

✓

IDENTITIES, MEMORIES, HISTORIES AND
REPRESENTATION: THE ROLE OF MUSEUMS IN
TWENTIETH CENTURY KWAZULU-NATAL

BY

Mxolisi Chrisostomas Dlamuka

Identities, Memories, Histories and Representation: The role of museums in
twentieth century KwaZulu-Natal

By

Mxolisi Chrisostomas Dlamuka

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters
in Department of History, Faculty of Humanities, at the University of
Durban-Westville



Supervisor: Mr. S. M. Leech

Co-Supervisor: Professor M. M. Goedhals

2003

*The Financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF)
towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and
conclusion arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be
attributed to the NRF*

TABLE OF CONTENT

	Page
Acknowledgements.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Declaration.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Introduction	
Historiography of the study and its context.....	1-6
Importance of the study.....	7-8
Theoretical framework and methodology.....	8-9
Outline of Chapters.....	10-11
Chapter One	
Definitions, historiography and the evolution of museums.....	12-21
Evolution of museums.....	21-27
Development of museums in KwaZulu-Natal.....	27-37
Chapter Two	
History and Ideology: The making of identities in KwaZulu and Natal	
Museums, c. 1920s-1970s.....	38-41
Power and ideology in Natal local history museums.....	42-61
Material culture and museums of colonial heritage.....	61-65
Chapter Three	
The making of new identities in KwaZulu-Natal museums, c. 1980s-1990s.....	66-67
KwaZulu museums during the early 1980s.....	67-68
Museums in Natal During the 1980s.....	68-79
Museums, history and transformation: a case of the Voortrekker Museum.....	79-93
Contextualizing transformation: an assessment of the politics of exhibiting.....	93-97
The challenges that face the Voortrekker Museum and other museums in KwaZulu-Natal.....	97-100

Chapter Four

Local history museums and tourism in the twentieth century KwaZulu-Natal.....	101-101
KwaZulu-Natal as seen through the tourism eyes.....	101-106
Museums as tourists destinations.....	106-110
Tourism growth in twentieth century KwaZulu-Natal.....	110-114

Chapter Five

Museums and their role in education.....	115-117
Early museums and education during the old dispensation.....	117-129
New facets of museum education in the 1990s.....	129-132
Local history museums and education: A teachers' perspective.....	132-137
Conclusion.....	138-141
Bibliography.....	142-148
Appendix.....	149-162

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere thanks to all who have assisted me in completing this dissertation. The following individuals deserve a special mention:

- Sincere profound thanks to Stephen Leech, My supervisor and Professor Mandy Goedhals, my co-supervisor, for being so excellent and encouraging dear friends. Thanks for guiding me adroitly throughout this research. For your academic guidance, infinite patience, and your support in various ways. I thank you so much.
- National Research Foundation (NRF) for their funding which played an instrumental role in supporting me during various field trips that I undertook. Views expressed in this dissertation should not be attributed to NRF.
- Staff members of the Natal Museum, Voortrekker Museum, University of Natal Library (Durban), Killie Campbell Africana Library, Don Africana Library, Durban Local History Museums, University of Durban-Westville library and Pinetown Museum played an important role in assisting me with data retrieval, I thank you all.
- Mduduzi Zungu and Nelly Shelembe for your guidance during my field trips. Thank you.
- Great thanks to Graham Dominy for his constructive criticism in certain chapters of this thesis.
- A deep thanks to my mother, who has meant more than one could imagine and continue to inspire me in so many ways.
- Thanks to Bongani Ndhlovu for your encouragement and support you provided me.
- Nombuso Mthiyane, thank you for your emotional support.
- And lastly to Nomathemba, thank you for your brotherly love , your emotional support was a constant source of encouragement.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my grand mother *Maphakathi Dlamuka (1880s-1989)* who, although illiterate and very old, played an instrumental role in sewing a school bag in 1983 to ensure that I begin schooling and have a successful career in my life.

Declaration

The Registrar (academic)

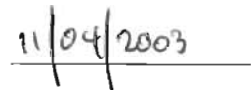
University of Durban-Westville

Dear Sir of Madam

I, Mxolisi Chrisostomas Dlamuka, registration number 9509010, hereby declare that the dissertation/thesis entitled 'Identities, Memories, Histories and Representation: The role of museums in twentieth century KwaZulu-Natal', is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other university.



Mr. M. C. Dlamuka



Date

The function of museums is to help people to see themselves, what they were in past, their position in the present, and what the possibilities can be for the future.'¹

¹ J. Kinard, *Sowetan*, 08 May 1987.

Abstract

The history of museums in South Africa dates back to 1825 when the South African Museum (SAM) was established in Cape Town. Initially museums in South Africa were established for science and local history was seen as peripheral. Nevertheless, this began to change during the early 1920s as artifacts of historical nature gained popularity, saving them from historical oblivion in museums. Museums themselves broadened their role to become major centres of both scientific and historical knowledge.

When museums started to include historical artifacts, they entered a terrain which was influenced by a racist ideology of segregation and then apartheid. Thus, they became centres of political discourse and mirrors of the white domination in South Africa. From the 1920s museums served to propagate certain myths which was based on the subjugation of Africans by white settlers. Museums played a pivotal role in entrenching ideas of white settlement in Natal as a triumph over barbarism, savage and heathenism. Exhibitions within the museums reflected certain identities at the expense of others. It was not until the 1980s that the political scenario forced museums to examine their role and adapt to the new order. This marked the beginning of a new dispensation in the politics and poetics of museum displaying. During the 1990s issues of representation in museums became popular. Historians were among those who became interested in the question of how to represent the South African a turbulent past in a post apartheid South Africa. This era was characterized by new displays which are more accommodative and represent diverse population groups of South Africa.

Exhibitions in museums always involve political ramifications and ideas within exhibitions draw reference to the powerful groups in the making of political and social discourse. During the post- apartheid era, KwaZulu-Natal museums reflect new identities which are based on non-racialism and interaction of diverse people of the province. They no longer serve as reference point for white domination and educational programmes are more multidimensional and appeal to all sectors of our society. The thesis adopted in this piece of work is that museums are political institutions and reflect the political identities of the society that they live. They cannot be divorced from their time and circumstances.

Introduction

Museums tell stories. They reflect the society in which they live. Museums do this with their powerful narratives through displays and exhibitions. Museums represent the past and serve to present history. They are instrumental in the shaping of public memory. Nelson Mandela, the former president, asserted that during the colonial and apartheid years, museums and monuments reflected the experiences and political ideas of a minority to the exclusion of the majority. The portrayal of blacks is painful to recall. This old trend, saw museum politics and the poetics of exhibiting influenced by ideological stereotypes and histories of African as peripheral and with a Eurocentric perspective. Museums were used as symbols of white domination and represented selected political identities based on racial policies which influenced the nature of politics in South Africa. Charmaine McEachern has rightly argued that a museum is a powerful engagement with South Africa's past, partly because its remembering is located in the very heart of apartheid philosophy and social engineering and the construction of the apartheid city.¹

Historiography of the Study and its Context

This research owes it impetus to the nature and the content of modules which were presented by History Department at the University of Durban-Westville, especially in 1999. As a young honours student in the history department which

¹ C. McEachern, 'Mapping the memories: politics, place and identity in the District Six Museum, Cape Town', in A. Zegeye (ed.) *Social Identities in the New South Africa*, Kwela Books, and South African History on line, Cape Town, 2001, pp.223-247.

was in severe difficulty of losing its credibility and popularity among university students, I believed it was necessary to focus on the sphere of heritage since its attractiveness was considered to be growing. It was against this background that Stephen Leech took us to Durban Local History Museums for a field trip on the making of KwaZulu-Natal's history, I was fascinated by the way history is represented. This became the motivation for me to pursue research on local history museums.

Initially the prime purpose was to explore the nature of discourse in museums as it is in history. When I presented my work at the end of the year (1999) it then became apparent that aspects of political identities has influenced the nature of exhibitions in KwaZulu-Natal museums.

The interest in this topic was motivated by the context of history which is found in local history museums and the manner in which museums have been subjected to manipulation and the extent of transformation in appraisal policies and practices. The primary focus of this dissertation is on local history museums as they are institutions where historical discourse is vividly portrayed.² The concept of a museum is not a new concept in world societies. In South Africa, the field of Museum Studies is still hindered by a dearth of scholarship. Unlike in the United Kingdom, United States and Australia where Museum Studies is a discipline on its own, in South Africa Museum Studies has yet to grow to

become an independent discipline. Previously, it has been studied in disciplines like Anthropology and Archaeology, while history only started to consider museology in the late 1980s. Thus most literature is published either in United States, Britain, or Australia.

The question of political discourse and its ramifications in museums has been a neglected story in the field of museum writings. It was not until the mid 1980s when it was disclosed that museums have been serving certain political and ideological objectives and were not apolitical and free of class ramifications. This was due to radical and social historians who began to embark on research projects in museums. These historians, influenced by the nature of the political context that they were operating and intransigence nature of museum professional, insisted on museums transforming their roles.

The decade of the 1980s marked the beginning of a new trend in museums history of museum writings in KwaZulu-Natal. During this decade many articles appeared in journals which focused on the nature of the museum in an apartheid South Africa. John Wright and Aron Mazel were pioneers with their work entitled *The Bastions of Ideology: the depiction of pre-colonial history in museums of Natal and KwaZulu*.³ Their work became influential since for the

² In this dissertation the term 'local history museum' and museum will be used inter-changeable to mean museums who are dedicated to local history.

³ J. Wright and A. Mazel. 'The bastions of Ideology: The depiction of pre-colonial history in the museum Natal and KwaZulu. *South African Museums Association Bulletin (SAMAB)*, no.3. 1987.

first time the question of ideology in museums was unpacked. Further, the presentation of this work in the 1987 South African Museums Association (SAMA) conference was phenomenal. This was to change the approach to museum research and the manner in which museums projected their images to their visitors and their approach towards transformation. It is essential to point out that in 1987 the Durban Natural Science Museum published a special book for its centenary celebrations. *Collection and Recollection: The Durban Natural History Museum* became the first of its kind to be published in the then Natal. In this book, Quickelberge focused on the history and the development of the Durban Museum since 1887. This study was superbly researched but it failed to point out the extent to which the Durban Museum contributed to the triumph of the white history in Natal and did not show how white history was displayed to the detriment of the majority's history which was regarded as peripheral.⁴ Wright and Mazel issued a second version of their work which was published in the early 1991. In their work they pointed to the nature and role that museums were playing during the apartheid era. This further helped to shape the nature of historical thinking about museum. In this second article entitled '*Controlling the past in the museums of Natal and KwaZulu*', their focus was not only on the pre-colonial history but on how museums were influenced and controlled by the policies of apartheid in the case of Natal and by the forces of Dr. M.

⁴ C. Quickelberge, *Collections and Recollection: The Durban Natural History Museum, 1887-1987*, Durban Natural History Museum, Durban, 1987.

G. Buthelezi, (the leader of Inkatha which was established in 1975) in KwaZulu.⁵ The main theme of this work was on how museums are places of political discourse rather than institutions of visual history free of manipulation. This work also provides a major contribution to the study of political identities and their relevance to the politics and poetics of exhibiting in museums. While transformation in the museum sphere was overwhelmingly supported, historians working in the museums were involved in various activities with an aim of broadening the knowledge and scope for museum development. Among them Dr. Graham Dominy, then historian at the Natal Museum, presented a paper in the University of Natal's (Pietermaritzburg) lectures series entitled *'From dead Zoos to sources of delight': Making museum matter in a changing society*. This unpublished paper asserted that museums were manipulated during the apartheid era to further political ideologies.⁶ Another contribution which also contributed in shaping the nature of transition in museums was a publication by the South African Museum (SAM) in 1993. It consisted transcripts of the symposium held in the SAM. This work entitled *The South African Museum and its public: Negotiating Partnerships*, demonstrated the path which museums could take to avoid the stereotypes and 'naive' perceptions about communities outside the museum premises. Nevertheless, it did not show how museums can transform their exhibitions and did not analyze the legacy of the old trend in museology.

⁵ J. Wright and A. Mazel. 'Controlling the past in the museums of Natal and KwaZulu'. *Critical Arts*, Vol. 5, no3, 1991.

⁶ See G. Dominy, *From dead zoos to sources of delight: Making museums matter in a changing society*. unpublished paper presented at the university of Natal's (Pietermaritzburg) lectures series, 5 June 1991.

During the early 1990s, forces of transformation were active and radical historians were in the forefront of spearheading transformation in the museum field. They did this through newspaper articles and pamphlets and posters in magazines.⁷ It was in this context that the University of Witwatersrand's History Workshop hosted a conference on *Myths, Monuments, Museums: New Premises*. This conference marked the History Workshop's most explicit move into the realm of public history. It was the first of its kind to be organized by the academic sector and demonstrated a growing interest in museum research. The product of the conference was the appearance of numerous articles focusing on museums in the South African Historical Journal. Among other articles which focused on museums outside the province of KwaZulu-Natal, Carolyn Hamilton's article was vital. In her article entitled '*Against Museums as chameleon*', Hamilton examined how museums in South Africa had been used to further the ideologies of the dominant class. She argued that museums should not change to mirror the powers of domination but rather museums should project the history and identities of the people they ought to serve.⁸

The decade of the 1990s marked the rise of a new perspective in museum historiography. The establishment of *CLIO*, a KwaZulu-Natal museums' journal which publishes articles and museum news from all over the region marked an

⁷ See *Natal Witness*, 6 and 9 June 1991.

⁸ C. Hamilton, 'Against the museum as chameleon' *South African Historical Journal*, vol.31, no.3, 1994, pp. 184-190.

important episode in museum writings. In this journal, aspects of transformation and news about new exhibitions were communicated to other museums. However, articles published in this journal failed to provide a background on the role of identities in shaping the nature of consciousness, and the museums contribute to both social and political engineering.

Importance of the Study

This research is a contribution to the growing volume of literature that deals with museums and the practice of heritage preservation in KwaZulu-Natal. It focuses on local history museums and shows how these museums are places of historical discourse and of public memory. The study explores the nature and the practice of identities in the case of museums and shows that identity formation cannot be properly understood unless the historical background is well encapsulated.

Museums have a history of being manipulated to perpetuate certain versions of the past. The study is also a contribution to the study of how the dominant ideology is preserved in local history museums. Thus this thesis argues that museums are mirrors of the control of the dominating classes and they will always be influenced by politics and context of their exhibitions. While the study singles out certain aspects of museums, it is an attempt to document the development of museums in KwaZulu- Natal.

Museums have been through a number of stages of development. This has meant that museums change their image and relationship with the audience as time progresses. In the nineteenth century, when the Natal and the Durban Museum were established, their focus was on science. This trend changed in the 1920s with the white centenary celebrations⁹ in Natal necessitated the need for the celebration of white history. This changing image and role of museums has not been documented. During the 1980s the trend of focusing on white history changed and museums arrived at a turning point. Their focus shifted to depict the histories of the hitherto neglected groups and their triumph over apartheid. As the post apartheid era is still in its early years no studies have been conducted to explore the nature of museums in a post apartheid KwaZulu-Natal. This study documents the changing politics and poetics of displays in KwaZulu-Natal's museums in a new era.

Theoretical framework and methodology

This thesis draws on the work of Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci.¹⁰ Althusser's concept of the Ideological State Apparatus and Gramsci's concept of hegemony is vital in analyzing the socio-political dynamics of every institution if one attempts to unpack its nature and role in the making of political discourse.

⁹ The year 1924 marked the centenary for the arrival of the whites in Natal who settled in 1824. This centenary was celebrated and both the Natal and Durban Museum played a crucial role in providing with historical artifacts relating to the white's early years of their arrival. See a special publication by E. C. Chubb, *The Natal Centenary 1824-1924*, Durban Museums, Durban, 1924.

¹⁰ For more information on Marxism see, M. Rosen and J. Wolf (eds), *Political Thoughts*, Oxford University Press, London, 1998.

According to Althusser, the Ideological State Apparatus plays a major role in ensuring that the dominant class remains in power. For him no class can stay in power for so many years only by coercion. He argues that Ideological State Apparatus plays a vital role in enforcing the false self consciousness which increases the prospect of the dominant ideology remaining unchallenged. Although his focus was on the role of the church and education in both pre-capitalist and capitalist societies, his theory fits well into the nature of museums and how ideology is prevalent. The role of museums in South Africa, and KwaZulu-Natal in particular has been political and this thesis strongly disagrees with the idea of museums being apolitical.

This thesis also relies on archival data as one of the major sources. Information from the archives provides the histories of museums and the political influences that underpinned in the establishment and the functioning during their early years. These also provide the politics and poetics of exhibiting by examining the nature of the exhibitions that were mounted and their political and historical context.

As there is still a dearth of published and unpublished materials on this field, this thesis has to rely on other sources of historical evidence. Since the scope of the thesis covers the period up to the late twentieth century and thus information on this era is not yet available in the archives, this necessitated the need to rely highly on interviews. Curators, directors, academics and other museum

professionals are among those interviewed with the aim of recording their experiences in museums.

In addition, this thesis uses questionnaires which played a central role in examining the aspirations of teachers who teach history in schools. Questionnaires were distributed to a sample KwaZulu-Natal Schools in rural and urban areas, both high schools and primary schools. Certain museums also played a crucial role in assisting with the distribution of questionnaires to history teachers who visited the museum with their school groups. Moreover both informal and formal discussions with experts in the field provided valuable information which shaped the nature of this thesis.

Outline of Chapters

This thesis consist of five chapters. This first chapter deals with the background of the term 'Museum' and its evolution. It also focuses on how museum started and the nature of collections which informed the establishment of museums.

The second chapter's main focus is on the development of exhibitions of historical interest and it examines the extent to which these early exhibitions were influenced by ideas of white superiority. Its scope discusses issues of the politics of exhibiting between the 1920s and the 1970s. It further outlines how culture, as a symbol of identity, was manipulated and used to the advantage of

whites while degrading other cultures which were perceived as peripheral in the Natal and Durban Museums.

Chapter three explores the period from the 1980s to the 1990s. It looks at the establishment of the KwaZulu Monuments Council (KMC) and how museums mushroomed in the rein of the KwaZulu government. It also focuses on the politics and poetics of exhibiting both in museums of Natal and those of KwaZulu. Aspects of transformation are discussed in this since it was during the 1980s when these concepts started to blow. It also examines the history of the Voortrekker Museum in Pietermaritzburg in a developmental manner and shows how the museum has changed over time.

The fourth chapter deals with the extent to which museums are tourist destinations. This chapter investigates the extent to which museums can play a role in tourism which has been seen as a backbone for KwaZulu-Natal economic development. Museums and tourism have made strong links and they are now working as partners. In this chapter, aspects of cultural tourism are discussed.

The final chapter explores the extent to which museums can be used or are being utilized as educational institutions. It provides the history of museum education in KwaZulu-Natal and demonstrates how museum education was manipulated to further the ideologies of segregation and later apartheid.

CHAPTER ONE

Definitions, historiography and the evolution of museums

Introduction

It is important to know what exactly we mean by the word museum. The word museum has various meanings for different visitors and museums staff members. This is influenced by the content of their museums and the prevailing ideology. The concept of a museum is in a continuous state of development. It is modified by the politics of the museum's context, period and the content of its collections and the audiences it aims to serve. Thus, a significant number of 'working definitions' are in existence and these guide our reasoning by reminding us of the fundamental features that distinguish a museum from other types of institutions and practices within the landscape of heritage. The purpose of this chapter is to explore various definitions of museums and further attempt to outline the historiographical trends that dominated and influenced the use of the term 'museum'. Further, this chapter will focus on the evolution of museums from their establishment up to the modern times.

The last few years have seen a major expansion and reorganization of museums in South Africa.¹ This is validated by the formation of two flagships, the Southern flagship (known as the Iziko Museums) and the Northern flagship, while another flagship had just been formed in the Eastern Seaboard.² Museums under the flagship system means that they will be under single directorship and funds will be directed to the flagship management not the museum per se. Change has been extreme and rapid. It has thrown previous assumptions about the nature of museums as boring Eurocentric

institutions into disarray. These recent changes which swept over the sphere of museums could not be understood clearly if one is looking at them from one perspective. Thus a holistic conceptualization is essential if one aims to understand museums. Multifaceted factors played a role in bringing changes or transformation that were well orchestrated by the government and political in their nature. This suggests that museums are dynamic institutions, which mirror a particular milieu. Since museum's meanings and their exhibitions are relative, it is absurd to argue that there is a single reality for museums and only one fixed way interpreting the past.

Looking back in the history of museums from the times when Ptolemy I established the first museum in 280 B. C. the realities have changed many times. Museums have always had to modify how they work, and what they do according to the context, the plays of power, and the social, economic and political imperatives that underpin their construction. This view is against the dominant idea which is popular among some museologists in KwaZulu-Natal, especially in the former province of Natal, who argue that museums are apolitical institutions and the transformation that took place was intrinsic rather than being determined by external factors.³ This was evident in interviews that I conducted with practicing museologists. A group of these professionals do not hold the view that museums are influenced by politics and their idea is that museums are apolitical and their aim is only to 'collect'.

¹ E. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of knowledge*. Routledge, London, 1992. p. 1.

² See *Natal Witness*, 07/07/2000 and *Daily News*, 08/01/1996.

³ Interview with the management of the Voortrekker Museum, Fort Dunfort Museum and Mrs. H. England.

From their inception during the era of Ptolemy I.⁴ a museum became a house of royal antiques collected with an aim of showing royal supremacy. The emphasis was further devoted to education and research, however this was not utilized to the fullest because only aristocrats had access to education.⁵ Moreover, museums were not open to all. It is vital to point out that during the sixteenth century the term museum came to be applied to these early private collections, and from the end of the century the term 'museum' was constantly used not only for the collection but also for the building in which they were kept.⁶

In 1895 George Brown Goode defined a museum as an institution for the preservation of those objects which best illustrate the phenomena of nature and the works of man, and the utilization of these for the increase in knowledge and for the culture and enlightenment of the people.⁷ Although culture was included in the definition, museums tended to focus entirely on natural sciences. Edwin Colbert defined it as an institution for the safekeeping of objects and for the interpretation of these objects through research and through exhibition.⁸ This definition does not include aspects of cultural artifacts and it further ignores the entertainment as an aspect of museum. The American Association of Museums (AAM) defines a museum as an institution that is organized as a public or private non-profit, existing on a permanent basis for essentially educational and aesthetic purposes, that cares for and owns or uses tangible objects, whether animated or unanimated, and exhibits these on regular basis, that has at least

⁴ It is not quite clear when this museum was established since other sources mention 280 B. C. others mention 300 B. C. and some just use the word 'around'.

⁵ Interview with Professor I. Filatova. 06 March 2000.

⁶ Presidential address to the South African Association for the Advancement of Science. July 1945 by E. C. Chubb, See CSO/4/1/3/602.

⁷ Burcaw G. E. *Introduction to Museum Work*, Nashville, the American Association for State and Local History. USA. 1975. p.9.

⁸ Ibid.

one professional staff member or the full time equivalent, and is open to the general public on a regular basis at least 120 days per year.⁹ While the AAM definition dwells on the technical aspects of the museum, the United Kingdom Museums Association focus more on what museums do rather than what museums are. According to them a museum is an institution which collects, documents, preserves, exhibits, and interprets material evidence and associated information for the public benefit.¹⁰ The South African Museums Association (SAMA) regurgitated this definition in its 1984 annual general meeting. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a great emphasis on defining a museum was educational value. Frostick argues that from the beginning of the nineteenth-century, museums were seen by many as a resource for education.¹¹ Although some local authorities funded educational personnel in museums or loan services at various times, museums were not seen as educational institution on the same level as schools and colleges. Thus, museums did not see themselves as anything other than centres of collection and research.¹²

During the first half of the twentieth century museums were not defined differently than the previous century. The first aim is that the museum should be an educational force in the colony; the second aim is that the collections should prove of practical utility to the miner and to the agriculturists and the third aim is that the museum should in time become a centre of scientific research.¹³

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the emphasis was on museums as viable educational sources. Museums were also perceived as having a role to play in serving financial imperatives and strengthen their partnerships with the business sphere. This is

⁹ N. Kotler and P. Kotler, *Museum Strategy and marketing: Designing missions, building audiences, generating revenue and resources*. Jossey-Bass publishers, San Francisco, 1998. p.6.

¹⁰ A. Ambrose and C Paine, 'Some definition of museum' in G. Kavanagh (ed), *Museums Professionalism*. Routledge, London. 1994. p.15.

¹¹ Frostick. 'Museums in education: a neglected role', *Museums Journal*. Vol. 85, no. 2, 1985, p. 67.

¹² J. Kloppenborg, *A pilot study into the trends and opinions of the black population in the Durban Natural History Museum*, Unpublished thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for degree of Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) in Sociology, university of Natal, Durban. 1987, p.2.

because business was one of the major financial sources for museums. However towards the 1940 museums were also seen as having historical significance. In 1945 it was noted by E. C. Chubb who was the director of Durban Museums from 1910 to 1951 that:

The functions of museums have been variously defined, but most authorities regard research, education and inspiration as primary functions, especially of museums devoted to science. Bound up with these is the function of conservation-the collection and preservation of objects of scientific, historical, or artistic importance, for the benefit of the present and future generations.¹⁴

By the early 1940s museums became institutions of visual instruction, mass educative in nature with their carefully selected specimen and intelligently displayed exhibits, accompanied by informative labels and supplemented by the provision of official handbooks.¹⁵

The decade of the 1960s witnessed a shifting paradigm in relation to culture and ethnography. This could be attributed to major debates hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, (UNESCO) which necessitated the changing attitudes in viewing other peoples' cultures. People who had been neglected under colonial domination began to emerge and started to define what museums meant to them.¹⁶ In 1960 the International Council of Museums (ICOM) defined a museum as a non-profit-making, permanent institution, in the service of society and its

¹³ *First Annual report of the Natal Government Museum*. Pietermaritzburg, 1904.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* P. 1. also see a letter from Chubb to the Town Clerk dated 23 March 1945. NAR. 3/DBN/4/1/2/6-42.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 4.

¹⁶ This was further articulated by Bwana in a South African Museums Association (SAMA) conference paper where the context of Kenyan museums after independence was became the focal point during the session. See O. Bwana, 'The experience of museums in Kenya after independence', (paper presented in SAMA conference, Durban, 1992 and also H. C. Hummel, 'Public history, monuments and marketing museums: some reflections on the Australian scene. (paper presented at the SAMA conference, Durban, 1992).

development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for the purpose of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment.¹⁷ By the mid- twentieth century, Klaus Schreiner defined museums as cultural institutions in which objects of the moveable cultural property are collected, preserved and decoded in the interests of the socialist society and the ideological basis of Marxism-Leninism.¹⁸ While museums mushroomed during the twentieth century, states adopted firm measures on museum policies and thus museums ended up being manipulated.

On the continent of Africa while museums grew rapidly during the 1950s and 1960s, the newly emerging states took control of them with an aim of using these institutions, including the writing of history, to serve 'national' goals.¹⁹

During the 1970s and 1980s a definition of a museum focused more on the use of culture in museums and how museums were viable educational institutions which were proactive in taking initiatives and outreach programs to schools. During these decades, although South Africa was struggling with a poor international image, museums begun to recognize themselves as tourists destinations.²⁰ Nevertheless it was not unveiled whether museums played a certain role in political arena. Prior to the 1980s a dogmatic

¹⁷ G. E. Burcaw. *Introduction to museum work*, the American Association for the state and local history. Nashville. 1976. p.9. Also this definition was published in the special SAMA-KwaZulu-Natal Clio. December 2000. p.38.

¹⁸ See S. Weil. 'Stuff and non-stuff'. *Museum Journal*, 1995. p. 29.

¹⁹ This was articulated further by A. Temu in his presidential address to the South African Historical Society conference, see A. Temu, 'Not Telling: African history at the end of the millennium'. in *South African Historical Journal (SAHJ)*, 42 (May 2000), O. Bwana, 'The experience of museums in Kenya following independence' and F. T. Masao. 'The role of museums in development: A case for Tanzania' (papers presented at the conference of the SAMA. Durban. June 1992).

²⁰ See Durban Museums and Art Gallery Annual Report. 1973-1974 and H. Deacon, 'Remembering tragedy, constructing modernity: Robben Island as a national monument', in Nuttall S. and Coetzee C,

approach was adopted in museum's definition. Instead of focusing on what museums were exhibiting, the prime focus was on what museums were supposed to exhibit. It was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s, when historians began to focus on museums that it became clear that museums were part of the state machinery, the ideological state apparatus.²¹ From that time museum articles started to appear as journal articles and conference papers and their central focus was how the state had manipulated museums, the politics of exhibiting and a great need for South African museums to be transformed.²² The Wits history workshop also marked the turning point in museum discourse. In this conference entitled 'Myths, Monuments, Museums: New Premises', many papers were presented and the core theme was the use of museum by the state to further its own objectives and how museums could be transformed to a new dispensations in new South Africa.²³

By the early 1990s museums began to forge links with the communities they served and in addition, they started to explore ways of establishing partnerships with other organizations in the planning of museum projects. Museums were conceptualized as an infrastructural resource and seen as having the potential to make an important contribution in the new South Africa.²⁴ In 1993 the African National Congress (ANC) unveiled its policy for museums. It asserted that

Negotiating the past: The making of memory in South Africa, Oxford university press. London, 1998. p.166.

