Representations of Zulu Cultural Identity in Cultural Tourism: A Case Study of Izintaba Zulu Cultural Village

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Declaration

I, Ntokozo Fortunate Ndlela, hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and it has not been submitted to any university before. Where use has been made of others, it has been duly acknowledged in the text.

Signed by:

Ntokozo Fortunate Ndlela

Date:
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone who assisted me in different ways to make this project a success. First and foremost, I owe it all to my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom all things are possible. Praise be to the Living Father for giving me strength and courage throughout this journey.

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Abstract

For the past two decades, tourism as an industry and a field of study has drawn much attention with holidaymaking and leisure activities becoming integral parts of human existence. The global recognition this industry has received regards it as a development programme for the developing nations and a significant factor in their economic growth (profit, income generated and jobs produced). The approach taken by this study highlights the cultural component of tourism in host or indigenous communities, which is overlooked by the economic and development dimensions. The study assesses and interrogates the (re)presentations of Zulu cultural identity/identities in cultural villages located in KwaZulu-Natal. It examines Izintaba Zulu cultural village as a text with encoded meanings to be decoded and interpreted by visiting tourists. It further analyses performances and activities to determine the cultural identity (re)presented in cultural villages.

Quite important to note about the study is that the interviews and observations conducted have been infused by my own position as a Zulu young woman. As Tim May (2001) point out, we, as researchers carry our experiences and identities into the research studies we conduct. These experiences and identities inform the texts hence studies cannot be entirely free of subjectivism. In the same way, my own experiences and conceptualisations as a young Zulu woman raised in a western-influenced society (perhaps moving away from what can be defined as culturally and traditionally Zulu), come profoundly and influentially into the study. The study is partly a personal journey. The study challenged my own comfort zone to realise that to be Zulu does not depend on what is considered Zulu and on (arguably) Zulu cultural and ritual practices. Examples of this emphasised in the study are the importance of Zulu language and communication, my ‘relationship’ with the performers and most importantly, my naivete in relation to some of the (supposed) ‘authentically’ Zulu cultural activities staged in the cultural villages. Again, the study has challenged deeply the assumptions about Zulu women in the sense that I come into the study from an academic background at the same time giving the voice to Zulu women.

One of the key themes that arise in the study is the idea of ‘discursive contradictions’ laid out and carefully discussed in the study. This construct, ‘discursive contradictions’ concerns the attempt to portray what is regarded as authentically Zulu in a manner that lacks the definition of where the contemporary world of the Zulu fits. Examples of this construct are modern items and objects found in the cultural villages such as flushing toilets, high cement seats, electricity bulbs, plastic bags and sunlight soaps. Other illustrations of this construct are the cycling shorts, pantihose, wristwatch, underwear that the performers wear and have incorporated as part of their costumes. This construct is important in the study because it illuminates the contradictions and the attempted representations of Zulu culture. It presents the tourists (and the performers as well) juxtaposed in the traditional and modern sense, the world of the past represented in the grass beehive huts and traditional clothes (ibheshu, inkehli, isidwaba, istinene), in contrast to the modern world represented in the flushing toilets, Spar plastic bags and Sunlight soaps.
Another key theme that emerges in the study is the ‘aberrant decoding of texts’. Cultural villages as texts are supposed to elicit different responses from the tourists. This occurs as soon as tourists enter into cultural villages with different motivations influenced by their experiences, social and cultural backgrounds and dispositions. Examples of this as outlined in the study are as follows: African-American tourists are keen on visiting tourist sites such as Izintaba, Shakaland, Simunye for the cultural revival and ‘return to the past’ they offer. To them (African-Americans), cultural villages offer them opportunities to experience what they have been taken away from and as stated in the study, this represents the discovery of their “roots” and “cultural selves”. This is quite different with tourists from other nationalities (like Europeans) who feel cultural villages offer an escape away from their everyday lives of careers and office contexts hence they are not disturbed by the sights of modern objects and items in the premises of these villages.

I have previously drawn attention to the significance of critical biography in the study. The project as a research study, however, involved taking and defending difficult decisions about what was significant in the findings generated by the methodology used (observations and interviews) and more generally, in people’s responses to me. Examples of this subjectivism include my own questioning and critiquing of my own position and consciousness as a young Zulu woman in contemporary and academic worlds that I come from. Reference to the research literature on women, race and feminism, more generally, is made in the study. As May (2001) states, the assumption is that men are capable of reasoning while women’s voices take an emotional stance in the studies. The present study defied and challenged the assumptions and stereotypes in understanding and critiquing cultural tourism, and cultural villages’ positions in the contemporary Zulu society thereof.
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Acronyms

KZN     KwaZulu-Natal
KZNTA   KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority
PPT     Pro-Poor Tourism
Section I
Introduction
Theories on Cultural Tourism

Introduction
As the title points out, this dissertation is neither an update of the political, economic and policymaking issues nor an analysis of strategies for development in the tourism industry on a global and national scale, and the study intends to make no relation to that approach. This is rather about what Marie-Françoise Lanfant et al (1995) term “local realities” — manifestations of cultural tourism in cultural villages\(^1\) claimed by tourism authorities to preserve ‘authenticity\(^2\)’ in indigenous cultures. The study seeks to open a discourse, a position in which to argue, contest and draw defence on the subject of (‘authentic’, fixed and historic versus imagined, incomplete and evolving) cultural identity/identities and cultural villages within the frontiers of cultural tourism\(^3\). It will interrogate, analyse and critique the cultural villages established (un)comfortably on the (un)certainties and ‘totalities’ of the past at the same time questioning cultural identity/identities neatly (re)presented through cultural activities and performances taking place within this structure of cultural villages.

Stuart Hall (1990: 222) states “[w]e all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always ‘in context’, positioned”. I find it important, therefore, to begin by problematising my position towards the choice of the study in which I write. By my own cultural and ethnic definition, I am Zulu (loosely translated as ‘Heaven’). The position I am claiming emanates from my background as I have characteristically conceptualised it; I was born and raised in a family, including its constituted ancestry, which claims cultural and ethnic links to Zulu culture. What completes this identification with Zulu culture is the community I was raised in where the ways of living are characteristically Zulu from its cultural and ritual practices to the language spoken. Therefore, I am Zulu. However, the claim is not entirely free of limitations and assumptions. Firstly, my knowledge of the culture is limited and heavily influenced by western forms I have been exposed to. As an urbanised woman growing up in a semi-rural area, the only cultural and ritual practices I know are ‘modernised’\(^4\) ancestral ceremonies. Other cultural ceremonies like the rites of

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\(^1\) The KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority (KZNTA) defines a cultural village as “an area which is set aside to depict the lifestyles, activities and artefacts of a particular culture, usually in the form of a living museum” (KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority website, How to Establish a Cultural Village hyperlink).

\(^2\) Authenticity as a term is difficult to define because it has been a central principle in many diverse studies. However with reference to tourism authenticity is equated with the ‘traditional’ (Taylor, 2001).

\(^3\) Cultural tourism is defined as “that form of travel in which visitors are located by the industry as pop anthropologists, as temporary or passing observers of people, cultures and ways of life. In short, the object of the gaze of cultural tourists in Africa is the often premodern other in the form of the ‘traditional’ Zulu, ‘Bushman’ or Ndebele” (Tomaselli & Wang, 2001: 23).

\(^4\) I cannot claim full knowledge on the authenticity in the traditional ceremonies, however, I can categorically claim that ceremonies performed in contemporary Zulu communities are now influenced by western forms of living. To illustrate, most people prefer to invite church members to bless the ceremony
passage such as the traditional Zulu wedding and the reed dance, *umkhosi wohlanga*\(^5\), I have learnt from Zulu books in schools. Secondly, the dialect I speak is not ‘pure’ or original Zulu since it is heavily characterised by borrowed terms from Western languages especially English and Afrikaans.

This delicate claim I make to Zulu culture challenges the reality and intactness of my world, exposing me to the post-modern\(^6\) idea of constant inquiries about identity/identities, identification and socialisation. As a result, my articulation of who I am is not grounded exclusively in culture and ethnicity (supposed to provide security in knowing who I am) and neither is it shaped by the consciousness of those with whom we share the same cultural and ethnic background. I come into the study not as the ‘Same’\(^7\) (tourist) (The concepts of the ‘Same’ and ‘Other’ are discussed in greater detail in Section IV). My motivation is not a quest for what is authentic nor to (re)discover my “roots”. I am also not a neutral character in the set-up of cultural tourism, because as soon as one enters a cultural village, there are binary identities and dichotomies to be assumed by those who have come to gaze (tourists) and those who are hosts in these encounters (performers). I come as a participant-observer probing into cultural villages where the decontextualised\(^8\) cultural activities have been carefully chosen by tourism authorities and cultural village managers to (re)present ‘authentic’ cultural identity. These cultural activities are then regarded as quintessential epitomes of ‘authenticity’ in indigenous cultures. I do not seek definitions and explanations but rather, aim to understand the search for ‘original and authentic’ identity people are travelling to search for. They believe this kind of identity is rooted in the past, but when it is enacted by performers in cultural villages it only reaffirms their contemporary multiple identities (to be dealt with in Section IV).

**Background to the Study**

The study is a continuation of the research that started in 1991 (funded by Natal University Research Fund/Smithsonian Institution) on tourism, cultural tourism, visual anthropology and the Zulu and Bushmen cultural experiences conducted by Prof. Keyan Tomaselli\(^9\). The research examines (re)constructions and representations of indigenous peoples’ identities and their cultures through the media and cultural villages such as Ngwatile, Kagga Kamma, Shakaland and Izintaba. It has been carried out in conjunction with other students’ dissertations and research such as that of Belinda Jeursen (PhD, instead of calling traditional healers, *izinyanga* and izangoma. I have thus used the term ‘modernised’ to refer to the contemporary ways of performing these ceremonies.

\(^5\) The reed dance tradition, held in August or September annually, is a festive ceremony whereby the Zulu kings are entertained by bare-breasted mZulu maidens who are still virgins (KwaZulu-Natal website, Zululand Reed Dance hyperlink).

\(^6\) The term ‘postmodern’ is used with reference to the collapse of certainties provided by tradition, culture and ethnicity experienced with civilisation, modernisation and industrialisation.

\(^7\) The ‘Same’ concept is used to refer to a Western tourist who has come to gaze at the African in a manner that ‘spectacularises’ and ‘exoticises’ the observed. The ‘Other’ refers to the African who depicts the ‘authentic’ cultural identity in contexts designed for this ‘Same-Other’ (observer-observed) encounter.

\(^8\) I have used this term ‘decontextualised’, in this context to refer to the way cultural activities have been removed out of their contexts to be (re)presented as ‘authentic’ depictions of cultures in cultural villages.

\(^9\) Prof. Keyan Tomaselli is the Programme Director in the Graduate Programme in Cultural and Media Studies at University of Natal, Durban and heads the research programme in the “Semiotics of Encounter”.

The decision to undertake a study on cultural tourism in KwaZulu-Natal was initially inspired by the conceptualisation of my own identity as a Zulu woman raised in a westernised society. This kind of society challenges the intactness and stability of an identity that is believed to be formed and shaped through ethnic and cultural consciousness. Cultural tourism affiliates itself with indigenous cultures employing the distinction and sacredness of their cultural knowledge and cultural identities for commercialisation (Lanfant et al, 1995); and the same can be said of cultural tourism in the KwaZulu-Natal context. Cultural villages attempt to offer an idea of a homogeneous and fixed cultural identity which is depicted as originating from the past. A substantial number of community members have responded to Western or tourists’ demand for authenticity and ‘authentic’ cultural identities by staging performative acts in cultural villages to correspond to that demand. Performers constantly shift between the historic ‘traditional’ identity they are portraying and their everyday identities in order to accommodate the expectations of tourists. This study seeks to problematise Zulu cultural identity by arguing that cultural identities are not fixed and rooted in the past, they are negotiated and constantly created and recreated over a period of time.

Economic and development writings theorise tourism as a force for social change, a model for economic development, community empowerment, nation building, and job creation (De Kadt 1979, D. Pearce 1989, P. L. Pearce 1996). However, Lanfant et al (1995) point out that indigenous peoples are driven to engage in tourism activities in the name of development, employment creation and community empowerment: “[t]hese indigenous communities are then pressured to engage in commercial transactions of a very particular type in which they offer their culture, their heritage, their traditions and even certain members of their population” (Lanfant et al, 1995: 7). While the output of tourism in societies in terms of economic growth and development cannot be overlooked, we also need to scrutinise the effects of tourism on the lives of the indigenous people.

The sudden rise in the 1990s of establishments called Zulu cultural villages claiming ‘authenticity’ by focusing on certain cultural activities and artefacts served as the second motivation to the study. Through advertising and marketing strategies, tourism entrepreneurs and agencies give an impression that tourism protects indigenous cultures from modern influences and preserves their ‘authenticity’ through cultural sites, living museums and memorial projects to tourists and potential cultural village visitors. However, the very ‘authenticity’ cultural villages claim to preserve remains questionable (MacCannell 1976, McIntosh & Prentice 1999, Wang 1999, Tomaselli 1999, Taylor 2001) as more travellers, holidaymakers and tourists engage in what MacCannell (1976) refers to as “pursuit for authenticity”. Cultural villages are designed primarily to meet

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10 The White Tourism Paper defines a tourist as “a person who travels to a country other than that in which she/he has her/his usual residence, but outside her/his usual environment, for at least one night but less than one year, and the main purpose of whose visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the country visited” (White Paper: The Development and Development of Tourism in South Africa website, 1996). John Urry (1990: 8) defines the tourist as “a kind of contemporary pilgrim, seeking authenticity in other ‘times’ and other ‘places’ away from that person’s everyday life.”
tourists’ demands and expectations. It is thus the aim of this study to assess cultural villages: their claim of preserving ‘authenticity’ and the (re)presentations of ‘Zuluness’ and Zulu cultural identity in these cultural villages. A further aim is to discover their relations to the lived experiences of contemporary and modernised Zulu people outside cultural villages.

An Overview of Tourism
It seems appropriate to begin by shedding some light on the subject of tourism to establish the path the study will take. Tourism is a complex subject. Its relationship to many aspects of social life such as job creation, economic development, community empowerment and nation building results in the lack of a single theory that defines and explains its nature (Burns, 1999). Writers such as Smith & Eadington (1994), Robinson et al (1996), Cohen (1988) have come to the conclusion that “there is no unique pattern according to which tourism can be viewed in every community, nor is there only one kind of tourist or only one way of tourist behaviour in tourism” (Vukonic, 1996: 292). Tourism and cultural tourism are not new fields in the history of travelling and holidaymaking. They date back to as early as the 16th century when travels used to be a sign of material affluence and a distinction between the upper class and working class (Smith & Eadington, 1994). It is only after World War II that travelling became an important practice in people’s lives regardless of their class and social status as they search for their ‘authentic’ cultural identities and “roots”. This launched the establishment of tourism as a recognisable industry and a global phenomenon (Smith & Eadington, 1994).

Tourism theorists are unanimous in their observations of a shift towards the demand for meaningful experiences (Greenwood 1979, Urry 1990 and Lantfant et al 1995). This sudden desire for something meaningful has been identified by Gail Lord (The Power of Cultural Tourism website, 1999) as “a paradigm shift from ‘escapism’ to ‘enrichment’”. According to Boris Vukonic (1996: 291), “[p]eople are nowadays interested in historical background, cultural identity, cultural meanings, meanings conveying historical heritage in the whole, and are searching very intensely for these issues”. The longing and desire for these has been interpreted as expressing a need for (re)discovering one’s identity and finding one’s ‘true’ self, hence the intense search for ‘authenticity’ and ‘authentic’ cultural experiences. This can be attributed to the consciousness that modernity has resulted in the displacements of ‘authentic’ cultures which in turn separates people from their ‘true’ selves. Many tourists or visitors consider the appropriation of the past and ‘contact with the naturally, spiritually and culturally unspoil’ as the only ‘redemption’ from this displacement (Bendix 1997, Taylor 2001).

The shift or change in tourists’ motivations and their desire for ‘authenticity’ has highlighted indigenous cultures as one of the most important and influential factors in attaining these desires. Vukonic (1996: 290) recapitulates this statement in his argument that “[t]ourism regards culture, and especially cultural heritage, as one of the fundamental motivation factors of tourists’ journeys”. Indigenous (‘authentic’) cultures are believed (both by tourism authorities and those seeking their ‘authentic’ identities) to be pure, authentic and culturally unspoiled by modernity. The experiences of these cultures will
re redeem “a sense of ‘loss’ felt within ‘our’ world of industrialisation” (Taylor, 2001: 10). This sense of ‘loss’ emanates from modern factors such as urbanisation, ‘massification’ and homogenisation of people as a result of civilisation. The same sentiment is noted by Regina Bendix (1997: 7) in her argument that “[c]ultural tourism serve as the vehicle in the search for the authentic, satisfying a longing for an escape from modernity”. Cultural tourism thus associates itself with indigenous cultures and, according to Lantfante et al (1995), cannot be conceived outside these cultures. It (cultural tourism) offers preservation of ‘authenticity’ in indigenous cultures by appropriating images and practices of the past and by appropriating a historic cultural identity in establishments such as cultural villages and living museums11 (Leong, 1989). Cultural tourism thus pretends to be supporting ‘a return to the past’ while in reality it commodifies indigenous cultures for tourist attraction and consumption in these villages. That is “[t]ourism tends to make cultures into museums, as cultural phenomena which can be viewed as quaint, peculiar and local” (Turner, 1994 in Burns, 1999).

Cultural tourism presents these cultures as ‘static and timeless’ or as Keyan Tomaselli (1999) puts it “frozen in time”. The activities taking place in cultural villages locate performers as “cultural isolates living in the ‘past’” (Shehme & Tomaselli, 2001: 107). Any signs of modernity are excluded or hidden from the front stage where cultural tourism occurs (Tomaselli, 1999). Michael Emmison & Phillip Smith (2000) refer to this process as “typically a transition space, such as a tunnel or passageway between ‘today’ and ‘then’” (2000: 172). These dominant (re)presentations of cultures play on the stereotypical images and perceptions of the indigenous peoples as the ‘Other’ (primitive or noble savage), created by media representations and intended to satisfy the ‘Same’s (Western tourist) expectations. This perception (re)presented in cultural villages reminds us of similar anthropological explanations and descriptions of indigenous peoples as savages, primitives and wild men in the eye of the ‘Same’ (Mudimbe 1988; Lindfors 1999). The consumption of indigenous cultures is also about affirming the ‘Same’s identity in the presence of the ‘Other’ especially in the case of Western tourists who are mainly interested in the consumption of the ‘Other’s perception and exotic physical appearances.

