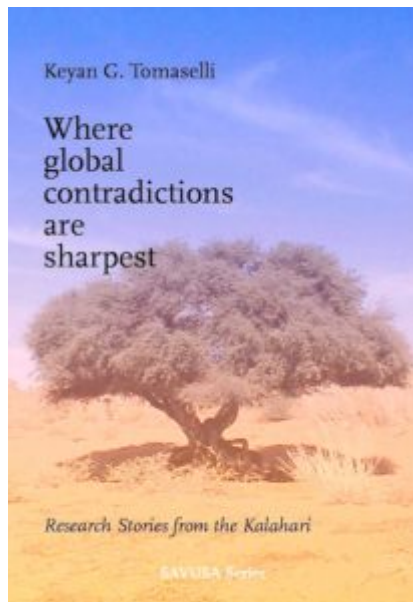


# Where Global Contradictions Are Sharpest ~ Research Stories From The Kalahari ~ Contents



The 'Bushmen' or 'San' of the Kalahari could well be called an iconographic people. Partly as a result of this, over the years abundant social research has been carried out among the San. *Keyan Tomaselli* and his research team from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa form part of that tradition; however, in this book Tomaselli is also able to reflect critically, and not without a touch of irony, on the way the San have been represented over the years. Hardly ever has there been a researcher who so uncompromisingly and aptly illustrates the many ethical contradictions in doing fieldwork among the

San, and at the same time manages to reconstruct and represent the actual fieldwork experience and the San people so vividly that you almost taste the dust of the Kalahari and smell the raucous world that is depicted.

## *Note on the Author*

Keyan G. Tomaselli is Professor in Culture, Communication and Media Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. He is a Fellow of the University and serves on the advisory board of !Kwa ttu - The San Cultural and Educational Centre. He is Old World book review editor of *Visual Anthropology*, and has published on visual anthropology in this and other publications such as *Appropriating images: The semiotics of visual representation* (Intervention Press, 1999). Other journals in which Tomaselli has published include: *Visual Studies*, *Cultural Studies*, *Journal of Film and Video*, *Research in African Literatures*, etc. He is published in translation in Italian, Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese and Arabic, amongst others. Tomaselli is editor-in-chief of *Critical Arts: A Journal of South-North Cultural and Media Studies*.

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Cover photograph: Frederik J Lange (Jnr). Taken between Witdraai and Welkom, Northern Cape, June 2005.

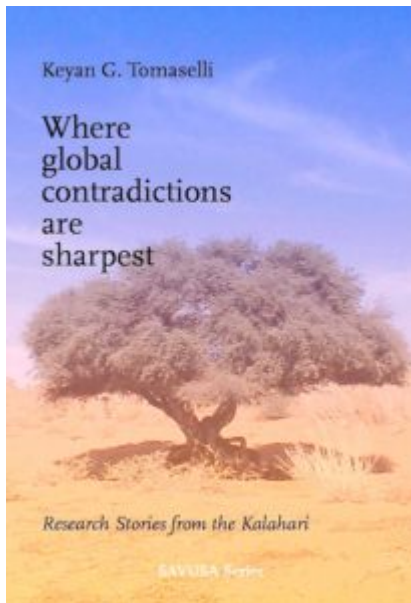
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# **Where Global Contradictions Are Sharpest ~ Acknowledgements, Acronyms, A Note On Pronunciation**



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*Keyan G. Tomaselli, August 2005*

## *Acronyms*

- CCMS Culture, Communication and Media Studies (University of KwaZulu-Natal) (Howard College Campus, Durban)
- CKGR Central Kalahari Game Reserve
- IGWIA International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs
- CPA Community Property Association (Based in Andriesvale)
- CRAM Cultural Resources Auditing and Management Project
- JFP Jesus Film Project (Based in Kimberly)
- LIFE Living in a Finite Environment Program
- NNDFN Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (Based in Windhoek)
- NNFC Nyae Nyae Farmers' Cooperative (Based in Baraka)
- SABC South African Broadcasting Corporation
- SASI South African San Institute (Based in Kimberley)
- SBB Safaris Botswana Bound (Based in Maun, operating in KD/1 Area)
- SI Survival International
- SIM Serving in Mission
- SACOD Southern African Communications for Development
- SWAA South West African Administration
- SWAPO South West African People's Organisation
- WIMSA Working Group for Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (Based in Windhoek, Namibia)

## *A Note on Pronunciation*

All !Kung and San languages have clicks, which are additional consonants. The most commonly used clicks are:

≠ Alveolar click made by sucking the tongue against the ridge behind the upper front teeth.

// Lateral click made at the side of the mouth.

! Palatal click made by clicking the tongue on the roof of the palate.

For further information on language see Dickens and Traill (1997); Dickens (1992); Barnard (1992: xix-xxii).

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# Where Global Contradictions Are Sharpest ~ Starting Off



*Map adapted from Willet et al.  
(2002)*

*Red sand dunes are set against an endless sky of indigo blue.  
At night the Milky Way envelops a seemingly untouched land.  
People who come here are changed forever  
(Molopo Lodge brochure).*

This book deals with three geographically discrete groups of people generally referred to as 'Bushmen' or 'San'. The controversial debates on naming are well known (Gordon 1990a) and need brief mention here. The politically correct terms are 'San' in South Africa and Namibia and, in Botswana, the official naming is 'Basarwa' (singular 'Mosarwa'). I will however use the clan names of the communities with which my students and I have been working, e.g., Ju/'hoansi (pronounced ju-twan-si), ≠Khomani and !Xoo. Often those who call themselves 'Bushmen' or 'Boesmanne', do so as a form of resistance against the politically correct externally imposed naming (Bregin and Kruiper 2004: 52-5). San is derived from a Nama word, meaning bandit (Barnard 1992: xxiv, 8; Hahn 1881: 3), while Saa means 'to pick things up' or forage. It is in this context that I will occasionally use the term Bushmen. Single quotes indicate where I am distancing

myself from such use.

The Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park spans both South Africa and Botswana. It features endless rolling dunes with shrubby vegetation and isolated tall savannah thorn trees. The semi-desert is interspersed with numerous pans, ranging from small to well over 50 kms in diameter. The communities with which we worked resided in three locations, Ngwatle in south central Botswana, Witdraai and Blinkwater in the Northern Cape, and the Nyae Nyae, Eastern Bushmanland, Namibia.

Ngwatle was a community of perhaps 100 plus displaced people in 1995, with over 184 in 2004. It is located in the controlled Hunting Area called the Kgalagadi District 1 (KD/1). KD/1 is 13,000 km squared and three villages within its boundary include Ngwatle, Ukwi and Ncaang. It has a total population of about 800. In 2001, the villagers told us that the number had risen to 200 plus, the majority being *inkomers* (newcomers/incomers) mostly of Kgalagadi origin. The !Xoo are the majority at Ngwatle during hard times, but sometimes become a minority in good periods of rain. Ngwatle is living on borrowed time: the villagers have been told to move to other settlements, as the area is reserved for wild animals. Their response is one of resistance, a refusal to move, and requests to publicize their plight.

Ngwatle consists of two main ethnic groups: The !Xoo and the Bakgalagadi, although the !Xoo typically build their shelters away from the Bakgalagadi. The Ngwatle Basarwa community comprises a mixture of Bakgalagadi and !Xoo who have defined themselves as Bushmen. This small group coalesced around two Afrikaans-speaking !Xoo brothers in the late 1980s (Simões 2001a).

The community is severely poverty-stricken and is serviced by a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), some state departments, and a safari company (Flyman 2001). 'Destitute rations' are delivered monthly to a third of the Ngwatle population. In July 2004, we watched as the district officials placed 66 rations of maize meal, sorghum, tea, cooking oil, etc. on a large tarpaulin on the sand, readied for distribution. The goods looked like a multi-coloured miniature magic city glistening in the fading sunlight. Those who qualified for these rations also received a monthly allowance of P55 [i] from the Department of Pensions. The community is supplied with one water tank that is filled approximately every two weeks by the government. The larger settlements are also provided with salt

water for their livestock. However, because Ngwatle is deemed too small, its villagers have little option but to share their water supply with domestic animals. Their main cash income is through craft sales to tourists, roadwork for the government and through various opportunities available via the Nqwaa Khobee Xeya Trust.**[ii]**

Two hundred kilometres south of Ngwatle, on the South African side of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, the Nama and Afrikaans-speaking <sup>1</sup>Khomani live in a variety of scattered settlements in the Northern Cape (1,400 kilometres from Durban). During the apartheid era, 'Bushmen' were classified as 'coloureds', and lived in harsh conditions. The violence and dislocation wrought by colonialism and apartheid resulted in the dispersion of the <sup>1</sup>Khomani, their language and their cultural practices. The lodging of a restitution land claim in August 1995 brought together about 200 adults. It was the first time that many of the surviving ≠Khomani (meaning 'large group') had come together as a community. This name was constituted to further the purposes of the land claim. Their diverse backgrounds, however, made it difficult for the <sup>1</sup>Khomani to form a cohesive community or clan identity, a contributing factor in conflict and division (cf. Robins *et al.* 2001: 26). The claimants were the ten families of the extended Kruiper clan who had been born in the area later declared the Gemsbok Park, from which they had been evicted in 1972.

The claim was granted in 1999 and culminated in a ceremony attended by the then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, and community leaders Dawid Kruiper and Petrus Vaalbooi. Many previously employed in a cultural tourism venture at the Kagga Kamma Game Park a thousand kilometres to the south, returned to the north. The previously scattered group of a few thousand people, few of whom were connected to the Kruipers, chose different paths following the claim. Some became pastoralists and farm sheep and goats (the Vaalbooi group); others moved into small towns in the area; and one small, self-declared, relatively alcohol-free group lived on a sand dune between April 2000 and May 2005, known as Blinkwater ('Sparkling Water'). The remainder, about eighty, try to live 'traditionally' on an inadequate tract of wilderness opposite a liquor store run by the Molopo Kalahari Lodge.**[iii]** This 'traditional' group has been - on paper at least - the recipient of huge amounts of development aid from both the state and international donors. Its members have been also employed in a variety of cultural villages and game parks in four different provinces. This community is



internationally well known in movies, TV-advertisements, photographic books and academic studies (White 1995; Buntman 1996a; Bester and Buntman 1999; Simões 2001a; Ellis 2000; Isaacson 2001; Weinberg 1997).

The extended Kruiper clan constitutes itself as 'traditionals'. The Kruipers seem to be much more embattled than their counterparts to their north in Botswana, or the pastoralists led by Vaalbooi. The Kruipers' encounter with modernity has had a negative impact on their social fabric. Sections of this community are often alcohol-driven, and at Witdraai, the gene pool of the 'traditional ≠Khomani' is further threatened, argues Roger Carter, **[iv]** by incestuous last grasp attempts to retain community, lineage and cultural cohesion (see also Bregin and Kruiper 2004: 106-7). AIDS, spread by unconventional sexual relations, suggested one of our informants during our July 2003 visit, will more than likely see the imminent demise of this community. Where deaths at Ngwatle occur through natural causes and illness, at Witdraai death by murder and domestic violence - often in public - is prevalent. Perpetrators were not held accountable by the police for these acts. In general the 'Bushmen' were ill treated by state agencies; indeed the police may have been part of the problem (*Special Assignment* 2004). This lack of attention to the needs of the community was rectified in 2004, through an inquiry launched by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). The inquiry concluded that despite the land restitution, the <sup>1</sup>Khomani lived in poverty and neglect. In addition, the conflict between the community and the local police was in need of a fundamental change, accompanied where possible by a change in police personnel, in order to restore positive relationships. Two policemen had been charged with the killing of Optel Rooi, and the court case resulting from the Commission's work was the talk of the area when we visited Witdraai in June 2005. It was via the Commission that the source of community divisions became clear. The original land claimants were encouraged to swell their ranks. Individuals not born in the Park were thus included, resulting in a challenge to Kruiper's authority and his traditional cultural objectives. The communal land managed by the CPA, in which the traditionals are a minority, resulted in Kruiper wanting to secede from the agreement (Ancer, 29 October, 2004).

Dependency characterises the Kruipers, but individual and communal agency was evident amongst the adjacent five family-community of Erin. **[v]** Individuals tend to migrate between a variety of Northern Cape and other locations, however. Witdraai and Erin resist the push towards pastoralism as indicated by the

*Westerse* ('Western') (pastoralist) constituency located a few kilometres away at Scotty's Fort where Vaalbooi resides. **[vi]** Where the Kruipers consider themselves 'special' - a status allegedly conferred upon them by donors, media professionals and the state - at Ngwatle, the !Xoo call themselves the 'undesirables', as the government would prefer that they move to better serviced settlements in the KD/1 area, such as Ukwi and Ncaang, which have clinics, schools, borehole supplied water and other amenities.

The Ju/'hoansi **[vii]** in Namibia are part of the broader San population scattered over large tracts of Southern Africa. 'Ju/'hoansi' translates to 'the real people', with about 12,000 living in Namibia and Botswana. It is the Ju/'hoansi which were studied and filmed by the Marshall Family Expeditions during the 1950s, resulting in the most continuous record of any people living anywhere at any time (cf. for example J. Marshall 1993; L. Marshall 1976; 1999; Marshall Thomas 1959; see also Wilmsen 1999). **[viii]** About 3,000 live in small communities in Nyae Nyae, where they have semi-control over their much reduced land area, now a conservancy. The rest live farther west or south in towns or cities with other cultural groups, or on farms.

Our visits to Ngwatle started in 1995. We began visiting the ≠Khomani in 1999 at Kagga Kamma, and Witdraai and Blinkwater in 2000. We also worked with the Ju/'hoansi in 1996, though a systematic analysis of the Marshall Family Film Archive started in 1991 (cf. Bishop 1993; Tomaselli 1999a; Cabezas 1993a).

The Ju/'hoansi coexist with herders and agriculturalists such as the Ovambo and the Herero. The Herero are Bantu-speaking and breed cattle to the south of the Ju/'hoan conservancy. Numbering about 100,000, the Herero have lived in the Namibia area for over 350 years. The Herero came under the colonial rule of Germany at the end of the 19th century. By 1904, a rebellious struggle between the Herero and the encroaching Germans lasted for three years. The conflict was a result of both the racist German attitudes as well as a cattle plague, called the *rinderpest*. Three-quarters of the Herero population was exterminated and the rest were forced to resettle in the mostly inhospitable portions of the Kalahari Desert (Holmes and Ford 2002) where they are locked in a land struggle with the Ju/'hoansi (see Chapters 5 and 6).

The individual actors in our story are mentioned below.

## *Different People, Different Communities*

≠ *Khomani*

### *Northern Cape*

*Belinda Kruiper* (Neé Matthee) - lived in Cape Town before working for the Parks Board in the then Kalahari Gemsbok Park, where she met the Kruiper family. She married Vetkat Kruiper, and lived on a rented sand dune, Blinkwater, six kilometres south of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. She worked for the South African San Institute (SASI), but left due to differences with management. Belinda started, but did not finish, her university studies in social work. Her role in the community is that of an organic intellectual. She promotes her husband's artwork (see Bregin and Kruiper 2004; Tomaselli 2003; 2006a).

*Vetkat Regopstaan Kruiper* Belinda's husband, and the younger half brother of Dawid Kruiper. A talented artist, his work has been exhibited and sold at a variety of museums since 2001 and was in 2004 exhibited at the United Nations. Family conflict resulted in their living at Blinkwater instead of one of the allocated farms. In 2005 he and Belinda moved to the nearby Welkom settlement and established an art centre.

*Dawid Kruiper* - Traditional leader of the ≠Khomani; lives at Witdraai (cf. White 1995).

*Petrus Vaalbooi* - Formerly the chairperson of the ≠Khomani San Community Property Association (CPA); has assumed the role of leader of the 'western' Bushmen.

*Silikat van Wyk* - Artist and craftsman, cultural performer (cf. Dyll 2003).

*Elsie Witbooi* - Silikat's former wife. Her new boyfriend murdered Elsie in September 2003.

*Toppies Kruiper* - Dawid Kruiper's son, who makes and sells crafts at the roadside; lives at Witdraai.

*Jon Kruiper* - Son to Dawid Kruiper; it is expected that he will be their next traditional leader.

*Anna Festus* - Previously fieldworker for SASI and personal assistant to Dawid Kruiper until 2005.

*Anna Swart* - Grandmother and original speaker of N/u who lives at Witdraai.

*Isak and Lys Kruiper* - Worked as cultural performers at Kagga Kamma (cf. Buntman 1996b) and Ostri-San. Returned to Witdraai as crafters in 2005. Isak is a traditional healer.

*Rosa Meintjies* – Wife of Abraham, previous manager of the Witdraai Tentepark (camp site). She works at Erin making patterns on sheets and other items.

Many of the traditionals have worked as cultural performers at the Kagga Kamma Game Park in the Western Cape (cf. Tomaselli 2002; Buntman 1996a), at Ostri-San and Mabilingwe in the North West Province and a park at Ellisras, Limpopo province, and elsewhere.

### *Ngwatle/southern Botswana*

*Miriam Motshabise* – Young single mother who lived at Ngwatle and Monong. Miriam died in April 2004 at Ngwatle.

*Pedris Motshabise* – Miriam's brother; also lives at Ngwatle. In 2002 he was at Ukhwi, looking after camels for the Nqwaa Khobee Xeya Trust.

*Baba (Kort-Jan) Kies Nxai* – Kort-Jan is an Afrikaans name meaning Short John, given this name because of his short stature. He is seen as a leader by his family within the Ngwatle community.

*Jon-Jon* – Kort-Jan and Katrina's son, who worked briefly for SBB

*Vista-Jan* – Kort-Jan and Katrina's son.

*Johannes Nxai* – Johannes' family was killed by South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) soldiers, and he was raised by Kort-Jan.

*Gadiphemolwe Orileng* – Was living at Ngwatle in 1999; worked briefly as a tracker for SBB.

*Kaptein* – Kaptein ('Captain') is the official leader. He was allocated this role by a local council under the Hukuntsi district and is paid a salary by the government. The position of Kaptein or chief used to be hereditary, but Kort-Jan's late brother, Petrus, was the Ngwatle community's last 'Kaptein' of this family, as he died before he could select the next Kaptein. The present Kaptein is a Mokgalagadi. He is, however, recognised to some extent as a leader or figurehead in the community, although his authority is challenged in some instances.

*Tshomu* – Worked on the mines in Witwatersrand and retired to Ngwatle.

### *Ju'hoansi*

≠Oma Tsamkxao – Also known as Leon; acted as the interpreter for the group during the 1996 visit.

N!ai – Subject of John Marshall's film, *N!ai: Story of a !Kung Woman* (1978), and acted also on Jamie Uys' Film, *The Gods must be crazy*, amongst others.

*Specifically, what are we doing?*

This book deals with the interactions between myself, my co-researchers and students, and the three communities in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. Each chapter presents a discussion and interpretation of the various interactions and gives attention to the often overlooked aspects of power, communication, symbolism and fieldwork experience that are usually back-grounded in favour of more objectified information on culture, livelihood and social life. The strength of this participatory project lays in its empirical, real-world basis, namely, a regularized series of field trips to the Kalahari (inaugurated in 1995) (Chapters 2-6). The chapters delineate a broad network of interrelations, within various networks and at different levels of social interaction, and between observers and observed.

On one level, this book deals with the variety of fieldwork experiences around transport, logistics, negotiating entry, and establishing authentic reciprocal relationships, which are important in making research possible in the Kalahari. The project started as a relatively formal exercise in the conceptualisation of the Marshall film record and Jamie Uys' *The Gods must be crazy* films (1980; 1983), and Ju/'hoansi responses to them (Tomaselli 1992; 2006b; McLennan-Dodd and Tomaselli 2005). The project developed into a wider study of researcher/researched interaction, cultural tourism, and the deconstruction of cultural studies, ethnographic research and 'Bushman' studies in general. I discuss experiences in the field recorded over a ten-year period, and I deconstruct essentialised categories often invoked to explain the behaviour of the Other, or in reverse, the behaviour and perceptions of the European Same.

The study is also an extended critique of a disengaged metropolitan cultural studies, one that lets form prevail over content. In reaction, this project is a cultural studies ethnography of doing research. On yet another level, our work is a record of the dialectic between cultural change on the one hand and political and economic change on the other. Another core theme of the study is the importance of human rights issues and politics. Included in the analysis of power relations are the relationships in the following dyads: people:government; female:male; and visitors:hosts.

The product of this approach lies outside conventional ethnography. I call it reverse cultural studies. Our autoethnographies are reflexive of the researchers' impact on the subjects and vice-versa.

*Chapter 1*, co-written with *Arnold Shepperson*, sets out the basic research questions, which have underpinned the approach as a whole. Shepperson's contribution was to assist in the development of a methodological framework in which to situate the ten-year-study. This chapter should be read in conjunction with *Chapter 7*, as both offer theorised explanations of the fieldwork experience. *Chapter 1* explains the questions within an implicit Peircean (1965; 1966; 1998) semiotic framework, while *Chapter 7* in drawing together the various theoretical strands of the study in general, also deals with questions of ethics, intellectual ownership, and interaction.

*Chapter 2* sets the methodological scene. A vehicle breakdown resulted in the genesis of a theorised diary of fifteen field trips to the Northern Cape, Ngwatle, the Kutse and Central Kalahari Game Reserves and adjacent areas. It provides the basis of a reflexive argument in discussing problems in fieldwork, globalisation, academic access, and research accountability. The narrative aims to forge a space in the global publications industry for kinds of cultural studies done in Africa, in which detail is as important as theory, in which human agency is described and recognised, and in which voices from the field are engaged by researchers as their equals in human dignity and thus as producers of knowledge.

*Chapter 3* continues the Kalahari story on issues of representation, research methodology, and reverse cultural studies. It discusses relationships between observers and observed in terms of dependency, inclusions/exclusions, and borders and othering. Continuing with autoethnography, it reflexively analyzes tensions and contradictions set in motion by the writing of this chapter within the Ngwatle and Northern Cape communities, and between myself, development, and other agencies.

“*Op die grond*”: Writing in the San/d, *Surviving Crime*’ (*Chapter 4*) is a theorised, detailed and densely narrated account of a series of unplanned ethnographic encounters which simply happen *en route* to the focal encounters intended to take place with members of the ≠Khomani and Ngwatle communities. Interacting both conceptually and experientially with the host communities in which it is conceptualised, and the scholarly circles within which I am anchored, this study enacts, among other things, the processual coming-into-being of a written ethnographic documentary in contemporary Southern Africa.

*Chapters 5 and 6* are interlinked in that they examine the impact of the visual on

the everyday life of the Ju/'hoansi in Namibia. The results of a fieldtrip in July 1996 to Otjozondjupa (previously known as Eastern Bushmanland or Nyae Nyae) in Namibia are discussed in terms of the question: How do subjects make sense of the anthropological? The 'texts' interrogated via Ju/'hoansi popular memory were those made by documentary film maker John Marshall, South African feature film director Jamie Uys, and a documentary made for the Discovery Channel.

*Chapter 7* presents the theoretical core developed in Chapters 2-6. Where Chapter 1 offers a theoretical entrance into our work in the Kalahari, Chapter 7 systematizes and theorises our early fieldwork. It thus offers a hindsight reflexive argument in discussing problems in fieldwork, academic access and research accountability. Chapter 7 analyzes tensions and contradictions set in motion by the writing of chapters on observer-observed relations within the communities themselves and between myself and other agencies working in these areas. Questions addressed relate to ownership of information, the relationship between the local/particular and the national/policy, and on how to ensure campfire dissemination/involvement of, and popular access to, the written product by a-literate and largely non-English speaking communities.

The kind of writing published here aims to 'show' the making of, rather than simply being the 'telling' of, a story. Each chapter uses scene-by-scene constructions rather than large chunks of narrative. Extensive use is made of dialogue, third person point of view, and detailed dramatic narrative descriptions recording everyday routines, styles and gestures. Multiple narrative digressions are intended to evoke critical response from the reader. At the same time, the style I have developed often resorts to free indirect speech rather than dialogue, frequently using autoethnographic points of view, suggesting a more personalized mode of shared ethnographic documentation (cf. Laden and Kohn 2003). I hope that this style will be both informative and engaging. **[ix]**

#### NOTES

[i] Pula is the Botswana currency. One Botswana Pula = 0.18 United States Dollars (currency rate on 24 August 2005).

[ii] The Ngwatle community has organised itself into the Nqwaa Khobee Xeya Trust. The Thusano Lefatsheng Trust supports it. There seems to be lukewarm support for the Trusts, which are seen to be unresponsive to the needs of the Ngwatle villagers.

[iii] The Molopo Kalahari Lodge is located in the heart of the Kalahari. It offers

extensive accommodation, conference and entertainment facilities. The Lodge was one of the production bases for the *The Gods must be crazy* (1981) film, amongst many others, both features and documentaries.

[iv] Carter was manager of the then German-owned Molopo Lodge situated across the gravel road from Witdraai. He had developed a corporate social policy for the Lodge *vis-à-vis* its relations with the adjacent <sup>1</sup>Khomani communities. The Lodge was bought by a South African concern in 2001.

[v] Erin is one of the six farms returned to the <sup>1</sup>Khomani after they succeeded in their land claim in 1999.

[vi] One of the white-owned farms bought by the government for the <sup>1</sup>Khomani.

[vii] The apostrophe in Ju/'hoansi calls for a glottal stop, which is a break in the words sound.

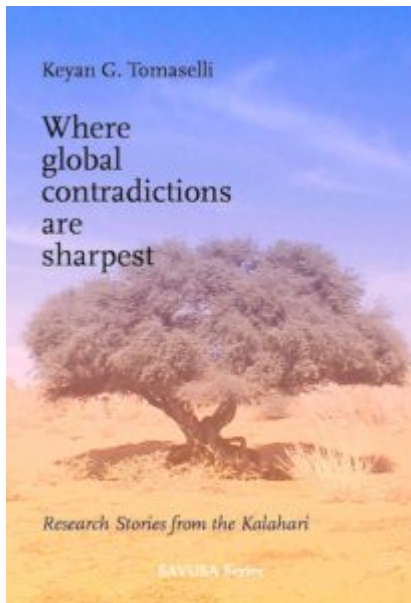
[viii] The Human Studies Film Archives in the Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, hold over a million feet of 16mm film footage and hundreds of hours of video taped observations recorded by John Marshall between 1950 and 1958, and from the late 1970s onwards (see Homiak and Tomaselli 1999). The released films are available via Documentary Educational Resources.

[ix] I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions.

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## **Where Global Contradictions Are Sharpest ~ The Negotiating Research With First Peoples**





### *Becoming not-strangers*

In moving from 'here' (Durban) to 'there' (Kalahari Desert), CCMS researchers and students had to rethink their research assumptions, identities and even their understanding of cultural studies.

The research team's respective journeys have positioned us, at different times, as insiders and outsiders, as heroes and villains, and as reporters evaluating the said in terms of the more usually unsaid. The complexity and tensions of relationships in Kalahari research is extraordinary, given the relatively small numbers of 'Bushmen' who are subject to the intense Western gaze (by researchers, NGOs, film makers, journalists, writers and photographers, many of whom serve audiences of hundreds of millions). Indeed, the nature of this kind of research can be seen as a passage through difficult and scantily known rapids, despite the volumes of published work on specific communities. But in another sense, the passage is more that of a group of individuals with divergent positions, interests or aims, researching together and establishing a consensual position on which their differences may be resolved or accommodated (Shepperson 1998: 348). How do we, the researchers, apprehend, write about and agree or disagree on our observations, interpretations and explanations, and how do we negotiate these with our hosts?

When the first draft of Chapter 7 was circulated for comment, the responses were striking, ranging from outright anger from one NGO-consultant to empathy from most academics, researchers, development workers and those who have had long associations with the ≠Khomani. A few of our often marginalized ≠Khomani sources were ecstatic as it seemed to them that they had finally found a team of researchers who perhaps understood their frustrations, hopes and fears, and who were able to communicate these in understandable terms. We spoke to ordinary people, and to some who had married into the clan. Each engaged with us on our objectives and we on theirs. We soon realised that research encounters are often

rearticulated by some of our informants into discourses of begging, poverty, hunger and complaints of exploitation at the hands of journalists, photographers and researchers (especially amongst the Kruipers of the Northern Cape).

We further sensed palpable relief from such correspondents that someone was at last critically examining development politics and research ethics, and engaging practices previously conducted in relative silence. Coming in from the cold (to Tomaselli, if no-one else), a few of these individuals started to write, dictate on tape, and e-mail him their own stories about themselves and their relations with ≠Khomani personalities, researchers, writers, video producers, and all manner of visitors. One or two expressed feelings of liberation as they no longer felt 'trapped' within their insufferable 'own experiences', some excruciatingly painful, and others extraordinarily heart-warming (cf. for example Bregin and Kruiper 2004). The unpublished stories are both horrific in their implications, and revealing in their stoicism. They had a sense of an emergent and empathetic community of researchers with whom they could do business, and to whom our correspondents could relate their frustrations, fears, and discontentment. But for obvious reasons many of these stories have to remain part of the hidden transcript, the unsaid contingent upon the community and the resolution of its participants.

'Paradigm fundamentalism' can easily occur if a scholar remains locked into the research programmes or theoretical structures inherited from preferred theoretical canons. Hidden transcripts, or at least their effects, tend to be suppressed by researchers because they are messy and get in the way of theory. In this kind of situation, students begin their assessment according to a canon provided *a priori* through the prescribed and recommended readings of various courses. What makes it specifically 'fundamentalism' is when the scholar either: (a) decides that items excluded from the canonical list *ought not* to be read; or (b) seeks to enrol with the consensus-making apparatus that establishes the 'canonicity' of prescribed and recommended readings. During our research period some scholars and films became *persona non grata* as epistemological battles were waged over legitimacy of interpretation (cf. Wilmsen 1989; Wilmsen and Denbow 1990 and responses to them; Barnard *et al.* 1996; Marshall 1996; Biesele and Hitchcock 1999; cf. also Gordon 1990b).

