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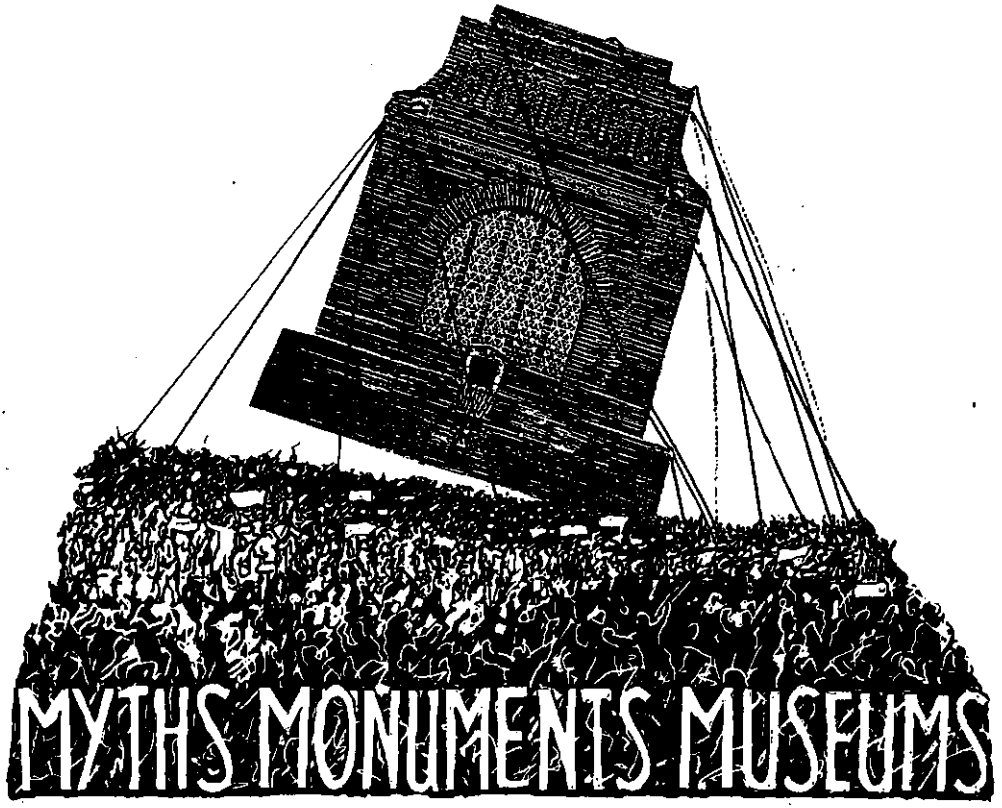

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THE REAL GOAT: IDENTITY AND AUTHENTICITY IN SHAKALAND

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AFRICANA

The Real Goat: Identity and Authenticity in Shakaland[1]

> [T]he frantic desire for the Almost Real arises only as a neurotic reaction to the vacuum of memories; the Absolute Fake is the offspring of the unhappy awareness of a present without depth.
> (Umberto Eco, Travels in Hyper Reality[2])

Introduction: In search of the real Zulu

Zulu ethnic tourism--the consumption of "Zulu" history and culture *in situ* by outside visitors--has been actively marketed for much of the twentieth century and is part of the growing international commodification of African culture. Tourism is of increasing significance today in South Africa's otherwise sagging economy. Current scenarios indicate that tourism is one of the few viable economic sectors in the country, and it enjoys a domestic and foreign investment priority.

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[1]This paper is a draft of a chapter from Carolyn Hamilton's Ph.D thesis and is circulated to the participants in the "Myths, Monuments and Museums" conference to serve as background to a joint presentation on **Shakaland** to the conference by Eleanor Preston-Whyte and Carolyn Hamilton. The paper and the presentation draw on a period of collaborative work by Hamilton and Preston-Whyte, and are part of an on-going research project. The material in the paper and in the presentation was accumulated in the course of a number of visits to **Shakaland**; discussions with audiences and staff at the resort; interviews with the director of **Shakaland** and with travel agents; and a survey of travel writings and publicity material on **Shakaland**.

[2]Umberto Eco, Travels in Hyper Reality, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, San Diego, 1990, first published in Italian in 1976, pp.30-1.

The particular local features which tourism developers seek to promote are the scenic beauty of the country, the game parks, and the African heritage. Zulu history and culture is the form of the country's "African heritage" most favoured for exploitation by promoters because of its distinct and potent public image. It is an image endowed with a deep historical background, dominated by three central organizing elements that are themselves well-known both within and beyond kwaZulu: Shaka, the founder of the militarized Zulu nation; the Zulu defeat of the guns of the great British empire at the battle of Isandlwana of 1879; and, finally, the figure of Gatsha Buthelezi, the self-promoting, publicity-seeking contemporary political leader.

The representations of "Zuluness" that occur in tourist contexts have been dismissed by academics and politicians as "simply" commercial, and the connections between them and the shaping of popular consciousness is ignored. But, as the work of Eleanor Preston-Whyte has shown with regard to Zulu art, tourist centres are important sites for the manufacture of both ethnic identity and notions of tradition and culture.[3]

Most studies of Zulu ethnicity to date are concerned with the reconstruction of the actions of leading political figures, their motivations for, and manner of, invoking and manipulating a

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[3]Eleanor Preston-Whyte, "Trading Networks and Money-Making at a 'Traditional Zulu' Market", paper delivered at the University of Cape-Town, n.d. Also see Dean MacCannell, "Reconstructed Ethnicity: Tourism and Cultural Identity in Third World Communities", Annals of Tourism Research, 1984, pp.375-391; and P. van den Berghe, "Tourism and Recreated Ethnicities", Annals of Tourism Research, 1984, pp.343-52.

Zulu identity.[4] Important directions that yet need to be pursued concern questions of how such identities are made real to, and by, the people involved, i.e. both those designated and those who designate.[5] Put another way, the question concerns what ideas about identity people will develop or buy into, and why and how this happens. It demands exploration of the relationship between the creation of perceptions of reality and

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[4]South African academics have attempted to analyze the emergence of conflict framed in ethnic terms. Developing the proposal that ethnic identities, and the sets of markers associated with them, are neither innate, nor are they immutable past features ordained to survive into the present, their work seeks, for the most part, to trace historically the emergence of a Zulu ethnic identity and to specify the circumstances of its making. These attempts have identified political conditions which gave rise to situations of ethnic mobilization, and have shown how, for their special power and appeal, they demand embeddment in a particular history. S. Marks, The ambiguities of dependence: class, nationalism and the state in twentieth-century Natal, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986; S. Marks, "Patriotism, Patriarchy and Purity. Natal and the Politics of Zulu Ethnic Consciousness" in L.Vail (ed.), The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991, first published 1989, pp.215-240; N.Cope, "The Zulu Petit-Bourgeoisie and Zulu Nationalism in the 1920s: Origins of Inkatha", Journal of Southern African Studies, vol. 16, no.3, 1990, pp.431-51; See also the work of G. Mare and G. Hamilton, An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and South Africa, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987; G. Mare, "The Past, the Present and negotiation politics: the role of Inkatha", paper presented to the Africa Seminar, University of Cape Town, 1989; Paul Forsyth "Inkatha's Use of History", unpublished MA thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1990; P. Harries, "Imagery, symbolism and tradition in a South African bantustan: Gatsha Buthelezi, Inkatha and Zulu history", unpublished mimeo, Department of History, University of Cape Town, 1987; and Daphna Golan, "Inkatha and its use of the Zulu Past", History in Africa, 18 (1991), pp.113-26.

[5]See the introduction of Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Verso, London and New York, 1983, for a discussion of the meagerness of work seeking to understand the making of identities that are rooted in notions of "nation-ness," as well as the philosophical "emptiness" of nationalism.

the making of identities. One approach to answering this question is to seek out sites where the "imagining" of identities takes place: to distinguish conditions which promote or inhibit new and different ways of thinking about the world, and to explore sites of active thought about the nature of identity, where thought is understood to be a process involving exploration and enactment, transformation and figuration. The product of these processes is "culture" that is capable of creating boundaries that separate one identity from another. The challenge, as Benedict Anderson has put it, is to look closely at settings where "pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed."[6]

In this paper I focus on one setting in depth, with the understanding that it is part of a bigger and infinitely complex text about notions of reality and identity that is emerging in South Africa. The pursuit of authenticity which lies at the heart of an ethnic tourist endeavour like **Shakaland**, a theme park dedicated to the representation of Zulu history and culture, makes it a revealing site for the investigation of the interweave of the creation of new realities and the making of new identities.

