Indigenous Cultural Bodies in Tourism: An Analysis of Local 'Audience' Perception of Global Tourist Consumers

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ABSTRACT The paper approaches cultural heritage tourism as an artefact of (cultural) globalisation and global "flows" (Urry 2007). The premise is that markets of (constructed) cultural 'heritage' and 'cultural bodies' rooted in specific 'localness', can be seen as being increasingly catered for within global cultural flows and transnational movements of tourists, with cultural commodities such as the 'Zulu dance' narratives and 'Zulu' bodies positioned to meet tourist expectations. Methodologically, the paper draws on ethnographic data generated from unstructured interviews and focus groups, and probes the *production* of locality and people through an analysis of the perceptions of a sample group of Black Africans towards the Zulu dance narrative that contrives to make African, in this case Zulu-*ness* as the emphatic "specificity" or condition "for intercultural participation" in tourism encounters (van Binsbergen 2003: 400). The paper examines local perception of the Zulu dance and the female dancers, probing how this category of local 'audience' perceives the positioning of dance and dancers, as items of *local heritage* and *indigeneity* for consumption within global(ized) tourism. The paper shows that an analysis of the data from the sample group reveals that local Zulu-speaking individuals believe that a strong marketing matrix contrives to sell a product of *Zulu,* that is *more* about meeting a global demand, than about showcasing what and *who* the 'Zulu' is.

INTRODUCTION

Markets of (constructed) cultural 'heritage' and 'cultural bodies' rooted in specific 'localness', can be seen as being increasingly catered for within global cultural flows and trans-national movements of tourists, with cultural commodities such as Zulu dance narratives and Zulu bodies positioned to meet tourist expectations. The paper approaches cultural heritage tourism as an artefact of (cultural) globalisation and global "flows" (Urry 2007). The paper draws on ethnographic data generated methodologically from unstructured interviews and focus groups, and probes the production of locality and people through an analysis of the perceptions of Black Africans towards the Zulu dance narrative that contrives to make African, in this case Zulu-*ness* as the emphatic "specificity" or condition "for intercultural participation" in tourism encounters (van Binsbergen 2003: 400). The paper examines local perception of the Zulu dance and the female dancers, probing how this category of local 'audience' perceives the positioning of dance and dancers, as items of *local heritage* and *indigeneity* for consumption within global(ized) tourism.

The Global(ised) Movement of Tourism

The increased interest in global forces and flows has pushed notions of the local more than ever to the forefront of scholarly analyses (Salazar 2005: 628). Local(e) and 'local heritage' have found consumer markets in global cultural flows and transnational movements of tourists, with popular local cultural commodities such as Zulu dance narratives and Zulu bodies positioned to meet tourist expectations. These are in turn perceived as having particular implications for both the indigenous heritage, as well as *people* being consumed. The argument is that 'place' and 'people' is "produced and couched in tourist image(s)" which affect, "how they are consumed" or in this instance, perceived as being consumed (Cornelissen 2005: 677) within a world whose contours and edges are rapidly shrinking under global processes that collapse space and time. Supraterritoriality (Scholte 2000: 3) is a reference to the spawning and spread of social spaces in which borders and locations have become relatively irrelevant in a world rapidly shrinking and fast becoming a 'single place' (van Ree 2003). For the contemporary global condition is anything but inertial, and is rather one of heightened move-

ment, flows and travel through permeable borders and boundaries that positions us in various contexts, in varying degrees, as mobile, global subjects (Naidu 2008), either as tourists travelling, or tourees being travelled to. Numerous new theories of transnational movements have arisen in an attempt to explain the changing nature of human flows as people traverse 'markets of movement' that allow them to increasingly transcend borders, and facilitate increasingly more temporary and more transient relations (Mcauliffe 2007: 311) with places and with other people.

Globalisation has spawned a vast array of fashionable and sometimes competing discourses in sociological, economic, political science et al. disciplines, as exactly *how* to define what it may be. This paper is concerned with cultural globalisation and the implications for the cultural communities caught in the so called globalising processes. Smart and Smart (2003: 274) speak of globalisation as the stretching and deepening of social relations across national borders and vast distances so that activities may be influenced by events at these distances, and where there is an "awareness of the globe as a perceivable whole". According to Castles (2001: 23), the cross-border flows and networks of movements of both commodities and people across the globe make up the discernable face of globalization. This paper understands international tourism as an illustration of tourist transnational movement, where a certain degree of *shrinkage*, through super efficient intercontinental travel, allows for global visitors to enter and move through transnational cultural borders porously and happily, with the ubiquitous camera in hand.