Despite the somewhat conspiratorial narrative inscribed in this thumbnail sketch of the academy, it is designed to illustrate one possible aspect of the shift in the

intellectual vista open to South African academics, development activists, public intellectuals, and other such practitioners. Our (often retrospectively constructed) past as participants in the final struggles against apartheid frequently involved exactly this kind of struggle for canonical hegemony. Leftists of all stripes railed against the apparently monolithic preferences of bourgeois literary and theoretical canons, all the while engaging each other in (mostly) bloodless but nevertheless near-mortal theoretical combat over what should be the canon of the Left. The same kind of bitter conflict occurred over studies of the San, their naming and on who could speak for whom, when, where, and how. **[i]** The *aprioristic* nature of canonical thinking amongst both the observers and the observed is far more a feature of both postmodern and modernist thinking than their respective adherents would like to admit. As we discovered among the different subject-communities during our research, the inherent fundamentalism of these traditions (in much the sense that Alasdair MacIntyre [1988] deploys the term) tends to slide glibly over the pre-theoretical, 'shit happens' kind of realism that shapes the everyday conduct of peoples like the !Xoo, the Ju/'hoansi and the ≠Khomani.

We wanted to document our dilemmas and dialogues with ourselves as individuals, between ourselves as research teams, and with our hosts as individuals and as communities. The participants involved in the dialogue and performance want to recognise themselves in this writing. We have questions, but not always the answers:

- a) How do we understand *Theory* as a hypothesis abducted from a community of inquiry's experience of phenomena? In other words, how much of our informants' (or sources' or hosts') explanation informs the products of our research, and how intelligibly is this done?
- b) Where does a condition of liminality appear during the course of the research process, and how does this contribute to the knowledge so produced?
- c) Does our making explicit of the processes of research interaction meet possible accusations of 'bias', lack of objectivity, and so on, especially from NGOs tasked with development briefs?

These questions all relate to the difficulties that inquiry poses for those who are engaged in practical efforts at development. Such agents - whether at community, organisational, or government levels - operate within well-established discourses like 'empowerment', 'development' and 'democratisation'. The

problem that we try to resolve is whether these concepts are methods or ends. If they are methods, then we are practically constrained to conceiving such ideas in terms of their applications in concrete situations. What is empowerment, development or democratisation for one situation will not necessarily be the same for another. The Kruipers, for example, have squandered their development opportunities, the !Xoo are resisting opportunities, and the Ju/'hoansi have embraced a limited solution to their benefit.

If concepts and methods are *ends*, however, then the research programme depends on the *hope* that all distinct but comparable situations are relevant starting points from which communities can direct their successors to a qualitatively different way of relating to the world beyond the boundaries of their immediate experience. This is the route taken by the *westerse* ('Western', modern) ≠Khomani who have embraced modernity. In short, the above questions confront those researchers, academics, and activists who view concepts as situational in themselves, and not as possibilities applicable to situations across a range of contexts.

In addressing these questions, we need to be always aware of the genealogy of autoethnographic methods (Chapter 2). The principal data unit for these methods is not a communicable representation or entity present to the minds of a community of researchers, but the dialogue an individual researcher conducts with his or her own methodological and paradigmatic assumptions. This in turn determines the direction and normative basis of the subsequent dialogue between researchers and researched.

In this dialogical sense, the basic method of autoethnography is barely distinguished from the method of the therapeutic 'talking cure'. As such, therefore, these questions must accomplish more than self-absolution in a form of neo-analytical therapy. In a strictly therapeutic autoethnographic process, the research topic shifts along a chain of more or less elaborated *dialogues* between a researcher and an ever-increasingly abstracted hierarchy of partners in the dialectic. The chain may well begin with a dialogue at the research site with culturally authentic sources (e.g., Chapters 2-4). But what happens if the subject matter of the dialogue is taken to the academy? Or to the publishing industry (Chapters 4-7)? Or to the NGO-sector which has assumed so much of the responsibility for development among the 'usual suspect' communities who form the subject matter of ethnography and anthropology? How does one attribute

responsibility to a dialogue, in a way that raises it to the status of a communicable *record*?

A tradition of confidentiality carries over from medical therapy to autoethnography as 'therapy'. Journals, film makers and others are often looking for personal roots, meaning and explanations (cf. e.g. Isaacson 2001; Van der Post 1988; Glasser 1996; Myburgh 1989; Tomaselli *et al.* 1992). It is thus hard to decide where along the chain of dialogue such representations must become knowledge, or be asserted as truth-claims. Medical (and therapeutic) *practice* is not to be confused with medical and therapeutic *science*. It is at the point we choose to assert something about the subject-matter to the general 'To Whom It May Concern' of an indefinite scientific future that ethnography must re-present itself as *communication* and no longer as dialogue or diary. Publication occurs at this stage. We have noted the various stages through which an autoethnographic dialogue can pass; the problem is to anticipate *how* any functionary (or activist, or practitioner) at one or more of these stages can appropriate the dialogue to ends not conceived as scientific (assuming the logic of science is itself presupposed by an ethics) (Peirce 1998: 196-207, 371-97). Practical ends drive NGOs, publishers, and indeed the academy, whereas the claims of science (which should not be confused with the claims *scientists* make in their professional or academic capacities) are potentially directed to ends beyond the immediate accomplishment of urgent matters. Without the normative shift, or better, the *ethical commitment* to do full justice to the reality of the subject-matter (or subject community) of a field of inquiry, *as it presents itself to the inquirer*, science becomes indistinguishable from engineering.

On this basis, the most urgent need in reviewing our research was to establish where the dialogues ended (or perhaps petered out) and the possibility for a bottom-up record began. Unless subject communities are informed about what is to be asserted about their reality, they can have no effective say in what subsequent agencies in the dialogue do with their representations. But to do this in good faith is not enough: it was decisive that this contact generate a record, and after realising how these questions arose from reading the texts recommended to us, we began to consider our writing as *rapportage* - the base data for developing a record that contributes to inquiry and resists its appropriation by vested interests. This *rapportage* will be housed at the Kwa !ttu Museum in the Western Cape, amongst other archives.

The first *rapportage* that Tomaselli revisited was one that Belinda Jeursen had written on their 1995 visit to Ngwatle. He then excavated a highly unliterary lecture that Belinda had given to the English Department at the Natal University (Durban) following their subsequent trip to the Ju/'hoansi in July 1996. This had languished on his hard drive in the wake of Jeursen's emigration to New Zealand two years later. In working with Jeursen, who had previously studied /Xam oral literature (1994; 1995), they developed something of an autobiographic method which could incorporate both writers into her narrative. Jeursen and Tomaselli (2002) then, is offered as a prism and a backward glance of the state of play at the time fieldwork commenced in the mid-1990s. They aimed to provide readers with a useful multi-perspectival pre-history from which to assess the broader ongoing project (cf. also Tomaselli and McLennan Dodd 2003).

Autoethnography is a relatively recent form of writing which permits readers to feel the moral dilemmas confronting us as researchers, to think *with* our narratives, instead of simply about them, and to join actively in the decision points which define the method (Ellis and Bochner 2000: 735). This approach - in our case - also permits us to write as individuals while maintaining team coherence and project cohesion. This is an important strategy given the fact that individual student members of our research team are constantly changing as they enter and exit, and sometimes re-enter, our graduate programme (see Table 1).

*Table 1 Research Students and Research Affiliates (1995-2005)*

<p><i>Garth Allen</i> [Fieldwork: 2004] cf. <i>Tourism in the New South Africa</i> (2004, IBB Tauris) with F. Brennan [1995-2004]</p>	<p><i>British. CCMS</i> Adjunct Professor. Economist. Director of Institute for Social and Economic Research, Univ. College of St Mark and St John.</p>
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<p><i>Gibson Mashilo Boloka</i> (2001) [Fieldwork: 1999, 2000-1]</p>	<p>PhD-student working on political economy of media.</p>
<p><i>Elana Bregin</i> (Bregin and Kruiper 2004) [Fieldwork: 2001-4] Thesis: <i>The identity of difference: A critical study of representations of the Bushmen</i> (1998).</p>	<p>English MA-graduate. Writer. Works for UKZN-Press. Wrote articles and press releases for Vetkat's Bergtheil exhibitions.</p>
<p><i>Sacha Cleland-Stokes</i> [Research: 2001-2] Thesis: <i>Representing Aboriginality: A post-colonial analysis of key trends representing aboriginality in South Africa, Australian and Aotearoa/New Zealand film and an analysis of three films in the light of these trends</i> (2002).</p>	<p>MA-student. Conducted textual analysis of <i>The great dance</i>, <i>The last wave</i> and <i>Once were warriors</i>. Drama and film graduate. Works as a professional TV-director. Her thesis is to be published by Intervention Press, Denmark.</p>
<p><i>Darryn Crowe</i> (2003) [Fieldwork: 2000]</p>	<p>Honours student and photographer.</p>
<p><i>Eduardo da Veiga</i> [Fieldwork: 2005] Video: Video on craft seller.</p>	<p>MA-student. UKZN Philosophy and psychology graduate. Studying video production and film.</p>

<p><i>Sian Dunn</i> [Fieldwork: 2002]  Project: Photographs taken at Witdraai and Blinkwater. Exhibited at Bergtheil (2002). Dunn's practice and photos are analysed by Mlauzi (2002).</p>	<p>Rhodes University journalism graduate and professional photographer then working for the <i>Highway Mail</i>.</p>
<p><i>Catherine Dunphy</i> [Fieldwork: 2005]</p>	<p><i>Canadian</i>. Journalist and journalism lecturer, Ryason University, Toronto.</p>
<p><i>Lauren Dyll</i> (2003) [Fieldwork: 2001-2003]  Thesis: <i>Close encounters of the first kind: What does development mean in the context of two Bushman communities in Ngwatle and the Northern Cape?</i> (2004).</p>	<p>MA-student. Drama and Performance Studies graduate. Was employed as a researcher and lecturer during 2004. Returning to do PhD in 2006 ff.</p>
<p><i>Matthew Durlington</i> (accompanied by Lauren Durlington) [Fieldwork: 2003-4]  Video: <i>Hunters redux</i> (in progress).</p>	<p><i>American</i>. UKZN Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellow. Video maker and graduate of Temple University's Graduate Program in Visual Anthropology.</p>



<p><i>Michael Francis</i> [Fieldwork: 2002-5] MA-Thesis: <i>Interpretations of development: Culture and the development encounter in rural KwaZulu-Natal.</i> PhD Thesis: <i>Onibonabonephi - I saw you where you were. Abatwa identity formation in the Drakensberg.</i></p>	<p><i>Canadian.</i> MA- and PhD-student, working on the KwaZulu-Natal project. Anthropology degree from Univ. of Alberta. Worked in Ngwatle, Northern Cape, Kutse and Kamberg (Drakensberg amongst the Duma clan).</p>
<p><i>Jo-Anne Hen-Boisen</i> [Fieldwork: 2004] Project: Autoethnography.</p>	<p>Honours student. Works for UKZN Development Foundation.</p>
<p><i>Belinda Jeursen</i> (1994; Jeursen and Tomaselli 2002) [Fieldwork: 1995-6]</p>	<p>English MA-graduate and CCMS research assistant.</p>
<p><i>Kaitira Kandjii</i> (1997) [Fieldwork: 1996]</p>	<p><i>Namibian.</i> Honours, MA. Journalism graduate from Natal Technikon.</p>

<p><i>Mary Lange</i> (2003a; 2003b; 2005; 2006) [Fieldwork: 2002-5] Honours Project: Reception Analysis of <i>Kalahari fires</i> (2003) MA Thesis: <i>Women reading the Gariiep River, Uppington: A reception study</i> (in progress).</p>	<p>Honours and MA-student. English and psychology graduate with archaeology as extra major, with diplomas in performance and drama. Works at the Bergtheil Museum, Durban. Is coordinator of CCMS-based Art and Reconciliation Across the World project in Durban.</p>
<p><i>Frederik Lange</i> [Fieldwork: 2005] Art project: Multimedia <i>Kalahari</i> representation.</p>	<p>Matric student, Westville Boys High.</p>
<p><i>Samuel Lelièvre</i> [Appointment: 2002-2003]</p>	<p><i>French</i>. National Research Foundation Post-Doctoral Fellow. Representation in African cinema.</p>
<p><i>Susan Mahando</i> [Fieldwork: 1995] Project: Video documentation used in <i>Kalahari fires</i> (Lange and Nxumalo, X., 2003).</p>	<p><i>Zimbabwean</i>. Graduate in media studies from University of Zimbabwe.</p>

<p><i>Linje Manyozo Mlauzi</i> (2002) [Fieldwork: 2002] Video: <i>Reading photographs in the Kalahari</i>, 33 minutes (2002).</p>	<p><i>Malawian</i>. MA-media studies student. Drama Graduate from University of Malawi.</p>
<p><i>Brilliant Mhlanga</i> [Fieldwork: 2005]</p>	<p><i>Zimbabwean</i>. MA- student in media studies</p>
<p><i>Nhamo Mhiripiri</i> [Fieldwork: 2003-5] Thesis: <i>The tourist viewer, the Bushmen and the Zulu: (Re) invention and negotiation identities</i> (in progress).</p>	<p><i>Zimbabwean</i>. PhD- Student and media studies lecturer. Lecturer at Midlands State University. Also published in <i>Visual Anthropology</i>.</p>
<p><i>Mashaya Mkwetshana-Dambuza</i> [Fieldwork: 2005] Project: Performance amongst marginalized groups.</p>	<p>MA-student in ethnomusicology. Professional performance artist geared towards community work.</p>
<p><i>Vanessa McLennan- Dodd</i> (2003a; 2003b; 2004) [Fieldwork: 2001-3] Thesis: <i>Reflexivity and research methodology in representation of the San: a case study of Isaacson's 'The healing land'</i> (2003).</p>	<p>Honours and MA- student. Project manager. English studies graduate. Has published other articles on the topic not listed here in <i>Critical Arts, Kronos,</i> and <i>Visual Anthropology</i>, and in various books.</p>

<p><i>Oyvind Mikalsen</i> (2004) [Fieldwork: 2004-5]</p>	<p><i>Norwegian. Sami.</i> Honours and MA- student. Worked in the Okavango Swamps on fisheries management, 2000-2004.</p>
<p><i>Kamini Moodley</i> [Fieldwork: 2004-5] Project: Technical Report: Kutse Lodge (2005)</p>	<p>Honours and MA- student. Research manager, [2004-5]. Natal University anthropology graduate.</p>
<p><i>Garath Morgan</i> [Fieldwork: 1996]</p>	<p>Anthropology MA- student, University of Durban-Westville.</p>
<p><i>Garath Myklebust</i> [Fieldwork: 2002-3]</p>	<p>Graphic designer. Assisted Vetkat with art supplies, advice and designed brochures for Bergtheil exhibitions.</p>
<p><i>Ntokozo Ndlela</i> [Fieldwork: 2001] Thesis: Representations of Zulu cultural identity in cultural tourism: A case study of Izintaba Zulu cultural village (2002).</p>	<p>MA-media studies student. Employed as a translator on other CCMS-projects and as an administrative assistant.</p>

<p><i>Nyambura Gachette Njagi</i> [Fieldwork: 2004-5] Thesis: Sustainable livelihoods: An analysis of household livelihood portfolios from the !Kung Group Basarwa of Ngwatle (in progress).</p>	<p>American of Kenyan extraction. Registered in Development Studies.</p>
<p><i>Nelia Oets</i> (2003; Tomaselli and Oets 2004) [Fieldwork: 1999-2005]</p>	<p>CCMS Research Affiliate. Afrikaans literature Honours graduate. Translation and interpretation, camp management and research.</p>
<p><i>Darren Oddy</i> [Fieldwork: 2004-5] Project: Publics in the Land Restitution Case.</p>	<p>Public Policy graduate student. UKZN Media studies and politics graduate.</p>
<p><i>Chantal Oosthuysen</i> [1999-2001]</p>	<p>MA-graduate. Research manager and translator.</p>
<p><i>Sherieen Pretorius</i> [Fieldwork: 2002]</p>	<p>Assisted Mlauzi (2002) in interpreting interviews and focus groups from Afrikaans.</p>

<p><i>Tim Reinhardt</i> (2003) [Fieldwork: 2003] Videos: Vetkat, a guy, a journey and a camera, and (with Sætre), The fire dance.</p>	<p>UKZN Electronic Engineering graduate turned video maker.</p>
<p><i>Dorothy Roome</i> [Fieldwork: 1995] Project: Video documentation used in <i>Kalahari fires</i> (2003) (Lange and Nxumalo).</p>	<p>PhD-student. MA in Media Studies from Arizona State. Now teaching at Arizona State University, Tuscon.</p>
<p><i>Marit Sætre</i> (2003) [Fieldwork: 2002] Thesis: 'I am, you are?' A documentary about the Bushmen and the Others in the Kalahari (2003).</p>	<p>Norwegian. MA-student in media studies. Worked with Reinhardt on the video of The fire dance.</p>
<p><i>Jeffrey Sehume</i> [Fieldwork: 1999-2000)</p>	<p>PhD-student. Now at University of Fort Hare.</p>
<p><i>Arnold Shepperson</i> (1998) [1999-2005]</p>	<p>Co-writer on project articles.</p>
<p><i>Anthea Simões</i> (2001a; 2001b) [Fieldwork: 1999-2001]</p>	<p>Honours and MA-student.</p>
<p><i>Bronwyn Spicer</i> [2005]</p>	<p>Honours student, editorial assistance.</p>

<p><i>Nasseema Taleb</i> [Fieldwork: 2004] Article: <i>A letter to myself: My trip to Ngwatle.</i></p>	<p><i>Mauritian.</i> Honours and MA-student, who worked at Ngwatle and Kutse.</p>
<p><i>Philip Tembu</i> [Fieldwork: 2005] Project: Field Research Methodology.</p>	<p><i>Kenyan.</i> Digital Media MA-student. Member of video production crew. UKZN Music graduate.</p>
<p><i>Ruth Teer-Tomaselli</i> [Fieldwork: 2005]</p>	<p>Professor of Media Studies. Telecoms interest.</p>
<p><i>Charlize Tomaselli</i> (Lange <i>et al.</i> 2003) [Fieldwork: 1995, 2002-4]</p>	<p>Undergraduate archaeology and anthropology student, Universities of Natal and Cape Town.</p>
<p><i>Damien Tomaselli</i> [Fieldwork: 2002]</p>	<p>Undergraduate drama and media student. Videoed interviews conducted by Mlauzi (2002).</p>
<p><i>Alexandra von Stauss</i> (2000) [Fieldwork: 2000]</p>	<p>MA-student. Professional photographer.</p>
<p><i>Caleb Wang</i> (2000; 2002) [Fieldwork: 2000-1]</p>	<p>MA-student. Volunteered for the Trust in January 2001.</p>

### Notes

- Unless stated, students were registered in CCMS.
- Fieldwork was not necessarily continuous, as students were required to complete course work during term. Many listed above were also employed as

tutors in the CCMS-Programme.

- Others who we participated with in various ways include Fiona Archer (development consultant), David Crichton (tourism consultant), Jake Homiak (Smithsonian), Christine Marcham (UKZN Sociology), Thaven Naidoo (SACOD), Frans Prins (Natal Museum), Sonja Speeter, Conrad Steenkamp (NGO-worker), Mzimkulu Sithetho (Lesotho journalist), and Rob Waldron.

Our hosts were initially mystified and even perturbed about the fact that after one or two visits, students with whom they had bonded and learnt to trust, no longer visited them. They feared a lack of a longer-term commitment from us; they felt that they had an investment with the students who had worked with them, and they suggested that they had contributed to my graduates' supposed success in the job market.

Where initially we did not know what to do with our written narratives and interviews, narrative and self-reflexivity have now become the project's prime mode of inquiry, thus redefining relationships between authors and readers. More significantly however, this form of inquiry and presentation is also one that is empathetically understood and creatively engaged by the project's host-communities. Individuals within these communities are beginning to appreciate the symbolic value of being included in someone else's story, whether in print, photography, or on video. Where conventional social science writing eliminates the observers and often the observed as well, our narratives attempt to write all participants into the encounter - and their observations and often their dialogue and their subjectivities - into the various story/ies being told. For example, an ongoing process of engagement, via independently taped and hand-written commentaries, is regularly posted to our hosts. (There is no postal service to Ngwatle, and few in the community are literate, so we return information via the Trust and by means of screening videos that we have made.) Campfire research, disseminations and interactions (including songs, music and dance, talk and banter, open-ended interviews, anecdotes, complaints and criticism) between researchers and subjects on the project's pre-published work, have resulted in an extraordinary process of civil, participatory collaboration, which joins the researcher with the researched in an ongoing moral dialogue (Denzin and Lincoln 2000: ix). Apart from regular visits to the Northern Cape, we are in constant contact via cell phone when one of our informants, Belinda Kruiper, passes a transmitter on the main road while in her donkey cart or other transport, via the



postal service in Upington 240 kms to the south, via fax c/o the nearby Transfrontier Kgalagadi Park office, and sometimes by e-mail which passes through a number of hands before reaching its destination. **[ii]** Belinda and her husband Vetkat annually join us on our university campus in Durban, to work with our students, when they exhibit Vetkat's art at the Bergtheil Museum in Durban ([www.indigenousheritage.org/vetkat.html](http://www.indigenousheritage.org/vetkat.html)).

Durban is a very different environment to the Kalahari. Existentialism rules in the Kalahari - what is, is what is. We surmised during our April 2002 visit to Blinkwater and Welkom that people however do want things to happen, and want and need social services. Things happen or don't happen. Belinda and Vetkat did not buy the sheep from their neighbour (which I offered to pay for), because of the wind. The wind happened, so the sheep was not bought and skinned. 'We can't do anything against nature' - the same feeling of natural agency overpowering action is what led to photographer Sian Dunn's feeling of frustration as 'everything went with the weather' (Blinkwater 2002; cf. Mlauzi 2002). Dunn was unable to fulfil a day's photographic brief, because the Blinkwater folk simply returned to their huts to escape the wind. Linje Manyozo referred to Marx's concept of 'commodity fetishism', and described this naturist energy-saving response by our hosts as environmental fetishism. Where industrial societies are shaped and managed by ruling elites via developing a desire for and consumption of largely unnecessary commodities, the ≠Khomani in contrast understand themselves to be at the mercy of the environment, an irresistible and invisible set of forces that shape daily decisions and prior arrangements, irrespective of needs. For them, there is no difference between the 'real' and the 'constructed' - what is, is what is. I am not sure about Linje's interpretation of the Marxist concept, but his comment sets off a semiosis. Perhaps what he presages is Levi-Strauss' (1971) concept of totemism, where the signifier is semiotically collapsed into the signified, and becomes the thing itself. The ensuing metonymic mystification perhaps would be better described as environmental fetishism in the semiotic sense than in terms of Marx's framework.

A-literates, theories of orality tell us, tend to be without metaphors (Jousse 1977). What is, is what *is*. The sand is part of the Bushmen; they are part of the sand. The weather, wind, and often the wine govern activities as well. Nature is seen to be capricious, but not malicious. Tomaselli learned about worlds without metaphor when first trying to make sense of the spontaneous Lament of old Piet

Draghoender, whom he videoed in 1984, in the Kat River valley, pending his family and community's imminent dispossession by the apartheid state. Blood, the ancestors/lineage and the ground, for him, were one and the same (Tomaselli 1997). The living are in direct relation with the departed, and are kept closer by going barefoot when dancing.

The contradiction is found in Belinda's Kruiper's attempts to bridge a fatalist natural existential cultural fetishism where 'things happen' (if one waits long enough) and the world of development and politics in which 'things are not happening' (because delivery is tied to a variety of processes, procedures and schedules even more invisible than the wind). The highly active South African San Institute (SASI) was perceived by many of our sources to be largely invisible in the body on the ground. The Khomani Community Property Association was alleged by some to be centralizing available resources; provincial and national governments work according to unknown mechanisms and time scales. (Similar comments are made about the Ngwatle situation by some of our !Xoo informants. In contrast, the Ju/'hoansi are highly involved in the agencies servicing their needs.) The CPA was also considered unrepresentative of the traditionals.

In the Northern Cape, significant resources are being delivered: schools, land, electricity, and reticulated water at the small urban settlement of Welkom, are amongst the new basic services, which attract the youngsters from Witdraai. But these are not 'seen' because they are not 'cash'. The people want more, they want to 'feel' their changes existentially - the 'what is is' factor. 'Our world is full of nothingness', complained Belinda Kruiper (July 2002). At that time of personal hardship their lives were spiritually empty but full of content at the level of the emotional interpretant, the birds and the bees, and the rustling of the trees. As one Ju/'hoan village told us, they deliberately represented themselves as 'poor' in order to leverage donations from visitors (Chapters 5 and 6). Here, the villagers were able to negotiate the rapids of modernity by constructing a realist meaning for the visitors notwithstanding their existentially pre-modern condition, supposedly lacking metaphorical signification.

Belinda's Kruiper's disturbance in the community - as an educated person who married into the Kruiper clan - is due to the fact that while she accepts existential totemism, she is also an indicator of the potential of personal and social agency (cf. Tomaselli 2006a). Things can be changed at a political and service delivery level even if not at the natural level. But she asks, why give the Welkom house

dwellers electricity, when they cook outside on the fire and when the lights attract the moths? The contradiction was evident when Elana Bregin in Durban, who was working on a book with Belinda, twice called Belinda on her cell phone at Blinkwater, which cut out both times. Belinda looked at us, phone in hand, and exclaimed, '%@#, I'm tired of trying to deal with technology! Technology doesn't work in the Kalahari!'

How does one begin to comprehend beguiling totemistic essentialism? The wind happens. The sunrise happens. The rain dance makes things happen (mainly in the rainy season). Things happen. But often nothing happens. That's because the wind is happening. Skinning animals in the wind invests the carcass with dust. So hunting does not happen. The land happens. It is not developed. Money happens - it comes in, it goes out. None of it is invested. That is known as development. It comes from tourists, visitors and charities. It does not come from NGOs or the government.

Life happens. The <sup>1</sup>Khomani at Welkom tell in July 2002 that development is not happening. We are told this as we sit underneath newly installed electrical cables feeding the house in whose yard we are sitting. People are fetching water from taps, and the streetlights sparkle in the wind and through the drizzle. The brand new craft showroom on the gravel roadside is empty, its windows broken and boarded up. In June 2005, Ruth in investigating the theft of the ceiling, startled an owl living in the rafters, and then found its mate's dead dried carcass on the sand. The surviving owl was disorientated, much like the people. What about the school? Few of the traditional <sup>1</sup>Khomani children go to school. No money for school fees, we are told. In 2005 some houses have satellite TV, and Belinda complains that parents cannot decode the ratings symbols, that children are watching late night soft porn on eTV and DStv while their parents sleep. Road workers seduce young girls with drink and money, and AIDS is on the march. The people cannot identify the development/s. 'Give me R5 and food', a young boy demanded from me in 2002. Now, that is assumed to be development. Or is it? Like waiting for the wind to die before buying and skinning the sheep which Tomaselli offered to buy, perhaps individuals are waiting for R200 notes passed out at random by temporary visitors, rather than the millions which pay for the civic infrastructure. Perhaps the infrastructure is not needed or wanted, but the government provides it anyway. Lights cost money, they attract millions of flying insects; stoves consume electricity, while people prefer to cook over a fire. Debt

starts. Where are people to get the money to pay for the electricity? Begging perhaps? Development begets begging. Begging becomes development - money in the hand. William Ellis, an anthropologist from the University of Western Cape, describes the new economy as 'organised begging'. So the people wait for the better days promised by the liberation government. The NGOs get the blame because nothing seems to be happening; not the government, not the individuals who run the Community Property Association, which manages the ≠Khomani's not-insubstantial state-provided resources, and which are accused of squandering it. The villagers seem to have little understanding of where or how they fit into the new democratic structures. By July 2005, consumption had replaced community, loud thumping rock music and TV drowned out natural ambient sounds throughout the day and most of the night.

Our methodological problem, as Zimbabwean PhD-student Nhamo Mhiripiri suggested, is how to write an analysis of a situation and a people who have come to take us seriously, but who may not appreciate our analysis, our critique, and our logic. Will we be also identified for blame? It's easy and fun to be the flavour of the month; it's a much less happy situation to be excommunicated from a life's work, blamed for everything that went wrong, and to stick to one's principles through thick and thin (cf. Biesele and Hitchcock 1999; Barnard *et al.* 1996; Marshall 1996). The wind comes and goes; legitimacy waxes and wanes, and trust has to be tested over good times and bad. We are concerned with the webs of research, exploitation and deceit that so often cloud academic and journalistic research in the Kalahari. Who is drawing the line around whom?

The problem, as far as method goes, is that there can be no argument against a perception. If there is wind, we will perceive that wind together if we are both exposed to it, though we might disagree on its meaning. We cannot argue against either of our judgements as to the severity of the wind, because perceptual judgements are 'necessarily veracious' (Peirce 1998: 204). All we can do is, in effect, to engage in dialogue in the hope that (in good therapeutic fashion) we can amicably resolve any conflict of interpretation. But a comparative analysis of the kinds of *inferences from perceptual judgements* made about, say, the wind on the day a sheep was scheduled for slaughter, already constitutes something other than a dialogue about wind and sheep. For example, the fact that wind may affect a community's will to act at all makes it possible to consider what social or communal spaces are available to people, and what needs to be done to make up

shortfalls in these spaces such that wind (or rain, or cold) have less impact on the capacity to act. For the present, however, our research has highlighted the need simply to set about presenting these pre-theoretical dialogues so that those who critically participate in them can find a common starting-point from which to move on.