The rise of cultural tourism in KwaZulu-Natal
The political transition from apartheid to democracy has opened tourism opportunities to the international tourist market in South Africa (White Paper: The Development and Development of Tourism in South Africa website, 1996). The main features of the country tourism seeks to promote are the natural beauty scenery like wildlife and beaches, game parks and African heritage (Hamilton, 1992). Zulu culture and its kingdom (both traditional and modern) in KwaZulu-Natal, which exude with a strong

11 The term ‘living museum’ is a complex concept but it is used to refer to a museum where “people live and work the way they did in that area in the past, assuming the roles of real settlers. Visitors to a living museum often get a more real sense of the time by observing and interacting with the personnel than they would have by just viewing displays of artifacts or homes. The inhabitants of these villages learn the crafts and speech of the era and work for complete authenticity” (Carol Hurst’s Children’s Literature Site website, Living History Museum hyperlink, 1993).
traditional leadership in South Africa, are distinct forms of tourist attraction. This focus on the Zulu kingdom and its indigenous culture stretches to its past where kings like Shaka, Dingaan, Cetshwayo, who helped form a very powerful empire through their military strategies, stand as prominent figures in the history of the Zulu. Secondly, the defeat of the British troops by the Zulu army, amabutho, during the 1878 Anglo-Zulu War battle at Isandlwana has brought the Zulu international fame. Thirdly, Zulu culture, as one of the indigenous cultures, is regarded by tourism entrepreneurs as ‘authentic’ in the country and the demand for ‘authenticity’ in cultural tourism makes it ideal for tourist production and consumption. It is also through the constructions and representations of the Zulu in media programmes such as Shaka Zulu (1986), Ipi Ntombi (1977), Zulu (1963) and Zulu Dawn (1976) and books like King Solomon’s Mines (1985) that people are interested in viewing the Zulu as a ‘native’ or ‘savage Other’. (Cultural village managers, cultural advisers and performers have noted the influence such media programmes have on tourists and their expectations. For example, Isaac Nhleko, cultural adviser at Dumazulu cultural village, noted that tourists mention movies like Shaka Zulu in his interview with Prof. Tomaselli and Jeffrey Sehume (Nhleko, 2000)). Cultural villages have been established around the province to promote the Zulu images of the past and ‘authentic’ cultural identity in the name of preserving ‘authenticity’ in this culture (Mersham 1993, Tomaselli 1999).

The displaying of Southern African indigenous peoples (the Bushmen and Zulu) for commercial and educational purposes is not new; it has a long history in Europe which dates back to the 18th century when these peoples were taken to Britain to be displayed for exhibitions (Lindfors, 1999). The interest in them was inspired by the belief that Africans constituted the “missing link” in the evolutionary chain between the animal and human worlds. So when they were displayed publicly in Europe and the United States, emphasis was placed on their association with animals (Lindfors, 1999). These historical misconceptions and misrepresentations of indigenous peoples shape European and American perceptions of Africans as backward and savage. This is evident even in contemporary ‘Same-Other’ (tourist-performer) encounters in cultural villages (or wherever the ‘Other’ is exhibited and ‘exoticised’). While the interest in these indigenous peoples and their cultures is not emphasising their supposed kinship with animals in the new century, they are definitely gazed upon as temporally and spatially isolated from the contemporary human race. Their cultural identities are seen as pure, homogenous and essentialist in a post-modern period where personal identities are ongoing constructions of the individual’s consciousness and comprehension of his/her surroundings and conceptualisation of who s/he is.

Cultural tourism as it manifests itself through cultural villages in KwaZulu-Natal relies on the perception of the Zulu ‘Other’, the idea of temporally and spatially isolated beings living harmoniously with nature, distant from modernity and civilisation. These cultural villages set out to “locate Zulu people living in contemporary times within a specified ideological and cultural locus where residual social rituals, forms of traditional cultural expression, clothing and housing are imaged alongside, and within a bric-a-brac of modern times” (Sehume & Tomaselli, 2001: 107). The performers perform, dance and dress up for what John Urry (1990) terms “the tourist gaze”. They construct and
(re)present an image of Zulu cultural identity which cannot be conceptualised outside narratives of Zulu history and past. This supposedly ‘authentic’ identity is enacted in a manner that upholds a sense of belonging, unity and uniformity among people who ethnically identify and define themselves as Zulu. It suggests that notions of ‘Zuluness’ and Zulu cultural identity can be understood only when assessed within the same contexts as the notions and structures of community: a community that shares similar culture, language, traditional practices, rituals, symbolic meanings and values.

Stating the Problem
The idea of constructing a site to (re)present ‘Zuluness’, Zulu cultural identity and ways of living is problematic. Cultural tourism needs to integrate the idea that cultures are more than the structured cultural villages constructed to meet tourists’ demands for ‘authenticity’ and ‘authentic’ cultural identities rooted in the past. As Sehume and Tomaselli (2001) point out, there is more to Zulu culture than what is packaged and (re)presented in cultural villages. Zulu culture is characterised by prominent traditional and contemporary figures (such as King Shaka, reigning King Zwelithini and Inkatha Freedom Party leader – Mangosuthu Buthelezi) as well as contemporary cultural events (such as umaskanda, isicathamiya and indlamu), with symbolic meanings for people in the formation of their cultural identities. Secondly, the appropriation of the past and historical images by cultural tourism promotes the view that indigenous cultures are static and fixed. However, writers such as Raymond Williams (1981) argue that culture evolves and is constantly changing. Culture is not only about fixed identities and certain cultural contents, it is an arena where those identities are created, shaped, contested and defended (Leong, 1989). Culture is also a particular way of life involving language, activities, customs, beliefs, rituals, symbols, symbolic meanings and objects irrespective of temporality and spatiality factors. This does not mean, though, that the formation of identity only occurs through culture and narratives of the past.

The study thus seeks to assess cultural villages, the role they play in the revival of history and the past to preserve ‘authenticity’ in cultures and cultural identities. It aims to pose questions to the establishments of cultural villages. Who organises and manages the cultural villages and the activities taking place? What cultural meanings are embodied and (re)presented to tourists through these activities used? How are they (re)presented? How authentic are they and how do they relate to the lived experiences of the performers and their communities? What concepts and ideas of the Zulu and Africans are they supposed to convey to the outside world, especially Western tourists? Through the application of a case study methodology focusing on Izintaba Zulu Cultural village, participant-observation and interview methods the study aims to answer the above-mentioned questions.

Conclusion
Through a focus on Zulu indigenous communities (performers in the Izintaba Zulu cultural village), this study aims to investigate the manifestations of cultural tourism in the host communities. Fundamentally, the study seeks to conceptualise (re)presentations of Zulu cultural identity in structured cultural villages where specific activities are routinely performed for local and foreign tourists. In so doing, I will utilise the issues of
representation, cultural identity, 'authenticity', tourist gaze and intercultural encounters in cultural villages toward fulfilling these aims. The study has challenged my own subjective consciousness as a Zulu woman. This was evident in my relationship with the performers and tourists, which will be discussed in Section III.
Section II
Theoretical Framework
Cultural Villages as Texts and Models of Cultural Identity

Introduction
The growth of cultural tourism in our society has produced a wealth of writings on the analysis of this industry and its activities. Many of these writings enable us to make sense of tourism in relation to our societies. Given the objective of this study with an emphasis on assessing the relationship between cultural villages and the (re)presentations of identities amongst the Zulu people, it is pertinent that the role of cultural villages and notions of cultural identity be analysed. The present section will theorise cultural villages as texts within the communication process. The communication process itself will be viewed according to John Fiske's (1982: 2) theory of communication that states that communication is “the production and exchange of meanings”. The notions of cultural identity will be conceptualised and critiqued using Stuart Hall’s (1990) two models of identity to determine what constitutes and defines ‘Zuluness’ and Zulu cultural identity that is (re)presented in cultural villages.

Theorising Cultural Villages

Cultural villages and the communication process
Despite contentions over what constitutes communication and where emphasis should be placed in the total process of communication Armand Mattelart & Michèle Mattelart (1998) state that there are five fundamental factors underlying the theory of communication. These are: an initiator; a recipient; a mode of vehicle; a message and an effect. James Watson & Anne Hill (1984: 55) explain that “the communication process begins when a message is encoded and transmitted via a particular medium or channel to a receiver who then decodes it and interprets the message, returning in some way that the message has or has not been understood”. Fiske (1982) presents two schools of thought on the theory of communication supporting what Mattelart & Mattelart (1998) have stated above. The first school supports the view that communication is a linear process of transmitting messages. It emphasises the ‘encoding’ (by senders or producers) and ‘decoding’ (by receivers) of texts embedded in messages through three elements in the process of communication: channel, medium and code. According to Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver (1948) the context of the message determines the types of message to be sent.

Opposed to this view and understanding of communication is the second school of thought which argues that “communication is the production and exchange of meanings” (Fiske, 1982: 3). According to this school, the message (which carries meanings) is a “construction of signs, which, through interacting with the receivers produce meanings” (Fiske, 1982: 3). This view places emphasis on how messages or texts interact with
people (both the producers and readers/listeners/audience) to produce meanings and how the text is ‘read’ (or interpreted). Unlike the first school, which believes that meanings are created during the process of transmitting a message, the second school believes that meanings are produced in the interaction between the text and readers/listeners/audience. This school uses semiotics to analyse production of meanings. Semiotics, according to Fiske (1982), focuses its attention on the text.

**Semiotics and Cultural Villages**

Semiotics is crucial to the understanding of the production and ‘reading’ of cultural villages as texts to be ‘read’ and interpreted by various readers (tourists). The study of semiotics has been propounded and developed by theorists such as Ferdinand de Saussure (1974), Charles Sanders Peirce (in Hartshorne & Weiss 1931-35, Burks 1958) and Roland Barthes (1977) amongst others. According to Tomaselli (1996: 29) semiotics is “the study of how meaning occurs in language, pictures, performance and other forms of expression”. This definition invites us to reflect on the concept of ‘meaning’ before attempts to analyse cultural villages as texts are made. We use this term, ‘meaning’ in our everyday language frequently but when we stop to reflect on its ‘meaning’ we begin to realise that it is a complex concept that needs elucidation (Cultsock website, Communication Studies, Cultural Studies, Media Studies Infobase hyperlink).

According to Fiske (1982: 49) “meaning is not an absolute concept to be found neatly parcelled up in the message. Meaning is an active process, semioticians use verbs like create, generate or negotiate to refer to this process”. This statement brings a new understanding to the concept of meaning as a process in semiotic usage. We begin to understand that firstly, meaning is not fixed and absolute. Instead, it is negotiated, constructed or produced, and moreover, it is open to various ‘readings’ or interpretations. Fiske (1982: 3) states that “meaning is never given and natural but is always constructed and arbitrary”. Secondly, this definition brings to our attention that meaning is constructed consciously by the producers as well as the receivers/readers (in the case of tourism, tourists) of texts. The producers and readers of the text produce meaning through processes called ‘encoding’ and ‘decoding’ \(^{12}\). This focus on the construction of meaning both by producers and readers shifts emphasis and importance from how texts are received to how they are ‘read’ and interpreted (Tomaselli, 1996: 33).

To understand how meaning is constructed David Morley (1992) employs two methods of analysis: semiotics to explain the textual construction and organisation as it has been stated above; and sociology to explain the social and cultural background of the reader (to be discussed under **Tourists as readers**, p13). The interaction of the textual organisation and the background of the reader are thought to be pivotal in the construction of meanings in the text in that readers are able to ‘decode’ meanings that are influenced by

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\(^{12}\) The two terms ‘encoding’ and ‘decoding’ are used to refer to the construction and interpretation of meanings and texts respectively. The term ‘encoding’ refers to process of creating what is called ‘preferred meaning’ done by producers. According to Frank Smith (1988), ‘decoding’ refers to the comprehension of what a text ‘says’ but it also includes the interpretation and evaluation of its meaning with reference to relevant codes (Semiotics for Beginners website, Encoding/Decoding hyperlink, 1995).
their social and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, Morley (1992: 75) believes the interaction of these two structures “define the parameters of the text’s meaning – thus avoiding the traps of either the notion that a text can be interpreted in an infinite number of (individual) ways or the formalist tendency to suppose that texts determine meanings absolutely”. The range of meanings is narrowed down by the context provided by the interaction of the two structures. In the same way, cultural villages as text produce meanings that are controlled by the village managers and performers through their chosen cultural contents (activities and performances). Tourists, who have come to gaze and consume the historical images and cultural identity of the Zulu warrior and topless Zulu women, make their own readings and meanings different from the dominant meanings inscribed in cultural villages by village managers and performers. To illustrate, Dawn, cultural hostess at Shakaland village, noted how African-American tourists were outraged at the postcards with bare-breasted women (Dawn, 2000). They obviously felt that such images sexualises Zulu women. This is in contrast to the intended meaning infused in these postcards. Thus, both the performers and tourists control the production of meanings attached to the villages and its activities.

Cultural villages as texts

A text is the site of struggles for meaning that reproduces the conflicts of interest between the producers and consumers of the cultural commodity.  
(Fiske, 1987: 14)

Like all other agencies of communication, cultural villages constitute semiotic texts that can be read/interpreted/decoded in various ways by different individuals at one time. The complexity of this term ‘text’ and its reference to art productions such as films, advertisements, cartoons demand further attention for explanation and expansion. What do we mean when referring to a ‘text’? “A ‘text’ is in itself a complex sign containing other signs” (Semiotics for Beginners website, D.I.Y. Semiotics Analysis: Advice to my own Students hyperlink, 1995). To understand the ‘text’ like any other form of expression the initial starting point is to identify and analyse the signs embedded in the text. According to Tomaselli (1996: 33), the concept of text has two dimensions: “[t]he text as a product and the text as the interaction between the reader and the signs encoded into the messages”. He refers to the first aspect of the text as the ‘inactive’ text, while the second as the ‘activated’ text defining it as “the construction of their producers and their audiences” (1996: 33). In the same way, this study seeks to challenge the assumption that cultural villages are mere sites where tourists can witness ‘authentic’ cultural experiences. It illuminates the idea that they (cultural villages) are activated texts. The producers of the texts set parameters for readers to interpret texts by encoding ‘preferred or dominant meanings’ in the texts. Conversely the readers, influenced by their own experiences and other sociological factors, make their own ‘readings’ different from ‘preferred meanings’.

All texts are capable of producing more than one meaning or interpretation and are open to a variety of possible readings. They can be differentiated as open or closed texts. Open texts transmit meanings that are beyond their ‘preferred meanings’ and can never be
reduced simply to one ‘ultitimate’ or preferred meaning. They also contain potential readings through implication, assumption and connotation (Morley, 1992). According to Mattelart & Mattelart (1998) open texts are designed to be read in multiple ways while closed texts tend to have only one meaning embedded in them. This embedded meaning is what its producers have also referred to as “preferred or dominant meaning” encoded into the text at the time of textual construction. Morley (1992: 84) says preferred meaning comes as an attempt by cultural producers “to provide ‘direction’ or ‘closures’ within the structure of the message, which attempts to establish one of the several possible readings as the ‘preferred or dominant reading’”.

This textual analysis by Morley (1992) bears a close relationship to the reception theory outlined by Hall (1980). He (Hall) argues that closed texts impose ‘preferred meanings’ to be read in particular ways by readers/interpreters whereas open texts can be considered polysemic. Open texts allow readers to be able to make their own meanings out of the texts. Hall (1980: 136) refers to this as “a measure of ‘negotiated’ or ‘oppositional’ readings of the text by the audience”. This means the readers/interpreters do not simply accept the ‘preferred meanings’ created by producers, rather they bring their own meanings into the texts as well. The negotiation in the construction of meanings takes place as the reader brings their experiences to bear upon the texts. Morley (1992: 87) suitably recapitulates this point when he states “[t]he meaning of the text will be constructed differently according to the discourses (knowledge, prejudices, resistances) brought to bear on the text by the readers”. The success in presenting the intended meaning depends on the encounter between the readers who inhabit the ideologies that parallel those intended by the producers and yielded through the texts.

Notions such as ‘preferred meanings’ and ‘preferred readings’ do not mean that interpretations inscribed in texts are fixed and texts cannot be read beyond that. ‘Preferred meanings’ and ‘preferred readings’ are simply modes of organising the construction and negotiation of meanings and how, “under certain conditions, in particular contexts, texts will tend to be read in a particular way by the readers” (Morley, 1992: 84). Secondly, it has to be noted that producers cannot simply leave the texts open to any interpretation. That is, producers “are bound to attempt to provide ‘direction’ or ‘closures’ within the organisation of the text, which attempt to establish one of the several possible readings as the ‘preferred or dominant reading’” (Morley, 1992: 83-84). Thus audiences produce meanings, but have to work on material which has been pre-selected and organised in particular ways by the producers. However, the readers have to note ways that texts address them and communicate their ‘preferred meanings’ because these tend to construct the readers’ relation to the content of the text in a particular way, requiring them to take up different positions in relation to them.

The texts should not be treated as ‘unilateral sign’ nor as a disparate sign which can be read any way. Morley (1992) acknowledges the ‘openness’ of texts when he aptly says

(a) The same event can be encoded in more than one way;

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13 Hall uses the term ‘polysemic’ to refer to the multiple ways of reading or interpreting a text.
(b) The [text] always contains more than one potential ‘reading’. [Texts] propose and prefer certain readings over others, but they can never become wholly closed around one reading: they remain polysemic.

(c) Understanding the [text] is also a problematic practice, however transparent and ‘natural’ it may seem. [Texts] encoded one way can always be read in a different way.

(Morley, 1992: 85)

A cultural village as a text becomes a cultural product that is embedded with signs and codes of meaning (staged activities and artefacts) that need to be decoded or interpreted by visitors and tourists. What is selected for (re)presentation at the villages is crucial in ascertaining what preferred meaning is intended to be disseminated to tourists. Tourists themselves, profoundly informed by their social and cultural experiences, make their own meanings corresponding to their demands and expectations.

Tourists as readers
In recent years, research has turned increasingly to the way that audience members generate their own meanings from their readings of texts, often resisting the preferred readings suggested by those texts (Fiske 1987, Morley 1992). This study views tourists as ‘readers’ or ‘receivers’ that consume cultural texts; and their responses are not always predictable. In semiotics, the reader is seen as playing an active role in the construction of meanings more so than in most of the process models provided by Fiske (1982). Readers help to create the meanings of the texts by bringing to them their experiences and dispositions. They decode texts in ways that are related to their social and cultural circumstances and the ways that they individually experience those circumstances. The lack of correspondence between the interpretations or meanings by readers and the ‘preferred meanings and readings’ does not necessarily mean that the producer has failed to send its messages across. It means “the receiver’s active participation in the construction of meaning doesn’t take place in the same ritual order as the senders” (Cultsok website, Communication Studies, Cultural Studies, Media Studies Infobase hyperlink).

As Morley (1992) states, texts should be considered in relation to their historical conditions of production and consumption. According to Tomaselli (1996: 51), “[a]udience research, however, demonstrates that different audiences, and even individuals from the same class, ethnic, cultural, language and national groups, often bring their own idiosyncratic readings”. In a sense, the definition by Tomaselli (1996: 51) asks us to view the contexts and positions of the readers in their communication with texts. Again, to him the concept of context is paramount to the comprehension of semiotics and the construction of meaning from any kind of cultural text. For example, he aptly says

The (semiotic) method incorporates not only how things come to mean, but how prevailing meanings are the outcomes of encounters between
individuals, groups and classes and their cosmologies and conditions of existence. These social and cultural categories are criss-crossed by other lines of tension such as gender, psychology, religion, language, ethnic and nationalist forms of domination and/or resistance. Overlaid on all of these is culture – how specific groups of people encounter, make sense of, and ascribe meaning to, the respective social, mental and physical worlds into which they are born, in which they live, and where they usually die. These encounters and conflicts are manifested in semiotic struggle, all kinds of representation embody and conceal their conflictual histories. Individuals are thus themselves sites of contradictory tensions and they move through multiple trajectories of dominant and counter-meanings.