Conceptually, the notion of what van der Veer refers to as "death of distance" (2004: 4), can perhaps be seen as sharing kinship with notions of 'global village', 'global economy' and 'global culture' within the larger matrix of the multiple processes of globalisation that appear to bring the various corners of the world in closer (for some anyway) encounters with each other. However, a closer look at the various conceptual constructions that accrete to 'globalisation' reveals multiple ruptures and asymmetric processes. For the oft spoken notions of 'sense of interconnectedness' or 'awareness of the globe as a perceivable whole', supposedly heralded by globalisation, is only true for one

half of the structural unit of host-tourist. It is valid for the tourist-traveller who leaves his or her homeland aware of 'others' *out there* who *can* be inter-culturally encountered. *Knowledge of* and *travel to* the 'other cultures' has been most discernibly governed by extremely uneven and potholed processes of economic and political power between the developed countries and the so called developing countries. This travel and encounter, for most short term international tourists, is more often than not within the constructed experience of tourist products, such as the Zulu dance narrative. For the host or touree, if they are the dancers in the Zulu cultural dance, there is very little, or possibly no awareness of the 'perceivable whole of the globe'. Nor will they ever as local (indigenous) Zulu dancers, except in the (very unlikely) event of being part of a performing troupe travelling abroad, be able to porously move across international borders and engage in similar tourist transactions of gazing upon the cultural heritage of the 'other'.

Tourists signal their motivations and behaviour through how they opt to spend their currency, which the industry has been quick to catalogue. Tourists are also extremely visual (see, Urry 1990; Bruner 2005) and their quintessential emblem, the camera, betrays their real interest (van Beek 2003: 275). Summarised below from Rogerson and Visser, is a listing of a kind of generic itinerary of what tour operators working with travel in South Africa, refer to as the classic tour:

Tourists typically arrive at Johannesburg airport where they visit Gauteng's urban attractions such the Apartheid Museum, Gold Reef City etc. The tour then moves to Mpumalanga, Kruger National Park, Zululand and Durban. In the city of Durban the beach and a cultural village are visited. 'From there Port Elizabeth' Knysna and Plettenberg Bay are the main focal points. Thereafter, it's Oudtshoorn and Cape Town (Rogerson and Visser is 2006: 208).

Rogerson and Visser contend that, while the South African tourism system is portrayed as consisting largely of nature-based tourism products, urban places, and hence *urban tourism*, also play an important role in the visits of international tourists to South Africa". One adds that, many experiences of the 'traditional' Zulu dance narrative, are encountered (by tourists) in urban spaces such as cultural 'villages', or entertainment and leisure venues.

So-called *cultural villages* (depicting 'Zulu' culture) in KwaZulu Natal have a long genealogy, KwaBhekithunga in 1960s, followed by Thandanai, Simunye, Phezulu, Dumazulu, Izintaba and the Zulu resort/theme park Shakaland. Shakaland, (also one of my research sites) is popular with tourists who opt for the longer 'Zulu cultural experience' and possibly overnight stay in the 'bush' themed Protea Hotel. However, for the large number of tourists who are on a classic tour described above, the cultural village of Phezulu in the picturesque Valley of a Thousand Hills is the main point of call. Zulu dance narratives are also situated in urban city hotel spaces and urban adventure centres such as Ushaka as part of the entertainment package for visual consumption. The 'Zulu dance' in these instances is very much a (global) product positioned for foreign tourists and falls under the tourist gaze (Urry 1990). Many local South Africans of course 'see' the dance, and local South Africans who identify themselves and their 'culture and tradition' as *Zulu,* are the 'bodies' that perform the dance for tourists.

METHODOLOGY

Sengupta rightly points out that apart from some impressionistic views on cultural aspects, very "little is known empirically about the social implications of globalisation" (2001: 3143). He asserts that for an empirical study of globalisation to be strong, it is compelled to be grounded on the impact on various aspects of human life. While this is not an extensive empirical study, it is hoped to be able to contribute to further understanding the cultural aspects of globalisation in the context of cultural heritage tourism. Ethnography at a micro-sociological level or level of the *person* is considered a vital window into understanding macro level phenomena such as the various processes of globalisation, and their impact on people. As Appadurai puts it, ethnography is tasked with determining "the nature of locality as lived experience, in a globalized, deterritorialized world" (1996: 196).