Our long-term research venture/encounter reminds us that (Western) theoretical constructs are not metaphysical ends or sets of values in their own right, but that they must always be laid open to re-examination and change when applied to (non-Western) empirical contexts and real-life subjects/informants. Moreover, by knowingly positioning observers and observed within specific, polyphonic communication circuits at given points in time and space, this endeavour over the decade of our research (1995-2005) problematises received models of authority in formulations of academic inquiry and writing, where the pecking order between researcher and researched, and among scholars themselves, is predetermined at the outset. Accordingly, it suggests new terms of mutual engagement for *cultural studies researchers* at various stages of inquiry, their *host communities*, and the targeted *readers* of the ensuing ethnographic accounts.

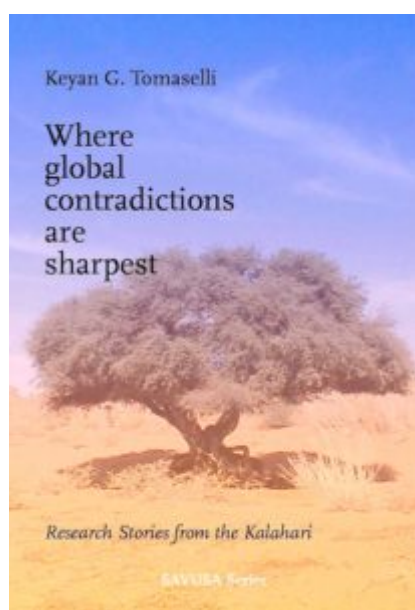
#### NOTES

**[i]** These discursive and ideological conflicts reached a crescendo with Pippa Skotnes' Miscast Exhibition in Cape Town in 1996 (cf. Jackson and Robins 1999; Douglas and Law 1997; Skotnes 2002).

**[ii]** As part of its public service mandate, Telkom, the national telecoms provider, was required to 'roll-out' significant new telephone lines to outlying areas throughout South Africa. The two major cellular phone companies, Vodacom and MTN, also extended their network significantly. From 2004 onwards, the Third Generation (3-G) value-added services such as e-mail, video and conference calling over both fixed line and cellular networks, resulted in an enormous infrastructural investment as towers are added to the network, and existing towers upgraded. Ruth Teer-Tomaselli documented much of this expansion, while conducting an independent survey of cell phone towers along the road to the Park in July 2005. By 2006 the entire route between Andriesvale and the park will be serviced by the cellular network.

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# Where Global Contradictions Are Sharpest ~ Reverse Cultural Studies: Field Methods, Power Relations and 4X4s



*When you visit Africa, be careful. It is an extremely dangerous place: you will lose your soul to it forever.*

Boesman ('Bushman') (Safari brochure 2001)

When we arrived at dusk at Ngwatle in July 2004, we saw a 4X4 sporting the sign, 'The Jesus Film Project' (JFP). A number of locals were dancing on the sand to religious pop music blaring from two loudspeakers. Later that evening, five missionaries from Kimberley screened an evangelical film to approximately fifty villagers who had braved the bitter cold. It was much like passing an old-time drive-in as Mick Francis and I returned to Hukuntsi to collect two of our party who had arrived there by car. The next day, we visited the JFP missionaries who told us that they were hoping to make the Bushmen into the Children of God. Far from losing their own souls to Africa, the missionaries were hoping to claim new

ones to an indigenised kind of Christianity. The dangers confronting JFP, they told us, were witchcraft, immorality, and Satan. Our own concerns, however, were water, fuel, and time.

We learn that a different organisation, '*Serving in Mission*' (SIM), had set up a large semi-permanent camp at Ngwatle, with the aim of translating the Bible into Sesarwa (a generic of !Kung commonly spoken by the !Xoo/Basarwa of Botswana). Their camp was, however, deserted for the week we sojourned at Ngwatle. We wonder whether these messianic initiatives will have any development implications for Ngwatle. Will jobs be on offer; will Ngwatle perhaps become more permanent, lessening the threat of removal, resettlement, and the destruction of their sense of community? Only time will tell.

*A theorised diary: Making sense as we go*

This chapter offers a diary of roughly fifteen visits to the Kalahari, between 1995 and 2005. In reflecting what I learned from the field, this book (and especially this chapter) is largely composed as a theorised diary through which I:

- critically address academy-bound scholarship claiming to be studying the 'popular';
- argue for a space in cultural studies for a greater acknowledgement of fieldwork done in the Third and Fourth Worlds *vis-à-vis* theory development in the Western metropolises;
- develop a multi-layered narrative through the main text supported by extensive illustrative and explanatory footnotes. I attempt to forge a space in the global publications industry for the kinds of cultural studies done in Africa, in which texture and experience are as important as theory, in which human agency is described and recognised, in which individuals have voices and personalities (cf. Wright 1998; Stanton 2000; Tomaselli 1998; Bozzoli 1987). Contradictions at the centre are usually much sharper in societies where scrambled developmental periodisations are the norm (Chapters 2-4); I also intend to:
  - offer some passing comments on how media globalisation impacts Third and Fourth World societies, and how local ontologies are articulated into notions of 'science', 'conservation' and 'preservation' (Chapters 5 and 6).
  - argue for an approach to cultural studies in Africa which starts from the signs and codes of Africans themselves, one which critically engages Western thought shops which impose themselves on local discursive contours in complete disdain for, and/or ignorance of, indigenous ways of making sense, coping and doing.

### *Post-millennium cultural studies: Getting dirty*

For me, post-millennium cultural studies largely conjure up images of highly educated, extraordinarily articulate scholars at work in their offices, often over-theorising their arguments, and conversing via well-rehearsed exquisite performances in air-conditioned First World conference environments. Amongst these are a few academic celebrities who charge high appearance fees on the conference and lecture circuits. These are the 'scholarcrats' of the international 'academocracy' who often pour scorn on fieldworkers who write about their research experiences in terms of arrival tropes, environmental hardships, and basic survival in remote and often dangerous places. As will become clear, the grassroots informants of many of these now generalized presentations and books also want payment and royalties, recognition for the knowledge they have imparted. Belinda Kruiper commented, for example, that without Ouma Una!, the linguistic studies of the ≠Khomani language would be nothing (25 July 2001). 'Ouma Una! is now dead and has lost control of her knowledge', lamented Belinda. How knowledge is recorded, archived and copyrighted is a key element of our field research. How it is used and abused is also a pertinent question. Who gets to own indigenous knowledge and benefit from it is of concern to both informants and researchers.

When selecting students to visit Ngwatle Pan in south central Botswana, I make it known from the outset that the temperatures are extreme, sometimes sub-zero at night and early morning in winter, and 40 degrees plus Celsius during summer days. And when the wind blows it is extremely unpleasant at any temperature. Scorpions and snakes are ever-present, though malaria has receded. Students are informed that the nearest primary clinic from Ngwatle is 47 kms away, between one and three hours drive, depending on the condition of the tracks. Our food and water intake depends on the number of vehicles in the convoy, and getting there could take two or three days driving time. The water ration, whatever the season, is only five litres a day (for washing, drinking and cooking). At this point the less adventurous drop out, realising that five litres is less than a single flush of a lavatory cistern. Moreover, there are no lavatories where we are camping.

*Waar kan ek 'n draai loop?* translated literally means, 'Where can I walk a turn?' This is a phrase understood only by Afrikaans speakers. One of Nelia Oets' friends once caused much confusion by asking this question of a local man for directions to the local public convenience. This misunderstanding became a metaphor for



our sojourns, as we summed up and tried to make sense of all the conflicting information given to us by all of our sources. 'Walking a turn' on our travels means finding a suitable patch of sand, behind a bush, and away from the campsite. In April 1995, my hygiene-obsessed mother asked if we were staying in a hotel. My 11-year-old daughter Charlize[i] replied, 'No, we are camping'. Her grandmother probed, 'Oh, are there ablution blocks at the camping site?' 'No', replied Charlize, 'there is no camping site and there are no bathrooms'. 'Oh dear', grandmother responded, 'how do you go to the toilet?' (This is perhaps an unasked question, which fascinates most Western tourists visiting the Third and Fourth Worlds.) Charlize went to the 4X4 Nissan Sani and returned with a spade and a toilet roll. By this time, her grandmother was speechless.[ii]

I mention this lavatorial anecdote not to dwell upon the hardships of fieldwork, but to point out that when cultural studies scholars talk about studying the 'popular', this refers mainly to relatively sanitised and developed First World spaces, places and people, where daily conveniences and luxuries taken as the norm by researchers, are simply beyond the experience of most of the world's impoverished population. Even five litres of water, drawn from the 240 transported by us, in and on our 4X4s to Ngwatle, could mean the difference between life and death. When we drove to the hunting grounds during the 1995 and 1999 visits, the hunters told us about how they nearly died of thirst at various places. They told of how they struggled to find the plastic water containers that they had stored in trees along the way and at the Pan. In the week after our July 2000 trip, no water was to be found in Ukhwi,[iii] one of the three KD/1 settlements. In July 2002 we videoed the goats, horses and donkeys as they tried to climb into and onto the water truck as it emptied 10,000 litres into the empty tank at Ngwatle. On arriving in July 2003, we observed that the remaining water tank was not on its concrete pedestal. It had been blown off its base, and water had not been delivered for many days. The borehole piping had still not been installed. Kort-Jan (Baba) Nxai asked us to donate spare water to them when we departed. We were already short on water rations because of the size of our party that year: thirteen in all. This water shortage is the obverse of the Andriesvale Molopo Kalahari Lodge's advertising catchphrase, '*An Oasis in the Kalahari Desert*'. The Lodge might be an oasis in summer, but it was until 2005 unheated in winter, and the water's chemical composition makes it taste and feel like soap. When the water did arrive at Ngwatle, it was decanted into two new large tanks located in the pre-primary school ground. Pedris Motshabise told us that they

would be empty by day's end as all of the people and animals would fill up on water. Thirst is a constant problem.

Celebrity[iv] scholars rarely permit the messy details to get in the way of their well-crafted, wonderfully manicured cultural studies patois in which they appear to be negotiating their own subjectivities and self-identity as much as anything else. In contrast, field researchers are often confronted by the facts which are disparaged by the theorists: vehicle breakdowns in the middle of nowhere; subject-communities destroyed by structural and political conditions beyond their and the researchers' control; and student researchers who, unable to cope with poverty and degradation on mass, or even small scales, unadvisedly take on the liberal guilt of centuries of Western colonialism. Some of these white middle class students have been known to accuse their research leaders of all kinds of exploitation, as if their professors' class determination alone is the cause of these terrible, historically derived, structurally induced conditions.[v] This is one response to field trips that is not often discussed in the scholarly literature. My own initial naiveté was in not realising how cocooned some of my black and white students were from the material realities of most rural Africans. One international student complained about the stench in a long drop built for the Ngwatle pre-primary school, for example. How to deal with this encounter between petty bourgeois students and the desert *Lumpenproletariat* is partly resolved by seminars held prior to visits. Yet, their shouts of joy when we arrive at a camp site with hot showers and flushing toilets, after a week in the bush, is indicative of just how difficult it is for them to live like the other - even for a short period.

The 'hardships', about which so many American visitors to 'Africa' complain, are unimaginable luxuries for many of our subject-communities (limited or no access whatsoever to phones, TV, medical care, heaters and air-conditioning!). Two American women from Boston, whom we interviewed at the Safaris Botswana Bound (SBB) luxury tented camp at Kaa in 2001, were delighted with the solar powered amenities provided for them by the company. They had taken every 'shot' imaginable to protect themselves from diseases that did not even exist in the areas they were visiting. In addition, they made no distinction between Tanzania, Victoria Falls, Johannesburg or southern Botswana, where their husbands had hunted, or through which they had passed, to get to Kaa. One had even brought a packet of mayonnaise with her, fearing that this product would not be available in Africa. (In 2004, we learned that mayonnaise is included in the

'destitute rations' to five Ngwatle orphans.) They asked if we were from 'AAAfrica'. The tented camp at Kaa was home from home. But they did complain about the 11- and 18-hour flights it had taken them to get to Johannesburg from Europe and New York respectively, and then about the shorter hops, and finally the four hours on an open 4X4 to get to the camp. (Belinda Kruiper pointed out that it sometimes took six hours by donkey cart[vi] to get from Blinkwater to Welkom, five or six kilometres away, or to get to a reception area for her cell phone.) Getting anywhere in Africa takes time and effort, and both donkeys and motor vehicles can be temperamental.

Despite the reified position taken by many postmodern literary critics, poverty and hardship cannot be easily reduced to a 'text'. Few in the Kalahari read, and even if they can read, they don't get much to read - although JFP distributed small booklets at Ngwatle from 2004 onward. However, a small and tatty Tswana Bible lay discarded in the sand and muck outside one well-to-do homestead, which doubled as a *shebeen* (informal drinking place). Newspapers and magazines are used for making cigarettes or pipes, and for toilet paper. Hunger is real, malnutrition is debilitating, and thirst is excruciating. Inappropriate development strategies are sometimes the cause, as Belinda Kruiper told us when we visited her at Welkom on 20 July 2001. The pleasure of 'writerly texts' has nothing in common with the pleasure of a full stomach, of a successful hunt, and of bringing home the meat. The context of my own film making and academic work has largely been conducted in terms of human rights, whether critiquing the apartheid film industry from a political economy perspective, or in discussing issues relating to the San. This orientation has sometimes drawn stinging attacks from those who prefer that I elevate Form over content, Text over context, and their pleasure of reading over 'the popular's' daily struggle for survival, democracy, human rights and dignity (cf. Willoughby 1991).

Perhaps this chapter might qualify as a 'writerly text', or a 'readerly' one after all. Norman Denzin, the editor of *Cultural Studies - Critical Methodologies*,[vii] told me that he could 'smell the dust' when reading this story in an earlier incarnation. Then the British publishing company, Sage, Americanised my spelling, expression and punctuation. In addition to this, they edited out some of my more pungent comments on Derrida and Foucault, thereby vitiating my South African inflections, and removing some of the 'dust' from my expression composed and typed on my laptop in my Nissan Sani, in the bush, at camping sites and hotels.

Mary Lange (2003a) similarly commented about the US copy editor's lack of understanding of local connotations relating to the word 'Bantu', for example. The editor had substituted 'Bantu' for 'black', not realising that Bantu in South Africa carried with it negative apartheid connotations. I too had negotiated with the editor about my use of lower case 'w' and 'b' when referring to whites and blacks. These had been converted into capitals. I explained that in apartheid semantic engineering, the use of capitals had been part of the discursive weaponry used to objectify races and legitimise racism (Tomaselli, Tomaselli and Louw 1989). The editor's response was that this was what the APA (American Psychological Association) system required. She agreed to use lower case where I had indicated, but on publication the capitals remained, thus stylistically implicating me in the very racial objectification I had fought so hard to oppose. **[viii]**

### *Doing fieldwork around the 4X4*

*The (Land Rover) Discovery is Britain's most significant contribution to good posture. Even if the driver is four foot six he is tall behind the wheel of a Disco. No opportunity is lost as this superlative 4X4 cruises around the most expensive malls (...)*

*(Andrew St Pierre White, The Psyche of 4X4 Drivers, (A Nissan Sani website)*

I wrote the original article as four students and I were holed up in a dusty Botswana crossroads in July 2000 (Tomaselli 2001a). Jwaneng sits on the world's largest diamond deposit, mined by the Anglo American Debswana Company. **[ix]** Anglo is a South African conglomerate listed in the Fortune 500 and is seemingly implicated in attempts by the Botswana government to dispossess communities from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) (Good 2003).

In writing this diary I need to distinguish between the continuous present (the Jwaneng story in 2000) and our other experiences both before and after this event. From this point on, I will write about our 1995, 1999 and 2001-2004 trips in the past tense, retaining present tense for the 2000 experience.

When announcing that she would be joining the 2002 visit to Ngwatle in my Nissan Sani, Mary Lange asked: 'Yes, but what are you coming back in?' (The Southern African 4X4 fraternity dismissed the Sani as a 'soft' vehicle, lacking machismo and durability.) This joke was told to me two years after my Sani had broken down in the Kalahari. In July 2000, Jwaneng Motors is stripping and

repairing the Sani. Fortunately, the engine stalled near a Government Department of Transport road camp, at the Sekoma crossroads. No one at the camp was interested in our problem, even when two of our Tswana-speaking students, Jeffrey Sehume and Gibson Boloka, spoke to them in Botswana's official language (alongside English). The workers pointed to where a mechanic lived but declined to drive us to him. Sehume and Boloka walked four kilometres only to learn that the mechanic was elsewhere. On returning, they went to the settlement's only shop/bar and bumped into a passing mechanic from the Botswana Agricultural College. Phatudi brought them back and checked our vehicle, while drinking Castle Lager. **[x]** A faulty spark plug might be the problem, he concluded. Off he went with Jeffery and Gibson in his Toyota 4X4 - someone in this remote rural area must surely have an old plug. They returned an hour later with another three passengers. They were members of the local *kgotla* (Tswana - 'council') and were clutching three old plugs and more cans of Castle. The three *kgotla* members had been playing pool in the shop/bar. No one at the road camp had yet taken any notice of us. **[xi]** Jeffrey suggests that Botswanans, known for their 'surliness', are 'kind hearted, but not light-hearted'. The five kind hearts are huddled over the Sani's engine, all entertained/frustrated by the diagnostic process, while Anthea Simões constructs sculptures in the sand and Caleb Wang reads poetry. I suggest that this is a good time for him to catch up on reading for our Ngwatle visit.

An abiding image of West and East Africa, apart from ungainly heavily loaded roof racks (as is the case with our Sani) is all manner of vehicles being fixed by groups of amateur mechanics on the side of the road. The mechanic tells us that the plug is not the problem; it is much more serious. We need a tow back to Jwaneng. We then phone the Automobile Association (AA), from one of the two phones (card and coin) serving the district. Because it is night, we flag down every passing vehicle with a torch, most of which turn out to be 18-wheeler freight trucks hurtling through the newly opened Trans-Kalahari Highway. Not one stops. Eventually a 4X4 with an exhausted German tourist couple draws up to ask us where they could camp. We tell them the next camping site is 300 kms north, or 84 kms back. This is a road construction camp, not a tourist spot. They drive away slowly, shaking their heads. I think of the many clothes and shoes stuffed into every nook and cranny in and on the Sani. We are hoping to give these in exchange for camping rights to the poor Ngwatle community to help them ward off the winter cold. The AA-van arrives three hours after the telephone call.

Jeffrey rides in the AA-van, which tows the remaining team in the Sani. He tells us, after we get to Jwaneng, that the AA mechanic talked incessantly to his girlfriend on his Association's cell phone for much of the two-hour haul back to Jwaneng Motors. Is this perhaps why I have to pay an outrageous fee for the tow? (I was incorrectly told that I could claim back a portion of the fee from the AA in South Africa.) I insist that the Sani be parked where the petrol attendants can watch it - packed as it is to the hilt. The AA-man says not to worry: 'There's no crime here'. Coming from South Africa - the murder, rape, mugging and car hijacking capital of the world - we are disbelieving. Seven days later, we leave Jwaneng without a single item missing. This reminds Jeffrey, Gibson and myself of the 18-wheeler furniture truck we came across in June 1999, shortly after it had overturned on the Trans-Kalahari Highway on the way to Ghantsi. The goat herder who had caused the truck to swerve, had no inkling, or concern, that the accident was due to his animals crossing the road without looking for oncoming traffic. He carried on as if nothing had happened. Life in the fast lane simply did not connect with his slow mundane herding existence. The furniture that had spewed out of the truck was still lying next to it a week later when we returned. In 2001, at the Ngwatle campsite, one of the first-time student visitors fastidiously locked his luggage in the Sani on his first night. He would not believe that nothing would get stolen, not even our alcohol or money, notwithstanding the extreme poverty of the community. Gibson later remarks that he now knows that poverty does not necessarily lead to crime.

However, one early morning in 2003, our camp was raided, and an entire bag of oranges and some smoked venison stolen. Later that day we noticed the oranges being traded within the community. That night we secured our perishables, and chased away foraging dogs, goats and donkeys. On discussing the disappearance of our food with our informants, we were told that the thieves might have been those '*slegte Boesmanne wat Tswanataal praat*' ('degenerate Bushmen who speak Tswana'), whose abodes were near our camp. Only the food was taken; the beer, wine and sodas were left untouched. We decided next time to take locks but we neglected to follow our own advice and one night, dogs ate an entire cooler bag of cheese. In July 2003, Belinda told us that new people claiming to be Bushmen were moving into the Witdraai area and that nothing was safe anymore. In July 2004, in rural Botswana, we noticed that public buildings now have burglar bars. In January 2005, we learned about recent armed robberies in Maun and Shakawa, blamed on Zimbabwean refugees by the local Botswanans. Like the thousands of

elephants that have fled that strife-torn country into the Chobe Game Reserve, Botswanans were now also feeling the cold criminal chill.

The extraordinarily expensive and run-down Mokala Lodge next to Jwaneng Motors, where we are staying, boasts state-of-the-art integrated showers and taps, badly installed, and often the wrong way around. 'Blue' indicates 'hot' water; 'red' indicates 'cold'. The idea of 'reverse cultural studies' came to me while I was having a bath in our room. At the <sup>1</sup>Khomani *Tentepark* ('camp site') at Witdraai in the Northern Cape, the blue and red on the taps in the shower and basin only spewed lukewarm water. **[xii]** Similarly, when I was at Johannesburg International Airport in October 1999, one of the public phones identified the card phone as coin and the coin phone as card. In July 2002, the Witdraai public phones at the entrance to the Molopo Kalahari Lodge had their own particular quirk. I used a card phone marked coin, and asked my Administrator in Durban to call me back. Her reply rang the coin phone on the other side, which had a one digit number difference. I now remember a PhD anthropology student from Cape Town, telling me on my arrival in North Carolina in January 1990, about directional arrows at traffic intersections. He found it incredible that when the lights changed to green, the car in the left lane turned left, the car in the centre went straight, and the vehicle in the right lane turned right, each obeying the three respective arrows. This student had been in the US for two years and still had not fathomed why American drivers followed the arrows, even though the rules are similar in South Africa. (Perhaps this is one reason why our road accident rate is amongst the highest in the world.) But Kort-Jan Nxai, an illiterate hunter, joking about having travelled said, 'I've been around. I know what a robot (traffic light) is. When it's red it means you must stop. When it's blue (i.e. green) it means you can go. I'm not like the other Bushmen. When they see red they think it's meat, the blood in the meat, and they go, and they will, bang, get knocked over just like that!' (July 2004).

There is no consistency of signs and signifiers in Africa. Conventional Western signification is often reversed, if not totally confused in the doing, installation, and in the reading. Doing fieldwork in Africa often locates one in a kind of reversibility and liminality - nothing is as it seems - while what is is what is. Researchers are constantly 'walking turns', inappropriately looking for forms of logic that do not exist in the behaviour of the popular. The SBB-camp had circumscribed the reversibility of the bush by providing solar power, Western

food (along with re-textured African cuisine), proper beds, sheets, blankets and bathrooms in their tents. *AAAfrica* was the same in Tanzania, where similar amenities had been previously provided by one of the hunter-husbands of the two women.**[xiii]** That's why they knew they would cope. McDonaldisation indicates stability, predictability, and assurance.

Reverse signification occurs partly because the African labourers who install plumbing, telecoms and electrical devices do not always have the wherewithal to purchase or use them, or do not understand the colour and spatial codes of the West. Or, they don't care. Apartheid's white supervisors hardly ever got it right either, mainly because blacks had the technical skills, while the incompetent, ill-educated white labour aristocracy had the supervisory power, and didn't care either.**[xiv]** It is also partly because indigenous forms of reasoning often subvert Cartesian logic. These tend to operate on circular, cyclical and non-linear patterns without the clear dichotomies found in industrialized societies (Masolo 1994; Tempels 1959). Heaven/hell, God/Satan, and saved/lost are binaries that clash with the African concept of ancestors, ancestor worship, and the ancestors being amongst us (cf. Kasoma 1996). The collision of these different forms of reasoning often has bizarre results which none of the parties in the encounter can easily comprehend. In the context of this discussion at Jwaneng, Jeffrey reminds us that Stuart Hall's (1981) encoding/decoding model has little validity under these conditions (cf. Conquergood 1986).**[xv]**

The new Lodge manager and his girlfriend have been in Jwaneng for just four days. They are fixing the plumbing, getting the TV-sets to work, gardening and cleaning. They call a meeting to persuade the staff to improve service. The service gets worse even as the receptionist tells us that the Lodge is now 'customer-driven'. I ask who owns the parked Mercedes. 'The owner', I am told. He is doing okay even if the Lodge is in need of major refurbishment and urgent staff training. The new manager, embarrassed at the exorbitant room prices, takes pity on us and, on the condition that all five of us share one twin bedroom, he charges us for only two guests each day. Every day it's a lottery to see which two get to qualify for the hotel breakfast, not much better, but vastly more expensive than the local eating houses in the strip mall across the road. A Lodge questionnaire asks: 'If we were not the only restaurant in town, on today's (sic) performance would you return?' When we returned a year later, in July 2001, the receptionist was no longer there, and neither was the manager nor his girlfriend. We were



disappointed, but pleased that some improvements had survived their departure. Perhaps they had worked too hard and threatened the owner's complacency and his insistence that his family be employed no matter their skill or performance levels? By 2004, the Trans-Kalahari Highway had made the construction of a second lodge at Jwaneng viable, and we also noted the massive expansion of the Mokala Lodge itself.

Instead of contemplating our navels as the Sani is stripped in the garage, we help the two mechanics. I am initially concerned as they ask me for my tools. We later learn that neither of them had ever worked on an engine that size - and that they were as apprehensive as were we! The engine is progressively stripped in three different places: the forecourt, the outside workshop, and eventually in the garage itself. My now flat battery is switched with another belonging to a policeman's vehicle. We'll get it back later, one of the mechanics, Wafula, tells us. We never do. It gave up the ghost the night before we were to return to Ngwatle in 2001. I hoped that this was not a sign from the gods on the portents of our forthcoming trip. I bought a new, much bigger battery, and fitted a split battery charger system and inverter, which would not run down or blow fuses when I recharged my laptop, lights, cameras, fridge, and other equipment from the cigarette lighter.

It takes another day to fetch the spare parts, from a variety of places and towns, and two more days to reassemble the engine. We begin to wonder if we will ever get to our destination - or home again. So we start looking for individuals with San features in Jwaneng. One woman working at the Lodge assures us that she is from 'here', and that she is a Tswana. In the Lodge reception is a calendar. The calendar's montage contains pictures of various Botswanan presidents. Happy children's faces are contained within a map of Botswana with a caption stating that they are 'our future'. A vignette of President Bill Clinton, standing in a safari truck in the Okavango swamps, shows him pouting for the camera rather than observing the elephants behind him. He is not an average tourist. Elephants, not cameras, are what most tourists have come to see in this land of Eden. Clinton comes to see the camera - or perhaps the camera comes to see Clinton? The calendar, issued by a chemical company, also sports a picture of a group of naked dancing Bushmen, labelled 'Traditional Dancing'.**[xvi]** Is this as close as we will get to the San?**[xvii]** A local hairdresser tells Anthea of a woman who once maintained that she was a 'Bushman'. Is this response indicative of identity

politics in Botswana? We think of talking to the garage pump attendants, who have some San features. Is this wishful thinking perhaps? Or, are we simply and opportunistically trying to create the object of our study? Maybe we will be able to justify our grant after all! I tell the students about a book called *The Innocent Anthropologist* (Barley 1983), where the author writes about his year-long run-in with bureaucracy when trying to get a permit to study a remote village in Cameroon. He never gets there. How will he explain this to his funders? It's a false relief for us.

We actually need to get to Ngwatle, where we have been twice previously (Boloka 2001). So, we decide to write this and other papers to justify my research grant, hoping that Ngwatle, a mere 350 kms away, will be eventually reached. I send the students out from the Lodge to undertake micro-ethnographies of the Jwaneng shopping area. Caleb does an olfactory semiotics, and Gibson helps the mechanics. Here are topics, which will intrigue and possibly bewilder the Faculty's Higher Degree and Research Committee! Caleb, on submitting his olfactory study to a local journal, is told to use Umberto Eco, rather than C.S. Peirce, in developing his phaneroscopic table derived from my own work (Tomaselli 1999b: 37). In literary circles, Eco obviously has a higher ranking than Peirce, and certainly myself. Caleb's paper was later published without modification in a specialist semiotics journal (Wang 2002). We run seminars every day in the Lodge's dining room. How can we justify experiential knowledge? Form, derived from the preferred gurus, rules theory we conclude.

While in Jwaneng, we eat where and what the locals eat - much to their amazement and delight. The food is basic, filling and because it is cheap, eating here twice daily will help limit the project's spiralling accommodation and subsistence budget deficit. We think of requesting a frequent dining card. The owner of the Menoa Masweu take away is unaware of this customer loyalty device, but he does have a computerized cash register. The cashier goes to great lengths to write up receipts that I can submit to the University's Finance Division. We feed the mechanics breakfast and supper. Wafula Nerubucha is a Kenyan and Richard is a Zambian, both doing sterling voluntary overtime. Their mission is to fix my Sani.