²¹Historians were not the only ones from the academic world to engage the museum field, Anthropologists had done so earlier. Some of these historians were Professor John Wright, Graham Dominy, Leslie Wits, Ciraj Rassool, Cynthia Cros, etc. and were critical of what museums were exhibiting and their intransigent appraisal and collecting policies.

²² The South African Historical Journal (SAHJ) is a precise example.

²³ The conference was Held at the University of Witwatersrand, 16-18 July 1992.

²⁴ A symposium arranged by South African in 1993 around the theme 'The South African Museum and its public: negotiating partnership' is the precise example.

The museums, monuments, national archives, heraldry, and national symbols in democratic South Africa should foster national unity, reconciliation and democratic values and be accessible to and preserved for the education, benefit and development of all South Africans.²⁵

The ANC's definition continued to place education as a vital aspect but it included aspects of national unity, which means that museums were seen as a political tool. From the early 1990s onwards it was pointed out by politicians, journalists and academics that museums reflect an apartheid ideological discourse and could not be divorced from their context and circumstances.

During the decade of the 1990s museums were also perceived as heritage resources and sites of public memory.²⁶ They were seen as custodians of society's cultural heritage, preserving for posterity and were deemed to be representative and important in material world. In 1995 Odendaal argued that a museum is a place where experts work. They collect things that exist in nature or had been made by people. They put these artifacts on display and explain their meaning to the public²⁷. This definition was vehemently opposed by Gordon Metz who argued that museums are dynamic public institutions that both shape and reflect the consciousness, identities and understanding of communities and individuals in relations to their historical, cultural and natural environment.²⁸ They (museologists) do this through the value they attach to things, both material and intangible, they choose to collect, documents, researches, and preserve and make accessible.

²⁵ See the ANC policy for museums in the *SAMANTLY*, July 1993, p.10.

²⁶ P. Davidson, "Redefining relevance: museums for a new millenium", in *SAMAB*. vol.25. No. 1, p. 2.

²⁷ See the proceedings of the SAMA conference, 17-21 July 1995, Cape Town.

From these above-mentioned definitions, it can be seen that museums have been perceived differently by various communities. It is not surprising, however that when museums were firstly established their definition focused primarily on research yet politics was implicit. While research was the great emphasis, museums became symbols of domination, power and the official wisdom in the making of political discourse and reflecting certain identities. Drawing from the earliest museums as a reference framework, they became the mirrors of the power of the royal empires and in all over the centuries they were not apolitical and classless institutions.

In general there are two schools of thoughts in museum sphere. The first school takes a scientific stance and argues that the role of a museum is to collect, preserve and research objects for future generations. This school of thought justifies the status quo and places museums outside the political domain. It is this school which influenced the philosophies of museum definition during the past centuries. The second school takes a humanitarian stance and argues that the role of museums is educating the public about its history and environment. This school of thought includes the notion that museums are not apolitical and registers the view that museums are man made, therefore reflecting the ideologies of those in power to the detriment of those who are powerless.²⁹

The Evolution of Museums

Museums started with collections either by individuals or by a group of people with an interest in a specific field. Collections have existed from earliest times, though notable collections in the past belonged to individuals of power and wealth, not the general

²⁸ Ibid.

public.³⁰ Collections are not neutral or passive. They construct certain attitudes and stereotypes. The kinds of artifacts which are collected determine the subject and theme of exhibition and shape the socio-political discourse in a museum. Donahue asserted that:

History museums traditionally strive to embody past cultures through artifacts that they preserve and exhibit to foster the public's understanding of their heritage. If, however, the collection and associated documentation inadequately represents the history of a culture then the record of the past and our understanding of it will be skewed.³¹

It is quite clear from the quotation that collections have an effect in the understanding of our past and the way people associate themselves with it and their identities. When museums construct collecting policies they are constructing their agenda. Museums cannot be divorced from their collections. Collecting and preserving objects is thus a central activity of a museum. These collections are used to advance knowledge and understanding of our world and its history through meaningful research, educational and exhibition.³²

Museums originated among the ancient Greeks prior to the Christian era as scholarly, religious, spiritual, and creative centres, engaging a small number of participants and far removed from everyday life.³³ The first recorded institution that bore the name 'museums' was that seat of learning at Alexandria, Egypt founded by Ptolemy I in the year 290 B. C. This was, however, destroyed in the year 48 B. C. when Julius Caesar

²⁹ See interview with Gilbert Torlage.

³⁰ Burcaw, p.16 and also Filatova do mention the question of individualism and wealth, see interview with Filatova, see appendix.

³¹ P. F. Donahue, 'A strategy for developing and managing a national collection,' *Museum management and curatorship*, vol. 12, 1993, p. 257-266

³² Durban Focus, number 17, July 1987, p. 3. Also Filatova does speak about the educational value of collections, interview with Filatova.

³³ N. Kotler and P. Kotler, p. 11.

besieged the city.³⁴ When Ptolemy died in 283 B. C., his descendents tried to improve it and this became the greatest achievement of his dynasty. Thus, the Greeks laid grounds for the formation of a museum. In ancient Rome during the second century B. C, museums became associated with storage and display of collections acquired in imperial and military campaigns. After the imperial wars and conquest, Roman generals returned home with thousands of bronze and marble statues and gold and silver pieces. Thus the centre of Rome itself became a museum, filled with objects from subdued nations.³⁵

Collections of curiosities, rarities and other objects have been formed throughout the ages. During the middle ages it was customary for the princes and dignitaries of the church to possess and carry with them collections of relics of saints and most churches had their own treasuries. Chubb, the director of Durban Museums from 1910 to 1944 argued that although the formation of these collections was prompted by the piety and superstition rather than for the purpose of study and instruction, it no doubt encouraged the collecting habit and resulted in the preservation of interesting objects, some of which in later times found their way into museums. Collections in modern Europe and in England in particular, were assembled by kings and nobility, by the established churches, and later by wealthy merchants. Housed in palaces and grand private residences, their target was certain groups or classes within the society. After the

³⁴ Chubb, 'presidential address'. p. 2.

³⁵ This would continue to influence early museum collections. Its implications could be seen in some, if not most, museums outside Africa which own large quantities of artifacts which were taken from Africa; the example might be the university of Tuebingen museum in Germany which has many Egyptian artifacts.

Greeks, museums as such, disappeared for hundreds of years, although there were collections in Roman temples.³⁶

The discovery of the sea route to India by Vasco da Gama in 1497 and America in 1492, resulted in the establishment of trading centres in the East and West Indies and the undertaking of missionary enterprises. Europeans were brought in touch with distant lands. Regular traffic in rarities and curiosities from other parts of the world soon took place. These collections were done with the aim of beautifying houses and keeping what was perceived to be worthy preserved. The public was neither shown nor allowed to access those collections. It was not until the eighteenth century that museums were opened to the people regardless of rank or class. In the case of museums in England, although the admission to the museums was free, a visitor had to obtain a ticket. The intending visitor had to apply a few days previously and enter his name, occupation and address in a register. This was submitted to the director, who, if he approved, issued a ticket which was not transferable.³⁷ Moreover, visitors were admitted in groups and rapidly conducted through various rooms, only one hour being allocated to each group for the inspection of the whole museum. For a number of years not more than sixty persons were admitted on any one-day. When considering the content of these displays, they were arranged in an encyclopaedic fashion in an attempt to encompass the known world. The content was usually known intimately by the collectors themselves, who were almost always men, and were accumulated for the purposes of prestige rather than didacticism. The message disseminated by these museums and their layout of the collections was one emphasizing the demonstration of the power of the state, region or institution. This has been the case in the museums of

³⁶ J. Kloppenborg, 'A pilot Study', p. 9.

KwaZulu-Natal during the pre 1994 era. This point will be examined in chapter two and three.

These "proto-museums" which developed during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries largely took the form of private collection or cabinets of curiosity. Thus, Walsh argues that the first museums were constituted for the benefit of the family who owned them. The collection was perceived as giving the collector a certain prestige. Not only did the creation and enrichment of a museum constitute an occupation worthy of noblemen; they were also a means of acquiring renown and of turning the owner's home into almost obligatory sight for everyone admitted.³⁸ Merriman argues that these museums envisaged promoting respect for the political and religious order and linked museums with political control by asserting that no municipality is complete without a museum.³⁹ Towards the beginning of the nineteenth century access to museums became less restricted, but it was not until 1810 that all persons of 'decent appearance' were admitted on three days a week, and the only thing required from them was their signature in a visitors' book. Visitors were now permitted to inspect the exhibition as long as they wished. This was freedom in its infancy which grew and spread. Notable by the nineteenth century, museums were undergoing transformation from being semi-private institutions restricted largely to the ruling class, into major organs of the state dedicated to the instruction and edification of the general public. By the end of the nineteenth century, museums were regarded as major vehicles for the fulfillment of the state's new educative and moral role in relation to population as a whole. The nineteenth-century museums were thus intended for people, however they were certainly not of the

³⁸ K. Walsh. 'Representation of the past', Routledge. London, 1992, p. 19.

people in the sense of not displaying any interest in their lives, habits and customs. In the case of KwaZulu-Natal museums, this was the central theme in the discourse of museum exhibitions, which will be discussed further in next chapters. Created by the wealthy, individuals who belonged to a certain class far more than above that of the ordinary masses at a grass root, these museums distorted histories of the people and thus were not appreciated and patronized by the neglected communities.⁴⁰

It was the French Revolution which gave impetus to the development of public museums. The overthrow of the monarchy meant valuable and extensive collections of works of art in royal palaces were made accessible to citizens. As public museums developed, it became customary to classify the collections and arrange them in a systematic manner but they were usually displayed in their entirety and visitors were greeted with serried rows of similar specimen, which if labeled bore no meaning to the ordinary visitor.⁴¹ About the middle of nineteenth century, when great interest was being taken in education, the important role that museums were capable of playing in public came to be recognized. Henceforth, more attention was paid to ensuring that exhibitions were instructive as well as repositories of objects of scientific and historical value and centres of scientific research.

³⁹ N. Merriman. *Beyond the glass case: The past, the heritage and the public in Britain*, Leicester university. London, 1991, p. 84.

⁴⁰ See K. Mathers, 'Why do South Africans choose not to visit museums? An analysis of a national survey of the museum visiting habits of South African adults', 1993.

⁴¹ Chubb, 'presidential address', p.5. Also see S. Macdonald, 'Exhibitions of power and powers of exhibition: An introduction to the politics of display', in Macdonalds S (ed), *The politics of displaying: Museums, Sciences and Culture*, Routledge, London, 1998, p. 7 and J. Bennett, 'Can museums of science take history seriously?' in Macdonalds, 'The politics', p. 174-183.

By the twentieth century there was a rapid increase in public museum interest. This is validated by a dramatic increase in public patronage.⁴² This interest led to the formation of international bodies, namely the International Museum Office in 1926 and in 1946 the International Council for Museum (ICOM). In addition, with the rise of the modern state, museums began to receive more financial support. This made them more vulnerable to the state's manipulation.⁴³ Among the significant trends of the twentieth century museums, is the tendency towards replacing the multi-purpose institutions that embrace various arts and sciences by more specialized museums i.e. of natural history, science, history, archeology, ethnology and art. Although this tendency of specialization did not feature in KwaZulu-Natal museums, it was not until 1954 that the authorities of the Durban Museum felt that the Durban Room was full enough to form its own museum outside the Durban Museum premises. It was against this background that the Old House was established, as a local history museum in St. Andrews Street.⁴⁴

The Development of Museums in KwaZulu-Natal

At this juncture let me focus on how museums developed in KwaZulu-Natal. Before museums were established in Southern Africa collections were in existence.⁴⁵ These exhibitions were not fixed but were performed in ceremonies. They would come with items that they would display at a particular ceremony. Certain artifacts would be for special occasions; they would not use them at all times. They were used for particular ceremony, like Rain Making, may be considered sacred and after the ceremony stored

⁴² See New York Times, a special section on museum. 19 April 2000.

⁴³ In the case of KwaZulu-Natal, by 1915 the government was proposing to reduce its grant-in aid to Durban Museums. DAR. 3/DBN/4/1/2/463.

⁴⁴ See *the annual report of the Durban Museum and art gallery, 1954-1955*.

⁴⁵ Interview with G. Torlage.

away.⁴⁶ For example in the inauguration of a new chief there would be certain utensils used and certain people that perform those, for example a priest. It is here that the exhibition comes in. People knew that these things are only used for this occasion and for this purpose. These items are preserved to ensure that they are passed to the next generation to come and there were specialists who were doing that.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, collecting was not popular among the indigenous people of Southern Africa; a notable individual was vested with power to collect certain artifacts. Like the Russian case where almost all collections prior to the nineteenth century were under the custody of the king, Southern African collections belonged to the royal house.⁴⁸ However these were never exhibited but were passed down to other generations. In the 1820s, with the arrival of whites, modern museums started to appear. The oldest public museum is the South African Museum in Cape Town, which was established in 1825 with the capable Sir Andrew Smith as its superintendent. In 1837 Smith left the museum for unstated reasons and it became defunct. The history of museums in South Africa can really be said to have begun in 1855 when the South African Museum was re-established by government proclamation. In the same year the Albany museum in Grahamstown was also opened. In 1857 the South African Museum Incorporation Act was promulgated. This Act provided museums with a right to appoint Board of Trustees and most importantly full-time curators, thus enhancing the status of South African museums.⁴⁹ It is vital to point out that while museums in the western world functioned for many decades as private institutions, within few decades of their establishment South African museums were soon put under the state custody. In KwaZulu-Natal, which is the focus of the study, three museums, namely the Natal Museum, the Durban Museum and the

⁴⁶ Interview with Professor Seleti, 19 April 2000.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Interview with Filatova.

Voortrekker Museum were pioneers and thus their histories are essential. However the Voortrekker museum which is among the earliest museums established, will be discussed in its own chapter. This is due to the fact that its history and nature is unique when compared with other museums in KwaZulu-Natal.

The Durban Museum, which is now a municipal museum, was founded by Councillor J. S. Steel. It was opened to the public on the 23 July 1887 by mayor W. E. Robarts. Its premises were within the Town Hall, the present Central Post Office. This museum was established as a general museum intended to house educational collections of material on the natural sciences as well as history and ethnology. Although it was not stated whose history was to be preserved, the museum echoed the then official version of history which was based on racism and undermined and overlooked the activities of blacks in the making of the past. The museum was encyclopaedic and contained a variety of objects associated with the 'dusty, musty clutter of Victorian museums.'⁵⁰ From 1887 onward, it was a group of white people who were concerned about their history and heritage, who then supported the idea of storing their memoirs, memorabilia and artifacts.⁵¹ When the museum was inaugurated it had no curator. The museums' trustees were indebted to the enthusiasm and energy of Steel.

In support for the establishment of the museum it was often stressed that this institution would fulfill an educational role. A museum is indeed suited to the realization of such an ideal. However, one gains the impression that this aspect of a museum's function

⁴⁹ H. Fransen, *A guide to the museums of Southern Africa*, Galvin and Sales, Cape Town. 1978. p.1.

⁵⁰ Old Court House Museum file: 545.612.

⁵¹ Interview with P. Tichman.

was overstressed at this time mainly to gain public sympathy and financial support of the state, as well as the private sector. Sufficient funding had always been a stumbling block for the realization of a museum and even after its establishment.⁵²

As collections grew the museum needed more space for its displays. By 1900 the lack of space was not only experienced by the museum but by various municipal departments which were housed in the Town Hall. In 1906 the City Hall which was intended to accommodate most of the municipal departments, museum, art gallery and library, was already in the process of erection. The area allocated to the museum was five times greater than that occupied in the Town Hall. In 1910 the museum was transferred to its new building in the City Hall. However this did not end comments about shortage of space. As a result an idea of finding a new building to house the museum alone gained momentum. Although the possibilities of this goal were stressed and discussed, no firm action was taken.

Soon after the museum moved to the City Hall one of its major priorities was to recruit a suitable curator to run the institution. The museum committee recommended in April 1910 that Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, A. D. Millar, communicate with other South African museums and those of Great Britain to invite applications for the post of curator. However, it was closer to the deadline for the receipt of applications that the name of E. C. Chubb was seen among the applicants. In a letter dated 30 November 1910 the Durban Town Clerk wrote that:

With reference to your letter of the 29th Instant, I have the honour to confirm my telegram of this morning to the effect that the appointment of Mr. E. C.

⁵²NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/2/651

Chubb to the position of curator of the Durban Museum is acceptable to the Union Government.⁵³

Although it is not stated to whom this letter was directed, it is possible that it was written to someone of high prestige or position within the local government. Seemingly at this point all the formalities were settled and Chubb wrote to the museum stating that:

I beg to thank you for your telegram of the 30 November informing me of the government approval of my appointment, and also your wire of yesterday notifying me of the municipal council's confirmation, I intend leaving Bulawayo on Thursday next, 15th Instant and shall up my official duties at Durban on Monday, 19th Instant.⁵⁴

A closer look at who Chubb was is essential, since during his office major developments would take place and the content as well as the image of the museum changed dramatically. Ernest Charles Chubb was born in London in 1884. His father, Charles Chubb was an ornithologist at the Museum for many years. Chubb, the son, was then educated at South Western Polytechnic and Birkbeck College, London. He then entered the museum world as an assistant to Oldfield Thomas, an eminent mammalogist employed at the British Museum.⁵⁵ As his father was still active at the same museum, this early training in mammals and birds showed itself later after he was appointed assistant curator and zoologist at the Rhodesian Museum, Bulawayo, in 1907. In 1910 he became the curator and the director of the Durban Museum and art gallery. What is significant about Chubb is that he did not only collect artifacts that belong to natural sciences he also started to collect artifacts that relate to local history. By 1920 he, with the assistance of Messrs. Boyce and L. Bevis, who were employed as museum assistants (on certain occasion Boyce acted as a curator when Chubb was not

⁵³ CSO/1896/1910/5500.

⁵⁴ Also CSO/1896/1910/5500.

⁵⁵ SAMAB, 1973.

away) had collected enough to the extent that it could be exhibited in a special room. These artifacts were displayed in 1924 to mark the white centenary. In 1927 Chubb visited many museums in the United States of America on a Carnegie Grant. From a very small beginning Chubb built up a fine museum which attracted large numbers of visitors. He was a prime mover in the formation of the South African Museums Association (SAMA) in 1936. He served as its president once and as a secretary and treasurer for more than 25 years and during his period he also edited South African Museums Bulletin (SAMAB). Thus, the establishment and development of museums association will remain as one of his most important contributions in the museum movement in South Africa. In recognition of his service he was elected an honorary life member of SAMA in 1962. He also regularly attended meetings of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science and served as president in 1944. He retired as the director of Durban Museums and Art Gallery in 1951 and he died on the 9 October 1972 at the age of 88. Notably under Chubb's, the Durban Museum expanded not only its collections on natural sciences but also artifacts of historical significance. Moreover its visitor patterns were reported to have increased dramatically.⁵⁶

In 1920 the South African National Society expressed views of celebrating the centenary of white's settlement in Natal. This view influenced and spearheaded the views on opening a display called the "Durban Room" within the Durban Museum. This display was officially opened to the public in 1924 to mark the centenary and it became the first display to focus on artifacts of historical importance⁵⁷ the content of which will be discussed further in the next chapters. By the mid-1920s the Durban Museum was experiencing severe financial constraints. This could be attributed to a

⁵⁶ NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/3/602.

Department of the Interior action which drastically decreased the grant-in-aid to the museum.⁵⁸ In addition, the future of the Durban Museum became uncertain of the Department of the Interior's plans of reconfiguration and establishing museums only in the four capital cities (Cape Town, Pretoria, Bloemfontain and Pietermaritzburg) of the Union of South Africa. Other museums were thus supposed to be satellites of the bigger museums. It was against this background that the Durban Museum was then taken over by the Borough of Durban and from that time until now, it is a municipal museum.⁵⁹ Objects grew rapidly and it became apparent that the Durban Museum could no longer accommodate the Durban Room within the museum. As a result in 1953 the Old House Museum in St. Andrews Street, Durban was established as part of the Durban Museum. It formed a repository for articles and artifacts of historical value connected with Natal, and as an active centre for research. The collections of this small museum grew to such an extent that soon additional premises were needed. In 1965, the Old Court House in Aliwal Street was renovated and adapted for use as the Local History Museum. Since then the Old House museum has functioned as a satellite of the Local History Museum.⁶⁰ These collections grew apace and within a decade it was clear that there was a great need for more space. This resulted in the extension of local history museum to the first floor in June 1986. In 1988 the museum satellite, the Natal Maritime Museum was opened to the public. Two years later, in 1990 the KwaMuhle Museum was approved.⁶¹ The approval of the KwaMuhle museum marked the turning point in history museums nationally. That meant for the first time there would be a museum

⁵⁷ NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/2/462

⁵⁸ NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/2/461

⁵⁹ NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/2/328

⁶⁰ D. H. Strutt, 'The part played by cultural history museums as a source of local history', *SALIB*, vol.11, no. 6, 1975, p.234. Also see the Old court House Files: 545.4; 545.617; 545.612: NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/3/601 and NAR, 3/DBN/1/3/14/1/1.

⁶¹ File 545.612.

dedicated to the struggle for survival by groups whose history and activities had been degraded and pushed to 'the dust bin' of social memory, and not worth being displayed to the public.

While museums in Durban mushroomed, a similar situation presented itself in Pietermaritzburg. It is vital to note that these museums have been different to those of Durban. While Durban Museum depended on the municipality for funds the Natal, Museum and the Voortrekker Museum in Pietermaritzburg were affiliated to the national government and the received funds directly from the state. The idea of museums in Natal came as a desire to maintain up cultural standards in a small and very isolated community of English settlers in early Pietermaritzburg.⁶² The roots of the Natal Museum are in the local literary society, the 'Natal Society' which was inaugurated in Pietermaritzburg in May 1851. Its purpose was of promoting general study.⁶³ A clause in the society's rule provided for a museum. From that time lectures on various subjects were occasionally delivered by messrs. H. Cloete, Russom, Johnson, and Madigam. In 1877 a Natural History Association was founded in connection with the Natal Society, but was short lived. Two years later it was resolved by the Council of the Natal Society that a collection of specimens should be formed with a view of founding a museum. The principal movers of this suggestion were Sir Henry Bale, Major Furse and Mr. F. J. Spence. The first contribution consisted of small collection of snakes presented by Mr. James Perrin, and then followed such objects as 'kaffir curies, shells, a few stuffed birds and small animals'. These were exhibited in extensive glass cases arranged in the public reading room of the society. Mr J. F.

⁶² *The Natal Witness*, 2/12/1994.

⁶³ CSO/779/1880/4471.

Quekett was appointed a curator, and assistance in arrangement of some of the collections was rendered by voluntary helpers.

In 1887 the Natal government sent a collection of about one hundred stuffed specimens of typical South African birds and mammals to the Colonial and Indian exhibition in London. After the exhibition was closed these specimens were presented to the Natal Society by the exhibition commission.

With the continued acquisition of new specimen, available space in the reading room of the library became too small and it became difficult, if not impossible, to continue functioning under those conditions. As a result in 1891 a room was rented in the immediate vicinity of the library for the temporary reception of these specimens. The Council of the Natal Society now resolved to provide increased accommodation for the collections. In 1894 a museum hall was built next to the present premises of the Society's library at a cost of eight hundred pounds. Gradually this museum hall was filled, consequently after six years little accommodation for new specimens remained. It was thereafter felt that Natal was worthy of a larger and a better-equipped institution. It was, however, realized by the Natal Society that a museum, to be of educational value, would require funds beyond those at their disposal, and that the institution could only be successfully worked as a government department. Then the Natal Society approached the government with a view to hand over the whole collection if suitable accommodation could be made available for them. After due deliberations the government decided to establish a museum department and thus the Natal Museum was finally born as a government museum and was opened on 30 November 1904 with Dr. Ernest Warren as the director. Dr. Warren served as director of the Natal museum from

1904 until 1935. He is of importance in understanding why the museum took particular stances during those years.

Warren was born in Canterbury, Kent, on 18 August 1871, and educated at the South Eastern College in Kent, at Bristol University College, and finally at University College, London.⁶⁴ In 1894 he graduated with a First Class Honours in Zoology, taking first place in the University and thus winning a scholarship. He was appointed a demonstrator in Zoology and five years later after gaining the degree of Doctor of Science and being elected a Fellow of University College, he was made assistant lecturer and museum curator.⁶⁵ In 1900, at the early age of twenty-nine years, he became assistant professor of Zoology. His appointment as a director of the Natal Museum dates from 1 February 1903 and he arrived in Natal in April 1903. His intentions for the museum was that it should serve not only the educational needs of the general public, but also those of the University of Natal. As a zoologist his collections were primarily animals but he did not overlook ethnography. Warren was determined to make a museum more scientific, however he expanded the ethnographic collections and from under his directorship a large section on African races was extensively collected. Although his scientific approach was criticized he launched into research, public education and further collecting. This was so successful that the museum had to be enlarged in 1912. He retired in 1935 having built up a remarkable internationally known museum.⁶⁶ The question of whether this collection was ideological orientated is discussed at length in the next chapters. Of course these early exhibits were influenced by certain stereotypes. For example in 1907 an exhibition was opened which displayed

⁶⁴ S. F. Bush. 'Ernest Warren: Director of Natal Museum 1903-1935. An appreciation', *Annals of the Natal Museum*, Vol. x, part 1 1941, p. 1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.2

series of photographs illustrating the habits and customs of the Zulu. These included subjects of a 'typical Zulu warrior' Royal and ordinary wardress. Perhaps one might question the continuous use of the term 'warrior' when discussing or referring to African societies.

The museum underwent a significant transformation from 1953. There were improvements in finance and staff. There were good reports and state funding soared.⁶⁷ The museum grew and flourished with additions to the building housing new display halls. The education department was established (see chapter five) and European cultural material was collected at the time of museum's 75th anniversary in 1979. Further progress was made in the 1980s with the elimination of design flaws and the establishment of sections on dinosaurs, archaeology, geology, conservation and African ethnology.

The history of the Natal Museum is fascinating when one look at the prestige it acquired as a national museum while museums outside major cities experienced severe cut in subsidies from the government. Although the Natal Museum enjoyed recognition from the government by the end of the Second World War in 1945, the museum had already reached a desperate position as regards to salaries and grant-in-aids which remained almost unchanged for a decade.⁶⁸ In 1949 national museums, including the Natal Museum, were transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Education, Arts and Science. ^{This} ~~The~~ marked the end of their golden age and from then on they would start enduring the same financial cut-downs as other museums during the

⁶⁶ *The Natal Witness*, 1994

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Natal Museum Annual Reports, 1968-69

1920s. Larger state aided institutions (including natural history museums, art galleries, libraries, etc mostly located in four cities) were in competition for money with universities and technical colleges.⁶⁹ In 1967 the Department of Education, Arts and Science was split and the declared cultural institutions were now transferred to the Department of Cultural Affairs. It is pivotal to note that each and every transfer that took place it had its implications to the museum itself.

In conclusion looking at a museum's definition, it is now 210 years since the first museum was discovered. Their meanings and definitions have changed from concentrating on few individuals of high prestige to include ordinary people on the street. They have change from being only educational institutions to include aspects of ethnography and most importantly have been seen as tourist destinations (see chapter four).

Virtually all museums are organized around collections of art, material culture or specimens of nature. They share the goal of acquiring and conserving their collections and of interpreting and exhibiting this human and natural heritage to the public audiences. They are expected to care for and preserve their collections as a public trust for future generations. Museums are normally invested with a mission to serve the public, and this mission is educational, aesthetic, scientific, or historical. Museums serve a wider purpose than that of a storehouse; they have become recreational and educational facilities for the public as a whole, and a centre for collaborative research studies. Thus, the museum is a centre for understanding and thinking about the past, present and future.

⁶⁹ Natal Museum annual reports, 1969-1970.

CHAPTER TWO

History and Ideology: The making of identities in KwaZulu-Natal museums, c. 1920s-1970s

Introduction

This chapter's primary concern is to examine how museums are products of historical and political manifestations and it explores how museums, during the decades 1920s to 1970s, functioned to perpetuate stereotypes and ideologies. This was due to their relationship with the historical and historiographical of the time. Chubb asserted that:

man's knowledge of himself and his world is based on a combination of the past and the present. In order to learn about the past, we depend on the study of objects which have been preserved.¹

There is a mutual relationship between local history museums and the history that is being written, academic history as well as popular history. It has been outlined by Saunders that man has always had some sense of history, and past events were remembered, and information about such events was passed down to the next generation.² Examining historical studies from the 1920s to 1950s, it is clear that the kind of history that was prevalent inspired or influenced the nature of exhibitions in the museums of Natal.

¹ E. C. Chubb, 1941.

History and its discourse in local history museums.