Survey of a range of tourist sites which market "Zuluness" in one form or another reveals that they characteristically offer visions of "Zuluness" that are predicated on notions of timeless,

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[6]Anderson, Imagined Communities, p.140, in which the description is used with reference specifically to language.

unchanging tradition, and they stress their authenticity. **Shakaland**, by way of contrast, provides an historicized view of Zulu custom and emphasizes its own simulacrity. The paper explores the significance of this reversal. I probe its promises as well as its fissures and absences, and discover a subtext about reality and identity. I argue that while **Shakaland** breaks free of many of the stereotypes that are characteristic of most representations of "Zuluness," it is a flawed enterprise that claims to explore openly questions of identity while surreptitiously imposing a structure that controls the production of the meaning of both "Zuluness" and the other identities constituted in the act of defining "Zuluness." The imposition of this structure is, I suggest, the product of a current confluence of political anxieties and market needs.

Zulu Markets

Zulu ethnicity is now, and has been in the past,[7] displayed and promoted in a variety of settings. Of these, the most

[7]The public exhibition of "Zuluness"--the people, culture and history--has a long lineage that encompasses displays both in south-east Africa, and, more commonly in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century, in metropolitan centres like London and Paris. These include the exhibition of Zulus at St. Georges Gallery, Hyde Park Corner, in 1853; in 1862 at the International Exhibition, London; in 1886 at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition; in Hagenbreck's famous travelling show that toured the Continent in the closing decades of the nineteenth century; the 1923\24 British Empire Exhibition at Wembley; and the 1924 Aldershott Pageant, to mention but a handful.

familiar and accessible today are the open-air craft markets that line the main roads of Natal and KwaZulu. The **Umgababa** market, some twenty-five miles outside Durban, is one of the best-known and most popular of these markets. In her study of the market, Eleanor Preston-Whyte observes that tourists like its "African flavour" and the presence of the market women sitting outside their stalls weaving or crocheting--the proof that the goods sold are "the real thing". **Umgababa**, she notes, is referred to in publicity brochures and the press as a "Traditional Zulu Market." What lies at the heart of its popularity is that it epitomizes what many tourists, foreigners as well as black and white South Africans, think of as "traditional" African life.[8]

Some sightseers are content with the purchase of sunhats for use on the beach later in the day, but many seek momentoes of their visit to a particular region. As Spooner notes in his discussion of connoisseurship, they hope to take home indigenous artifacts, preferably items of exceptional quality or of some rarity. Their judgement of one item on offer as superior to another is usually made with reference to the context of the item's production. In this view,

> the real thing is not simply an artifact; it is made by particular individuals, from specially handcrafted materials, in particular social, cultural, and environmental conditions, with motifs and designs learned from earlier generations.[9]

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[8]Preston-Whyte, "Trading Networks and Money-Making," p.3.

[9]Brian Spooner, "Weavers and dealers: authenticity and oriental carpets", in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), The Social Life of Things: Commodities in cultural perspective, Cambridge University

The desire for authenticity prompts the reconstruction, usually imperfectly, of that context.[10]

The importance of the context of production to tourists who view themselves as discriminating, is fully recognized by the entrepreneurs at **Umgababa**. The notions of what is traditional, as well as the air of authenticity which pervades the market, are actively fostered by the traders and their suppliers who together orchestrate a vision of "tribal Zululand" which is given concrete form in the curios which the tourists take home. Preston-Whyte demonstrates that most traders have no idea about how things were made in the past, but invent stories to satisfy their customers. The skills of women who manufacture beadwork for **Umgababa** are often not based on traditional methods passed from generation to generation as the tourists imagine, but were learnt at school, as part of a Bantu Education curriculum.[11] Paradoxically, much of what is sold at **Umgababa** is not made by the stall-holders, is seldom even local in provenance, and not infrequently, is made in Taiwan.[12] The pretence is vital not only because of tourist demands, but also because **Umgababa** is tax exempted as a "traditional" rather than commercial market.[13]

Press, Cambridge, p. 199.

[10]On the contribution that contextualization makes to the experiences of viewing or appreciation see Sally Price, Primitive Art in Civilized Places, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1989, especially chapter one, "The Mystique of Connoisseurship."

[11]E. Preston-Whyte and J. Thorpe, "Ways of Seeing, Ways of Buying; Images of Tourist Art and Culture Expression in Contemporary Beadwork," in A. Nettleton and D. Hammond-Tooke (eds.), African Art in Southern Africa: From Tradition to Township, Johannesburg, A.D. Donker, 1989, p.131.

[12]Preston-Whyte, "Trading Networks and Money-Making at a 'Traditional Zulu' Market", p.3.

[13]The tax concession is augmented by significant investment in the market by the kwaZulu Development and Finance Corporations. See Preston-Whyte, "Trading Networks and Money-Making at a 'Traditional Zulu' Market", p.4.

The demand for "traditional beadwork" from markets like **Umgababa** is not confined to tourists. Such items are used increasingly at the kwaZulu capital, Ulundi, and in the festivities of the Shembe church, as well as for stage and screen shows, while beadwork is further promoted in the press and on television.[14] The goods on sale at the relatively remote **Umgababa** market thus promote a vision of "traditional Zulu" that is actively shaped by a range of market tastes and needs.

More than mere goods are offered for sale at the **Phezulu** curio shop, situated in the Valley of a Thousand Hills just a short distance outside the major holiday city of Durban. In addition to Zulu crafts, **Phezulu** offers visitors a "colonial-style restaurant," a "crocodile safari," and "over 100 deadly poisonous South African and exotic Snakes." The main attraction at **Phezulu** is, however, "our Zulu show." The promotional leaflet promises an "experienced guide" who "will take you into two traditional huts where you will be told about the fascinating taboos and rituals of the Zulu people." This item is followed by Zulu dancing and a "genuine" witchdoctor consultation. The multiple activities on offer suit some holiday makers, but are too tawdry and overtly commercialized for other tastes.[15]

The discerning tourist's search for an authentic experience demands more than the buying of goods at **Umgababa**, or the viewing of the "shows" at **Phezulu**. Such a tourist typically hopes to probe the back regions of the place visited, to obtain a special and intimate view into the heart of things, a view normally denied by everyday experiences and inaccessible to coach tours. **Ophapheni**, in "the heart of the Zulu country," offers an opportunity for tourists to visit an "authentic Zulu village," where it is possible to observe "skills, dress, art and the traditional Zulu lifestyle .... preserved just as it was more

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[14]Preston-Whyte and Thorpe, "Ways of Seeing", pp.133-4.

[15]Interview with Barry Leitch, 25 February, 1992.

than a century ago" (along with "cheetah, ostrich, crocodiles, impala and nyala"). **Ophapheni** also offers accommodation in "Zulu beehive huts."[16] The long journey of almost eighty miles from Durban to the remote Nkwalini valley and its conclusion on dirt roads is part of **Ophapheni's** certificate of authentification. This is "Zuluness" in its "real" setting.

"Getting in with the natives" is, however, the acme of ethnic tourist experience. **KwaBhekithunga**, also on the edge of the Nkwalini Valley, taps into this desire. It offers "an exclusive opportunity to experience the uncommercialized, authentic and true culture of the Zulu people, their customs and dignified way of life." There, "Thomas (Mbhangcuza) Fakude and his family will welcome you to share their home and with lectures and demonstrations, he will explain the beliefs, customs and culture of his people." **KwaBhekithunga**, the advertisement continues, "is Thomas's home and is not open to the public on a Daily Basis...At **KwaBhekithunga**, you as visitors are special and have the exclusive use of the Kraal. At no stage will you have the inconvenience of another party spoiling the mood." At **KwaBhekithunga** the tourist's guarantee of authenticity is Thomas himself, the Zulu *in situ*.

The real connoisseur, however, eschews these obviously commercial enterprises in favour of sites of genuine historic significance. There are a number of projects in the area which make greater claims to "cultural authority"[17] than resorts like

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[16]Azalea promotions flyer issued on behalf of the Tourist Association of Natal and KwaZulu, n.d.