### *Soccer, digitalisation and markets*

We punctuate our days talking to the mechanics as they work and explain what they are doing. On TV, the South African cricket and rugby teams are trounced in

Sri Lanka and Australia respectively. The hotel room television offers only a fuzzy picture that keeps losing the satellite feed, irritating the manager, a rugby enthusiast. We learn from extended news leads on all three South African public service channels that South Africa was not awarded the 2006 Soccer World Cup Bid. Nothing seems to be going right. To us, stuck in another country, South Africans seem obsessively fixated on failing to secure the bid, and on looking for conspiracies on the part of the six-nation Oceania delegate from New Zealand who abstained, thereby ensuring that Germany wins by one vote. The media inexplicably fastens on this single beleaguered delegate rather than targeting the majority who voted against South Africa. The New Zealand Foreign Minister apologises to South Africa and his ambassador in Pretoria complains about abusive telephone calls. South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki insists that relations between the two countries will not be harmed. The South Africans have requested an international inquiry. This continues for days on end and resembles the repetitive and self-indulgent tedium of US presidential election coverage. Africa has been spurned yet again by the racist west; scream the South African media (*Mail and Guardian*, 7-13 July, 2000: 24). A South African brokerage firm comments that 'the market' has responded negatively. South Africa is thereby punished for losing the bid. The Third World is always being punished by the West's financial institutions for failing, for not playing ball, and for being unable to compete globally. We live at the mercy of the world's financial markets. South Africa, however, won the bid in 2004 for the 2010 event, despite the lack of support of many African FIFA-delegates. This time, South Africans looking to attribute blame demonised a hapless Botswanan delegate of Indian extraction. I ask myself if South Africa is becoming the imperialist of Africa. Are we becoming like Americans? In 2004, the press ran articles on the still beleaguered Oceania delegate who stalled the earlier bid. Perhaps the South African bid committee should 'walk a turn', contemplate their arrogance, and shit for a while.

In June 2000, we remember a sign at the Botswana border post warning visitors that corruption is not tolerated. After our return in January 2005, I found a package addressed to me personally from the Office of the Botswana President. His Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime had sent me pamphlets and details of its education program, which includes primary schools. Why I am a recipient is not clear. But I affixed the enclosed decal to my Sani anyway. It might protect me from corrupt Botswanan traffic officials. The decal depicts a horse-drawn cart against a no-go red circle with the catchphrase: 'Don't give corruption

a ride'. Curiously, the picture looks more like an English milk cart than an African donkey cart.

Three days after the World Cup vote in 2000, we watch on TV as pandemonium erupts at Zimbabwe's Harare soccer stadium. Overly zealous fans throw bottles at South Africa's goal scorer. The Zimbabwean police react by shooting tear gas into the crowd. The game is abandoned, with players and spectators alike fleeing the continued firing of canisters. A Zimbabwean soccer official tells the TV-interviewer that 'Africa is a fishbowl, the world's looking at us to see if we can deliver; the spectators came here to enjoy a game not fight a war'. Would this have happened in the First World, we ask ourselves? No one knows how many are injured. Will Africa ever grow up, asks the official?

We just want our engine fixed. The Botswanan press barely mentions South Africa's loss of the World Cup bid, but lauds its own team's win against Madagascar. Botswana does not yet have a TV-station, but in the paper we find an advert for a professor and lecturer in media studies, to be appointed at the University of Botswana. **[xviii]** The satellite transmissions of the three SABC channels and M-Net, the now black-owned South African pay-TV channel, which we watch in our Jwaneng Lodge room, are constantly interrupted by a message headed 'Analogue to Digital Exchange' - 'If you don't get your new subsidized digital decoder now you will have to pay full price after October 31st' (2000). The accent of the voice-over is white South African. Is this multiracial post-apartheid imperialism at work, I muse? Some of my more deterministic political economy colleagues would think so. This notice interrupts just about all important news items and other programs during the six days we intermittently watch TV.

### *Discouraging productivity*

*They don't want to work.*

*(Manager, Molopo Lodge 2002, on the Witdraai ≠Khomani)*

We loan a jerry can to a South African whose car ran out of petrol 30 kms away, and who had hitched into Jwaneng and found us at the garage. He works for a laser printer refill company. His colleague, still in the car, is missing a leg, lost when hit by a petrol tanker while cycling. They give Wafula a lift to Gabarone to fetch some spare parts. We watch as Wafula, holding the two Sani cylinder heads on his lap and sitting on a cushion where the back seat should be, is driven off in

a clearly unroadworthy vehicle. I wonder if I will ever see my cash and cylinder heads again. My students reassure me. Wafula returns a day late with the spares. My students are cleaning the engine. Caleb is learning to use a new digital video camera. He is chased away by some of the hawkers who do not want to be videoed. In 2001, at Tsabong, Darryn tried to take a photo of a man on a camel in the parking lot of a small shopping centre. He was warned off by the rider, 'Hey bra, [xix] pula talks!' In 2004, the manager of Kutse Lodge told us that we must get permission to take a photo of the hotel. Isn't tourism partly about taking pictures, I asked a local Botswana man in 2001. He agreed and was unable to explain why some Botswanans object to their pictures being taken. None of the roadside shop staff object. Perhaps they understood the value of promotion, or maybe they wanted to be famous. In 2004 at Ngwatle, Charlize learned that a digital camera was acceptable, but a film camera was not. She mused that digital cameras enable interactivity; the subjects can see themselves immediately, whereas a film camera is remote, alienating and mysterious. In the Central Kalahari Game Park (January 2005) we interviewed residents of two villages who were being hounded out of the Park by the government. They were more than happy to talk to the camera in the hope that their pleas for domicile restitution would be recorded. But they refused to criticise the government, having been so warned by visiting officials. We listened apprehensively for approaching vehicles while we videoed.

Wafula, I am told by Jeffrey, has a philosophy on cars, Botswanans and society in general - since we are stuck here we should be interviewing him. Wafula has been in Jwaneng for two weeks. He was retrenched in Kenya, eight months earlier, from his job as a quality controller in a vehicle assembly motor plant. We are sad that he lost his managerial job but we are pleased that he is working on the Sani, especially as he has a Higher Diploma in Automotive Engineering. He has also worked as a desert rally mechanic. His approach is deductive, systematic and contemplative. Wafula also has a teacher's diploma, and regales us during supper with stories about his inability to write 500-word-essays. Calculus and calculations are his forté. He thinks Botswanans are lazy and lethargic and sets the standard with his Zambian colleague by working 18 hours a day. I worry that they are not getting enough sleep or food. Wafula asks me if Natal University has a distance learning section; he wants to study management, as being an engineer limits one's upward mobility. The following year I invited Wafula to Durban, and liaised with my Nissan service station on the possibilities of his employment

there. I suspect that he got a job *en route* as he never showed up.

We have attracted a lot of attention since our arrival. The playschool children next to the garage tell us that they really like the 'big car'. They show us theirs - steering wheels connected by a pipe to a rubber wheel, which they push and pull around the playground - metonymy in action. **[xx]** Caleb also fascinates the locals - a white person walking barefoot (in the middle of winter) is exotic behaviour - most black adults wear shoes all year round. Once, in Johannesburg, I was refused a credit card application because a colleague had applied the week before, barefoot! I think of signs I have seen at the entrances to US shopping malls: 'No shoes, no shirt, no service'. The two Americans on our 2003 trip, Matthew and Laura Durlington, told me that they have noticed this lack of dress in the best upmarket Durban shopping centres. They speculated on whether the laxity here was due to our less litigious culture.

The Jwaneng Motors manager seems uncomfortable with the professionalism and productivity of the two mechanics. We later learn that he employs neither. They have declined a low salary offer and prefer to work independently, using the garage's facilities. The Kenyan manager instructs the mechanics to curtail their hours of work and locks them out of his small house where they are living, sharing a bedroom and a single bed. On another night at 9.30 pm, he turns up at the garage in his pyjamas demanding that they cease working. They are employed by the manager to work on his car, not mine. So, they fix his car at 5.30 am the next morning. I wonder about my legal status as a 'client', and whether the mechanics will get paid at all.

I remember my own professional experience as an employee in the film industry. Initiative tended to be distrusted by the company's chairman. In the mid-1970s, covert and overt surveillance of my daily expenditure, correspondence, telephone calls, and movement, was the result of my instituting cost saving measures, and working 18 hours a day including weekends, to help a new company get onto its feet. The owner refused to pay service providers until sued. Months later he would whip out his cheque book on the steps of the Supreme Court and sign, deducting ten per cent for cash (sic). Thus were productivity and company income impeded, national economies stifled, and competitiveness destroyed. Is this business practice in reverse? The broader African response is to blame the West for its resulting woes, not itself. Botswana, however, is a wealthy country - diamonds, cattle and ludicrously expensive safari tourism - which, with a small

population, means that employed people don't have to work very hard, though poverty is rife.

For the Kruipers at Witdraai, who rank amongst the highest profiles in world media on indigenous peoples, 'talking is our profession', Anna Festus told Simões (2001a). Actually getting things done may be less important. Millions have poured through their hands, yet they remain visibly and horribly destitute. They complain that everyone with whom they have had business partnerships has ripped them off, though they do comment positively on the help they have received from these same individuals. In 2001, I warned my students camping at Witdraai to be ready to pay for seemingly friendly encounters with the traditional <sup>1</sup>Khomani, or to curtail such interactions if they did not have any money with them, or didn't want their casual conversations with passers-by commodified. Sure enough, Caleb and Darryn returned to camp with a story of one such encounter. The traditional <sup>1</sup>Khomani have managed to commodify casual face-to-face conversation in the bush, which for big capital requires a phone, videoconference or other technology and signal distribution system. Just how real can this 'Unforgettable Kalahari experience' be? (Witdraai pamphlet).**[xxi]**

'Can I pay Jwaneng Motors by MasterCard as I am running out of pula?' My question is met with a cautious 'yes' from the manager, who tests me anyway by insisting that I pay cash for the parts which have to be fetched from Gaborone, 157 kms away. He drives us to the South African-owned First National Bank where I draw the money. A few days later I phone my wife, Ruth, and ask her to ensure that my credit card account is liquid. When I do pay I tell the students that the huge repair bills will have to be borne by myself. If my research grant covers these costs I get taxed at the marginal rate of 43 per cent. I bite the bullet and cough up. Academics are the only class of professional in South Africa who were forced to pay tax on expenditure in pursuit of their profession. When some of my colleagues at the University of Natal were faced with this double taxation after 1998, they simply stopped doing field research and even private contract work.**[xxii]** I think of the economic consequences for the Ngwatle community of my following suit. In 2003, the community had already started wondering when we would arrive, as we were, at that time, its only regular buyers of their crafts.

In contrast to Ngwatle, the community at the repossessed farmhouse in Erin, Northern Cape, is a hive of cottage industry activity. While I was waiting in 2002 for Nelia to conclude an interview with Rosa Meintjies, I observed adults cooking,

washing clothes, painting linen and making duvets and pillowslips. Teenage children were scrubbing shoes, raking the sand outside the house, and the younger ones who could count were manning the craft stalls at the roadside (when not at school). Only the toddlers were not working, playing with their homemade toys. The community also sold its wares at a trading store in a village 14 kms south, and were very impressed when Nelia gave them an order for a queen size duvet. An official order! We also learned from a *SASI Annual Report*, and via the grapevine, that the area had become a conduit for narcotics and that domestic violence was not unknown. I wonder how Erin's TV-set, VCR and music centre were paid for? I am hopeful that it was from the proceeds of their vibrant cottage industry.

Apart from filmmaker Rob Waldron, **[xxiii]** between 1995 and early 2000, we were the only visitors to the jobless, displaced and poverty-stricken Ngwatle community, though the situation was looking better in July 2004. Bookkeeping procedures and institutional financial practices have no way of quantifying or understanding hunger; though readerly texts might provide some emotive insights on what hunger feels like. After all, Richard Hoggart (1959) does argue that literature, like social science, is a way of knowing. Literature is particularly good at re-creating a sense of 'being there' (Peirce, not Eco). Fiona Archer, who accompanied us in 2003, admonished us for not drinking the remnants of water in our mugs, reminding us that the villagers and donkeys were dehydrating for the lack of it. Others of our party regularly washed their clothes, seemingly oblivious of the broader camp intention to donate as much water as possible to our informants on our departure.

Few of the Ngwatle people wash regularly because water is for drinking - by people, donkeys, goats, horses, and dogs. (In 2001 and 2004 there were cattle as well.) **[xxiv]** Dogs are underfed and mistreated animals used for hunting. In civilization, at the Mokala Lodge in 2000 where the supply of water is not a problem, our few clothes are beginning to reek, and Lodge guests are looking at us askance. Part of this response, however, might be our group's composition: two white men, one white woman, and two black men. The Lodge's reception staff couldn't initially understand why we suggested staying in one room late on the first night, all the other rooms being occupied. The racial and gender composition suggested that we were from two or three separate parties which had arrived simultaneously.



The two Tswana-speakers amongst us broke previous social and linguistic boundaries, and the Ngwatle villagers opened up to us much more than before. We still needed banks of interpreters when trying to make sense of Tswana dialects mixed with all these languages as well as Sekgalagadi (Tswana dialect), Selala (Tswana and !Kung), Sesarwa (!Kung), and various other dialects, including Nama. On the 2003 trip, Vetkat and Belinda accompanied a four-vehicle convoy consisting of a Natal University contingent, and a group of Italians working for an environmental organisation, *Legambiente*. Introducing the two groups from geographically contiguous parts of the Kalahari, now separated by fences, passport and customs offices, and boundaries of nation-states, seemed to us to be a much more interesting project than bringing an Inuit to the Kalahari and taking a Bushman to the arctic circle as suggested by a film proposal I had been asked to read just prior to our departure. The Kruipers and Ngwatle folk instantly recognised that they spoke the same languages, Nama and Afrikaans, though their indigenous dialects differed - the Ngwatle !Xoo speak to each other mainly in !Kung, whereas the <sup>1</sup>Khomani language, N/u, has hardly survived at all. The !Xoo, who attract little anthropological, and no media, attention, had told the missionaries that other Botswanans call them 'undesirables'. The Kruipers imported a wonderfully essentialist narrative romanticism not really understood by the !Xoo, whose hardships of daily life inevitably focused their attention on food, water and habitat. Belinda said that the reason Kort-Jan knew of our coming was because a bird had told him. Kort-Jan had a more plausible explanation: it was winter, the *sterre* ('stars' - milky way) were bright, and that's when we usually came. Just the previous week, he had asked Miriam (Masebene) Motshabise when we would come; she had replied, 'This week or next week'.

The next section attempts to develop a theory to explain this kind of essentialist/materialist category confusion.

### *Theoreticism: Cultural studies critiqued*

In July 2000, we discuss two articles during our morning seminars at the Mokala Lodge. One is by Gareth Stanton (2000), an extensive review of Paul Stoller's (1997) *Sensuous Ethnographies*. The other is a draft of an article on tracking by a Canadian, Ted Chamberlin (2001), whom we are supposed to meet at Witdraai, after our stint at Ngwatle. We have no idea how we will get there from Ngwatle, as there are no maps of the area. In fact, in July 2001, in both Botswana and the Northern Cape, we sketched roads and towns onto our various maps, based on

our compass observations. **[xxv]** We will rely on Jeffrey and Gibson in 2000 to get directions from the Botswanans. We never got to Witdraai on that trip because I was fearful that my vehicle would break down again, so we went home to Durban on the tar road. As it turned out, in 2001, we gave a lift to Jon-Jon Nxai. **[xxvi]** Jon-Jon worked at the SBB-camp and was able to show us the way. Every year we get different directions to Ngwatle, depending on the state of the roads, and whether the Botswana Parks officials will let us use them (being restricted mainly for their own use).

Both Stanton and Chamberlin **[xxvii]** are hostile to theoreticist cultural studies. Chamberlin, for example, argues that reading animal tracks assumes a skill similar to literacy. These are amongst a number of articles now beginning to appear in the anthropological and cultural studies literature on the value of anthropology to the field. Some question the assumption of Western Cartesian logic in studying the Other as well (Stoller 1992; Tomaselli 1999a; Muecke 1999; Stoller 1984; Young 1995; Katz *et al.* 1997). We note that Stoller claims to have become the Other; we have yet to get to the Other (on this 2000 trip). And, amongst us is the Other (the two black students) as well as the European Same (the three whites). Hence, the interest and confusion at the Lodge and the eating houses, by the German tourists, and by the two families inhabiting the two overcrowded Land Cruisers, on distinguishing who was the Other and who was the Same (see Chapter 3).

Stanton (2000; 1996) sees little point in academy-bound learning only, and draws attention to the lesser known, but much more significant, empirical studies of those anthropologists whose theoretical work has been feted by cultural studies – James Clifford (1982), Clifford Geertz (1979), Paul Rabinow (1977), and Pierre Bourdieu (1979). But it is in their fieldwork, beyond the academy and the First World, in the dust, dirt, sounds, and often obnoxious smells of the Third and Fourth Worlds, that the seminal theories of these scholars were originally forged. It is in the South and East from the North Atlantic that the most populous ‘popular’ is to be found, where ‘thick’ descriptions disrupt the neat and clean continuities of cultural studies and anthropological theoretical banquets (cf. Geertz 1983; Stanton 2000: 260; Stoller 1992). The non-European world is examined by these scholars for its conceptual use-value. Cultural studies’ tendency towards synchronic theoreticism ensures that this historically discursive Other dimension is largely erased from further analysis when abstracted into

theory in the First and Second Worlds. This is one reason why South African culturalists like Ari Sitas (1986) are so hostile towards structuralism and semiology, arguing that it inflicts analytical violence upon individuals who live and negotiate social structures. The individual, human agency and experience (in E.P. Thompson's [1968] sense) is theoretically negated by such forms of analysis.

Contemplating the idea of conceptual use-value, I now think of the reasons given by eminent Western radical and conservative scholars alike for avoiding conferences in Africa. The discomfort of only temporarily 'being here/there' is not really balanced by the use-value of the conceptual return. Unpredictability, crime, grime, foul odours, lack of air-conditioning, refrigeration[xxviii] and filter coffee, heat and dust, is discouraging. In 2003, our new post-doctoral fellow from the United States, Matthew Durlington, on a particularly unpleasant and windy day, was conducting a seminar on autoethnography with CCMS researchers in the icy and draughty Molopo Lodge lounge. He commented, 'You're sitting in an armchair in the Kalahari, not London. You're getting your hands dirty' (Durlington, 9 July 2003). He was discussing the merits and discontinuities of autoethnography in the context of what he identified as CCMS' rather episodic narrative-collecting participant observation. This he labelled a kind of 'applied cultural studies' which produces 'ethnographic epiphanies'. We talked about the Ellis and Bochner (2001) chapter on autoethnography and agreed that what differentiated our approach from theirs, was that ours does not have the appearance of fiction. Nor is it conceptually clean, but it is messy, 'just like culture' (Durlington 2003). Our narratives can be checked with our sources, with reference to dates, times and places, people, interview transcriptions, in both the language of the interview, and the English translations. Ellis and Bochner suggest that autoethnography is: ... an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal and the cultural. Back and forth autobiographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that has moved by and may move through, reject and resist cultural interpretations (2001: 739).

With *boeremusiek* (Afrikaner country music) playing in the background Matthew responded:

There is a step missing here after the 'autoethnographer' looks through a 'wide angle lens' if they truly want to call what they are doing ethnography or

anthropology or informative at all ... there must be a discussion of the political economy of the culture, the actual setting, the actual people involved and some of the participant observation which is then highlighted by 'personal experience', etc. (9 July 2003).

Matthew told us that political economy is both a lack of and an advantage in our own research. We can get away with this in cultural studies but not in anthropology, he concluded. On our 2004 visit to Ngwatle, we took along Nyambura Ganchette Njagi, a development studies MA-student, hoping to add the conventional dimension of how livelihoods are organised at Ngwatle. Her clip board and interview schedules seemingly attracted attention from the Botswanan authorities, who were apparently concerned that we might have been supporting the Bushmen in the context of the Survival International court case brought against the Botswana government with regard to its eviction of communities previously living in the CKGR. Someone in our party suggested that in 2005 we return to autoethnography so as not to again expose ourselves by doing formal survey research.

Autoethnography as discussed by Ellis and Bochner (2001), provides a beguiling justification for being descriptively self-reflective, rather than rigorously theoretical through self-reflexive, applied and empirical research. The latter is our aim, one in which we explain events and processes in terms of broader social theories and critical methodologies. The diary is merely the narrative form; the content requires as rigorous an apprehension and understanding of the empirical world as does any analysis. Later, Matthew suggested that if the subject communities find our work useful, then that's really what counts.

I remembered a meeting I had with the TV-director a few days before leaving for our 2003 trip. 'No politics!', exclaimed the producer of *Sand and Snow*, who had approached me to advise on his production where he would interface Inuit and San hunters in the Kalahari and northern Canada respectively. My point had been that the political economy of tracking and hunting in Botswana had been fundamentally linked to the safari industry, Botswana government land, (re)settlement, and national development policies, dispossession, and the second class status of Bushmen in that country after 2000. Just making the programme would have consequences for the participating communities. He needed to take these issues into account when scripting the movie (cf. Biesele and Hitchcock 1999). The metaphor of sand and snow took on a far more significant resonance in

2004 when Oyvind Mikalsen, a Norwegian studying in CCMS, linked his encounters with the <sup>1</sup>Khomani with his own Sami identity and experience. A 'white' representative of a northern First People meeting darker individuals claiming a Bushman identity generally resulted in confusion, discussion and initially, scepticism: how can this 'white' man claim to come from an oppressed, poor and marginalized group, was their recurring question. As Mikalsen (2004) suggested, things are not all that different in Europe. In his experience, '... being approached for money by a shaking drug addict in Oslo who looks more like Gollum, the creature from *Lord of the Rings*, than like a human being, is scarier and more dangerous than being stopped by anyone in Durban'.

Places where ordinary people eke out a basic existence have adapted First World inventions and behaviours to their Third World conditions. Working with TV-producers is one way of earning income, attempting to communicate their plight to the world, and exerting political leverage at a variety of levels. In 2003, the Ngwatle villagers were instructed by Botswana Parliamentarians not to 'make photos' (videos or TV-programmes), as these are then used by their makers to reveal their actual material conditions, the denial of their hunting and land rights, and the elevation of animals over people. Piet, who asked us to intercede directly with the government, supplemented these observations. Politics, as he realised, is always involved. Economy is ever-present. The enforced resettlement of the Central Kalahari Bushmen by depriving them of their livelihoods while claiming to be 'civilizing' them - is just one example of political economy (cf. Good 2003; Hitchcock 1985; IWGIA 1999-2000: 362-5). As Lesotho journalist Mkimzulu Sithetho commented on the 2005 trip, the CKGR folks have an excellent analysis of their situation. They don't need 'civilizing'.

In fact, the consequences of state policy usually contradict the advertising hype of the tourist industry, with its emphasis on peace, tranquillity, and timelessness. Tourists are able to purchase these protected, constructed, and commodified liminal 'wilderness' peace experiences, sometimes in the midst of social, cultural and political chaos, from which even the elephants flee. However, the indigenous people and Third World countries which are claimed to facilitate these states of altered environmental, psychological, and social consciousness, are themselves often cauldrons of instability, violence and poverty; ineluctably trapped in scrambled development periodisations, and irresolvable historical conditions. Overseas white hunters are charged fortunes by the Botswanan government and

safari companies for their sporting activities, while the real hunters, those who hunt to survive, are denied their individual hunting rights in order to link national economies with global consumers/hunters. A few white hunters have sole entrée to tens of thousands of square kilometres. The Ngwatle villagers seem to be in the way of this global hunting economy, which is why they tell us that the government wants them to relocate to other better-serviced settlements in the KD/1 area. In the CKGR, hunting is not permitted; but the prospecting for diamonds is. People to whom we spoke within the Park asked us to remove the now empty Fanta cans we had given them, lest the government know they interacted with passers-by. The government claims it wants to protect the villagers from the lions, but the people now use lions as part of the food chain - since they are not allowed to hunt, they follow the lions and claim their prey. The hunters have been turned into scavengers by state policy.

Survivalist micro-economies are grist to the development studies mill. But development theory is often unable to integrate the confusion of actual practice/*in situ* with the logic of development strategies. The Ngwatle villagers would get all the services they want if they relocated to Monong, Ukwi, Zutshwa, Monong or Ncaang. But such piecemeal fragmentation would shatter their deep sense of identity, of Bushmanness, of community (cf. Simões 2001a). Pedris told us that in 2003, they would move back to the Masetleng Pan, the hunting grounds, if a year-round water supply could be arranged. Many years previously, a Canadian Petrol exploration company had sunk a now disused borehole. But after 2001, this became the new playground of the great white American hunters, now the key commercial factor in the longer-term economic development of KD/1 and KD/2 in terms of national policy. In 2003, Giorgio Menchini of Legambiente tried to persuade SBB to expand its operation to include cultural elements for its members who wanted to track and hunt with the Bushmen, but not necessarily shoot anything. Thus would SBB increase its turnover - fixed by the animal quotas it bought from the Trust - but it would also provide a Bushman experience for Italians, while also helping to resuscitate Bushmen culture, simultaneously providing them a direct, if perennial income. SBB was not biting: cultural tourism means more tourists; more tourists irritate the hunters.

People on the ground have their own strategies for development. In Ngwatle, this is partly to prepare crafts for our annual visit, to sell to other passers-by, and to take on migrant labour where possible, working for the Trust, running small

informal shops (*keffietjies*) and being dependent upon government and Trust-supplied rations and pensions. In Jwaneng, a much greater degree of economic activity is possible. Informal shopping stands in Jwaneng face formal shops and South African-owned chain stores. These stands are evenly spaced along the alley from one side of the business district to the other, anchored by South African-owned First National Bank on one end, and a British Petroleum filling station with a South African franchised fast food outlet called Chicken Licken, on the other.

Jwaneng's informal shopping stands are covered with shade cloth. Each boasts a large ghetto blaster powered by a motor car battery. The hawkers sell scarves, belts, cheap jewellery, purses, make up, toiletries, sunglasses, jackets and bags. Individual stores display the same assortment of music. The music is West African, but with Tswana titles overlaid on the tape sleeves. In strolling down the alley, one's ears are assaulted sequentially by each radio-tape playing different tracks. Each stand has a wheelbarrow parked next to it. The barrows are used by the hawkers to transport their wares. They become mobile music carts as they push their still playing radio-tapes and unsold goods home, to the surrounding shiny corrugated iron shack settlements around the shopping area. At night, the music continues in these dark candle-lit abodes. The garage recharges the batteries. A laser-printed note in the workshop informs battery owners that upfront payment is now required to recover electricity costs lost when owners fail to collect if they suspect the batteries are damaged.

In Accra, Ghana, drivers can do their shopping from their cars, stuck in endless traffic jams, as street hawkers ply their goods up and down the arterial roads and intersections. This is how most people in Third World cities earn a living and do their shopping. In Durban, such vendors were prohibited in 2004. I think of my previous life as an urban geographer, constructing complex computerized mathematical consumer models of retail attraction, and how inappropriate these are in places like Jwaneng. Even post-apartheid Johannesburg, a mini-New York in its formal architecture, has the flavour of West African street markets as its hawkers jostle and struggle with formal shop owners whose customer access they impede and whose goods are cheaper and untaxed. The hawkers are often homeless and live on the street, or they are political and economic refugees from other African countries. They may even be illegal immigrants with entrepreneurial flair. But, as is pointed out in a SABC-programme I watch in July 2000 at Jwaneng, the new democratically elected South African government treats hawkers and the

homeless as a disease. The sanitary syndrome by which the earlier apartheid government tried to rid itself of black and Indian street sellers (Tomaselli 1983) continues in the post-apartheid era. Everything changes but nothing is different.

In Jwaneng, however, there are no homeless, and the hawkers are part of the shopping choice. This is the mathematics of the street, not of big capital, though big capital in the form of South African owned retail stores and franchises seem to have found a happy solution with the hawkers in Jwaneng. South Africa is Africa's economic powerhouse, the imperialist neighbour, whose homeless immediately accosted Gibson and myself on our arrival at Upington in mid-July 2001, after our travels south from Ngwatle. 'Times are hard', said the young white Afrikaner man who served us at the town's Spur Steakhouse, a South African franchise using American country and western iconography. The coloured homeless man and his three urchins that were harassing car parkers, had uttered exactly the same comments as this young white part-time waiter, who told us he had to support his three-month-old baby. Though we had spent a week at the always-lit campfire at Ngwatle, I found myself slipping into old habits, complaining to the waiter about the obnoxious cigarette fumes wafting towards the non-smoking section. On handing out tobacco packets to our Ngwatle helpers and informants, Gibson and I pleaded that they not be given to the children, who smoke via metal and bone pipes from almost the time they learn to inhale. I explained that in South Africa, it is illegal for children to buy tobacco. In 2004, Pedris told us of a group of missionaries who confiscated tobacco from those using it, symbolically burning it. In 2003, I worried about the size of Vetkat and Belinda's nightly fires, remembering Waldron's admonishment of our consumption of wood on a previous trip: 'Each and every "dead" log on the ground is a small ecosystem in and of itself'. I recalled Waldron's comment about 'fiscal creep', where large visiting parties consume the resources belonging to our hosts, even as we bring more income to the area. Our seemingly excessive consumption of wood on the 2003 trip did not seem to bother the three members of the Italian environmental NGO. We ate and drank merrily, burning up wood from this currently drought ravaged, grassless, sandy environment. That the Kruipers joined in this consumption seemed to make our (over)use less questionable. Members of the team talked about the need for gourmet cooking on hard trips like these. The Italians even brought an espresso percolator. Camp life would have been unbearable otherwise, I heard around the campfire. I kept my silence, limited my alcohol intake, and thought that wearing more clothes with a



smaller fire will both keep the cold at bay and the ecosystems intact. This is First World consumption in a Third World environment. But the food *was* magnificent. Why did I feel guilty? Good food and good cooking was a necessary condition in keeping our students and associates happy and productive. So be it. Later we donated our uneaten meat, cans of food and unused water to our informants at Ngwatle. There were some benefits for the community after all. But one man asked for money instead; I later realised that money was needed to purchase alcohol. The JFP-missionaries reminded me of this when we discussed the nature of our exchange with the community.