(Tomaselli, 1996: 29)

The meaning that is derived from any text is mainly influenced by the readers’ own cultural background and experiences. Whilst it is true that meaning is not wholly ‘determined’ by contexts of ‘production’ or ‘reception’, meanings may nevertheless be radically inflected by particular contexts of ‘writing’ and ‘reading’ in space and time (Morley, 1992). Texts do not mean simply what either their producers or their interpreters choose for them to mean. The same text can be interpreted quite differently within different contexts imposed by the readers. As stated above, one text can invite different readings and interpretations but also readers choose to negotiate their meanings with ‘preferred meanings’ encoded in texts. Readers appropriate meanings that best fit their imaginary solutions as interpreted by individual, cultural and class experiences (Cultsock website, Communication Studies, Cultural Studies, Media Studies Infobase hyperlink). The same is true for tourists’ visits to cultural villages (to be discussed in Section III). The readings preferred by the dominant ideology are structured into the text as a whole, and they could be resisted or negotiated within the context of an engagement with the complete text.

In the same way, tourists retrieve meanings from the texts depending on their cultural background and experiences. Tourists do not come to cultural villages simply to look without engaging actively in the activities and performances taking place. They construct their own meanings based on what the performers are (re)presenting. Their background experiences and expectations influence the meanings they negotiate in cultural villages as texts to be read and interpreted. In establishing what I have stated above about ‘preferred or dominant meanings’ I shall therefore argue that most cultural villages, especially the Izintaba Zulu cultural village, try to give the impression that there is one homogenous Zulu culture, hence cultural performances and (re)presentations of being Zulu provide one dominant preferred reading. My contention will be based on a critique of the dominant textual reading represented at Izintaba cultural village. Umberto Eco (1981) introduced the concept of aberrant decoding of texts - the tendency for people of different cultures or sub-cultures to ‘read’ a text in a way that is quite different from the dominant reading.
The Conceptualisation of Identity

There are at least two possible ways of conceiving cultural identity – one essentialist, narrow and closed, the other historical, encompassing and open. The former thinks of cultural identity as an already accomplished fact, as an already constituted essence. The latter thinks of cultural identity as something which is being produced, always in process, never fully complete.

(Larrain, 1994: 157-158)

The concept of cultural identity is paramount in the evolution of tourism given the modern tourists’ motivations and their beliefs that indigenous cultures have cultural identities to preserve. These identities are supposed to provide them (tourists) a sense of belonging and redemption for the loss of ‘true’ self in the industrialised world. However, post-modern discourses challenge the idea of homogenous and essentialist identity that cultural tourism is attempting to offer in cultural villages. Studies on identity have made a distinction between two types of cultural identities: the identity that stems from common interests, shared values and similar ethnicity (suggesting homogeneity and unity) amongst people and the personal identity constructed through the individual’s background and experiences (Hall 1990, Larrain 1994, Morley & Robins 1995). These studies support the thinking stated by Hall (1990: 222) that “[i]dentity is not transparent and unproblematic as we think”. This study will assess the cultural identity as conceptualised by Hall (1990) in the two models that he proposes.

First model of cultural identity

This first model defines cultural identity in terms of “a collective ‘one true self’ hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (Hall, 1990: 223). It identifies homogeneity and shared culture, traditions and values as the main characteristics in constructing and shaping cultural identity. The view, affiliated with the (re)discovery of or return to the past, locates cultural identity as fixed, firm and permanent in a particular spatiality and temporality “beneath the shifting divisions and vissitudes of our actual history” (Hall, 1990: 223). The idea that seems to be suggested is that the construction of cultural identity depends on the questions of and about the past, a historical past that is becoming extinct. This idea places the question of memory as substantial in cultural identity (Carter, Donald & Squires, 1993: 10). However, in the post-modern era the certainties of cultural identity provided by this first model and their emphasis on a particular spatiality and temporality (housing stable cohesive communities of shared traditions and perspectives) are increasingly being questioned, disrupted and displaced (Carter, Donald & Squires, 1993).

Second model of cultural identity

Cultural identities are points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of culture and history. Not an essence but a positioning. Hence there is always a
politics of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic ‘law of origin’.

(Hall, 1990: 226)

The second model views cultural identity as an individualised ongoing process of constructing and imagining ourselves through our own personal dispositions, mental constructions and social identifications. This model holds the view that identity is circumstantial, experiential, temporal, spatial, “always relational and incomplete, in process” (Hall & Du Gray, 1996: 89). It challenges the assumption posed by the first model that cultural identity is fixed, static and grounded in the past by acknowledging that who we are is made up of distinct multiple identities. Jonathan Rutherford (1990: 24) asserts by arguing that “[m]odern life ascribes to us a multiplicity of subject positions and potential identities which hold the prospects for historically unparalleled human development”. The argument further proposes that identity is never complete and is always evolving to accommodate these distinct identities within us. According to Hall (1990), identity is an act of ‘becoming’ and ‘being’. This post-modern thinking conceptualises cultural identity as having much franchise on the past as in the future (Carter, Donald & Squires, 1993). Identity, in this sense, is not given but is negotiated over a period of time and a particular place and space.

This sense of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ is about self-articulation, how we see and imagine ourselves, and consciousness, how we are positioned and represented by society within the narratives of history, the structures of the present and what we are to become. However, we can argue this point of self-articulation and consciousness by questioning whether this conceptualisation of identity is ascribed or inscribed. Identity is therefore the affirmation of who we are as we continuously imagine ourselves through our experiences and how we think others have positioned and continue to position us within societies. Hall (1990) substantiates this point

Far from being grounded in a mere ‘recovery’ of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves, within the narratives of the past.

(1990: 225)

We are forever constructing, shaping and defending our positions through identification and difference in a society where the (un)certainties of the past are crumbling and their representations are continuously probed and questioned. As Hall (1990: 222) states “[i]dentity arises, not so much from the fullness of identity which is already inside us as individuals, but from a lack of wholeness which is ‘filled’ outside us, by the ways we imagine ourselves to be seen by others.”

Re-Thinking Ethnicity

Ethnicity is transactional, shifting and essentially impermanent.

(Jenkins, 1997: 20)
The conceptualisation of cultural identity has direct implications on the notion of ethnicity which supposedly provides a sense of security and belonging in unified cultural identification and homogeneity. However, as the firmly and securely stable walls of culture and tradition located in history and the past are being pushed and displaced, questions on ethnicity and the securities it provides are constantly being raised within the circuits of post-modern thinking and discourses. Ethnicity as a concept is very complicated, its connections to issues such as race and nationality makes it more difficult to define and characterise it in relation to culture and tradition. Anand Paranjpe (1986) notes “the phenomenon called ethnicity is a highly complex and elusive one.”

This complicated nature of this phenomenon has resulted in debates and disagreements regarding the make-up thereof. However, ethnicity is concerned with culture and “is no more fixed and unchanging than the culture which it is a component of or the situations in which it is produced” (Jenkins, 1997:18). Like identity, ethnicity is not given, natural or unchanging (Van den Berghe, 1981). Instead, it is constructed among people who identify among themselves cultural similarities and common interests, thus forming an ethnic group or community. Jenkins (1997:10) notes this:

An ethnic group is based on the belief shared by its members that, however distantly, they are of common descent. People come to see themselves as belonging – coming from a common background – as a consequence of acting together. Collective interests thus do not simply reflect or follow from similarities and differences between people, the pursuit of collective interests, however, encourage ethnic identification.

(1997:10)

Ethnicity is an individual’s conceptualisation of his/her own surroundings and subjective interpretation. The identity that is formed through this process is called ethnic identity. Like cultural identity, this kind of identity is constructed, situational, temporal, spatial and “transformed in the course of interaction and transaction” (Barth, 1969 in Jenkins, 1997: 12). Rex (1986) notes that ethnicity functions as a resource in the contemporary sense of the term: “[i]t can be used to summon up a social organisation for the attainment of ends when it is needed, but it can also be latent and ignored” (Rex, 1986: 27). The same uncertainty on issues of ethnicity applies to Zulu people as an ethnic group (expected to adhere to conceptions of homogeneity and unity particularly as this relates to those who identify themselves as Zulu). It is becoming increasingly difficult in the current times to make a categorical distinction of ‘Zuluness’/being Zulu based on ethnicity. The lines of ethnicity among African Blacks is becoming blurred and shifted by factors such as intercultural and interracial marriages. Cultural identity/identities thus cannot be constructed and shaped in ethnic identifications and associations because of frailties existing within ethnicity as a concept and phenomenon.

Conclusion
This section aimed to lay a theoretical framework by which to assess and analyse cultural villages. It highlighted the fact that texts embody meanings constructed by the producers
and readers/receivers. It is imperative to understand the codes inscribed in the meanings of these texts. In the same way, cultural villages are activated texts because of their openness to a number of potential readings and interpretations by tourists and visitors. At the same time, the village managers and performers infuse 'preferred meanings' that guide tourists through the cultural activities that are staged or performed. The conceptualisation of cultural identity is two fold, essentialist and historic as opposed to being personal, incomplete and evolving. The study challenges the notion of a fixed cultural identity, (re)presented in cultural villages by arguing that identities are ongoing constructions formed through consciousness of who a person is and comprehension of his/her surroundings. In such settings, ethnicity is believed to create a sense of belonging and uniformity for the formations of cultural identities.
Section III
Methodology, Presentation of Data and Data Analysis

Introduction
The aim of the present section is threefold: firstly, to state and describe the methodology used for the study; secondly, to present data collected and thirdly, to analyse it. The section interweaves the chosen theories (as outlined in Section II) with data analysis and the methodology. Pertti Alasutari (1995: 42) states, “[t]he theoretical framework determines what kind of data to collect and what method to use in analysing them”.

Methodology
Without an explicitly defined method, without clear rules which tell what conclusions one is allowed to draw from different kinds of observations, research is easily turned into an activity where you try to prove your own prejudices right.

(Alasutari, 1995: 41-42)

Research and its reporting are social acts that require you to think steadily about how your work relates to your readers, about the responsibility you have toward your subject and yourself and toward them as well.

(Booth et al, 1995: 5)

The research and its reporting have a task and responsibility to present the information obtained truthfully, accurately and objectively. It is of utmost importance, therefore, that the researcher is clear on what information is required to obtain the desired results and how that is going to be achieved. Methods help in eliminating any forms of bias (the researcher might bring into research) and reach a verifiable conclusion without the researcher attempting to prove his/her prejudices right. The study employs a case study approach and the methodology used for data collection is in-depth face-to-face interviews and participant observation.

Case study
The study sought to analytically observe and critique the Zulu cultural villages, established in the KwaZulu-Natal province, in their (re)presentations of Zulu cultural identity/identities through cultural activities. A further aim was to discover the ‘authenticity’ claimed by cultural tourism authorities and village managers in advertising and marketing strategies they employ (Izintaba Zulu Cultural Village brochure – “Experience True Zulu Culture”, Isithumba Zulu Cultural Village brochure – “Experience Authentic Zulu Culture”, Ecabazini Zulu Cultural Homestead webpage – “Authentic Zulu living homestead”). The case study method may be used with other research instruments such as participant observation and interviews in providing qualitative information (May, 2001). The use of this method in the study (focusing on Izintaba Zulu cultural village as its case study) was to aid in providing and seeking to understand the cultural villages and the activities taking place on an everyday basis.
The architectural styles of cultural villages had to be assessed to ascertain their resemblance to the ‘typically authentic’ Zulu cultural village and to problematise this ‘authenticity’ in their construction in the traditional or modern sense. The cultural activities taking place in the villages had to be interrogated to discover whether the Zulu cultural identity/identities depicted and (re)presented was (were) ‘authentic’ too. The disadvantages in the case study method were the impossibility to observe and analyse every cultural village in the province. Secondly, the broad documentation of each happening in every village would have extended the study beyond its required length and it would not have been able to deal with important issues in greater detail. The limited financial resources and time constraints also prevented me from visiting as many cultural villages as I could. One cultural village had to be chosen to act as a prism of cultural villages in the province.

The Izintaba Zulu Cultural Village was selected to be a representative of nine Zulu cultural villages registered with KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority (KZNTA) (KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority website, Zulu cultural villages hyperlink). The Izintaba cultural village is located in Botha’s Hill, less than thirty-five kilometres outside Durban. This made it more accessible as it was nearer to the location in which I was based at the time of writing. I managed six visits to the village (to be discussed in the Encounters with the ‘Other’ section, p31). The method proved very helpful as it brought cultural villages to an amount which was “sufficiently manageable to be understood in all its complexity” for research (Moore, 1987: 48).

Of utmost importance is the reliability and validity of information that was obtained by observing one cultural village. As such, I had a chance to visit another cultural village, PheZulu Safari Park on the 25th of September 2001. The visit I had to PheZulu village was with Nhamo Mhiripiri (PhD candidate), Caleb Wang (MA graduate, 2001), Vanessa Dodd (MA candidate), Kyle Enevoldsen (Master of Science in Communications candidate at Oklahoma State University, USA and a visiting research affiliate in the Graduate Programme in Cultural and Media Studies at the time) and Cindy May (Wang’s fiancée). I also had a chance to look at brochures and websites of other cultural villages in the province (Dumazulu, Isithumba, Simunye and Shakaland villages). The villages have programmes of structured similarity (cultural knowledge to impart to tourists and performances) to present and stage for the tourists. The emphasis is put on the forms of traditional dress especially for women, Zulu dance (ikusina or indlamu or ingoma), courtship rituals and frequent consultations with fortune-tellers and traditional healers.

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14 The huts in a modern village are built using bricks and thatched roofs or preferably timber roof compared to the traditional village huts that were built of reed.

15 Other cultural villages are Dumazulu Cultural Village (Hluhlwe), Ecabazini Zulu Cultural Homestead (New Hanover), Hambanathi Village (Tongaat), Isithumba Village (Botha’s Hill), KwaBhekithunga (Eshowe), PheZulu Safari Park (Botha’s Hill), Shakaland (Eshowe) and Simunye Pioneer Settlement (Melmoth) (KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority website, Zulu cultural villages hyperlink).

16 PheZulu Safari Park is situated in Botha’s Hill, about 2 kilometres from Izintaba Cultural Village. The site was formed 35 years ago by the Gasa clan which entertained visitors in the area by staging Zulu cultural performances like Zulu dance (KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority website, PheZulu Safari Park hyperlink, Wang 2001).
(izangoma) for emotional and physical well being. The aim is to epitomise Zulu lifestyles and reflect their fixed cultural identity.

The limitation of using one cultural village is there are happenings that are particular to some cultural villages and that may not be experienced in other cultural villages. For example, in an unstructured (recorded) conversation with two Izintaba cultural village performers, they voiced their concern at the conditions of employment:

We are not happy with certain conditions of work here. We are threatened to be dismissed at the slightest of mistakes we make. Any of the performance props we use and what you see here is what we make for ourselves and what we brought when we were hired.

(Ngcobo andGas a, 2000)

This may not be the case with every cultural village. This particular issue was not interrogated further as it would have detracted from the focus of the study on the (re)presentations of cultural identity. The performers\(^\text{17}\) as representatives of the Zulu community depicted in the cultural villages were important in the study. However, their role as employees could not be followed because it would have deterred the focus of the study.

**Participant observation**

Given the objective of the study it was crucial for me to observe analytically – from a personalised angle – the happenings at the village as they unfold on any given day. Hence the participant observation method was employed to bring out the intricacies and subtleties that can be found in human activities, relationships and encounters. I, therefore, had to arrive before the scheduled time for the shows and leave well after the shows to observe performers, their behaviours and activities before, during and after the performances. This was to ascertain the performers' constant shifts between binary dichotomies, their acting and everyday identities, to accommodate tourists and their expectations. I had to detach myself from that position (of observing performers) and participate in documenting what the tourists saw and what they were permitted to see.

According to May (2001:153) participant observation is a form of methodology that “requires the researchers to spend a great deal of time in surroundings with which they may not be familiar; to secure and maintain relationships with people with whom they may have little affinity; to take copious notes on what would appear to be everyday mundane happenings”. In the same way as May (2001) comments on this methodology, I was required to spend time at the village and taking notes on the normal everyday activities of the village (as outlined in the **Presentation of Data**, p28). However, this mundane aspect of the research process but allows the researcher an opportunity of reflecting on, questioning and critiquing the normal everyday activities as they take place.

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\(^{17}\) The performers and the village manager, from different clans and families, come from the Valley of a Thousand Hills settlement. They were employed by the hotel to perform in the village when it commenced as a tourist site on the 5\(^{\text{th}}\) of March 1999 (Performers, 2001).
in their ordinary contexts. In essence, the method allows the researcher to “engage in a social scene, experiencing it and seeking to understand and explain it” (May, 2001: 173).

The advantage of the participant observation method was the first hand information gained through observation as compared to inaccurately conceptualising experiences of both the performers and tourists. That first hand information gained through this method ensured that the assumptions I had formed and brought with me to the village were challenged. For example, the preconceived idea I had was that cultural villages exploit cultures by creating false images about the Zulu people. The performers perpetuate these perceptions (already formed by tourists in their visits to villages) by their participation in staging the cultural identity as a fixed historical phenomenon. However, the disadvantage of this method was that I did not know how far I had to go in my participant observatory roles. I became vulnerable to the tales of unhappiness expressed by the performers regarding the alleged mistreatment by the hotel manager. A further limitation relates the way I was perceived by the participants. For example, the village manager, Richard Gasa, introduced me to his friend who was passing by the village in one of my fieldtrips as “a student from Natal University. She is here conduct a research on the village as part of her studies but I no longer take her in that capacity, she is more of our sister now” (Gasa, 2001). Through the use of this method, however, I managed to note how the performers shifted between the two identities and helped in shaping and confirming the perceptions that Western tourists bring along and take with them. To add to this, it helped in the aspect that tourists reaffirm their identities by their refusal to participate in the dance with the performers (to be discussed in Data Analysis, p45).

Structured face-to-face interviews
It was important, again, that I get first hand information from the people involved in the cultural villages, mainly the village manager, performers and tourists. Another important point was to help with yielding “rich insight into the [performers and tourists] biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitude and feelings” (May, 2001: 120). Following are examples of questions that I wanted answered (through the interviews with these people): What is the involvement of the performers and the village manager as Zulu people in the village and what are their positions in the construction of cultural villages? Are they involved merely as employees or does this have symbolic and cultural meanings to them? How do they feel about the images and cultural activities which created perceptions that they were ‘trapped in the past Zulu savages’ in the village (and other villages)? Do these images and cultural activities (re)present ‘authentic’ Zulu cultural identity which they, the performers, participate in and perpetuate? What are their feelings about the tourists’ gaze and intrusion into their lives? How has cultural tourism helped in alleviating the plight and current conditions of contemporary Zulu people economically and otherwise? Specifically, what is the relationship of cultural tourism with the lived experiences of modernised Zulu people? This question refers to living conditions of Zulu people such as poverty, tribal warfare and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the province. How has the state of near nudity for women impacted on the conditions such as rapes and perceptions that forms of dress lead to rape cases?
In terms of tourists, I wanted to find out their (tourists) motivations for coming to Izintaba cultural village and whether they had any expectations, which they felt were met or were not being met, as well as their feelings about the show. Secondly, the interviews were intended to determine the nature of the tourist gaze. Was this a homogenous gaze or did they have their own 'reading' and interpretations of the cultural village and the performances? What interested them, the authenticity or (re)presentations of the village in relation to the lived experiences of the Zulu people? How did they feel about the 'staticness' of Zulu culture (re)presented in the village?

Structured interviews according to May (2001: 128) "are social encounters and not simply passive means of gaining information. In other words, these kinds of interviews (employed in the study as well) assist the interviewer to "probe beyond the answers" (May, 2001: 123). Again, this methodology helps in seeking clarification and elaboration and in receiving validity for the answers, at the same time eliciting information that is free of bias and prejudice (May, 2001).

