# Pre-Colonial South Africa: The Ancestors who Paved the Way

# Agenda

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|---|---|
| **Opening** | Reflection on the origins of modern humanity: Mother Africa & Ubuntu |
| **Introduction** | Indigenous South Africans: The Khoekhoe (or Khoi)  and San |
| **Long Histories** | The Khoi & San |
| **Indigenous Empire Building** | The Zulu Empire |
| **Closing** | Indigenous South African Art & Ubuntu |

For more info:
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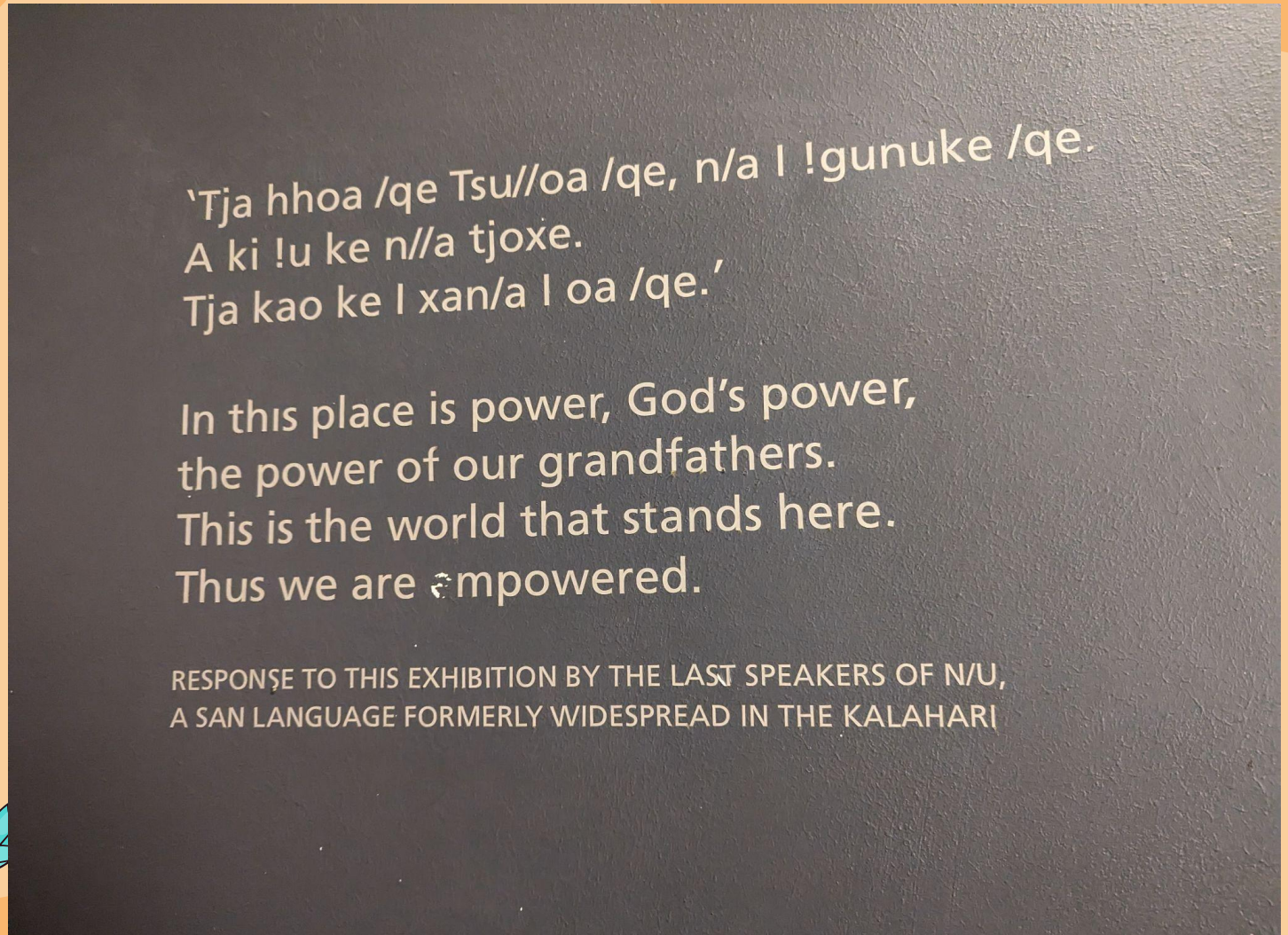
# Opening: Reflection on the origins of Modern Humanity