[17]Karp and Kratz make a useful distinction between "ethnographic authority" ("the means through which cultural others are represented" including labels, design elements, floor plans and so on) and "cultural authority" ("claims about who controls the distribution of knowledge...the standards for what is worth knowing...claims which are intrinsically evaluative and hierarchical" and which are established in a host of ways: through links with other cultural institutions, founding ceremonies, catalogues, the collective research and experience of their

KwaBhekithunga. These include a camp at **Ondini** controlled by the KwaZulu Monuments Council. Overnight visitors are accommodated in a "traditional homestead" (with amenities) adjacent to restored sections of King Cetshwayo's newly-excavated **Ondini** residence. At this site, the accent is on authentic recreation, with the "20th century ... screened from the Ondini Homestead by indigenous parklands." Possible activities in the immediate neighbourhood for guests staying overnight at **Ondini** include visiting other nearby sites of historical significance such as the graves of the early Zulu kings and a number of important battle fields. These trips demand a degree of prior knowledge of Zulu history on the part of visitors for them to be attracted to the sites in the first place, and for them to be able successfully to apprehend the fragmentary remains and unembellished scenes of past events. The aficionados at these sites stroll around with bedraggled accounts of battles tucked under their arms, eyes raking the ground for spent cartridges and rusted assegai heads.

The various sites which represent "Zuluness" market their authenticity in different ways and are pitched at different categories of tourists, but one site attracts everyone from the Spanish and Zulu royal families, Johnny Clegg and Knight Rider to local school parties, and black and white family groups: **Shakaland**.[18] Described as "the new living museum to Zulu

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curatorial staff and "ambitious and encyclopedic claims to knowledge", to mention but a few. (I. Karp and C. Kratz, "The Fate of Tippoo's Tiger: A Critical Account of Ethnographic Display," paper presented to the Anthropology Department, Northwestern University, 1992, p.2.)

[18] **Shakaland** staff are unable to provide a detailed visitor profile. Director Barry Leitch estimates that, excluding the high numbers of local visitors that come in school parties, the number of foreign tourists slightly exceeds that of locals. He notes further that the local component is growing steadily and is expected to equal the foreign component in the very near future. While large numbers of black school children visit the resort, only a small--but steadily increasing--proportion of black guests stay

culture"[19] by one travel writer, and a "definite must for every South African and tourist" by another,[20] Shakaland hosted 32000 visitors in 1991, a figure vastly in excess of the number of guests at its neighbours, Ophapheni and KwaBhekithunga.[21]

Located close to many of the sites already discussed, Shakaland is situated on a finger of white farmland that reaches into the kwaZulu homeland. The core of this resort was originally built as one of the film sets for the television mini-series, *Shaka Zulu*.[22] Two of the cultural specialists on the film subsequently bought up the land, turning the set first, in 1986 into a film camp, and later into a "bush camp" and educational centre. In 1988, the prestigious Protea hotel chain invested in Shakaland, and oversaw its transformation from a small, marginally successful, operation into the major tourist attraction that it is today.

The approach to Shakaland is marked by a large sign in burnished orange, red, and brown that mimics the design of the title of the *Shaka Zulu* television series. The driveway passes under a gate made up of dramatically elevated look-out posts topped with waving pennants. In the parking lot visitors are greeted by a gatekeeper in full warrior regalia and directed to a fenced walkway. A large board at its entrance introduces "Zulu" for those who may not know the basics. A potted history of the rise of the Zulu nation under Shaka is given, and its

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in the *luxury* accommodation.

[19]The Motorist, 1st quarter, 1989, p.4. I am grateful to John Wright for a copy of this article.

[20]Weekend Getaway, October 1989, p.76

[21]Fax, Errard Sullivan, manager of Shakaland to C. Hamilton, 25 January, 1992.

[22]C.A. Hamilton, "A Positional Gambit: *Shaka Zulu* and the Conflict in South Africa", Radical History Review, 44, 1989, pp.5-31.

significance as one of the most dramatic events in southern African history is asserted. In a final flourish the resort is introduced:

> The romance which surrounds the name of the Zulu nation has lingered on for a century or more since the days in the mid 18 hundreds when their exploits were blazoned in dramatic headlines across the world. The tales of their deeds during those warring years read like the legends of forgotten time. But the Zulu epic is no fantasy! Today below the hills where once stood KwaBulawayo, the great military kraal of King Shaka, lies SHAKALAND.

The walkway is a long and winding path fenced on both sides by a dense reed screen, similar to the closed approach to a game hide and carrying the same promise of a rare sighting. The reed corridor opens into **Shakaland**, and the visitor experiences a marked sensation of entering another world.

The resort is divided into a hotel area and the immediately adjacent film set. Dining takes place in a thatched "boma" with an open campfire area, and bar. The whole overlooks the Mhlathuze dam and the rolling Ntembeni hills. The setting is, in the words of one travel writer, "spectacular."[23] Both cheap dormitory accommodation--used mainly by school parties--and luxurious guest rooms are available. The dormitories are large "beehives" made in the conventional fashion, with few concessions to modern-day comforts. The deluxe guest rooms are spacious bungalow structures topped by skillfully woven and thatched "beehive" roofs. The walls of the guest rooms are decorated with choice Zulu artifacts. The pieces--wooden neck-rests, beer-pot covers, woven grass mats etc.--are individually displayed and carry labels which give the item's Zulu name, its use, as well as its provenance and the history of its collection. Guests comment on how aesthetically pleasing the rooms are, and how the artifacts convey a sense of having been carefully selected, of being "the real thing." Indeed, the feel of the rooms is

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[23]Siobhan O'Reagain in Weekend Getaway, October, 1989.

reminiscent of an art gallery and the display technique stimulates the guest into wanting to know more about the objects exhibited. "It stirs the interest" comments the travel writer.[24] Unlike a typical art gallery, however, **Shakaland** holds out the promise of further opportunities for the viewer to place the objects in context.

Large artifacts built especially for the two television series filmed at the site have been carefully preserved in the hotel courtyard. The first is "The Forge. Used in the filming of *Shaka Zulu* for the making of Shaka's spear" and alongside it is "The Boat. Used in the filming of *John Ross*". (The series *John Ross*, also set in Shakan times, was filmed on the same set, shortly after *Shaka Zulu*.) The walls of both the bar and the reception area are festooned with framed press clippings and posters about the television shows. Amongst glossy portraits of the stars of *Shaka Zulu*, are accounts dating back to 1984 of the building of the set as well as that of "rustic accommodation" to house the film crews. A number of press reports and framed information sheets trace the genesis of the **Shakaland** resort out of these various components of the old location. Even the takeover of the resort by Protea hotels is documented.

The filmset section of the resort is a cross between an enlarged living diorama and a theme park. "No detail has been overlooked to ensure that visitors get an authentic, dramatic introduction to this mighty nation," notes one promotional leaflet.[25] The set was built to be the homestead of Shaka's

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[24]Siobhan O'Reagain in Weekend Getaway, October, 1989.

[25]In his article "Mickey Mouse History: Portraying the Past at Disney World" (Radical History Review, 32, 1985, pp.33-57), Michael Wallace remarks on a similar attention to detail in **Disneyland**, which he ascribes to Disney's cinematic roots.(see p.38) A new Disney theme park, "a 300 million dollar movie and television studio, the Disney-MGM studio" is reportedly due to open soon. (A.S. Dennett, "A Postmodern Look at EPCOT's American Adventure", p.48.)

father, a considerably less important figure than Shaka himself. It is a relatively modest establishment of some sixteen huts, but it nonetheless manages to impress. The "Great Kraal" as the homestead is called, is a cross between an ordinary homestead built on traditional lines that might yet be found in the kwaZulu countryside and the large royal residences still in evidence in neighbouring Swaziland.

In many respects, **Shakaland** offers a holiday package that is similar to those of its competitors. The accommodation provided in the deluxe bungalows is certainly more luxurious (and more expensive[26]) than that available anywhere else, but it is only a small proportion of the total **Shakaland** clientele that avail themselves of its comforts. In contrast to resorts like **Ophapheni** and **KwaBhekithunga** however, **Shakaland** does not purport to offer tourists "the real thing," but rather the real filmset. Even the goat grazing in the Great Kraal is not represented as a "typical" feature of the Zulu countryside, but is introduced as "William C. Forager, the real goat - the one that was in such and such a scene of the film *Shaka Zulu*," while the goat's name is a play on the name of the series' director, William C. Faure. Likewise, the Shaka who is present in **Shakaland** does not seek to be faithful to early descriptions of the Zulu king, or even to a contemporary sketch of the monarch. Rather, the only Shaka present in **Shakaland** takes the form of pictures of Henry Cele, the actor who played Shaka in the television series. In drawing attention to its genesis as a film set, **Shakaland** emphasizes its artifice.