I have probed elsewhere, how the women, as performers in the constructed dance, erect counter-narratives that attempt to resist being fully smothered in the potentially totalising tourist gaze. This paper looks at the perceptions of the non performing local African 'audience' towards the dance. This segment of the audience is a vital population and window able to offer critical reflection, as a large (50 percent) percentage are themselves *isi*-Zulu-speaking, and all are at a potentially decisive juncture in their lives and engaged in constructing their own exegetical readings of *African* and *Zulu* heritage.

The data were generated over a four-month period in 2008 through semi-structured interviews with a core population of 94 randomly selected African participants as well as a secondary source of focus groups. The 94 participants comprised an equal number of male and female participants and 50 percent of the male and female informants identified themselves as being 'Zulu', and *isi*Zulu-speaking, while the other half were representative of various other linguistic groups. These were all young university going students drawn from across three campuses of UKZN or the University of KwaZulu Natal. This 'filtered' sample of young university students was thought to be important, as the study assumed that this particular population of informants would have a greater (especially the *isi*Zulu-speaking individuals) familiarity with the Zulu dance, as it features as part of the cultural make-up of people who identify themselves as being Zulu. It was also assumed that this category of student participants were familiar with some of the critical issues around contested notions such as *culture* and *heritage,* and how these notions related to them. It was felt that it was important to probe how this category of 'locals', who were 'more on the inside', relatively speaking, perceived the Zulu dance performed for international tourists, *and as a cultural product in tourism.* There is an awareness of course that the so called *inside* is consistently on the move, fluidly shifting as the participants each possessed their unique individual lenses, that positioned them at various points, refracting their perceptions of the dance through their own standpoints, as 'urban Zulu' or 'modern Zulu' or 'traditional *and* modern African', or 'proudly African', self-adopted branding markers that they ascribed to themselves, and which surfaced in the interviews. The interviews revealed that the participants were on the threshold of formulating and exercising their own identities as young Africans in a rapidly globalising world where different groups of 'Africans' are dissimilarly positioned within the processes of cultural globalisation. These potholed processes allow 'culture' and 'heritage' to be both *preserved* in specified contexts, as well as *commodified* in others.

South Africa's international tourist market consists of two main segments, those from other parts of the Africa, and the international arrivals. While the former is by far the larger (comprising three-quarters of all international arrivals), the travel and spending patterns of the latter means that it is therefore a more lucrative segment. Consequentially, overseas tourists with international currencies, according to Cornelissen (2005: 680), are the focus of South Africa's international marketing campaigns. The study thus sought to assemble a broad profile of African perceptions towards indigeneity and the Zulu cultural dance and Zulu cultural bodies, as they come to be commodified in international cultural heritage tourism.

The 94 informants who were interviewed regarding cultural heritage and tourism were filtered into four streams: African Zulu male, African Zulu female, African male other, African female other, the 'other' in this context references to linguistic-cultural groups other than Zulu. Numerous questions were asked around the informants' perception probing various material and cultural elements of the dance and female performers in terms of their attire, assumptions about how the dance po-sitioned in tourism was experienced by the women, as well as their opinion of the branding matrix constructed around the cultural dance. However, for the purposes of this paper, three major overlapping thematic issues were assembled for scrutiny. These themes are seen to organically bleed into each other in terms of the overlapping issues that are problematised. Because these three issues are closely intertwined, the organization of the material reflects a matter of emphasis, and not a strict partitioning;

- Perception of Zulu dance in tourism as an expression of 'local' heritage and identity embedded in indigenous locale
- Perception of the positioning of the female Zulu dancers in tourism as 'cultural bodies'
- Their understanding of the Zulu dance as a commodity for foreign tourism consumption.

FINDINGS (MANUFACTURING INDIGENEITY)

Almost all the Zulu participants felt very strongly that it was indeed Zulu heritage that was communicated in the dance for tourists. From the group of African (non-Zulu) male and female informants, about 40 percent of the par-

ticipants communicated that the dance was "African", and "a symbol of African culture". Some informants pointed to attributes of attire stating that "African skins are synonymous to African culture", or "all the costumes are actually African". Other informants alluded to the elements of movement in asserting their opinion that the dance was "more African, than just Zulu". The informants maintained that the "dance was African because it relates to other African cultures", with one participant sharing that it was "African heritage because when you see a Zulu person dancing, you identify them as African", with another commenting that, "its African heritage, because all African cultures have things in common with the Zulu culture". The majority of the other linguistic groups however, and certainly the Zulu participants, were very clear that the dance narrative was specifically Zulu in form and material content, and that it was the *Zulu* heritage that was positioned for tourism in this instance. They pointed to what they perceived and read as the Zulu specificities, encoded in dress, dance style and movements.