### *Beating about the (bush)-text*

*A mystical place! A world of adventure and magic. The sky is azure blue, the sand iron red. As you travel this magical land, you will become part of the seemingly endless dunes.*

*(Molopo Kalahari Lodge brochure, 2001)*

In July 2002, at the Molopo Lodge, the CDs playing were recycled medleys and poor cover renditions of the original Elvis Presley, Cliff Richard and other 1950s hits. These were supplemented with tacky Afrikanerised versions - *Johnny be Good* becomes 'Swem Jannie Swem' ('Swim Johnny swim'), *Achy Breaky Heart* became 'Dik Bek, Lang Gesig' ('Sullen mouth, long face'), and *Wild Thing* was rendered as 'Gau-teng' (a province in South Africa). In 2003, Matthew and the CCMS-students commented on the continual replay in the pub of *Ver in die ou Kalahari* ('Far Away in the Old Kalahari'), an old Afrikaner country song. I told them that the song was made famous by American singer Jim Reeves, in the 1960s, when he cracked the Afrikaans-speaking music market with an album of Afrikaans folk songs. Reeves was yet another foreigner who wanted to understand South Africa's apartheid experiment. Those who sought international approval for apartheid promoted him locally. **[xxix]**

In early 2002, the Molopo pub had, we were told by the previous manager, evicted some <sup>1</sup>Khomani customers who wanted to keep their hats on, despite the fact that the *boere* ('farmer's') *veld*-hats were okay, and Caleb's bare feet in the dining room hardly caused a ripple. Betta Steyn, who managed the Sísen craft project, told us that the new Lodge manager was fair but tough on inappropriate customer behaviour, regardless of who was concerned. The white clientele with whom we rubbed shoulders in 2003, under another new, more urbane, manager-

owner, was sometimes rougher, tougher, and socially cruder. [xxx] In this otherwise family-oriented setting, fathers were seen to encourage their underage children to down hard tack in the pub, and engage in sexually offensive banter with female CCMS students, and on occasion, mildly abuse black patrons and staff. The white drinkers/hunters/flirters, after being told off by Charlize, called the CCMS-students *rooinekke* (pejorative, 'redneck' - British/enemy/invader), and started shoving them. The students then left the pub. In 2002, we learned that no Bushmen were allowed into the pub, though they are permitted to purchase alcohol from the liquor store at the entrance to the hotel grounds, and some coloured employees offered to evict those who were begging from us in the campsite. Charlize believed that it should have been the white hunters who should be evicted. Next year she wanted to stay at the Witdraai camping site. Fending off drunken Bushmen is much less onerous than protecting oneself against offensive white hunters - she suggested.

American hunters in KD/1 and KD/2, contribute fifteen times more income *per capita* than do other kinds of tourists in Botswana. At Molopo Lodge, the hunters are what the manager of the SBB camp site describes as a bunch of hooligans with cooler boxes, who own rifles, who are running away from their wives, and who would shoot five animals before successfully killing one. In KD/1, hunters are well-behaved professionals, he informed us. This is ensured by close government surveillance provided in the form of environmental and game officers who ensure that each party adheres to Botswanan law. Having to employ such regulatory personnel, and pay a welter of hunting fees, licenses and other charges, makes hunting in Botswana extremely expensive but well-managed.

### *The publishing mill*

*Body, Mind and Soul - unbeatable value at the place abounding with Candle-Pod Acacias.*

*(Wilderness Safaris brochure, 2001)*

As I contemplated the wretched prose of the Kalahari marketing brochures, I think about academic publishing. We are told that studies on the south are of limited interest to readers in the north. I ask myself two questions: has big international publishing capital at last realised the use-value of this kind of book? With academic publishing now largely corporative, the publisher, not myself, has any substantive rights over our published intellectual labour. Capital rules. Why

do academics publish in these journals? Because we, like the San, are locked into multiple exploitative relations of production and reproduction, where taxpayers indirectly subsidize multinational publishing firms. We are the workers who provide them profit. Perhaps the ≠Khomani and Botswanans who demand payment for tourist photographs of themselves ('Hey bra, pula talks!') are more discriminating and more effective than we as academics when it comes to getting payment for their labour (being photographed)?

I began to wonder whether 'the facts' are as important as the theory. I thought of the overseas PhD-theses, books and articles I have evaluated, in which argument often prevails over empirical accuracy. Some supervisors do not seem to care about detail when compelling arguments can be constructed in the face of, and sometimes despite, the facts. I remember critiquing the notion of 'fact' in my journalism classes in the early 1980s, but now I find myself reassessing my previous relativistic position. Hunger is a fact. Thirst is a fact. Slow alcoholic-induced communal suicide is a fact. Domestic violence is a fact. Dependency is a fact. AIDS is a fact. These are not only texts; more pertinently they are debilitating social conditions. Only well-fed readers can see them only as texts, reified beyond material hardship. As I wrote this sentence at the Molopo Lodge I could hear a drunken <sup>1</sup>Khomani shouting in the road, 100 meters away. The shout is a text, the individual's condition is real, and the context in which he finds himself is historical. Structuralism does have explanatory value. The individual, whether they be Bushmen, offensive racist white hunters, or attractive female students, act out their individual, gender, and class agency within predetermined social, economic and political structures.

In much that calls itself cultural studies, form prevails over content (cf. Stanton 2000; Tomaselli 1998). My graduates, who study and work in the UK and the USA, are often discouraged by the dismissive response of their supervisors to the 'slight' African research topics they propose. Doing reception analysis of *Homicide, Life on the Streets* in Baltimore, gets a much higher ranking than reception analysis in South Africa of *Suburban Bliss*, a highly-rated Archie Bunker-derived sitcom designed to foster intercultural communication on prime-time South African public television (cf. Roome 1999/2000). Thus is academicism linked to racism, and an exclusion of some of the most popular parts of the world from visibility in the Western academic enterprise. **[xxxi]**

I thought then of the problems we have with external examiners from the First

World. African PhDs are expected to include rich detail, extensive empirical data, and textured paradigmatic overviews. Certain overseas examiners complain when they receive 400-500 page theses. They further insist that they are being underpaid, when they are usually paid seven to ten times more than the internal and external examiners in Africa. Amongst the wingers are leftists in cultural and media studies, the very people who constantly jabber on about democracy, resistance, the popular and the value of difference. External examination and peer review is a major investment for most African universities. In the PhD-theses I have marked from overseas, I am constantly struck at their terseness and brevity, often lacking in detail, corroboration, sufficiently convincing empirical data, and cross-referencing. This is cultural studies as a personalised literary form of writing; it is not necessarily a form of critical pedagogy as it would have to be to qualify as cultural studies in Africa (Wright 1998). It is more of a contribution to speculative theory or analytical philosophy and argument, than to knowledge. It mediates personal rather than collective experience; it is largely lacking in strategy and development use-value. Its brevity retains the attention of examiners however. Its use-value is the degree itself, the publication, and not necessarily anything that will make a difference to the subject communities involved, if any. Everything is different but nothing changes.

English-language book publishers are not interested in the non-European world, lamented Larry Grossberg at the Birmingham 2000 Crossroads Conference. **[xxxii]** I tell my students here in Jwaneng in July 2000, that James Curran and Myung-Jin Park (2000) managed to persuade Routledge to publish their anthology, *De-Westernizing Media Studies*. I had assumed on invitation to submit a chapter on non-Western theory of political economy. **[xxxiii]** As it turned out, the Korean co-editor preferred the object to be non-Western, but the method and theory were to follow the familiar Western theoretical contours. Yet, the non-European world is where most of the globe's population live, where even the remotest of communities are impacted by a rampant post-Cold War capitalism and the often-disorganised impulses of postmodernism. Even where the products of capitalism are cast-offs, like the Coke bottle in Jamie Uys' film, *The Gods must be crazy* (1980), the signs of globalisation are everywhere: a prepubescent Tarzan, Goofy and Mickey Mouse, with a youthful Nelson Mandela, painted on the wall of a pre-primary school in the remote Monong settlement in Botswana; Adidas labels on hand-me-downs given to the Ngwatle community, and other brand names on all manner of clothing worn by villagers in the middle of nowhere. We find

ourselves reading their T-shirts and caps, and commenting on them. The wearers find this amusing – clothes and their labels are not necessarily signifiers for them before they are apparel. Clothes are mainly for combating the cold winter weather, and perhaps looking Western in a general sense only. One faded brand is as good as another. Only the upwardly mobile gate guard at Ngwatle has a fur lined leather jacket, purchased at Hukuntsi. For her, it's a fashion thing. [xxxiv] Now, the villagers at Witdraai, Kagga Kamma and Ngwatle make necklaces for tourists, not always based on any indigenous craft pattern. They too have learned what will sell; what these crafts tell or signify is no longer important. Since 2002, they have learned to make the crafts larger, to fit bigger Western heads, necks and wrists. Postmodernism rules even in the Kalahari Desert. Meaning is evacuated from the rituals of production. Form and content lose their meanings. Only the sale counts. [xxxv] On a brochure for a facility in Namibia, it states, 'The layout', and architecture at Goheganas Wellness Reserve in Namibia which 'incorporates local arts and crafts', 'follows a body, mind and soul format: The hierarchy of courtyards leading up the hilltop to the main Wellness citadel forms a spatial metaphor for the body's energy points'. This New Age type discourse is obviously aimed at well-heeled tourists. But it also has resonance amongst cultural performers. Commenting on the social function of cultural tourism, Isak Kruiper pointed out that dressing in authentic gear, even if for tourist consumption is itself a form of homage to the spirits (10 July 2003). Cultural tourism was not for him simply a way of making money; it was also a preservation of an older, more spiritual, traditional, way of life. Thus did a performer in the tourist spectacle invest existential and cultural meaning in a work role denied him by critics of cultural tourism who argue that the debilitating hegemony of the spectacle victimises the observed (cf. Buntman 1995) (see also Chapters 5 and 6).

Back at the Jwaneng Lodge in the year 2000, I mention *Appropriating Images* (1999a) to my students. It is a book about being an African scholar. Not a scholar in or of Africa, but about being an African who is also a scholar, writing from African perspectives, from within Africa, who is also trying to understand Africa from the perspective of the Western Other. That's why we appreciate meeting South African Afrikaans-speaking whites and coloureds, and Americans, lost and not lost. At the Molopo Lodge in July 2003, some white South Africans now living in Switzerland assumed that Charlize was as racist as they were. Having established that she lives in Durban they told her that there are too many blacks on the Durban beaches. Charlize responded, 'You are talking to non-racists', and

gave them a ticking off. In the Northern Cape Kalahari, people of colour are mainly Bushmen and coloureds, perhaps less threatening (romanticized?) to expatriates now living overseas.

I am trying to study the nature and semiotics of the encounter between observers and observed, and of course my own subjectivity, especially when I am identified by our subjects as being the Same and/or Other. 'Are you all from AAAfrica?' still resonates as I wrote my impressions, after we reached Witdraai (July 2001). My broader study is therefore also about the semiotics of identity, and how that subjectivity is inscribed into one's research, writing and publication - and experience (see also Simões 2001b).

*Appropriating Images* is my attempt to come to terms with Africa, my fellow Africans and the often weird, wonderful, and contradictory occurrences on the continent. It's about indigenous concepts of the soul, not attempts like JFP's to remake the soul in the Western Christian image. (It's not about azure skies and the Red Dune Route. It is not about how tourist capital could McDonaldisize the pans, the dunes, the trails, and the rivers. The fast traveller process has begun, the Molopo Lodge's Bimboisation, [xxxvi] being the start). In the Okavango we stayed at the Sepuma Swamp Stop, ate Swamp Slop, and were required to watch/listen to VH1 pounding from the open-air bar in a *Tropical Heat* type location [xxxvii]. This TV series was made by a Canadian company, and was filmed in South Africa. 'Tourists like MTV' I was told when I commented on the incongruity, 'if they want peace and tranquillity they go out on the water'.

*Appropriating Images* is about trying to come to terms with power and power relations, its idiosyncratic discourses, and about the scientifically unexplainable. [xxxviii] It's about my experiences and my colleagues' experiences in making movies on situations and people whose discourses and achievements are often incomprehensible - to us at least. It's about peoples, countries and a continent, in a double millennium-old asymmetrical engagement with Europe, in which nothing is as it seems. Everything is different, and sometimes it is actually the same - but the African Same sometimes also needs African-derived methods and theories to make sense of things, behaviours and processes (cf. Mudimbe 1988). My aim is also an attempt to reconstitute these two methods - semiotics and visual anthropology - from the perspectives of the Other, the Third World, and Africa. Cultural Studies in the 1970s, early 1980s and post-millennium emphasised method (Willis 1981; Tomaselli *et al.* 1988; Gray 2003), and proposed

strategies to overcome repression. This strategic thrust was much less visible within the field for a while, however, especially since Cultural Studies became an undergraduate teaching syllabus. It has therefore, in some applications, lost some of its original methodological, political and critical thrusts, though method has recently come back onto the agenda (cf. Gray 2003; Saukko 2004). This is why we have developed the notion of dialogical autoethnography, to reinsert the dialectic into ethically based, politically charged, applied cultural studies, in which we get our hands dirty. In *Appropriating Images*, Africa is an issue from the start. The US publisher wanted me to erase the lesser-known Third World film examples. Its referee - who was solid enough on the concepts - missed the African orientation. The second referee, who would have picked up the African orientation, unbeknown to the publisher, had inconveniently died before submitting his report. The subsequent Danish publisher had worked in Mozambique as a development anthropologist, where everything was stolen from his 4X4, including its wheels. This is African socialism at work: 'what's yours is mine'. At Kagga Kamma, a ≠Khomani man working in the Park's cultural village stole a PC hard drive, thinking it was a cash register. At the Molopo Lodge, an artist allegedly stole R1,600 worth of expensive wine and hard tack, and then was surprised that his 'friend', the manager Roger Carter, charged him with theft. A young white man, who had joined the Witdraai community for a period in 2003, looking for healing after a break-up with his girlfriend, observed that his food and other belongings were sometimes stolen out of the hut he was sharing with the local community leader. Being 'friends' would appear to legitimise redistribution without the owner's consent. This is a malady that plays itself out on a national scale in South Africa, beset as it is both by violent and white-collar crime on unprecedented scales.

In 2003, Dawid Kruiper told Nelia that he had been neglecting us, and told her that the time was now right for a more in-depth discussion, which had occurred with regard to a photo-elicitation of a group portrait of the Kruipers with Lokkie Henning, taken in the early 1980s. [xxxix] Only the night before, both drunk and stoned, Dawid had crudely propositioned Charlize in the company of his wife, child, and three of the CCMS research team, which had been invited to eat at Witdraai by Dawid's white sojourner. Charlize's hostile response to Dawid: '*Jy is mal*' ('You're mad'). The community saw this retort as a sign of strength. It earned their respect, as it did Dawid's. The following day, a perfect gentleman, Dawid permitted Charlize to video him without any demands for payment. Neither did he

proposition her. In September 2004 Jo-Ann Hen-Boisen complained that the Kruiper men demand 'respect' from us, but they fail to reciprocate the gesture where our female researchers are concerned.

### *Reverse cultural studies*

In the meantime in Jwaneng (June 2000), we discuss Chamberlin's critique of cultural studies and Walter Ong (1982) in particular. Now I remember that although I have relied heavily on Ong's theory of orality in my own analyses of African cinema, I was never very comfortable with his binary functionalism (Tomaselli *et al.* 1999). Chamberlin had helped the penny to drop. On my fourth visit to Ngwatle (2000), I remember being criticized in March 1996 by a post-LitCrit scholar, an Indian expatriate. She questioned me after my lecture at a US University and asked 'What about Derrida's critique of Ong?' This was in response to my presentation on orality and film in Africa (Tomaselli and Eke 1998). Perhaps it took me five years for this question to penetrate my consciousness, but Africans in my audience seemed to appreciate my trite response at the time, something about 'Wot about the workers?' Perhaps I was irritated that she was trying to pin me down with a Western theory of deconstruction, rather than trying to understand the African theory of representation Maureen Eke and I were trying to develop. Ong's theory was simply a means to this end.

Our group at Jwaneng eventually agrees that the West has not the faintest idea of what goes on in the rest of the world: It's the West versus the Rest. In 2003, Matthew kept telling us how Saddam outwitted Bush: more US soldiers were killed after the war than during it; God knows how many have died in the three weeks we've been in the Desert. In July 2005 we were still counting. I relate some of my experiences at the 2000 Birmingham Crossroads Conference, where even the activist sessions tended to ensnare themselves in sterile book-bound rhetoric. Keynote speaker Daniel Mato critically regaled the 950 delegates with stories of how cultural studies has a much longer pedigree in Latin America than in Europe and the USA, certainly longer than the Birmingham trajectory. A similar argument was made by Sierra Leonian, Handel Wright (1998), then in Tennessee, for cultural studies in Africa, at the first Crossroads Conference in Finland in 1996. Why is it, both asked, that the great Western gurus are automatically assumed to have had an influence on the Third World non-English-speaking scholars? We were doing dialogical autoethnography before I was even aware of the Ellis and



Bochner chapter, to which Denzin referred me. In reversing the gaze Mato questioned the influence of these Third Worlders on the First World scholars. The audience laughed, perhaps a little embarrassedly. In this context Jeffrey mentions Manthia Diawara's video on Jean Rouch, *Rouch in reverse* (cf. Harrow 1999). A defensive Rouch in the Parisian metropole frustrates Diawara, a West African teaching at Columbia University. Like us in Jwaneng, Diawara returns 'home' to the USA, wondering about how to implement reverse anthropology. We do this by finding our inspiration in improbable places like Ngwatle and the Molopo Lodge where contradictions are often at their sharpest and, therefore, most visible.

I remind my students that during apartheid, our Marxist sources were as much African, Latin American, East European and Russian, as they were European and American. We are reassured in our diachronic theoretical cosmopolitanism. Now we are developing African approaches to cultural studies (see *Critical Arts*, 13, 1999; Wright 2002; 2003), the latter edited from the African presentations at Crossroads 2000. A longer South African version deriving from culturalism has, however, existed since the early 1970s (cf. Sitas 1986; Van Onselen 1996). Many of us are surprised that no mention whatsoever is made of this historical and labour-orientated strand in a new South African post-LitCrit book, *Senses of culture*, subtitled itself *25 culture studies* (Nuttall and Michaels 2000). It appears that Raymond Williams is now the new guru, to be applied in South African literary and anthropological appropriations of cultural studies.

I tell of the South African Vista University delegate, Jane Starfield (2000), who offered one of the few strategic papers at the Crossroads Conference. Couched in the discourse of resistance, Starfield spoke of how an undergraduate cultural studies curriculum was developed to break the hold of apartheid's Fundamental Pedagogics on this national eight-campus university. She explained that Vista's students were black, disadvantaged, and brought up via rote learning through which all initiative and critical thought was institutionally and administratively stifled. She implicated the new black post-apartheid university administrators in perpetuating the problem. Rather, we are told, education must start from the students' experience. But then she added, the students will read Foucault and Baktin! In South African universities, the post-LitCrit crowd teaches cultural and media studies from their white, middle class, sanitized Western perspectives, rather than also incorporating African approaches, and the dirt and the muck of this Third World society (cf. Nuttall and Michaels 2000; Cooper and Steyn 1996). I suggested that Franz Fanon (1972) and Paulo Freire (1970) might be more

situationally appropriate starting points for Vista, as their work derives from the kinds of experiences that should be instantly recognised by the Vista students. I am reminded of a large architectural impression stuck on boarding concealing building operations at the Johannesburg International Airport in 1999. The impression promises 'Your world class duty-free shopping mall' - 'Your patients (sic) will be exceptionally rewarded'. I think I must be negotiating a Foucaultian nightmare. Are we indeed still unwilling prisoners and patients of both Eurocentric theory and the Airports Company? The latter was in 2000 the most profitable firm in post-apartheid South Africa, but was also at times the most inefficient and the most insensitive to the needs of those who used its facilities. Capitalism rules in both academia (the books we prescribe) and business (surplus value is God). At Zhutswa in July 2001, when we were looking for Pedris Motshabise, one of our 1999 and 2000 informants, the clinic's sister asked me for a job. Does she really want to immigrate into the mad Western world that I represent in Africa? In 2002, an old man came up to our parked vehicles. He said he was sick. I referred him to the well-equipped clinic. I wondered if the same nurse was still there. Kort-Jan told us that only white people cared about the Bushmen. Belinda Kruiper concurred, blacks look after their own, not others.

The Vista delegate at the Birmingham conference responded to a question on where to start by referring to the popularity of the US-made soap opera, *The bold and the beautiful*, which pulls in the highest black TV-audience rating in South Africa. I confirmed that this could be a point of departure as research shows that this programme, amongst others, offers a way in which black South Africans negotiate their encounter with the wider globalising world. I explained that Zulu-speaking viewers in KwaZulu Natal sometimes read the program in terms of gender struggles related to their own, often repressive, patriarchal circumstances (Tager 1997). Disbelief, I think, was the response of most of the delegates. But, I am pleased to reveal, Tager's study did get a lot of play in the South African Sunday papers, where the 'popular' is reported. At Crossroads, however, we moved on to the next speaker. The pregnant moment sparked by Starfield was lost in First World conceptual irrelevance. The visual imperialist thesis ruled. We never returned to Starfield's crucial intervention.

Cultural Studies laud the 'popular', but reject it when it comes to the Third World. How would my First World female colleagues have responded if Dawid had propositioned one of them? A court case? Withdrawal from the project? Blaming

the project leader? Demanding a lift home? Some choice expletives recorded on tape after the event was Charlize's response - then going back to talk to him the next day. She'd now taken sides in the internal politics between Blinkwater and Witdraai, for Dawid had similarly propositioned Belinda, who was told that in order to marry Vetkat, Dawid's half brother, she needed to sleep with him first. This story, amongst others of domestic violence and sexual abuse, was known to the group prior to Charlize's first encounter with Dawid, which had also led to some discomfort amongst some of our September 2004 party in talking to Dawid at all. However, some of these same female students deflected similar offensively crude sexism and sexual innuendos directed at them by the white hunters in the Molopo Lodge pub in 2003. Does the discursive location of sexually offensive male behaviour seem less threatening in a more familiar environment? The pub, rather than a home with family or the Lodge's parking lot, may be a more appropriate site for such banter. Ruth Teer-Tomaselli, who accompanied us in June 2005, certainly thought so, having been one of our three middle aged collaborators to fend off unwelcome advances from both young and old white men. The appropriate delimitation of discourse (Therborn 1980) is tolerated in one setting but not another. Our CCMS-contingent found neither setting acceptable. Charlize mused that her people skills might be lacking; perhaps she should study physical rather than social anthropology? Her own conduct and responses could not be faulted, however.

Ngwatle always offers a different experience.

### *Ngwatle: 'Being there'*

In 1995, it took us three days of driving in deep sand, after crossing into Botswana from South Africa, to get there. In 1999, it took one day, mostly on tar. The last 80 kms took us three hours to traverse in a four-wheel drive. While in Ngwatle in 1995, we saw only two other vehicles during the whole week, apart from the weekly water truck, its pistons screaming as it struggled through the sand to the 10,000-litre water tank. In 1999, vehicles were passing through every second day. By 2001, there was a veritable traffic jam with three or four vehicles over a two-day period.

During the first few mornings in 1995, everyone turned out to greet us. We videoed and photographed the interactions, especially between Miriam[xl] and Charlize [xli] who immediately befriended each other. The small children referred to our 35 mm still cameras as 'snappies', but paid no attention to the

video cameras, possibly because of Rob Waldron's previous visits. **[xlii]** In 1999, they referred to his large Betacam camera as 'video video' and made up a song with these words. In 2001, one of the students was told not to take photos, but to pay P10 for the privilege, unless he first secured the consent of the subject. The power of agency had begun to assert itself, as exemplified in the camel rider's comment, 'Hey bra, pula talks!', Darryn later tried to photograph some game park workers as we exchanged heated words between my Sani and their Land Rover. We'd nearly had a head-on collision in the middle of nowhere! (We were at fault.) He was emphatically told that the consent of the photographed was necessary. In the West, the picture taker in public spaces has the power and the copyright; here those being photographed assert their power and demand payment. They believe that the imaged have the power of copyright over those who frame the picture, even in public spaces. At Witdraai, the cost in 2000 was R50 if in traditional clothes and R25 if in shop-bought clothes. We negotiated these costs in Ngwatle by purchasing far more artefacts than we needed, and by offering to send copies of the pictures to the Trust. In the West, ordinary people will do anything to get their faces on TV, thus ensuring their 15 seconds of fame; in parts of Africa, people are so irritated with cavalier tourists photographing anything and everything that they want payment or voice disapproval. The payment is demanded also because amongst the amateurs are professionals who make money off their photography, but who return little or any of it to the person or community photographed. By 2003, no one at either settlement asked us for payment as we returned stills from the videos made to our host communities and also screened videos for them. We discussed their impressions of the senior primary school children in Durban, and the latter's gratitude for being able to communicate with the !Xoo via Mary, and ourselves and Charlize in particular. **[xliii]** These symbolic exchanges allowed our hosts to get a sense of our work with them, though their prime motivation for hosting us remained economic.

In 1999, Gadiphemolwe Orileng (Gadi) told us about a mobile video van operated by a missionary organisation that had passed through the community. They showed a film on Jesus Christ. 'Now I know what he looks like,' Gadi told us in June, delightfully collapsing the signifier into the signified. In 2004, Jakobus succinctly explained the underlying message of *The Lazarus phenomenon*, though its graphic and violent scenes of hell freaked out my Islamic, Tamil and Christian students. This did not seem to worry Jakobus, in the informal reception analysis

we conducted with him the next day in which he detailed the film's argument clearly.

In 1999, Tshumo, an elderly hunter, fixed my snapped audiotape which Durban's finest technicians could not. He declined my offer to buy it back from him. Now, 1950s rock-and-roll complements the South African 1990s Kwaito music at this Pan. He still had the tape in 2000, which he played for us when we finally got there. Every family has a radio and they listen to the Botswana radio stations. The *skerms* (grass huts) of the community in Ngwatle, and D'Kar further north, sport centrefolds of South African soccer players. On inquiry, we were told that this was a protest against repressive Botswana government policies regarding the San. South Africa was the Ngwatle villagers' model in the light of its new democracy and its progressive indigenous minorities policy. Miriam, whom we tracked to another settlement, Monong, in 2001, wanted her new baby, Patience, fathered by a Remote Development Area official, to speak English and Tswana so that she could work in South Africa. The Kgalagadi language was not on her agenda, given the discriminatory way this group behaves towards the Basarwa. The 1999 centrefolds were an indication of resistance, rather than of South African imperialism. This reversal of the visual imperialist thesis would not find easy acknowledgement amongst some scholars, who see a loss of agency everywhere.

Afrikaans had been learned by the men who had worked on Afrikaner-owned farms in Namibia, particularly //Kuru!ka (Petrus) Nxai and his brother Baba (Kort-Jan) Kies Nxai. The names in brackets are the 'white' names that they gave themselves. The two brothers spawned a group who speak Afrikaans, initially surprising, but less so in 2001 when we met some Park rangers and when we stopped to fill up with petrol at Tsabong. My Durban number plate was like a magnet, drawing South Africans working in these areas, and Botswanans, all speaking Afrikaans to me. South African farmers who had moved into Botswana after 1994 had taken the language with them, teaching it to their labourers. In 1999, Kort-Jan identified the melons Charlize had collected along the route as '*Boesman se water*' (Afrikaans - 'Bushman's water'), although they were too bitter to be eaten. But in 2003, we learned that not all the Nxai children had learned to speak the language. Afrikaans was used when necessary with visitors like us, or when the family wanted to communicate in a language not understood by others in the community. The children speak !Kung at home, and learn Tswana at school

in Hukuntsi. Vista Jan, who thought he was 22 in 2003, has five children at boarding school in Hukuntsi.

In 2000, Wafula and I returned to Hukuntsi to find some gear that had fallen off the Sani *en route*, and to fix a shock absorber. Knowing that the community had not received its weekly water delivery, we collected scores of melons for them on the way back. Only the donkeys ate them, however. Delivered water is better than the age-old method of securing one's H<sub>2</sub>O by sucking it up through the sand, a lengthy and tiring procedure, as Johannes told us in 2003.

In 1999, the adjacent Pan was where the community had to dig deep to find water during winter to complement the water truck's ration. Meredith Regnard, my niece from Australia, helped with the digging, but it was backbreaking work. We did not use the community's water; that is why we take our own. However, the more donkeys, goats, cattle and dogs which drink the water, the more water is needed. Donkeys are the prime means of transport. They pull carts and are ridden to the hunting grounds. They are used to transport water from the water tanks to individual homesteads. In 2000, a number of horses had been added to the transport mix. Ten had died in 2001. Kort-Jan's horse, he said, was retired in 2003; it had lost its teeth. The government had, in late 2000, paid the community to dig for water in the Pan, and put a fence around it to keep out the cattle, goats, horses, and wildlife. By July 2001, these animals had contaminated the pan's water as no one bothered to lock the gate. The truck will come, or perhaps the borehole being sunk will start soon. Tomorrow's another day. The borehole had been sunk by 2002, but a pump had yet to be installed. Piping was not being laid at Ngwatle, though the other settlements were being fitted with pipes. Everything changes but nothing is different. Thus does dependency develop.

When we met the Trust in 2002 at Ukwi, KD/1, the committee insisted that we work with all three villages. We explained that our work was not of a hard socio-economic data kind, but was historically linked to the experiences of two families and a few individuals in Ngwatle, and that spreading our research across the other villages would interrupt our objectives. The Trust was also concerned that our resources (crafts purchasing in particular) was benefiting only one of the three villages and that we should work through the Trust on such purchases other than for personal use. We agreed. But the Trust never responded to our queries, so again we bought the crafts in Ngwatle. SBB similarly complained. In terms of

an unsigned agreement with the Trust, SBB was supposed to buy crafts for resale to their guests from the Trust. But the Trust never facilitated this purchase. So SSB bought crafts from the Trust managing KD/2, and also from those brought in by their workers, much to the KD/1 Trust's displeasure.