Thus, the interviews were conducted with:


b) The tour guides:
   i) Patrick Dlamini (16 September 2000) and
   ii) Virginia Ngcobo (22 April 2001).


d) The tourists (five)
   ii) Local tourists from Pietermaritzburg who were in the company of their friend from England (21 May 2001).

e) The curio shop owners:
   i) Jenny (23 September 2000) and
   ii) Sally (23 September 2000).

Conducting structured face-to-face interviews with these informants helped in obtaining the required information and also identifying non-verbal and verbal behaviour which could not have been achieved with methods like questionnaires. There were important things picked up about the performers during the performances. To give an example, the female performers seemed withdrawn and uncomfortable when asked questions and opted to let male performers provide explanations. When American tourists, Kevin and Emmanuel, seemed very happy at their experiences (despite their acceptance that it was a production), the Pietermaritzburg tourists, looked and sounded agitated at the inauthentic objects like the whistle and beer can tops that they found in the village. “What did they use before they had beer can tops and whistles?” the Pietermaritzburg tourist commented.

One advantage of in-depth face-to-face interviews is that this allowed me to develop close rapport with the performers. As mentioned above, the performers no longer related to me as a researcher but they saw me as their friend. I had a lot of unstructured conversations with the village manager, Richard Gasa, about the cultural village. He
noted the lack of communication between the performers and the hotel management even after they (performers) took ownership of the village.

The disadvantage of this method is that it elicited different responses and remained open to many forms of bias. For example, the female performers’ silence during the interview can easily be interpreted in terms of their unhappiness with the conditions of work or patriarchy characterising relationships between men and women in Zulu relations. It can also happen that they are quiet in nature. Again, the understanding the gender relations in Zulu culture, the women could have been quiet because they were in the presence of men. The similar experience is noted by Dawn in her interview with Prof. Tomaselli and Sehume. She is a modern girl who grew up in the city, when she came to Shakaland village, she remembered that gender relations are different in such settings and thus, she had to learn when to talk in the presence of men (Dawn, 2000). The interview was conducted on the 22nd of April 2001 when the performers had the control and ownership of the village (to be discussed in greater detail under The History of Izintaba Zulu Cultural Village below, p24). On reflection, therefore, I did not understand their reluctance to participate in the interview. I thought they had nothing to fear since they now had control and ownership of the village.

The major disadvantage turned out to be language and expression when I interviewed the performers. I constantly failed to express myself fully in Zulu (despite my claims that I am Zulu in Section I) to the performers who did not feel comfortable in using English but preferred to be addressed in Zulu only. At first I attributed this difficulty to my education status. However, when hearing Xolani Nxumalo (my colleague whom we went with on the 22nd of April 2001) who is also a Zulu expressing himself with ease in the language (Zulu), I thought about the reasons behind this difficulty. Western languages (English and Afrikaans) have heavily influenced the Zulu dialect I speak such that I tend to rely on borrowed terms rather than original Zulu terms. Growing up in the semi-rural and urban environments where the kind of people I mix speak different languages so that I am forced at times to revert to English when conversing with them could be another reason. Again, this confirmed the judgement I made earlier that my consciousness of who I am as a Zulu does not depend solely on the identification with people with whom I share the same cultural and ethnic ties.

Case Study

The History of Izintaba Zulu Cultural Village

Izintaba Zulu cultural village, referred to as “an ‘authentic’ Zulu village of the 1890s” by Margaret Von Klemperer (The Natal Witness, 02.03.1999: 9), is “situated in Botha’s Hill, KwaZulu-Natal [South Africa], overlooking the magnificent Valley of a Thousand Hills, forms a natural extension to the Valley and its people” (Izintaba Zulu Cultural Village brochure). It is located within the vicinities of a suburb-based hotel called Rob Roy Hotel (built in a Scottish castle architectural style), a posh wedding venue, upmarket curio shops, Zulu artefacts museum and a business conference room. The construction of this cultural village resembles a traditional village, “constructed in true Shaka style, the village portrays an authentic beehive construction” (Izintaba Zulu Cultural Village
brochure). Located out of sight of the hotel, curio shops and wedding venue, the village features a circular shaped design of seven grass-thatched beehive huts with dung floors surrounded by a reed fence with a kraal positioned at the centre.

The idea to set up a cultural village to act as a subsidiary to the hotel was initiated by the Cutting family when they took over the ownership and management of Rob Roy hotel in 1997 (The Natal Witness, 02.03.1999: 9). The aim was to "offer tourists a completely different experience and provide work for the Thousand Hills community" (The Natal Witness, 02.03.1999: 9). Interestingly, the village is a replica of PheZulu Safari Park in terms of activities and performances staged for tourists where most of the performers were poached. The Izintaba cultural village started working as a tourist cultural site on the 5th of March 1999 (Performers, 2001). The hotel management collaborated with the University of Natal through the then Deputy Chancellor, Prof. Eleanor Preston-Whyte and Director of Campbell Collections18, Dr Yonah Seleti to make the cultural village “the only university-approved Zulu cultural experience in KwaZulu-Natal” (The Natal Witness, 02.03.1999: 9). It is quite interesting that the only consultations made regarding the establishment of this village were with the university while the community or the elders, who may still possess knowledge about the authenticity of some Zulu cultural elements, were sidelined, notably. This procedure by the hotel management raises an important issue of commercialisation and commoditization of indigenous cultures engulfing many of these cultural villages. At the same time this raises another point that this cultural site, Izintaba cultural village, was created primarily for commercial purposes and to yield financial gains for the hotel.

The entrance fee to attend the show (comprised of cultural knowledge about the village and the performance) is R25.00 per person for 1-½ hours. The show is based on a script devised by the village manager and the performers (but similar to other cultural villages’ scripts e.g. PheZulu Safari Park) that stresses the construction of the village and the huts, courtship rituals and traditional outfits, Zulu dance and consultations with the sangoma. The hotel management owned virtually everything for the operation of the village (the land, bookings, ticket purchasing, advertising strategies and the governing power and control on the proceedings of the village) from 1999 until early 2001 when it handed the village to the ‘community’ for its operation. The village manager, Gasa, and the performers (originally employed by the hotel to work in the village at the commencement of the village as a tourist site) control the activities and performances taking place in the village by deciding on what Zulu elements to include in the show tailored for tourists. Cutting, who also managed the village before it was handed to the performers, emphasised that the Zulu dance was what the tourists wanted to see (Gasa, 2001). The village initially served as an entertainment and educational supplement to the tourists, visitors and business people who came for accommodation at the hotel or to attend conferences (The Natal Witness, 02.03.1999: 9).

At the beginning of 2001, the hotel management handed total control and ownership to the ‘community’ (Gasa and performers) for the operation of the village on condition that

18 Campbell Collections is the University of Natal library branch that contains rare books, manuscripts, maps, photographs and items concerning the heritage of KwaZulu-Natal.
the village continues to run as a traditional Zulu village (Wang, 2001). The contract, however, was verbally negotiated between the hotel management and the performers. There are two major reasons behind this unexpected change of ownership. The first reason is the village’s failure to command the anticipated profit through tourist visits since its establishment in 1999. Perhaps this could be attributed to the village’s location a few kilometres away from the well-established PheZulu Safari Park, resulting in competition between the two villages for tourists. The second reason is there were complaints and dissatisfaction from mainly African-American tourists at the involvement of a white people (referring to the hotel management) in what was intended to be about the Zulu “located in the past” (Sehume & Tomaselli, 2001). An almost similar situation happened at Shakaland village, the white managers would retire out of sight when the African-American tourists arrived (Dawn, 2000). This involvement refers to the control the hotel management had on the village. The hotel management therefore had to withdraw from the organisation and running of the village in 2001. Gasa now manages the village collaborating with the performers (Gasa, 2001).

Although the power and ownership has shifted to the ‘community’ the hotel still has some degree of control in the village since it provides facilities such as the land (on which the village is built), water, electricity and advertising for the running of the village. The bookings and purchasing of tickets are still organised at the hotel reception and the performers are now remunerated from the purchase of these show tickets, crafts and artefacts purchases and tips from the tourists. The performers work in the hotel gardening and painting before the opening of the village, which opens at 10:00 until 16:30, as part of the agreement and verbal negotiation of the contract when the village was handed to them. They are required to arrive at the hotel by 7:00 until 10:00 when they go to the village (Gasa, 2001).

The withdrawal of the hotel management from the village, however, coincidentally applied Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) development strategy (Ashley et al, 2001). Caleb Wang (2001: 20) defines this development strategy as “basically an approach to tourism that uses the industry to generate sustainable development for the communities involved by including them in the design and implementation of tourism projects”. The Valley of a Thousand Hills community (through the performers and the village manager) received full participation on the operation and creative control of the village. The performers now have creative power to devise their own script for the show and stage it in ways that are suitable to their intentions about the village. Just as Wang (2001: 74) states “[t]he minimal involvement of the private sector, the Rob Roy hotel in this example, affords creative freedom to performers”. Previously, their participation was shaped by the hotel management’s guidelines on the type of activities to stage for tourists in anticipation of their demands and expectations. Although the hotel does not receive any financial gains in the profit received through visits from tourist any longer, it benefits by having tourists using their accommodation and restaurant. In a way, the newly devised partnership has helped in bringing mutual benefit between the community and the hotel (Wang, 2001).

There are no major changes in the activities and performances, though, since the shift of ownership. The script still provides cultural knowledge and insight on the construction of
the village (the huts and the kraal), forms of dress and a performance about consultations with the sangoma and courtship rituals. However, the village has outgrown its initial intention as an entertainment and ‘educational’ supplement to now offering quintessential ‘authentic’ Zulu cultural practices with the creative control on the hands of the ‘community’ (Gasa, 2001). The village manager together with the performers decide on the organisation and operation of the village, for example, what performances (especially what songs to sing because the performances are routinely done) to present to the tourists. This is somewhat different from before where, according to Gasa, “[t]he hotel management would tell us to stage Zulu dance more than other elements of Zulu culture because, in their opinion, this is what the tourists want to see, but we now make our own decisions on what to perform for the tourists to preserve our culture” (Gasa, 2001). They are currently planning to expand the show and provide more insight into Zulu culture every year and include demonstrations on the preparation of types of Zulu food and making of cutlery like Zulu pots, izinkambo (Performers, 2001). The change in the intentions is similar to Shakaland where the village claims to preserve Zulu culture: “I think what Shakaland has tried to do is just to preserve what was there before, years and years, hundred years ago for the people that actually didn’t see it, for the people that want to see it” (Dawn, 2000).

The shift in ownership and control in a way has helped in opening doors for tourists even though the village seems to be overshadowed by PheZulu Safari Park. Local and overseas tourists frequent the village as Gasa explains.

We get tourists from overseas as well as local. What I have noticed is most of them are international. The reason for that, I think, South Africans are more exposed to other elements of Zulu culture (like umaskanda and indlamu) and the international tourists have never witnessed it. They come from all classes, upper, middle and lower classes. We do have children from schools as well even multiracial schools.

(Gasa, 2001)

These tourists have different motivations for their visits to the cultural village. The American tourists I managed to interview stated that the Zulu warrior they saw by the road attracted them into the village, their visit was more entertainment than a search for authentic cultural experiences (Kevin and Emmanuel, 2001). The Pietermaritzburg tourists wanted to learn about Zulu culture, they grew up in South Africa but besides the maid in their homes, they had no contact to Zulu people. Their visit was more educational, a learning experience (Pietermaritzburg tourists, 2001). The motivation of the American tourists outlines MacCannell’s (2001) theory of the ‘second gaze’ that people are no longer in search of the authenticity but delight in the inauthentic as well. As such, authenticity and authentic cultural experiences depend on tourists’ expectations influenced by their backgrounds and dispositions. To give an example, it would probably be more important for African-American tourists to understand every activity performed and staged in cultural villages. As Wang (1999: 355) points out “To an extent then, ‘authenticity’ is thus a projection of tourists’ own beliefs, expectations, preferences, stereotyped images, and consciousness onto toured objects”.

27
Presentation of Data

When entering the Izintaba Zulu cultural village (our first trip was on the 16th of September 2000), two (English and German) versions of a book Uli Von Kapff9 (English edition titled “Zulu: People of Heaven” and German edition emphasises the image of a Zulu warrior) and a registry form greet the tourists. The registry form is for the tourists to fill their details including the country where they come from, their nationalities and reasons for visiting the site. The tour guide, assigned the task of imparting cultural knowledge about Zulu culture to the tourists with explanations and descriptions of the village and the days’ proceedings, meets the tourists at the entrance. The tour guide on our first trip was Patrick Dlamini, who greeted us (Prof. Tomaselli, Alexandra Von Stauss, Thokozani Khuzwayo20 and myself) in English. We immediately noticed that the tour guide, Dlamini, was wearing a traditional male outfit made of a cowhide ‘ibheshu’, black underpants underneath the traditional outfit and wristwatch on his left arm. Prof. Tomaselli questioned him on the contrast he was presenting about himself with the outfit he was wearing and a wristwatch and underpants. His answer was that the wristwatch was to time the tour and the performance which had to take 1-½ hours.

The show starts with the greeting upon entering an ‘authentic’ Zulu cultural village. The tourists are instructed to lift their hands while the tour guide counts up to three whereafter they (the tourists and himself) all shout “E Baba” (loosely translated to ‘Greetings to the Great One’). The explanation given by Dlamini for this form of greeting is to show the Chief (assumed to reside in the biggest hut in the cultural village) that the visitors (in this case, the tourists) are not enemies. The tourists are told about the village with seven beehive huts (including a flushing toilet with a brick wall and thatched roof) which Dlamini (2000) referred to as a “typical Zulu village” because it houses performers from different families: “[h]ere we have a Dlamini family, Ngcobo family, Gasa family and Mtshali family” (Dlamini, 2000).

Explanations offered for the use of each hut begin with the visitor’s hut at the right hand from the entrance, then the boys’ hut, the kitchen or the second wife’s hut and the Chief’s hut also used for performances. The tourists are not led inside the visitor’s hut despite the fact that they are visitors in the village. They (tourists) are taken to the boys’ hut, which is the second on the right from the entrance, where the tour guide let the tourists inside while he continues with his explanations. There is a sleeping mat made of a cowhide, and a pillow made of wood. Other objects found inside the hut are kitchen utensils such as a grinding stone, isigqilo, claypot, ukhamba for Zulu beer, utshwala or umgombothi, milk container, ithunaga, beer strainer, ivovo or ikhama and a meat tray, uqgoko. I thought these items should have been stored in the kitchen. Dlamini’s explanation regarding these utensils was “[i]f a girl has come to visit her boyfriend, but mostly, it’s a fiancée, she has to grind mealies to take to the kitchen” (Dlamini, 2000).

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9 Uli Von Kapff was born in Germany and moved to KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa in 1989 where he became fascinated by the Zulu nation and its ways of living hence he decided to write a book about this powerful nation (Zulu “People of Heaven” website).

20 Alexandra Von Stauss is an MA candidate in the Graduate Programme in Cultural and Media Studies. Thokozani Khuzwayo is a lecturer in Zulu Department and a PhD candidate.
The tour guide proceeds to the next hut. There was much hesitation among two male performers who were inside the hut and Dlamini as what the third hut from the right was for on our fieldtrip. The performers claimed the hut was the kitchen (perhaps because they were cooking) while Dlamini thought it was the second wife’s hut. Eventually, the three agreed that it is the kitchen which is also the second wife’s hut. Tourists are not taken inside this hut. I thought that this was done to avoid the contradiction the happenings inside the hut would present to tourists. Later, though, I learnt that it was done not to jeopardise tourists’ health since the hut was used for cooking on fire and it was assumed that the smoke was not good for tourists’ health (Ngcobo, 2001). Again, this contradicted the very importance of taking tourists on tour, to make them experience ‘authenticity’ they are searching for.

The tour guide offers explanations about the vegetable storage, which is situated between the kitchen and the chief’s hut. The storage is elevated from the ground using rods so that the water cannot accumulate on the floor of the storage and spoil the vegetables. After the explanation the tour guide turns to the cattle kraal situated at the centre of the village. Dlamini told us there were two cows in the village but the kraal did not look like there were cows staying there. After that, tourists are taken to the chief’s house, marked by the buffalo’s horns at the entrance as a symbol of high status. The chief’s hut is also used as a performance room when the descriptions of the huts have finished. High cement seats and electricity bulbs inside this hut are evidence of prominent modern objects. Dlamini apologised for these ‘inauthentic’ features “[t]hese concrete seats are not Zulu, we just made these ones for you, customers, because the Zulu have to sit down on the floor. So I don’t think you can sit on the floor. And the light in fact, we used to make a big fire at the centre of the hut, but the smoke is not good for you, that is why we have electricity lights” (Dlamini, 2000).

Forms of dress for women are described as Zulu women display traditional Zulu attire for tourists. These women, in traditional female outfits, izidwaba, cycling shorts underneath and pantihose on their heads, are dressed according to their marital statuses. Being bare-breasted symbolises unmarried and virginal women while covered breasts symbolise that the woman is either married or is a mother. After the descriptions of the forms of dress, the tour guide briefs the tourists on isangoma – the divine healer, traditional healer or fortune-teller and his/her qualification process.

To become a qualified sangoma can take from three up to seven years. Why it takes a long duration is because a qualified sangoma needs to teach the trainees, amathwasa, how to make traditional medicine from the herbs, how to heal people with different sicknesses, even how to throw bones and read them. When she is going to be a sangoma the villagers are going to see her crying like she is going mad. Her ancestors will lead her straight to a qualified sangoma to train to become a sangoma. (Dlamini, 2000)

The tour guide then introduces a performance about a young man who consults a sangoma to advise him on whether or not his girlfriend will be a good wife. The
performance is comprised of sangoma consultation scene, the sangoma scene where she thanks her ancestors for the gifts of divine healing and fortune telling, an engagement ceremony scene and a wedding ceremony scene. After the performance, the tourists are asked to join in the dance with the performers. The performance ends with the performers singing a church song and a national anthem and their appreciation for the tourists' visit Siyabonga, Hambani Kahle (Thank you, have a safe journey). The tour guide informs the tourists that if they want to give the performers anything to thank them before they leave, they should put it in a small grass mat in front of the entrance. The performers wait for the tourists to give them gifts (usually in the form of money) before they leave the hut through the entrance on the side to resume their everyday identities and perhaps take pictures with the tourists. The back area of the main house, which is revered as a holy place to summon the dead or the ancestors, is not explained. Its symbolic meaning that only the head of the house is allowed to enter is not preserved as the performers frequent it when they are preparing their scenes or taking their props such as shields, umahawu.

The village's huts have low entrances with no doors. Prof. Tomaselli asked Dlamini about the doors in the village. Dlamini explained that the traditional huts' doors opened to the right (whereas most modern house doors open to the left) because most Zulu men in the past were right handed. It was easy for them to take their spears, imikhonto or ikhvac, and 'knobkierries', isagila, and hit out at the enemy coming inside the house. He explained further that another reason was women had to sit on the right hand side and not mix with men on the left-hand side. However, my observation was the performers were not strict with gender organisations because the tourists are allowed to sit in any side they want during the performances in the main hut. On my third trip (22 April 2001) we were instructed to sit separately according to our gender. This became an added element to the script.