The term indigenous is an "ecodeterminant" for Masolo (2003: 22) and is used in defining the origin of items or persons in relation to how their belonging to a place is characterized. While it may not appear of critical importance, even to the participants, whether the dance was perceived as Zulu or African, it was of importance to them *whether* Zulu or African heritage was actually being communicated. However, both the Zulu and other linguistic groups pointed out that whether "more African" or "more Zulu" heritage and identity was attempted at being shared with the tourist, *neither* identity or cultural heritage, of Zulu or African could be adequately communicated to the tourist in the "quickie" experience designed in the dance. "Zulu culture is too intense for people to learn anything about Zulu or African heritage this way" said one participant. Many participants shared similar sentiments to, "maybe the tourist will know less about us and our heritage if they see it like this ... and the dance is too short... with less feeling ... *really* not like how it is done at our celebrations". Some participants shared, "tourists see this and think this is who we are, always in skins and stuff" and "*they* seem to enjoy seeing us Africans from Africa like this".

While the Zulu participants perceived the dance as being spatially linked to the 'place' KwaZulu Natal and the indigeneity of Zulu-ness,

most of the non-Zulu African participants felt that the locale of KwaZulu Natal and the identity and heritage of *specifically Zulu*, was also effectively part of the production of tourist machinery, with many in this category claiming that marketing the province as kingdom of the Zulus mutes other African identities, saying that "this does not acknowledge the other Africans". Recent anthropological and sociological scholarship on tourism shows that the (mobile and global) tourist gaze has led to a vast production and consumption of regions (see, Pi-Sunyer et al. 1999; Torres and Momsen 2005), changing how we understand landscapes, region, and supposed alterities. 'African Experiences' at places like Phezulu can in turn be seen as being instrumental in further producing a region i.e. KwaZulu-Natal that is visually associated in the tourist imaginary, as 'Zulu' (Naidu 2009).

The noted anthropologist and intercultural philosopher Wim van Binsbergen (2003: 400) states that from the perspective of movement, "things African dissolve as a ruffle amidst many others within the great flow of world culture and world history" but continues that *movement* also lays stress on the *construction* and *appearance* of identity at local and national levels. The latter perspective, Van Binbergen claims, contrives to make African identity as the "emphatic politicised condition" for intercontinental and intercultural participation (Binsbergen 2003: 400). This is certainly the case of Zulu cultural tourism in the KZN province (see, Hayward 2007; Witz el al. 2005).

There appears a bizarre contradiction in this kind of tourist intercultural participation, where 'African' and 'Zulu' is muted and made invisible while at the same time *African* and *Zulu* is reconstructed and made visible. But it is reconstructed within selective imagery and symbols (see Naidu 2009), and the performers in products like the dance, perform certain aspects of indigeneity. These are the symbols and images of African that the international tourist appears familiar with, and seems to want reinforced or vindicated in their experience of, and encounter with Africa and African people. As an earlier comment by a participant shared, "tourists see this and think this is who we are, always in skins and stuff" and "*they* seem to enjoy seeing us Africans from Africa like this". Other informants also pointed out that the tourists come thinking "they know what Zulus must look like",

and "they see all these postcards of Africans wearing beads". In the context of tourism, the reconstruction of identity as Lafant et al. (1995: 36) state "begins with the gaze of the foreigner acting as a kind of reference point and guarantor of identity".

Hitchcock (1999) maintains that a spectrum of studies (Hitchcock 1990; Grünewald 2003) have challenged the notion of essentialized primordial 'ethnicity'. Sociological and ethnographic work throughout much of pre-colonial Africa also reveals that ethnic identity was shifting and fluid. Ethnicity emerges as a process rather than a fixed entity. However, cultural heritage tourism in the province chooses to offer up Zulu ethnicity as a fixed entity, with fixed borders, which the informants seemed to feel was not so much, *which,* they were but *what* the tourists wanted to see.