Our best interviewee is Gadi. He has a story to tell, something about a *muti* ('sorcery potion') murder of his brother in Hukuntsi, 80 kms and 3 hours drive south. His tale is deeply compelling, plausible, and it commanded the attention of Waldron's camera and all the visitors during our June 1999 visit. We listened spellbound and felt his pain and frustration at the lack of progress on the part of the Police. Then he asked Waldron for a job. The power relation was instantly inverted. Waldron agreed to employ him on his game farm in South Africa's Northern Province. Gadi later phoned Waldron twice from Hukuntsi, the nearest phone to Ngwatle, saying he could not take up the offer. We wanted to ask Gadi why he was unable to take up the job. But, lest my narrative get ahead of me, we are still in Jwaneng, where the manager is working frenetically to upgrade the Lodge even over the weekend. I see a notice in the kitchen banning employees from playing casino at any time, or drinking alcohol while on duty. He has a difficult job ahead of him.

*It's a man's world*

*After time passes through the valley of the Camel Thorn Tree, the sun sets in the distance ... Silhouettes against the early evening star, man alone, eyes forward, dunes like the motion forever, just you and the African sky, you alone walking ... experiencing ... AFRICA!*

*(Boesman ('Bushman') Safaris brochure 2001)*

Our visits primarily occur within a masculinist discourse, though female students are often in the majority. A bumper sticker distributed by the Viljoen family's Hukuntsi Trading Store (on the way to Ngwatle) reads 'Hukuntsi: A Mans (sic) Paradise and a Woman and Vehicles (sic) Hell'.**[xliv]** The sticker gives some idea of the state of the roads, little more than cut-lines through the *bushveld* - on which in 1995 we had to travel often at little more than 10-25 kms per hour in a four wheel drive - to get to our destination. An improved 4X4-suspension saw me drive much faster from 1996 on. In 2003 the driver of a Land Rover berated me for travelling too fast. Another at Kutse in 2004 told us that his Land Rover Discovery is 'dangerously comfortable' and glides through the desert, unlike the

Sani, which gives a bumpy hands-on experience. The phrase 'A Mans Paradise' invokes the stereotypical notions usually associated with safaris through inhospitable terrain, which the Camel cigarette company popularises in the masculinist, environmentally destructive 'Camel Trophy'.<sup>[xlv]</sup> The 1994 trip, however, was everyone's hell, as my vehicle's factory-fitted suspension - made for tar - was much too soft off-road. As driver of my Sani, I grittily held onto the steering wheel while the four female passengers bounced and banged their heads against the roof and sides over an 80-kilometer stretch. I replaced the suspension before my next trip to the Kalahari, this time to Namibia; and again with a *bone fide* 4X4 Old Man Emu system in August 2000. That's why I was able to travel so fast in 2003. (It now has its third suspension, second gearbox and radiator, and a new engine.)

### *Hunting: Trophies or bonding*

*The tracking ability of the local Bushmen can only be appreciated when personally experienced while on safari.*

*(SBB web entry ([www.africanhuntingadv.com/kanana.htm](http://www.africanhuntingadv.com/kanana.htm)))*

The *Boesman Safaris*' brochure has a large colour picture of two American hunters (wearing caps) posing for the camera, seated behind a huge dead kudu, still bleeding at the mouth. The caption reads: 'There is a chance to get a perspective on your own life as you share Africa's secrets and emotions. Experience what few have ever done. Find your own sixth sense'. 'They come here to kill things', commented Mick Francis, on talking to a bunch of Swiss hunters, visiting 'savage' Africa, at the Molopo Lodge. *AAAfrica's* the place to find oneself, by killing something else simply for the trophy photo, and the export of the buck's head, horns, and skin to show one's friends back home. No wonder audiences everywhere think that Uys' 1980 film *The Gods must be crazy*, is an ethnographic documentary! They're living in it.

The 'Great White Hunter', e.g., Robert Redford in *Out of Africa* (1985), usually a man of integrity and cultural understanding, is in cinema, a classless individual who often represents counter-racist tendencies (Cameron 1994). Now, in the guise of adventure tourists, they tend to be lazy slobbers who kill from the comfort and safety of 4X4s and helicopters, after spotter planes have located the prey. At the Molopo Lodge a successful hunt is bizarrely ritualised in which the bloodied and messy hunters sit on a barber's chair in the pub, downing tots, and having



their heads shaved. This connotes their new identity as a hunter (Man), while their mates sing and shout unspeakable obscenities at them. This we learned from the young white man who was living with the Kruipers at Witdraai. We witnessed this behaviour in 2005. Matthew surmised that the hunters return home with the symbolic marker of having passed through a liminal state (hunt/ritual). In between, they came on to the CCMS female students.

A bartender in a previous life, Jason Arther hinted at this and all sorts of tantalising ethnographic titbits, but he was very coy in going on the record. We all agreed, Jason was the 'real' anthropologist amongst us: he'd been living with Dawid for three months, was building his own hut, and he had the inside story of just about everything: unconventional sexual practices, domestic violence, and local politics. He described the hunters' head-shaving ritual as 'really scary'. Then he clammed up. One of our group drew an analogy with *Star trek*. This series is about 'anthropologists, in space, with guns'. We were reminded of the SBB-manager's description of these hunters as armed hooligans with cooler boxes. Is there any real difference? Anthropologists in space do not get drunk, and the crew does not interfere with the order of things, Mick Francis reminded us.

As Gadi told us in July 2000, when he was working for SBB as a tracker, the white hunters simply pulled the trigger. They were more interested in trophies and pictures of their 'kills' to show off back home than in the meat and its life-sustaining qualities, social means of distribution, and cosmological meaning. 'God provided it for us', was what Kort-Jan told us while skinning a fox in 1999, adding that all animals belong to God. We wondered about issues of dependency and cultural cohesion notwithstanding the benefits of having entire carcasses delivered to family abodes. Waldron explained his interest in Ngwatle in terms of a much more existential understanding of hunting:

I am particularly interested in the bonding that happens between men when they go hunting. I believe that this bonding, harmony and great friendship and deep love for each other that is evident and is echoed in their statements about each other, is a very valuable thing that we could learn something from and that all of us, having probably derived from hunter-gatherer societies at some time or another, would have had that would have united our societies rather than disintegrating them (in Jeursen and Tomaselli 1999).

The women were discouraged from accompanying the two vehicles on the 1994 visit to the hunting grounds that were three hours drive away. This male activity

is fraught with danger, while trust and ability are crucial survival mechanisms: I went hunting with Petrus Nxai, also called //Kuru!Ka, which means greenery ... Just myself and him went off with assegais, and whilst I have been on hunting trips with Petrus before, I have never been an active hunter. This time I was and we ran off with his dogs. It soon became apparent to me that he needed my reassurance that we could work together. His phraseology was '*Saamwerk, saam lewe*' (Afrikaans - 'Working together, living together'), and he was giving me a brief bonding and education lesson about this as we were running after the dogs, telling me what to do with my spear. Once we saw a gemsbok that was brought to bay by the dogs I was to throw my spear into the hindquarters of the animal while he dealt with the 'working end'. We walked sometimes, we ran sometimes, and we did follow the dogs which eventually brought to bay a Bat-Eared Fox which we killed and ate later. But what was particularly interesting was how we could converse while we were hunting and the camaraderie which developed between us, which was quite unique because I had a very strong sense of a longing fulfilled. I felt a deep sense of relevant meaning and I think that he did too. In that situation when two men are helping each other to survive and at the same time to find food for their brethren there can be no room for dissent, there is great pressure for harmony and brotherhood. I believe that that can be a great healing factor for all types of people, uniting in a common cause that goes beyond many of the so-called western bonding processes (Jeursen and Tomaselli 1999).

In 2002, Kort-Jan suggested a visit to the hunting grounds at the Masetleng Pan. I suggested that Mary and Nelia join us as Mary had a particular teaching interest, and Nelia was the owner of the second vehicle. Kort-Jan indicated that the visit was a man's activity and that the presence of women would be inappropriate. Mary indicated that female presence would not be inappropriate as both were 'past our time' (no longer fertile). But they declined to join the men at the Pan when we went off tracking. In 2003, the men reluctantly permitted a young woman from Legambiente to accompany us to the Pan. The Legambiente team had wanted to assess the potential of the area for cultural tourism. After some discussion between Johannes, Kort-Jan, Vista, Jon-Jon and myself they agreed to permit the female to accompany us if she, like Nelia and Mary, did not join the tracking. However, it was clear that the trackers felt inhibited while she was in the vicinity. The men only opened up with stories about hunting, and how hard this activity was, when she was not within earshot. In interviewing them for Matthew's camera, they discussed hunting as a dangerous, difficult and thirst-

quenching activity, quite without any reference to existential meanings evident when John Marshall made *The hunters* (1958). The gnawing of hunger, the need to quench one's thirst, and the time taken to hunt, suppressed any spiritual meaning which may once have been encoded in the practice. **[xlvi]**

Craig Foster's film, *The great dance* (2000), also revisits the hunting hypothesis in a search for essential 'man', which in African communalist terms requires community, and hence bonding rituals and behaviour. This enchantment with the Other, with hunting, with the kill, and the camaraderie that goes with it, perhaps helps filmmakers like Waldron and Foster to momentarily become the Other, to communally experience what is otherwise lost to individuals in modern civilization - and to indigenous hunters whose habitat has been reduced, concessioned out, and restricted. Male bonding via the stalk is as important as the kill itself, if not more so (cf. Wiczorek 1999; cf. also Young's [1974] film). Where in 1995 we went hunting, in 2002 the prime activity was tracking and, as with 2001, reminiscing was the main discussion between us, Kort-Jan and Johannes in the back seat of the Sani. In 2003, the romance of hunting had worn off and they complained incessantly about being hungry, thirsty and 'swaer kry' ('hard life'). They told of being monitored by a spotter plane that reported their presence at the Pan, and of their arrest and fining if they were caught, even if they had not been hunting. Their dogs were shot, though the Trust sometimes bailed out arrestees. If locals were seen to be wearing shoes made from wild animal skins, they were asked for their hunting permits. Gadi told us that when he was tracking for SBB he was also instructed to keep a lookout for Bushmen tracks. In 2003, Kort-Jan told us that the hunters were tracked to their very houses; the meat was confiscated, and the hunter sent to jail. While at Masetleng Pan in 2004, we found donkey tracks and the residues of small fires, clear indications of 'poaching'. The impression amongst the community was that the hunters had become the hunted.

They enjoyed recounting stories of hunting, and following the tracks of gemsbok, leopard and other animals, which they had found in the vicinity of the fourth pan where the camping site is located. Vista told us that since hunting had ceased, the sense of community had declined and that each household now fended for themselves. In 2003, Johannes told us that the white hunters with guns can kill from a distance, quickly, and without danger to themselves. The real hunters don't have guns and cooler bags, and they are not hooligans.

In 2001 and 2003, Gadi said that in working for SBB, he did the tracking while the

tourists followed in the Toyota. The tourists would simply pull the trigger. Johannes complained that white hunters ate more than the Bushmen, yet the Bushmen would be the ones accused of negatively impacting the environment. Something had been lost in the process; Gadi seemed to be telling us. Like some anti-apartheid academic tourists, some great white hunters perhaps wanted to have the experience of 'being here', but to simultaneously be taken 'there' without too much effort or danger, in as short a period of time as was possible. The Ngwatle hunters often took three days to corner their prey, with nothing but their donkeys, dogs, a spear and some water. That's NOT what tourists pay for - solar power, electricity, hot showers and gourmet meals accompany high powered rifles, binoculars and 4X4-transport. SBB distributed the meat to the three villages and sent the trophy items (head, horns, skin) to a taxidermist in Maun, which did all the health and export paper work for the hunters, who wanted to put the heads of these animals on their walls back home.

In 2002, hunting was no more, except perhaps clandestinely. Meat was delivered about once a month, and eaten immediately. Sometimes people were so hungry they simply chopped off meat from the carcass, eating it raw. The Ngwatle hunters were unable to pay for hunting permits. The Trust sold the permits to SBB. SBB also made two-thirds of the meat available to the Trust, which now sold it to the villagers.

What are the implications for political economy, we wonder? For dependency? For self-esteem? The Bushman's act of hunting has historically been more than just obtaining food. It was a process, an existential activity, a psychospiritual relationship with each other, the environment, the sand, and the wind. When replaced with another form of economy, it becomes just another commodity and handout, possibly lacking in any kind of ontological significance. The new economy as described to us by the four Ngwatle hunters was simply based on need, with no reference whatsoever to the cultural and social significance of hunting. Such a lack of existentialism contributes to cultural breakdown.

### *A woman's hell?*

During our sojourns, the Ngwatle women visited us in groups with their babies, to be interviewed and videoed, and to individually sell us artefacts. Belinda Jeursen formally interviewed Miriam in 1994 (Jeursen 1996). In 2000, Anthea established a close relationship with Miriam, both in terms of a formal interview and informally. Charlize sent a gift with me in 2001, and joined the team in 2002, re-

establishing her acquaintance with Miriam. Gregarious Meredith, who is not a researcher, and who speaks English and French, was a hit with all the women and a few young men in 1999. Somehow, she managed to transgress gender roles and age sets without offending anyone. Between 2002 and 2004, however, the presence of up to six women in the party, two of whom speak fluent Afrikaans, perhaps elicited greater female interest. Mary and the female students bought approximately P2000 worth of crafts on the first day there. Mary and Nelia's empathetic demeanour contributed to warm visitor-visited relations; and for the first time the Ngwatle women seemed to be much more assertive in their interactions with us, both in their individual and communal roles. The clearest evidence of this occurred in discussions leading to our offer for Charlize to perform a fire dance (see Chapter 4; Sætre 2003; Reinhardt 2003).

In 1999, we played soccer at Ngwatle. The field was deep with loose sand, and the ball was old and limp. It did not bounce. The players were barefoot. Fortunately, it was winter, and the scorpions and snakes were hibernating. Meredith, my three students, together with Rob Waldron and his sound technician, and I were assigned four of the Ngwatle youth to make up our team. The Ngwatle women, who did not play, screamed their support for Meredith, but we were beaten hands-down. **[xlvi]** In 2001/2, we brought two pre-pumped soccer balls for the community. We donated new balls along with a pump. Will we be creating a culture of entitlement via these gifts, we asked ourselves?

### *Reversing the learning*

*Our journeys change people's lives.*

*(Wilderness Safaris brochure)*

What did we learn from our Ngwatle trips? This is the discussion in Jwaneng on the Saturday. Perhaps we learned more about ourselves than we did about the Ngwatle community. All student participants spoke of being changed by their respective experiences. On her return, Charlize told her primary school teacher that the San part of the Grade 5 syllabus taught to her prior to our trip, needed revision as the course content assumed the San of 'old', a static image of a people-caught-in-time. Ironically, her teacher had only used the politically correct term, 'San', in the classroom prior to our departure. Charlize did not initially know whom I was talking about when I used the term 'Bushmen'. She had told me that I was wrong when I queried the sketches of 'traditional' Bushmen given to

her by the School, prior to our trip. At Ngwatle, Charlize met, talked and played with children from the village where we camped. She learned their games - the melon tossing game, the kudu hunting game, and knee dancing in the sand. She taught the !Kung children English nursery rhymes and Spanish dancing and they taught her !Kung songs and how to gather wood. Charlize was surprised however, to be denied the opportunity of joining the kudu hunting game with the boys. Miriam told her that it was not 'girl's play'. On returning to school in Durban, primed with photographs, video, an ostrich egg and a variety of other artefacts bought from the Ngwatle villagers, Charlize became the teacher. Her school gave her the opportunity to tell of her experiences in the Kalahari. For Show-and-Tell day, Charlize bought some melons and, using the video record of the melon tossing game, she rehearsed the game with some of her friends in the lounge of our house. Came the day that the game was to be enacted at school, she returned home furious because one of the troupe had thrown the melons forward instead of backward. Charlize, if not some cultural studies scholars, saw clear merit in detail and factual accuracy. What we learned from Charlize's experience and responses is that children:

- are outside of the encumbrances of the judgmental attitudes of 'science' and modernity;
- learn the 'proper' ways of doing things very quickly - but that experience overrules the romantic orthodox teaching that sometimes dominates the classroom;
- appreciate cultural difference to be an enriching element of existence, which is learnt when community-oriented tasks and cooperation over-ride individual preferences. This was why Charlize felt that some !Kung cultural convention had been broken when the melon was thrown forward rather than backward.

In 2001, Charlize was invited by Mary to narrate a reflexive re-edit of the VHS footage recorded at Ngwatle in 1995. Mary immediately assessed the value of the 11-year-old Charlize in the 1995 footage as a means through which to connect Durban English, Zulu and Indian South African senior primary pupils with a people whom they largely interpreted through myth and stereotype. Charlize narrates, introduces and discusses the video, and completed reception research schedules during the classes. An album of stills from *Kalahari fires* and Durban pupils' before and after drawings was discussed with the Ngwatle community in 2003. On learning of how the video was being used in Durban, Kate, a Ngwatle woman, immediately suggested that some of them should return to Durban with

us, to actually do the teaching.

Belinda Jeursen gave a seminar in the English Department on her return from Nyae Nyae in 1996, arguing implicitly for a greater emphasis of context over purely textual analysis and hyper-theorising with little allegiance to the material world (cf. Jeursen and Tomaselli 2002). 'Being there' (a term which draws on Peirce's phanerescopy), she confessed, was the missing dimension in her early work. An English professor who had written on San poetry disagreed: there was no need to visit the San to be able to write about and analyse their oral narratives, historical or contemporary. My first visit to Ngwatle disabused me of this misnomer. Context is important. On the 2004 visit, Mauritian MA-student Nasseema Taleb said that reading about Ngwatle and being in the context are two totally different things. Nasseema commented, 'There's just so much one can imagine'. Vanessa McLennan-Dodd, after her first visit to Witdraai in July 2001, concluded 'It's not just about asking questions and acquiring information; but it's also about spending time with people'. Nelia observed: 'Everybody seems to know where they want to go, but don't know how to get there. One gets a lot of insight from literature, but it does not give you reality, it isolates you, it privileges the book'.

The two experiences were used by Boloka (2001) to discuss globalisation from Third and Fourth world perspectives, citing instances of political resistance through the mobilisation of the soccer images made possible by globalisation. Anthea applied Stuart Hall's (1996) two models of identity, as developed by Grossberg (1996), in coming to terms with the diverse ways in which the two communities coped with a world largely destructive of their former open spaces where as 'independent people' (Marshall 1993) they roamed large tracts in search of food and water (Simões 2001). Jeffrey confronted the impacts of cultural tourism, and I answered some questions as to why some Americans see racism in *The Gods must be crazy* (1983; 1989) films, while the San themselves, as do many Africans, have completely different interpretations based on their own cosmologies (McLennan-Dodd and Tomaselli 2005; Tomaselli 2006b). Mary Lange, who was working with the <sup>1</sup>Khomani prior to becoming an Honours student in August 2001, used the 1995 video of Charlize and Miriam to educate primary school children in Durban, on intercultural interactions and culture. She also facilitates the purchase of crafts for curio stores and museums. We introduced a basic export economy for Ngwatle in 2002, much more sensible than

setting up a store at the Masetleng Pan, in the hope that a few tourists will pass through every now and then. Waldron learned about myth and human rights:

... I'm also very concerned with their land rights ... the group I visit most, don't have any entrenched land rights ... they have established that in their living memory, they have always lived in this area. When I talk about this area I am talking about one hundred kilometres in any direction from here, because when you are a hunter-gatherer you have to be mobile over those kinds of distances.

... My largest concern here is that if somebody comes along to you, for example, and asks if you own a piece of land and you then produce a title deed, you are enacting a role within a Westernised infrastructure. These people don't have a piece of paper entitling them to land that they and their forefathers have been born on. It is rather like asking a tree for the title deed. Because of this, and because of their almost total unfamiliarity with Western systems dominant in the area, they are not informed about the number of choices that they can make, to enable them to make an effective decision, whatever that decision might be (in Jeursen and Tomaselli 1999).

### *Relocation and removal*

The San, ... still live a hunter-gather life in small communities ... Despite the encroachment of modern civilization, throughout the surrounding regions, many of the San have retained their rich cultural way of life. Their unique understanding of the cycles of nature and desert life is legendary.

*(Bajanala: A Tourist Guide to Botswana, p.10)*

This statement is belied by the relocation, in early 2002, of the CKGP-dwellers who are being forced to 'enter' the 21st Century by being relocated from the Park, which was established in the early 1960s as a place for the Bushmen. The rationale offered is that they needed to be 'civilised', but the reality is that the area has been concessioned out to South African and Australian mining companies. Lest there be any doubt, a colour poster attached to a tree outside one of the CKGR-villages assured villagers that they have nothing to fear from the low flying aerial 'minerals exploration' survey planes.

In January 2004, while lecturing on this research in the USA, I was severely berated by a mature-age Botswanan student. She had no interest in the people concerned or the impact of my research, only on whether I had obtained the



necessary government research permit to be in Ngwatle. Her other concern was the refusal of the Ngwatle community to be relocated. Ngwatle, we were told, is not 'a recommended settlement'. But the inhabitants of Ngwatle want to remain there - those who identify themselves as Bushmen have a deep sense of their own identity, strengthened via their interactions with the incomers, the Bakgalagadi. I responded that forcing people to become 'civilised' is undemocratic and that this cultural arrogance marred the Botswanan government's policy towards Bushmen. The day before we departed on the July 2004 trip the court case instigated by Survival International (SI) had started in Ghantsi. SI is a banned organisation in Botswana, and spooked the Botswanan government with regard to its support of the CKGR-villagers. The Botswana president, Festus Mogae, announced in a radio interview that the government would appeal the judgement if it lost its case to forcefully remove the Central Kalahari Bushmen from that reserve. Prof. Ken Good, who taught at Botswana University, and who had written on the dispossession of the CKGR-people, was expelled from Botswana in 2005. The police visited Ngwatle in 2004 wanting to know about the 'white' visitors (three of Indian extraction, one black, and seven whites), but were told by the community that we were just visitors on our annual trip. But they showed greater interest in the Serving in Mission (SIM) group, who were absent that week, who had set up camp in December, but had not spent much time in the village. Ngwatle became aware of the SI support for the Bushmen by reading local newspapers and listening to radio broadcasts. SIM was surely there with government approval. Christine Marcham's questioning of health workers and Nyambura Njagi's interviews with government officials may have sparked this interest. In any event, we liaised closely with the Trust on our work and all our reports and videos are part of its archive.

### *Reversing information flow*

We always send offprints of our reports and articles to the various development and cultural organisations, and to anthropologists and filmmakers who are getting their hands dirty doing social action projects in Africa. We also send our transcriptions of interviews back to our sources, where possible. Sometimes authors receive the offprints as much as a year or more after publication. My appeal to Harwood Academic Publishers for Lorna Marshall, then 102 years old and living in Boston, to see this special issue on the pioneering work of her whole family in the Kalahari, failed to unscramble the delay of the *Visual Anthropology* (1999b) journal's publishing multinational. No one seemed to know whose

responsibility it was to send the offprints, or to supply the fully paid-for copies. Perhaps the Third and Fourth Worlds are not quite as perverse/reverse after all! When the company was taken over by Taylor and Francis in 2001, things improved immediately.

The NGOs always thank us for the written research we send them, as this seemingly minor gesture is a courtesy not often observed by academics who use the NGOs' facilities, who 'take' information and pictures from communities and individuals, and who write up their results in expensive European and American journals, often beyond the affordability of those NGOs and development workers who take hands-on approaches. **[xlviii]** This is one of the reasons that the <sup>1</sup>Khomani and others like the camel rider demand payment for photographs taken of them. Dawid Kruiper, traditional leader of the ≠Khomani, told us in 2000 that in his international travels he saw his kith and kin staring at him from postcards sold in curio stores, news agencies and bookshops. He claimed that neither the photographers nor the publishers secured the consent of those depicted, nor have they returned any royalties to the community. **[xlix]** So now tourists have to pay for photographing them. Thanks to our regular return visits we have been somewhat exempted from these payments because our work is well known amongst ≠Khomani individuals at Witdraai and adjacent areas. They still demand payment from other visitors. Often quite aggressively.

Academic studies are often very useful for day-to-day policy planning on the peripheries, where the world changes faster, is often more diverse, and where people struggle against Herculean odds. A year's delay in provision of offprints can occur against major social changes in even so-called 'traditional societies'. The logic of time is reversed: in the First and Second Worlds 'time is money', and money rules; in the Third and Fourth Worlds, history is 'timeless', according to tourist brochures and promotional movies I made in 1975 for the Gametrackers safari company, but means everything where resources are concerned. In 1999, we were able to video the Ngwatle community as they hunted. In 2000, hunting by the Ngwatle hunters was no more than *pampiere*; the SBB and tourists largely governed this activity.

Filmmakers like Waldron and Foster, **[I]** see themselves as cultural intermediaries between the Fourth and the First Worlds, where audiences of hundreds of millions can be influenced by more sensitive depictions, through which the San speak for themselves. However, the video makers are battling on two fronts,

firstly, with the global TV commissioning editors who often think in terms of Western stereotypes and myths of *AAAfrica* and Africans, and solely in terms of TV-ratings and global competition for audiences; and secondly, with restrictive conditions where the San are being systematically stripped of their hunting grounds, hunting rights, and water holes through officialdom, 'incomers' and by Western tourists who don't want to see people living with the game they have come to photograph and/or hunt. European tourists especially are to blame for this - they don't want to see Bushmen living with animals, they want the animals separate from the Bushmen in the national game parks they visit.

In July 2000, our extended delay in Jwaneng means that the hunting season at Ngwatle, where quotas by species apply, may have come to an end. Bows and arrows are not used for hunting any more in this part of the Kalahari. One JFP missionary wanted to buy a bow and arrow, I assume for its spiritual significance as explained by one of their colleagues, Elizabeth Jordaan:

The Bushman's arrow points will clear the way for whatever needs to happen in this continent. And then the Lord said to us that he wants us to polish them so that when the time comes we can use them. We believe that when we go up now through Africa, we will take two sets of bows and arrows with us and we will shoot them somewhere in Jerusalem and ask the Lord to set them free ... (2000).

Jordaan's assumption of recent north-south migration is derived from Schapera (1930);[li] Hahn (1928: 83); and other early scholars. The missionaries were unaware of current accounts which contest this speculation, or that the Ngwatle hunters had never used bows and arrows. The hunters use dogs to locate the game, and then trap the animal, which is then speared. Until March 2000, single men riding donkeys, some with dogs, could be seen leaving the village to go hunting. The hunting area was a day by donkey and three hours by 4X4. They returned a few days later, their dogs sometimes following in the days after that. Donkeys might carry water containers with the hunters walking alongside. Though hunting was clearly in evidence while we were there in 1995, the village was littered with rusting tin cans and decaying cardboard packaging. Our hosts always seemed a little surprised when they saw us burning and burying our rubbish.

Up to early 2000, the community lived on hunting, gathering, state handouts, a meagre income from those who had obtained work elsewhere, and from the odd visitors like us. By 2001, the women no longer gathered balanced nutrients; they

just prepared porridge. In February 2000, the KD/1 area was declared a conservancy and SBB allocated a concession. This was a joint venture tourism project, involving the three villages, the Safari Company and the Trust. All travellers were button-holed by earnest looking gate guards as they passed through the villages, required to pay transit fees, and write their names into a book. Initially, I was irritated, and then I thought of the endless and opportunistic tollbooths which dot the South African national road system, which similarly charges users. Perhaps the South African system is just that much more sophisticated?

The Ngwatle villagers were required to cede their hunting quotas to the Trust, which then sells them to the Safari operation. Initially SBB directly delivered meat to the villagers, but in 2003, we learned that two-thirds of the meat from any kill was given to the Trust, which was called by radio to collect it, with SBB paying the petrol. The Trust was then assumed to distribute it amongst the three villages. At Ngwatle, people complained that the Trust actually charged between P10-15 for a piece of meat, and that the necessary rations were not provided when the hunting season closed.

The San hunter in Botswana is now mainly a fiction on TV, though subsistence hunting does still occur. The two American women at Kaa were very impressed that SBB then distributed half the meat to the camp's workers and half to the villages. We explained that the game was owned by the government and licensed to the villagers for a fee, that the Trust had given permission for the meat to be hunted by SBB clients provided that it was distributed amongst the local population. Food delivered to the door, killed by someone else, made for easier, less dangerous living. But as one of the cleaners at the camp told us, when there were lots of tourists it was sometimes difficult for SBB to find the time to distribute the meat evenly between the three very dispersed settlements. In 2001 at Ngwatle, the community was expecting their delivery on the Sunday, but nothing had arrived by the time we left the following Thursday. The emerging political economy of the KD/1 area might be more efficient in extracting dollars from the tourists, but the Ngwatle community were not yet entirely integrated into the new set of relations.

*Periphery and centre: Reversing the relationship*

*While traveling through this vast area [Northern Cape] you can enjoy wine tasting*

*at the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest co-operative wine cellars in the world ... visit private game parks, salt pans and the last remaining San tribe in Southern Africa.*

*(Kalahari Tours and Travel brochure 1991, the motto of which is 'Satisfied tourists never complain')*

Are cultural studies really concerned with power relations and their often-negative consequences for the less powerful? While the post-LitCrit strand celebrates resistance behaviour of 'mall rats' in shopping centres, as well as the liberation of 'the body', how can cultural studies offer any real solutions beyond the Western world and the pleasure of reading? Explanations are offered aplenty by this kind of cultural studies, but social action is rarely evident. This is not so in the Third World, which, as Starfield (2000) amongst others has suggested, should be praxis-based. For those located in Ngwatle, the degree of liberation could be measured by a constant water supply, the restitution of their hunting grounds and domicile rights, the return of water holes and, consequent upon all these, food, education and jobs. Jon-Jon did say that a clear benefit of the SBB-operation was steady work, delivery of meat, and the purchase by tourists of artefacts. But without food and water the liberation of the body in Western feminist and masculinist terms means little.