Tosh has rightly argued that our sense of personal identity demands roots in the past. Our sense of what is practicable in the future is informed by an awareness of what has happened or not happened in the past.³ Thus history becomes a collective memory, the storehouse of experience through which people develop a sense of their social identity and their future prospects. Political judgement is influenced by a sense of the past, whether we are deciding between the competing claims of political parties or assessing the feasibility of particular policies.⁴ This means that our particular understanding and the way we communicate with other groups within a society is predetermined by the way the 'other' has been constructed in the historical discourse.

Tosh argued that the pace of change does not render the past irrelevant, it merely shifts the perspective from which we weigh its influence and interpret its lessons. The point raised by Tosh that, unlike the individual's sense of his or her past which arises spontaneously, historical knowledge has to be produced, gives an indication that history is a product rather than a producer of humanity. Wright and Mazel in their study of the depiction of pre-colonial history in the museums of Natal and KwaZulu argued that history is not a set of facts about the past; it is rather, a set of ideas about the past held in the present. These ideas are based on evidence, whether in the form of recorded oral testimony, archaeological

² C. Saunders, *The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class*. David Philip, Cape Town, 1988, p.1.

³ J. Tosh, *The pursuit of history: Aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history*, 2nd ed. Longman. London. 1991, p.1.

remains, or written documents which survive from the past. In addition however they derive their much of their form from the set of socially conditioned ideas about the present which the producer, i. e. the historian and the public, carries in his or her mind.⁵ Wright and Mazel further argued that as a social product, history is largely shaped by the nature of political struggles in the present. History is always a facet of the beliefs and assumptions of contending groups in the society to which the historian belongs.⁶ Wright and Mazel's justification was that this is because historians' ways of knowing the past are inevitably shaped by the social milieu in which they operates. At another level, Wright and Mazel argue, that control is itself important for groups seeking to impose their domination on, or avoid domination by others. Thus, history functions to legitimize, or challenge political practices and social relationships in the present by appealing to precedent. It is therefore always a site of struggle and contestation between dominant and dominated groups, producers of history are always producers of ideas that are political in their import.⁷ In his presidential address to South African Historical Society (SAHS) conference in Cape Town in 1999 Arnold Temu asserted that:

The celebration of a past in the singular and the suppression of an alternative history in the name of nation-building opened the door for the emergence of the single party or state and the politicization of ethnic identities in the post colonial era. If there is an original sin that professional historians committed in this

⁴ Ibid., p.2.

⁵ J. Wright and A. Mazel, 'Bastions of ideology: The depiction of pre-colonial history in the museums of Natal and KwaZulu. South African Museums Bulletin (SAMAB), vol.17, no.8. 1987. pp.301-310.

⁶ Ibid., p.301.

⁷ Ibid.

early period, it is simply the sin of not telling; of lies, and distortion about the collective history and memory.⁸

This argument support the point raised by Wright and Mazel that history is not free from political influences and subjectivity. Thus history is a battleground, and history is also a record of human achievements in the past. It is the past which becomes the source of exhibitions in museums.

Local history museums reflect the prevailing historical discourse and historical activities and in that way they become part of history. Local history museums are about meanings of the past and how they are interpreted by practicing professionals and recorded as history. Thus museums have a mutual relationship with history and its presentation. Museums also reflect the processes of history as they themselves are part of history. As such, museums can tell us much about the values and ideologies held in a society at any given time as they can tell us about the past.⁹ Davidson argues that museums like memory mediate the past, present and the future.¹⁰ By virtue of their responsibility they serve to restore the historical knowledge. As history is about events, there is always tension between differing groups, overlapping constituencies, and opposing interpretations of events. Thus, museums have various interpretations of historical events and this makes museums vulnerable to subjectivity and manipulation by powerful groups within a society.

⁸ A. Temu, 'Not Telling: African history at the end of the millennium', *South African Historical Journal (SAHJ)*, vol.22, 2000, p. 2-10.

⁹ C. Levitz, The politics, ideology and social practices of South African National Science and Technology Museums. Unpublished Masters thesis, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Witwatersrand, 1995, p.1

¹⁰ P. Davidson, 'Museums and the reshaping of memory'. in S.Nuttal and C. Coetzee. *Negotiating the past: The making of memory in South Africa*, Cape Town, 1998, p. 145-159.

Power and ideology in Natal local history museums

Davidson argues that museums give a material form to authorized version of the past, which in time become institutionalized as public memory. In this way, museums anchor the official version of memory. Ideas and historical interpretation that are held by powerful groups become institutionalized in museums. Although museum presentations, i.e. exhibitions, are always subjectively shaped, they are widely associated with authenticity and objectivity.¹¹ Nevertheless, museums have become privileged institutions that validate and affirm certain forms of interpretations, in most cases at the detriment of other groups.

The kind of history that Natal museums projected between the 1920s and 1970s was influenced by white supremacist ideas and their exhibitions were segregative in nature. Simultaneously this was also the nature of historiography that dominated these decades.¹² In addition, curators who were involved in the museum making did not have authority to challenge the dominant ideology. In some instances, curators themselves continued carrying out ideological assumptions and ensured that museums propagated certain stereotypes. Local history museums played an important role in providing 'secular temples' where dominant groups' or official version of the past was symbolized in a

¹¹ Ibid, p.146.

¹² K. Smith, *The changing past: Trends in South African Historical writing*, Southern Book, Johannesburg, 1988. ch.3 and also C. Saunders, *The Making*.

standardized and simplified way in the form of displays and exhibitions intended for popular consumption.¹³

Louis Althusser, a Marxist, argues that no class can hold power for any length of time simply by the use of force. Ideological control provides a far more effective means of maintaining dominant rule. For Althusser, if members of the subjected group accept their position as normal, natural and inevitable, and fail to realize the true nature of their situation, then they will be unlikely to challenge the ruling dominance. Physical force is an inefficient means of control compared to winning over hearts and minds. The maintenance of dominant rule depends on the reproduction of ruling ideology. Althusser argues that the reproduction of dominant ideology also needs the reproduction of submission to the ruling class ideology. This submission is reproduced through what he calls the 'Ideological State Apparatus' which he argues includes religion and museums. The Ideological State Apparatus transmits ruling ideology thereby creating a false class-consciousness which largely maintains those who are ruled in their subordinate position. As Althusser has seen the church as playing a major role of being the Ideological State Apparatus in the pre-capitalist society, museums likewise play such role in the postmodern societies. As Wright and Mazel have argued, the museum is not, and cannot be, what museum personnel often claim it to be, an ideologically neutral institution whose purpose is simply exhibiting.

¹³ J. Wright and A. Mazel, 'Controlling the past in the museums of Natal and KwaZulu', *Critical Arts*, vol.5, no.3, 1991, p.60.

From the 1920s to the late 1970s museums in South Africa existed only in the four provinces. Natal was no exception.¹⁴ It was not until the early 1980s when museums were established in the former homeland of KwaZulu. When the museums were established in Natal, as noted in the previous chapter, they focused initially was on objects of science and exhibitions of local history interest were conceived as peripheral and unworthy to be displayed. As Foucault has argued that knowledge is linked to power.¹⁵ This became visible in local history museums of Natal (and later KwaZulu) when the Durban Museum begun its collection of artifacts of historical nature. These exhibitions were Eurocentric and adopted a narrow perspective when viewing African histories. Although William Campbell had already collected artifacts on African societies it was not until the establishment of the Killie Campbell Museums when a need to display them was seen.

Prior to 1920, artifacts of historical interest had already been collected. In 1916 the Durban Museum, for example, purchased a collection of photographs of historical interest. The photographs were of Durban and other parts of Zululand and Natal, including Rorkes Drift and Isandlwana taken immediately after the battles in 1879.¹⁶ Deducing from the then historiographical trend, it is clear that those photographs were serving a particular ideological aim, that of projecting

¹⁴ This does not mean that there were other museums in South Africa. Similar museums had already been established in various cities of the country, e.g. Cape Town, Bloemfontein, Transvaal, and Port Elizabeth.

¹⁵ P. Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader: An introduction to foucault's thought*, Penguin Books, England, 1984, p. 239-256.

¹⁶ Minutes if the town clerk, 3 October 1916. 3/DBN/4/1/2/462.

how 'barbarous the 'native' were in resisting civilization.'¹⁷ The kind of history exhibited featured the history of whites in Natal. In 1917 the signal gun which was obtained from George Cato by Mr. P. E. G. Mitcheson was handed in Durban Museum. When receiving it Chubb, who's short biography has been dealt with in previous chapter, commented that:

This is a very interesting relic of the early days of Durban and I shall be pleased to receive it for exhibition amongst similar articles of local historical interest.¹⁸

If Chubb knew that there were certain artifacts which were interesting, then the question is which artifacts were not interesting and did not deserve to be exhibited.

In the case of Durban Museums, for example, the question of romanticizing white history started to gain momentum in the early stages of its collection of historical artifacts. On the 11th October 1917, after the death of William Smith Churchill in England, his collection of English, Roman and Saxon coins were send to Durban Museum for custody. There were labeled 'W. S. Churchill Collection'. The reasons for this bequest are not clear in the archival documents. Although this was arranged before 1917, it was not displayed due to the disturbances caused by the First World War.

In the previous chapter the collection of artifacts of historical interest is outlined in Natal museums but it is viewed in a developmental approach, not ideologically. The South African National Society's celebration of the 1824

¹⁷ Ibid.

white centenary became the basis for the collection of artifacts of local history in the early 1920s. The purpose was to preserve records of historic or artistic nature including pamphlets, documents, photographs, furniture, paintings or other relating to early Durban.¹⁹ These artifacts were to be displayed in an exhibition which was named the 'Old Durban Room'. In a Durban Museum booklet it is stated that:

This room is devoted to the history of Durban. It was in 1824 that the first European settlers came to Natal and made their homes at the site of the present Durban.²⁰

As early as 1921 Chubb reported that the Old Durban Room was proving to be of great interest especially to the older inhabitants and was hoped that it will prove equally interesting to the then rising generation and serve to engender a spirit of civic pride in them.²¹ This was attributed to the untiring work of the South African National Society. Amongst the exhibitions displayed in the Old Durban Room was a portrait of Henry Fynn who with F. G. Farewell and J. S. King were the leaders of the 'original heroic little band of pioneers.'²² The exhibition had ideological purposes which could be seen when its aim is scrutinized. The exhibition's aim was to coincide with the 1824 Centenary thus emphasizing white settlement in Natal. It is vital to note that by that time there

¹⁸ Letter by Chubb to the town clerk, 29 January 1917, NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/2/462.

¹⁹ Minutes of Town Clerk, May 1920, NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/2/462.

²⁰ 3/DBN/4/1/3/601.

²¹ Report of the curator for the month of September 1921, NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/2/462.

²² There is a considerable debate about who these individuals were. Although they have been regarded as heroic pioneers, they may have been crooked businessmen. Other historians have regarded them as as probanly looking for a 'a fast buck' at the very last, see J. Pridmore 'Henry Francis Fynn: An assessment of his career and an analysis of written and visual portrays of His role in the History of the Natal Region' (unpublished PhD, University of Natal, 1996); NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/3/601.

was nothing which registered Africans²³ existence prior to the white settlement. Therefore as Merriman argues, museums were transmitting specialized messages. He further asserts that museums transmit ruling ideologies which ensures that certain atrocities are overlooked while romanticizing the histories of rulers and colonial warfare.²⁴

In South African historiography during the 1930s, aspects of settler history prevailed.²⁵ This was because the Great Trek Centenary was to be commemorated in 1938. Thus, there was a great demand for histories and artifacts which justified Afrikaner nationhood and settlement in Natal. Museums therefore, became more conscious of their role and contribution in history. While the Centenary celebrations and the inauguration of the Voortrekker monument in 1939 took place in Pretoria, in Natal aspects of the Voortrekker history gained momentum.²⁶ In a monthly report Chubb asserted that the museums had contributed in the remembrance of the spirits of those who died in 1838 conflict by putting temporary displays which focused on the Voortrekker history. While artifacts of historical nature were not prominent in the Natal Museum, it felt obliged to mount a temporary exhibition on the 1838 settlers' victory.²⁷

²³ I use the term to refer to black indigenous people of Africa. I am aware of the controversy and the debate concerning the term 'African'.

²⁴ N. Merriman. *Beyond the glass case: The past, heritage and the public in Britain*, Leicester University press, London, 1991, p. 81.

²⁵ See K. Smith, *The changing past*, p.70.

²⁶ See NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/3/601 and PM/1939/2732.

²⁷ Natal Museum annual reports, 1937-38, 1938-39.

Museums played an instrumental role in fostering myths on whites' land ownership. This idea of justifying whites' land ownership is also vividly articulated at the Fort Durnford Museum, for example, where an exhibition on 'early settlers' shows that Africans and whites came at approximately the same time in South Africa.²⁸ It is important to assert that appraisal policies of the Natal and KwaZulu museums were Eurocentric and draw upon to a colonial history of Natal and Zululand as their reference framework. Maylam reminds us that the decade marked rapid urbanization, yet the role of Africans was negated and perceived as peripheral in museums. Nevertheless, during the 1930s a group white liberals who believed in the inclusive perspective advocated for African artifacts to be displayed in museums.²⁹

Also during the late 1930s although Africans started to be exhibited in the Old Durban Room they were exhibited in a limited manner and displayed only for ethnographic purposes. In a monthly report of September Chubb wrote:

The exhibits devoted to the manner and customs of the Zulu race were furnished with 27 printed informative labels under the following headings: origins of the Zulus, kinship and social organization, status of wives, etc. These printed labels, together with the objects, models and photographic illustrations that comprise the exhibition serve to enable visitors to readily acquire a general knowledge of habits, customs and mode of life of this interesting native tribe living in proximity to us.³⁰

It is apparent that the main aim of exhibiting blacks was to outline their origins and history and show how unchanging and barbaric they were in comparison to the 'civilized' white people. The decade of the 1930s witnessed vigorous

²⁸ This is what the research observed from the Fort Durnford Museum, in Estcourt.

²⁹ Letter from William Campbell to Town Clerk dated 29/07/1937, NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/3/601.

attempts by the Natal museums to improve their displays on white seniority and heroism. For example in 1939 a replica of Bartholomew Diaz cross, obtained from the Department of Works, was placed on exhibition in the Old Durban Room.³¹ It is vital to note that although many relics and artifacts were added to the Old Durban Room, what remained unchanging was its representativity and exclusiveness of important aspects of Africans' history. The history that these museums produced and (re)presented was from a whites' view point.

The decade of the 1940s witnessed a new scenario in museums. This was because of rapid industrialization that drew an enormous number of Africans to the city thus marking the era of profound changes. It is noted by Ken Smith that during this decade a major focus of attention among liberals was the black welfare.³² Despite vigorous attempts by liberals to persuade the Durban Museum to include African displays, the Durban Museum did not change its exclusive policy of displaying. During the 1940s despite the failure of their attempts, these liberals were agitating for the establishment of the Native Museum emerged. Among the prime movers for the establishment of such an institution was Mr. W. A. Campbell. This museum was going to be named 'Mashu' after his late father, Sir Marshall Campbell.³³ After many deliberations John McIntyre, the then town clerk commented favorably about the Native Museum. It did not

³⁰ Monthly Report of October 1939, Chubb.3/DBN/4/1/3/601.

³¹ Monthly Report of October 1940, Chubb. NAR. 3/DBN/4/1/3/601.

³² K. Smith, *The changing past*, p. 103.

³³ See a letter to the town clerk by W. A. Campbell dated 2 May 1944; Memorandum for the Native Administration committee, dated 23 July 1945; Letter to the town clerk by W. A. Campbell, 22 November 1944; and Memorandum by John McINTYRE, town clerk, dated 2 February 1945. DAR, 3/DBN/4/1/3/607.

materialize and the reasons are not clear in the archival documents. One might speculate that the failure of the establishment of the museum could be attributed to the Second World War which was on its peak during the first half of the 1940s or lack of support and popularity.

It is vital to note that while the Natal museums were expanding in size, the nature of their focus did not change. The year 1942, for example, marked the Dick King Centenary.³⁴ A special temporary display was made up of maps, documents and illustrations. The Albany Museum lent a rare lithograph of the city of Port Elizabeth, where Dick King stayed in 1842 and a house which King is believed to have stayed on his arrival. The Natal Land Colonialization Company lent two letters bearing King's signature. The sole purpose of exhibiting the artifacts was ideological, that of registering whites' superiority and settlement in Natal.

The post World War Two era was characterized by political turbulence. The victory of the National Party in 1948 marked the institutionalization of apartheid. By the early 1950s, artifacts of historical interest increased within the science museums. This became the case both in the Durban Museum and the Natal Museum. It is important to note that although the Natal Museum had already started to collect artifacts of historical nature this was done on a limited scale because of its partnership with the Science Department of the University of

Natal, Pietermaritzburg. In Durban, on the other hand, artifacts of historical interests flourished. As it has been noted in the previous chapter, as historical collections grew apace, it became apparent that the Old Durban Room could not be accommodated within the Durban Museum and thus there was a great need for a new building. Although the main idea was to relieve the Durban Museum, which was focussing on science, the ideological assumption was that historical artifacts would play a role in infusing and indoctrinating racial stereotypes.³⁵ Therefore it was believed that if the artifacts were within science museums, their value and exposure might have been overshadowed by the science exhibitions. Vital to note is that although history was not a forgotten phenomenon prior to the 1950s it was not given much exposure in the previous decades. During the 1950s artifacts of a historical nature became more popular to museum curators and trustees and the perspective in which they were viewed shifted from the margins to the centre. When it became clear that the Old Durban Room was not big enough to house collections of local history, a new building had to be found. From a political point of view one might argue that the expansion of local historical artifacts and gaining of a popular focus could be attributed to the political strategies of the National Party regime which sought to establish its dominance and assert its hegemony. After one year in power the National Party (NP) proved to have a much more sophisticated idea about the future of museums. The transfer of museums from the Department of the Interior to the

King's role in 1842 is very important and it has its place in the history of Natal. He rode a horse with Ndongeni ka Xongo to Grahamstown to call for help to relieve the besieged English men in what became known as the battle of Congela.

³⁵ Minutes of the 'Old House' advisory committee. 7 May 1953, NAR, 3/DBN/1/3/14/1/1.

Department of Education, Arts and Science meant that they wanted to broaden the role of museums particularly the role of indoctrination. The increment of grand-in-aids under the new department meant the NP wanted to strengthen the role of museums.

The year 1954 was a centenary of the formation of the Borough of Durban. The intended museum was thought of as providing significant material for the celebrations and also of being a historical reference to the white population and as an acknowledgement of Durban's Borough. The museum was thus supposed to predate the centenary celebrations. Notable is that whenever there was something of historical significance for whites, museums were used to become useful resources. This could be traced back to the early 1920s, as has been mentioned earlier. The development of artifacts of local history interest was a set agenda, coinciding with the 1924 centenary.

The opening of the Old House Museum came to fruition in 1953, a few months before the centenary celebrations. The director of the Durban Museum argued:

The Old House museum was intended to be part of a much larger scheme which the council [Durban Museum Council] was to undertake in due course. The present building [referring to the building which was designated to house the Old House Museum] should house a Settlers or Folk Museum.³⁶

When the museum was opened in 1953 the emphasis was on how it would be a useful resource for the then forthcoming centenary. It was declared a national

³⁶ Minutes of Old House advisory committee. meeting held on the 7th May 1953, NAR, 3/DBN/1/3/14/1/1.

monument in 1975.³⁷ It is apparent, in the minutes of the Old House Advisory Committee that:

Miss Campbell made references to the forthcoming centenary celebrations of the city of Durban and suggested that representations be made to the Durban centenary celebrations Executive Committee requesting a grant towards the cost of the construction of part of the larger scheme envisaged for the Old House.³⁸

Miss Campbell referred to above is Killie Campbell who by that time had collected a large quantity of Africana artifacts and it appears that she played an instrumental role in the establishment of the Old House Museum. The question of a museum playing a role in the centenary celebrations was not a coincidence but well orchestrated to the extent that even grants were requested, by the director of the museum from the Borough as well as the Executive Committee of the centenary celebrations. It is not clear whether these grants were received or not. Nevertheless, the museums played an instrumental contribution toward the centenary celebrations. This is evident in Daphne Strutt's account when she asserted that:

The fact that 1954 was a centenary of the formation of the Borough of Durban was fortuitous, for commercial firms and pioneer families alike were searching for information for celebration projects and made their way to the Old House Museum as a sort of desperate last resort and were surprised to find that quite often help could be given.³⁹

It is clear that this newly established museum was to play a significant role in enforcing an ideological view of whites' early settlement in Natal.

³⁷ See Government Gazette, November, 1975, p.22.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ D. H. Strutt. 'The part played by Cultural History Museums as a source of local history', in SAMAB, vol.11, no.6, 1975, p.234.

The manner in which museums can be subjected to manipulation, as happened in the case of Old Durban Room, is also evident in Bennett's argument. She articulates that the museum presents a social history of the country or a region in which they are located. Thus the making of the past as it is materially embodied in museums is inescapably the product of the present which organizes and maintains it.⁴⁰

It should not be forgotten that artifacts which were to be displayed in the Old House Museum were from the Old Durban Room which became too small to be a home of this collection. There were certain additions which were made but it is not clear from the archival documents what was added. Dephney Strutt who served as a curator of the Old House Museum from 1953 until 1983 gave an account of what was in the museum from its establishment. She asserted that:

In 1953 the content of the Old House Museum consisted of a collection of local historical material, mainly Durbaniana, and an equal-sized collection of Natal pioneer personalia, pictures, period costume and family records.⁴¹

Archival documents do not provide extensive information about the content of the Old House Museum. Museum annual reports, where Strutt play a leading role as an editor and a news reporter, are also instrumental, however these can be misleading since Strutt herself might have been influenced by a particular ideology.

⁴⁰ T. Bennett, 'Museum and people'. in R. Lumley (ed.), The museum time machine, p. 118.

⁴¹ D. H. Strutt, p. 234.

Although the Old House Museum was intended to be a local history institution it became a battle ground and played a pivotal role in neglecting the history of Africans and asserted certain stereotypes. The annual report reveal that among the donations to the Old House Museum was the facsimile of the treaty between Piet Retief and Dingane in 1838,⁴² with other interesting books, pictures and documents, presented by Richard Currie; documents, books and photographs, including the first minutes book relating to the Natal Harbour Board.⁴³ The question of depicting the Retief-Dingane treaty was to register the myth that the whites' ownership of land was legitimate. From the mid-1950s it is not clear what exhibitions were mounted because there is dearth from records of the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s in either the state archives or museums themselves.

The decade of the 1960s witnessed the further expansion of artifacts in museums of Natal. In the case of the Natal Museum, artifacts of local historical interest grew apace under the archaeology department (within the museum). In a lecture held at the Natal Museum Mr. A. E. Trollip, the administrator of Natal and a descendent of the 1820 settlers, said the great deeds and history-making events of the past which were glorified should be share by two great white sections of the population.⁴⁴

⁴² The treaty between Dingane and Reteif has been challenged by J. Naiddoo, *Tracking down historical myths*. A. D. Dontier publishers, Johannesburg, 1989.

⁴³ Durban Museum and Art Gallery Annual Report, 1954-1955.

⁴⁴ *Natal Witness*, 07/04/1960.

Although the decade of the 1960s witnessed the mushrooming of liberal Africanist history, museums remain rigid in depicting Africans as subjects of history. Museologists of this era acknowledged the pervasive idea of African history as timeless and static. Museum exhibitions often consisted of jumbled, meager and badly displayed collections of artifacts.⁴⁵ In the case of Durban, the Old House Museum became overcrowded and by the 1960s it was difficult to function at its premises. In 1965 Durban's Old Court House in Aliwal Street was renovated and adapted for use as a museum. It is in this building where a new home of the Old House Museum was found. This marked the birth of a new museum. The Old House was fitted and re-arranged as a Natal settler homestead and all historical material was moved there. It became the Local History Museum. The museum was opened to the public by the Administrator of Natal, Mr. Theo Gardener on the 24th of June 1966.⁴⁶

During its first year of existence the museum mounted exhibitions which did not differ from exhibition of the previous decade. The exhibitions on the 'Birth of Natal,' told the story of the 'discovery' of Natal and its history before settlement.⁴⁷ This exhibition referred to pre-colonial people as barbaric and uncivilized. An exhibition on 'From settlement to colony', covered the period from the arrival of the first voluntary settlers in 1824 to 1845 when Natal had

⁴⁵ J. Wright and A. Mazel. 'Controlling the past', p.63 and J. Wright and A. Mazel, 'Bastions of Ideology', 1987.

⁴⁶ Strutt. p. 234-237 and also see Durban Old Court House Museum file 545.612.

⁴⁷ Durban Museum and Art Gallery Annual Report, 1965-1966.

become a colony.⁴⁸ The experience of Africans and challenges whites encounter during their conquest of Natal and the relationship with the Zulu kings which deteriorated and degenerate to a conflict did not feature. And lastly the display '1849 to 1879' covered the period of the main influx of settlers to Natal, and a large portion of the collection housed in the Local History Museum related to the period mentioned above.⁴⁹ The Natal Museum mounted a temporary exhibition of the 1820 settler relics as a contribution to the 150th anniversary celebrations during September 1970.

During the early 1970s local history collections grew rapidly in history museums of Durban and the Natal Museum in Pietermaritzburg. In the case of the Local History Museum in Durban this was necessitated by the 150th anniversary celebrations of the arrival of Durban's first settlers. The city's contribution to the celebration was the arrangement of an exhibition of archival and historical material in the Local History Museum. This exhibition was a highlight of the settlers' activities in Natal, Durban in particular.⁵⁰ In the opening of the exhibition, Mrs. Shepstone, represented the Shepstone family, made a speech and provided some historical possessions of the Shepstone family for display. These were exhibited in the museum and their aim was to register the rightfulness of white occupation of Natal.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Durban Museum and Art Gallery Annual Report. 1973-1974.

⁵¹ Natal Museum Annual Reports. 1969-1970.

During the decade of 1970s a new trend, which was trying to reform the past inequalities with regards to ethnographic displays, gained momentum in global museology. In 1972, participants at the meeting of International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Santiago, Chile, argued that museums should become integral part of societies around them. Furthermore it was agreed that indigenous cultures shall be given equal status.⁵² While global museology introduced new trends, Natal museums did not consider those policies passed by international bodies as important.⁵³ They continued to consider only the histories of whites as vital. In 1973, for example, as part of the festivities to celebrate the 150th year of white settlement in Natal, the Natal Numismatic Society, together with the Philatelic Society, staged an exhibition at the Natal Museum. The exhibition included military medals relating to Natal units and the Zulu Rebellion of Natal; token icons of Natal; unusual items from Ceylon; medical medallions, badges, etc relating to the coat of arms of Natal prior to the Union of South Africa.⁵⁴

It is apparent in Wright and Mazel's argument that the establishment of the Natal Provincial Museum Service in 1973 changed the existing situation in Natal museums and marked the beginning of profound changes in the poetics of exhibiting. Ostensibly, it was set up to provide financial and technical aid to existing local museums and establish new ones, and co-ordinate administration and policy making. Displays prior to the formation of the Museum Service often

⁵² For more discussion on this see. 'Museums and Cultural Diversity: Draft ICOM policy statement.' <http://www.icom.org/devirsty.html>

⁵³ This is evident in the exhibitions that the museum mounted during the period under discussion. see Natal Museum annual reports. 1970-1978.

During the decade of 1970s a new trend, which was trying to reform the past inequalities with regards to ethnographic displays, gained momentum in global museology. In 1972, participants at the meeting of International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Santiago, Chile, argued that museums should become integral part of societies around them. Furthermore it was agreed that indigenous cultures shall be given equal status.⁵² While global museology introduced new trends, Natal museums did not consider those policies passed by international bodies as important.⁵³ They continued to consider only the histories of whites as vital. In 1973, for example, as part of the festivities to celebrate the 150th year of white settlement in Natal, the Natal Numismatic Society, together with the Philatelic Society, staged an exhibition at the Natal Museum. The exhibition included military medals relating to Natal units and the Zulu Rebellion of Natal; token icons of Natal; unusual items from Ceylon; medical medallions, badges, etc relating to the coat of arms of Natal prior to the Union of South Africa.⁵⁴

It is apparent in Wright and Mazel's argument that the establishment of the Natal Provincial Museum Service in 1973 changed the existing situation in Natal museums and marked the beginning of profound changes in the poetics of exhibiting. Ostensibly, it was set up to provide financial and technical aid to existing local museums and establish new ones, and co-ordinate administration and policy making. Displays prior to the formation of the Museum Service often

⁵² For more discussion on this see, 'Museums and Cultural Diversity: Draft ICOM policy statement.' <http://www.icom.org/devirsty.html>

⁵³ This is evident in the exhibitions that the museum mounted during the period under discussion. see Natal Museum annual reports. 1970-1978.

consisted of collections of colonial and ethnographic artifacts haphazardly organized and poorly displayed. By contrast, displays produced since its formation was technically more sophisticated. As a result the exhibition's messages come across much more clearly and efficiently.⁵⁵

In the Durban Museum and Art Gallery annual report of 1975 it is apparent that the centenary of the death of Thomas Baines, the famous artist and explorer, on the 8th May 1875, was remembered throughout South Africa. As Baines spent his last years of his life in Durban, and buried in West Street Cemetery. It was suggested by both Frank Bradlow, premier authority on Baines, and the South African National Society that the commemorative exhibition be held in Durban's Local History Museum.⁵⁶

Up to now the question of Indian and Coloured representation had not been mentioned. It should not be forgotten that the twentieth century witnessed major struggles by Indians who came to Natal from 1860 as indentured labourers. The Durban Local History Museums might have mounted an exhibition to commemorate their anniversary but due to the absence of some museum reports in the museum and the archives, this cannot be verified. This makes it impossible to deduce what was really happening during that decade especially since the year 1960 was an Indian centenary in Natal.