What is worth noting, again, is that the village, like all other cultural villages in the province, is situated in the vicinity of modern and Western structures like hotels, safari parks, lodges and guest houses away from the Zulu community. The explanation given by Gasa for the location of Izintaba cultural village was that the hotel provided convenience (in terms of accommodation and meals) for tourists who came to the village (Gasa, 2001). This is ironic considering that tourists are motivated by their desires to find 'authenticity' and 'authentic' cultural experiences Jeursen (1996: 6) aptly explains such kinds of location of cultural villages “[t]he separation of the tourist village from village where the group lives is partly to give their privacy but is mostly aimed at presenting the tourists with a sanitised space free from any western paraphernalia.” The tourists themselves prefer such places where they will be accommodated in the conditions they are familiar with. They prefer the western or modern comforts compared to experiences of sleeping on the dung floors with a sleeping mat made of a cowhide. Asked if any tourists had ever slept in the visitor's hut, Dlamini said that he did not recall any tourist staying in the village overnight. These kinds of conditions fit perfectly with what MacCannell (1976) refers to as a 'tourist bubble'. While tourists enjoy parading in the village, gazing at the 'primitive natives' in their animal skins and other unfamiliar exotic sights (re)presenting timeless Zulu natives and their hunter-gatherer lifestyles they want to keep their identities as the Same (contemporary everyday ways of living). Tomaselli (2001: 180) aptly puts it
In semiotic terms, tourists prefer a familiar experience in which they maintain their identity in the face of the Other, while doing what tourists normally do (in MacCannell’s tourist bubble). They don’t want to penetrate the thirdness of the Other, and neither do tour guides, as this takes long, gets in the way of pre-planned travel schedules, and is often uncomfortable, particularly where pre-modern living conditions are replicated – as in parts of Simunye.

(2001: 180)

**Encounters with the ‘Other’**

The report documented in this section is a personal account of the six visits made to Izintaba Zulu cultural village. It will note observations made by myself in the encounters with the Zulu performers and tourists as the layout of the show has been presented in the **Presentation of Data** (p28) above. In addition to the visits to Izintaba I visited another village, PheZulu Safari Park. I have documented notes and observations made on this visit in this section (**Encounters with the ‘Other’**) as well. The main reason is to provide a brief comparison of Izintaba with another cultural village. The second reason is to distinguish the similarities in operation and activities of cultural villages in the province.

My first visit to the Izintaba Zulu cultural village was on the 16th of September 2000. I was part of the group who were academics and also participant-observers: Prof. Tomaselli, Von Stauss, Khuzwayo, Wang (who could not make it inside the village) and Wang’s friend, Zoë. My initial feeling towards the trip was that of excitement and anticipation. Perhaps the feeling emanated from the fact that the trip would grant me the privilege of seeing a (perhaps authentic) cultural village, which up to that point I had only seen in media productions, *umaskanda* music videos and *Ingolobane Yesizwe*21 (1989) book I used in high school. Despite having no prior knowledge on the exact happenings and activities in the village I knew that the performers were simply actors and employees employed by the hotel to enact the Zulu lifestyle like in media productions such as *Shaka Zulu* (1986). I expected the performers to depict themselves as authentic and use the image of King Shaka and of Zulu warriors, *amabutho*, in their depiction. The use of these images was due to their popularity: King Shaka, the most powerful and prominent Zulu king, managed to single-handedly form the largest Zulu nation through his apt military strategies. The Zulu warrior image is also popular because of the 1878 Anglo-Zulu War at the ‘Battle of Isandlwana’ where Zulu warriors, *amabutho*, defeated the British army. I knew again that the grass beehives in the village were built for tourist attraction and as such, did not expect to find any performers living permanently there.

All these assumptions (formed before I saw the cultural village) lead to the conclusion that it (cultural village) was fake, a reconstruction of the real just like Shakaland Cultural

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21 *Ingolobane Yesizwe* is a book written by Sibusiso Nyembezi and Otty Nxumalo which is attempting to document 'authentic' Zulu ways of living just like Von Kapff in his book “Zulu: People of Heaven”.
Village\textsuperscript{22}, an illusion that was commercially motivated. These sites depend on the historical Zulu images and cultural events to glorify the 'return to the (romantic) past' and the preservation (imagined and illusory) of 'authenticity' to further their commercial interests. Perhaps we should refer to such villages as not only a lens to the past, but also demonstrations of the livelihood of Zulu people, in days gone by. The cultural elements and activities could be extracted "from the fragments of collectible memory or, better still, from rare survivals still found in daily life" (Smith & Eadington, 1995: 100).

We (Khuzwayo, Von Strauss and me) awaited, in anticipation, our visit to the exotic place where the past is (re)created and the ‘Same/Other’ identities are sought, (re)presented and affirmed. Wang and Zoë joined us at the village. The sight of a Scottish castle-like hotel called Rob Roy Hotel greeted us on our arrival. This, together with the purchasing of tickets (each costing R25.00) at the hotel reception, curio shops and a wedding venue (I saw after the visit in the village), immediately confirmed my assumptions relating to the fake-nature of the village. My unhappiness was directed at the hotel management for the inaccurate information they impart to the tourists that the Zulu still live in beehive huts, parading "in the state of nature, exposing their nudity and proximity to savagery" (Masolo, 1994: 182). However, I began to understand that tourists themselves want such facilities provided for them after witnessing and experiencing 'authenticity' and Zulu culture in the village. As Tomaselli (2001: 180) states "[t]ourists prefer a familiar experience in which they maintain their identity in the face of the Other, while doing what the tourists normally do (in MacCannell’s tourist bubble)”. These Western facilities, the hotel for accommodation and posh restaurant for lunch and dinner, provide the western luxuries and comfort tourists want to keep with themselves in their 'journeys to the past' and '(re)discovery of selves'. Von Strauss (2000) confirms this by asserting that

Tourists obviously prefer the comfort of the 'First World' treatment at the Rob Roy Hotel, in spite of the 'authentic Zulu' plastic hangers and the plastic 'ukuphalaza' - a bucket, which is used for vomiting after taking traditional cleansing medicine – provided for the 'pleasure' of the visitor in the guest's house. (2000: 6)

From outside, the physical construction of the village corroborated the element of 'authenticity' as I had seen in the Ingqobokwe Yesizwe (1989) and media productions. The round-shaped huts were grass-thatched with low openings serving as entrances. The village appeared traditional in its physical appearance (though the thatching appeared to have been done haphazardly). For a moment, my assumptions that the village was a fake were challenged. Nevertheless, I proceeded with much eagerness to witness what was waiting for us inside. I, armed with a notebook and pen, was prepared to jot down whatever could confirm my pre-conceived notions of cultural villages in KwaZulu-Natal and prove my assumptions right.

\textsuperscript{22} Shakaland Cultural Village, based in Eshowe, is 'a theme park dedicated to the representation of Zulu history and culture" by showcasing Zulu cultural events and offering insight on Zulu cultural elements (Hamilton, 1992: 4). The village was originally built as the set for the movie Shaka Zulu (Hamilton, 1998).
The construction of the entrance was shaped like a hut with a wooden counter (on the right of the entrance). My attention immediately fell on the registry form and the two (English and German) versions of a book by Uli Von Kapff lying on top of the counter. Seeing the book that I thought was really unnecessary to be lying around at the entrance, I concluded that the purpose of the book was to supplement the insight and cultural knowledge imparted by tour guides with supposedly credible documented information. Secondly, as it is sold in the curio shops, the book will serve as a memento for tourists and refresh their memories about ‘authentic’ Zulu culture and lifestyle. Thirdly, the purpose is also to circulate amongst friends and relatives, who might be interested in visiting such cultural sites to experience Zulu culture for themselves in future. Vincent Sikhakhane, assistant general manager at Simunye cultural village, substantiates this in his interview with Prof. Tomaselli about Roger and Pat De La Harpe, Barry Leitch, and Sue Derwent book called Zulu (1998).

Prof.: When I have finished this book, what would you like me to know?
Vincent: To remember and to pass it on to other people.

(Sikhakhane, 2000)

An interesting observation is that the author of the book, Zulu: ‘People of Heaven’ (Von Kapff), is a German national. From his acknowledgements he has cited who his sources of information for this work are. The title of the English version, Zulu ‘People of Heaven’: Witchcraft, How to behave, Love life, History: Everything you should know! is interesting in that it claims that the book has documented everything about Zulu culture that non-Zulu people need to know. My concern is the presentation of this information which fails to acknowledge the changes in Zulu culture and ways of living in the contemporary world. This presentation suggests that Zulu culture is static and fixed in time.

Most of the performers continued with their preparations for the show while we waited at the entrance until a tour guide, a young man wearing a traditional male outfit (made of cowhide), ibheshu, black underpants and a wristwatch, came to us. (Wearing contrasting outfits is common in other villages. For example, the tour guide in our visit to PheZulu Safari Park was wearing a T-shirt and long pants. The similar incident is noted by Sikhakhane at Simunye where tourists demand to know why they “are wearing American plastic” (Sikhakhane, 1999).) After the tour guide, Patrick Dlamini, greeted us (in English) and ushered us in, he gave an instruction of a Zulu greeting that we had to perform and a brief explanation of what a cultural village is (as outlined in the Presentation of Data, p28). The constructed nature of the (re)presentation of Zulu culture began to unfold. I noticed a grass mat with beadwork and woodwork in front of the entrance. Dlamini explained this work, “[h]ere on the grass mat we have beadwork and woodwork. Beadwork is made by girls and woodwork is made by boys with an aim of selling” (Dlamini, 2000).

My critical approach to cultural villages and anything that was not authentically Zulu - but presented as Zulu – allowed me to notice that the beadwork covered modern items
such as cups, spoons and combs. My assumption was the location of these artefacts in front of the entrance suggested the commercialisation aspect in cultural villages. I concluded that these artefacts were placed there simply for tourist attraction and consumption. For tourists, buying such items would mean they have actually experienced Zulu culture and these will provide a sense of “being-there” and “having-been-there” when they return to their homes. As Von Stauss (2000: 6) states “[t]ourists take back home commodities, which capture the perceived authenticity – proof that they have visited the exotic destination and which, therefore, act as status markers of an authentic experience”. However, I was interested in the symbolism associated with beads and whether these bead works had any symbolic meanings which were conveyed to the tourists as these items were purchased. It is important to mention that all performers interviewed towards this research revealed that they had little or no knowledge about the symbolism of beads (Performers, 2001). My attention, though, was taken by the explanation by Dlamini which hinted at the fixed and specific roles characterising gender relations and duties in the Zulu culture evident even in the contemporary gender relations.

Despite seven huts in the village we were taken into four huts, the ones that are on the right hand side of the entrance. I thought that this fit perfectly with the idea of keeping backstage concealed to the tourists’ gaze (though we were not tourists). After all, front stage is designed for observer-observed encounters where the ‘authentic’ cultural identity is enacted while the back stage is reserved for performers’ everyday identities. Tomaselli (2001) recapitulates

Most cultural tourism occurs front stage, in the public spaces where the meeting of hosts and guests/tourists is designed to occur. Backstage is where the hosts and performers live, retire, and conduct their own social, leisure and symbolic lives.

(Goffman 1959 in Tomaselli 2001: 176)

It is worth noting that Dlamini would not have taken us inside the visitor’s hut had Prof. Tomaselli not reminded him that we were visitors and should be taken into this hut first. The true test came when we had to figure out how to enter the hut through the low opening. Khuzwayo, who had adamantly affirmed that she is Zulu, had to ask Dlamini how to get inside the hut. As small as the incident might look, it represented a significant moment that this world depicted (in the village) almost to perfection from the outside is far removed from the reality and Zulu lifestyle we know as Zulu people. We found modern objects like coat hanger, sweetwrapper, sunlight soap and a paint tin with indigenous medicine, ubulawu, for cleansing the inside of a person in the hut. Asked whether any tourists had ever slept or were keen on sleeping in the village and use, ubulawu, Dlamini had to admit that he knew no tourist who showed any interest in staying overnight in the hut.

Prof.: The tourists when they come here, especially the foreign tourists, do they expect to see a big hotel?
Vincent: They expect a big hotel, you can see it in their eyes. When they arrive at the store, they ask “where do we sleep?” Simunye is completely different from the hotel.

Prof.: When you show them where they will sleep what do they say?

Vincent: I can tell you now, they say “they (the huts) are more like rock rooms”. I can tell you now, they don’t want to stay in a Zulu umuzi.

Prof.: Have people told you that?

Vincent: They want to visit Zulus not to stay with Zulus...

Prof.: Do they tell you this when they arrive or afterwards?

Vincent: They tell me afterwards. They want to visit the Zulu but not stay in the village.

(Sikhakhane, 1999)

The questions that we kept posing to Dlamini (Izintaba tour guide) during our visit made him realise that our interest was beyond the planned and structured script and the show. He began to relax and started explaining things in greater detail. My observation was that his cultural knowledge seemed to be based on common sense and guessing rather than factual information proving further my assumption that the village is a construction. To illustrate, Khuzwayo and I questioned him on the kitchen utensils found in the boys’ hut. His answer was that the utensils were kept for the son’s fiancée to grind mealies before taking it to the kitchen. This information contradicted what he had earlier told us, that it was boys’ hut. The constructed nature of the performance became even more apparent when the female performers who had been waiting uninterestedly for the cultural knowledge session to finish started preparing themselves at the sight of Von Stauss taking out her camera. Obviously, this was an important moment for them, as performers, they had to switch into their character roles including “outfits and expressions that are harmonised with themed environments” to convey the meaning that this is ‘authenticity’ (Edensor, 2000: 324). It seemed that they (performers) know when to assume their ‘authentic’ cultural identities for tourists lest they be caught unprepared and convey meanings that contradict the intentions of the village. While we were educated and elucidated on Zulu culture inside the village, Wang and Zoë were “afforded a backstage view as the performers prepared to enter the spell woven around the paying customers” when the women started preparing themselves for the show (Wang, 2000: 3):

Zoë and I watched the women put on and adjust their beaded aprons. The men, dressed in skins, tied on their fluffy ankle warmers. A plump woman from a hut, dressed only in short length of black material, and disappeared into another hut. She emerged later in full sangoma gear with a skirt, string of beads, Job’s tears woven in her hair and sundry strips of leather.

(2000: 3)

We were taken into what appeared to be a kitchen (since we found two male performers cooking). The uncertainty of what the hut was proved important in revealing the performers’ cultural knowledge. After all, they were attempting to (re)present a world that had almost gone extinct. Khuzwayo and I had a lengthy conversation with two male performers who voiced their unhappiness at the employment conditions they were
subjected to by the hotel management. The male performers earned R594.00 while the
female performers earned a R394 month. In times, where everything is becoming
increasingly expensive, this kind of salary can be argued to be pure exploitation of human
labour and resources.

Our interest beyond ‘tourist impressing acts’ separated us from the tourists. Normally,
tourists and performers are not interested in the private lives of each other but only that
which they can offer each other. Their encounters are based shallowly on the exchange
between cultural knowledge and monies. Tourists leave immediately after the shows
without attempting to converse with the performers nor to understand performers’ lives
beyond performative roles. Joost Krippendorf (1989: 59) highlights this point by arguing
that “[t]he one thing [tourists] care about is their recreation. They are not really interested
in meeting the natives, unless it can contribute to their entertainment and add variety to
the trip”. I did not see the working conditions as exploitative as much as Khuzwayo felt
the performers and Zulu culture were exploited. I felt for them at the same time I
condemned their participation in perpetuating myths and stereotypes tourists already
formed about the Zulu. The Zulu no longer live in grass thatched huts nor do they walk
around in states of near nudity. I silently agreed with Greenwood (1978: 136) in his
argument that “[c]ulture is being packaged, priced, and sold like building lots, rights-of-
way, fast food, and room service as the tourism industry inexorably extends its grasp”.
(Wang (2001) argues that cultural villages do not sell culture itself but the representation
of culture which is what tourists are searching for.)

I believed the performers participated in this commercial establishment on their own
accord, but the again, what choice did they have? In a country where it is hard even for
university graduates to find employment what choice do they have with their high school
education? Opening a cultural establishment costs money and needs resources such as the
huts, hygienic water facilities, electricity, bookings, ticket purchases and perhaps
accommodation. All these facilities need finances and the village needs refurbishing on a
continuous basis to attract tourists. At the moment the performers depend almost entirely
on the hotel for facilities I have mentioned above. They need the hotel to provide them
with necessary facilities as they cannot manage the village with the remuneration they get
from ticket purchases, tips from tourists and artefact purchases.

Dlamini led us to the chief’s hut where he called women dressed in different dress codes
symbolising their marital statuses. He explained the symbolism of each dress code,
uncovered upper bodies meant a girl or woman who is still a virgin or unmarried while
covered bodies meant a woman who is a mother or is married. Later, when I thought
about these topless performers, I could not help feeling embarrassed and uncomfortable
especially coming from a society which does not tolerate any forms of dress that would
reveal breasts in public. This was a different setting in that it was closed to the general
public’s gaze. However, this did not change the fact that there are people who come to
gaze at the Zulu performers. That was an outside gaze and tourists probably reacted with
varying emotions towards this form of dress. I began to wonder how tourists felt when
gazing at topless performers. Perhaps this is what they want to see after all and it is not
shocking to them to gaze at these women’s states of near-nudity, they perhaps take pleasure at gazing at “[s]uch forms of (un)dress” (Tomaselli, 2001: 179).

I wondered about the women too, how they felt knowing that there are people watching them especially if they remained topless in the presence of men. They seemed to be comfortable in that state during their performances. Perhaps they have got used to the tourist’s gaze that it no longer felt uncomfortable. I concluded that their uncovered tops were not for sexual purposes but to ‘exoticise’ and ‘spectacularise’ their forms of dress. Dawn (2000) recapitulates “I know that some people have a problem with the fact that the girls expose their breasts. The girls don’t have a problem with that. It might be you that has problem with it because you feel intimidated by the fact that someone else is walking around, well to you, half-naked”. African-American tourists seem to be more outraged at such states of ‘nakedness’ than any other nationality. Jenny (2000), the curio shop owner at Rob Roy hotel, told us that they (African-Americans) responded with shock when they saw women with uncovered tops. Similar experiences have been noted in other cultural villages too. Dawn related that African-American tourists at (and other tourists as well) Shakaland cultural village respond with shock and shame to see bare-breasted women (Dawn, 2000). Nhleko agreed that African-Americans were very rude and felt ashamed when they saw bare-breasted women at Dumanzulu (Nhleko, 2000). Such forms of reading women’s states of dress do not apply only to the cultural villages. Prof. Tomaselli narrated to Sikhakhane at Simunye that tourists respond with the same emotions towards the postcards with bare-breasted women at the Shakaland curio shops (Sikhakhane, 1999). This shows that the active text is ‘activated’ as ‘soft pornography’ by tourists in their ‘reading’ of the postcards and cultural villages. While these sights of bare-breasted women symbolise their virginal statuses, tourists deconstruct these sights in ways that are completely opposite to those intended by the cultural villages. It is clear that cultural villages, as open texts, elicit tourist responses and readings that are different from the ‘preferred meanings’ infused into the activities.

The second visit was on the 23rd of September 2000 with Prof. Tomaselli, Sehume (PhD candidate), Khuzwayo and myself. We did not aim to visit the village because Sehume, currently doing his research on the perceptions of the Zulu and Bushmen by Western tourists, wanted to conduct interviews with curio shop owners. While Prof. Tomaselli and Sehume conducted interviews, Khuzwayo and I had time to mill around the curio shops for the artefacts and curios sold. I was quite alarmed and a little perturbed to find that most of the curios were imports from other parts of Africa and the world. Only few crafts were traditionally Zulu and worse still, none of them appeared made by local craftsmen.