Of course, close identification with the film series is a drawcard, prompting easy recognition by the general public of the

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[26]In October 1991 a deluxe double room cost R390.00 (about $200) per night, meals and "cultural experience" included. Day trips--the "Nandi experience" which offers a "two hour sampler of Zulu tradition which includes Ngoma dancing and lunch"--cost around R60.00 (about $30.00) per person, with significantly reduced rates for school trips and other large parties.

nature of the enterprise.[27] One of the reasons that **Shakaland** does better than its competitors is that it is able to capitalize on the success of the television series and the widespread appeal of, and interest in, the historical figure of Shaka. The promotional leaflet appeals directly to this double interest:

> Experience the power of Shaka Zulu. Take a step back into time and enter the world of Shaka, King of the Zulus at his Great Kraal overlooking the Umhlathuze Lake. Shakaland, originally created for the film set of the epic Shaka Zulu, is one of South Africa's most unique tourist attractions.[28]

The positive identification of the resort with the series and with the figure of Shaka explains why some tourists are initially attracted to the resort, but it does not account for its widespread acclaim and marked success.

While survey of <u>what</u> Shakaland offers does not assist in accounting for its greater appeal, analysis of <u>how</u> the resort works, and how it is apprehended by visitors is more illuminating.[29] The central feature of a visit to **Shakaland** is

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[27]Leitch noted that **Shakaland** was launched into "the slipstream" of the television series, and that following the series, the name **Shakaland** provided "an instantly powerful image." (Interview with Leitch, 25 February, 1992.)

[28]In fact, **Shakaland** is not the site of either the original Great Kraal or even the miniseries' Great Kraal. That was fired in the final flaming scene of the film. It was, as we have noted, the set of the smaller residence inhabited in the film by Shaka's father, Senzangakhona, while the Mhlathuze Lake is a dam constructed in the mid-1980s that was not a feature of the landscape in Shakan times.

[29]A similar "cultural experience" is on offer at **Phumangena**, outside Johannesburg, which draws an equally favourable response from its visitors. Its popularity is such that mini-bus taxi drivers from the townships of Sebokeng and Mamelodi offer associations and other groups, including Sotho-speaking women's clubs, special rates for day trips. All aspects of **Phumangena** are imported up from kwaZulu and modelled on **Shakaland**, down to the staff, many of whom are related to the staff at **Shakaland**. Sotho-speaking visitors to **Phumangena** express interest in visiting **Shakaland** which they perceive to be superior to **Phumangena** but note that it is "too far" and "more expensive", as well as expressing

what is termed the "cultural experience", designed by one of the directors of **Shakaland**, Barry Leitch.[30] An anthropology graduate, Leitch has devised a script for the cultural experience that offers more information, and more accurate and often not widely known data than any of **Shakaland's** rivals. He carefully avoids the biases, racist representations and stereotypes characteristic of the other resorts discussed, and explicitly affirms the culture being experienced. As Leitch put it,

> In **Shakaland** you are paying homage to a culture that everything else Western has tended to negate and look down upon....We are recognizing that the Western perspective is just one way of looking at things and within the Zulu perspective one recognizes that you have a whole range of intelligences; within the range of natural abilities you have a whole world there: it is the recognition that a man's intelligence and self-esteem does not depend upon whether he's got a Standard Eight or a Standard Ten [Grades ten and twelve].[31]

The script is sensitive to a relatively sophisticated international tourist market, as well as local visitors, large numbers of whom are, to some degree, aware of the distortions of African history under apartheid. Indeed, Leitch further made a point of inviting members of a local university anthropology department to inspect the resort and he incorporates material into the script from the research of Natal Museum archaeologists and university historians. The **Shakaland** script thus aspires to satisfy demanding new criteria of political sensitivity, and academic precision and respectability.

The program is taught to staff on a training course, which includes a hand-out prepared by Leitch, covering all aspects of Zulu history and life as presented in **Shakaland**. In addition, extra reading and research by the staff themselves are encouraged, guided by a source list provided by Leitch. The

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concern about venturing into a Zulu-speaking area.

[30] Your Family, March, 1989.

[31] Interview with Leitch, 25 February, 1992.

"cultural experience" takes place under the supervision of a "cultural adviser" following Leitch's script. At the time when the research for this paper was undertaken, in late 1991, there were three resident "cultural advisers." All three are native Zulu-speakers with an excellent command of English. Two of them had been recruited in Durban, while the third came from the nearby town of Eshowe. They all have tertiary qualifications of one sort of another, previous work experience in business or education, and are familiar with the backgrounds of both their non-Zulu speaking guests and their various Zulu-speaking guests. These criteria are viewed by Leitch as fundamental to the task which they perform. The right sort of person for the job, Leitch notes, is hard to find. "You run into them. You can't actually advertise for them. You don't find them if you advertise for them. They are very difficult to identify."[32]

Guests gather in the "boma" to meet their adviser, and receive a short lecture which consists of an outline of Zulu history (similar to that sketched on the board at the entrance to the resort) and a summary of the development of **Shakaland**. The adviser then leads the way to the filmset homestead, telling the visitors to pick up a stone *en route*. Some distance before the main entrance, the guide pauses in front of a cabbage tree, at the base of which is a cairn of stones, and inquires of his followers if they know what they are looking at. While they may have seen such a cairn before, even his Zulu-speaking guests struggle to give an account of it. They have halted, explains the adviser, in front of an isivivane, in earlier times a marker of important routes of travel. On nearing the isivivane, he elaborates, travellers would pick up a stone, spit on it and toss it onto the pile, thereby marking the stages of their journey while they paused to gain their bearings, and to appraise themselves of any threats abroad. The adviser then spits and

[32]Interview with Leitch, 25 February, 1992.

throws his stone, urging the visitors to do likewise. "When you spit on a stone and place it there, you are placing yourself in that area, greeting the spirits of that area and asking for good luck." The cairn thus grows with the passage of every party, and all leave behind a mark of their participation. "It's a kind of communality thing," remarked Leitch.[33]

Behind the isivivane is a model of a homestead which the guide uses to explain the layout of what is described as a typical "traditional" Zulu homestead. He notes, for example, that the wives of the homestead head each have their own hut. He indicates that this is just a model, and that in practice few homesteads adhere to the ideal form. He goes on to say that in current times most Zulu homes are built on more modern and western lines, while retaining certain features derived from the earlier structure. Implicitly acknowledging the poverty of many Zulu homes today, he points out that these days few men can afford to house their wives in separate structures, if indeed, they are wealthy enough to have more than one wife at all.

Questions from the visitors are actively solicited and carefully answered. The guides present themselves as skilled cultural translators who use examples familiar to their diverse audiences in order to illuminate a particular practice or event. Overall, the advisers readily historicise Zulu tradition, avoid enshrining "custom" and convey an accessible, but complex, picture of the interweave of old and modern cultural forms used by present and past rural Zulu-speakers. In contrast to neighbouring resorts, and the kwaZulu authorities in nearby Ulundi, **Shakaland** does not seek to authorize a return to tradition, but promotes instead an appreciation of "Zuluness" in diverse forms.

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[33]Interview with Leitch, 25 February, 1992.

Reception of this script is undoubtedly highly varied and is difficult to gauge in its full complexity.[34] One of the most striking responses is the extent to which visitors to **Shakaland** recognize as superior the quality of the information provided at the resort. They value the elements presented that deviate from the tired texts of other resorts, and frequently comment on how informative the experience is. Many visitors are sufficiently discerning to appreciate the attempt not to idealize the past. They feel that they have acquired the knowledge necessary for them to reconstruct the social context of the items that they purchase from markets such as **Umgababa**, or the artifacts which they view at exhibitions. By placing such items in context, they are increasingly confident of their ability to discern good artifacts from bad, genuine from imitation, and their status as connoisseurs is enhanced and affirmed. The promise of the guestroom decor is fulfilled.

