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Rewriting history pomfret community stories

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Rewriting History (Pomfret community stories)

Abstract

Rewriting history has been a form of self-determination since Histories of the oppressed were intentionally erased by oppressive systems such as colonialism. However, rewriting history is not only about retelling or remembering past events, but is required also to restore a sense of continuity within these communities. This thesis seeks to explore how storytelling can be used as a form to rewrite history, by using the Pomfret community – a South African community formed during the Angolan civil war – as a case study. The thesis unpacks the idea of rewriting history through storytelling, not only as oral storytelling, but as manifested through different art forms, including video installations, sound, found objects and paintings.

Each chapter begins with a story from the Pomfret community that navigates the different tools used to rewrite the community's history. The chapters are hinged on intersectional themes of: storytelling, as a form and why it is important in the research; memory, as a primary source of history and stories; home and belonging, looking at the Pomfret community in the present and how they engage with their history and stories; and healing, the last chapter, which looks at the trauma that the Pomfret community experienced, especially the women, during the Angolan civil war and the Border wars. In this way the research, in its totality, considers how storytelling can help a community to begin a process of healing.