Cultural studies in the Third and Fourth Worlds obviously must incorporate the First and Second World theoretical trajectories, as the processes they explain clearly impact the worlds in which some of us are working. But the scrambled development periodisation in these less-developed countries imposes largely different responsibilities on cultural studies approaches. As Wright (1998), and African and Latin American scholars insist, these are partly to be found in action-oriented praxis long pioneered on these two continents. The most important statement made by Stanton (2000: 259), is that much Western cultural theory derives from fieldwork in the Third and Fourth Worlds. The First and Second Worlds, however, have largely failed to pay their dues to these non-European sources.

*Off-roading: It's all in the image*

*The really old Land Rover driver has either never driven a coil spring Land Rover or is a fanatic who likes spending his weekends on his back being rained on by oil and dirt.*

*(The psyche of 4X4 drivers)*

It's late Sunday, five days after we broke down. Anthea returns to the motel from the garage and tells us that the engine is looking 'more holistic, that it's taking shape'. We then push and pull the vehicle onto the Bosal lift so that we can replace the engine. Jeffrey tells me that his father was a taxi driver, with a car that broke down every day. He wishes now that he had spent more time with his father learning how to fix cars. I tell him I could once strip my 1948 Willy's Jeep and repair anything that went wrong with it, that I and my fellow students spent many a weekend fixing the damn thing and camping on traffic islands in remote towns, looking for spares in rubbish dumps and local farmers' garages. But these new and very expensive 4X4s are much too complicated for amateurs like us. In 2003, we worried about the diesel consumption of Nelia's new 4.7 Land Cruiser. The SBB manager told us that it wouldn't handle the sand, and that we needed to take a different route from Kaa to Ngwatle.

The South African-made Nissan Sani was still largely mechanical, until the new Japanese holding company of the South African operation unilaterally terminated its production in 1999. The Sani can be fixed in the *bundu* (countryside), but the modern range high-end market 4X4s are so cluttered with computerized technology, flashing lights and beeping gizmos that they cannot even be jump-started without blowing up their electronic systems. This is Africa, modern computerized motor technology, like the taps at the Mokola Lodge, coexist uncomfortably, often in reverse signification, with ways of life which have little need for them. In the 30 June - 06 July edition of *Mmegi* (the only daily, independent newspaper in Botswana), I read about the Mitsubishi 'Pajero re-invented', which 'tames the wild' in 'quality and comfort'. 'The Pajero owner sees himself as the master of the universe ... The Pajero ... is the equivalent of the Red Ferrari in a man's world', comments St. Pierre White on the Sani website. I also read about the launch of a new South African-designed and made utility vehicle in which one can 'Fly to freedom in your new go-anywhere do-anything Toyota Condor'. The No. 11 issue of the South African *Adventure Leisure*, sold at the Jwaneng Gift Shop, has a high angle shot on its front cover with two Toyota Condors offroading in Maputoland, South Africa. Walking towards the camera in single file alongside the two vehicles, which shields sight of their occupants, are three smiling traditional Zulus, two bare-breasted women and a man.

After our return to Durban in late July 2000, I saw an advert for a Land Rover Freelander in *Time* (November 27, 2000: 11-13). The advert covered three pages,

beginning with a single full-page photo (p. 11) of a bare-breasted woman of seemingly Himba appearance. **[iii]** She is alone in long shot, with her eyes, and breasts bizarrely airbrushed at an angle that look towards the lower right-hand edge of the page. A dust haze covers the lower third of the desert picture to just above her knees. On turning the page one encounters a full-page spread depicting the Freelander whizzing past. On the left page the caption 'The new more powerful Freelander' is written in the sky above the desert. The right page, which continues the panorama, hosts the vehicle leaving behind a trail of dust stretching back to p. 11. The Himba woman's breasts are thus now understood to be blown by the wind generated by the speed of the passing vehicle (Van Eeden 2003). Apart from being in bad taste, this advert also juxtaposes wheel-less pre-modern wo/man with an unseen jetsetter. This advert was photographed at a Pan near to where the ≠Khomani live. Where in the Condor advert the 'primitive' Zulu people carry on walking untouched by passing 'civilization', the Freelander advert symbolises the ability of this other postmodern tourist dimension to impact on the very body of a person depicted as living in pre-modernity through whose time and place it is travelling. In Namibia, tour guides now tout the Himba as the oldest tribe in Namibia, displacing the Bushmen for this honour. While the Himba woman's breasts are elongated in an asexual way, and her open-mouthed expression is one of scepticism/defiance/amazement/indignation, the usual direction of the gaze has been inverted in both adverts: the gaze is by the women towards the 4X4, not the Western Same's gaze at the exotic Other. 4X4s are usually depicted as the ultimate luxurious time-machines safely taking their unseen occupants back to a primitive 'past', indicated by the remotely located unclothed Other, jungles, deserts and swamps. The vehicles and their drivers are simply passing through time - free of spatial/sexual/temporal/normative restrictions. The Freelander advert drew the wrath of South African feminists, and was reissued without the Himba woman, with Land Rover blaming their advertising agency for the problem.

The attitude of many 4X4-drivers, who do take their vehicles into the *bundu* (bush), remains as alienating as they are suggested to be in advertising. In 2002, at the Molopo Lodge, two Isuzu's circled our campsite - surrounded as it was by Nelia's Toyota Prado, the Sani, a 4X4-trailer and three tents - wheel-spun and kicked a storm of sand into our faces as they sped for the exit. These drivers have no qualms about wrecking the environment they have come to experience. Although they are literate and educated, they would not understand the Botswana

Code of Conduct even if they did read it. As Carter commented, doctors, lawyers and businessmen in their personal aircraft are as utterly contemptuous of the desert ecology as are rough and drunk bikers (interview, July 2001).

Four-wheel-drive vehicles are taken off-road mainly for advertising and promotional purposes. The Botswana Department of Tourism however states: 'One of the fastest growing adventure sports in Southern Africa which has been made popular in recent years by the advent of custom designed 4X4 recreational vehicles, GPS equipment and the desire of owners to experience the wilderness area of Africa' (*Bajanala* n.d.: 10). I remember a relative declining to join my family on a trip to the Okavango Swamps because he feared damaging his Land Rover Discovery - or even using it on the tar, 'because that's building mileage'. A colleague actually sold his Mitsubishi Pajero and bought a 1992 Sani because he could not afford to take the Pajero off-road. Nelia Oets tried to buy back her Prado because the Land Cruiser, which replaced it, cost too much to tempt off-road damage. Our 4X4 Nissan web wag observes of the Prado driver, 'He's confident his vehicle will cope and every time he takes it off-road he apologises for its inadequacy'. These little snippets of 4X4 folklore may hold more truth than is realised. In Maun 2005, I watched in bemusement as Oyvind Mikalsen went from one spares shop to another, including informal street traders, looking for cheap spares for his Sani. Eventually someone who knew someone else who had worked at Nissan and who had the part was able to install a fan clutch, saving Oyvind over P200. No one was telling how the clutch came to be in the hands of this unemployed mechanic who did the job under a tree, in the sand, on the side of the road. Those who own expensive 4X4s rarely take them off the tar - the prime market for Sani's were businessmen 'driving to the office' was what I was told by a Nissan Sani representative. Those who really need 4X4s use donkeys, horses and oxen on tracks that can be hardly called roads. The world is indeed back to front.

In the Kalahari, Toyotas are king. Few other makes survive the rugged terrain. **[liii]** Of all 4X4s and vans, however, only Nissan has tried to link its advertising to African cosmologies. The 1997 South African TV-advertisement is a metaphorical play on 'hard body' [an old man, a black *bakkie* ('van')] and the African's ancestors, land and heritage. This metaphor is worked through the leathery black man who survived apartheid and who is now putting the finishing touches to his house in a rural area. At last he has a stake in the country. He also



has a stake in his own land, his own house, his own identity and his lineage. The old man says he is going to leave his 'hard body' (that is, the van) to his son, thus setting up associations of symbolic succession: religious, psychospiritual, and personal, via the land in which his ancestors are buried, who talk to him via indigenous healers or *sangomas*.**[liv]** These metaphors are linked to independence (personal, racial, spiritual, economic) and political liberation. They cohere metaphorically in a TV-commercial that marries the political, the cosmological and the mobile via the *bakkie*. The product is a 'hard body' van, not dissimilar to my Sani station wagon. This is the mixing of the sacred and profane for commercial purposes. My Michigan anthropology students in 1998 were mystified by the advert, though one accused it of being politically correct. Wafula, however, tells me that our plight has been a Godsend for him, that this is the first proper job he has had since arriving in Botswana eight months previously, that it has given him a new sense of purpose, meaning and motivation - he's gotten his hands dirty again, and found some friends in a strange and alienating country where the people are unfriendly, inhospitable and remote. He seems to be undergoing a metaphysical reawakening in working on my Sani, and describes it as 'mechanical spiritual journey'. I have, however, learned that my Sani, despite the advertising hype, is mortal after all, (it was, however, resurrected by Nissan West for the 2001-2005 trips, and gave few problems) though the self-styled 4X4 psychologist describes Sani drivers as 'disappointed people'.

### *Theoreticism and essentialism: Being unAfrican*

The two youngest in our group, Caleb and Anthea, get cabin fever on Monday. They hitch to Gabarone, the capital city, to where I should have, in priceless hindsight, had my Sani towed. There they meet a Rastafarian who claims to be a Bushman. I worry about their safety. Jeffrey says not to worry, 'They are too exotic not to get a lift'. In this country we (white) South Africans are the Other, different, and easily identified. Caleb is especially easily identified for his earring. He has already been asked by a Botswanan at the Lodge if he is a 'lesbian'. A press report in *The Mirror* reports on some school children in Selebi Phikwe who think it is unAfrican for men to wear jewellery, that this connotes homosexuality (11 July 2000: 13). In Zimbabwe, homosexuality is illegal, where they are considered by President Robert Mugabe to be 'less than dogs'. Thus is the Same now othered as unacceptable, as being behavioural imports, as being unAfrican. In contrast, homosexuality has constitutional protection in South Africa - for how long I wonder? Caleb is neither homosexual nor lesbian, but he does read the *I-*

*Ching* (Wilhelm *et al.* 1951) on both the 2000 and 2001 trips, making copious notes.

His father, Derek, a physicist, prescribed this book when he co-taught a course on 'Science as a Cultural Expression' with another physics renegade, Don Bedford, in our Centre during the late 1980s (Wang and Bedford 1985; Tomaselli 1989). In his first seminar, he would throw the bones and ask students to discuss issues of method and interpretation, causality and appearance. This course was received with some bemusement by the Science Faculty, which found its abiding positivism now being thoroughly questioned in a Faculty more open to critical debate. Derek would tell our students, 'Beware of actors wearing white coats pretending to be doctors and scientists in TV-commercials'. In response to a query from the head of the Physics Department, we had indeed found an external examiner who was a scientist, and who also had a graduate degree in cultural studies. She later visited the University and gave a very basic lecture on cultural studies and science in the Science Faculty. Some senior academics in the audience had trouble keeping up with her. Hers was not the kind of science that made much sense to scientists. The basic problem is one of paradigm: Derek and Bedford learned that Humanities students with no maths, calculus or science education scored well because they could construct arguments, whereas the physics students doing the course were more adept at solving conceptual problems, and were unable to develop arguments to the same degree. Perhaps our paradigms are really just different kinds of arguments preferred by users and readers in the same way that soap operas, sitcoms and serious dramas draw different kinds of audiences needing to assuage different kinds of reception needs?

CNN's *BizAsia* is being transmitted on one of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) channels when I return to my Jwaneng Lodge room. On the edge of my consciousness I hear that Nissan Japan has sold one of its companies to an American firm. What does this mean for my Sani, I wonder? The channel switches to the SABC News and I hear that 14 people including two children were killed in the Harare soccer stadium on Saturday. Zimbabwe's President Mugabe blames the Parliamentary Opposition (sic). The spectators were waving the party's open-handed salute and brandishing small plastic squares, to symbolize 'giving the red card' to Mugabe. The International AIDS Conference in Durban is told that South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe have such high infection rates that a negative population growth rate is expected by 2003. I read of rape in the

Botswana press and I again worry about Caleb and Anthea. The South African President who opened the Conference doubts the link between HIV and AIDS, and his Health Minister still refuses state hospitals anti-retroviral drugs now to be offered at no charge to Third World countries. A German pharmaceutical company makes this offer the day before the opening of the Conference. The Minister questions the company's timing and motivation. Are we now truly stuck in reverse? The President formulated his views on AIDS from the Internet, one of the few outlets where the 'AIDS dissidents' can still get published. We must keep the dialogue open, he argues, Africa is different; AIDS is caused by poverty (is it a Western plot?). He reiterates this in the face of 20 years of unprecedented international empirical research into any virus at any time in history.

African scientists are key contributors to this research. *Thus does an entire government legitimise a debilitating theoreticism.* How many at Ngwatle and Witdraai will die from AIDS, I wonder? No one will ever know, as 'Bushmen' are barely accorded their constitutional rights by the health services of either country. I recharge my electric razor, thinking of the TV-advertising song, 'What did you do with your Philips today?'. Use value is replaced by consumption value. Where and who am I? I grieve for those denied anti-retroviral treatment. I was the 'media expert' who had been tasked by the South African Department of Health to draw up the Guidelines for its national media and educational 'Beyond Awareness' campaign strategy (1996-2000). This was done against sometimes incredible bureaucratic odds, government mismanagement of the pandemic, and opportunistic politicking. 'It belongs in the dustbin', says Mbeki's representative, responding to the 'Durban Declaration' signed by 5,000 scientists asking Mbeki to reconsider government policy on AIDS. He later died from an unspecified ailment, and the press speculated on the cause. The government berated the press for not letting the man die with dignity. When will our government realise that they are now a *government*, not an oppositional liberation movement?

On Wednesday after an all-night stint in the workshop, the two mechanics and the students arrive triumphantly at 4.30 am at the garage manager's small and sparsely furnished house, where we are staying for the night, sleeping on a carpeted floor still wet from a plumbing accident the previous day. His loud music wakes us all at dawn. In his lounge is a Bible studies book, *Witnessing: Turning the world upside down*. Is this the conclusion of our liminal story? Revising this paragraph reminded me of the JFP's insistence that the Bushmen migrated south

from Egypt (cf. Schapera 1930), rather than having migrated from the south through Egypt to India, Polynesia, Australia and North America, as argued in the National Geographic documentary, *A journey of man* (2004).

If this chapter is a theorised view of our stay in Jwaneng, what of our arrival trope in Ngwatle? Will the Sani break down again in the next 600 kms? Jeffrey has in jest invited Wafula to join us to Ngwatle. Gibson had had to return home from Jwaneng, which leaves one space. Wafula comes with us in exchange for food, a sleeping bag, and the ethnographic experience. He later fixes a front shock absorber at the Viljoen crossroads trading store, where workshop facilities are available. Joe Viljoen tells me that he hates Sani's as their wishbones spew up sand all over the engine. I remember, on the 1995 trip, spending an hour de-hosing the sand off the top of the engine at his facility, and being astonished that none of it had gotten into the air filter.

### *Getting there*

On finally reaching Ngwatle we realise that massive changes have occurred in but one year in this remote village, and the area as a whole. We learn from Keith Viljoen that there is now a camping site, which he built, at the request of the community. It is one of six in the KD/1 area. On arrival late at night, we are taken to a 'gate guard', who recognises us, and kindly agrees to let us camp where we have always camped, close to the community. The new campsite is at the other end of the Pan, well away from the community, fitted with a *boma* ('enclosure'), shower and drop toilet.

The next day we are greeted by the gate guard who carries a padlocked money box, a book in which to record our stay, and a request for all kinds of payments. This development involves two agencies: SBB, which secured a concession in February 2000 to manage tourism and environment, and the Nqwaa Khobee Xeya Trust. Being short of ready cash, most of it having been used to pay the Lodge and garage in Jwaneng, we ask for leniency at these unexpected payments. We explain that we have come as friends and researchers, not as tourists, and that we also have about 500 items of clothing to distribute in exchange for camping, as well as a new soccer ball. We agree to donate the clothing to the gate guard and her *kgotla* (council), who will be responsible for the distribution.

JFP in 2004 identified Kaaitjie, the previous SBB gate guard, as having 'leadership potential' and had invited her to volunteer to translate religious videos screened

at night on the large screen, and to teach Bible studies to the pre-primary school children. The missionaries are keen to foster an alcohol-free and moral environment. After a hot day at Masetleng Pan with Kort-Jan and Johannes, videoing yet more footage with Matt, we go to the Ngwatle drinking place. The *shebeen* queen is none other than the self-same irrepressible Kaaitjie, who conducts business from her hut, with the walls adorned with large religious pictures overlooking her double bed. Mary comments tongue-in-cheek, 'The alcohol and the spiritual life are one and the same. All leads to enlightenment'. The contradictions are many and wonderful, I reflect. Kaaitjie certainly is ahead of the rest when it comes to seizing her opportunities.

### *Abstracting one week in Jwaneng*

Where is the (reading/textual) pleasure in our experience? I stand accused by some of my colleagues of caricaturing literary studies, and I am informed that some of my writing on the state of the discipline of communication in South Africa, in which my colleagues and I have questioned the appropriation of communication studies into the Post-LitCrit paradigm, is causing some consternation. Of course, I told them that this is a global debate (cf. Windschuttle 1997; Hartley 1999), which is only now finding its feet here. They were unimpressed.

I remind myself that I am an African in Africa studying Africa and Africans. As Ian Player, the renowned conservationist, told Malcolm Draper and I in 1999: 'A wilderness experience is an inner and outer enlightenment of man's position in the world'. Unless I understand this multiple location of identity, place and space, I cannot really understand the significance of our week in Jwaneng and the many weeks spent with different communities in different parts of the Kalahari Desert. The periphery (e.g. Jwaneng), as Stanton (2000) implies, often offers the empirical fodder to the theory developed at the centre, where the source of this theory is often erased in its subsequent appropriations, abstractions and rearticulations. However, we still have to get to the edge of the periphery, Hukuntsi, before we can return to the centre (Durban and its links to First and Second World scholarship) and write up further articles. It is in this transition that the voices in the field are abstracted into theories at the metropole. The concrete quotidian orality of the San is developed into the theory, which now silences the very people/informants whose knowledge, information and voices provide the raw data for the finished product. Those 'there' write up the concrete experiences of their

subjects 'here'; while those 'here' don't always appreciate that for those 'there', their conceptual questions may have moved in different directions to simply writing about a single concrete issue, people or activity. Thus, for them 'here', the published works seem not to embody their contributions accurately, understandably, or even visibly. They are thus deeply disappointed and become antagonistic towards academics whom they thought were 'on their side'; perhaps working on their behalf, and who may have been seen to have become an extension of the observed's community. The researchers, however, know that theirs is a temporary sojourn, geared to achieving aims not necessarily consonant with their subjects' expectations. Blaming one academic blames all for any and all misfortunes experienced by our sources.

Observers (academics, filmmakers, journalists) live in trajectories of mobility, change and difference, while those they observe, film or write about - the 'natives' - are more easily identifiable because they are relatively immobile and therefore knowable and reproducible in all kinds of texts. Local cultural knowledge can be understood by readers, as books (and films) which are meant to be read *beyond* the cultures in which the author is located or about which s/he is writing. This is another transaction that further distances observers from observed. Writers and academics live between 'here' and 'there' - where travelling becomes a mode of dwelling between themselves as observers and the subjects who are observed and who are relatively static. When researchers return home, they do so with new knowledge that is valorised in the academy and the multinational publishing industry which is subsidized by it. **[lv]**

### *Remodelling the Cultural Studies 4X4*

*The Hilux driver is very proud that he is tough enough to take the rough with the smooth (smooth?!) ... he is less proud however, and never lets on, about the kidney belt in the cubby hole and silent wish for a Defender that is half as reliable.*

*(The psyche of 4X4 drivers)*

In some ways, cultural studies may have partly become the discipline in which a discursive struggle over who generates the most quotable quotes predominates. In analogous terms, the conspicuous consumption of top-of-the line 4X4s - which are often less reliable than their cheaper competitors - is more important than the ability of these vehicles to get their wheels and chasses dirty. The little homilies

of cultural studies' good sense offered *ad infinitum* by a growing cadre of authors are shown to be sometimes seriously deficient in the empirical testing and application (Tomaselli 1998). Similarly, other than the Hilux, off-road vehicles are sold more by their slick advertising images than by any actual owner need for the vehicle.

Theories, like luxury 4X4s, often bracket out the mess, smells and contradictions of everyday life and struggle. Theories sometimes eliminate the notion that some people are simply not coping, and are committing slow communal suicide, as is the case with the 'traditional bushmen' at Witdraai. Concentration on one variable or topic only, such as tracking, language, or lineage, forgets the conditions under which people live - and which they want publicized and resolved. Academics can be single-minded about their often paradigmatically narrow objectives.

Inopportune development strategies and lack of training on how to manage both small and large sums of money cover up a litany of serious health, psychological and developmental failures. The question often asked by our informants is just who is benefiting from the development-NGOs. The answer is usually implied in this rhetorical question: NGOs often seem to service their own needs first before any significant trickling down reaches those most in need. Our informants themselves complain that the NGOs seem to think that they 'own' the bushmen, and that they should necessarily act as intermediaries between observers and observed, between tourism capital and the objects of their gaze, and between businesspeople and communities. 'What about personal choice?', asked Belinda Kruiper.

It takes a car to get to the Witdraai *Tentepark*, but a 4X4 to get to their impermanent village on the other side of the dune (unless one is walking). It takes a lot more resolve to exit the farm, having to fend off intoxicated individuals at the gate, begging us for food, money, and telling us their hard luck stories, parading their children for effect, and blaming us for everything that went wrong in their lives. Staying at the Witdraai camp in 2001 was an act of will, not an accident, though we were well looked after by Abraham Meintjies, who seemed to be working on his own to keep the tent park going. He told us in 2001 that he asked the community not to visit us; we suspected that he was trying to conceal their alcoholism. Caleb and Darryn realised that the elaborated friendliness and story being told to them by an old woman, was nothing more than a ploy to extract further payment from them. Meintjies tells us that the 'traditional' ≠Khomani

want to keep their old ways, that the only places of employment for the traditional ≠Khomani are at the Witdraai cultural village, Kagga Kamma, and Mabilengwe. That's why cultural tourism is so important for them. [lvi] Is this the new nomadism? Instead of hunting and gathering in wide open spaces, the traditional ≠Khomani travelled between cultural villages/tourist sites in the western and Northern Cape, the Northern Province and, until a labour dispute, in Namibia. This economic principle aimed at maintaining language, [lvii] culture and traditions, however, fails to take cognisance of other factors, such as incest. Dawid Kruiper insists that the traditionals only marry within the clan. Models of cultural tourism, like most academic models, simply do not take these and other factors like communal alcoholism, communal psychology, and historical circumstances into account.

Conversely, accidental circumstances such as in Jwaneng provided us unanticipated empirical opportunities to write theorised diaries of sorts - not easily possible in the increasingly commodified practices, output orientations and top-heavy bureaucracies that universities have become - especially in South Africa. We need to make cultural studies subversive again, just as Starfield and her colleagues have done. Is it not coincidental that Vista University where she worked was merged with others in post-apartheid educational restructuring? The radical origin of cultural studies in Birmingham during the 1950s was an attempt to recover democracy through critical engagement of articulations of socialism, critiques of power relations, and via a critical rereading of social, anthropological and political theories (Johnson 1981; Hall 1981). There is nothing better than experiencing a few days of hardship in the field to ensure that cultural studies does not absorb the fundamental stasis associated with any form of ideology, paradigm fundamentalism or assumptions about just what is 'popular', or the conditions under which people assigned to this category have to do to survive. Writing critically about arrival tropes and other experiences should be just one way of linking practice to theory and back again. Having to deal with morose students who refuse to put up tents in the middle of the night (preferring the local pub) because they are jaded by but one week's camping and travelling, is methodologically instructive indeed.

In short, cultural studies should provide ways of analysing power, text-context relationships and media-society relations, and engaging these for democratic outcomes. The power brought by the SBB Land Cruisers and their hunting guns to



the KD/1 area is just one example of how a fundamental change in political economy can occur almost overnight. New sets of relationships are thus generated, resulting in both anticipated and unanticipated effects. The growing plethora of academics, filmmakers, missionaries, NGOs and other agencies all involved in the KD/1 area (and the Kalahari generally) adds to the complexity and the confusing noise. Where once a small floating community like at Ngwatle coped irrespective of these outsiders, now it has to negotiate with them, almost on a daily basis. Books like this one additionally place them inexorably within international networks of discussion and debate. Power, and those who now have it, is visible where it was previously invisible, where it was working quietly within community networks mostly beyond the view of development agencies, filmmakers and academics.

The power relationships at Ngwatle have been fundamentally altered, not only in terms of community-SBB relations, but also internally. Those employed by SBB are the new power brokers, they controlled the 'roger roger machine' (one of three SBB-supplied two-way radios previously managed by the gate guard in each of the three villages). The gate guards largely decided on how incoming donations to the community would be distributed.

Jeffrey and I immediately notice, on the day following our arrival in July 2000, that the community is better dressed than before. Clearly, more regular resources are now coming into the community as a result of the SBB-presence. A number of people led by Miriam approach us independently to request a different distribution procedure with regard to the clothes, which we offer to hand over to the gate guard for allocation within the community. Past experience has suggested to them that donations tended to be rather narrowly distributed. Four hours of very difficult negotiations on how to allocate the clothes ensue. A Hukuntsi man who also worked for the Council, and who owned the only *spaza* (informal shop) in the area, assists. He is visiting us as he had found one of my two spare wheels, which unbeknown to us had come off my Sani as we bounced over the track between Hukuntsi and Ngwatle the night before. (We later discovered that we had also lost two gas containers and a 25 litre water bowser, which we found the next day when retracing our route). We set up an *ad hoc* distribution committee consisting of the Council worker, the gate guard and Pedris to distribute the clothes on an equal basis to each of the thirty families. The entire community turns out to receive the clothing. Even with this care in

devising a fair distribution mechanism, the gate guard manages to play both distribution committee member and recipient. Having outmanoeuvred our distributive mechanism, however, the committee is challenged by the other recipients who realise that they are again being disadvantaged. The recipients of handouts do have power and use it when necessary (cf. Katz *et al.* 1997: 147-52). Indeed, Kaaitjie told me in 2004 that she owns a 4X4. Why does she position herself so prominently for handouts we wondered? A few days after the 2004 distribution, we noticed that she was wearing clothes given to other people.

In 2002, we were told that although the community was happy with the distribution mechanism, the remaining problem was that the community did not share. It had been agreed that family recipients of randomly handed out items would trade with each other after the donation: families with children would swap with recipients who had received children's' clothing for example. This did not happen - everyone hoarded what he or she got, irrespective of its utility. Thus does another myth disintegrate about the Bushmen and sharing. In 2003, we modified the distribution by separating out the boys and girls, men's and women's clothes for distribution to individuals rather than families. Everyone got something, except those who arrived late. A nurse in the mobile clinic stopped to find out where all his patients went, and he told us that we were 'empowering the people with cash', on observing our purchase of crafts from the community. A small group of enterprising men were rapidly sewing a waistcoat as the transactions occurred. They sold it to one of our party. In 2004, we separated the men, women and children, and allocated clothes directly to each based on size and gender. Because of this transaction, the community permitted us to camp free of charge.

How can power relationships be negotiated to the benefit of all parties in the encounter? This is one of many difficult, uneasy and unclear questions we kept asking ourselves. Perhaps cultural studies scholars should ask them more often than they do. In writing this chapter Waldron constantly - and correctly - challenged us on our motivations, objectives and imperatives. The people of Ngwatle asked him about us. We asked the Ngwatle community about SBB. We wondered to whom Waldron held himself accountable - his relationship with the community is based on a deep friendship with specific individuals; our relationship with Ngwatle is less clear. **[lviii]** In 2001, there were far more cattle than ever before - a clear indicator of a shifting economy- brought by the

Kgalgadi incomers, who we were told were using all kinds of parasitic strategies to exploit the donor sympathy for the Bushmen, in attempts to find grazing and water for their cattle. Afrikaans was in decline as Petrus had died prior to our 1996 trip, and Tswana and other dialects were now displacing !Kung and Afrikaans. (In 2003, the incomers had gone, the drought having driven them elsewhere.) Miriam was looking for a better place for her daughter. Charlize had been her friend, now a memory, and a link to an assumed better life, **[lix]** notwithstanding South Africa's huge poverty levels. Analysis of structure reveals these kinds of processes; analysis of culture and communication identifies the angst experienced in negotiating structures beyond one's control. The deep Bushmen identity identified by Anthea, Jeffery and Gibson from their previous trips in 1999 and 2000 was already under threat barely a year later. The !Xoo men were drunker than usual for longer than usual, they were openly pejorative of the Kgalagadi *inkomers*, and they were much more open with us than during any previous visit. The Kgalagadi and their cows were largely gone after 2002, and the drinking was less evident, but we did find the local shebeen a hive of industry (crafts making, drinking, etc.). In 2001, we were indeed 'friends' and not merely and only a resource, though at the start of our 2002 visit, we were again viewed primarily as a resource. This changed dramatically however when Charlize performed a fire dance, derived from aboriginals in Australia. We were still 'friends' who could be trusted with information not previously made known to us, told to us on our travels to and through the hunting grounds, and afterwards more directly by the Kaptein himself. Ngwatle, not having a clear status, does not have a clinic, a primary school, or a sense of permanency. But also, they do not beg, tell us in drunken states of their hard luck stories, take without giving, or blame us for their predicament. Unlike with the Kruipers, exchange relationships are clear and consistent. In 2004, for example, some of the men offered to trade their spears for shoes that we had brought with us, but had not distributed because of the dissension being caused.