By extension, this knowledge is seen to apply also to the tourists' understanding of "the Zulu" themselves. "You can see a real difference between the old kind of Zulu, and these new ones," commented one visitor motioning first in the direction of the Great Kraal, and then at the cultural adviser sitting a short distance away. This knowledge is viewed by many of the guests as filling an important gap created by apartheid. Such views voiced by **Shakaland** guests echo sentiments expressed in a market survey conducted by the Reader's Digest prior to the latter's decision to publish the revisionist Illustrated History of Southern Africa. In the survey, both black and white respondents, like many visitors to **Shakaland**, indicated profound dissatisfaction with the lack of information about African history available in

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[34]Assessing audience response to an exhibit like **Shakaland** poses tremendous difficulties. In addition to the use of visitor statistics, my evaluation of its reception is based on overheard audience comments, and responses actively elicted in conversation with other visitors by myself and three other anthropologists who accompanied me on the trip. I have also used reviews by travel writers and interviews with travel agents.

educational and popular forums, and expressed an active desire to become better informed on the topic. The respondents objected to the biases as well as the tone and style of treatment in the few texts available. The Illustrated History was specifically designed to meet these needs and objections, and within six months of its publication in 1989, over 85,000 copies had been bought by a South African public hungry for a new history.[35]

The public that buys the Illustrated History at the very high price of R85.00 (about $38.00) is overwhelmingly middle class as are the bulk of the visitors to **Shakaland**. But the impact of both the Illustrated History and **Shakaland** goes beyond the immediate purchasers of the respective products. Materials from both are passed on through school teachers and other producers of history materials and come to inform a broader and more diverse public, and, in the case of black school children, one which has been vocal in its rejection of apartheid history.

Shakaland has, to use Mike Wallace's comments about **Disneyland**, "taught more people more history, in a more memorable way, than they ever learned at school."[36] **Shakaland** offers to recreate and preserve treasures that the folly and ideology of the apartheid order expunged. In some respects, it presents itself as the bad conscience of South Africa, and part of its attractiveness is the debt that it pays to destroyed historic cultures. For black visitors **Shakaland** further meets a basic need for temporal connectedness, the need to establish links with the past especially at a time of widespread community

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[35]For a more detailed discussion of the popular appetite in South Africa for a revised history, and the role played by the Reader's Digest in identifying and meeting this need, see L. Witz and C. Hamilton, "Reaping the Whirlwind: The Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa and Changing Popular Perceptions of History," South African Historical Journal, May, 1991, pp.185-202. Also see Hamilton, "A Positional Gambit," pp.7-8.

[36]Wallace, "Mickey Mouse History", p.33.

destabilization.[37] The resort offers special programs for school parties and provides take-home educational materials. Programs tailored to meet specialist needs, such as those of performing arts students, are also available. Many students leave **Shakaland** expressing urgent desires to learn to speak isiZulu and demonstrate new enthusiasms for, and understandings of, manifestations of African culture. Travel writer Siobhan O'Reagain, for example, noted that on their return from **Shakaland**, her children promptly began to teach their friends the niceties of the various kinds of dancing which they had watched and participated in at the resort.[38]

In another context, Rosenzweig has noted that commercial forms of history tend to take over where academic historians and institutions abdicate the terrain of popular history.[39] Such abdication is clearly manifest in South Africa today where history curriculum writers and museum curators are immobilized and admit to being in a state of deep crisis.[40] In this situation, entrepreneurs perceive that there is money to be made

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[37]There are few sites in South Africa where this happens, a notable exception being the "Art and Ambiguity" exhibition recently hosted by the increasingly politically and socially aware **Johannesburg Art Gallery**. Reviewing the exhibition, prominent critic Barry Ronge noted that it "opens another avenue along which we can see what Martin Luther King called 'the content of our character' which will inevitably define our future." (Sunday Times, 8 December, 1991)

[38] Weekend Getaway, October, 1989, p.76.

[39]R.Rosenzweig on American Heritage, in Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Breier and Roy Rosenzweig (eds.), Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1986, p.47.

[40]The **Africana Museum** in Johannesburg recently approached both the present author and the Wits History Workshop for assistance in reconceptualizing their displays. The despair of educators concerning the inappropriateness of present history curricula and the absence of suitable materials for teaching beyond the curricula was especially evident at the Teaching Workshop section of the colloquium on the mfecane debate held in September, 1991 at Wits.

in the provision of history to the public.[41] In order to sell its product on an already crowded ethnic tourism market, **Shakaland** distinguishes itself from other producers of "Zuluness" and other products by creating distinctions within the market, between, for example, what Leitch calls "moth-eaten, flea-bitten outfits...trotting out the same old dances" and the **Shakaland** dance team "in full cry...exerting power through the strength of the dance routine itself...able to hold its own against the best dance teams in South Africa."[42] The distinctions occur both in the quantity and the quality of the material available, but these features are not the core of its difference.

Shakaland offers more than a compendium of knowledge, both arcane and relevant, that fills the gaps in the textbooks and satisfies the curiosity and the growing public appetite for a new history. It presents itself as providing a cross-cultural experience, an experience that is denied to many South Africans by apartheid. As the Guest Relations Officer for **Shakaland** wrote to a Natal Rotary Club,

> The Rotary Club of Eshowe have approached us with regards [sic] to sharing our "UNIQUE ZULU EXPERIENCE" with the youth of Natal. We feel, as they do, any Cross-Cultural Experience can only better the understanding between racial groups. What better place to start than with the youth of South Africa, for they are OUR future.[43]

The concern with cross-cultural experience implicitly acknowledges what the other resorts ignore, the tremendous anxities that all South Africans have of cultural others, especially those of non-Zulu-speakers regarding "Zuluness", and

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[41] Ford and Rockerfeller, for example, were amongst the first creators of museum villages in the United States. (See Benson *et al*, Presenting the Past, p.146)

[42] Interview with Leitch, 25 February, 1992.

[43] Letter, Fiona Small, to Rotary Club President, 22 Jan. 1990.

addresses them by offering a site for first-hand knowledge of this feared other.

Leaving the model of the homestead behind them, and moving forward to the entrance of the Great Kraal, the visiting party shifts from hearing about "Zuluness" to confronting it, and to coming into the first-hand knowledge of it. Here, the way is blocked by a barrier pole. The adviser pauses at the pole, and calls out loudly in isiZulu. Nothing happens. He then outlines to the group the appropriate Zulu etiquette for making one's presence as a visitor known at a homestead. This involves the loud calling out of the praise names of the homestead head. Knowledge of such praise names is an esoteric business, and most Zulu-speakers know the praises associated with only a few surnames, if any at all. To know the correct ones, and to call them out specifically--rather than to resort to a general alternative--is an "insider" sort of thing, and the guide takes time to teach the group the names appropriate to the homestead. Then all are encouraged to call out and announce themselves. At this point, the "homestead head" responds, appearing at the entrance of the cattle byre ahead. Appealing to the tourists' desires for insider knowledge and for "getting in with the natives", **Shakaland** draws the visitors into its script as active participants.

As befits a homestead head who sees a crowd of strangers at his door, the man collects his stick and shield and approaches cautiously, ready for come-what-may. In many respects, the homestead-head looks exactly like the men in the news photographs of Zulu impis at Inkatha rallies with which most of the visitors are familiar. In isiZulu, and following all the normal forms of polite address, the guide tells the man, whom he refers to in English as "the chief," that he has brought a party of visitors to see his home. He explains that they want to learn about the "Zulu" way of doing things, and requests the homestead head to accommodate them. This the chief graciously assents to, the bar is drawn back, and the party is admitted. All present are

introduced to the chief. The entire exercise is handled in such a delicate fashion that were it to have been the homestead of an acquaintance that the party was entering, rather than a commercially available experience, the visitors are made to feel that their behaviour is in the best possible taste. Exactly what is going on, and the politeness of the entrance, are not made explicit to those members of the party who do not speak isiZulu, nor are they at any point directly translated. The effect is, however, unmistakable to the visiting party.

In this, as much as in the quality of the information imparted, **Shakaland** shows itself to be cognizant of the sensibilities of its black visitors and the widening of the horizons of a white clientele increasingly concerned to be able to behave appropriately in African settings. Indeed, **Shakaland** prides itself on its attractiveness to black visitors and anticipates that this section of its market will expand as tourism amongst black South Africans develops further.[44]

The visitors then enter the Great Hut which the cultural adviser prefers to name in isiZulu, the indlu nkulu. The guide has previously explained that guests are not made welcome in a home until they have been offered beer to drink. Inside, the visitors, now the guests of the homestead head, are given utshwala (home-brewed sorghum beer), an act signaling their formal acceptance. The utshwala is drunk from a communal receptacle, with all the attendant rituals and etiquette, and it is a measure of the momentousness of this act in the **Shakaland** script that few visitors are sufficiently inhibited to forgo the experience.