Sengupta (2001: 3140) argues that globalisation is also a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding. While the non-Zulu participants did not use the word recede, their sentiments indicated an experience of distanciation in how they felt "their culture" was "on show for international tourists", which was experienced as being removed from themselves as African people. Thus, while cultural globalisation might well work to draw the corners of the world closer together, these processes are uneven and do not necessarily bring all people together. Cornelissen argues trenchantly that:

It is the contrivance of a particular representation of a destination by agents/officials/marketers; it draws on existing social and cultural elements within the destination to develop a place identity, but, importantly, much of it also depends on the fashioning of new image(s) and narratives and the use of desire-instilling myth(s) to draw people to a destination (2005: 676).

Particular packages of cultural codes have been acknowledged (Schroeder 2005) as influences on consumer's relationships with advertising and with brands. For the consumer, it is important to, *order and consume the right product,* and within the realm of tourism consumption, this is perhaps especially true. Conversations with some of the international tourists show that they are very clear about what they

would like to see. Although this category of informants are not the focus of this particular study, casual conversations reveal that they were attracted to "Zulu warrior imagery", exotic "indigenous costumes of skin" and images of "Zulu beaded women", as well as sounds of the "African drum" and the "vibrant movements". *Zulu* was a word they used frequently in their reference to wanting to have an African cultural encounter "when in Durban".

The increasing global importance of cultural heritage and the ever-expanding scope of the term, thus introduces increasingly knotty issues concerning the *nature* of cultural heritage (Blake 2000: 63) and the *construction* of cultural identity that surrounds notions of culture and cultural heritage. Sengupta says of globalisation, that it (globalisation) is akin to a kind of culturisation of social life, maintaining that it is the realm of *culture* rather than economics or politics which is potentially able to more astutely define the modes of globalisation. For 'maintaining identity' while participating in the world of tourism has led to the phenomenon of "selling" the "cultural image" (Ballengee-Morris 2002: 236) or cultural bodies in tourism. The non-economic or socio-cultural domains of globalisation thus appear more complex than the economic counterpart and the organisational clusters of world capitalism and industrialisation (Sengupta 2001: 3139/3140) feed the global tourist network. They also produce a kind of *distanciation*, the inverse of 'shrinkage' of world distances as far as certain cultural communities in the South, and their identities are concerned. A social constructivist perspective facilitates an understanding that 'identity' continually creates itself through narratives that include that of the tourists' who are woven into these narratives. According to Freedman and Combes (1996), social constructivism allows us to understand the manner in which identities come to be created, institutionalized and as in the case of cultural tourism, inserted back into 'tradition' and 'heritage'. The identity of 'Zulu woman' emerges as the product of social encounters, conceived in this context as between tourist and host (see Naidu 2009).

Consuming African Indigeneity

There exists an additional complexity in interpreting the core concepts of 'cultural heri-

tage'. The symbolic relationship of cultural heritage to 'culture' in its widest sense is seen as being essential to understanding the *nature* of cultural heritage (Blake 2000: 68). The identification of cultural heritage is based on an active and articulated choice and it is political as to which elements of the broader culture (of society) are deemed worthy of preserving or museifying as an 'inheritance' for the future. It is this role of cultural heritage which lends its powerful political dimension since the decision as to what is deemed worthy of protection and preservation is generally made on a national level (Blake 2000: 69). Echtner and Prasad (2003: 66, see also Stronza 2004) note that the primary targets of marketing efforts are located in the First World, as the developed countries are the main generators or producers of tourists. 'Zulu' and 'Zulu heritage' and particularly the Zulu dance, emerge as products that have found a demand in global markets. Most foreign tourists that were approached confirmed in conversations that they were attracted to images of 'Shaka Zulu' and the iconic image of the 'Zulu Warrior' in South Africa, and that they felt a sense of visual familiarity "with Zulu".

Within the province of KwaZulu Natal and in the context of African cultural heritage, it appears that the Zulu and Zulu heritage is the indigenous African identity and heritage that is privileged in tourism, and as *the* African cultural tourism product. Historically, both popular media and political constructions of 'Zulu' and around 'Zulu' and 'Zulu people' have identified with indigenous locale as KwaZulu Natal, as the largest concentration of people who identify themselves as being Zulu, live in the province. However, the privileging of these particular indigenous identities and cultural heritage has perhaps more to do with commercial and economic transactions and less about the people. The reality of growing global interconnectedness opens up the issue of production of local meanings, images and representations (Appadurai 1996). In other words, the socio-cultural impact of globalization first and foremost comes out of the transformation of localities themselves.