⁵⁴ Natal Museum annual reports, 1973-1974.

⁵⁵ J. Wright and A Mazel, 'Controlling the past', p. 70 and also see the annual report of the Natal Museum Service, 1974-1975.

⁵⁶ Durban Museum and Art Gallery Annual Report, 1974-1975.

Nevertheless, in 1970 a library and a museum were opened at the Gandhi Settlement in Phoenix, near Durban. This museum emerged to represent the underrepresented Indians and the main focus was on Gandhi and his policy of 'satyagraha' in Natal. This museum was destroyed during the political turbulence of the mid-1980s. Some of the remains of the artifacts which belonged to this museum are now in the custody of the Local History Museum.⁵⁷

It is interesting to note that since their establishment, the Natal Museum, the Old House Museum and the Local History Museum registered white settlement only and legitimated and justified whites' domination of Natal. This was done with the exhibitions which were made to celebrate centenaries of their arrivals and the death of stalwarts in the struggle for colonial domination.

The year 1979 marked a turning point in the museological discourse. For the first time an event which the museum would have not displayed in the 1920s⁵⁸ was mounted in an exhibition on the Anglo-Zulu war centenary. During the decade of the 1970s radical historians emerged, thus marking a new interpretation of Zulu history. Historians including Jeff Guy and John Wright became critical of the colonial views of the battle of Isandlwana.⁵⁹ The opening

⁵⁷ This museum does not exist now, but its photographs were taken by Mr. Chetty during the 1970s and they are of great significance in providing the content of the museum. The photographs are at the custody of Mr. Chetty, Documentation Centre, UDW.

⁵⁸ This is because the kind of historical analysis used by the 1920s was too Eurocentric and museums only concerned whites' activities in Natal.

⁵⁹ J. Wright, Beyond the washing of the spears, Reality, 1979 and J. Guy, The British invasion of Zululand: Some thoughts for the centenary year, Reality, 1979.

of this exhibition was performed by his worship the mayor of Durban, Councilor Haydn Bradfield, on 22 January 1979 and after the ceremony S. Bourquin, of the Natal Native Administration Board, spoke on various aspects of the Anglo-Zulu War.⁶⁰

During the last years of the 1970s museums started to change racial connotation that influenced their exhibitions. However, they persisted with the ideology which was based on white supremacy and biasness.

Material Culture and Museums of Colonial Heritage

Museums are about telling stories in a dramatic and lively way. The manner in which these stories are presented and viewed by museumgoers is influenced by subjectivity and relativism. Relativism states that all ideas arise out of a particular culture or subculture and assumes that all cultures and ideas have an equal value. According to this view the truth of an idea is not absolute but relative to the viewpoint of the culture of a person who holds them.⁶¹ Racist oppression and colonial conquest had been sustained by the belief that white culture was superior to other cultures. It is this kind of ideological assumption which influenced the nature of exhibitions during the decades prior to the 1980s. Thus it was against this background that the cultures of African, Coloureds and Indians were marginalised and regarded as belonging to the dustbin of history.

⁶⁰ Durban Museum and Art Gallery Annual Report, 1978-1979.

⁶¹ G. Kavanagh (ed.), *Making histories in museum*. Leicester university press, England. 1996. p.43. also see S. Nuttal and C Michael. *Senses of culture: South African culture studies*, Oxford, 2000.

As a result their appearance in museum display became uneven. By claiming that all cultures are equal, relativism undermines this chauvinism. No culture, it assert, is superior to another. Buckley argues that:

In the museum world, relativism justifies the bread and circuses of commerce. There has been a growth of parks and displays centres, and the ethos of these institutions has spread into more sober mainstream museums. The prime aim of such bodies is commercial: the concern to raise revenue. And to this end, there is a new emphasis on providing not only for the comfort and entertainment of the public, but also a version of history that people want to see.⁶²

It is insufficient to argue that truth is merely the view that one's own social group happens to hold. It is also absurd to say that all ideas generated by cultures are equally valid or true. A better perspective is a dialectical one, in which we learn what the world looks like from other perspectives. Thus we can hope that all our versions can be superseded. Such a view respects the truth while not claiming that any one version is complete.⁶³ It is possible to present a history or culture in museum, which represent the truth and moves forward in search for it. As Beckley has pointed out, the idea of commercialization which does not care what it tell its public, works to accumulate wealth. It is true that museums can hardly sustain themselves without financial support from the state or other agencies but that does not necessarily mean that museums should divert from their mainstream purpose of displaying relevant cultural history free of manipulation and bias.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Winters Y. Killie Capmbell Museum. (Curator). 08 July 1999. Also W. Haviland, *Cultural Anthropology*, is a good example.

Culture is the man-made part of human environment. The idea of culture arises from observation that what human beings do and what they refrain from is, in part, a consequence of being brought up in one group as opposed to other.⁶⁴ People have a social heredity as well as a biological heredity. Members of the human species are socialized in the family and their education, formal and informal, to behave in ways that are conventional and fixed by traditions. Culture is learned rather than transmitted. Obviously culture is knowledge of traditions that are transmitted from one generation to another during the process of inculturation and socialization. There are two interrelated types of culture, namely, general culture and a unique culture. General culture is a phenomenon which is universal in human life while unique culture refers to a particular variety of cultural phenomenon. General culture is one of the main concepts that help us to understand similarities and differences in human conduct. When taking into account cultural diversity that is apparent in KwaZulu-Natal, it becomes difficult to state that a particular culture should be given preference or neglected. As a result a situation arises whereby certain cultures are prioritized at the detriment of others could be the end product. This has been the pervasive idea of understanding culture which asserted that Africans' cultures are static and timeless as it is seen in exhibitions which focused on the cultural aspects of the Zulu and other Africans in the continent in Natal.⁶⁵

⁶⁴See W. D. Hasley, Collier's encyclopaedia, vol.7 Britain, 1965.

⁶⁵ This became apparent in the interviews that I conducted with practicing museologists.

There is a relationship between a museum, history and culture. One can argue that this is because museums constitute public history. During the nineteenth and twentieth- centuries historians regarded primary documents as the only sources of historical data. Corsane asserted that

In the dominant tradition of history which grew out, historians using documents produced nationalistic histories which they believed could be 'factual' and correspond exactly with reality...In this historiographical tradition material culture was neglected as a source and historians were happy to leave material culture to archaeologists.⁶⁶

From the mid-twentieth century historians have begun to voice concerns about the limitations of the historical approach and explore new options. They began to consider material culture as worthy to be studied. Those historians who have become involved in material culture studies have found that objects are important sources of evidence which can provide useful information for the study of social history especially when researching the past life of those cultural and groups that traditionally did not record their activities in written form.⁶⁷ This has proved successfully as Winters notes that:

It is vital for the museum to store all cultural artifacts because out of these cultural artifacts we can draw conclusions about how people lived, dressed and how they practiced their rituals. We have store these cultural artifacts (material culture) since the time of Killies⁶⁸ and researchers are always coming for these artifacts.⁶⁹

The changes that had taken place in the history discipline had influenced the museums' exhibitions. Instead of focusing only on political aspects, from the late

⁶⁶ G. Corsane, 'Material culture a neglected source of historical evidence using an artifacts study to access material culture', (paper presentation, Future of the past: The production of history in a changing South Africa. University of Western Cape, 10-12 July 1996), p.3.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p5

⁶⁸ This refers to the time when Dr. Kille Campbell embarked on the collection of African artifacts during the 1930s up to he death in the 1960s.

⁶⁹ Winters Y. Killie Campbell Museum.

1970s and early 1980s museums began to use material culture as a source and a focus of their displays. This is because by the early 1980s, which the next chapter explores, museums started to mushroom in the former KwaZulu homeland and they focused entirely on the Zulu culture and history.

In conclusion this chapter has pointed out that museums are a product of politics and how race, power relations and political ramifications can all be manifested and visible in exhibitions which display cultural discourse. Thus, museums mirror the activities of those who wield power. In Natal from the 1920 to the late 1970s museums served to promote the aspirations of the ruling ideologies and overlooked the role of Indians, Coloureds and Africans as the prime movers and shapers of their history. They are depicted as victims of circumstances who remain uncivilized even when the 'civilized nations' brought civilization to them.

CHAPTER THREE

The making of new identities in KwaZulu-Natal museums, c.1980s-1990s.

Introduction

Museums always involve the cultural, social, and political business of negotiations and value judgements and they always have cultural, social and political implications. The editor of the South African Museums Association Bulletin (SAMAB) asserted:

Most of South Africa's people were marginalised by museums, though never overtly or deliberately excluded. The buildings are often formidable and intimidating, the exhibitions are inaccessible. The neglected cultures of blacks, Coloured and Indian South Africans need serious attention, need to be documented, interpreted and presented in our museums.¹

This comment was a reflection on the politics of exhibiting in South African museums generally and KwaZulu-Natal in particular. This kind of poetics and politics of exhibiting influenced the nature of exhibition during the pre democratic era in South Africa. The decade of the 1980s marked the beginning of a 'new museology' in the museum discourse in South Africa. Prior to the 1980s museums tended to be conservative in their displays and see themselves as only concerned about the activities of the powerful groups. The new museology focused on the deeds of those who have not been prominent in museums. This was brought about by a number of factors which could be attributed to the nature of political upheavals that overwhelmed KwaZulu and Natal. It is also essential to point out that it was not until this decade when museums mushroomed in the KwaZulu homeland which set up in the mid-1970s. During the 1980s it became apparent that apartheid could not survive unchallenged and the state begun to adopt certain reformatory measures. This chapter argues that the nature of political instability

¹ See an editorial comment in the *SAMAB*, vol.23, no 1. 1997.

influenced the politics of exhibiting in museums. Thus, when it became apparent that the winds of change were blowing and democracy was imminent, museums started to transform themselves in order to be politically correct. Further this chapter explores how museums have changed from being elite orientated institutions which have traditionally reflected sectional interests and neglected important aspects of our country's heritage,² to being places of delight featuring all parts of our colourful history.

KwaZulu museums during the early 1980s

During the early 1980s museums in KwaZulu were established for the first time. This could be attributed to the establishment of the KwaZulu Monument Council in 1981. In August 1983 the foundation stone of the KwaZulu Cultural Museum was laid by the Honourable Chief Minister, M. G. Buthelezi.³ In April 1985 it was opened by Goodwill Zwelithini. Wright and Mazel have argued that the opening of the museum together with the unveiling of Mpande's gravestone were to play an ideological function. This needs to be viewed against the background of historical developments in KwaZulu which are not a central focus of this dissertation.⁴

It is vital to examine the content of the KwaZulu Cultural Museum since it played a particular ideological imperative different to museums of Natal during the early 1980s. The displays covered a narrow range of themes, nearly all of them relating to the history and culture of the Zulu people or their descendents.⁵ The main displays were on aspects of the history of the 19th

² Speech by the deputy minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), Mrs. Brigitte Mabandla, at the opening of Coert Steynberg Museum, Pretoria, 18 May 1996.

³ See M. G. Buthelezi, 'The approach of the KwaZulu Government to museums and the preservation of our cultural heritage', in *SALAB*, vol. 17, no. 4, 1986. Also Wright and Mazel dealt with the question of representation in KwaZulu and Natal museums, see J. Wright and A. Mazel, 'Controlling the past'.

⁴ For more accounts of the development see J. Wright and A. Mazel, 'Controlling the past'.

⁵ *Ibid.*

century Zulu kingdom, with an emphasis on the history of the royal house, and on features of traditional Zulu material culture. These displays overlooked certain aspects of the history of Zulu Kingdom and KwaZulu. Unlike their counterparts in Natal the role of white people- missionaries and traders- in Zulu history was silenced and marginalised. These exhibitions further downgraded the history of Zululand since the destruction of the Zulu kingdom in the 1880s.⁶ These displays' functions were vividly ideological. They operated to assert the legitimacy of KwaZulu as a political entity and to assert the legitimacy of the KwaZulu leadership of which Buthelezi was the Chief Minister.⁷ Canizzo has argued that museums are symbolic structures which make visible our public myths: the stories we tell about ourselves are institutionalized and materialized in our museums.⁸ In this context KwaZulu museums were manipulated to further the ideology of the then ruling discourse which was to affirm the domination of Buthelezi as one of the natural leaders of the Zulu people. This was because the decade of the 1980s witnessed the upsurge of political rivalry and the leadership of Buthelezi was vehemently challenged by other groups like United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Congress of South African Traders Union (COSATU).

Museums in Natal during the 1980s

Now it is essential to examine what the museums in Natal were exhibiting. These museums did not change from the legacy of the 1970s, thus Africans' histories were still marginalised and perceived as peripheral. However, the exhibitions portrayed Africans' resistance to civilization as the cause of the war. The Anglo-Zulu war centenary in 1979 could be seen as a major

⁶ Guy provides a detailed accounts of the Zulu history by the late ninetieth century. However this was overlooked in museums. For more information see J. Guy . *The destruction of the Zulu kingdom*.

⁷ See Wright and Mazel, 'Bastions of ideology'.

achievement of the museums in Natal. The centenary's historical interpretation overwhelm both the Local History Museum in Durban and the Natal Museum in Pietermaritzburg. Had it happened that it was not overshadowed by ideological stereotypes it would have been a major contribution of the museums in the writings of radical historians of KwaZulu-Natal.⁹

During this decade KwaZulu and Natal museums asserted that they occupied a neutral zone where knowledge was generated and communicated to the public. These museums emphasized their research role and were reluctant to recognize the relationship between knowledge, power and privilege.¹⁰ Davidson argues that predominantly white museum professionals regarded their work as objective and apolitical. In this regard Davidson's argument is echoed by a group of museologists of KwaZulu-Natal who still asserted that museums are apolitical and the changes that took place in museums emerged intrinsically from the museums themselves. This group opposes the view that museums can be manipulated and their argument is that museums undertake research with the purpose of restoring, documenting and preserving. They focus more on education and tend to avoid the question of the involvement of politics and ideological. I do not agree with this view of analyzing understanding museums' exhibitions with a narrow minded view that look at museums as isolated entities without any external influences. In this dissertation, I view museums as part of society's activities and thus cannot escape external influences. It is vital to emphasize that it was not until the 1980s when the political nature of museums was identified and reached all the spheres of public debate. This could be attributed to the growing interest among academics, especially historians, who had previously distanced

⁸ See Canizzo. 'How Sweet it is: Cultural politics in Barbados', in G. Kavanagh (ed.). *Museums provision and professionalism*. Routledge, London, pp26-30.

⁹ For a detailed account of these exhibitions see the Durban Museum and Art Gallery Annual reports of the years 1980-1984.

themselves from museums debates and projects. In Natal academic historians, namely, Professor John Wright and Dr. Graham Dominy embarked on projects that focused entirely on museums and politics. This signaled a growing momentum to tell hidden histories that had been suppressed or distorted by museologists of the time.

Natal museums were based on an 'overseas model' and tended to reflect a Euro-centric view of the province's history.¹¹ This was because there were aspects of 'Englishness' which was apparent in museums of Natal, argued Dr. Kinard.¹² Politicians as well as museologists who aligned themselves with liberal views challenged these museums in the public. Dr. Graham Dominy vehemently challenged these museums at a college lecture at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus. He argued that KwaZulu and Natal museums must stop thinking themselves as white institutions serving blacks.¹³ These museums avoided controversy and saw themselves as simple chroniclers of events rather than agents of social change. The idea of transformation in the museum sphere became apparent in the 1987 SAMA conference where major ideas that relate to change were discussed critically. This conference is still perceived as a milestone in the history of museum movement in KwaZulu-Natal. This is because for the first time the conference drew a number of delegates from both public and private organizations and was devoted to transformation in the museum field. Moreover, out of the many papers that were delivered, many of them called for museums to change from being elitist and exclusive to become more inclusive in their nature. It is important to point out that the 1987 SAMA conference is significant in the history of SAMA conferences. Since 1936 when SAMA was

¹⁰ This became more apparent in the interviews that I conducted with: Mr. Torlage, Dr. J. Vincent, and Mrs H. England. Also see P. Davidson, 'Museums and the shaping of memory'.

¹¹ See *Daily News*, 16 May 1989.

established, museologists gathered for the first time in 1987 with the intention of looking at change and representation in museums.¹⁴ An American guest Dr. Kinard argued that museums should look at the future through the eyes of the present and should not only be chronicle of the past. Dr. Stuckenberg, the then director of the Natal Museum, said the conference had brought museologists to realize that they had not developed museums to show the diversity in South African society, and were not serving all sections of the society. He further argued that:

People have come to perceive that our museums are very much cast in the European mould. The time for change is long overdue if museums are to serve as valuable cultural resources to all sectors.¹⁵

It is apparent that the mid-1980s witnessed a situation where museums started to look for new perspectives in line with transformation. It then became clear that museums were previously manipulated and served certain elements and for them to survive they would have to change. It worth quoting a Natal Witness reporter who pointed out that:

Until fairly recently the depictions have reflected, more or less, white perspectives. But as education has broadened to embrace more fully the cultural communities once relegated to the background, glaring gaps in perceived history and cultural knowledge have become apparent.¹⁶

It was against this background that in Durban, the Local History Museums began to mount exhibitions with ethnic, cross-cultural themes. However, these were inadequately researched.¹⁷ Issues like Indians in Durban, Africans in hostels and arts and crafts featured prominently among those topics which were still being researched during the 1980s.¹⁸ By the turn of the decade, Dr. Stuckenberg of the Natal Museum pointed out that museums can be instrumental of social

¹² This became apparent in the proceedings of the 1987 SAMA conference, see a special edition of the *Natal Witness*, 13 May 1987.

¹³ *Natal Witness*, 6 June 1991.

¹⁴ See *The Mercury*, 7 May 1987, *Natal Witness*, 7 May 1987 and the *Daily News* 13 May 1987.

¹⁵ See the *Natal Witness*, 13 May 1987.

¹⁶ *Natal Witness*, 13 May 1987.

¹⁷ Although these museums tried to change but 'new' exhibitions were still seen as peripheral in comparison to other exhibitions, see the *Natal Witness*, 13 May 1987.

¹⁸ See the city of Durban mayor's minutes, 1980-1989.

change and national reconciliation and were able to reflect all segments of society honestly and fairly.

The beginning of the decade of the 1990s marked a significant historical event in South Africa's history. It marked the total dismantling of apartheid and the rise of new perspectives in South Africa's politics. A new president, F. W. de Klerk was at the political helm of the country. He released the world famous political prisoner, Nelson Mandela, unbanned liberation movements and scrapped most of his party's apartheid laws, thus marking the beginning of transformation which led to the new dispensation.¹⁹ Although South African museums had already started to discuss issues of transformation, no document had been prepared which outlined the museums' approach towards transformation. Although there had been slight changes in the exhibitions of KwaZulu and Natal museums most of these museums were still operating with the legacy of apartheid, which segregated Africans. Also important is that this decade witnessed a growing number of people who became involved in museums. By this time many political activists and intellectuals became more involved in day to day projects in museums. These museums responded by appointing them to their board of trustees and as chairpersons of their councils. In Durban, a major event took place. This was the time when the proposal for the creation of KwaMuhle Museum was made to the Durban city council. It is vital to understand what really KwaMuhle was and its importance and contribution to the history of Durban. The building was used as a Native Administration Department by the Durban City Council to control the movement of Africans who entered Durban seeking work. The administration of passes, labour bureaux, housing, health, beerhalls, and so forth centred on KwaMuhle. KwaMuhle functioned until 1986 when all administration boards were disbanded and their functions reorganized and

taken over by relevant government and provincial administration.²⁰ By the late 1980s when plans for selling the KwaMuhle building did not materialize, the City Council wanted to demolish the building. Due to the dissatisfaction of a group of academics and concerned individuals who mobilized communities, political parties and non-government organizations to lobby against the demolition of KwaMuhle. Their view was that KwaMuhle should be transformed into a museum.²¹ In drawing upon a proposal the following people participated: Prof. Colin Webb, Drs I. Edwards, M. Padayachee, P. Zulu, Ms G. Berning and Mr. D. Claude. Many other people supported the initiative and their role is acknowledged in the first page of the proposal.²²

While the focus on South African politics was still concentrating on the transition to democracy, Museums for South Africa, known as the MUSA, was launched in 1992.²³ This was a major step in a process of analyzing and consultation that aimed at putting museums on a firm footing in a new South Africa. MUSA was an attempt to revitalize the role that museums would play in the wider context of South Africa. Some 40 people were involved in the establishment of MUSA. These people were appointed by the then Department of National Education. They consisted of specialists from academic departments, museums and non-government organization. MUSA produced a document that became a blue print for restructuring museums in the new dispensation. This document contained numerous recommendations that were seen as a guideline for any prospective museum of the post apartheid era. Although the MUSA was seen as step forward towards transformation, it was criticized by the ANC. They argued that the MUSA document's producers did not come clean about the past and the role that the Department of

¹⁹ *Sowetan*, 27 August 1997.

²⁰ See the Kwa Muhle Museum proposal, 1991, p.4.

²¹ See interview with Professor Seleti.

²² For more information see the Kwa Muhle Museum proposal, 1991.

National Education (DNE) played in it.²⁴ The ANC argued that the DNE and the South African museum fraternity did not challenge past inequalities in the apartheid South Africa even though aspects of the document suggested otherwise. Odendaal pointed out that:

A document emanating from this source [MUSA] cannot, therefore, be broadly trusted to be in the best interests of all the people of South Africa and needs to be viewed critically. In the interests of legitimacy, among other things, it is imperative that any national policy document should originate from a far broader spectrum of museum workers, administrators and community groups.²⁵

While the ANC vehemently rejected MUSA and its recommendations, it launched its own policy for museums. It is worth quoting part of the ANC policy to show how it differs with the MUSA.

The ANC's policy assert that the role of museums is:

To overcome the legacy of inequality and injustice created by colonialism and apartheid, in a swift, progressive and principled way.²⁶

While the MUSA document did not highlight the question of the relationship between the state and museums, the ANC policy stated categorically that museums are supposed to play a major role in fostering national unity.

While administrative and structural transformation was taking place, a more co-ordinated approach between the years 1990 to 1994 at a national level, museums in KwaZulu and Natal were redressing their politics and poetics of exhibiting. Nevertheless, the nature of the then existing museums in KwaZulu remain unchanged. This is not to say that these museums have not yet changed but exhibitions which were mounted prior the promulgation of MUSA were not affected. In Natal, museums started to focus on exhibiting previously marginalised groups. In

²³ J. C. Pauw, 'Museums for South Africa', *SAMAB*, vol.22, no.1, 1994, p.4.

²⁴ For more information on the MUSA see A. Odendaal, 'Working document: Comment on MUSA intersectional investigation for national policy', *SAMAB*, vol.22, no.1, 1994, p.7; Dr. G. Dominy reflected on the failure of the MUSA document and attributed its failure to the intransigent nature of the then DNE, see G. Dominy, 'Give a dog a bad name, or how to turn museums into sleek pussy cats: Some reflections on transformation in the museums and heritage sector,' *CLIO*, December edition, 2000, pp.2-10.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ G. T. Sirayi, 'The ANC policy for museums', *SAMAVTIX*, no. 15, 1993.

the Natal Museum for example, an exhibition on Indians was mounted. The invitation cards were not dated but since the commemoration was for the 130th arrival of Indian anniversary it is clear that the year was 1990. The invitation cards were written as follows:

The chairman and the council of the Natal Museum have pleasure in inviting you to a function on Thursday, 15 November at 19:30 to commemorate the 130th anniversary of the arrival of Indian Settlers in South Africa. The gathering will be addresses by Professor Joy Brain, history department, University of Durban-Westville. You are also invited to view the special exhibition 'Glimpses of India.'²⁷

It is essential to note the presence of Professor Joy Brain as a guest and an expert in the field of Indian history in South Africa is the evidence of the development of partnership between museums and communities. This further validates the involvement of academics in the museums.

Museums were developing links with communities museums. In Durban Local History Museums aspect of Indian representation had already emerged by 1985.²⁸ This was because artifacts of Indians taken from the Gandhi Settlement in Phoenix were at their disposal. KwaZulu-Natal museums started to recognize the significance of Africans as well as other racial groups in the construction of social memory. Thus exhibitions which were about Africans' experiences started to appear. Africans were soon recognized as producers of history rather than victims of circumstances.²⁹ In 1991 Dr. Dominy asserted that South African museums were in many ways part of the legacy of apartheid and colonial past and it was not possible to for these 'white' institutions to provide black people with a vision of what they had achieved, to instill them with self-confidence and pride. As it is apparent that his argument was out of scholarly expertise, the tendency of shifting the blame from museologists to apartheid injustices come out often in his

²⁷This invitation card is at the disposal of the Gandhi-Luthuli Documentation Centre, at UDW.

²⁸ The involvement of Professor J. Brain, the University of Durban-Westville head of the department of History, in the opening of the museums' 125th anniversary exhibition to mark the arrival of Indentured Indians in Natal is an example. See minutes of the Mayor, City of Durban, 1985-1986.

viewpoint. According to his approach, the justification of museums for not telling and secrecy in the museological discourse prior the 1990s is only the influence of Eurocentricism only and there is not indication of how museologists themselves posed their inherent ideologies.³⁰ Also during the 1990s an appeal for museums to become participants in a comprehensive project to change the educational and cultural practices of South Africa and the building of a new nationhood became the dominant agenda in the museum movement.³¹ Museologists realized that somehow the role and the function of museums in the new dispensation needed to be re-determined. The months before the April 1994 witnessed various statements and the emergence of many suggestions about the future of museums not only in KwaZulu and Natal but also in South Africa at large. South Africa was seen as facing the challenge of taking museums to the people and make them places which they would enjoy visiting. On the side, Peter Mokaba, the Chairperson of the ANC's forum for Arts and Culture asserted they had plans to open a museum of apartheid, which was supposed to offer an overview of the events during the apartheid. However, they did not envisage destroying the existing colonial structures.³²

The general election of 1994 marked the triumph of democratic principles in South Africa. A new dispensation was born, and new ministry, the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), was created. Museums that were previously called national museums were relocated to the new ministry while other museums affiliated were to their provincial departments of education and municipalities. The Natal Museum's director, Dr. J. Londt argued

²⁹ See interview with Paul Tichman. 24 May 1999.

³⁰ This was reported fully by the Natal Witness. 6 June 1991; for further information of this see G. Dominy, 'From dead zoos to places of delight: New directions for old collections- changing exhibitions for new purposes' (Paper presentation at the Wits History workshop, 16-18 July 1992).

³¹ See the proceedings of the SAMA conference held in Durban in 1992, also the *Daily News* have a full coverage of the event, see *Daily News*, 23 June 1992.

³² See *Mercury*, 26 February 1994.

that museums exist for the use of everyone regardless of the level of literacy, and foster a culture of learning, enlightenment and education.³³

When the Government of National Unity came to power in 1994, it launched a positive approach towards the re-developing and transformation of museums. SAMA and its stakeholders recognized that the time was opportune for museums to reposition themselves strategically as the custodians of the heritage of all South Africans within the context of world heritage.³⁴ The establishment of the Art and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) by the DACST is also evidence of transformation in the heritage sector. ACTAG was initiated because MUSA was criticized since it was not the product of a process of widespread consultation.³⁵ The promulgation of the ACTAG report in 1995 was significant in the history of museums. The report acknowledged that policy-making in museums had been compartmentalized and museums had been supportive in propagating the previous inequalities.³⁶ In his address at the opening of a museum in Pinetown, Dr. Mdlalose, the then premier of KwaZulu-Natal, pointed out clearly that:

Museums have been too Eurocentrically orientated in the past and this is probably an accurate and understanding assessment. However, recent years have seen strenuous efforts to address this imbalance and our museums in KwaZulu-Natal have become not only more accurate in reflecting our culture and heritage but also more meaningful to our broader population.³⁷

While such debates were being held, the proposal for the KwaMuhle Museum was approved. The opening of the museum is a good example of trying to cater and provide an alternative view

³³ *Natal Witness*, 2 December 1994.

³⁴ See the presidential comments in the *SALAB*, vol.22, no.2, 1998.

³⁵ For further discussion on the critique of the MUSA see, G. Dominy, 'Give a dog a bad name, or how to turn museums into sleek pussy cats: Some reflections on transformation in the museums and heritage sector', *Clio*, (December edition, 2000), pp.2-10.