In these actions, the tourists participate actively in the fantasy, but because of their own authenticity at this moment as, literally, consumers, fantasy and reality blur together such that the guests find themselves making real gestures in the theatrical setting. In this context, they have momentarily become Zulu

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[44]Interview with Leitch, 25 February, 1992.

themselves, and in so doing the image of the other that "Zuluness" embodies, that haunts many South Africans, and that figures importantly in the consciousness of foreign visitors as quintessential Africa, becomes self, and is thereby altered. The shared cup, symbolic of mutual acceptance and respect, begins to create a new community amongst guide, chief and visitors. The drinking of the utshwala is the consumption of the **Shakaland** promise of a new future. In the setting of the indlu nkhulu--the repository of a family's most ritually and historically significant items--it is also the enactment of a symbolic connection with the past.

A discussion of Zulu dress follows the drinking of the utshwala, with reference to the accoutrements of the homestead head and his wife, and to items laid out on display. Here, the homestead-head takes over and discourses in isiZulu on all the items and their functions. His explanations are translated into English by the adviser for the benefit of those members of the audience who do not understand isiZulu. The mode of presentation is of an elder, well-versed in matters traditional instructing, not only the guests, but also the younger, modern, cultural adviser. The performance achieves thus a special authority, emphasized by the many ways, including body language, in which the adviser demonstrates his respect for the older, more knowledgeable--at least in these matters--homestead head. The audience is thus made to feel that they have had the benefit of explanations from "a real expert." The cumbersome translation only serves to enhance the feeling of authenticity.

The guides at **Shakaland** play a key role as cross-cultural brokers. The "experience" is structured in such a way that the visitors must rely on their guide, allowing him to speak for them and to translate back to them, trusting him to protect them from social embarrassment in an unfamiliar world. For white visitors, this is an especially marked reversal of the forms of knowledge transmission to which they are accustomed. Indeed, the guides at **Shakaland**, while always solicitous, readily reprove guests who

err in matters of etiquette, and insist that the visitors make the effort to learn material from one stage of the visit before the next commences, as in the guests having to call out the praises of the homestead head before gaining admittance, and in a tendency in the guides' expositions to use more and more Zulu terms as the experience advances. While the homestead head stands for the most traditional, the guides--sophisticated, urban Zulu-speakers--are positioned midway between the worlds of their modern visitors and those being toured, the **Shakaland** staff in their "Zulu" setting. Not only do the guides name and explain, and offer a form of knowledge which the patrons feel has been denied to them by apartheid, but, in their dual proficiency in isiZulu and English, in their relaxed, though not complete, familiarity with both urban and rural etiquette, they offer an ideal, but also realistic, prototype of the new South African.

In the Great Kraal the guests develop a relationship with the homestead head that is increasingly demanding of them. The visit is structured such that their admittance is dependent on his graciousness: they are his guests, and their experience is a result of his extension of hospitality to them. The visitors are bound over to behave as guests, and not as tourists paying their way. The relationship between guests and host develops through eye contact, joking (often in translation through the guide) and an appearance by the homestead head of taking pride in making the experience available, in manifestations of his concern for the guests' education in his domain. The "experience" thus takes on the form of a normal, proper social interaction--such as might occur when adult children bring friends met in distant places home to the remote villages of their birth, and seek by introducing their parents to their friends to make each of their worlds gain in knowledge of the other. Because normal social interactions of this nature across racial lines are rare in South Africa, the **Shakaland** enactment provides an opportunity otherwise elusive for whites to enter what they see as a black world, for Sotho-speakers to penetrate an apparently Zulu one and so on.

Shakaland is, as Leitch put it, "..an oasis within what was an essentially an apartheid society."[45] It is a safe, controlled setting for the crossing of boundaries and barriers that elsewhere are seen to be too dangerous to breach.

This brings the first part of the "cultural experience" to a close. In the evening, dinner is taken in the "boma," followed by a tremendous display of Zulu music and dancing back up at the indlu nkhulu. The display is at once a mix of the old and the new, rural and township, with masikanda and ngoma[46] all contributing to the spectacle. One of the managers of the resort, a young white man who speaks good isiZulu, provides the commentary and explanations of the dances. As much as the cultural advisers stand for the new South Africa, so too does the young manager with his demonstrable facility in the contexts of both the dancers, and the various visitors. To see a young white person in the role of cultural authority introduces the idea, at least in the minds of white visitors, of the possibility that their submission to the tutelage of their guides will allow them access to the same confidence and authority.

The following morning, overnight visitors return to the Great Kraal, this time accessible (the barrier is removed) and familiar. They move quickly and confidently through the necessary greetings, and enter to watch the making of spears,[47] and to participate in "traditional sports." A demonstration of spear-throwing and stick-fighting ensues, in which the importance of physical prowess, agility and adherence to strict rules are emphasized. The audience is invited to try their hands at both "sports." Finally, the cultural adviser conducts the visitors to a sangoma's establishment (translated by the adviser as a

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[45]Interview with Leitch, 25 February, 1992.

[46]Masikanda is a modern urban musical form while ngoma is a rural dance style that has its roots in first-fruits ceremonies.

[47]The demonstrator was a spear-maker by trade before coming to Shakaland to practise his craft

"healer" and "diviner"--no "witchdoctors" here!), and significance of various tools of the trade are explained, again with the sangoma speaking in isiZulu, and the adviser translating. Impepho (a burning herb) is passed around for the visitors to inhale, as is common before a consultation. The sangoma rehearses the various steps in a diagnosis, and discusses some of the possible remedies to common complaints.[48] Depending on the time of year, and the resort's refurbishment or provisioning needs, other opportunities to view cultural activities may be available, such as wood-carving, hut-building or beer-brewing.

The richness and variety of cultural activities and experiences that are on offer at **Shakaland** are greater than that which would be available in any other single setting, such as in a real-life homestead in the Nkwalini valley adjacent to **Shakaland**, or indeed, perhaps within the entire valley. Not only does **Shakaland** offers a reproduction of reality that is more concentrated than the real thing, it is also more perfect. Its finish is more immaculate, its attention to detail more precise, even its construction is sounder. It is, to use a phrase of Umberto Eco's, an exercise in hyper reality.[49] This excellence is one of things that initially attracts visitors to **Shakaland**. Their search for knowledge of "Zuluness" is then broadened through the interaction in the Great Kraal into a rich experience of "Zuluness." Through this experience, "Zuluness" becomes familiar, is assimilated and is understandable. Now the visitors are ready to face the real thing.

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[48]There is no attempt to suggest that a genuine consultation is taking place. Indeed, in response to subsequent questioning, the adviser notes that the man who acts as the sangoma is not a real practitioner. By comparison, the entrepreneurs behind commercial Haitain voodoo shows which are "acted" for audiences claim that on some occasions real possession occurs in the course of a show. See Alan Goldberg, "Identity and Experience in Haitian Voodoo Shows" Annals of Tourism Research, vol. 10, 1983, pp. 479-97.

[49]Eco, Travels in Hyper Reality.

The final thrilling experience is a visit to a genuine homestead. For this visit, smaller parties are taken by boat up the narrows of the Mhlathuze lake. The journey--over an hour long--passes through areas increasingly more remote and wild in appearance. The boat finally ties up, and the guests ascend with difficulty a steep slope to a distant homestead. Employing all their newly acquired knowledge with some assistance from the **Shakaland** staff who accompany them, the guests make a visit. Here, they experience the real thing: the homestead is small and ill-fashioned in comparison to the filmset. The poverty of the residents is evident. The visitors are given a warm welcome, reminiscent of the previous day, but it is a warmth tied to the opportunity which the visit provides for the residents to sell off a few crafts which are strategically displayed, and which are snapped up by the visitors.

Visitors enquire suspiciously if the family are employed by **Shakaland**, and are told that they are not. As Barry Leitch puts it, visitors who go "on safari" to homesteads in the area "will meet independents and not contracted workers."[50] This assurance is the guarantee of the authenticity of the experience. Lest the visitors fear they have imposed themselves on the family, the staff offer the comfortable assurance that a properly reciprocal relationship exists between the families visited and the resort, whereby the heavily laden, the ill and the elderly are freely lifted to and fro on the boat. The combination of these features, Leitch notes, is part of

> Shakaland's special hallmark, setting it aside from commercialized concerns which feature 'ethnic experiences' totally out of their natural environment which often depend on the re-enactment of worn-out charades. Likewise, our lectures and the dancing entertainment are not all period museum pieces...The visitor will come away with insights that are not only historic, but also applicable to everyday life.[51]

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[50] The Motorist, p.5.