The lack of artefacts made by the locals revealed that there was little or no relationship between the curio shops and the community situated a few kilometres away from the hotel vicinities. Instead, they were two distinct worlds, even though they were a few kilometres apart. Here was the site attempting to (re)discover authentic Zulu culture and preserve it, yet it left the community aside in every angle and had no connection with them except the performers who were employees. Jenny, a curio shop owner who had been on the hotel premises since 1990, admitted that she had never visited the village
even though they are in the same premises (Jenny, 2000). The price of the curios confirmed that this was a world characterised by commercialisation for tourists’ consumption. The curios (or rather commodities because of their commercial values) are meant for the rich tourists who have travelled miles away to buy what will serve as mementoes of where they have been and what they have experienced. After all, Sally, curio shop owner, disclosed that some tourists spend up to R700.00 on the curios during their visits to the curio shops (Sally, 2000). The commodification of the curios, which are an intrinsic part of development for the very community that the village seeks to recreate, is blatantly ironic.

The two curio shop owners interviewed, Sally and Jenny, both white, highlighted their bad experiences with tourists, especially African-Americans. Jenny noted that an African-American couple from Atlanta, Georgia walked in her curio shop and left immediately after she attempted to converse with them. Sally, who had a similar experience with a group of African-Americans, felt that perhaps their rude and unsociable manners could be attributed to their shock at finding white people in what they think would be run by Zulu people. She noted how a group of African-Americans who came to her curio shop were taken aback to see her and demanded to know why she, a white person, was running the shop. Sally noted again that most tourists showed interest in the traditional Zulu artefacts while others voiced their unhappiness at the craft imports in the curio shops while insisting on knowing where the crafts were imported. She said that they preferred artefacts that are traditional and Zulu-made that is why she was planning to liaise with the local craft makers.

It is worth noting that the two visits I have documented above were done in 2000 before the dramatic handing of ownership to the community (the village manager and the performers) at the beginning of 2001. Just after that change, I had another visit to the village on the 22nd of April 2001 with Deseni Soobben (MA candidate), Xolani Nxumalo (Honours candidate), Thabiso Saka (Honours candidate) and Matireng Fhee (Honours candidate). I was not aware of the new changes and developments during this visit so, I did not expect anything new or different. We arrived at the village towards 10:00 assuming that we were on time for the first show. Our tour guide, a young woman wearing a traditional skirt, isidwaba, came and greeted us in English. Her breasts were covered and so I assumed that she was either married or was a mother. I expected the performers to recognise me as we had established our intentions in our first visit in September 2000.

Our tour guide, Virginia Ngcobo, immediately instructed us on the Zulu greeting and a brief explanation about a cultural village like Dlamini did. I felt that she recognised the demands that we made in our first trip so that I did not have to remind her that she had to take us to the visitor’s room. As she took us to the huts I noticed that the objects that we commented on were still there. The visitor’s room, where she focused on explaining the use traditional of cleansing medicine, ubulawu, still had inauthentic objects like a plastic hanger and a plastic bin instead of traditional container, ukhamba. The boys’ hut had the kitchen utensils that we questioned Dlamini about on our previous trip. Perhaps tourists were not probing and interrogative as we were about these items. Therefore, the
performers found it unnecessary to remove them. However, it is such small objects and items that convey the accuracy in the (re)presentation of Zulu cultural identity and cultural lifestyle. That is why I thought the performers should have taken note of questions we posed regarding the village and its ‘authenticity’.

What was new in the script was the depth of the description of the kraal situated at the centre of the village. Ngcobo described aptly the importance of the kraal and the use of the cows:

The cows stay in here. In the Zulu life the cows are important because we have milk, meat, the boys use the skin of the cows for their dress, iBheshu. In the Zulu life you are not supposed to be divorced because if you are married and you want to divorce your wife you will not get your cows back, but if she divorces you have a right to claim your cows back. That is why the Zulu don’t like to divorce. Why cows are important again is for the dance we use the drum made of the cowhide and the shield, iHawu.

(Ngcobo, 2001)

While I felt Ngcobo attempted to explain the importance and use of the cows and the kraal I felt the explanation lacked the symbolic significance of the kraal. In Zulu life the kraal was revered for its symbolic importance as a place where the ancestors dwelt (KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority website, Cultural Villages hyperlink). Only men were allowed inside the kraal during the ancestral ceremonies. Obviously, the ‘life and the lifestyle’ at the village raise a lot of questions regarding the relations this has with the reality and lived experiences of the contemporary Zulu outside the village. The presentation of information did not highlight that this no longer applied to the contemporary Zulu people who now pay bride’s price, ilobolo, in monetary values. Secondly, the information is in stark contrast with the reality of the high statistics of divorce amongst a lot of contemporary Zulu people.

Our tour guide, Ngcobo, proceeded to explain that the buffalo’s horns hung above the entrance which marked the hierarchical status of the chief. She explained that the Zulu army, amabutho, would attack their enemies from both sides of the entrance in the shape of the horns. This was followed by a demonstration of how amabutho would kill their enemies: the performers approached us in a war-like manner with sticks, izagila and spears, imikhonto. She led us inside the hut where she instructed us to sit separately according to our gender, women taking the left hand side and men sitting at the right hand side of the hut. The same procedure followed as I had witnessed it in my first trip. In front of the entrance was a small grass mat with a R20.00 note tied into it. I felt this was to remind tourists that they had to thank the performers, preferably in cash. This clearly indicated the power relations characterising the ‘Same/Other’ encounters occurring in establishments such as Izintaba. It was the manner in which the performers sat after every performance waiting for tourists to give them something that told of the power relations and perhaps their attitudes towards tourists. Tourism authorities and performers believe tourists have money while performers are poor or perhaps represent themselves as poor. Irrespective of how much we tried not to be regarded as tourists, to
the ‘Other’, this is all we were, tourists, in the Other’s presence. Enevoldsen (2001) highlights this point

I was aware of the power relations of my situation: I was the tourist (despite my academic status) with money in my wallet and these were marginalised subjects of my gaze. But I also was aware of the fact that many of these subjects had little money and might have been fighting to feed themselves and their families, pay school fees and care for their elderly and sick.

(2001: 11)

I had a brief conversation with Ngcobo after the show and I specifically asked her about Dlamini, the tour guide on our first visit. She told me how a number of performers left while the village was under the hotel management. She noted that the working conditions made it difficult for some to stay at the village. I then asked her to allow me to speak to the performers.

Taking their time in the huts where they disappeared into after their performances, they eventually assembled in front of the kraal where my colleagues and I began a formal interview with them. As I noted above, the female performers appeared withdrawn and preferred to let the male performers answer. Initially, this silence of female performers made feel uncomfortable as I wanted them to participate in the interview. After all, this was no longer a conventional Zulu setting where women were not allowed to say anything when it came to important matters and discussions. This is the similar situation experienced by Dawn, cultural hostess at Shakaland. “When I came I remembered that when you are a woman you do not speak any-old-how in the presence of men, you do not behave any-old-how, you don’t sit anywhere you like. So in that way, I sort of like, well not change myself, but reserve back to where I was supposed to be” (Dawn, 2000). Nevertheless, the female performers would either keep quiet or respond as briefly as they could despite my attempts to direct each question to them. As mentioned earlier, I had difficulty expressing myself in Zulu, the language I have adamantly claimed to define who I am in Section I. Nxumalo seemed to find his expression from English to Zulu with ease. So I let him explain to the performers where I failed to express myself. Besides the performers’ reluctance in the interview I found that there were not many new changes incorporated in the script or proceedings of the village except the description of a kraal and a demonstration of attacks, in front of the chief’s hut.

Prior to this visit I had not had the opportunity to converse with tourists. For some reason, not many tourists come to visit the village. I had spoken to the village manager, Gasa, about my wish to talk to the tourists. He suggested that I come on weekends. On Sunday, 28 April 2001, I had a chance to fulfil my wish to engage with tourists and their experiences at the village. Two Americans tourists, Kevin and Emmanuel, told me they were driving past when they saw “the Zulu warrior” by the road and then decided to see what was taking place in the village. A group of four tourists came late in the village when the performance had started. The village manager, Gasa, gossiped about one of the tourists, citing that he looked mad. This act fits perfectly with Jeursen’s (1996) argument
that the language can serve as the separation of front stage from back stage. A similar incident happened at Dumazulu cultural village during Prof. Tomaseoli and Sehume's visit (21-22 January 2000) where the performers sang a song, Asiculeleni umlungu ngoba ngaye osiholelayo, which meant “Sing for white man for he pays us”. While the two American tourists, Emmanuel and Kevin (at Izintaba village), were reluctant to participate in the dance when asked by performers, they obviously looked happy after the show. They noted how good the performers and their performance were and that one could not tell that it was just a production. I started questioning the depth of the cultural knowledge the tourists posed to me. They asked if any of the tourists stayed permanently in the village. Again, this was important in the way the tourists saw me. Obviously, they saw no difference between the performers and me. The fact is they saw me in the same way they saw the performers, as the ‘Other’.

Feeling that one interview with tourists did not really give me enough information on the tourists’ feelings, expectations and demands in their visits to cultural villages, I decided to arrange with Gasa who informed me that there was a group of tourists who booked on the 21st of May 2001. He had told me that the booking was scheduled for 11:00. As in the previous visit, there were no tourists. The performers lazed around the village waiting for the tourists to arrive at the same time. I overheard a conversation between Ngcobo and another performer where they were moaning about how tired they were from all the painting they did that morning. They were wearing their modern clothes and others who put on their traditional attires had T-shirts to cover their breasts. The tourists eventually arrived after 13:00, over two hours late. They were not a group as I had been told but two local tourists (husband and wife) with their friend from England. Gasa had to shout at the performers to prepare for the show Ngicela nilunge lapho, meaning, “please, get ready now”. The women emerged from the huts with their uncovered tops and waited outside looking at the tourists having put on their performing identities ready to depict the Zulu warrior and images of topless maidens. A group of white children came inside village prepared to enter the chief’s hut so as to watch the performance. Upon seeing them, Gasa told one of the performers to chase them away because they did not pay for the show. After taking photographs, one of the female performers went into one of the huts and emerged in a T-shirt she was wearing earlier. From a twinkling of an eye she shifted from being a ‘topless maiden’ into her normal everyday self in her modern skirt and T-shirt.

The sixth visit was on the 13th of September 2001. I had spoken to Gasa who informed me that a group of a multi-racial pre-school children (Indian and African) from Ladysmith had booked. While waiting for almost two hours for the children to arrive, I went to the coffee shop next to curio shops to buy a cooldrink. I was surprised when the lady serving me said the cooldrink cost R5.50 whereas the normal price is R3.50. She told me that this was for tourists as they knew the tourists have money. While I waited, I noticed that there were hardly any tourists or visitors who came past or were interested in coming inside the village. I asked the village manager who told me that they only have many tourists in December during the holidays. What is interesting about this particular show was the willingness of the pre-school children to participate in dancing with the performers. The teacher asked the village manager to explain the reserved area at the
back of the chief's hut. It was the first time that I saw people buying those artefacts in front of the entrance.

The visit to PheZulu Safari Park took place during the September holidays on the 25th of September 2001. I was in the company of my academic colleagues: Mhripiri, Enervoldsen, Dodd, Wang and May (Wang's fiancée), most of whom were writing their research and assignments on cultural tourism. PheZulu Safari Park offers a lodge complex for accommodation, Zulu shows, game drives, a crocodile farm, snake park and a private tour to the community of the Valley of a Thousand Hills (KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority website, PheZulu Safari Park hyperlink). The lodge management in partnership with the Gasa family (related to the Gasa family operating at Izintaba cultural village) from the Valley of a Thousand Hills runs the Zulu cultural village which is part of the complex. Interestingly, the cultural village is built so as to look like an extension to the curio shop, unlike Izintaba cultural village, which "seemed to look like an afterthought, as it was haphazardly attached to a colonial hotel" (Enevoldsen, 2001).

While waiting for the tour guide (we arrived early), we lingered in the curio shop gazing at the curios sold. I found none of the curios and artefacts I could identify as authentically or traditionally Zulu, a striking similarity to the curio shops at the Rob Roy hotel. Secondly, they (curios) were expensive and it was clear that this was for tourist consumption. The tour guide, wearing a 'Mike Tyson versus Frans Botha' boxing match T-shirt and long pants, finally came and led us through the passage into village. (Dawn as a cultural hostess wears modern clothes at Shakaland (Dawn, 2000).) The integration of these two different settings, a curio shop and a cultural village, represented to me the commercialisation of cultural villages. The tourists cannot avoid the need to buy curios that will serve as mementoes when they get back to their respective countries. Moreover, the structure of this passage from the curio shop to the Zulu village represented what I have mentioned earlier "a transition space ... between 'today' and 'then'" (Emmison & Smith, 2000: 172).

The village looked a real attempt into the representations of Zulu culture. There were no electricity bulbs (or any other modern inauthentic objects) as it was the case at Izintaba reserved for tourists but fireplaces were found at the centre of the huts. We were led inside what appeared to be a kitchen. A woman to demonstrate the cultural knowledge imparted to us came inside wearing a T-shirt, traditional women’s hat,  înkehli, and cotton cloak, îbhayi, worn by contemporary rural women. She demonstrated to us the grinding of the maize into meal mealie, împuphu, and making sour milk, amasi, in a hollowed-out butternut gourd, îthunga. The woman's actions lacked energy and vigour, she looked weary and detached from the act. Perhaps she had done the same demonstration many times before and it had become a boring, dull and uninteresting chore. It could also mean that such acts no longer hold any significance in her life in times where împuphu and amasi are bought from the shops.

We were then led to the chief's hut where we found a man sitting like a king in the centre of the hut, dressed in a leopard skin, which symbolised his chieftain. We were instructed to sit separately according to our gender. The tour guide continued imparting knowledge.
to us about traditional weapons as he showed us a reserved area at the back of the hut called *umsamo*. After leaving the chief’s hut we went into a performance theatre to witness a play staged for tourists. As I mentioned above, the script of the performance had striking similarities with that of Izintaba. The performance started with an insight on the *sangomas* and *sangoma* trainees, *anathwasa*, with bone throwing and the burning of incense demonstrated by the *sangoma* performer. Then came the courtship ritual starting with the man declaring his love to a girl by the river. Although the script seemed constructed, the performers relied on improvisation so that it dragged on to the point that it started to get boring. Just as we were to view the final performance, a group of senior primary school Zulu pupils arrived and joined us at the theatre for the performance. The unfamiliarity of the dress codes was evident as the primary school pupils kept laughing at the performers, not laughing in an annoying manner but because they did not know it and probably found it both surprising and funny. But this was the (re)presentation of the actual world versus the imagined world as these pupils will probably never witness a traditional wedding. As Enevoldsen (2001: 18) aptly states

These were two worlds facing each other: rural and urban, traditional and modern. ... [T]his moment saw a representation of a world that no longer existed juxtaposed with “real” Zulu culture in another sense – the pre-urban and urban life that makes up the mainstream in South Africa; school uniforms and bookbags; neo-Christian sensibilities about nudity and the human body; Coca-Cola and football.

These visits became interesting journeys, not journeys to understand my own culture in the (re)presentations of the past, but the journeys of self-discovery. I was the ‘Other’ in the eyes of the ‘Same’ and will remain the ‘Other’. Although, I as the ‘Other’, empathised with the performers, I also distanced myself from the ‘Other’ by refusing to assume the identity of the ‘Other’. My gaze was neither innocent nor neutral. It sided with the tourists. I felt uncomfortable at the sight of women with bare breasts. I questioned their involvement at this commercial establishment quite forgetting my own privileges as an academic against their plight as the less educated (and less privileged). Cultural tourism was the only opportunity for them to generate any form of capital for their families and I hope it brought along a sense of cultural pride and a determination to preserve the sacredness of Zulu culture, as well.

Without any attempt to ascertain which of the two villages is an accurate representation of Zulu culture, I want to note that Izintaba village is a replica of PheZulu Safari Park as mentioned above. The reason for that is most performers, especially the village manager, Gasa, were headhunted from PheZulu Safari Park when Izintaba commenced as a tourist site. Secondly, the mere fact that PheZulu has been an established cultural village for over 35 years shows originality in their script. Izintaba appears to have been haphazardly built whilst PheZulu appears to be much more structured, organised and looked taken care of on a continuous basis. However, the operation of the village is almost similar. Both villages (Izintaba and PheZulu) rely on the cultural knowledge on the structure of a village, forms of dress, courtship rituals and consultations with the *izangoma*. These elements of Zulu culture are (re)presented to convey the formation of Zulu cultural
identity. Nevertheless, the question to be asked is: what are we really representing in these sites?

The cultural knowledge imparted to tourists is not enough to educate and enlighten them about Zulu culture nor to challenge some stereotypical perceptions tourists may have of Zulu people and their culture. The tourists I had interviews with had a lot they wanted to know that was not explained by the tour guides and performers “Are any of these rituals still practised?”, “Is the culture still taught from one generation to the next or is it forgotten?”, “Is this a real umthakathi?”, “What about the music, is it traditional?”, “Does everyone live in these huts?” The Pietermaritzburg tourist asked me if the sangoma was a real umthakathi (witch). She could not differentiate between the role of a sangoma and umthakathi. However this brought a new angle to my own subjectivity and the position I assumed in the study, I remained the ‘Other’ in the eyes of the ‘Same’.

These tourists do not always get accurate and detailed information about Zulu culture. Pietermaritzburg tourists (2001) noted that they heard about Zulu culture on the radio: “We don’t know much about Zulu culture other than what we have heard on the radio. I was listening to a show on SAFM one day on Zulu culture. But we expected to find traditional huts and men in animal skins”. Kevin and Emmanuel, the American tourists, noted that they knew nothing about South African cultures:

We knew nothing about Zulu culture before we came here to South Africa except what we have seen on television and movies. And it’s not the same, the little culture that you see about Africa is really more ‘Western Africa’ because that is where the African-American people originally came from or unless you are in contact with somebody who has been part of that old various regimes. So that’s the whole safari kind of thing with a big white hunter. We don’t know anything about this part of Africa.

( Kevin & Emmanuel, 2001)

Cultural sites like Izintaba, PheZulu, Simunye and Shakaland can play a pivotal role in the nationbuilding and reconciliation processes in South Africa. This can be achieved if these cultural villages provide accurate cultural knowledge. At the same time, this can provide an opportunity for tourists (whether local or international) to appreciate the beauty of Zulu culture. They (cultural villages) can also help in challenging any historical misrepresentations and misconceptions tourists might have formed (and bring along with them) about the cultural lifestyles of Zulu people.

I would like to draw on a few promises made by the hotel management (through Cutting) prior to the official operation of the Izintaba cultural village as stated on the Natal Witness newspaper (02.03.1999: 9) which in my observations were not kept.

During the three month setting-in period, the hotel, the families who will be operating the village and the University of Natal will work together to ensure that the tourist experience is an authentic one. We wanted to involve the local people, offer an outlet for arts and crafts room from the
valley, create a muti garden and a vegetable with madumbis, maize, millet, pumpkins and so on. Visitors will be able to see traditional food growing and then sampling it.

(The Natal Witness, 02.03.1999: 9)

The hotel management’s main idea was to provide employment to the local people, the people of the Valley of a Thousand Hills. Employment was provided but there was no close partnership with the hotel, the community and University of Natal. There are no cows to demonstrate the milking process nor chickens and goats but there are ducks and hares in the boma. Two families from the valley were to be involved to act as the families in the cultural village. There are families from different clans. However, in all my visits there was no male elder who should have served as the head of the family. The female elder was hired to perform as a sangoma (Gasa, 2001). A Zulu guide was to be trained by the university to explain to the tourists what the families are doing. This is not the case for tour guides as they do not have that skill provided by the university.