³⁶ See Art and Culture Task Group (ACTAG). Draft proposal for heritage, 20 March 1995.

³⁷ Speech by the premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Dr. F. Mdlalose, at the opening of the Pinetown Museums, 23 February 1995

for hitherto marginalized groups. This is a museum of resistance, which features permanent displays on the Durban system and Cato Manor. It examines hardships that were caused by Durban authorities, and the Cato Manor Riots. These riots took place in 1949 due to racial conflict which deteriorated and led to the looting and destruction of Indian property in Cato Manor. The museum also features life in Cato Manor (umkhumbane) up to its demolition. It was demolished between 1958-1963.³⁸ Thus a new museum that was devoted to the struggle by the previously neglected group, set a new mark in museology. Moreover, numerous exhibitions were mounted in different museums that registered the idea of inclusivity and transformation in museums. A good example is the exhibition at the Old Court House Museum, called The Movers and Shakers. The then provincial minister of Tourism and Economic Development, Mr. Jacob Zuma opened the exhibition on September 24, 1996. One should note the importance this day has in our heritage. Historically the day was mourned by the Zulu for the death of King Shaka, and was formerly known as Shakas' Day in KwaZulu. After 1994 a more inclusive approach was adapted and this day became a national holiday and known as Heritage Day, when all South Africa's heritages are remembered for their instrumental and pivotal role that they played in the construction of a common heritage. Thus, the exhibition includes people who contributed to the construction and shaping the history of KwaZulu-Natal, specifically Durban. People like King Shaka, Mpande, Dingane, M. K. Gandhi, Gibson, Dick King, Albert Luthuli, and Sir Benjamin D'urban, among others features as prominent in the display.

³⁸ Many studies have been conducted which document the reasons for the demolition of Umkhumbane. These covered the responses of residents and the involvement of political parties, especially the ANC in the resistance activities which took place. For more information see, Ladlau L. K, *The Cato Manor Riots, 1949-1960*. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1975; Edwards I, *Mkhumbane our home: African shanty town society in Cato Manor Farm, 1946-1960*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. University of Natal, 1989.

Transformation in the museums did not only become the task of the government departments but SAMA also took the responsibility of preaching the gospel of change. In a SAMA conference held in Pietermaritzburg in 1997, the core theme was that of reviewing progress that have been achieved by museums since the early 1990s. In his keynote address, Dr. Ngubane, the then premier of KwaZulu-Natal, emphasized that museums should mirror society's identity.³⁹ He further argued that more than anything else museums should capture nation's social identity. According to Ngubane as the South African society has been through a political transformation, so museums must transform themselves to be able to mirror the new changing reality.

In wider South African museology, the year 1997 marked another development. This was the official opening of the Robben Island Museum, in Cape Town. In the case of KwaZulu-Natal, this trend of being accommodative and responsive to society's needs gain momentum. The Natal Museum was entirely on focusing on the previously neglected groups. While that was taking place in Pietermaritzburg, the Local History Museums in Durban also became proactive in lobbying for Africans' history to be the focus. Indian history was not neglected. In the Natal Museum, plans were in progress for the mounting of the exhibition entitled 'Threads in Time' which focused on the history and cultural diversity of Indians in Natal.⁴⁰

Museums, history and transformation: a case of the Voortrekker Museum

The history of the Voortrekker Museum in Pietermaritzburg is traced back to events that were part of the Great Trek of the 1830s. When the relationship between Dingane and the Trekkers

³⁹ *Natal Witness*, 24 April 1997.

⁴⁰ See *Natal Witness*, 1999: This exhibition became permanent in the Natal Museum. see I Bornman. 'The threads in time: A community project'. paper presented at the Injobo SAMA conference, Newcastle, 2000 and was published in the *Clio*, pp. 23-27.

deteriorated and reach a state of confrontation,⁴¹ it was a belief in God that led to the erection of the church that would later become a museum. When a state of conflict became inevitable after the assassination of Piet Retief and his group, the trekkers began to prepare for conflict. The causes of the conflict, which were centred on the question of land, are not the focus of this dissertation. It is crucial to point out that the Trekkers victory over Africans in this war was so immense that it was going to determine their fate and existence in the region. This served to provide determination and courage for a victory. It then justifies the reason for a vow that Trekkers undertook.

The vow and the museum of Voortrekker heritage

Here we stand before the holy God of heaven and earth to make Him a vow if he will protect us and deliver our enemies into our hands we will observe the day and date each year as a day of thanks like a Sabbath, and we will erect a church in his honor wherever he may choose and that we will tell our children to join with us in commemorating this day also for coming generation. For His name will be glorified by giving Him the honor and glory⁴²

There are two contesting accounts of the vow. According to some accounts, the vow was made on the 17th December 1838, at Danskraal beyond Ladysmith, by the Dutch commando under Andreis Pretorius with a view of punishing Dingane for his treacherous murder⁴³ of Retief and his party and women and children subsequently.⁴⁴ If one take into cognizance the purpose of the prayer it is highly unlikely that the vow was taken after the battle in 1838. This could be the reason for the emergence of an alternative viewpoint that stipulates that the vow was a well-orchestrated phenomenon. It was taken on December 9, 1838 on the banks of Blyle River until

⁴¹ This has been well noted by S. Ndlovu,...

⁴² This prayer is one of the plaque in which the church of vow was created to fulfil, see the original Voortrekker church, Voortrekker Museum.

⁴³ Recent historical accounts do not subscribe with this idea, for further information see S. M. Ndlovu, 'He did...'

⁴⁴ Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository. Untitled document. A81/ 1908-1938/, Voortrekker Museum files.

December 15, 1838 before the eve of the battle. It was Sarel Cilliers who repeated the vow that if the Lord could give them victory; they would consecrate and keep his holy.⁴⁵

It is imperative to always bear in mind the relationship between the church of vow that houses the Voortrekker Museum and the Blood River incident. The battle's historiography has changed dramatically and is subject to various historical interpretations that have recently emerged. Now most radical historians of KwaZulu-Natal know the battle as *Impi yase Ncome*. The history of the battle and its consequences are too well covered to be mentioned in this thesis.

In his report on the 22nd December 1838, Pretorius stated that the victory should be attributed to the Almighty, whose assistance they had invoked, and that a place of worship should be erected to His Glory.⁴⁶ Immediately after the battle, peace having been restored, the Trekkers proclaimed Pietermaritzburg as the capital of the newly created republic of Natalia.⁴⁷ As early as 1839 they began to embark on a campaign to garner funds and material for the erection of the promised church with the aim of fulfilling the vow. By mid 1839 they had collected approximately £4000. In addition, several individuals contributed their building materials with the objective of keeping the obligation they made during the wartime. The foundation stone was laid towards the end of 1839.⁴⁸ The building was furnished in about January 1840. They were certain events that are not

⁴⁵ E. Delmoth, 'The Voortrekker Monument: Monolith to myth', in *SAHJ*, vol. 29, 1993; also J. Naidoo, *Tracking down historical myths*, A. D. publishers, Johannesburg, 1988; A. E. Cubbin, 'Retief's negotiations with Dingana: An assessment', Natal History Workshop Paper, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1990; *Natal Witness*, 06/08/1987.

⁴⁶ This is well articulated in the Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository, Voortrekker Museum Files, A81/1840-1890; Voortrekker Museum pamphlet written in 1982. Thanks to Henriete Ridley and Dr. Ivor Pols for providing me with other instrumental information regarding the history of the Voortrekker Museum.

⁴⁷ For more details, see the *Riders' Digest: Illustrate History of Southern Africa*, The real story, Reader's digest Association, Cape Town, 1988.

⁴⁸ Archival Data does not provide with any exact dates for early years of the Voortrekker church, they keep on approximating.

mentioned in the archival data that delayed the church service to be held as soon as it was finished in 1840. Later in March 1841, the first service was held.⁴⁹ It was then used for religious purposes for of twenty years until 1861. Subsequently, the building proved to small for the requirements of the congregation. On the 5th April 1855, it was decided to erect a new church away from the main street and steps were taken to obtain the portion of the Market Square where Voortrekkers had originally intended to build their permanent church. This request was refused and the erection of the new church commenced in 1856 on the plot adjoining that of the Church of the Vow.⁵⁰ The new church was completed after five years and the last ceremony in the old was held on the 6th April 1861. From the 7th April 1861 the new church became the parent of the Dutch Reformed Church in Natal and it served as such until the 5th June 1955. The original building (the old church) was rented by the government as a school and placed at the disposal of other religious denominations that had no church of their own.⁵¹ Owing to stringent financial difficulties, the Church Council was compelled to sell it for £700. It was sold on condition that it was to be used for licensed victuallers' purposes. The firm of blacksmiths and wagon makers, which carried on business therein for many years, acquired it. Towards the beginning of the 1890s, it was utilized as a chemist. As from 1900 it occurred to a few individuals with ardent spirit that this building was not only of historical importance but that the association connected with it would form a valuable tradition for future generations. They felt that it was to be rescued from losing its identity and preserved for the wellbeing of Afrikaner heritage. A meeting was called with the aim taking a decision about the future of the building. One of its resolutions was

⁴⁹Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository, Voortrekker Museum Files, A81 (6), A letter to the editor of the Cape Times from the Secretary of the Voortrekker Museum, 28 August 1923.

⁵⁰ Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository, Voortekker Museum Files, A81 (9). Report on the development of the church of the vow, undated: see Natal *Witness*, 19/11/1970.

⁵¹ Voortrekker Museum pamphlet.

to take immediate steps for the collection of funds for the purchase of the building. However, it was not until 1909 that a committee was formed to raise subscriptions.

It should not be forgotten that the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed hardships, the worst being the Anglo-Boer/South Africa War of 1899-1902, which led to many traumatic experiences for the Boer nation. Moreover, the war ended with the Boers being forced to sign a humiliating treaty of Vereeniging in 1902. This degraded them as a nation, and thus despair and hopelessness prevailed. The restoration of an institution like the Church of Vow was an attempt to redevelop the national Boer pride that they had lost in the war. Therefore, the role of this church became important for Boer consciousness.

The negotiations which resulted into a Church of the Vow being restored and converted into a museum were rooted in manipulating the church's historical image. The General Committee appointed in 1909 brought all the decisions to fruition. The appeal for funds was directed to the Dutch people in South Africa only, because it was felt that the church was their responsibility and it was their duty to wipe out the stigma attached to the sale of building of a sacred nature, 'erected by the pious on the strength of a solemn vow.'⁵² To assist with the collection of subscriptions, a Ladies Committee was formed. This was very successful, since subscriptions were received from Orange Free State, Transvaal, Cape Colony, Rhodesia, East Africa and even from students of South African nationality in Holland.⁵³ Jansen summarized the motives attributed to the renewal of the church and its transformation to be a museum as follows:

It is intended that the building is to be utilized as a museum of historical objects of interest, representative of the customs, dress, furniture and pursuit of the

⁵² Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository, Voortrekker Museum Files, A81/1908-1938.

⁵³ Obviously those students were the sons of Afrikaners, see Ibid.

immigrants and an appeal has been made for the donation of such articles, as well as weapons used for defense, official documents, books, etc.⁵⁴ From 1910, the building was restored as near as possible to its original form. It was equipped and established as a museum exclusively for the Voortrekker artifacts and on the 16 December 1912, it was officially opened.⁵⁵ The opening of the church was a splendid occasion. The ceremony lasted for four days and many people attended. Mr. Christopher Bird, principal Under-Secretary for the Colony of Natal, opened the programme with a lantern lecture in the City Hall on the 'Voortrekkers, who they were and what they did.' On following morning the new museum was filled with a temporary exhibition of historical portraits and pictures of the old Cape houses.⁵⁶

From the time of its restoration as a heritage institution the Voortrekker Museum became the resource of settler heritage. In 1938 the museum became a centre of centenary celebrations of the 1838. Moreover, its focus was on fostering settler heritage by focusing entirely on romanticizing the Voortrekkers history and viewing any opposition to it as aggressive.⁵⁷ During the 1950s the museum continued to display artifacts of the Voortrekkers with the view of restoring their heritage. In 1951, for example, the museum acquired a brown coat that belonged to the wife of Gert Maritz, the Voortrekker, after whom the Maritzburg is named.⁵⁸ Moreover, numerous artifacts were displayed in the museum during the 1950s. These include the following: In 1953 Afrikaners presented a number of treasured historical artifacts which were at their disposal and hitherto hidden away in private homes to the museum. Among the exhibits was a chair, which once belonged to Piet Retief. Another exhibit was the trunk in which the wife of Gert Maritz

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Voortrekker pamphlet.

⁵⁶ See Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository, Voortrekker Museum files, A81/1908-1938; the Daily News, 23/04/1955.

⁵⁷ Voortrekker Museum Annual Reports 1938-1939. It must be pointed out that document of the museum from 1912 up to the mid 1930s are written in Dutch, thus making it difficult to comprehend.

⁵⁸ *Natal Witness* 11/05/1951.

used to keep baby clothes.⁵⁹ Also in December 1955 the museum housed many religious services in the original Church of Vow. In December 16, the day of covenant, according to the old South African calendar, a celebration was staged in the museum and a foundation stone for a new addition was laid.⁶⁰ These activities were an attempt to promote settler heritage and the museum was used as the reference point for the development of the Afrikaner nationalism.

Museum annual reports of the 1960s and 1970s do not include developments in the museum except that of grant-in-aid from the government and increases in staff members. However the *Natal Witness* articles show that the museum continued to view African participation in Voortrekker history as peripheral, and thus did not deserve to be exhibited. During the 1960s the museum exhibited a collection of Dutch biblical tills dating back to about 1800.⁶¹ Moreover, by the beginning of the 1970s the museum still continued on its quest to acquire more artifacts of the Republic of Natalia (1838-1842).⁶² Thus from its establishment in 1912 until the late 1980s, the museum was exclusively displaying Afrikaner artifacts despite major trends that were forcing KwaZulu-Natal museums to adapt to transformation.

Many white museologists have opposed the argument of the state as the major manipulator in the museum displays. Their viewpoint suggests that museums do not have a relationship with the state since they belong to local authorities. On the contrary, a black museologist believes that the state plays a pivotal role in influencing the nature and the politics of exhibiting in museums.⁶³ It is in this context that the role of the state is vividly seen in influencing the museum. Since from

⁵⁹ *Natal Witness* 03/04/1963.

⁶⁰ *Daily News*, 07/03/1955.

⁶¹ *Natal Witness* 08/06/1968.

⁶² *Natal Witness* 09/04/1971.

its establishment the Voortrekker Museum was declared a national museum, receiving its subsidy directly from the state. Although the 1920s decreased grant-in aid for museums, the Voortrekker museum did not experience the severe financial problems that the Natal Museum and the Durban Museum were experiencing. This is because while Afrikaner donors continued to contribute more funds and material for displays, the state treated the Voortrekker Museum as a unique institution that deserved certain attention. To substantiate this point, by the mid-1920s there was a proposed merger of museums in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Although this did not come to fruition the Voortrekker Museum was not included in this venture.⁶⁴

The nature of politics of the early 1990s influenced the politics of displaying in the Voortrekker Museum in particular. The museum accelerated its pace of putting more mental energy in to the hitherto marginalised histories and their significance in the construction of public memory. Thus, exhibitions that were from the victims' experiences started to appear in many displays. An example is the display entitled 'The birth of democracy' which depicts the struggles by former liberation movements in South Africa during the twentieth century

The Voortrekker Museum has changed from being a source of Afrikaner heritage to be much more inclusive in its nature and highly representative. Rather than depicting the histories, activities and triumph of Afrikaner nationalism, the museum has taken its rightful place in a diverse society, that of championing the experiences of blacks who form part of the heritage of the province. In attempting to transform itself at all levels it has recently appointed, to its council, a black radical historian, Professor J. Maphalala, at that time who was attached to the

⁶³ This became apparent in interviews which I conducted.

University of Zululand. Professor Maphalala is an advocate of the idea of speaking in the liberation of isiZulu language and its use in public places. He was officially appointed on as the chairperson of the council on the 12th April 1999.⁶⁵ It is vital to point out that both Professors Mzilikazi Khumalo and Langalibalele Mathenjwa from the University of Zululand serve in the council. The translation of museum's inscription could be attributed to their influence. The appointment of the council marked another turning point in the history of the Voortrekker Museum. For the first time in its history Africans begun to be involved in the council which is the governing body of the museum. This council has been termed the 'transforming council' by Professor Maphalala.⁶⁶ During the first council meeting Professor Maphalala greeted everybody in both Zulu and English. He continued saying that

this was the first meeting of the transformed council. Previously council had always consisted of whites member only.⁶⁷

Bearing in mind its Afrikaner image as early as 1912 when it was opened, the museum used Afrikaans in its inscriptions. In a report to the new council in 1999, the museum pointed out clear its objectives as following: to improve tolerance, understanding and mutual respect among the diverse groups in KwaZulu-Natal; to interpret and display the Voortrekker history in a holistic and more objective manner; to display cultures of all the peoples of kwaZulu-Natal; to provide educational services to all groups of the community and; to provide an outreach programme to all groups of the community.⁶⁸ Moreover, a radical change has taken whereby its inscriptions (in exhibition and letterheads) are now written in three languages, namely, Afrikaans, English and IsiZulu. This is a good way of promoting multilingualism and pluralistic ideas. The introduction of IsiZulu is signal of transformation and the extent to which the museum dedicates itself in

⁶⁴ The cut down in grant-in aid from the national government started to be seen from 1922 see minutes of the town clerk 1922-1923; DAR/3/DBN/4/1/2/642.

⁶⁵ Letter from the minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, 12/04/1999.

⁶⁶ See interview with Professor J. Maphalala, 6/09/2001.

representing and drawing patronage from the Zulu speakers whose ancestors fought in the *Impi yase Ncome* (battle of iNcome). Thus the museum is geared to serve the needs of its visitors. The museum subscribes to multilingualism, which is the basis of the South African society. The museum is now an integral part of society around it.

The nature of displays in the museum draws on multiculturalism as its reference framework. The museum is a product of its time and it fits well in to the current political climate. This is shown by the following exhibitions that are displayed in the museum.

The Birth of Democracy

This exhibition displays the painful struggle against the evils of segregation which predated apartheid, apartheid from its institutionalization since 1948. It also displays ANC activities of the 1950s and early 1960s before the time of exile. Issues like the Soweto uprising and the growing black militancy during the late 1970s; the state of ungovernability during the 1980s; the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of liberation movement are featured. It highlights aspects of the 1994 general elections and the triumph of the ANC features prominently. The exhibition registers the view that while the colonial and apartheid governments were imposing their domination, Africans did not emerge as mere victims of circumstances but they chiseled out spaces and made life meaningful to themselves.⁶⁹ This is accomplished by a reflection on cataclysmic activities like protests, etc that they engage themselves into with the view of

⁶⁷ Minutes of the council meeting of the Voortrekker Museum, 11/05/ 1999.

⁶⁸ Confidential letters sent to new council members in 1999 date 17/06/1999.

⁶⁹ The question of representing the previously marginalised groups is well captured by L. Witz and C. Rassool, 'The dog, rabbit and the reluctant historians', *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 27. 1992.

challenging the state. As Carolyn Hamilton has noted, these exhibitions celebrate the vitality and creativity of ordinary lives, while acknowledging the legacies of historic deprivation.⁷⁰

The Bead work in Natal

Aspects of bead work, either Voortrekker or Africans, has been a focus by historians. This exhibition focuses on aspect of the use of glass beads during the nineteenth century Natal by the Zulus, Victorians, and the Voortrekkers. While the beads used originated from the same sources and were readily available, each cultural groups constructed their own identity through making and decorating artifacts with this small colourful glass bead.⁷¹ This exhibition aim at asserting that although 'we differ in our understanding and nurturing, our history and heritage are closer to each other.'

The Zulu heritage

This exhibition focuses on various aspects of Zulu heritage and cultural artifacts. Mrs. Ina Janse van Rensburg, a council member of the Voortrekker Museum, opened it.⁷² Zulu beer brewing, household utensils, clothing, African spirituality and the presence of a warrior forms the core of the display. This subscribes to the idea of a dynamic Zulu culture which is now far away from what it was during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This exhibition is essential since it captures social activities among the Zulu and thus serves to inform those who are ignorant about the Zulu traditional socio-cultural life. The presence of the warrior in this exhibition has raised

⁷⁰ C. Hamilton, 'Against the museum as chameleon', *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 31. 1994.

⁷¹ Noted by the research in the plaque at the beginning of the exhibition.

⁷² More information on these exhibitions could be found in the *Clio*, December 2000 publication.

criticism. This is because the image of the Zulu warrior signifies a barbaric and savage native, which dominated the colonial mindset during the nineteenth century.⁷³

Not Only a White man's War

This is one of the contributions of the Voortrekker Museum in the historical controversy that surround the Anglo-Boer war centenary celebration. Historically it has been pointed out that the war that overshadowed the tip of the South African continent between 1899-1902 was not fought by whites only. The prevailing perspective is that many people were involved in the war thus its historiography needs to be understood against the background of inclusive participation.⁷⁴ This exhibition focuses on the Anglo-Boer/South African war, as it now called. It displays how Indians, Coloureds, and Blacks played a role during the course of the war since their role has been overlooked. It registers correctly the point that the war did not only affect whites or only the whites participated but all South Africans fought on both sides. This exhibition was chosen by DACST as the best in KwaZulu-Natal and thus it was exhibited in a conference hosted by Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology in Durban, 29-31 August 2000.

The Zulu Home and the Shiva Temple

One of the recommendations of the ACTAG document is that museums should broaden their vision to include living cultures (*amasiko*) in their educational efforts; special efforts should be

⁷³ This became evident during my interviews: The idea of colonial images of referring to black as savages influenced the nature of race relations and is well documented see R. Haggard, *King Solomons' mines*; J Comoroff and J Comoroff, *Ethnography and Historical Imagination*. Westview press. Oxford, 1992.

⁷⁴ The department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology was the major role player in spearheading conferences around the country with aim of getting new ideas about the facet of the war; also the South African Historical Journal issued a special issue on 'centenary perspective: South African War 1899-1902', *South African Historical Journal*, no.41, 1999.

made to make museums living cultural centres.⁷⁵ The mounting of these exhibitions is a direct response to the ACTAG document. Their erection in an open space within the premises of the museum draws the eyes of people passing in both Church and Long Market Streets in the centre of the city. The Zulu home was opened by Professor Maphalala. At the opening of the exhibition Mrs. Gasa, the then provincial MEC for Education and Culture was present among the guests. Both her and professor Maphalala tasted some of the Zulu Beer that was specially brewed for the occasion. This is evidence of a museum which is willing to incorporate living cultures within its premises.⁷⁶ The MEC was impressed by the interior of the home in which Zulu household utensils are displayed.⁷⁷ Mr. C. M. Pillay, president of Midlands Hindu Society, opened the Shiva Temple. His address emphasized the question of indentured Indians and hardships that Indians suffered and how they brought their religion with them from India. These exhibitions form a basis for the Voortrekker Museum's commitment to multiculturalism. Thus, the museum is now a hub of both multilingualism and multiculturalism. The museum is committing itself to the promotion of ideas of cultural democracy.

The Museum and HIV/AIDS

The dawning of the twenty-first century witnessed an increasing high rate of AIDS infection, particularly in the sub-Saharan Africa. Museums as part of public places were urged by the ministry of Art, Culture, Science and Technology to assist in preaching the gospel of preventing the pandemic. Thus, in the entrance of the Voortrekker Museum posters and small displays that deals with the epidemic can be easily be seen by everybody who enter the museum. Pamphlets are found in the reception that deals with how to prevent the disease. Because the museum does

⁷⁵ ACTAG, 1995, p. 23, 86, & 87.

⁷⁶ C. Hamilton, 'Against the museum as chameleon'.

not only care for those who enter its premises, it has put another window display behind it so that even people who are passing might see the message this display conveys. This has proved to be very successful because each individual who passes and look at these 'scary' pictures and come closer and closer.⁷⁸ Other museums in the province have undertaken similar displays. The exhibition that is currently displayed by the KwaMuhle Museum in Durban also focuses on HIV/AIDS. More interesting about the KwaMuhle's exhibition is that there is a writing board where ordinary visitors can right their suggestions and input about AIDS.

These above-mentioned exhibitions are evidence of a museum that is willing to change and submit to new challenges. More than mounting an exciting exhibition, the Voortrekker Museum is involved in numerous projects with rural societies with the aim of introducing the concept of a museum to them. In addition, the museum has established friendly relations with women who sell fruits, home baked cakes, and so on, on in the streets of the city. On the 13 April 2001, a public show was organized by the museum where women, with their varieties of product that they sell, were invited into the museum and were given a hall where they exhibited and sold their products. The theme of the occasion was 'women and development.' On this day more than a hundred people entered the museum premises and people who benefited were women vendors.⁷⁹ In every Friday morning izangoma (traditional healer) from the outskirts of the city come inside the museum and many people see them for the first time and some consult. This is the evidence that the museum is committed to becoming a centre of knowledge and culture without any

⁷⁷ See December's edition of *Clio*.

⁷⁸ This is what I observed when I stood there for five minutes looking at all the people who pass next the window display.

⁷⁹ The education officer of the Voortrekker Museum organized the event. Thanks to Makhosi for her invitation.

marginalisation or discrimination of any group or class within the society. The museum is becoming a 'forum' which is accessible to everybody.⁸⁰

Contextualising transformation: An assessment of the politics of exhibiting.

The concept of change that overwhelmed museum practices needs to be assessed so as to ensure that museums do not repeat the hitherto imbalances. This section interrogates the nature of exhibitions that became sign-points of transformation in a post 1994 era. Museums played a significant role in shaping the nature of discourse during the apartheid era and continue to do so in a post apartheid era. As Edwin Suderland argued, behavior is learned, something that can be applied in museums as well.⁸¹ Tourists, be they local or international, learn the images of the dominant hegemony that are displaying in museum exhibitions. Since museums are educational institutions, they shape the individual's understanding of a historical phenomenon that characterizes a particular society. The behaviour that is represented in museums enforces certain normative standards that are prescribed within a particular society. As I have pointed out earlier, museums are transforming agents that the state utilizes for its benefit. This needs to be carefully undertaken with certain precautions and a wider understanding of both historical and social phenomenon. This will assist in not repeating previous mistakes and legacies that have dominated and prevailed in the understanding of the past. History may be well understood by examining the views and objects of the past. These may provide contradictions concerning an understanding of an event. Distortion and biased facts have characterized the history of KwaZulu-Natal. It should be pointed out that the new dispensation is in its infancy and there is

⁸⁰ The interview with Henriete Ridley and Dr. Ivor Pols is the evidence that as a management team their main objective is to ensure that the museum serve the community, see interview with the Voortrekker Museum management.

⁸¹ See Giddens, *Sociology*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1989.

still a dearth of historical research that portrays and reflects this dispensation. Thus the experiences of the previously marginalised groups needs to be scrutinized correctly without any overestimation and romanticism.

The types of exhibitions that have been mounted since the early 1990s qualifies KwaZulu-Natal museums to be seen as transforming and these very same exhibitions needs to examined closely. These exhibitions includes the: 'The Movers and Shakers'; 'The birth of Democracy'; 'Threads in Time'; 'Sisonke: Symbols of Identity'; and 'The new facets of the Anglo-Boer War'. These exhibitions are symbols of transformation the museums have undertaken. However, they need to be analyzed and given their recognition they deserve. The displays are well researched and affect directly societies who visit them. Their messages, both covert and overt, are instrumental for the national consciousness and nation building that is required by a newly emerging country like South Africa. The Zulu proverb which say '*akukho soka lingenasici*'⁸² make the content of these exhibition more clear. Thus these exhibitions have their strengths and shortcomings.

There are number of issues that these exhibitions do not feature but should be seen in museum displays. The questions of why these historical facts and individuals do not feature in displays is not clear among museologists. Kavanagh argues that those who have power to manipulate the symbols and their meanings are in privileged and highly advantageous positions. They have the potential to order the world to suit their own ends, the potential to construct a context in which they are central.⁸³ The absence of certain histories is a well orchestrated event rather than haphazardly done. The realities of male dominance in society is so dominant that museum

⁸² Everything has its merits and demerits.