[51] The Motorist, pp.4-5

The "safari" confirms the **Shakaland** message that even in its most "raw" form, "Zuluness" is not threatening, it is something that can be visited and assimilated.

Shakaland pushes its visitors to move beyond the passive acts of viewing or buying, into doing and acting. They embark on a journey marked by stages after the completion of which their status is altered--a change first signalled by the removal of the barrier at the entrance to the Great Kraal, and finally and fully realized in the "safari."[52] The vast number of stones on the isivivane are the symbol of **Shakaland's** success in this endeavour.

Turner's ideas of liminality and communitas used in the analysis of certain kinds of tourism, notably in the work of MacCannell,[53] and Fine and Speer,[54] are suggestive as to why this experience is so satisfying and how to grasp what distinguishes it from other tourist enterprises. Drawing a connection between certain kinds of tourism and pilgrimages, these writers view tourists as

> liminoid beings who travel outside their normal routes, experiencing things outside of everyday routines. In this period of release from structure, the travellers reflect on the meaning of basic religious and cultural

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[52]The closest parallel to this to be found elsewhere are the refurbished ghost towns in the United States. Noting that in these towns tourists get fleeced just like the cowboys of yesteryear, Eco comments, "... since the theatricality is explicit, the hallucination operates in making the visitors take part in the scene and thus become participants in that commercial fair that is apparently an element of the fiction, but in fact represents the substantial aim of the whole imitative machine."(Travels in Hyper Reality, pp.42-43) A key difference in **Shakaland** is that the commercial basis of the enterprise is obscured.

[53]Dean MacCannell, "Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings," American Journal of Sociology, 79, pp.589-603.

[54]E.C. Fine and J.H. Speer, "Tour Guide Performances as Sight Sacralization," Annals of Tourism Research, 12, 1985, pp.73-95.

values, and may experience communitas: a quality of communion.[55]

Turner[56] sees societies as being in a dialectical process with successive stages of structure and communitas. Thus, people starved of communitas in day to day activities may seek it in the liminality of ritual. In the South African context such starvation is obvious, and in the current crisis, the need for communitas is as pressing as it is elusive, and the possibility of its achievement in **Shakaland** is especially alluring.

Staging Reality and Making Identity

For some visitors, **Shakaland** is simply a safari experience, a convenient way of viewing the other. For the majority, however, the "cultural experience" advances knowledge of a perceived other, and indeed suggests that in the new South Africa the distinctions between self and other might not be immutable nor a matter of fear.

Karp and Kratz set up an illuminating opposition between "exoticizing" and "assimilating" exhibition styles. While the television series *Shaka Zulu* exoticized "Zuluness," **Shakaland** assimilates it, creating "familiarity and intimacy with representations and their subjects."[57] In challenging visitors to understand the past, and to use that understanding to inform

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[55]Fine and Speer, "Tour Guide Performances", p.82.

[56]V. Turner, The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure, Chicago, Aldine, 1969, p.129.

[57]I. Karp and C. Kratz, "The Fate of Tippoo's Tiger: A Critical Account of Ethnographic Display", p.8.

their comprehension of the present, **Shakaland** encourages visitors to imagine new and optimistic futures.[58]

Shakaland thus takes on the role of an agent of redemption and healing, offering to compensate for the failure of normal institutions of social life. It is an opportunity for travellers to seek epiphany, an intuitive grasp of reality through its simple and striking setting. It creates a situation where people feel that they are beginning the work of reconstituting themselves and forging a new citizenship. The process of a visit to **Shakaland**, through the enhancement of knowledge of the other, resocializes, establishing through shared enterprise, a sense of social cohesion. A symbolic new community is created out of visitors, guides and other participants, prefiguring an ideal new South African society, possibly even nation.[59] Through revelation and progress, the visitors are transformed and in the process come to feel that they have embarked on a new set of social relationships. The staged quality of the setting is, in this instance, reassuring and facilitating of the promise of further development.

Tourism is an arena that is frequently about the enactment of cultural difference. The emphasis in **Shakaland** on differences is not an act of discrimination as it is in many other tourist

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[58]Michael Frisch has argued in relation fractured nature of the relationship between history and memory in American life, that the repairing of this fracture through the enhancing of people's ability to imagine and create a different future through the reuse of history, is a major goal of public history. In Benson *et al* Presenting the Past, pp.5-17, this quote p.6.

[59]In these respects, **Shakaland** functions in a manner similar to what Hobsbawm calls "an invented tradition." See E. Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions" in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, (eds.), The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, p.9.

settings, but "a mode of exploration and understanding"[60] The main issues which the visitors to **Shakaland** are primed to re-imagine are questions of people's differences and similarities. What Karp says about museums in general is equally pertinent to **Shakaland**:

> They define relations with communities whether they intend to or not. This process of making meaning, negotiating, debating - localized in institutions such as museums - provides the unwritten, ever-changing constitution of civil society. The social ideas of civil society are articulated and experienced through striving for consensus and struggling against the imposition of identity. Museums are one of a number of settings for these conflicting but simultaneously operating processes, which make social ideas understandable, but not always legitimate.[61]

Recent literature on exhibition practice recognizes that displays are seldom, if ever, politically neutral.[62] Frequently, exhibitions are the arenas in which particular definitions of identity and culture are asserted. As such they play an important role in the making of identities, or as Karp puts it, they are "sites for the play of identity."[63] While **Shakaland** is not a museum, it is an exhibit that is about identity situated in a wider context of intense conflict about identity in which all meanings of Zulu identity are highly charged.

Shakaland offers an exploration of Zulu culture, for people of other cultures, for modern, urban Zulu-speakers interested in the past, and for Zulu traditionalists today. It thus works to

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[60]The distinction is made in I. Karp and C. Kratz, "The Fate of Tippoo's Tiger: A Critical Account of Ethnographic Display", p.2.

[61]Ivan Karp, Museums and Communities, forthcoming, introduction, p.9.

[62]John Wright and Aron Mazel, "Controlling the Past in the Museums of Natal and KwaZulu", Critical Arts, 5,3 (1991) pp. 59-77.

[63]Karp, Museums and Communities, "On Civil Society and Social Identity", p.1.

define a Zulu identity as well as identities which gain in definition themselves through the defining of Zulu. The definitions enacted in **Shakaland** potentially assist both Zulu-speakers and non-Zulu-speakers to legitimize themselves in a new way. Mutual definition of identity means that the resort is able to ratify different things for different people. While **Shakaland** offers a unique setting for this process, it does so on its own terms. The illusion which enables the **Shakaland** project is also a source of fraud, the script a form of closure and limitation.

Leitch's program expressly banishes discussion of material on politics. Apartheid relations are eschewed.[64] Nonetheless, the script is designed by the white anthropologist, the hotel is run by a white manager, and the land on which it is built is just outside kwaZulu, in an area designated white. Leitch believes that one of the truly distinctive features of **Shakaland** is the "Zulu" relationship at the resort between the white owners and managers on the one hand, and the Zulu-speaking staff on the other. He described how the resort is run on a headman system, with dispute resolution between the staff and the management conducted through the two headmen. Relating proudly how in one instance, when the general manager erred in following procedure, he was subject to a fine imposed by the headmen, Leitch commented,

> The two patriarchs of **Shakaland** are myself and my partner, Kingsley Holgate. We are essentially White Zulus. We conduct ourselves very much in the Zulu fashion. We don't conduct ourselves in a white fashion...and the whole way that we run **Shakaland** is exactly the same way as the head of a kraal or the head of a family would run a family in the rural areas....We formed **Shakaland** with people who have evolved with us. A lot of the dancers are people I have been friends with since my childhood...or people that my partner Kingsley has gleaned, people that have tacked on to him along his journey through life, people that have then come together in a kind of nexus at **Shakaland**. That's where the whole thing is distilled. So our roots in

[64] Interview with Leitch, 25 February, 1992.

> many cases go back to our childhoods. It is a truly South African situation, minus the negativity and the violence.[65]

But, violence is not absent in the resort's labour relations and the hard realities of "patriarchal" relations inadvertedly reveal themselves in the domineering behaviour of the white hotel personnel at the resort towards black employees. In response to questions probing the day-to-day running of the resort, one member of staff described how the white manager threatened them saying, "You are all Inkatha, and I am ANC [African National Congress], so you had better watch out."[66]

Similar fissures and contradictions are revealed in the "cultural experience" itself. Because the script depends on the interaction of guides and guests, on the frankness of the guides, and on the first-hand testimony of the guides and those being toured, there is space for its subversion. Indeed, when guests ask questions to which they do not know the answer, the advisers readily refer the questions to "actors" being viewed--mostly local Zulu-speaking inhabitants with a rural backgrounds, people like the chief--and thereafter incorporate the replies into their repertoires. The education of the guides in this form gives the "actors" a voice that is not scripted. These voices are frequently nationalist, even chauvinist--"The Zulu are the most powerful people in all the country; only the Zulu are really kings"--in forms expressly avoided in the script.