Data Analysis
As stated above, it is imperative that the study analyses the Izintaba cultural village’s architectural style to problematise the notion of ‘authenticity’ in the traditional sense. The village’s physical construction reflects the traditional architectural style of a village. A reed fence surrounds the village, there is a main entrance which serves as the gate, two small entrances at the side of the village, the huts are built with grass and they have low openings with no doors as entrances similar to a traditional village. Does this authenticity in the physical construction complement the cultural activities staged, objects found and general events taking place in the village as well? Modern items such as ‘Spar supermarket’ plastic bags, sweet wrappers, coat hangers, Sunlight soap, and a flushing toilet built of bricks (obviously to accommodate tourists) challenge the notion of ‘authenticity’ that the village is attempting to depict. These objects betray the fact that the village is supposed to be “constructed in true Shaka style” (Izintaba Zulu cultural village brochure). The objects are found in places that tourists are not taken inside, like in the visitor’s hut and the kitchen. This act can be interpreted as hiding contemporary conditions from the tourist’ gaze in order to reinforce the idea that Zulu culture is still pure and unspoilt. Emmison & Smith (2000) state that “[s]igns of modernity ... are excluded or hidden from the visual field”. This begs the question: what implications does this have to the cultural village as a ‘text’?

Modern apparels such as cycling shorts worn by women (who perhaps are too shy to let their thighs be gazed at by tourists, quite ironic as the unmarried women and virgins remain bare-breasted), pantyhose, whistle and beer can tops are regarded as part of the costumes and props despite the contradictions they present to the observers. Yet the tourists who either want to learn about Zulu culture in its ‘original’ state or are in search of authentic cultural experiences are able to detect that these things are not traditional or ‘authentic’. The Pietermaritzburg tourists (2001) were not very pleased to see the sangoma wearing beer can tops on her ankles as part of her outfit: “[w]hat did they use before they had beer can tops and whistles? I think they should keep it as authentic as they can”. Gasa agreed that these inauthentic or modern objects raise dissatisfaction from
tourists, that is why the tour guides firstly apologise to the tourists for such things: “[b]efore the performance we apologise to them (tourists) for things like cement seats and electricity bulbs instead of using traditional mats and fire” (Gasa, 2001). Similarly, Dumazulu village has experienced problems with tourists who are unhappy with their huts built of cement, blocks and corrugated iron roof instead of traditional huts made of reed (Nhleko, 2000). Tomaselli highlights this when he aptly states “[t]hese discursive contradictions abound in the vicinity of ‘living museum’” (2001: 179).

The reconstruction of a traditional village is dependent on symbols of Zulu culture ‘encoded’ such as traditional forms of dress (stressing women’s costumes and their symbolic meanings), courtship rituals, Zulu dance, artifacts (bead and wood works) and consultations with the sangoma in attempts to epitomise and (re)present Zulu cultural identity and lifestyle. Gasa admits that these cultural elements embedded in the village do not “highlight the lifestyle of the Zulu people” (Izintaba Zulu Cultural Village brochure). Instead, they are modes of anticipating tourists’ demands who, Gasa claims, show interest in Zulu dance more than cultural knowledge (Gasa, 2001). The anticipation of the demands and expectations of tourists are embedded in the village as an ‘activated text’ (Tomaselli, 1996). This is referred to as ‘preferred meanings’ and ‘preferred readings’ or ‘closures’ (Morley 1992, Hall 1993).

The inscription of these cultural elements as ‘preferred or dominant meanings’ in the village proposes limited ways of ‘reading’ or understanding Zulu culture and the (re)construction of cultural identity. For example, there are important rituals, cultural activities and rites of passage such as the reed dance, umkhosi wohlanga, and the coming of age for girls, umemulo25, which the cultural village script does not reflect. Both these ceremonies are very important in symbolising the marital and virginal statuses of girls and the formation of women’s cultural identities. However, these ‘preferred meanings’ do not suggest that what is embedded in the village is a fixed and homogenous way of reading and interpreting the cultural village, its activities and Zulu culture. They are simply modes of organising ways of constructing and negotiating meanings between the village manager and performers (producers) and tourists (readers/receivers). Izintaba cultural village as a ‘text’ has the potential for a number of possible ‘readings’ by tourists. As Morley (1992: 84) states, “we must not assume that these strategies of closure are necessarily effective. It is always possible to read against the grain, as it were, to produce an interpretation which goes against the grain of that ‘preferred’ by the programme discourse”. In recapitulating this point, not all tourists subscribe to the ‘preferred readings’ provided by the village that Zulu culture and cultural practices are static and continue to modern times, completely unchanged. The American tourists, Kevin and Emmanuel, (who came to Durban for business) noted that the performers were very good in their performances which they regarded as an entertainment supplement.

Ntokozo: How do you find the show?

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25 Umemulo is a ceremony marking the transition of a woman from youth to adulthood. It is the equivalent of a 21st birthday in the western tradition. This transition is accompanied by the symbolic ceremony, umemulo which signals that the girl is ready for courting (Department of Education website, Speech by Minister of Education, Prof. Kader Asmal, MP hyperlink).
Emmanuel: It's very interesting.
Ntokozo: Can you explain to me what you mean by interesting?
Emmanuel: The people seem happy, natural.
Ntokozo: Natural, what do you mean natural?
Kevin: It doesn't look like a production for us.
Emmanuel: Yes.
Ntokozo: So you are aware that this is a production?
Emmanuel: No it doesn't feel like it, they are actors.
Ntokozo: It doesn't feel like they are acting.
Emmanuel: No it does not.
Kevin: They are more natural than actors.
Ntokozo: So you are aware they are just performing?
Kevin: Yes, but they are not obvious you can tell when we were taking their pictures that they like what they are doing and they know that they need to put a nice face on for us to take the pictures.

(Kevin & Emmanuel, 2001)

In an interview with local tourists from Pietermaritzburg, I found that they were more interested in knowing the relation of the performance to the lived practices and experiences of the Zulu people rather than as an entertainment form.

Tourist 2: Is this a real umthakathi (witch)?
Tourist 1: Are any of the performers living here?

(Pietermaritzburg tourists, 2001)

The negotiation and construction of meanings also depends on the cultural and social backgrounds. That is, "[t]he meaning of the text will be constructed differently according to the discourses (knowledge, prejudices, resistance) brought to bear on the text by the readers" (Morley, 1992: 87). To illustrate the point, American tourists found the show entertaining and educational whereas Pietermaritzburg tourists were interested in authenticity and the relations of the village to the reality of Zulu people/society. Perhaps this could be attributed to the identification of theme parks like Disneyland in America as forms of entertainment and what Belinda Kruiper24 noted that the rich white Americans want to see the indigenous South African people as forms of entertainment (Personal correspondence with Mhiripiri and myself, 2001). This is perhaps different for local tourists in a time where the reviving of indigenous cultures is important in striving for nationbuilding and the creation of national identity in the country, South Africa. Local tourists may feel the need and importance to understand other people's cultures as part of the rainbow nation concept, hence their interest in the 'authenticity' of cultural elements.

Again, the symbolic and cultural meanings embodied in the village may relate to black people who feel ethnically linked to the Zulu and Africa as the Pietermaritzburg tourist noted that the village would probably have significant meanings to black people overseas because of their believed line of genealogy with Africa. While I have never met any

24 Belinda Kruiper is married to Vetkat Kruiper, from a Bushman community. They live on Blinkwater farm in Northern Cape. She acts as a spokesperson for the community.
African-American or black person from overseas, it would have been ideal to hear what they feel about the village and the meanings embedded. Gasa notes that African-Americans are very interactive compared to the whites and they (African-Americans) are always eager to discuss Zulu culture and lifestyle.

Gasa: [African-Americans] are ready and more willing to participate in dances and discuss the Zulu cultural lifestyle even after the shows. Some of them even say they wish they could live like this.

(Gasa, 2001)

Such willingness to participate could be arisen by their beliefs that they ancestors come from Africa. So when they participate in cultural activities taking place in cultural villages it symbolises a significant moment in their lives, a moment of living and feeling what their ‘ancestors’ once lived. Dawn (2000) also disclosed that African-Americans responded with different emotions when they arrive at the site. Jenny agrees that they (African-Americans) are very emotional and intend to sublimate that Zulu culture as theirs and as such, they tend to get emotional when they see a white person.

Jenny: Just for instance, I had a group of six two weeks ago, and you know I say ‘Good Morning’ and ‘Good Afternoon’, ‘where are you from?’ One said ‘Atlanta Georgia’ and they all walked out, and they walked straight out again, when I usually say ‘have a nice day, thank you’. They didn’t want, you could see ‘stop the conversation they don’t want to talk to you’. But I am not saying it’s black or white, I am not saying that at all, it’s probably just that there is an attitude.

Prof. Tomaselli: We’ve just talked to Sally and she said part of the reason that African-Americans may be less forthcoming and downright rude is because they are little taken aback when they find a white person selling black artifacts.

Jenny: That’s a possibility.

(Jenny, 2000)

The structure of cultural villages permits tourists into certain spaces while other spaces remain hidden from their tourist gaze. As Tomaselli (1999) argues, that cultural tourism occurs at the front stage while the back stage is for the performers to retire and rest between their performances. While Izintaba village does not have one design of a theatre like construction, it is important to note how this front and back stage is manifested. At the beginning of the show, the tour guide explains the set-up of the village and its seven huts to the tourists. But he permits them only inside two huts, which are the boys’ hut (where the kitchen cutlery such as the grinding stone isigqulo, beer containers izinkamba are stored) and the chief’s hut also used for performances. This separation of front stage and back stage is designed to give tourists what McCannell (1976) calls ‘staged authenticity’ and also to provide the tourists with the ‘true’ cultural village where modernised objects cannot be found.
Crang (1997 in Tim Edensor, 1999) points out that performers are trained to perform particular identities that fit with a particular moment. To illustrate this point, the performers rushed to assume their identities as soon as Von Stauss, my colleague, took out her camera in one of the field trips at the Izintaba village. This emphasises a point made by Jeursen (1996) that the host communities (in this case, the performers) are always ready to assume their roles and perform for the tourists. Crang (1997) argues further “these ‘cast members’ are required to wear outfits that are harmonized with themed environments” (Edensor, 1999: 324). The performers dress up in traditional clothes made of animal skins and uncovered top halves for men, while women wear traditional skirts made of goats hide and remain bare-breasted to symbolise their virginity and their marital status (single) throughout the performances. After the performances the female performers rush back to the huts where the tourists are not allowed to enter and come out wearing t-shirts and modern skirts to cover their bodies. “The strategic ‘stage management’ of impressions characterises the ways in which people attempts to convey particular meanings and values in social settings on the ‘front stage’, dropping their actor’s mask only when they reach the domestic safety of ‘back stage’ regions” (Edensor, 1999: 323).

**Conclusion**

The section aimed to marry the theoretical framework as outlined in Section II with the methodology and data analysis. The importance of methodology (in this case, case study, and participant observation and interview methods) used in the research and reporting processes helped in obtaining the required information and bringing out the intricacies in human relationships while at the same time eliminating any forms of bias. I outlined that Izintaba Zulu cultural village as an activated text and the cultural elements embedded in it serve as the ‘preferred meanings and readings’ for tourists. However, the village as an open text had a number of possible readings and interpretations ‘decoded’ by the tourists who do not subscribe to the dominant ideology inscribed by the village manager and performers.
Section IV
Discussion

Introduction
The section aims to critically discuss the main themes that emerged from the previous sections: authenticity, cultural identity, tourist gaze, representation and commercialisation. It attempts to bring the contemporary element of Zulu culture into the study while arguing about the notion of ‘authenticity’ in cultural villages and their attempts to preserve Zulu culture and its traditions from modernisation.

Cultural Tourism and Cultural Villages
As I have pointed out in Section I, cultural tourism focuses on the cultural component in indigenous societies. This form of tourism attempts to ‘preserve’ authenticity in fast disappearing indigenous cultures. It has been argued, though, that cultural tourism is the basis for the internationalisation of indigenous cultures for commercial purposes (Lanfant et al, 1995). This has significant implications on its development as an industry and activity as it determines the effects it has on societies. I did not quite relate this argument to Izintaba cultural village, but after reflecting on the inconsistencies and cultural contents at the village (outlined in Section III) I began to wonder and ask some questions. What is cultural tourism in KwaZulu-Natal? What are we (re)presenting in cultural villages? Where does the reality and lived experiences of the masses of Zulu people fit in the neatly packaged (re)presentations of ‘authentic’ Zulu cultural identity? Is Zulu culture and cultural identity all about “bare-breasted maidens in beads and men in skins holding sharpened sticks [?]]” (Edwards, Sunday Tribune 21.06.98: 26). If cultural tourism is about (re)presentations, what notions are we attempting to convey to people who know little or nothing about Zulu culture? How authentic are these (re)presentations?

My immediate assumption was that the search for authenticity and ‘self-discovery’ has prompted cultural tourism to create contexts where the production of what tourists desire, seek and demand takes place. Cultural villages such as Izintaba, Shakaland, PheZulu and Dumazulu have therefore been established in the province. These cultural sites present (consuming) tourists with constructed images of the Zulu and perpetuate well-constructed stereotypes already formed in media programmes. Perhaps not constructed images in the sense of creating new images but (re)creating rituals and practices in a manner that attracts and appeals primarily to tourists and their gaze. Lanfant et al (1995) aptly highlights this point.

In the attempt to an external demand for authenticity, the inhabitants of traditional societies will willingly indulge the fantasies of the foreigners. They reinvent for them fêtes, shows, costumes, culinary practices of funerary rites in a new spirit of aestheticism. This new tradition is a manufactured tradition, however, recomposed to correspond to the wishes of tourists. It only mimics the old ways…
When these constructions come to be presented as true, as the most authentic ones, we enter a region of hyper-reality.

(Lanfant et al, 1995: 38)

The performers, dressed in their animal skins, amabheshu, and uncovered tops demonstrating their cultural practices and rituals, attempt to depict the idealised and romanticised King Shaka and Zulu warrior images popularised by the media. These images give an impression that Zulu people are "noble savages' living in the state of 'primitive affluence'" (Douglas & Law, 1997: 105). Izintaba cultural village (acting as a prism of KwaZulu-Natal villages in the study) is encoded with cultural activities and artefacts which are to be 'read' and interpreted as 'traditional and authentic', in the historical sense, by tourists. Tour guides, whether men in animal skins or bare-breasted women, are assigned tasks of imparting cultural knowledge to tourists about the construction of a traditional village, forms of dress, courtship rituals, consultations with izangoma for welfare and Zulu dance in the formation of Zulu cultural identity. In reference to this picture-perfect 'authentic' (re)presentation in the village Jeursen (1996: 6) states, "[t]he fake village fits perfectly the stereotype of a people with nothing, live in harmony with nature and accumulate no material goods".

Such cultural villages do not take into account the contemporary ways of living and their symbolic meanings in shaping people's identities. They (cultural villages) strive on (re)creating and (re)presenting fixed and essentialistic cultural identities shaped by the notions of shared culture, always rooted in the past (Hall, 1990). One of the important questions that arose while interviewing the Izintaba cultural village performers in April 2001 was the relation the village had with the contemporary lifestyle and lived experiences of Zulu people. Elias Ngcobo stated clearly that "[t]his lifestyle here (in the village) is very different from the life we live in our homes. We don't wear these outfits everyday except on special occasions like in a traditional Zulu wedding nor do we live in huts like these" (Performers, 2001). France Gasa admitted that being part of the village had no symbolic meaning to him and his involvement was purely employment-motivated. "I am only here for employment just like most of the performers are here for employment" (Performers, 2001). Von Klemperer (1999) asks an important question regarding the presentations of reality and 'authenticity' in the villages:

Is this not a fantasy Africa, a romantic recreation of a past and a culture? After all, African people, even in rural areas, are not living like this in 1999. T-shirts and takkies are worn, not skins. Radio and television bring them news, often the same news that the visiting tourists would be getting back home in Chicago, Tokyo or Frankfurt.

(The Natal Witness, 7.5.99:13)

It is quite obvious that the cultural activities and performers' behavioural patterns are sensationalised for tourist attraction and consumption hence cultural tourism has been referred to as the "final commodification of culture" (Jeursen, 1996) and "commoditization of culture" (Greenwood, 1979). An important question that arises is whether cultural tourism preserves authenticity in indigenous cultures or it commodifies
these cultures for commercial purposes. Obviously, the demand for ‘authentic’ cultural experiences imposed by tourists and visitors on their hosts leaves them with no option but to (re)construct cultural identities and (re)present them in spaces that will rhyme with the demands and expectations. Bendix (1997: 7) clarifies by stating that “[o]nce a cultural good is declared authentic, the demand for it rises, and it requires a market value”. Cultures (indigenous cultures), cultural identities and cultural knowledge are now transformed into tourist products or commodities and subjects for tourist gaze. Thus, cultural tourism “spectacularises” and “commoditises” cultures, and then sends the tourist to consume what it has created. Because of these well-constructed representations of touristic paradises, tourists have well-formed expectations as to the sort of people they will meet and the experiences they will have” (Lanfant et al., 1995: 212). Tourists bring the same expectations to other cultural villages. For example, Dawn (2000) noted that “they (tourists) are actually looking for the real thing. They don’t want imitation. And when they come here they know exactly what they are looking for, which is what they have always heard, that the Zulu people live in huts”. Nhleko (2000) asserts by stating “[t]ourists come here with expectations. They know what Zulus should look like, how they should live, where they should live”.

In the process of transforming these appearances into commercial values and public objects for tourists’ gaze meaning is lost or recreated to correspond to the tourists’ demands. Lanfant et al. (1995: 37) states that “an important part in this process is that, in becoming a tourist product, ‘heritage’ changes its meaning”. Greenwood (1979) argues further by stating that the meaning for these rituals is lost as they are turned into public performances. To illustrate, at Izintaba cultural village there is a staged performance about a young man and a fortune-teller. In the Zulu culture visits to the fortune-tellers are kept secret from people because of their sacredness and the symbolic meanings attached to these visits. Can we claim the same meanings for the activities and performances, staged in institutionalised settings like Izintaba cultural villages, when they have been taken out of their contexts to become objects of public gaze? Obviously, the meaning is lost, shifted or (re)created with the introduction of cultural tourism in these activities. Can we ignore the intrusion to privacy and sacredness that cultural tourism brings into host communities’ living? As such, we can no longer relate to the activities in the same way and claim the same meanings hence Greenwood (1979: 137) states, “commoditization of culture in effect robs people of the very meanings by which they organize their lives”.

At the same time, tourists claim to have a right to see what they want to see because of the power of money they have, whether it is the enactment of the stereotypical myths they have watched in media programmes. “If you have money in the hand it is your right to see whatever you wish” (Greenwood, 1979: 136). Wang (2001) argues that tourists should be given what they want to see, which is the enactment of the myths they have seen in media programmes. In a show for tourists at Izintaba village (April 2001), the village manager, Gasa, told one of the performers to send a group of white children who were prepared to watch the show away. He stated that it was “because they haven’t paid”. This clearly indicates the commercialisation taking place in cultural villages. There are two more points worth mentioning about the commercial motivations of the
village. Firstly, there are cultural artefacts displayed as one enters the village that indicate to the tourists that they (cultural artefacts) are for sale. Secondly, at the front of the chief's hut, which is also used for performances, there is a small grass mat which has a R20.00 note indicating to the tourists that at the end of the performance they expect the tourists to tip them. The tour guide does not say it directly that the performers are expecting to be paid but he says that it is a form of thanking the performers for their efforts. However, the performers sit and wait for the tourists to give them something after the performances. This highlights what Greenwood (1979) calls "performance for pay".