⁸³ Kavanagh G. (ed.). Making histories in museums. Leicester university press, London, 1996. p.54.

professionals, regardless of gender, contribute to those gender notions with judgements and decisions on how and what to display. The act of collecting and interpreting women's history is subject to an acceptance that history is a discourse about the past. The past itself has gone and only be brought back again by historians in books, not as actual events but as memoirs. The challenge, then, is to establish the right of women to share in that past in such a way as to reinforce their stake in the present. Collecting, displaying, and communicating women's histories means creating new histories and symbols from existing collections and working with people to collect and interpret new objects. Indeed, the influence of male hierarchy can be cited as a reason why displays feature women in a particular way or else exclude them altogether. This does not provide a comfortable atmosphere to a visitor.⁸⁴

The dismantling of the apartheid regime marked a new opportunity for those previously disempowered groups. Nevertheless, museums did not take the lead in championing women's histories, rather women's stories were included within a male-dominated historical narrative.⁸⁵ This has marginalised their histories and as a consequence, the major role that women played in history is still not really visible. These exhibitions do not indicate the actions of women who chiselined spaces for themselves in both colonial environment that segregated them and in the political economy, which considered them insignificant. The role of pioneer women who distinguished themselves in the early encounter with Europeans against the missionaries that was designed to 'domesticate' them does not feature in these exhibitions. Women are only displayed when they assist their male counterparts. Women like Sibusisiwe Makhanya who receive mission education and went beyond the parameters of domesticity and narrow minded education system,

⁸⁴ Winters Y, Killie Cambell Museum of Ethnography, interview, 08 July 1999.

provided at the Inanda Seminary do not feature. She was trained as a teacher. What became important about her is that instead she went to America and qualified as the first black social worker in Natal. She became more involved in promoting the idea that young ladies should not see themselves as subjects of male domination.⁸⁶ Similarly, when displaying pre-colonial history the pivotal role that women played is totally neglected. Museums need to balance their display of both sexes so as to document history on both sides.

Another shortcoming is the presentation of certain historical facts with distortion, or not in line with present historical discourse. The example is the presentation of King Dingane in the 'Movers and Shakers'. It is of paramount importance to note that the images of Dingane have been debated widely by academic historians. Different viewpoints come up from J. Dube, Rolfes and Herbert Dhlomo, Petros Lamula and Isaiah Shembe. These individuals seem to have earned a good reputation and they made a full use of *Ilanga lasa Natali* to air their views. The exhibition on the 'Movers and Shakers' does not provide these contesting viewpoints about Dingane. Due to simplicity, the exhibition hides many complexities that the society possesses.

Although these exhibitions do have negative connotations, they also have positive aspects. The author believes that museums are dynamic institutions that need to change with time. However, they should not be chameleons as Hamilton argues.⁸⁷ The exhibitions that the museums of

⁸⁵ The project entitled 'the living tradition' aims at also looking at the question of representing women but it is premature to celebrate its contribution to gender relations in museums.

⁸⁶ See Hughes, 'A lighthouse for African womanhood': Inanda Seminary 1867-1945', in C. Walker, *Women and resistance in Southern Africa* (second edition), David Philip, Cape Town, 1987; W. S. Zondi, *Gender in the Weysele Mission in KwaZulu-Natal*, Unpublished MPhil. thesis, Cambridge, 1998; W. S. Zondi 'African Nursing and the mission hospitals in early twentieth century', paper presented at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1998.

⁸⁷ C. Hamilton, 'Against museums as chameleon', *South African Historical Journal*, no.31, 1994, pp184-190.

KwaZulu-Natal have mounted are signs of change and a positive approach towards displaying a history that is inclusive and more relevant to political transformation within the country.

The Challenges that face the Voortrekker Museum and other museums in KwaZulu-Natal

Considering what museums have done in a short period of time, one can assume that they have no difficulties. Most of the problems that the Voortrekker Museum experiences are also applicable to other museums. Thus, this section will examine these problems in the context of KwaZulu-Natal. Since museums operate in a dynamic environment they will always have to succumb to new challenges that will occur as over time.

‘A overcrowded museum is healthy museum’. Although some, especially in Durban, are widely visited, other museums are still struggling to attract visitors. The Fort Durnford museum at Estcourt is a good example. The question of what measures can be put in place to improve patronage and that museums are not perceived as boring and stuffy institutions have been the subject of dialogue in SAMA conferences. Museums are competing with cinemas which attract large numbers of patrons, particularly youth. Moreover, visiting a museum is not among the top priorities for visiting KwaZulu-Natal.

Museums are facing the challenge of dwindling funding from their major providers. In Durban for example, the Durban municipality, now called the Unicity has continued to decrease the allocation of funds to the museum department. This is because with poverty becoming rife more funds are being allocated to poverty elevation schemes than to leisure. Consequently, by 1998

the KwaMuhle Museum was in a critical financial situation which nearly resulted in its closure.⁸⁸ The matter was resolved after much deliberation with the city council which increased the subsidy to the museum. Thus it became difficult for museums to be more relevant and able to attract new audiences. On the other hand there is a great appetite for heritage.

The concept of a museum has been construed as an urban phenomenon. Most museums are located in cities while they are intended for both urban and rural communities. Although attempts are being made to establish satellite museums beyond metro boundaries, especially in townships and in rural areas, success has not materialized. As a result many people do not know about museums or where they are.⁸⁹

KwaZulu-Natal museums open from 8h00 in the morning and close at 16h00. This increases the chance of visiting for those who are working during those hours. By the mid 1920 under the directorship of Chubb the Durban Museum did open its doors during the evening from 19h00 to 21h00. This proved successful but did not last very long due to financial constraints.⁹⁰ Since South African society is dominated by the working class majority, it is difficult to visit museums because by the time people finish work, museums are closed. Moreover, poverty contributes to limiting prospects of visiting museums. This has resulted in a situation whereby visiting museums is not a priority and people are struggling to earn a living.

Another challenge is that museums are not places people can see now and then. Museums are not in major centres so as to attract even the unintended visitor. In Durban and Pietermaritzburg,

⁸⁸ *Sunday Tribune*, 10 November 1996.

⁸⁹ See interview with Winters, Seleti, and Torlage.

museums are not in business centres where most of the people prefer to go either for leisure or shopping. It might be sometimes difficult to relocate some of these museums into new convenient places since they are also monuments.⁹¹

Conclusion

The last decade of the twentieth century marked a milestone in the history of museums in KwaZulu-Natal. This is because during this decade of the politics and poetics exhibiting changed from being exclusive to be inclusive. As a result the nature of exhibitions began to focus on the activities of the hitherto marginalised groups, rather than romanticizing the histories of white men's activities at the detriment of the black majority. It took almost twenty years for KwaZulu-Natal museums to respond positively to what Cameron termed the 'forum' museum. This chapter has argued that museum are dynamic institutions, dynamic in a sense that they have shifted to being community conscious. This has required museums to move far from being specialized, inward looking and 'object-centred' to being highly creative, outward looking and people centred, seeking aspirations from the people they serve rather than the collections they hold. This is a very exciting change since it is forcing museums to look very carefully at what they are and how they operate and this has the potential to make them more lively, interesting and vital institutions. This chapter has argued that KwaZulu-Natal museums echoe official versions of history, As Canizzo has rightly argued museums are not neutral places, nor do they exist in a state of political independence somehow suspended above the wash of dominant ideology, they

⁹⁰ See DAR, 3/DBN/4/1/2/463

⁹¹ Example being the Voortrekker and Kwa Muhle Museum.

embody the distinctive view of those who hold control. They cannot be divorced from their own times and circumstances.⁹²

⁹² J. Canizzo, 'How sweet it is: Cultural politics in Barbados', in G. Kavanagh (ed.), *Museums provision and professionalism*, Routledge, London, 1994, p.26.

CHAPTER FOUR

Local History Museums and Tourism in the twentieth century KwaZulu-Natal.

Introduction

Deacon has noted that the decade of the 1970s witnessed the decline of South Africa's tourism potential. This is because tourism was undermined by the poor image that the country had due to its apartheid policy.¹ As a result South Africa was unable to exploit its tourism potential efficiently. It was not until the 1990s when the political transition to democracy opened South Africa to the rest of the world. As a result in 1995, tourism was seen as one of the few remaining growth industries, certain to increase rapidly during the twenty first century. This chapter argues that while South Africa emerged as a democratic country to rejoin the community of nations, and to become a leading tourist destination among African countries, KwaZulu-Natal began to realize its role as a tourist destination. It further explores the contribution of local history museums in tourism and what the relationship is between museums and tourism industry.

KwaZulu-Natal as seen through the tourism eyes

Statistics of the KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority (KZNTA) point out that the province of KwaZulu-Natal is one of the major choices made by both domestic and international tourists. This can be attributed to a number of factors. The province possesses a warm climate which attracts many tourists. The province has two world heritage sites, namely Ukhahlamba-

¹See H. Deacon, 'Remembering tragedy, constructing modernity: Robben Island as a national monument', in S. Nuttall and C. Coetzee (eds), *Negotiating the past: The making of memory in South Africa*, Oxford University press, Cape Town, 1998, pp. 161-179.

Drakensberg and the Greater St. Lucia Wetland Park.² KwaZulu-Natal provides Zulu culture and thus making visiting more exciting and informative especially for international tourists. It has also the largest port in Africa while the Tugela Falls become the second largest in the world.³ Cultural heritage, as it has been marketed by KZNATA, also contributes to influencing choices made by tourists to visit the KwaZulu-Natal province. KwaZulu-Natal is popular because of its British defeat in 1879, and passive resistance inspired by Mahatma Gandhi. The province houses Africa's top convention centre, the International Convention Centre (ICC) in Durban

We cannot offer anything better than what is offered in Europe and elsewhere in terms of the beaches, recreational facilities, hotels and luxury. Cultural tourism is one of our strong and unique selling points in terms of adding to our product range.⁴

Tourism may be thought of as a journey or temporary stay for people travelling primarily for leisure or recreational purposes. This, however does not mean that those people who travel for conferences, sports and academic purposes are left out. A tourist is a temporary visitor staying at least twenty-four (24) hours in any country not of their normal place of residence. This definition includes both leisure purposes and business.⁵ A visitor can be a voluntary temporal traveler, travelling in the expectations of pleasure and experience on relative long and non-recurrent round trip.⁶ Further, it is essential to distinguish between conceptual and statistical definitions. Conceptual definition refers to a broad national framework, which identifies the main characteristics of tourism and serves to distinguish tourism from similar, but different

² R. Naidoo, 'A socio-economic review of the kingdom of the Zulu'. (paper presented at the heritage day seminar, held at the University of Durban-Westville. 26 September 2001.

³ Ibid.

⁴ See *City Press*, 23 September 2001.

⁵ D. Harrison, *Tourism and less developed countries*. John Wiley, New York. 1992, p.2.

⁶ J. Lea, *Tourism and development in the third world*. Routledge, London, 1988, p.4

activities. Statistical definitions on the other hand provide the instrument for a particular statistical or other purposes within this framework.⁷

According to the statistical definition the following categories of tourist are distinguished: international visitors, comprising international visitors and international excursionists; domestic visitors, comprising domestic visitor and domestic excursionists. The international visitors are defined as people who visit a country other than their usual place of residence, for no longer a year and mainly whose purpose in visiting is not the pursuit of an occupation remuneration from the country visited. Statistics from both SATOUR and KZNTA point out that visiting a museum is one the main activities is tourists while in KwaZulu-Natal.

Soni asserted that tourism has become a fiercely competitive business⁸ and therefore KwaZulu-Natal's tourist image has had to improve drastically since 1994. The political transition that the country had, changed the image of South Africa and the international tourists began to arrive in numbers. It is also attributed to the marketing of tourism in public areas around the province. For example, during November-December 1999 the KZNTA put a huge poster on the Tollgate N3 bridge (the freeway which connects Durban and Johannesburg), one-kilometer before you enter the city Durban. The poster's image was that of the king Shaka, as represented by Henry Cele,⁹ welcoming all holiday visitors who came for a festive season in Durban. Cele is an actor who has played a character of Shaka whose character has been said looks like Shaka although no one knows how Shaka looked like. The poster was written '*Wozani. Our kingdom calls.*'

⁷ J. A. Bennett, *Managing Tourism Services*. Shaik, Pretoria, 1995, p.4.

⁸ A. Soni 'Making cultural tourism work: The human resource, infrastructural and other requirement', *Cultural Tourism in South Africa*, Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Pretoria, 1997, pp.89-96.

⁹ He is an actor who is playing the part of Shaka in the film 'Shaka Zulu'.

This served to remind even those tourists who might have been obsessed by the beach and other activities that KwaZulu-Natal has more to offer. Following this, a significant increase in visitors of both domestic and international numbers was noted in museums. The KZNTA still continues with this as it has produced writing pads and plastic bags with the picture of Henry Cele (as Shaka), and welcoming note to KwaZulu-Natal. Although KwaZulu-Natal's geographical position locates it away from Johannesburg International Airports, which is more popular, it captured more than 30% of international visitors. This is illustrated in the following table.¹⁰

Province	%
Guateng	55
Western Cape	53
KwaZulu-Natal	35
Eastern Cape	24
Mpumlanga	21
Northern Province	11
Free State	8
Northern Cape	8
North West	6

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal has made a full use of magazines available on South African flights, for example, South African Airways (SAA). *Sawubona* is published by SAA with the aim of comforting passengers while introducing tourists to their destination. The KZNTA has included its articles which focus on introducing tourists to Durban. The September edition of the magazine shows a beautiful view of Durban as a gateway to KwaZulu-Natal. The bold title of

¹⁰ KwaZulu-Natal foreign tourism consumer survey, KZNTA, 1998.

the article reads *Kingdom of the Zulu and some*.¹¹ There are various aspects of Zulu traditional culture clearly articulated in the article unnecessary. It is not surprising that beadwork and Zulu material culture become the prime focus for tourists. This has produced many economic spin-offs for local communities which have established themselves as beadwork producers. While aspects of beadwork have remained linked to tourists' centres like airports, museum are gradually featuring beads in their displays and curio shops. It is worth noting that while street vendors are selling traditional Zulu beads, museums are becoming more sophisticated in their approach to bead work. This is because instead of displaying only contemporary beadwork they are displaying it to show the historic development of beads. Museums are utilizing beads to reflect on their role as both ethnic, racial and national symbol while they have a history in forging separate identities in KwaZulu-Natal.¹² In the article referred to above the following phrase is bolded and highlighted: '*You can't be in the Kingdom without experiencing the cultural festivities*'. There is no indication of how this could be materialized. Since other tourist do not get time to visit African villages museums are the only places where tourist can see the dynamics of culture.¹³ It transpired in the discussions between the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and technology and various stakeholders who participated in the establishment of the Ncome Museum in Dundee. One of the aims of the museum was to provide spaces for indigenous culture within premises. When the idea of the museum came into fruition in 1999 Zulu dancing became one of its prime activities every week. Thus tourists come in a museum in

¹¹ See *Sawubona magazine* which is found in the South African Airways, September edition, 2001, pp.69-79; the British Airways publish the similar magazine which also introduces tourist to various destinations in KwaZulu-Natal, see the December edition of *British Airways Magazine*, December 2000.

¹² E. Liebenberg-Barhuizen, 'Aspects of the Voortrekker beadwork in the Voortrekker Museum', unpublished conference paper, 2000.

¹³ Interview with H. England.

numbers to see Zulu dancing.¹⁴ Thus, museums are becoming a cornerstone for the preservation and the projection of not only the Zulu culture but other cultures are also taken into consideration. The need for vibrant South African cultures has been outlined by the director of the ICC who argues that the trend in conferences is changing: people want to go to more exotic destinations and to have an African experience.¹⁵ Museums provide not only an African experience but a multifaceted experiences which shows how various communities and their cultures forms links in the pursuit of making a living. When tourists start to examine KwaZulu-Natal's inherent qualities, they find a world-class climate, excellent infrastructure, big game parks, mountains, beaches and vibrant local cultures that truly reflect the people of South Africa.¹⁶ This makes them realize the potential the province has for multiculturalism.

Museums as tourists destinations

Museums are tourist destinations. Since museums depict culture it is vital to point out that there is an increasing demand for cultural history by tourists who visit KwaZulu-Natal.¹⁷ The efforts by the KZNTA to use the *Kingdom of the Zulu* to attract tourists to KwaZulu-Natal are worth noting. This demand for cultural history results in the mounting of exhibitions in various museums of the province which focuses on both history and culture of the Zulu. The KZNTA noted a 30% increase in tourists who visit KwaZulu-Natal since 1997. This is attributed to international conferences and events which Durban, as a gateway to KwaZulu-Natal, has hosted. Although these tourists come with different agendas, they become fascinated about the

¹⁴ Ncome museum is the product of the legacy project and has played its vital role in not only depicting the Zulu version of the 1838 conflict but reviving the practice of the Zulu culture, see. B. C. Ndlovu. *Museums and the challenges of interpretations*, (paper presented at Injobo SAMA-KZN conference, 25-27 October 2000, Newcastle).

¹⁵ *Sawubona*, p.70.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ See KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority pamphlets, 2000.

history and culture of the province. Thus visiting museums becomes immensely important.¹⁸

The following table shows some activities which were undertaken by tourists in KwaZulu-Natal in 2000¹⁹:

Activity	%
Beach	47%
Art/Crafts Centre	10%
African Township	9%
Museum, Art Gallery	9%
Hiking/Mountain Climbing	8%
Watch Live Sports	7%
Nature Reserve	6%

Both museums and tourism are about people and places. Museums provide a visual history of the province that is easy to access. It is essential to point out that tourists who come to conferences or sporting events do not have time to read thick books in order to find out more about cultural and historical heritage of the province. They opt to visit museums during their leisure time. Therefore visiting a museum became the only alternative. Museums have been well marketed in tourism brochures that are available in tourism centres around the province. These brochures provides maps and the brief description of what the particular museum offers to its tourists. Thus making it easier for tourists to make their choices of museums of their particular interest.

It is evident that cultural tourism is also practiced to its best in museums. Nevertheless cultural villages, like Shakaland and Phezulu claim to offer a more 'live' and vibrant cultures. As tourists land in Durban International Airport they are introduced to KwaZulu-Natal by the KZNTA which marks its customer outlet with colourful bilingual inscriptions which read,

¹⁸ Visitors' comments in the Old Court House Museum., 2000.

¹⁹ KZNTA, 2000.

'Uyamukelwa eThekekwini Embusweni WaKwaZulu-Welcome to Durban the Kingdom of the Zulu'. This is important since it ensures that tourists become aware that Durban as a gateway to KwaZulu-Natal has a distinguished cultures which must not to be missed. Museums have realigned themselves to provide vibrant Zulu culture and history. The exhibition at the Old Court House on the Zulu Kings is the example. This exhibition depicts the line of kings up to the present king and their short history. To those tourist who could not take a trip to Northern KwaZulu-Natal or rural areas, museums become the only alternative place where they can see the culture of the Zulu in various displays.

Another strategy that the KZNTA has adopted is to place advertisements of cultural tourism in municipal buses, *'experience the many wonders of our kingdom.'* This raises many concerns since KwaZulu-Natal has many attractions to offers to its tourists. Leech reminds us of the misnomer of calling KwaZulu-Natal Zulu country²⁰ as this might limit the potential of places that do not reveal the Zulu culture as tourists destinations. It is in museums that a visitor can get a diverse understood about various groups that live in KwaZulu-Natal. Although these advertisements are an attempt to make tourism much more accessible to everybody, both domestic and international tourists, they tend to prioritize particular destinations for tourists. This perpetuates some discomfort and creates tensions among groups whose heritage is not prioritized.

The use of the image of king Shaka with a spear for tourism purpose raised a debate among various organizations and individuals. While some countenance the use of king Shaka as

²⁰ S. M. Leech. *Twentieth century images of the "Zulu": Selected representations in historical and political discourse'*, unpublished MA thesis. University of South Africa, Pretoria, 1998, p.178.

marketing strategy, others argue that the use of the spear signifies a 'blood-thirsty' individual and continues to perpetuate stereotypes about the 'Zulu warrior'. This raises the question whether tourism satisfies the aspirations of the local citizens or only concerns itself about marketing. The answer to this question depends on the perspective of the beholder. Nevertheless, tourism continues to be seen as KwaZulu-Natal's panacea for its economic problems.²¹

Culture is a symbolic and a valued asset for every nation. It is worth noting that Zulu culture is marketed by the tourism industry as a strategy to increase the amount of tourists who visit KwaZulu-Natal. The KZNTA strategy of incorporating Zulu culture is evident in its street advertisements about the bead ceremony held at Nyokeni palace from the 8th to 9th September 2001.²² Many people assembled and the ceremony was used as a tourist attraction. However both the presence of whites as tourists and the secondary purpose of promoting tourism using *umkhosi womhlanga* has raised many debates about the role and the position of the Zulu culture in tourism. Zulu complained that the ceremony was not for tourism consumption and asserted that it seems as if the King is shifting the importance of the ceremony and the focus to tourism rather than practicing Zulu culture.²³

It is vital to note that KwaZulu-Natal has been marketed by tourism as the Kingdom of the Zulu. This raises many questions about the neglect and the role of other races and ethnic groups

²¹ Ibid.

²² Author's observation. The *Umkhosi womhlanga* (bead ceremony) instills pride and self discipline among the Zulu girls and it promotes sexual abstinence prior marriage. During this ceremony girls from all over KwaZulu-Natal assembly at the King's isigodlo (Nyokeni) to be tested for virginity and soon move to dance for the King holding beads. This Zulu culture was revived by the king in 1985 as an attempt to contribute in a struggle against HIV/AIDS.

²³ Author's discussion with an person who remain anonymous and who is close to the King's affairs.

who have been residing in KwaZulu-Natal. Ndebele reminds us that KwaZulu-Natal is the place where east has met west, it is essential not to downplay the role of Indians in the making of vibrant and the unique heritage.²⁴ Their arrival in 1860 is historical and vital in understanding the nature of the social fabric and the landscape of memory in KwaZulu-Natal. It is undeniable that KwaZulu-Natal has been inhabited by not only the Zulu, among Africans but also the Sotho at Nquthu in the northern KwaZulu-Natal. However, their presence is seen as peripheral and they are pushed towards the margins of memory. Thus it is a misnomer to call KwaZulu-Natal the Kingdom of the Zulu.

Tourism growth in the twentieth century KwaZulu-Natal

The rapid growth of tourist potential in KwaZulu-Natal since 1994 is noted by Soni and the KZNTA statistics. This growth is noted from domestic, regional and international tourists.²⁵ The potential for KwaZulu-Natal to increase both arrivals and expenditure is essential, considering that the majority of the hitherto marginalised groups in society have not yet traveled.²⁶ Another contributing factor is that the last years of the twentieth century witnessed the advent of democratic governments replacing military dictators, thus the image of Africa started to change. Instead of fear and despair when one thinks of visiting Africa hopes started to rise especially among international tourists. While international tourism is flourishing, domestic tourism has been tipped to play a major role especially KwaZulu-Natal tourism. October 1999 to December 2000 saw approximately 2.6 million domestic tourists visit KwaZulu-Natal.

²⁴ S. Ndebele, Keynote address on the international museum day workshop entitled '*Commemoration and Monuments-Peace, reconciliation and Nation-building*', at KwaMuhle Museum, 18 May 2000.

²⁵ See tourism brochure.

²⁶ A. Soni, 'Making Cultural tourism'.

KwaZulu-Natal's share in national tourism was approximately 42%. The most important source markets for domestic tourists being its own residents and Gauteng province.²⁷

It is worth noting that the year 1994 became a turning point in shaping the nature of tourism potential. The successful political transition that South Africa had, overshadowed many misfortunes. Thus, following the democratic elections of April 1994, extremely positive growth in visitor arrivals from both the regional and international markets was recorded.²⁸ Soni argues that tourism will continue to grow as previously neglected people become tourists and travelers themselves.

It is noted in the early chapters that by the mid-1970s South African museums started to define themselves as tourist destinations. While the appetite for the past is greatly increasing in South Africa museums have also increased. The last five years of the twentieth century witnessed a number of museums being established, among them the Nelson Mandela Museums in Eastern Cape, Robben Island in Western Cape and the Income Museum in KwaZulu-Natal, and monuments being erected. These museums, especially the Ncome Museum, have proved to be mostly visited since it is located in the battlefield. As Soni has noted, the preservation of history and the quality and the management of museums is of utmost importance for successful tourism. Becoming familiar with the history of an area can be one of the most compelling of all travel motivation. Nevertheless, had this been a reality many tourists would have prioritized visiting museums as their top motivation for visiting KwaZulu-Natal. The following table

²⁷ See KZNTA statistics, 2001.

²⁸ The thorough examination of KZNTA's statistics support this fact, see KZNTA brochure; A. Soni, 'Making Cultural Tourism', p.91.

illustrates that tourist who visited KwaZulu-Natal did so with the aim of being on holidays rather than attracted by the Zulu culture.²⁹

Purpose	%
Holiday	61
VFR ³⁰	23
Business	14
Other	5

The KZNTA statistics, provide a view which stipulates that with the vast majority of foreign visitors originating from the United Kingdom, and the inclusion of the North American and Australian markets, the home language of over one third of South Africa's foreign visitors is English. The use of English as a medium in our museums makes things easier for our tourist to communicate with displays. Therefore, according to the KZNTA there are no linguistic barriers, which Soni mentions, with regards to museum visiting.

One has to note the discrepancy between the core attractions and activities undertaken. When tourists are in host countries, the idea of visiting a museum is only 1% in 1998 but when they arrive among the activities that they undertook visiting museums constitutes 19%, while cultural village visits goes up to 40%. An increase of 2% of visitors in 2000 in museums as core attractions is worth noting at this stage. It is evident that museum visiting has changed and museums are becoming core attractions to tourists. The following table how activities undertaken by tourist in KwaZulu-Natal-foreign visitors:³¹

²⁹ KwaZulu-Natal foreign tourism consumer survey. KZNTA. 1998.

³⁰ Visiting a Friend or Relative.

³¹ www.kzn.org.za (KZNTA 2000).

Activity	Percentage
Beach	42%
Nature Reserve	40%
Art/Craft Centre	28%
Cultural Village	19%
Museum/Art Gallery	19%
Hiking/Mountain climbing	18%

It is important to note that among tourists who visit KwaZulu-Natal, domestic tourists form the majority. The KZNTA statistics shows that the majority of people who filled out visitors book entries in museum and art galleries in KwaZulu-Natal were from within the province. The second most important source of visitors was Gauteng. The following table shows the major sources of tourism in KwaZulu-Natal:

Country	Percentage
RSA	73 %
UK	7%
USA	4%
Holland	2%
Germany	2%

It is essential to point out that among foreign tourists the United Kingdom the major source of international tourists. The Anglo-Boer War and the relationship that Britain had with South Africa could be the prime causes.

In conclusion museums are tourists centres. Museums play a vital role in providing cultural heritage which is the cornerstone for museum visiting. There is a necessity for museums to forge links with tourism industry so to ensure that both partners contribute to the development of tourism industry. As Robbie Naidoo, a manager at KZNTA has asserted, KwaZulu-Natal is a unique place that has it all. It deserves nothing less than the participation of museums in the facilitation of a heritage which is much more representative.

CHAPTER FIVE

Museums and their role in education

Introduction

'I have spent several very pleasant hours in this museum [Durban Museum] and I am sure that it must form a great attraction to a very large number of the many visitors to this city [Durban]. This museum have a great educative value'¹

Abrahams and Corsane point out that for the past few decades South African museums and heritage institutions, organizations or agencies have been fighting for survival by claiming that they are valuable educational resources. Traditionally museums were established to serve as research and educational institutions. This is evident if one examines the objectives of the Ptolemy's museum which he founded in 280 B.C. Among the aims of this museum education featured prominently.² These museums were not intended to serve the general public but only for aristocrats and other dignitaries. Moreover, the focus of the museum was on its content rather than its visitors. This traditional method, as Hudson calls it, has begun to blur.³ It is therefore true that during this old trend museums were content to reach a small, narrow and self-selected audience. Their narrow pragmatic focus in the past (i.e. the focus on collections and professional activities) reflected their small, relatively homogenous constituency base.⁴ In accordance with the present museological trends, museums are not only reaching out to a larger audience and new groups, they have become proactive in forging sustainable links and partnerships with communities they represent and they are generating satisfaction from their new patrons. Museums have become fully educational centres and hubs of holistic knowledge

¹ Captain F.E. Selon, Report of the General Purpose Committee, 20/10/1926, NAR, 3/DBN/1/2/463.

² For further discussion on the aims of the 'classical' museums see, G.E., Burcaw, *Introduction to Museums Work*, Nashville, USA, 1975; E. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the shaping of knowledge*, Routledge, London, 1992; Author's interviews with Professors I. Filatova, S. J. Maphalala, Y. Seleti; Drs J. Vincent, I. Pols, Messrs. P. Tichman and G. Torlage; Mrs H. England and Ms Y. Winters.

³ K. Hudson, 'The museum refuses to stand still', *Museums International*, No. 197, 1998, p.43.

about man and the universe. The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. The first section argues that museums play a vital role in education. It also points out that while museums' focus has been put only on education to schools, adult education has been sidelined. Recently, this trend had collapsed and today museums provide education for adult and young people. The second section is an analysis of research which was conducted to elicit views from history teachers.

Learning and teaching with objects has often entailed the collection of groups of related things, whether by individual, groups, or by state. Conversely, the existence of a collection of things has promoted and enabled the production of knowledge. Hooper-Greenhill asserts that in some cases objects have been assembled in order to shape consciousness in the context of ruling class control.⁵ In other cases a more democratic end has been paramount. The construction of a world view through the choice of representative objects and their arrangement in space has been an enduring function for collections, although the world's view so represented has varied with time, context, individual subjectivities and the context of knowing. It should not be forgotten that education is one of the prime functions of a museum and the reasons for the existence of a museum.