In attempting to broker between the many worlds of their audience, the guides have to move beyond Leitch's prepared text, to reach into their own experience. The advisers consistently introduce into the discussion images and comparisons drawn

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[65]Interview with Leitch, 25 February, 1992.

[66]At **Phumangena**, the guide described the Great Hut as the venue of all important discussions in homestead, and as the site for conflict resolution. He went on to say that when labour disputes broke out in the resort between the workers and the manager, discussions would convene in the Great Hut.

directly out of an experience of a South Africa wider than Shakaland. In explicating the Zulu amabutho system, one adviser drew a comparison with the South African Defence Force and its division into battalions, referring by way of example, to one of the army's most notorious divisions recently stationed in Natal and accused to committing a range of atrocities. To many readers of the daily newspapers, the very naming of "32 Battalion" is chilling. Likewise, in attempting to explain rituals observed around death, and the significance of branches of the buffalo thorn tree in bringing home the spirit of a relative who has died in distant parts, one adviser began his example thus: "If you are working on the mines and get shot and die in Johannesburg...," this in 1991, the year in which the terror of the train massacres and hostel clashes involving Zulu-speakers, besieged the consciousness of all South Africans. Violence is the very sweat of the resort and it seeps through its carefully overstitched seams.

These examples alert us to a massive silence in the resort: the absence in the exploration of identity as scripted for Shakaland, of present-day ethnic violence, of the massive furor in the press and other public domains concerning issues of Zulu militarism, cultural weapons and nationalism. "We are a proud people with warrior blood in our veins," is a frequent refrain of the traditionalist leadership of kwaZulu.[67] "...[O]nly warriors," claims the Zulu king, Goodwill Zwelethini, "could have put KwaZulu together under the direction of that great and illustrious founder, King Shaka."[68] Zulu-speaking hostel dwellers endorsed the king's description of innate Zulu militarism: "Zulus are born fighters who can respond spontaneously to any attack." Another elaborated on the origins

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[67]Zulu king, Goodwill Zwelethini, quoted in the Weekly Mail, 19 December, 1991-2 January, 1992.

[68]Shaka Day speech, King Goodwill Zwelethini, Eshowe, 1991.

of this militarism, "The Zulu Nation is born out of Shaka's spear. When you say 'Go and fight', it just happens."[69]

In South Africa, claims about what "Zuluness" really is, are made against the backdrop of conflict that began in Natal, in the mid-1980s, and which surged dramatically in 1991 across the Reef. The violence most frequently saw Zulu impis (armed groups of men)--often made up of hostel dwellers--pitted against neighbouring communities of non-Zulu-speakers and supporters of the African National Congress (ANC). Political negotiations ground to a standstill as the ANC demanded that the Government ban the carrying of "cultural weapons" by its Zulu-speaking opponents. In response, the Zulu king accused the ANC of having insulted his manhood and "the manhood of every Zulu man," with its demand.[70]

Journalists besieged university anthropology departments, the imagined "experts" on the matter, with urgent questions: "What is a 'cultural weapon'?" "Is it real, this Zulu tradition 'thing'?" Finally, when asked to judge whether "fold-up spears ...roughly 50cm long...[with] detachable blades that screw into rectangular metal bases, and ...fit snugly into an easily-concealable sheaths made of industrial tape" were *bona fide* "Zulu cultural weapons" some of us contemplated unplugging the telephones.

The controversy surrounding these definitions of "Zuluness" and concern over their authenticity involves questions which range well beyond the identities of the people who describe themselves, or who are designated by others, as "Zulu." The backdrop to these questions is the painful emergence of the so-called new South Africa, and the controversy includes struggles over what ideally will constitute this new society, as well as

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[69]Both quotes from the Weekly Mail, 30 August-5 September, 1991.

[70]Quoted in the Weekly Mail, May 30-June 6, 1991.

over changing and sometimes contradictory meanings of what it is to be "black" or "white", "Zulu", "Sotho", "Afrikaner", and so on.

Shakaland offers a vision of identity and reality that is a response to these struggles, but which, paradoxically, must deny their existence to be effective. In **Shakaland** the "tyrant" of history, Shaka, is Henry Cele, an actor, and assegais and sticks are instruments of sport, not weapons of war. The conflict between the ANC and Inkatha is banished from the stage.

Conclusion: Faith in Fakes[71]

Shakaland does more than simply market Zulu history and culture. In the current situation of massive social and political upheaval in South Africa, the **Shakaland** product is successful because it addresses an important need for a new post-apartheid knowledge of Africa. It does so in the form of an accessible and polished package that can conveniently be completed in one or two days. At one level, it is a praiseworthy didactic and celebratory endeavour, and its product is of sufficiently high quality to satisfy a new and more demanding connoisseurship on the part of its customers. At the level of cross-cultural communication through the provision of information it also enjoys significant success, so much so that it provides a crucial reassurance to its participants regarding a culturally heterogenous future. But **Shakaland** does more than provide new knowledge; its real product is "experience."

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[71] Faith in Fakes was the original English title of Eco's essay on exhibitions in the United States, Travels in Hyper Reality, cited at the beginning of this paper. The change of title for the San Diego edition was presumably a strategic softening of the critique to assist sales in the United States. I am grateful to Adam Ashforth for this choice detail.

The majority of the visitors, but most especially the white visitors, come to value not so much their viewing of the filmset and the acquisition of information about Zulu history and life, but their engagement with "Zulus"--the "advisers" and the "actors"--in a shared experience. They are satisfied by the interaction rather than the setting and the lecture, although the latter are, of course, essential prerequisites for the former. In the course of the experience, **Shakaland** successfully makes the other familiar and comfortable for its patrons. "Coexistence" wrote one travel writer, "is what **Shakaland** is all about."[72]

While the conventional mode of knowledge of Africa, that of white mastery and manipulation, seems exorcised, it is not. Patrons gain a new and more sophisticated authority over "Zuluness" through the acquisition of knowledge and experience. Close examination of the resort reveals that it is governed by a script created by a white author and shaped by weighty market constraints, notably the need for manifestly "authentic" reassurances. In South Africa today, **Shakaland** shares the peace-of-mind market with security companies, gunshops and prayer. It is part of a search for security and control in an increasingly volatile and unknown world. Violence is excised because it would confound the vision of smooth transformation and the ritual reassurance that is **Shakaland's** special product.

The methodology of the **Shakaland** experience is fundamentally depoliticizing. The script places the guest in the position of an "I-witness" in the sense employed by Clifford Geertz.[73] By using his or her experience ("I was there, I saw it happen") to testify to the reality of the experience, the range of imaginings is limited to the alternatives posed by **Shakaland**. The **Shakaland** vision of reality is further entrenched and made difficult to challenge because the structure of the experience ensures that

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[72] Weekend Getaway, October, 1989, p.75.

[73] Clifford Geertz, Works and Lives: the anthropologist as author, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1988.

the visitor takes responsibility for the act of imagining, and thereby makes the visitor complicit in **Shakaland**'s vision of the future.

As the most realistic representation of Shakan times, **Shakaland** enjoys a powerful visual monopoly over representations of the period, and it is likely to influence museum curators, film makers and, indeed, historians in any future attempts to envision precolonial times. As such, it has successfully constituted itself as a new repository of knowledge and functions to blur the boundaries of public and institutional history, high and popular culture. It is thus a powerful form of iconic knowledge. To understand the past, one must have an image of it, of the period. Where there are no photographs and so few drawings or other contemporary visual materials, reconstructions dominate. The iconic knowledge offered through **Shakaland** in this context is absolute and complements personal experience.

Shakaland has become a site for the production of both history and social ideas. Yet, because it promotes itself as fake, as a fantasy experience, the ideas which it advances so successfully disguise their political potency and seep unchallenged into popular consciousness. While the **Shakaland** reconstructions are executed with absolute fidelity to reality, yet openly admitting their artifice, the script covertly excludes and suppresses other more uncomfortable realities. The "real Zulu," like the "real goat," is defined by grand gestures of imposture. Visitors to **Shakaland** thus place their faith in a double fake.

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