The power relations characterising the relationships in the villages construct the Same/Other dichotomies evident in the tourist-performers encounters. Hall (1990: 225) states “[Tourists] have power to make us see and experience ourselves as ‘Other’”. As a result, the manner in which performers depict themselves unveil that they are not passive subjects in the set-up of cultural villages. Lannant et al (1995) aptly says

As soon as the society offers itself up for sale, as soon as it attempts to enhance its appeal to the eyes of the foreign visitors, it is the very consciousness that society has of itself which is being affected. Thus native populations are not passive objects of the tourist gaze, but active subjects who construct representations of their culture to attract tourists.

(Lannant et al, 1995: 46)

According to Lannant et al (1995) this commodification of cultures and cultural identities meets the demands for authenticity that the tourists make on the host communities. Nhleko (2000) pointed out that Dumazulu village responds to the demands made by tourists rather than attempt to depict what they think tourists ought to know and learn about Zulu culture. Cultural tourism thus plays on the images of the past and ideas of authenticity and authentic cultural experiences carefully employing the "ideologically situated system of Time" for tourist consumption (Taylor, 2001). The very existence of tourism as an economically motivated and commercialisation-driven (Greenwood 1979; Hamilton 1992; Jeursen 1996) industry cancels out the possibility of finding an authentic cultural experience (Turner, 1994). Culture in cultural tourism is packaged, priced and sold to tourists thus turning practices and objects, which are to remain sacred and symbolic to the host communities, public objects for tourist gaze or, better still, commodities to be bought by those who have the buying power through money. Meanings are produced, reproduced and altered to respond to tourists' demands and expectations while cultural identities are (re)constructed and (re)presented in this set-up. Their cultural values are transformed into abilities to command tourist consumption in the exchange process between cultural knowledge and monetary values within the context of trade (Robinson, 1996).

The Search for 'Authenticity' in Cultural Villages
Cultural villages should be accurate (re)presentations of 'authentic' cultural identities. However, what is authenticity? What do we define as authentic? As mentioned in Section I, authenticity is a difficult term to define. Wang (1999: 350) argues, "[a]uthenticity connotes traditional culture and origin, a sense of the genuine, the real or the unique". In
the case of KZN cultural villages, tourists think that activities taking place in cultural villages are still a way of life even for people outside these villages. One group of tourists at the Izintaba village kept asking the tour guide if the behavioural patterns (women remaining bare-breasted and men in cowhide) were the ways of life outside the village. Can we claim the sight of a bare-breasted woman in beadwork, traditional skirt, cycling shorts and pantyhose on her head or a man in a cowhide and underwear underneath authenticity and experiencing true culture?

Smith & Eadington (1995: 51) argue, “authenticity remains an issue of importance only to tourists, or to the hosts insofar as they want to please the tourists”. Wang (1999: 350) highlights that “tourists themselves think they have gained authentic experiences, this can however, still be judged as inauthentic, if the toured objects are ‘in fact’ false”. People who have come to search for their roots obviously will be apprehensive about what is happening and how it is done in these villages. Dawn (2000) noted the different emotions displayed by African-American tourists: “[w]hat happened with the American people, the Afro-Americans when they come here they feel so close to touching what they never got. You find people weeping because they come so close to what they were taken away from”. The similar emotions are displayed at Dumazulu where African-American tourists are very interactive with tour guides and performers (Nhleko, 2000). For the people who have come to the villages to learn about the culture will also be in a different position and probably less concerned about ‘inauthentic’ or modern objects like cycling shorts, plastic hangers and plastic bags. In another interview with Pietermaritzburg white tourists, they wanted to learn about Zulu culture and watch the dance rather than look for meanings. Even though modern objects did not disturb them they felt it could be more culturally and educationally beneficial if the cultural village could be as traditional as it originally was. Therefore, as Wang (1999: 355) states, “[a]uthenticity is thus a projection of tourists’ beliefs, expectations, stereotyped images, and consciousness onto toured objects”.

As I sat with the tourists on the high cement seats, designed for tourists, I watched the ‘Other’ perform and dance for the ‘Same’. In that moment, I was the observer subjecting those I was observing, the performers, to objects of gaze. This was the beginning of my experiences, witnessing the (re)presentations of ‘authenticity’ and illusive authentic cultural experiences unfold before me. As MacCannell (1976: 101) notes, “often it is very difficult to know for sure if the experience in fact is authentic” because culture is changing. Should we assume that cultural villages are offering true cultural experiences? Can we claim that the (showcasing of) cultures in these villages are unspoilt, pure and timeless? These are all issues to be dealt with in the complex relationship between the indigenous cultures and cultural tourism. Lanfant et al (1995: 37) states that “in becoming a tourist product, ‘heritage’ loses its meaning. It becomes a capital to be used profitably and made to yield in return”. Understanding that there are meanings to be made by the communities when they engage in their cultural events, what meanings are made in the cultural villages? Based on what? Who gets to make those meanings?

The tourist gaze
The inscription of selected cultural activities (as preferred or dominant meanings) in the programmes and scripts of cultural villages attempts to ‘homogenise’ tourist gaze. At the
same time, this 'preferred or dominant meaning' infused into cultural villages imply that tourists search for similar cultural experiences and are delighted at gazing at activities with the same observations and views. This homogenous tourist gaze has been popularised by Urry (1990) seeing the similar authentic experiences foreigners tend to seek in their visits to exotic places. It is referred to as a dominant gaze. To illustrate, the two cultural villages I visited, PheZulu and Izintaba, attempt to convey meanings that Zulu people still live in beehive huts, dress in animal skins and remain bare-breasted. This is highlighted by the emphasis their scripts put on the insight about the village, forms of dress, courtship rituals and consultations with izangoma. At the same time, the infusion of certain cultural activities attempts to assume that all tourists from different nationalities are interested in similar cultural activities and they (tourists) make the same 'readings' and interpretations out of these activities. It is quite obvious that cultural tourism attempts to homogenise tourists gaze.

Obviously, tourists, as individuals with different cultural experiences and influences, do not seek similar experiences in their visits hence Eco (1981) came up with the concept, 'aberrant decoding of text'. African-Americans may like the cultural villages for cultural revival and identity search whereas European tourists may see the performances as forms of entertainment. Secondly, local and Zulu tourists are not accommodated to this set-up since the content on cultural villages seems to be directed mainly to foreign tourists hence cultural advisers and village managers stress on what they believe tourists want to see (Nhleko 2000, Patrick & John 2000, Gasa 2001). Cultural villages can provide opportunities for local tourists to learn about indigenous cultures in the same way Dawn felt working as a cultural hostess at Shakaland would provide her an opportunity to learn more about her culture, Zulu culture (Dawn, 2000).

There has been a new kind of tourist gaze which has been referred to as a “second gaze”. MacCannell (2001) argues that tourists are no longer interested in searching for what is authentic or originating from the past. The need to escape from everyday life and redeem oneself from the industrialised world does not necessarily demand for authentic cultural experiences. Tourists now revel in the inauthentic elements and depictions of the original (re)presented in cultural villages (MacCannell, 2001). The second gaze was evident with some tourists at Izintaba cultural village. Kevin and Emmanuel were not searching for authentic cultural experiences, however, they saw the performance as a form of entertainment which they found interesting (Kevin & Emmanuel, 2001). The similar experiences took place at PheZulu (23 September 2001) when senior primary school pupils and pre-primary school children at Izintaba (13 September 2001) were there to learn about Zulu culture, not to live it the way it was once lived.

Politics of Representations: Same/Other Encounters
At this point in our contemporary society where people feel the need get away from their own places and spaces we are faced with a challenge of striving to (re)present a particular Zulu cultural identity. We find ourselves with a dilemma of sensationalising and ‘exoticising’ certain images and cultural activities for the sake of tourist demands. The performer as an observed does not exist outside the tourist gaze neither does the tourist as an observer exists outside the presence of the performer. It is the very belief that "the past
is seen to hold the model of the original” (Taylor, 2000: 9) that shapes the constructions of what tourists seek and desire to see. In this crisis, how is the ‘Other’ (the performers/Zulu) (re)presented in the villages? To understand the politics of representations we first have to seek out contexts where the ‘Other’ and ‘Same’ are negotiated and represented, where tourists and performers position themselves and are positioned by each other’s presence.

Again, it is of interest to consider that as the performers depict the media-popularised images of the Zulu, they enter into relationships with tourists where the ‘Same/Other’ identities are created and presented as binary dichotomies. We imagine that the ‘Other’ is encountered or found in the spaces for the application of the dominant and second gaze. However, it is our own consciousness that constructs these binary positions. As Johannes Fabian (1990: 755) argues “[a]wkward and faddish as it may sound, othering expresses the insight that the Other is never simply, never just found or encountered, but made”. To make an example, the ‘Other’ is represented as a pure noble savage living in the past at the same time we are presenting the image of the performers as poor. This begins with the point of identifying Western tourists as rich while the performers are poor African savages. The need to view the ‘Other’ is the point where the ‘Same’ identities are created. “Our ways of making the other are ways of making ourselves. The need to go there (to exotic places, be they far away or around the corner) is really our desire to be here (to find or defend our position in the world)” (Fabian, 1990: 756). The Other and Same are created through difference or binary positions (Ferguson, 1998). These sharp juxtapositions of the West and the ‘Other’ construct and position the ‘Other’ as neither here (in the West) nor there (in the past): “we are nowhere – we are not in the West yet, but we have already left our own world behind” (Godwin, 2000: 35).

The ‘Same/Other’ identities are contextualised within the indeterminacies and inaccuracies of presenting the ‘Other’, which emerge from the differences and power relations between the ‘Same’ and the ‘Other’. Western discourses of the ‘Other’ tend to ‘exoticise’ those subject to the gaze of the tourists. There may be various reasons for these locations besides looking it from an economic point of view, when the tourists come to watch the ‘Other’ in his pure state, they can have modernised accommodation where they will be safe from being attacked by ‘savage Other’ and wild animals. This kind of context perpetuates the myth of performers living behind current times in harmony with nature. “Africans are depicted in the state of nature, exposing their nudity and proximity to savagery” (Masolo, 1994: 182).

Cultural village contexts also create the right environments where tourists cannot be exposed to the realities and lifestyles of contemporary Zulu people miles apart from the images depicted in these contexts. Again, these kinds of tourist contexts provide the convenience for the ‘Same/Other’ relationship where the ‘Same’ (tourists) can be able to gaze at the ‘Other’ (performer) at the same time keeping their identities (Same). At the same they provide for what MacCannell (1976) terms “tourist bubble”. This was unfolded and revealed when the IZintaba tour guide, Dlamini, could not recall any tourists who was interested in staying at the visitor’s hut in the village.
Questions of Identity
The definition of ‘Zuluness’ and who qualifies to be Zulu is becoming a complex phenomenon to sustain. We are at a critical juncture in our society where ethnic and cultural identifications supposed to provide senses of security, self-identifications and belonging are collapsing. Factors such as inter-racial and inter-cultural marriages, and relocations are contributing substantially to this collapse of ethnic and cultural certainties as points of identity verifications. At the same time, identifications by virtue of clan and ancestry, birthplace and location, and language claim legitimacy and right to cultural identities. It is these facts that we begin to realise the fragility in claims laid on cultural identities. The same can be said about Zulu cultural identity. Who or what is Zulu? How do we define ‘Zuluness’?

The dilemma in conceptualising Zulu cultural identity as a point of identification challenges the ethnic and cultural certainties as conceptions of identity as depicted in cultural villages. Cultural villages strive to (re)present the kind of cultural identity that is fixed, static and rooted in the past. Within the (re)presentation of this cultural identity, the implication is who we are begins with the recognition of our own group based on shared history and culture. Hall (1990: 233) recapitulates, “[w]ithin the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as ‘one people’, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history”. My colleagues and I witnessed an important moment at PheZulu Safari Park where Zulu school pupils, obviously with little knowledge and appreciation for their culture, found a point of difference within the representations of Zulu cultural identity. This revelation happened during the courtship demonstration where women with their uncovered tops were dancing. For young people who have learnt that who they are is not rooted in the past neither does it start with the recognition of one’s own kind, witnessing acts of historical images has no symbolic meaning. The enactment of this critical point had no cultural significance in the school pupils’ identities. The demonstration was obviously similar to a comedy show where everything is and remains a comic drama.

Again, the performers' conceptualisation of themselves as performers and Zulu people begs to be probed. The sharp binary cultural identities they (performers) assume in the presence of tourists prove that this process has no symbolic meanings to them as contemporary people living in a society where what constitutes who we are begins with an understanding that our identities are situational, incomplete and ever-changing. Such situations challenge the notion of uniformity and shared culture presented in cultural villages. Identities are not ascribed by common histories and cultures nor are they given to us at birth. They are our own definitions and conceptualisations of who are and where we position ourselves in societies. Such kinds of identity formations are never complete for they are always waiting to encompass other points of identifications. It is at this point that we begin to realise the challenge to understand cultural identity as delicate, ever-changing and that for others, it has no space in the narratives of the past, shared history and culture. Thus, cultural villages cannot claim to (re)present the accurate Zulu cultural identity and position it as original. Moreover, they (cultural villages) cannot serve as
arenas where people construct and shape their own cultural identities. Thus, I would like to end with a quote from Hall (1990: 225):

Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialist past, [identities] are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere ‘recovery’ of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.

(1990: 225)

Conclusion
These neat (re)presentations of Zulu culture taking place in cultural villages overlook the realities of people. Nate Kohn (1994: 90) points out, cultural villages, the activities taking place and artefacts are done in such a way “that it touches a human chord that makes people come, share, understand and encourage their friends to come and do the same”. Perhaps it is best that we look at these cultural villages as arenas where indigenous peoples enact their cultures, rituals and cultural activities instead of selling the idea of authenticity, authentic cultural experiences and identities. In these spaces we can then appreciate performers as “signifiers of the past events; epochs or ways of life” (Taylor, 1994: 10).
Section V
Conclusion

The rise of cultural tourism has been largely informed by Western tourists’ demands for ‘authentic’ cultural experiences in their pursuit of ‘authenticity’ and desire to (re)discover their ‘roots’. Zulu culture, as one of the indigenous cultures in the country, is ideal and subjected to such demands. It has been the objective of this study therefore to reveal and substantiate that the establishment of cultural villages in KwaZulu-Natal is simply a response to that demand.

The Cultural Village, Cultural Tourism and The Tourism Industry in KwaZulu-Natal: The Policy Framework

The study, through Izintaba cultural village serving as a microcosm of cultural villages in KwaZulu-Natal, interrogated cultural villages and activities taking place in them. These cultural villages, mostly situated in the premises of hotels, game reserves and bed-and-breakfast lodges, give emphasis on selected cultural elements such as forms of dress, courtship rituals and consultations with izangoma in their (re)presentations of Zulu culture and cultural identity. However as these villages open themselves as tourist sites cultural activities are turned into tourist products or commodities, performers enacting the Zulu cultural lifestyle are turned into subjects for tourists gaze and meanings are (re)created and shifted to meet tourists’ expectations and demands. As a result there has been a “distortion of our history towards the greater good of wanting foreigners to come and pay money to watch us” (Sunday Tribune, 21.6.98:26). The use of marketing and advertising strategies is useful in luring tourists to come and consume what is being (re)reconstructed, (re)presented and sold as authentic cultural experiences. For example, the Izintaba cultural village brochure promises tourists and potential visitors as chance to “experience true Zulu culture” (Izintaba Zulu Cultural Village brochure). They will get to taste Zulu food “prepared in the most traditional manner” and “a fully-initiated Zulu sangoma [will] assist [the tourists] with forecasting [their] future, or making important decisions” (Izintaba Zulu Cultural Village brochure).

These cultural villages appropriate the images of the past such as King Shaka and Zulu warrior images. The use of such images has been primarily informed by the myths and images misrepresented in media productions such as movies and adverts. Staging such misrepresentations about Zulu people and their culture only perpetuates those myths instead of challenging them. This (re)presentation of Zulu people as happy ‘noble savages’ living harmoniously with nature “denies the real politics of poverty, civil war, unemployment and clan diversity” (Sehume & Tomasselli, 2001:110). Cultural tourism should thus strive to enact accurate representations of indigenous peoples and their cultures. PheZulu Safari Park has initiated tours to the surrounding communities to give tourists an insight on how the contemporary Zulu people live. Cultural tourist sites have the potential to be used as sites where the insight about Zulu culture for the understanding of culture can be imparted. This is the approach which the cultural tourism industry (the public and private sectors like hotels, game reserves, lodges etc) should exploit.
Secondly, cultural tourism has a potential as a community resource and economic development strategy.

Tourism authorities, village managers and performers should carefully plan programmes that will offer a variety of cultural elements to be showcased and (re)presented in the villages. The Izintaba cultural village script appeared very fragmented and moreover, a replica of PheZulu Safari Park. The tour guides seemed uncertain when asked questions relating to the village and activities taking place. The knowledge they imparted to tourists seemed derived from everyday understanding of things. At times things were superficially addressed and lacked symbolic meanings attached to them. To illustrate, Ngcobo defined the importance of the kraal for the use of cows. She did not address the symbolic aspect of the kraal as a sacred area where the ancestors are believed to dwell.

We talk of job creation and development for the indigenous communities. We should also recognise the theft of cultural knowledge to perpetuate the images already formed about indigenous people that they are primitive, trapped in hunter-gatherer lifestyle, their connection with nature. It is quite important that tourism research dealing with social, cultural and economic impacts of the industry and its activities should be conducted to inform the policy and strategies drawn with regards to tourism field in South Africa (Tomaselli & Wang, 2001). There should be advisory committees or boards to work with the cultural villages on a continuous basis to ensure that the villages impart accurate knowledge to tourists. For example, at the Izintaba cultural village, the hotel management should have perhaps formed an advisory board or collaborating committee comprised of the Valley of the Thousand Hills tourism authority, the Rob Roy hotel management and the community to consult on a continuous basis in the establishment and running of the village. This committee could ensure that the mission and intentions of the village establishment (to create employment and development at the same time attempting to preserve Zulu culture) are met. This board/committee could include the involvement and participation of the University of Natal to help in aspects such as offering training to the tour guides. What could be of concern is the verbal negotiation of the contract between the performers and the hotel management when the village was handed to the performers and the purchase of tickets in the reception.

**Recommendations**

One of the profound elements that emerged out of the study is my position as a young Zulu woman in a contemporary and academic world. The importance of this element stems from the fact that the study offered an opportunity to critique as well as shape or conceptualise my own identity. Perhaps an appropriate as well as significant point to end is the question of how to conduct social research (in this case, cultural tourism specifically in KwaZulu-Natal and more generally, in South Africa) as a Zulu woman. It is important to note that, as researchers, we write from particular contexts and as a result, our studies cannot be free from subjectivism. It is at this point that our values, our experiences and dispositions enter into our studies hence I refer to this study partly as a personal journey. Important to the question of subjectivism and objectivism lies the point about researchers as members of the social settings: “People are obviously fundamental to social life and the question is now raised that as social researchers and as members of a
society, is it possible or desirable for us to suspend our sense of belonging?” (May, 2001: 9).

The main strengths and weaknesses of cultural tourism especially for tourism development in South Africa begin with the identification and understanding of indigenous cultures as one of the main attractions in the country. The main problem or downside with cultural tourism is commercialisation of indigenous cultures and in effect robbing people of the meanings by which they organise their lives (Greenwood, 1979). On the other hand, the main benefits of cultural tourism for the Zulu communities is that if promoted in collaboration with communities, it can provide community members with opportunities of using their abilities, and to be financially rewarded for this, in their (re)presentations of Zulu culture and cultural identity.
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