It is thus essential to point out that museum education has a long history and its application varies from decade to decade in KwaZulu-Natal. This is evident when one examines the nature of museum education in the previous dispensation and the kind of lecture series these museums conducted. During the old dispensation, museum workers were largely concerned with the care

⁴ This has also been pointed out in the case of USA, see N. Kotler and P. Kotler, 'Can museums be all things to all people? : Missions, goals, and marketing's role', *Museum Management and curatorship*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2000, pp.271-287.

of their collections. However, with the evolution of democratic principles, the concept of care has been widened to include the way in which these collections could be used for the benefit of sectors. This movement has been rapid and has resulted in many changes in the way in which museums operate. It has brought the educational role of the museum to the fore. The collapse of the old trend gave birth to a new dispensation in museum education. Instead of being inward looking, they have become outward looking and more aware of their responsibilities in educating the visitors.⁶

Early Museums and Education during the old dispensation

Museum education is centrally concerned with teaching with and learning from objects and specimens. The history of museum education tells us that museum education has undergone into many stages of its development. It is traced back to the objectives of the early museums where education featured prominently. During the Middle Ages, the relationship between objects and a human being was emphasized and that created a great necessity for a museum to provide objects which were of educational value. During the Renaissance, collections were compiled to represent the entire structure of knowledge about the universe.⁷ The only problem these collections encountered was that they were not widely utilized since museums themselves were elitist in their nature. These began to blur when the Louvre Museum in Paris opened its door to the wider public during the eighteenth century. This museum was established as part of the French education system, thus marking a new trend in museum education. It should be

⁵ E. Hooper-Greenhill. 'Museum education', *The educational role of the museum*. University of Leicester press. London, 1998, pp-229-257.

⁶ See the annual reports of the Durban Local History Museum, 1920s and those on that Natal Museum during the 1920s and 1930s: Also Hooper-Greenhill does mention the question of old museum education in the case of Britain, see E. Hooper-Greenhill (ed), *The role of museum in education*, Leicester Press. London, 1998.

noted that previously no education system bothered with the establishment of such institutions, although schools used museums to further their own objectives.⁸ The educational role was carried out in museums in different ways: through thematic and labeled displays, through inexpensive catalogues, and through gallery teaching. The museum became a place to learn, to meet friends, to talk, to paint and to enjoy exhibitions and events.⁹ This resulted in the 'object-lesson' becoming the major feature of nineteenth century schooling. This kind of teaching method was seen as being more learner-centred, like the current Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in South Africa.

The initial aim of object-lessons was imaginative and forward looking on the side of the students. Nevertheless, in the event much object-teaching may well have degenerated into rote learning, a process that was no doubt partly enabled by the production of endless method textbooks.¹⁰ Also during the nineteenth century, both local and internationally, a museum was seen as providing a major component for researchers. This trend (old trend) also undervalued the scope of museum education since very few people had access to education, and thus museum education became a privilege for few individuals of high profile.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, organized provision for visitors other than school groups was limited. As a new century began, the Victorian values that celebrated museums as

⁷ For more information on the global history of museum education see, E. Hooper-Greenhill, 'Museum education', in E. Hooper-Greenhill (ed). *The educational role of the museum*, University of Leicester Press. London, 1998, p.231.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ D. F. Cameron, 'The death of the museum and the emancipation of culture', in *SAMAB*, vol.24, no.1, 2000. pp.1-11.

¹⁰ R. Silverstone, 'The medium is the museum: on objects and logics in times and space', R. Miles and L. Zavala(eds) *Towards the museum of the future: New European perspectives*, Routledge, London, 1994, pp.161-176.

institutions for educational self-help were already dying, to be replaced by less altruistic attitudes. As the century progressed, holistic approaches to the museum as an educational institution in its own right were superseded by gradual arrangements for different audiences, with a concentration on school groups. Soon, museum education was understood to mean children's activities and provision for schools.

It is crucial to point out that during the twentieth century, the question of employing education staff in museum was not considered. Curators were running all museum related activities including education. It was not until the 1920s that growing numbers of school visits necessitated the need for specialization and the employment of educational staff. This marked a turning point in the history of museum education. The last quarter of the twentieth century witnessed a further change in museum education. During this period the term museum education was broadened and applied to adult education as well. Museum education also shifted from being agents of formal education only to embracing notions of informal education.¹¹

When the idea of the establishment of the South African Museum (SAM) in Cape Town came to fruition in 1825 among its main functions was that the museum would serve as an educational resource. This idea influenced the nature of the formation of museums during the nineteenth century in South Africa. From the late nineteenth century the value of education in museums was equated with that of civilization. It was this notion of education that influenced the nature of museums which were established in the then Natal. Both the Natal Museum and the Durban Museum were established with education as one of the prime objectives. In the case

of the Natal Museum, there was a notion that a scheme of higher education in scientific subjects was to be formulated, and museums were to play an important role in the working-out of such scheme. It was then proposed that lectures and practical demonstrations were to be given periodically to the general public.¹² As Chubb argued that:

museums are institutions of visual instructions and great popular educators. The museum is one of the foremost educational institutions in Borough, and in its own quiet and unobtrusive way in perhaps doing folk as the stereotyped school. Teachers should become more acquainted with its treasures and encourage their pupils to visit it more frequently.¹³

It is then vital at this point to note that during the late nineteenth century, the concept of museum education was restricted to those who can acquire education. The term was only applied to formal education and the role of museums in transmitting certain values and ideologies was not considered. Exhibitions and their ability to educate was pushed to the margins. Moreover, as the scope of education was too narrow, museum education serviced a very small sector of the society.¹⁴ Museum education was used to supplement the then prevailing ideology which was based on segregation and later apartheid and there were strong links between the content of the lectures series that were given to the school children and the historiography. Moreover, it appears in the archival data that only white schools were able to utilize the museum for their educational purposes. The main focus of lectures given to school children varied from time to time. During the early years of both the Natal and the Durban Museum 1920s, the focus of lectures was on mammals, insects and wild animals which were mostly collected by Dr. Warren. This was because during the period prior to the 1920s

¹¹ This became prevalent in interviews that I conducted with Ms U. Winters, Ms Royeppen and H. England.

¹² See the aims of the Natal Museum, Minutes of the Natal Museum, 1904-1905, p.32; this was also prevalent in the interview which I conducted with Dr J. Vincent (20/12/2000).

¹³ Chubb, Letter to the General Purpose Committee dated 24/07/1923, NAR, 3DBN/4/1/2/463.

¹⁴ See interview with Ms Y. Winters.

museums tended to focus more on science. Profound changes occurred during the beginning of the 1920s.

The mounting of exhibitions of historical interest within the science museums marked another episode in the history of museum education in KwaZulu-Natal. By this time museum education had begun to change its content as well as its focus.¹⁵ It started to put an emphasis on subjects which were historical and anthropological in their nature. Among the lectures given by the education staff 'the arrival of the settlers' became the main subject. This was due to the white centenary celebration in Natal, in which both the Natal and Durban Museums played a pivotal role.¹⁶ The 1920s witnessed a significant number of schools which visited the Durban Museum. During these decades the term 'museum education' entered another significant trend. Museum education was not only restricted to school education but the role of museums in educating the public was recognized.¹⁷ By the virtue of the content of lecture series it is apparent that the nature of museum education became a cornerstone for indoctrination and served to instill certain biases that were ideological in their nature. During the 1930s although the focus was still on the settler's stories in Natal, the Iron Age was also gaining momentum.

By this time Miss Mary Ritchie played an influential role in broadening the scope and the content of museum education. She was employed by the Durban Museum as a member of staff. She believed that museums educate their visitors in an ongoing manner. For her, education in

¹⁵ See annual reports of the Durban Museum and the Natal Museum between the years 1915-1925. for the case of the Durban Museum see NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/3/601

¹⁶ See NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/3/602; E. C. Chubb, *The 1924 Centenary*, a special publication which included the programme and the whole history of the arrival of the whites in Natal. This publication indicate that whites arrived in an empty land. The only place which inhibited was in northern KwaZulu-Natal and only make note of Shaka.

¹⁷ This is evident when one examine the Annual Reports of the Natal Museum in 1920-1923.

museums occurred as a result of a planned, conscientious system of conveying information, and informally as people visited exhibitions.¹⁸ She conducted tours in the museum from 10h30 until 15h00. Due to her commitment she was able to organize lectures at 8.00pm to accommodate those who were working. Moreover, she became the first museum professional to include aspects of arts, natural and cultural history in her series of lectures. These lectures were well advertised in the then *Natal Advertiser*.

In the reception to commemorate the opening of the Durban Museum which was held on the 23rd July 1937, Mr. H.E. Jones, principal of the Natal Technical College asserted that a museum is an essential cultural and educational amenity serving all classes and all ages of the community, and it is a matter of importance that its development shall be commensurated with that of the city.¹⁹ They serve to educate both their visitors with exhibitions they mount, and school groups with organized guided tours and lectures.

It is also vital to point out that during the 1940s the content of education in museum was still highly biased and continued to perpetuate certain myths. Also during the 1940s only those schools which were in the proximity to the city visited the museums, both with the case of Natal and Durban Museum. This will be seen in the later part of this chapter when statistics prove that most of the schools which used museums as a supplement to the subject of history, were those less than five kilometers from the city centre. The following school were recorded to have visited the Durban Museum in 1940: Windsor Park; St. Joseph School; Durban North School; Park View School; Gordon Road Girls High School; Stamford Hill School; Overport

¹⁸ See NAR, 3DBN/4/1/3/602.

¹⁹ See museum jubilee, 1887-1937. NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/3/601.

School; and Botanic Gardens Boys' High School.²⁰ It then became clear that among these schools the nature of visit was more than a question of proximity rather it was a question of class, race and the identities that museum education fostered. The absence of themes which focused on Indians, Africans and Coloureds lives and their contribution in the making of the past is well noted.

During the old trend of museum education there was no more valuable method of co-operation and formal partnership with the schools except by daily visits of classes to the museum for talks and lectures on subjects embraced within the scope of those museums. Schools were only expected to make a prior booking before they visited and it is not clear what kinds of links the museums had with schools after their visit. No outreach programmes or similar activities were undertaken by museum staff to schools and no lectures were reported to have taken place outside the museum premises. This typifies the narrow minded context in which museums saw themselves, as only concerned about those who come to them rather than reaching out those who could not come. Museum reports of both the Natal and Durban Museum show that the same schools who visited the museum during the 1920s were the same schools which were still strong museum visitors during the 1940s. Nevertheless, during the late 1940s the Town Clerk reported that there were many arguments for bringing the museum into closer touch with communities so that they make a greater use of it. The policy of museum education was also put into consideration. The prime objective was to seek the co-operation of the Department of Education to enable schools to make use of museums.²¹ It was not until the 1970s, however, that this view came to fruition.

²⁰ See the report of the director, February and March 1940, NAR/3/DBN/4/1/3/602.

²¹ See Town Clerk's memorandum for General Purposes Committee, 16 September 1947, NAR, 3/DBN/4/1/3/602.

The decade of the 1950s is essential in the history of education generally in South Africa. This decade witnessed the promulgation of the notorious Bantu Education Act, opposed by African political organizations which were mobilizing for African liberation. The Act became the cornerstone of apartheid education policy from the 1950s until the 1980s.²² This system of education ensured that Africans were provided with education which prepared them to be manual labourers in the workplace.

The early 1970s marked the beginning of the end of the old museum education. During this decade museums vigorously embarked on putting more emphasis on their role in education. They became proactive and embarked on outreach projects to schools not only in their vicinity but also to the outskirts of the city. This was due to the fact that by 1970, news of the introduction of television to the Republic was received and this raised possibilities of future difficulties for the museum in their bid for the attention of the public.²³ While television was seen as offering a great opportunity as an educational medium, it was viewed as a potential distraction, especially for young people who formed the larger part of museum visitors. The question of the extent to which museums would suffer a drop in attendance when the full television service was offered remained unclear. Museums felt that the time was opportune for them to consider the validity of their claims on the time and attention of the public. Museum professionals thought that providing new and 'fresh' exhibitions might attract more visitors to come to the museum. It was also decided that a forbidding facade and heavily academic

²² Jonathan Hyslop has explored the question of the implementation of the Bantu education and resistance to it, see J. Hyslop, *The classroom struggle: Policy and resistance in South Africa 1940-1990*, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 1999.

²³ For more information see the Annual report of the Natal Museum, 1970-71, p.4.

atmosphere must be avoided so that the materially and intellectually less privileged would not be discouraged from coming in. They felt that the sense of participation was to be achieved especially by encouraging more contacts between museum staff and communities. It was against this background that the Natal Museum and the Durban Museum started to use films extensively in their educational programmes so to compete the pressure posed by the television.²⁴ In addition, the necessity of employing a specialist in museum education was recognized. Dr. Stuckenberg, then director of the Natal Museum, asserted that:

the delivery of formal public lectures by members of the museum staff or by other qualified persons on subjects within the scope of the institution is now a recognized activity; and many museums have a properly designed lecture hall incorporated in their buildings, with the necessary equipment for showing motion films and latent slides.²⁵

This led to the realization of the need to develop museum education extensively. As Wilmont argues, education in museums in the region only started properly during the 1970s. This does not mean that there were no educational services in museums prior to the 1970s. Although museum education was highly recognized in school it remained in a low-key position and most definitely not considered to be a 'main core' function. Collections, research and public exhibitions held centre stage.²⁶ Museum education was therefore seen as a major development which would help museums to attract huge numbers of visitors thus justifying their relevance to the public.

In the Natal Museum's report, Dr. Stuckenberg wrote that:

for young people in particular, who in these times tend to have little real respect of their actual heritage and take for granted the achievements of earlier generations,

²⁴ See Annual reports of both the Natal and Durban Museum, 1970/1-1971/2.

²⁵ Annual report on the Natal Museum, 1972-3.

²⁶ B. Wilmont, 'An overview of museum education in South Africa: Models for the future', *SAMAB*, vol.20, 1994, p.33.

there must be a clear demonstration that museums have relevance. The achievement of this will involve shedding some cherished notions about what the public ought to see, discontinuing modes of display that are traditional rather than rational, and avoiding the presentation of objects and data about them in a context not relevant to the actual environment and experiences of today's young people.²⁷

This indicate that the museum was no longer only self-conscious about its collections in the exhibition hall but was concerned about becoming a major institution and role player in promoting education in the region.

As museum education focused on aspects of whites' arrival and whites' history in South Africa, during this decade there was a major change in the nature and the content of lectures that were given by museum educationists. Instead of focusing only on the selected topics in their themes, for example primitive arts and Durban past ad present, they started to give lectures on issues like beadwork, Zulu history and culture and Indian's culture. It appears that from 1972 the Natal Museum especially, began an extensive campaign to invite schools of other race groups. As a result from 1972 the visits of Indian and Coloured schools was noted to have increased the numbers of visitors.

Educational Services²⁸		
Description	Classes	Pupils
'European Schools'	358	9 787
'Non-European'	77	4 383
Total	435	14 170

This above table shows the number of schools and pupils which visited the museum in 1972. This is significant due to its contribution in increasing visitor numbers to museums. During

²⁷ Director's report. Annual report of the Natal Museum, 1970-1971.

1973 while there was no educational officer in the Natal Museum, films played a crucial in replacing the tasks of professional personnel. In the Durban Museum, museum education also encountered difficulties. This was because the professional education officer struggling to attract schools located in the periphery. It proved to be difficult since there were linguistic constraints which meant museum education did not prosper among the hitherto neglected groups.²⁹ While museum education was in the state of disarray and uncertainty in Durban Museum, the Natal Museum was reaching a major stage in its development. The appointment of Miss Iris Bornman as an education officer in the-mid 1970s marked a milestone in the history and the development of museum education. She broadened the scope of museum education and introduced another sector within museum education, adult education. Prior to her appointment, museum education had focused only on pupils and disregarded adult education as its one of major component was. She gave a number of workshops on adult education between the years 1975 to 1977. Moreover a special workshop on basic education was held where about seventy people attended, a great achievement in museum education.³⁰ While such activities were still beginning, a massive increase in patronage by schools was recorded in the Natal Museum from the mid to late 1970s.

Year	Visitors	Scholars	Total
1976/77	55 299	9 074	64 373
1977/78	75 009	9 147	84 156
1978/79	66 525	13 306	79 811
1979/80	79 849	14 888	94 038

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Minutes of the Town Clerk, City of Durban, 1973-1974.

From the above table it is evident that museum education played a crucial role in increasing the number of visitors to the entire museum. It is also apparent that during the late 1970s there was an increase in focusing on multiracialism in museum education. The Natal Museum recorded the following numbers from the years 1979 to 1981:

	Classes		Pupils		Average per Class	
	1979/80	1980/81	1979/80	1980/81	1979/80	1980/81
White Schools	259	318	7801	9561	30.1	30.6
Black Schools	70	50	5385	4635	79.9	92.7
Indian Schools	14	13	915	1251	61.0	96.2
Coloured Schools	11	8	787	511	71.5	63.9

These were the numbers of the schools which visited the Natal Museum.

Among the topics which became major themes of the late 1970s, the following featured prominently: The Zulu People, the Stone Age, the Anglo-Zulu war, Durban's early inhabitants, and the San.³¹

The broadened scope for museum education necessitated the need for the use of multilingualism in the lecture series and tour guides by museum educationists. There was a growing concern that the majority of school children, especially African schools, were experiencing problems of understanding English. The Natal Museum's response was the realization of the need to employ

³⁰ See annual reports of the Natal Museum, 1975-1977.

³¹ Annual reports of the Natal Museum, 1979-1980.

a person who could speak both English and Zulu. When an African education staff member was employed in the late 1970s it proved that the museum was concerned about taking the needs of its visitors to the fore. It then became clear that for the museums to cope in the growing competition from cinemas and television, they had to take into cognizance the challenges that they were facing and try to identify the needs of their visitors.

In the 1980s the educational role of museums increased as shown by the regular visits of schools. Teachers opinions indicated that the rise in the number of classes of school children coming to museums for guided tours and lectures was surely an indication that exposure to original, significant objects in an informative and interesting manner was a worthwhile experience.³² During the early 1980s, museums began to focus not only on schools which visited them but they went to schools and demonstrated their potential as educational sources. For example, in March 1982 the Old Court House educational officer visited the following schools: Stamford Hill, Durban High School and Westville, Rosburgh High School. Nevertheless during the 1980s, museum education did not flourish as extensively as was anticipated. This was due to the fact that the major focus was devoted to aspects of developing new researches and new audiences as it had become clear that the old trend was collapsing.³³

New facets of museum education in the 1990s

The beginning of the 1990s marked vigorous changes in the museum sphere (these have been outlined in previous chapter). As museums were entering into a new phase, museum education became the vanguard for establishing partnerships with various stakeholders involved in to

³² This became apparent in a discussion with a history with a history teacher at Redhill.

communities. They started to establish links with schools and the provincial Department of Education with the view to strengthening their approach to education and a better coordinated system of museum education effectively linked with the schools' activities.³⁴ The Durban Museum provided service to the public visitors. Pupils visit museums with their teachers to pursue their syllabus and curriculum. This is because museums are places where history learners, for example, can see and revisit the past and in doing so they are part and parcel and feel incorporated in the past that they study. In some instances teachers use museums as resources for preparation of their lessons. In Pinetown Museum for example teachers usually come and collect material and they eventually come with their learners to the museum. A museum becomes an integral part of learning and education. Talk and lectures given by academics, guests and museum officers, are also provided to cater for adult education.

During the 1990s museum education entered another phase. Unlike the 1920s and 1940s when only museum workers gave lectures, during the 1990s visitors from universities and other institutions provided lectures at museums on various subjects. This broadened the collections in museums and their scope became multifaceted. As visitors gave lectures in museums, museums themselves became popular as centres of knowledge and hubs of interpretations. The relevance for schools was continuously increasing.

³³ This point became evident when examining the Durban and Natal Museum's annual reports between the years 1975-1989.

³⁴ Interview with Ms Roepypen, Kwa Muhle Museum and Ms Y. Winters.

With the drastic imbalances which were created by the South African education system during the apartheid era major, discrepancies and shortages have been noted.³⁵ Museums have been identified as major institutions which can provide facilities to schools which might not have been able to afford these crucial benefits. Children from disadvantaged communities do not have the benefit of learning from real objects then museums become the solution for these problems. They have limited amounts of books and audio visual material and certainly do not have the benefit of visiting nature and game reserves.³⁶

Schools that are in the urban areas and are governed by wealthier governing bodies cannot be compared with those suffering from the legacy of deprivation. Bennett, in his survey in Durban High School (DHS), points out that the economic viability of the school is very apparent, especially among the former white schools. He argues that the school has highly qualified biology and science teachers, and fully equipped laboratories for both subjects.³⁷ The biology laboratory has even its own mounted birds, reptiles and mammal species. Children study live animals, conduct experiments and dissection, receiving for most part a good education. The question is what about those who have been deprived of those resources and who cannot afford to pay for them. Visiting a museum becomes the possible alternative.

The end of the twentieth century witness a new scenario in museum education. The Commonwealth Association of Museums (CAM) organized a workshop which was held in Kenya in 1997. The workshop entitled 'Children in African Museums' was dedicated to review

³⁵ See J. Hyslop. *The classroom struggle: Policy and resistance in South Africa 1940-1990*, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 1999.

³⁶ See interview with H. England.

the role of museums as socialization agents for children and how museums cater to the needs of children who are believed to be the most important part in museum patronage. At the end of the workshop the CAM adopted a 'Nairobi Declaration on Children in African Museums' which set out fundamental principles: Museums should be children-friendly; there should be a free entry to museums, monuments and sites for children; all museum staff should be involved and committed to children's programmes; and last but not least, mission statements should be developed for museums as institutions and professional organizations that include an emphasis on the needs of children. The commitment of museums to develop projects and strategies that would be centred on visitors' interests is an indication that museum education is concerned about its contribution to the well being of museums and their role as educational institutions.

Local History Museums and education: A teachers' perspective

From the above section it has been made clear that museums are educational institutions. Since the study relies on information from the archival data and interviews from professional museologists, this section is the result of the questionnaires that were distributed to about 60 schools in KwaZulu-Natal both urban and rural. These questionnaires were directed to history teachers with the objective of finding out the extent to which they utilize local history museums as part of educational resources. The findings were as follows:

- It became apparent that most of the teachers know of the existence of museums in general have visited museums and have visited them in numerous occasions. This shows that the awareness by museums that their institutions can contribute to education has been well

³⁷ D. Bennett 'Does the Durban Natural Science Museum provide a formal role in education', *Museum education as potential Dodo in the future South Africa (proceedings of the 11 Biennial SAMA conference, 18-22 October 1993)*, p. 59.

publicized. The table below shows the response of the teachers to whether they have visited a museum or not.

Have you visited a museum?

	Responses	Percent
No	4	6.7
Yes	56	93.3
Total	60	100

- As has been noted above, although the concept of museum education started to mushroom during the 1970s most teachers have been to museums. However most of them have not visited the museums for more than twice. Many teachers wrote that although they have been to museums, most of them have not been there for more than two. This is shown in the table below.

How many times have you been to the museum?

	Responses	Percent
Nil	4	6.7
Once	17	28.3
Twice	15	25.0
Thrice	8	13.3
More	16	26.7
Total	60	100

- In the previous chapter I have argued that one of the challenges facing museums is that they are mostly located in cities. The teachers' responses proved that most of the schools which use museums are those are in close proximity to the cities. The question then arises as to what kind of school and which schools use the museums more often. Schools which are urban, white and/or multi-racial and middle class- controlled are more likely to visit

museums.³⁸ The question of distance between a museum and schools proves to be the major hindrance for visiting or not visiting a museum. Among these, financial issues are prominent. As one teacher pointed out ‘it becomes a problem even if we want to take our learners to a museum because they have to pay about twenty Rands per child for transport.’³⁹

How far is the nearest museum?

	Responses	Percent
Less than a kilometre	8	13.3
About five kilometres	24	39.0
About twenty kilometres	7	11.7
More than thirty kilometres	21	35.0
Total	60	100

- Before visiting to a museum learners have a their own attitude towards it. This is because museums are not well advertised in both print and electronic media. This usually changes after they have visited a museum.⁴⁰ This is illustrated in the following table:

Did learners' attitudes change after they have visited the museum?

	Responses	Percent
Nil	4	6.7
No	1	1.7
Yes	55	91.7
Total	60	100

- Before the new paradigm in museum education, curators and other museum workers were responsible for giving lectures and guided tours to school groups. There were no

³⁸ Discussion with a history teacher in Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale.

³⁹ This became apparent in my discussion with a school teacher in Cato Ridge.

⁴⁰ Author's observation. I asked a nine (9) year old about what he think a museum is. The only meaning he can give was that a museum is a very boring and a place for only 'adults' although he has never been inside the museum. After the formal visit organized by the school this changed drastically.

professional educationists employed by museums with the aim of facilitating education in museums. This changed in the 1970s noted in the first section of this chapter. The following table suggest that teachers receive an attention from museum education officers while in their visit to museums.

Was the staff available to facilitate your visit to the museum?

	Responses	Percent
Nil	4	6.7
No	1	1.7
Yes	55	91.7
Total	60	100

- The next question was whether teachers use museums as a supplement to education. It became apparent that history teachers especially in schools which are in the outskirts of the city and remote from towns cannot use museums to supplement their history classes. The reason for the high rate of museum users is that out of all the questionnaires which came back properly filled out, most of them were from schools not more that ten kilometres from the cities.

Do you use museums as supplement to your classes?

	Responses	Percent
Nil	2	38.3
No	23	3.3
Yes	35	58.3
Total	60	100

- With the introduction of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) museums are destined to play a major role as educational institutions. The OBE approach emphasizes demonstration, more practical learning, involving learners in the lesson. This has meant raising up the role of museums since it is in museums where most of the materials and resources are store, especially for students of human and natural sciences. As a result much negotiation with the

Department of Education and Culture and workshops has taken place with the aim of bridging the gap between museums and schools. When teachers asked whether they think museums can play a major role in OBE, the overwhelming majority responded positively as the following table shows:

Do you think museums can play a role in OBE?

	Responses	Percent
Nil	2	3.3
No	1	1.7
Yes	57	95.0
Total	60	100

- In a discussion with a history teacher it became apparent that there is no close relationship between what is being displayed in museums and what they are teaching in the syllabus.⁴¹ It then became clear that the issue is more than just a question of not displaying what schools are teaching but also a poor focus on South African and African history by the school syllabus which has been seen as more Eurocentric. Moreover, there is still a problem of the school syllabus not focusing on local history which museums are focusing on. This has resulted in a discrepancy between what museums are displaying and the schools. The table below shows that the kind of history that museums display does not always correspond with the school syllabus.

Are Museums relevant to the kind of history that is taught in schools?

	Responses	Percent
Nil	2	3.3
No	43	71.7
Yes	15	25.0
Total	60	100

⁴¹ Discussion with a history teacher in Estcourt.

- Visitors are one of the most fundamental stakeholders in the museum since museums render their services to its visitors. KwaZulu-Natal has more than thirty-five museums. Some date their origins back in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless teachers showed that they have visited KwaMuhle Museum in Durban which was only established in 1994 more than others which are older. This is illustrated in the following table:

Name the museum/s you have visited?

	Responses	Percent
Nil	4	6.7
Begtheil Museum	1	1.7
Durban Natural Science Museum	1	1.7
Empangeni Museum	1	1.7
Eshowe Museum	3	5.0
Fort Dunford Museum	4	6.7
Killie Campbell	1	1.7
Kwa Dukuza Museum	1	1.7
KwaMuhle Museum	13	21.7
Natal Museum	11	18.3
Old Court House Museum	6	10.0
Old House Museum	2	3.3
Ondini Cultural Museum	1	1.7
Pinetown Museum	1	1.7
Port Natal Meritime Museum	1	1.7
Port Shepstone Museum	3	5.0
Siege Museum	1	1.7
Talana Museum	1	1.7
Voortrekker Museum	3	5.0
Total	60	100

Conclusion

This chapter has emphasized that museums have changed their roles, as has the nature of the audience they are serving. Instead of being institutions where education was used as a tool to foster elitist ideas, they have restructured their focus and become concerned with educating those communities who have been seen as peripheral. This chapter has also pointed out that although museum education has gained momentum in the discourse within museums, there is a discrepancy between what museums are displaying and the history in schools.

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to examine the nature and the making of political identities in KwaZulu-Natal museums. It is apparent that museums are neither apolitical nor stand uninfluenced by the political discourses that inform the underlying framework in the making of history. Museums reflect the processes of history, as they themselves are part of history. As Levitz reminds us, museums tell us as much about the values and ideologies held in a society at any given period, as they can also tell us about the past.¹

Museums have a history of being manipulated and used by powerful groups to perpetuate their own ideologies. In KwaZulu-Natal, the term 'museum' has never been restricted to 'curatorial tasks' and objectivity but it has meant a place of contention where those who hold control in the political arena are favoured. This thesis argues that during the twentieth century, museum movement has been characterized by the overwhelming manipulation as well as significant development of new approaches.