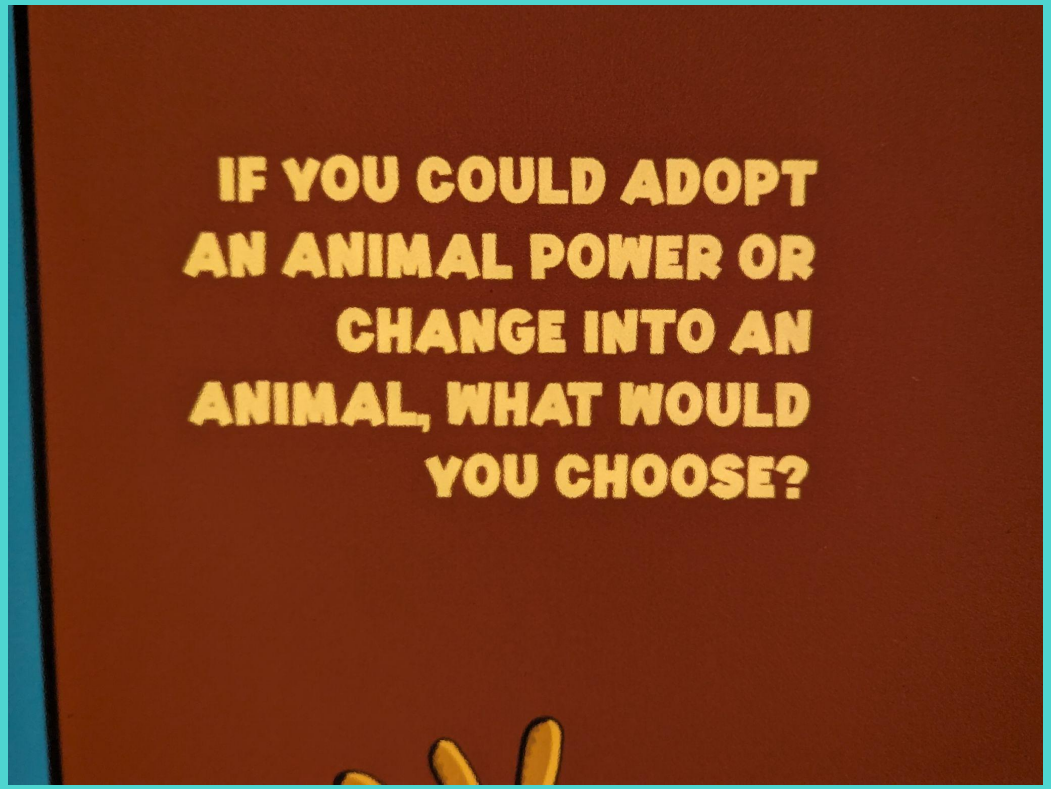
Choose one image, passage or question from the following slides. Write a reflection in response to these questions:

1. Describe the image,explain what the passage means to you in your own words or answer the question from the slide.
2. Why did you choose the image, passage or question?

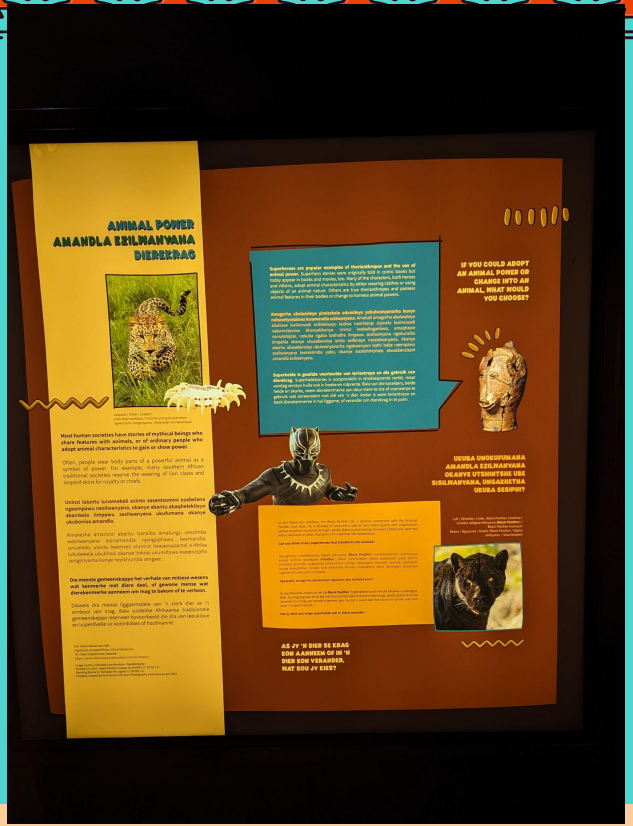
# All images were taken at the South African Museum in Cape Town:

Artist=Day Andrew
Title=Talking with the gods


‘Tja hhoa /qe Tsu//oa /qe, n/a ǂ !gunuke /qe.
A ki !u ke n//a tjoxe.
Tja kao ke ǂ xan/a ǂ oa /qe.’
In this place is power, God’s power,
the power of our grandfathers.
This is the world that stands here.
Thus we are empowered.
RESPONSE TO THIS EXHIBITION BY THE LAST SPEAKERS OF N/U,
A SAN LANGUAGE FORMERLY WIDESPREAD IN THE KALAHARI

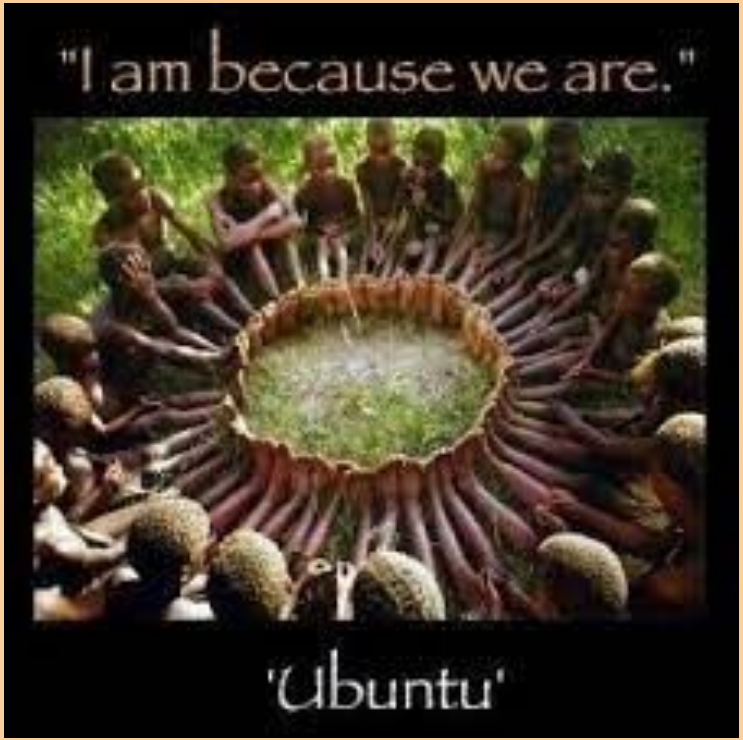

IF YOU COULD ADOPT
AN ANIMAL POWER OR
CHANGE INTO AN
ANIMAL, WHAT WOULD
YOU CHOOSE?

***Dogaloshi*** is the spiritual powers that come in different forms such as from animals or natural elements.




# Animal Power: Amandla Ezilwanyana

# Reflection Sharing & Ubuntu



# The Pillars of Ubuntu

Ubuntu equally values the individuals who make up the collective as well as the collective. It is a belief, a philosophy and a sacred practice based on these principles:

- We are defined by our compassion and kindness towards others
- We hold ourselves and one another accountable in humanistic ways
- We are connected not only to our communities, but also to our Ancestors, who are always present with and through us

# Indigenous Ways of Being: Collective Consciousness

## Ubuntu (indigenous South African)

It's not about you
It's not about me
It's about We
Working together as one

## In La'Kech (Mayan)

You are my other me.
If I do harm to you,
I do harm to myself.
If I love and respect you,
I love and respect myself.