The visual consumption of place has long been recognised as a key aspect of tourism which Urry (1990) most cogently unpacked in his formulation of the 'tourist gaze'. According to Urry the way in which people travel through a

destination is highly structured. More importantly, the 'tourist gaze', the way in which people view the places and people they visit is 'socially organised and systematised' (Cornelissen 2005: 678). In cultural heritage tourism the image of the Zulu male, and as in the focus of this paper, the image of beaded Zulu female, has gained immense traffic and currency among international tourists through their familiarity with postcard imagery and tour operators' brochures. MacCannell (1976) argued that the search for novel experiences and cultural 'authenticity' constitutes a key motivation for travel to developing countries. This means that, to satisfy tourists' demands, host culture comes to be performed or 'staged'. Often, according to MacCannell (1973) this leads to a loss of identity in the process of being *consumed* in tourism.

Mathers and Landau assert that tourism is generally seen as force for transformation. They point to the press release for the 2004 Tourism Indaba which states;

The real value of tourism goes well beyond concepts like revenue, turnover, and occupancy rates – *the greatest value of tourism lies in its power to bring people together and to uplift communities*. This *unifying force* is most visible in the way that tourism *draws people across great geographical distances*, but tourism crosses more than just physical boundaries, *it draws people together* within countries like South Africa, *across the borders of the mind* (Aucamp 2004 cited in Mathers and Landau 2007: 526 italics mine).

Mathers and Landau (2007: 526) in which this excerpt is cited, refer to this as a vein of optimism, which is but hollow at best. The crucial issue is that far from being *about* people or perhaps even the locale of place, destination or tourist imaging, is also fundamentally a social and political issue.

Consuming Female African Cultural Bodies

One of the issues probed with the informants was the positioning of the female Zulu dancers in the dance. The intention was to 'poke around' and query their perceptions of the construction of female 'cultural body'. There appeared to be diverse responses when the informants were asked how *they thought* the female Zulu performers, some of whom were bare-breasted, experienced being photographed by foreign international tourists. Some informants communicated that, as the women were "just expressing their culture", it was "okay for the women", and they felt that the women "did not mind". However, a large number of responses from *both male and female* and from the categories of both Zulu and non Zulu, expressed that this must necessarily "be awkward for the female performers" who had to in many instances submit to "having strange tourists put their arms around their necks", or have to smile next to "some strange guy so he can take a photo home of a native". From the cluster of responses from participants who felt that they saw no problem with the female dancers having to pose with the tourists, all of them articulated that "as long as this was done with the permission of the women" and "as long as the women did not mind".

However, the issue of *permission to consume* is far from straightforward. Who is meant to give the permission, is it the female performers themselves? Observations at cultural villages such as Phezulu in the Valley of a Thousand Hills, reveal that even though one of the Zulu performers steps forward with the invitation to (further and closer) consume with the lens of the camera, this invitation to the 'backstage' of the Zulu woman (or man) is very much part of the directed narrative, with the performers acting out the roles scripted for them within the tourist experience. And while almost all of my informants answered the related question, that "yes" the women "always look happy" while dancing, and that they were sure "that at least the women enjoyed dancing for tourists", dozens of sessions of participant observation at Phezulu Cultural Village and interactions with the women there paints another picture. None of the female performers here revealed any measure of dislike for their "job" as it was seen as legitimate work. The women also indicated *and* were observed as enjoying a good relationship with their employer. It was clear though, that they were able to 'switch on' facial expressions and bodily demeanour that sold them as thoroughly enjoying themselves in front of the tourists, who sought out this encounter with what they perceived as 'the African Zulu', and the 'culturally indigenous'. This, the performers confided, they managed to accomplish no matter how tired or bored they might have been, and was very much an expectation of their job.

This did not mean that they despised the act of dancing, but that the very sense of enjoyment they portrayed was also *performed*.