In the past museums served dual purposes: as agents of the state to provide material evidence of the past so as to justify the white man's regimes; and to perpetuate the neglect of African histories and cultures both during the pre-colonial and post colonial eras. The overwhelming distortion of indigenous histories and the entrenchment of Eurocentricity characterized this trend. The cultures and histories of Africans were perceived as barbaric, peripheral and unchanging. Since African cultures and artifacts were not treated as part of the historical knowledge there was no need for them to be collected and preserved. The nature of racial

¹C. Levitz, *'The politics of Ideology'*.

discrimination influenced the framework of the museum's appraisal policies thus limiting the scope of exhibitions and made them too narrow for public consumption.

This trend began to collapse during the 1980s, as political transformation was inevitable. The discourse of transformation was a difficult experience for those museologists who could not adjust to new directions and new museological trends as events were forcing them to do so. Nevertheless, by the early 1990s many museums realized the necessity of adapting to new changes since without them their future was uncertain. As stated in the chapters, this thesis does not subscribe to the belief that transformation in museums was intrinsic, rather it argues that museums were responding to extrinsic forces which were pushing them towards to direction of transformation.

The era of the 1990s marked a turning point in the politics and poetics of exhibiting. The growing volume of historical output by professional historians, archaeologists and anthropologists meant the birth of a new discourse in museology: a discourse which analyzed the nature of museums as serving a particular ideology. Those historians, especially, argued that museums were political institutions and have never been apolitical in their history. While this historiographical trend witnessed a vast output from historians both in museums and from academic institutions, the general public was also gaining awareness of museums. This could be attributed to outreach programmes which were instituted by museums themselves with the objective of reaching the wider public and creating a new audience for their exhibitions.

Under the new dispensation museums began to redefine themselves and their fate was examined in a different perspective. While other political parties did not outline their position and their approach toward museums, the ANC came up with their own policy for museums which it thought was going to be relevant in a new South Africa. Its policy was concerned with the curbing of the marginalisation of Africans histories in exhibitions, while spearheading an accommodative approach that was to include all racial groups of South Africa. This idea was highly influenced by relativism which points out that all cultures are equal and need to be given an equal rating in the society in which they exist.

The rise of new approaches is the direct reason for the depiction of African histories in another perspective in museums and trends. The manner in which exhibitions were created, shifted significantly and Africans began to be regarded as major role players and subjects of their own history rather than as mere victims of circumstances. It was against this background that these exhibition were mounted in the Natal, Voortrekker and Durban Local History Museums: The 'Movers and Shakers'; the 'Sisonke Display'; 'Not only the white mans war'; and 'theThreads in Time'.

The nature of political transition has led to growing numbers of tourists coming to KwaZulu-Natal. Thus museums have realigned themselves as tourist destinations. The gap between museums and tourism is becoming too narrow and museums are becoming major providers of cultural heritage of the eastern seaboard to tourists. While museums serve as tourists attractions, they also play a pivotal role in educating both young and old. Learning takes place formally through planned school visits and as people visit exhibitions. Museum education has

broadened the scope and the role of museums in the new dispensation. The closer links that they have established with school and the Department of Education and Culture are evidence that KwaZulu-Natal museums are willing to serve their audiences. Research has proved that educators also view museums as having a potential to contribute to OBE system.

This thesis has pointed out that museums are political institutions. As institutions where public memory is constructed and deconstructed, they play a vital role in enforcing and forging political identities which carry a particular ideology. They are always utilized as sources of history and the makers of discourse. They play a major role as evidence of both the past and present, and as visual reminder of domination and resistance. Therefore they save the society from historical amnesia. Thus museums form part of history and its making.

Bibliography

A. Primary Sources

Museum files

File 545.612, File 545.613-9

Archival Data

Durban Town Clerk files, 3/DBN (1885-1960); CSO.

Voortrekker Museum files- A81 (1-6)

Natal Museum files

Museum Annual Reports

Annual Reports of the Durban Museum (1890-1996);

Annual Reports of the Natal Museum (1904-1990);

Annual reports of the KwaZulu-Natal Museum service; and

Annual Reports of the Voortrekker Museum (1912-1999).

B. Secondary Sources

Policies and White Papers

Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG), Draft proposals for heritage, presented to the minister of Arts, Culture, Science and technology, Pretoria, June 1995.

African National Congress, Policy for transformation and development of heritage resource (museums, monuments, archives and national symbols).

National heritage Resource Act, No.25, of 1999.

Museums and Cultural Diversity: A Draft ICOM policy statement,
www/icom/org/deversity.html

White paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, 4 June 1996.

Theses

Davidson P, Material culture, context and meaning, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1991.

- de Conning C, The interrelationship between the museum community and tourism industry, Unpublished post graduate diploma thesis in museology, University of Stellenbosch, 1995.
- Leech S. M, Twentieth century images of the "Zulu": Selected representations in historical and political discourse, Unpublished MA thesis, University of South Africa, 1997.
- Levitz C, The politics, ideology and social practices of South African Natural Science and Technology museums, Unpublished MA thesis, University of Witwatersrand, 1995.
- Kloppenborg J, A pilot study into the trends and opinions of the black population in the Durban Natural History Museum, Unpublished B. A. Honours thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1987.
- Mathers K. F, Leisure-Learning: Revitalizing the role of museums: A survey of Cape Town parents' attitudes towards museums, Unpublished M.Phil thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993.

Unpublished Articles

- Abungu G, 'Heritage community and the state in the 1990s: Experiences from Africa', Conference on the future of the past, University of Western Cape, 10-12 July 1996.
- Dominy G, From 'dead zoos' to 'sources of delight': New directions for old collections-changing exhibitions for new purposes, (Paper presented at the History Workshop, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 16-18 July 1992).
- Dominy G, Give a dog a bad name, or how to turn museums into sleek pussy cats- some reflections on transformation in the museum and heritage sector, (paper presented at Injobo Conference- SAMA KwaZulu-Natal, 25-27 October 2000, New Castle).
- Mathers K. F, Why do South Africans choose not to visit museums? An analysis of a national survey of the museum visiting habits of South African Adults, Unpublished survey, 1993.
- Mathers K, The role of Durban City Museums: The result of a survey of museum visitors, Report submitted to the Durban Metropolitan Council, The Natural Science

Museum, The Durban Art Gallery and Durban Local History Museums,
November 1998.

Martin M, Bringing past into the present- facing and negotiating history, Memory, redress and reconstruction at the South African National Gallery, (Conference paper, 1996).

Ndhlovu B. C. Museums and the challenges of interpretations, (Paper presented at Injobo Conference-SAMA KwaZulu-Natal, 25-27 October 2000, New Castle).

Wakashe T, 'The changing Context: New policies and processes in the South African Heritage Sector', paper presented at the future of the past conference, University of Western Cape, 10-12 July 1996.

Published Articles

Cameron D. F, 'The Museum, a temple or the forum', Journal of World History, Vol.14, 1972.

Cameron D. F, 'The "language" of museum interpretation', Journal of World History, Vol.14, 1972.

Jackson S and Robins S, 'Miscast: The place of the museum in negotiating the bushman past and present', Critical Arts, Vol.13, No.1, 1999.

Hamilton C, 'Against museums as chameleon', South African Historical Journal, No 35, 1996.

Hamilton C, 'The future of the past: New trajectories', South African Historical Journal, No.35, 1996.

Hamilton C, 'The poetics of public history', South African Historical Journal, No.35, 1996.

Kros C, 'New Culture of control', South African Historical Journal, No, 22, 1994.

Kros C, 'Pardoning the past', South African Historical Journal, No.38, 1998.

Morley, G, 'Museums of South, Southeast and East Asia', Journal of World History, Vol.44, 1972.

Nunoos R, 'Perspectives for African Museums', Journal of World History, Vol.44, 1972.

- Pietersen C, 'Miscast: Negotiating Khoisan history and material culture', South African Historical Journal, No.35, 1996.
- Singleton H. R, 'Museums in a changing world', Museum Journal, 1979.
- Wits L and Rassool C, 'The dog, the Rabbit and the Reluctant Historians', South African Historical Journal, 1993.
- Waldman L, 'The past: Who owns it and what should we do about it', South African Historical Journal, No.35, 1996.
- Wright J and Mazel A, 'Controlling the past in the museums of Natal and KwaZulu', Critical Arts, Vol. 5, No.3, 1991.
- Wright J and Mazel A, 'Bastions of ideology: The depictions of pre-colonial history in the museums of Natal and KwaZulu', South African Museums Association Bulletin, 17 (7 & 8), 1987.

Books

- Adam T. R, The civic value of museum, George Grady Press, New York, 1937.
- Arden D. C. and Arinze E, Museums and the community in West Africa, Smithsonian institution, Washington, 1995.
- Barker E (ed), Contemporary Cultures of Display, Yale University, London, 1999.
- Berkeley W. N, The small-community museum, The J. P. Bell company, Virginia, 1932.
- Bennett J. A, Managing tourism services, JL van Schaik, Pretoria, 1995.
- Bennett T, Trotter R and McAlleer D, Museums and citizenship: a resource book, Queensland museum, Australia, 1996.
- Bennett T, The birth of a museums: History, theory and politics, Routledge, London, 1995.
- Bennet T, 'Museum and people', in Lumley R (ed), The museum time machine, Routledge, London, 1988.
- Bonaface P and Fowler P. J, Heritage tourism in the 'global village', Routledge, London, 1993.
- Boylan P. J. (ed), Museums 200: Politics, people, professionalism and profit, Routledge and museum association, London, 1992.

- Chadwick A and Stannett A, Museums and the education of Adults, The national institutes of adults continuing education, England, 1995.
- Dubow S, 'Placing "race" in South African history', in Lamont W (ed), Historical controversies and historians, UCL Press, London, 1998.
- Eagleton T, Literal theory: An introduction, Basil Blackwell, England, 1983.
- Elsner J and Cardinal R (eds), The cultures of collecting, Reaktion books, London, 1997.
- Forgacs D and Nowel-Smith G. (eds), Antonio Gramsci: Selection from cultural writings, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1985.
- Fowler P. J, The past in contemporary society: Then and now, Routledge, London, 1992.
- Hall S (ed), Representation: Cultural representation and signifying practices, Sage Publications, London, 1997.
- Hooper-Greenhill E, Museums and the shaping of knowledge, Routledge, London, 1992.
- Hoots B, Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations, Routledge, London, 1994.
- Henderson A and Kaeppler A. L (eds), Exhibiting Dilemmas: Issues of representation at the Smithsonian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 1997.
- Jenks C, (ed) Cultural Reproduction, Routledge, London, 1993.
- Karp I and Lavine S. D.(eds) Exhibiting Cultures: The poetics and politics of museum display, Smithsonian institutions, New York, 1990.
- Karp I, Kreamer C. M. and Lavine S. D. (eds), Museums and communities: The politics of public culture, Smithsonian institution, Washington, 1992.
- Krafchik B, The South African Museum and it public: Negotiating partnerships: transcript of a symposium held at the South African Museum, October 1993, South African Museum, Cape Town, 1994.
- Kavanagh G (ed.), Museum provision and professionalism, Routledge, London, 1994.
- Kavanagh G (ed.), Museum languages: Objects and text, Leicester University press, London, 1991.
- Kaplan F. E. S (ed.), Museum and the making of "ourselves, Leicester University press, London, 1994.
- Macdonald S (ed.), The politics of display: Museums, science and culture, Routledge, London, 1998.

- McEacern C, 'Mapping the memories: politics, place and identity in the District Six Museum, Cape Town', in Zegeye A. (ed), Social identities in the new South Africa after apartheid (volume one), Kwela Books and South African history online, 2001.
- Miles R and Zavada L (eds), Towards the museum of the future: new European perspectives, Routledge, London, 1994.
- Lumley R. (ed.), Museum time machine, Routledge, London, 1988.
- Lowenthal D, The heritage crusade and the spoils of history, Penguin Group, London, 1996.
- Marwick A, The nature of history, Macmillan Press, London, 1970.
- Merriman N, Beyond the glass case: the past, heritage and the public in Britain, Leicester university press, London, 1991.
- Nuttall S and Coetzee C (eds), Negotiating the past: The making of memory in South Africa, Oxford University, London, 1998.
- Pearce S. M. (ed), Interpreting objects and collections, Routledge, London, 1994.
- Pearce S. M, Museums objects and collections: A cultural study, Leicester University Press, London, 1992.
- Rabinow P (ed), The Foucault Reader: an introduction to Foucault's thought, Penguin Books, 1991.
- Sandell R, "Museums as agents of social inclusion", in Museum management and curatorship, Pergamon, vol.17, no. 4, 1998.
- Saunders C, The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class, David Pilliph, Cape Town, 1988.
- Scottish Museum Council, Museums are for people, Crown copyright, Edinburgh, 1985.
- Sherman D. J. and Rogoff I, (eds), Museums Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles, University of Minnesota, USA, 1994.
- Stanford M, A Companion to the study of History, Blackwell, Oxford, 1994.
- Smith K, The Changing past: Trends in South African Historical writing, Southern Book publishers, Johannesburg, 1988.
- Tosh J, The pursuit of history: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the study of modern history (2nd ed.), Longman, London, 1991

Walsh K, The representation of the past: Museums and Heritage in the post-modern world, Routledge, London, 1992.

Woodhead P and Stansfield G, Museum studies, 2nd ed., Mansell publishing, Chicago, 1994.

Weil S. E, A cabinet of curiosities: Inquiries into museums and their prospects, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 1995.

News Papers

Natal Witness

Mercury

Daily News

Post

Sunday Times

Sunday Tribune

Sowetan

New York Times

Interviews

Mrs. H. England, Pinetown Museum, 07 July 1999.

Ms Y. Winters, Killie Campbell Museum, 08 July 1999.

Ms H. Ridely, Voortrekker Museum, 10 September 2000.

Mr. P. Tichman, Old Court House Museum, 24 May 1999.

Ms L. Royepen, KwaMuhle Museum, 10 July 1999.

Ms. R. Omar, Local History Museums, 03 August 1999.

Professor I. Filatova, School of Social Science and Development Studies, 6 March 2000.

Professor Y. Seleti, Killie Campbell Collections, 7 June 2001.

Professor J. S. Maphalala, Chair of the Voortrekker Museum Council, 6 September 2001.

Dr. J. Vincent, KwaZulu-Natal Museums Service, 20 December 2000.

Dr. I. Pols, Voortrekker Museum, 10 September 2000.

Mr. G. Torlage, KwaZulu-Natal Museum service, 20 November 2000

Appendix

Interview between the author and Professor Irina Filatova 6 March 2000

Q. Before 1917 the Tsar was in power, so what was the position and the situation of museums in Russia.

Let me start with where it started from the very beginning. It that every conservation, where does conservation starts. It starts with collection, collection and collecting something. Who was collecting and when did it start in Russia? In Russia it started with Peter the Great, the beginning of the eighteenth century. Why did he start collecting. This is because he had an interesting personality and was always interested in unusual things. He for example created something which was called "kunskamerum". This is a Deutsche word which means chamber for curiosity, arts, and so on, in fact it were curiosity and what he collected there were really abnormal things, for example there was a small machine double headed which was bought somewhere and so on. There were some strange mechanisms which he either bought from Germany of made by local Russians. Some unusual mechanisms and different machinery, etc. That was all brought into one room and displayed and it was his collection. It thing that was actually the first museum in Russia. Rich people collected pictures, and aristocracy also collected pictures of arts both local and brought from abroad. I think that before Peter the Great they needed no skill for decoration they just put pictures on the wall.

Q. Does that mean that those picture displaying where not informed by any ideology?

Look the picture is an ideological creation, all pictures are ideological creation but I don't think they collected pictures with a particular ideology in mind. They collected what was at that time aesthetically interesting and beautiful so they wanted to make their home beautiful according to their taste and fashion of the time. If you look at the pictures, of course they would carry a lot of ideology above them. That is what was collected. From Peter the Great time that is from the beginning of the eighteenth century, collection of such pieces of arts became really a fashion among Russian aristocracy. They collected jewelry, etc. There was no question that they could wield these thing, there were thousands of them and every new Tsar had more and more pieces such jewelry but there were, of course pieces of arts and you see them they are all beautiful, some of them were done by local Russians, masters and some of them were brought from abroad, from the east, west, and so on. Fore example a card diamond which was given to the Russian Tsar when one of the diplomats was killed Iran in Persia at that time and so as a kind of peace and famous for the head of the diplomat, his ambassador. But what I'm trying to say is that this is one of the things which was collected and the picture, watches, clock, beautiful table clothes, table wear became pieces of arts that were collected by the Russian Tsar. Where they displayed and acceptable to the people, no they were not. They were exclusively, there were not museums but Peter's Krums was for the people to come and see not every person from the street but it was acceptable for the educated public. The

aristocratic house/ homes were not open to the public at all and only the guest of aristocracy could see, enjoy the jewelry and so on. Therefore it was ideological directed but also very close to a man in the street but also at time in Russia there was not many men in the street because the peasants were still serfs and were not free people and were not educated and did not have any interest in these at all. The places where the ordinary folk could enjoy at least some art was churches. The churches were the only place where some sort of exposure to music, choirs, bells you could just press and hear tunes by the bells and it was an highly admired arts this bell sound in Russia. And of course the pictures, items that were in different churches were pieces of arts and that is how the shape of the art was acceptable to the people. The churches were also kind of museums because they collected their own luxuries, they collected items and they preserved items. The ancient the item the precious it is. There were some items in Russia that dates back to the eleventh century. 16th and 17th century items churches preserve them and they were very precious items but it is not only an item itself it is also the frame in which it was put. There were decorated very beautifully and were sometimes pieces of themselves because they were silver, gold or metal or something that were very beautifully done. Churches were a kind of a very popular keepers of the art for the people but of course they did not have that idea churches were highly ideological than the aristocratic houses or any civilian lay art because they have a particular ideology in mind and of course they did not keep these things just for the idea of preserving art, of preserving culture in any sense of the world, many of them did realized that they are preserving art but in most

cases they did it because of the state and the more ancient an object of is for it would just an object of state and not an object of art or the two went together. So these were the beginning, and what I mean is a collection is the beginning of any museum. A collection was done with different purposes. A collection can be done to show and demonstrate a luxury, a collection can be done to just decorate a house, a collection can be collected to satisfy curiosity and a collection can be done with a particular ideological purpose or something like that in mind. Now when the situation started to change with Russian museums was actually at the end of the nineteenth century. What happened at the end of the nineteenth was first of all was serfdom was abolished and the serfs were liberated and after that a whole new layer of society appeared which was intelligent, educated people and many more educated people than they had before. And also simultaneously what happened was there was an upsurge of Russian nationalism which was not a very good feeling but it produced some good side effects. But the upsurge of Russian nationalism brought about an interest. Those among aristocracy and among intelligentsia to the Russian part, to the Russian identity and to the Russian culture including peasant Russian culture, etc and then what happened was author, because it was an era of quite development of capitalism in Russia. The big cities were built one after another, big manufacturers, industries started to develop and so on. A lot of cheap western goods came into the country such as metal plates for example and peasants begun buying the metal plates and before that they used to make a plate for themselves. Before that plates were made out of wood and certainly at the end of the nineteenth century it all started to disappear.

Intelligentsia, educated people and aristocracy understood that if the peasant folk Russian culture which disappears you have to capture it and grab it and try to conserve it. And they did it for the first time at the end of nineteenth century, they actually started this quite consciously to collect all works of arts not necessarily rich picture, old items but artifacts, Russian peasantry things. What these people who were interested in Russian arts at that time, they would notice that some places were better in one thing and some places better in other thing.

Q. Do you mean that they collected different objects from different regions?

Not only that they collected they created schools where people were trying to preserve their art, not that they taught in that school but they gave money to people who were particularly knowledgeable in these or that craft. They educated and instructed them to teach young people, young generation. And they taught people to produce it not for their own use because all these have been produced for the use of the peasants themselves but now they were encouraged to produce for selling and for the tourist, although not many tourist at that time but just foreigners who came to Russia but mostly for the aristocracy because all these things became fashionable at the end of nineteenth century. All the peasants dress, decorations, etc all of them certainly to the aristocratic houses, homes and somewhere else. This was a very interesting development in conservation at the end of the nineteenth century. Now after that of course a lot was disrupted during the first Russian revolution, First World War, 1917 revolution and new ideas

came into existence and new approaches started to develop. So we arrive now at 1917 revolution which had changed the approach to everything. The first idea, the first really emotion was to destroy whatever belonged to the aristocracy. Peasant of course tried to steal and as a result many of them were ruined and burned down completely during the revolution and the civil war and these disturbances in Russia at that time. On the other hand one of the good things the soviet government did almost immediately after it has come to power, it has announced that it would take everything, all the objects of arts belong to the state and they have to preserve as such as the legacy of the people as heritage of the people and they have to be preserved. Maybe the only exception was made for the churches and it took a long time for the government to actually try to realized and begin to realized that churches are also cultural heritage and they had to be preserved either as museums or function churches. And the soviet government saw the churches as an ideological enemy and that is why whenever there was a chance they closed down the church and the items would either be removed to the museum or just lost somewhere and the architectural many churches were destroyed and so on and so forth. What happened was that after the revolution was that many of the aristocratic houses and first of all the Tsar's palace in St. Petersburg were turned into the state owned museum. All these pictures and riches that had been collected there in the previous era were now accessible to the public and become something that everybody could see and everybody could enjoy. The Tsar's palace, hermitage which is the former Winter palace, the biggest museum, has got the enormous

amount of exhibits of every possible kind. They collected Greek art, Asian, Egyptian art, painting of the 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th centuries.

What other kind of museums appeared after 1917? I can't say 1917 because it took quite a long time. It was not done immediately. Some of them such as the Tsar's palace were turned into museum almost immediately but other museums started to appear during the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, etc they were added and added. But finally the churches began to be used as museums and in each era, city or town there appeared something which was called the regional museum, showing the traditions and habits of the Russian people. Russians, in that sense were very different from the British and from the French because in France and Britain anthropology was something which discussed other people in other languages, such as Africa, Asia, etc and they describe the people who were there. Russian anthropology concentrated all mostly on its own population and described the traditions and habits of the Russians and then their closest neighbour and then the people whom they have subjugated such as the Chechens, it was all there but the Russians have never been excluded from their picture. So regional museums would have that part where they would describe their lives and local traditions of the people, local costume, etc. Another addition of course was the memoirs of the Soviet era itself. There appeared such things as museums of revolution, there are two of them: one in Moscow and another in St. Petersburg. In Moscow there are monuments which are devoted to the period of the revolution and the post-revolution era. One bad thing is that the attitudes of the Russian people into

museums and memorials is very different. If you have a museum there is a notion in the peoples' mind that this is something fashion it has to be kept. If you have a monument devoted to a special person the first thing after revolution you pull down the statue of that person and so many statues devoted to Tsar's were pulled down. Then come 1991 revolution and new monuments, soviet monuments are pulled down. So ideology is always there where ever you find a museum but it is a different ideology and the most important thing is that people are trying to preserve their legacy in what ever ideological background.

Q. Prof. tell me when Stalin assumed power by the late 1920s we saw him orchestrating mass killings, deputation, liquidation of other ethnic groups, then was the state of museums?

Churches were destroyed at that time completely. And many of them suffered in such an extent that they were beyond repair. Some of them were neglected. The biggest museums all appeared at that time. The attitude was very different to the monuments, Stalin's attitudes to that was highly ideological. He did not like any manifestations of the Russian culture to be preserved such as all these Russian folk, arts. They nearly went down because Stalin didn't like it and to be quite honest I think one of the reasons why folk art are not flourishing here is that the ANC came to power with the idea that national culture doesn't matter, its only now that they are starting to invoke the entire different notion and are trying to develop different cultures and previously there was no such a thing. During the Stalin's era they did realize that pictures are great value, they realize that because

they saw themselves, the soviet government during the 1920s and 1930s sold a lot of pictures from Tsar's collections abroad just to get money. They realized that this is a great value that's why they captured and also they did open them to the public and that was good idea. But at the same time the church art and the icons are very precious things they could be just thrown away and the church could be burned down or destroyed or just closed and the folk arts were not popular fashionable because they presented a national culture which the government did not like .

Q. In other non-Russian Republics how were the museums, were they promoting Russification or ethnic minoritism.

Well during the Stalin's era there were certainly no national museums. There were certainly museums which handle memorials and monuments which glorified the friendship of soviet people which basically meant not Russification but meant unification and the inclusion of these particular republics into the Soviet Union. Stalin tried to suppress all the vestiges of national cultures within the republics and he tried to basically prohibit the national arts and national cultures, etc. and cases people who tried to develop national cultures were detained and killed.

Q. Then in some instances museums depict as certain history, what kinds of history did they depict in Soviet Union during the 1970s to the end of the Soviet Union?

Well, one and the first of all you can't call the Soviet era because the Soviet era was quite different. The Soviet era of the 1920s and 1930s was radically different from the Soviet era of the 1960s and 1970s and 1980s they were very different but there were some general lines and the general lines were first, during the 1920s and 1930s the old Russian history was depicted at all completely bad that is before 1917 revolution or absolutely nothing which was worth. There was nothing in that era that was not denounced. The museums basically tried to show that there was only exploitation, suffering and there was nothing good that happened at that time and so on which was all true but there were also a great achievements among arts, culture, literature, etc. In that era such writers as Dr. Yetki fore example were nearly banned. You could never get his books, you did not study them in school etc. so that was the kind of history was shown at that time. Now suddenly with the Second World War the situation started to change. The museums started to show that Russian history was great and that Tsars protected the integrity of the country and independence of the country and they were only great victories. Of course there was exploitation of the peasants but at the same time there was statemanship which glorified victories of Russian people and the failures of the government certainly became less visible. By the end of the Soviet era, by the end of the 1970s to the 1880s the pre- revolutionary was glorified to such an extent

that even now the former Soviet Russian population believe that Russian history before 1917 consisted of only glory. And it was a wonderfully history and there was nothing to be ashamed of or to be sorry about, etc. The Soviet period had always been glorified Soviet era and that was quite obvious, and the figure of Lenin and some stage Stalin and closer surrounding were termed into semi Gods. About Lenin you will find out that from the age of five he already knew everything about the future revolution and so on, and he was really such a genius like he did need any developmental education, etc and everything connected with this certainly very important which may be a distortion.

Q. After 1990 we witnessed the collapse and the disintegration of the Soviet Union and non-Russian republics started to gain their independence from Moscow. What is their relationship with Moscow in terms of the creation of memory? Do they project any of the deportations, liquidations, etc. that was orchestrated by Moscow during the Soviet rule?

Well, I don't know what happens to the museums there. I'm sure that they will project in their museums. But I'm sure that there are museums in Chechnya for example. What I do know is that there is a debate about certain exhibit which they think belong to them but are in the Russian museum and Russia think they had also certain exhibit which should belong to Russia. Particularly immediately after 1991 there was a huge debate of exchange of exhibit or buying out the exhibit etc. and it ended nowhere. But of course all of them, as well as Russia, are rewriting their history.

Q. Since it is clear that Moscow lost non-Russian republics, do Russian museums reflect any atrocity that Moscow committed to them?

What I can tell you is that I've through the Historical Museum last year when I was in Russia. It did not show any removals but it did show the suffering of the Russian peasants. What you mean is the reflection of the nationality question in the Russian museum. I don't think that the Russian government started to do it yet but in the literatures you do find a lot of these. But as far as the museums are concerned, a museum is a good expression of history. What is the difference between History and heritage? History is a critical discipline, which assesses and re-assesses the past. Heritage also deals with the past, the material part of history for example, but heritage is all creating a glorified image of the past for a particular era. Heritage works in conserving what it sees as good side or bad side of the former history, then heritage can be critical of the past not of the present.

Q. Prof. what would you say in the context of KwaZulu-Natal where you find a situation that museums in former Natal & KwaZulu are depicting two completely different histories.

My ideology is that museums and conservation should be as close to reality and diversity as possible, that is to be less crude in its ideological. I think it should depict all the history objectively as it can. If there was or is a Zulu kingdom it should be depicted but also what should be depicted are the wrongs that happened. If you depict colonialism and the sufferings of people you should also

depicts the construction of the cities. If you depicts the good things about the governments and the discoveries etc. you should depict also the horrors of apartheid. You cannot say that only Gandhi has a great impact in Indian history the are many other things to be depicted in museums, the same in African history and all should not go into their separate schools such as an Indian museum and an African museum in one place. This is a possibility but not good such as the Anglo-Boer war museums. I'm very glad that now at least we have an understanding of 3000 blacks that took part in the war and there must a reflection of that in the museum but should be in the same museum.

Q. You spoke about objectivity, having this dilemma of museums being controlled by the state or on the other side museums being independent institutions yet some people say museums cannot be independent of the state control owing because of financial support thus they will always purport the dominant idea which the state fosters.

This is a dilemma. Museums says claim to be independent but they will never reach such a stage even if they have a donor but there would never be enough funds to run a museum. And they are usually dependent on the state because they create museums to propagate its own ideology. What you can have different interesting groups that have their own museums and to protect the local museums which belong to all the community, they have the right to do that and the government would lesson because the community's the interest, and that is the only degree to which museums can be independent otherwise they can't. You

cannot run a museum as a private sector, it can only be a very small museum and can only be a short while.