# The Long Histories of Indigenous South Africans:

Key Points (Source: South African First Nations Have been Forgotten, October 19, 2018, fp,https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/19/south-africas-first-nations-have-been-forgotten-apartheid-khoisan-indigenous-rights-land-reform/) :

- The Khoisan were the first inhabitants of southern Africa and one of the earliest distinct groups of Homo sapiens
- Even the word Khoisan is a foreign term, coined in the 1920s by a German anthropologist trying to describe multiple tribes—including the ***Khoikoi and San***—as a single ethno-linguistic group.
- Recent DNA research shows that, for tens of thousands of years, the *so-called Khoisan* were the **largest human population on the planet**. These days, those who identify as Khoisan are an ostracized minority, not just inside their country but also within the coloured community (in South Africa)
- In the **third to sixth centuries,** northern Bantu groups migrated into southern Africa from central Africa, establishing agricultural settlements and **displacing many of the traditionally hunter-gatherer Khoisan**.
- When the Europeans arrived—*1,000 years later*—the **Khoisan were the first to fight against them,** leading to a series of of 17th century wars between the Khoikoi and Dutch settlers.
- Their native resistance culminated in the 18th century in battles that came to be known as the Bushman Wars. Eventually, **smallpox d**ecimated the majority of the Khoisan population, making it easier for settlers to take their land and then force the natives to work on it.

# In Class Activity: The Long Future of Indigenous South Africans

Individually read the article: *Indigenous Peoples in South Africa* and answer the following questions:
https://www.iwgia.org/en/south-africa.html

1. What has South Africa voted in favor of, according to the article?
2. What are indigenous San and Khoekhoe peoples excercising?
3. What did the Law of Traditional Leadership and Khoisan Bill intend to do (it was voted down as deficient and invalid in 2023)?
4. What percentage of the South African population is comprised of indigenous peoples?

# The Zulu Kingdom: Apex of Pre-Colonial South African Empire, 1816-1828

Key Points:

- King Shaka Zulu with a council of largely women advisors formed the largest indigenous South African kingdom
- He took over neighboring tribes in order to create the Zulu empire
- The Zulu empire fought against the British Colonizers during the Anglo-Zulu War in 1879
- The Battle of Isandlwana was the Zulu empire's greatest victory in their fight against the British

Source: Lecture, Dr. Bheki Madela, June 21, 2023

# The Zulu Empire, Key Points continued

## Introduction

- Today: Largest and most influential tribe in South Africa
- Rise to power began with Bantu Migration (first millennium CE)
- Existed as one of many autonomous tribes in area
- Creation of empire began with leader Shaka Zulu
- Shaka formed military state - agricultural economy
- Structure provided base for expansion of empire

Picture 1
Map of South Africa and Zululand

Zulu Kingdom
KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
MPUMALANGA
SWAZILAND
MOZAMBIQUE
ELEPHANT COAST
FREE STATE
BATTLEFIELDS
ZULULAND
NORTH COAST
UKHAHLAMBA DRAKENSBERG
PIETERMARITZBURG & MIDLANDS
DURBAN
SOUTH COAST
EASTERN CAPE
EAST GRIQUALAND
LESOTHO
INDIAN OCEAN
HLUHLUWE-IMFOLOZI PARK
KWAZULU-NATAL
100 km (approx)
KEY:
National Road (Freeway)
Major Provincial Route
Rivers

# The Enduring Legacy of Zulu Nation

- 2016 was the 200th anniversary of Zulu Nation
- South Africa is currently divided into 9 provinces (e.g. similar to states in the U.S.)
- KwaZuluNatal the province of the Zulu nation, which encompasses a large portion of the original empire
- ***Ulimi nesiko kumaZulu*** (isiZulu and communal culture)

Source: Lecture, Dr. Bheki Madela, June 21, 2023

**Indigenous Artist & Instrument:** The uhadi bow (of the isiXhosa) is played by striking the string with a reed or thin stick while using the calabash to resonate the harmonics. The isiZulu equivalent is the umakhweyana

# Nomakrestu Xakakhatugaga, IsiXhosa Overtone Singer

# CLOSING

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/ozx64QYaDVg

Watch the video with myself and another 2023 Fulbright participant dancing to the collective chanting/singing with an indigenous artist.

- What do you notice/observe/hear/feel when you watch the video?
- How do you think it portrays ubuntu?

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