It is claimed that the inhabitants in the so-called Third World countries spatially organised in the South, are usually more exposed to the tourist gaze. In particular contexts the locals are claimed as managing to limit the effect of the all-seeing eye by making the tourists believe that the false backstage seen, is actually authentic (MacCannell 1973; Urry 1990). In other instances the locals are said to conform to the tourists' stereotypes and "to mirror what the tourists want", and play out the "Western imaginary" (Maoz 2006). The performance of 'enjoyment' in the Zulu dance enacted for the tourists is important in this context. It is crucial for a theatre group to take literally, the industry saying that the 'show must go on' and put on the best performance for the paying audience. However, the dance narrative constructed in tourism is meant to showcase a 'slice of Zulu life' and 'African lifestyle'. The fact that the performers are at some level compelled to adopt a smiling joyous disposition with every dance is an issue that invites our attention. This is compounded by the fact that these dances at venues like Phezulu Cultural Village occur four times a day and seven days a week. This reveals an ongoing consumption of 'culture' and 'cultural bodies' in the context of tourism and an ongoing performance of constructed indigenous African and Zulu identity by the dancers.

CONCLUSION: CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM, PROMOTING 'CULTURE' OR ERODING 'CULTURE'?

Tourism development, of which cultural tourism is one important limb, is claimed according to Rogerson and Visser (2004), as having been prioritised in the wake of the newly installed democratic processes and structures as part of South Africa's broader development frameworks. They assert that the past decade has witnessed a constant stream of new and enabling policy frameworks and strategy documents, as well as institutional support mechanisms, positioned to expand the tourism system (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism or DEAT, 2003, 2004, 2005). Tourism in the national economy was again profiled in the *Accelerated and Shared Growth-*

South Africa (Asgi-SA) development strategy document and given the sustained growth of international tourism over the last two decades, emerges as a reliable export product (Rogerson and Visser 2006: 199). This particular 'export product' is of course fairly unique in that it is not a product that is exported out of the country, rather the image and surrounding marketing matrix is exported which works to *import* the tourists into the country. Tourists 'importing' themselves into the country seek in heritage tourism, so called cultural authenticity, which the mediators are meant to find. But how does a tourist know what is culturally authentic asks Ballengee-Morris. Is it how items are packaged and labelled? How much truth is in the text? Who would know what the truth is? (2002: 242). Notions of any kind of cultural purity, or cultural discreteness are inherently problematic, and as Meskell (2005: 75) tells us, much boundary crossing, boundary blurring, or boundary shifting is always operative within and between cultures. Additionally individuals may choose to continue or subvert their cultural traditions.

One such example is that, in the search for the novel and 'authentic' on the part of the tourist however, and the positioning of the real and authentic on the part of tourist venue managers and tour operators, bare-breasted females (culturally assumed to be virgins) are often seen performing the Zulu dance for the tourists. The rationale on the part of the tour managers in charge of cultural villages is that this is deemed culturally acceptable and indeed a part of Zulu culture. The responses of the participants when questioned about the tourists' consumption of female 'cultural' bodies in the dance narrative revealed that this issue of *what is cultural,* and *for whom,* is complex and tiered with layered understandings.

There appeared variegated responses across the four streams of informants, male and female, Zulu and non-Zulu. Most informants across these streams understood that 'bare-chested' was culturally associated with 'being a virgin'. Other informants referred to the observation that "this was how it was in the past". Many of the informants felt that the young female performers who danced bare-chested for the tourists "must be okay with it"; with one informant asking "why else would they do it?" Many referenced their particular exegete of 'bare-

chest' to the notion of 'culture', or 'tradition' asserting that it was "their [the female performers'] culture".

However, in response to questions about how they perceived the international tourists *consumed* these cultural bodies, many admitted that they felt that the male tourists would experience not just a cultural, but an erotic element in the dance. While some of the Zulu and non-Zulu males pointed out that seeing the performers' breasts "was cultural" and certainly "not sexual" for them, other male informants from across the cultural-linguistic groups admitted that yes they "were male" and could not avoid the sexual connotation attached to "seeing breasts".

Many informants felt that there was nothing wrong with the women dancing topless for the tourists and they "need not be ashamed" or embarrassed about their culture" and are "just maintaining the tradition" and "keeping it alive". As a counterpoint, an equally large percentage (almost 50 percent) of male and female participants felt strongly that, positioning the female performers in this manner "was demeaning to the women, or "rude to them", and other participants used the phrase, "making them [the women] cheap".

All the participants who indicated that they did not see anything wrong with the women performing bare-chested were in concert that "as long as the women did not mind". This group also felt that it was "fine" for the tourists to pose with the topless women for the inevitable souvenir photograph, provided "permission was obtained from the women" and "provided the women did not mind". However, both the male and female informants felt that the photographs were to be used for *cultural* and not any other subversive purposes. Once refracted through the photographic lens though, the women have no control over how these digital images travel back to the host lands. And while most images would be innocently enough assembled into tourist travel albums, the responses from the informants indicate their awareness that there are reasons *other* than cultural, for photographing topless young women. The masculine gaze further refracted through the camera lens is associated with the power that tourists activate against locals by gazing at them. It is usually constructed by Western society and especially by the media and by tourists' texts that route and direct the gaze (Maoz 2006). For of understandable concern within what is termed *heritage*, is also the issue of permission to gaze upon (Urry 1990) and to consume (Lowenthal 1985) as well as exactly *what* is on offer to be (visually and otherwise) consumed. The pleasure of looking according to Freud derives from the sexual drive, and voyeurism is linked with dominant-submissive behaviours. The gaze is situated somewhere between the eye and what is seen, and "the function of the gaze is not the same as that of the eye, since the gaze is pre-existent to the eye" (Johnson 1996: 9). Looking involves not simply the act of seeing, but also translating, interpreting (Coorlawala 1996: 19) and are powers and prerogatives that lie with the tourist-consumers.

Within the flows of cultural heritage tourism, as conceived in African tourist encounters, 'disciplined' (a la Foucault 1976, 1979) 'cultural bodies' are positioned in particular transactions in venues labelled 'cultural villages' to meet the demands of global tourism "flows" (Urry 2007). Various managers of cultural heritage tourism 'discipline' certain cultural practices of living cultures such as movement, dance and cultural attire before placing them on the tourist map, for tourist consumption. Such 'disciplining' is effected through organizing the sequence of events in the encounter, by a process of including/excluding and centering/decentring aspects of the dance narrative and symbols and items of clothing and jewellery that the tourist has familiarity with through the marketing matrix that has already reached them in some form or other.

As far as the economic and developmental aims for tourism in South Africa is concerned, the government is only one set of agents in an interwoven international tourism production system (Cornelissen 2005; van Beek 2003) with the dominant players in African tourism being the so called culture-mediators, in the guise of the tour operators. Tourists visiting Africa and South Africa, tend to rely on the arrangements made by these 'go-betweens' (van Beek 2003: 253; see also Witz et al. 2005). This is what is referred to as the 'environmental bubble' meant to cushion the reality of the encounter, and assist the tourists meet 'Africa' without fully experiencing it. The 'bubble' filters and *produces* information about the other party in the encounter (van Beek 2003: 254/5). The 'Zulu

woman' thus emerges as the (safe) 'product' of social encounters, conceived in this context as between tourist and host.

The reality of tourism is thus quite at variance with the Utopian dream of profit and sustainable development without exploitation, with the tourism industry showing huge 'leakage' where most benefits remain in the North, not the South (Beek 2003: 253). Tourist brochures perform as texts and are read and construed by tourists as showcasing South Africa and African cultural heritage. However, cultural villages and arts and crafts are often depicted as specific products for consumption. Cornelissen (2005: 688) argues that African people were less prominent in tourist brochures and Black, 'coloured' or Indian South Africans were generally portrayed as cultural products.

The nature and scope of present-day international tourism involves the flow of capital, finance, goods, knowledge and *humans* (Appadurai 1996 italics mine) as well as their indigenous cultural practices which have become fetished into static 'heritage', rather than dynamic 'culture'. Cultural heritage in this instance, is in danger of being subsumed into commodities or 'services' nourishing the flow of global tourism capital at the expense of itself going 'hungry'. Cohen points out that the reality is that the local people in tourism activities can be seen as engaging in participating in staging 'identity' as resource exchange for money, which "replaces one type of oppression with another, called poverty" (Erik Cohen 1996 cited in Ballengee-Morris: 238). Of obvious concern is the discernable unidirectional flow of cultural products from the South to the North, and with it human relations that come to be expressed in person-commodity terms (Ishemo 2004: 77).

One suggests that one way to begin to engage with the processes of allowing the people, or living cultures to *begin* to be aware that there *are* terms that may be negotiated, is to have more grounded research that looks at how the people view themselves in tourism, and what they wish to represent about themselves to tourists. Such participatory research, grounded with the local people who are in a sense, *consumed* in tourism activities allows research to move out of a so called 'ivory tower' location and into the space of meaningful dialogue with the various categories of participants in cultural tourism.

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