The variety of NGOs working on San issues from Cape Town to Windhoek, have varying and often difficult relationships with the communities with which they are working. 'Where are the benefits (from the work of these agencies)?' is a frequently heard question, asked by our Northern Cape sources. Malnutrition continues, dependency deepens; no one cares for the old and for those in ill health. Carter's provocative question is: '... show me one hole dug in the ground by an NGO?' Both Lodge managers told of what they considered to be potentially

workable joint business proposals, allegedly shot down without thought by SASI, Land Affairs and their consultants. At Witdraai, the Lodge could have been a key player in employment and development. Yet development proposals aimed at empowering both the Lodge and the ≠Khomani, we are told, failed to receive sympathetic hearings from those who have influence over the ≠Khomani. Every developmental mistake, described in hundreds of thousands of pages of academic literature drawing on experiences across the globe, are seemingly squandered by agencies which, while claiming to represent the beneficiaries, allegedly fail to spend any real time with them, preferring the luxury of the Lodge. These are all allegations made by a variety of sources, both ≠Khomani and other, and ironically, it was the Lodge managers, who would have derived the most financial benefit, who pointed this out to us. Time, input-output, outcomes, are the problems. 'There's no hanging out', as Belinda Kruijer might say. This is just too costly, and bookkeepers don't understand it.

For researchers to negotiate all these - sometimes competing and antagonistic - networks is difficult enough, as John Marshall discovered after 45 years of work amongst the Ju/'hoansi in Namibia (Barnard 1996; see also Biesele and Hitchcock 1999). Trying to unravel the power relations that underpin interactions between all these agencies, individuals within agencies, fieldworkers, consultants, advisors, state agencies and all manner of academics, is a task of extraordinary complexity - but a very necessary one.

Some CCMS-colleagues in July 2004, who had not met the JFP-missionaries, were dismissive. Charlize, Mary and I, however, saw the missionaries' presence (and sophisticated video equipment) as an opportunity to show our Ngwatle videos on the big screen, to a much larger audience than was otherwise feasible. We hoped that the missionaries might have also learned something about the personalities that they were trying to influence. We had wanted Miriam's family and her toddler, Patience, to see her on screen, and to take heart and strength from their own way of life, their own spirituality, and their own deep sense of identity linked as it is to the place of Ngwatle, as recorded in *'I am, You are?'* (Sætre 2003). We realised that JFP, with its projected three visits per year, might provide some continuity, further resources and some protection from resettlement. We also know that local individuals seize their opportunities when they come. Missionaries are not that different from development workers; they both largely apply top-down strategies and externally derived solutions. Their supposed

beneficiaries know this and act accordingly. Just think of Kaaitjie's entrepreneurial flare. She milks each and every opportunity for her personal benefit, thereby rendering services to the community, which no one else does.

The next chapter continues this story.

## NOTES

[i] Charlize is known at Ngwatle and in some published works as 'Catherine', her original first name. She added Charlize by deed of poll in 2002, and now prefers this name.

[ii] On our return two weeks later, grandmother asked Charlize how she had fared. Charlize replied that going to the toilet was a complicated business: one walks roughly a hundred meters from the camp, preferably unsighted at night. Using the lantern for light, you clear the sand to remove scorpions and you check for the odd snake. Then dig a hole. Care is required: 'Going to the same place twice can get quite messy'. In July 2002, Mary Lange once returned to camp complaining that she had 'lost her tree' - the one with her makeshift lavatory seat hidden behind it. She was concerned that someone might have been watching her and stolen it. She found it later where she had originally put it. In 2004, the missionaries showed us a patented fold-up chair with a hole in the middle called a 'Super Duper Pooper'. As for the snakes, well, when we struck the tents we found that Charlize and the three female students had been sleeping on top of a partially hibernating baby puff adder. Some children immediately killed the snake, while we watched with paralysed bemusement.

[iii] Boreholes were sunk in 2001, but neither a pump nor piping was provided at Ngwatle. In 2003, we learned from the villagers that the two boreholes sunk in 2002 near Ngwatle, were not for people, but for animals. The act of withholding water becomes a form of social control.

[iv] For a discussion of a different kind of academic celebrity, see Lewis (2001).

[v] During the early 1990s, some US- and UK-visitors to Durban wanted to participate in the thrill and romance of anti-apartheid revolution. They were disbelieving that going underground for a few hours was inadvisable. On occasion when visits to war zones found our party in the middle of conflict, they became extremely angry at being put in danger, notwithstanding their incessant nagging to actually visit these locations. We quickly learned that revolution for such tourists was understood in terms of some kind of sanitised text, and not as a dangerous, bloody and disturbing reality with real life-and-death consequences.

[vi] Donkey carts are made from the back wheel axels of scrapped *bakkies* (small trucks). They are used all over Africa, even on main roads. Carts drawn by two donkeys are called 2X4s and those with four donkeys are 4X4s.

[vii] *Cultural Studies - Critical Methodologies* is a peer review, interdisciplinary journal devoted to analysis of the relationship between cultural studies, cultural critique, and interpretative, methodological inquiry.

[viii] When proofreading a chapter on the political economy of the South African film industry, my co-author and I picked up another version of this kind of linguistic/stylistic/cultural imperialism. Where we had cited *The Sunday Times* (a Johannesburg paper), the book's US editor had fastidiously inserted 'New York' for 'Sunday'. Such is the parochialism of the publishing industry: clearly records in the Third World were thought not to exist by this editor.

[ix] Debswana is a joint venture between De Beers and the government of Botswana.

[x] Castle Lager is brewed by South African Breweries (SAB), which in 1998 became the world's fourth largest brewer, and number two in 2002, after it bought Millers in the USA. The Botswana beer is 'St Louis'.

[xi] Botswanans, we think, tend to be very aloof. The difference in attitude between the Botswanan and the South African border passport officers is a point of discussion every time we cross over to Botswana.

[xii] The site is serviced by running water and a flushing toilet drawn from a large tank next to the village, 300 meters from the campsite. The heating is obtained by means of a 'donkey', a 44-gallon drum fitted with plumbing, and heated by a fire from underneath. It only provides hot water if the fire is continuously maintained. In 2002, the lavatory bowl had been stolen, but was replaced in 2003, when two grass huts were also built. In 2003, the site was advertised at the entrance to Erin, by a makeshift yellow and black road sign, with a cell phone number. The site is isolated, unserviced, and not very attractive in comparison to the Molopo Lodge campsite with its electricity, lights and general access to the Hotel's amenities.

[xiii] When we visited a small private game reserve in KwaZulu-Natal in August 2001, we asked the driver of the open game-viewing Land Rover what the management meant by 'harvesting' of animals. Her response was that this meant culling, so what better way than to get some 'idiot hunter' to pay for the privilege. Thus is the visitor charged for doing work, which the Park staff would previously have done.

[xiv] When my parents built their swimming pool in 1964, the degenerate white

supervisor, who did no work at all, sent a black labourer to get 'his' tea from the 'madam'. My mother's response was to make tea for the labourers and deny him. Much confusion resulted as the black labourers merrily drank their tea while the supervisor complained.

[xv] Hall's (1981) model proposes three forms of reception: i) transparency, where the message is understood and accepted as intended by its utterer; ii) negotiation, where the message is understood, but its meaning is debated; and iii) rejection.

[xvi] See Buntman (1996a; 1996b) for an analysis of how the San are imaged in print advertising.

[xvii] The same template was used for the 2001 calendar, but with two Bushmen inserts in the western and southern sections of the country.

[xviii] TV was inaugurated in Botswana in 2001, but most Botswanans with access to electricity, solar power and/or generators were MultiChoice subscribers. Signals are received via satellite from the South African company (see Boloka 2001). The advert intrigues me as I had been asked by the University in the late 1980s to comment on the feasibility of a media studies department. The US consultant was paid the equivalent of my own Faculty's total annual supplies and services budget (17 departments), to write a totally unrealistic proposal that assumed state of the art production and computer studios. Is this perhaps reverse accounting?

[xix] 'Bra' is a slang word for brother.

[xx] Consider the impact of observer-observed relations, the effects that emanate from them, and the way they are appropriated into indigenous folklore. A good example is the Marshall footage of Ju/'hoan children playing with 'autos' they had carved from the likeness of the 1950s Expeditions' vehicles, Jeeps, and Dodge Power Wagons. These hand-carved toys were made from wood or oblong sardine cans. They have turning wheels; one has tyre treads on the wheels, headlights and a driver. The autos are on long sticks and can be pulled or pushed. These carvings contain their own narratives on the nature of the encounter and can be seen as symbolic appropriations of the visiting culture's sources of mastery over the terrain, distance and the seasons. While they seem innocuous on the surface, these appropriations implant the idea of a more powerful external Other (Tomaselli and Homiak 1999). The province of KwaZulu-Natal has witnessed the increasing prevalence of similar, but painted hand carved wood branded 4X4s made by Zulu crafters, sold at roadside stalls. What was once cultural appropriation is now sold as a souvenir. In January 1999, Jeffrey and I found a few looking like and sporting Toyota and Nissan Patrol names. In August 2001, the

following makes had joined the list: Jeep, Prado, Colt, Mazda; some pulling Honda-named speedboats. These imitations reflect the return to South Africa of Jeep and the importation of other expensive luxury models. Prior to 1994, the only 4X4s made locally and easily available were basic Toyota, Isuzu and Nissan models. If the souvenir 'mediates the dialectic between Same and Other' (Love and Kohn 2001: 7), then on the highway between Durban and Mozambique, the Other, the Zulu crafters, have turned the tables on the Same-Other relationship. By domesticating and absorbing 4X4 culture and imagery, these crafters are able to sell these to the wealthy consumers who introduced the brands in the first place. The toy vehicles or souvenirs produced from wire by poor rural black children are now being mass-produced in factories. Thus does capital appropriate what were once poor objects of domestic individual creation, turning them into an object of production and mass consumption. At the Molopo Lodge the manager in 2003 told us that he was going to revamp the campsite to meet the needs of families who arrive in luxury 4X4s, towing mobile kitchens (known colloquially as 'Kalahari Hiltons') and other accessories worth another R100,000.

[xxi] A week later, we were guests at Blinkwater. No one charged us for our friendship, and Vetkat and Klein Dawid made up songs about us, which they sang till midnight. Just get the 'truth out,' Belinda implored us, 'record anything you like' (24 July 2001). In 2002, the Witdraai ≠Khomani had accepted us to a much greater extent and were less insistent about being paid for interviews and talk. While in July 2003, only Dawid, on seeing my daughter's video camera when she went to a roadside stall to purchase crafts, demanded that she make a film of him and that she pay him for the privilege. At the time, he did not know who she was. Charlize, a brash straight-talker at the best of times, told Dawid that she was not interested in making a film of him. Earlier that morning, in a chance encounter at Elias Festus' house, Dawid had told me how much he appreciated my sending him our articles and interview transcriptions. Charlize told Dawid that she was '*Prof. se dogter*' (the Prof.'s daughter) to quieten his incessant chatter about her making a film of him. This incident recalls an encounter she had with Silikat the previous year when a more interesting banter of who owned the spot on which Charlize was standing was negotiated (Dyll 2003).

[xxii] To address the problem I engaged in a frustrating round of discussions with the University's Finance Division to get my salary repackaged to include a car allowance, which would also result in a tax deduction on official research travel. I was told that this was not possible and that no other academics had the same problem as me. Divide and rule, you are on your own, was the usual tactic used by



this Division, which failed to understand that we academics are its end users, its client base. On checking with the University's Research Office, I learned that it, too, had been negotiating a solution for a lot longer; also to no avail. My personal tax consultant sent me half a page explaining how my salary should be restructured. I sent it to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) of Research who passed it onto the Finance Division. I then faxed all the documents to the DVC (Finance) who had been unaware of the problem. He was about to take three months leave, but resolved the problem in ten minutes. It had taken me three months of negotiation with the Finance Division to be compelled to agree to a legal resolution suggested by the Receiver itself. The Deputy Finance Officer nevertheless issued me with a veiled tax warning about my *not* using my Sani sufficiently for field trips. I think about Roger Carter's observations of how the Witdraai community restricts individual initiative. A similar attitude seemed at the time to prevail in a so-called service division at my own institution. The geographical margins are not that different - the restrictive discourse of 'it can't be done' - reminds me of Darryn's astonishment in Ngwatle, when he was told by a !Xoo man that they could not become pastoralists because Bushmen don't know how to look after cattle.

[xxiii] Waldron was creative director of an advertising company in Johannesburg and wildlife documentary filmmaker. We met in late 1993. Klatzko and Waldron have not exploited the mythical image of the 'Bushman' in their advertising campaigns, as have many others (see Buntman 1995). Yet Waldron is probably the only advertising executive to have a personal and comprehensive knowledge of Basarwa groups and individuals, their locations and lifestyles. Waldron's video, *Hunt or Die*, on changes in Basarwa tracking techniques, made with the help of the Ngwatle hunters, won an award at an Italian Film Festival in 1999.

[xxiv] No one claimed ownership of these animals, as this might have affected their eligibility for destitute rations.

[xxv] Lorna Marshall told me that the Marshalls had chosen to travel the Nyae Nyae area because it was one of the last unmapped places on earth. They placed a world map on the floor in the lounge of their house in Cambridge and they looked for unmarked areas on the map. The Kalahari was one such unmapped area. So they decided to go there (10 March 1996). We marvelled at the courage of the Marshalls, as we are very apprehensive about travelling into uncharted territory barely a few kilometres off the beaten track.

[xxvi] Being illiterate, he did not know how to spell his name. Jon-Jon is one of Kort-Jan's sons, who in 2002 and 2003 became a key informant, along with Vista

Jan and Johannes, Kort-Jan's adopted 'son' (who seems to be as old as Kort-Jan himself).

[xxvii] I do wonder at the tendency towards romance in Chamberlin's writings. They make no mention of the problems besetting the ≠Khomani, especially those who retain their tracking skills, the 'rose-tinted' version as Carter explains it.

[xxviii] While I was making a promotional movie for a safari company in the Okavango Swamps in the summer of 1975 the three US travellers experienced withdrawal symptoms from the lack of ice cubes. The only fridge, which was carried by the two Land Rovers, was reserved for vegetables. This became a major conflict during the ten-day-trip.

[xxix] John Grierson, the father of the 1930s British documentary film movement, was another. He described the vigorousness of the political debate of the early 1950s, though he always understood that apartheid's life would be limited (Tomaselli 2000).

[xxx] In June 2005 a huge cattle truck modified for living driven by drunken hunters crashed its way through trees in the campsite before parking right next to the ablution block. They were sent to the other side of the property by management, away from the families of campers. That night they downed more liquor in the pub, had their heads shaved in the barber's chairs and one of their number stole the R2000 they had pooled for drinks.

[xxxii] To her credit, Roome has secured a number of international publications on South African sitcoms from her base in the United States.

[xxxiii] Lawrence Grossberg, Stuart Hall and Meaghan Morris proposed to a number of publishers, a book series on cultural studies in the non English-speaking world. They would be series editors and contribute introductions, thus lending the combined weight of their respective extraordinary international reputations to the marketing process. They could not find a single taker; cultural studies for the English-speaking world are American, English and Australian, where the markets are.

[xxxiv] I failed to develop an indigenised theory of political economy, but later, working with my students and some colleagues, we forged fragments of theory of the media sourced to our respective personal experiences in various parts of Botswana, including Ngwatle (Boloka 2001). See also Kerr 2001; Donnelly 2001; Simões 2001.

[xxxv] At Blinkwater on 11 July 2003, I found a young boy wearing a CCMS T-shirt, which we had given Belinda the previous year when she was in Durban. Other children were sporting Legambiente shirts and caps, given by three

Legambiente members staying there. Giorgio was wearing a T-shirt, which stated on the front, 'Africa Excursion', and on the back, 'An assault on the senses'. He offered to sponsor the art community at Blinkwater, as he was drawn to the idea of art, identity and Bushmen cultural recovery. Legambiente made a glossy colour calendar of Vetkat's art to raise funds to establish an art centre at Blinkwater, which was inaugurated in August 2004.

[xxxv] Bows and arrows are now made to fit into tourist suitcases. Rock art fits into a handbag, and is no longer painted on large slabs of stone. While tourists require miniaturisation, the service is not always followed through. On buying a rock painting I asked the ≠Khomani vendor to package it against chipping and breakage for the long trip back to Durban. He had already lost interest, having secured the sale, and told me that it needed to be wrapped in some toilet paper. He not only expected me, the customer, to use my own toilet paper, but also to wrap it myself. While this artist told me he felt '*gebruik*' (used/abused) by Kagga Kamma and other cooperatives, he was completely oblivious to the need for after-sales service. In contrast, in Kisumu, Kenya, I bought some very delicate paper mâché hanging birds from a disabled artist/vendor who located himself outside my hotel. When I told him I needed the item to be packaged for three air flights home, he obliged without question and then told me about his export operation. Tourists to the Northern Cape have been sworn at when they don't buy from road stalls, and sometimes roadblocks force them to stop. In 2002, tourist agencies warned their clients not to stop at the side of the road. Unlike the rules of hawking in most parts of the world, prices are rarely negotiated, though the prices in the northern Cape are twice what they are at Ngwatle, for similar items of lesser quality.

[xxxvi] Bimbo's is a South African fast food chain located at Engen filling stations. Jean Lamprecht, who owns Bimbo's also owns the Molopo Lodge. In 2002, the Lodge was much cheaper, better run, and more fun, than it had previously been. It had replaced its labour, and did not, as when Carter was the manager, consider itself as something of a support mechanism and facilitating network for the adjacent ≠Khomani communities. When we arrived in 2003, we noticed five large brown wooden figurines welcoming us along the driveway. In the Lodge itself, ostrich egg light shades are found in the dining room, and a huge wooden hippo with a cupboard door welcomes new guests with glasses of sherry. Unfortunately, as Charlize complained, the chips (French fries) served in the dining room were no longer made the Bimbo's way. The Bimbo's chips are, in fact, frozen McCain's product. The Sísen craft shop had moved in next to the bottle store, now much

more accessible than before, tucked away as it was next to a makeshift open-air car workshop and a pre-primary school. The craft shop was doing so well in its new location that its craft makers were battling to keep it supplied.

[xxxvii] *Tropical heat* is a Canadian TV-series, partly shot in South Africa, with SABC as a production partner.

[xxxviii] The Jesus Film Project screened *The Lazarus phenomenon* in July 2004, with simultaneous translation offered over a microphone. Kaaitjie (previously the SBB gate guard), Independence and Sophie were now volunteer Bible teachers for JFP at the Ngwatle pre-primary school. The South African-made film offers a Biblical interpretation, read through science, of near-death experiences. Notwithstanding this topic, the JFP missionaries were extremely concerned with the extent of ancestor worship, which they considered 'wrong'.

[xxxix] The director of a museum in Durban who had asked Mary Lange to identify the people depicted had found the photograph use for teaching at Durban schools. Looking much like an old American plantation photograph, we constructed our 2003 research around this photo, interviewing the Kruipers. All told the same story. Lokkie Henning, the white man in the centre, was both saviour and rogue. The picture was shot in the early 1980s for marketing purposes, to promote Henning's Bushman tourism venture. He later disappeared with 'millions' after the making of *Red scorpion*, they told us. Thereafter, they moved to Kagga Kamma, where they performed for tourists until June 2003, when their contract was terminated.

[xl] In 1995, Miriam Motshabise was 16 years old, part Basarwa and part-Tswana. She completed Form 2 (Grade 9) in 1995 and wrote matric in 1999 at a school in Hukuntsi. Motshabise told Jeursen (1999) that there were thirty-four, mostly Tswana, students in her Form 2 class. About fifteen people shared her sister's dwelling in Ngwatle, a cross between a traditional Bushman *skerm* (grass hut) and a Tswana homestead. Miriam had five brothers and sisters, one of whom, Pedris, acted as a translator for us during our 1999 and 2000 visits. Miriam's Tswana name is 'Masebene'.

[xli] Miriam spent a lot of time with Charlize, who was then 11 years of age. Photographs and a video showed them teaching each other folk dances and songs. This expressive intercultural interchange occurred during the two mornings after we arrived in April 1995. As the week drew on, Charlize and Miriam spent less time dancing and more time talking to each other (Jeursen 1999). Charlize visited Ngwatle again in 2002 when she re-established her friendship with Miriam, but had to leave the 2003 visit because of an exam in Durban. Sadly, we learned that

Miriam had passed away in April 2004, two months before Charlize's third return to Ngwatle.

[xlii] The issue is important in the light of mythical Western media perceptions of the 'Bushman'. The exploitation of this image in advertising and the media generally, and in light of the numerous philanthropists who couch their visits in the expeditionary discourses of 'saving the Bushmen', 'vanishing' and 'disappearing cultures', 'cultural recovery', etc. (cf. Perrott 1992).

[xliii] Mary Lange runs workshops for Durban schools. Charlize narrates the videos, sometimes presents the videos, and answers questions for white, Zulu and Indian pupils.

[xliv] '*Bajanala: A tourist guide to Botswana*', tells us that the Kalahari Desert is perhaps the ultimate 4X4-challenge.

[xlv] One student had independently, but unsuccessfully, approached Camel to help finance his participation in one of our field trips. This approach raises a number of pertinent questions: the first concerns the questionable values of this company in relation to the research we were doing, and the history of corporate, visual and academic exploitation of the San. How would the research funding agencies and University have reacted, especially in terms of their respective legal positions, and in terms of the research team's obligations to its subject communities? What if Camel had wanted to use our experience and this student's photographs in its PR? This use might have occurred in direct contravention of the proscriptions and considerations placed upon us by our trusting subjects. How much payment, if any, to our subjects would have occurred in such an instance? How would such exploitation/association have impacted our access to the Ngwatle and ≠Khomani communities? The fact that most San and their small children seem to chain-smoke tobacco is not the issue. The issue is one of ethics and also of the social contract we have established with our subject communities over a five year period (cf. Tomaselli 1996). On learning of the approach to Camel, Caleb mischievously retorted that 'we should have been sponsored by Boxer', the brand smoked by the San.

[xlvi] The three Italians did not give the hunters anything to eat or drink during the full day's visit to the Masetleng Pans. We provided apples, meat, potatoes and tea. Eventually, they realised their error, and made a plate of Parmesan cheese and savoury meat snacks available, items certainly not part of the hunters' cuisine!

[xlvii] The Molopo Lodge manager (2002) told us that he had offered to make a soccer field available to the ≠Khomani, behind the Lodge. He would provide

water for the grass, but on the condition that the ≠Khomani plant the grass. They refused, unless they were paid to do so. Abraham Meintjies, who single-handedly ran the *Tentepark*, told Caleb and I that he got no help from anyone on the communal land, but that everyone living there wanted to benefit from the proceeds. They want to be paid to work on the communal property, but did little to facilitate income of any kind. Thus, dependency relations become a culture of entitlement - we must be paid because we are 'special' - we are the Bushmen! This explanation/criticism was heard both from within and beyond the ≠Khomani.

[xlvi] Our informants, who feel used and abused by academics, often express real and sustained resentment to us. They believe that their communities should: i) benefit materially from such impartation of knowledge via donations to schools, clinics and so on; ii) be adequately thanked and written into the published outcomes; and that iii) an archive of all this information should be set up in South Africa. The Kwa !ttu Museum has been established for this purpose. They are looking for due recognition as much as anyone else.

[xlix] Photographers like Paul Weinberg have very different relationships with the ≠Khomani. However, we have learned that some of his subjects, when they discovered such photos, claimed they were reproduced out of context, or with the wrong names, to illustrate stories that have nothing to do with the pictures (Mlauzi 2002). They somehow felt violated, and resented not having the ability to control the context of the syndication and reproduction.

[l] Carter, too, located himself as advisor, friend, and educator. Others, we were constantly told by all and sundry, were 'helping' the ≠Khomani while 'coining it'. This charge was levelled at the SASI-supported craft workshop. Mass production methods have killed the market in Cape Town, said Belinda Kruiper, and art was not being made, commented Silikat. Mass production is a requirement of development, and opens up new market niches, rather than closing more organic individualistic art production. Vetkat has since become an internationally acclaimed artist.

[li] 'On the whole, therefore, the evidence seems to indicate that at a very early time the Bushmen occupied the hunting grounds of tropical East Africa, perhaps even to the confines of Abyssinia. That they are no longer to be found in this region may be ascribed to its extensive invasion by later Hamitic and Negro peoples. Harried by the encroachment of these more powerful races, the Bushmen, where they were not exterminated or absorbed, must gradually have passed southwards, keeping along the more open grasslands of the eastern mountainous zone, where they could still preserve their hunting mode of life,

until, when the written history of South Africa commences, they were roaming all over the territory south of the Zambezi River ... It is certain, judging by what is known of the history of the later invading peoples, that the Bushmen came into the country well over a thousand years ago, but at present no more definite or even approximate date can be assigned to their immigration ...' (Schapera 1930: 28, 29).

[lii] The Himba are nomadic pastoralists who inhabit the Kaokoland area of Namibia.

[liii] The Botswana 4X4 Code of Conduct insists that a minimum of two vehicles drive in convoy, that travellers take all the water, food, spares, and fuel. Its most stringent criterion, however, is for drivers to respect the environment and carry their rubbish with them (*Banajala*). Carter told, however, of the Desert Run, an annual bikers' jamboree, once hosted by the Molopo Lodge. The racist white bikers humiliated the drunken ≠Khomani selling artefacts at a specially constructed sales stand - one farmer drove over it, injuring a ≠Khomani individual. Their wheelies destroyed some sand dunes. At the Upington Air Club meeting these well-heeled aviators gave drinks to the ≠Khomani, and then deducted the cost from their wages (for cultural performances). Carter, who said that he was appalled at the behaviour of both groups, facilitated both events. He later got the blame from the ≠Khomani anyway, when the damage was assessed.

[liv] A *sangoma* is an African traditional Zulu healer, often a woman, claiming supernatural powers of divination.

[lv] Only rarely do academic authors get paid royalties, and the taxpayer via university salaries and national research bodies, has more often than not sponsored the research, which underpins the publication. Publishing companies thus do not bear the full cost of innovation and production. Just where the grassroots informants' copyright fits into these relations is anybody's guess. This is one of the reasons they so often feel exploited. Universities want the patent rights to inventions made by our engineering and science colleagues, but they are more than happy to sign away the intellectual property of Humanities and Social Science researchers.

[lvi] Amongst the activities advertised at !Khainses are 'An unforgettable Kalahari experience' - visit a cave surrounded by legend; take a closer look at nature and some safari veld plants while following the spoor of wild animals; a night under the stars; and listen to old bushman stories around the fire while enjoying traditional *asbrood* ('bread'); traditional rain dance. Each of these activities is additional to the camping fee. But only two or three campers a month are hosted,

most of the business coming from film companies employing ≠Khomani as actors. Where tourists paid R5-10 per hour per dancer for the rain dance, film companies were charged R500.

[lvii] Mostly Nama and Afrikaans, though a pre-primary school at Witdraai is trying to resuscitate N/u among pre-primary school children.

[lviii] In the Northern Cape, we felt that expectations that we could 'do something' were unrealistic. The Kruipers modified this expectation when they began to understand our research objectives and methodologies. Other agencies hold the purse strings to development funds, education, health, and skills learning. It is to these agencies that the community must address their requests. Belinda Kruiper, however, after a few years here, is more realistic; 'getting the message out', she feels is just as important, especially as the politicians and NGOs are not always listening. 'We don't want electricity, but self-esteem, appropriate technology, and services, which do not put people into debt. The answers to our problems are so simple; why can't they understand?' The irony is that the academic literature on participatory research, and social action research is easily attainable. Why don't the development NGOs and government agencies read this material we wonder? (cf. Dyll 2004).

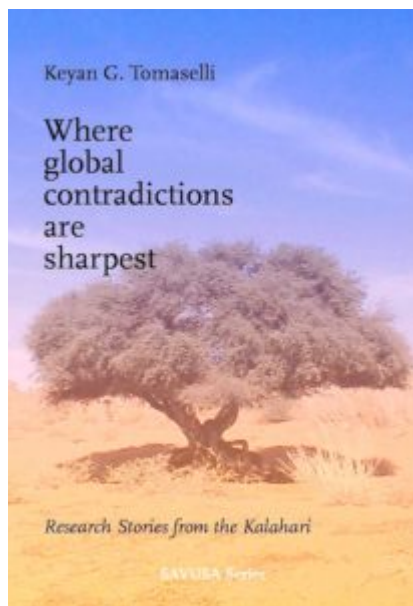
[lix] When we screened *Kalahari Fires* on the missionaries' big screen in July 2004, Charlize dedicated the film to Miriam, when introducing it to the audience of about 50 people. Previously we'd played this and other videos to the community via a small TV-set and VCR brought by us. Miriam is survived by her toddler Patience, Pedris, two other sisters, and Action, a cousin who lives in Zutshwa.

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**Where Global Contradictions Are Sharpest ~ 'Dit is die Here se Asem': The Wind, Its Messages,**



# And Issues Of Autoethnographic Methodology In The Kalahari



The wind. One of my research assistants, a student in Afrikaans literature, told me about the wind. Formerly a physiotherapist, Nelia Oets has spent a lot of time in the Kalahari Desert on photographic safaris. I have also spent a lot of time in the desert. I had not previously experienced the wind. We woke to the wind on 8 July 2001, at Ngwatle Pan. It was unremitting, it was uncomfortable, it destabilised our tents, and blew away some of our camping items. It swept the campfire's flames onto two of our camp chairs, our only luxuries, and burned them to cinders. Caleb woke in his tent staring up at the moon - which should not

have been visible. He had to retrieve and tie up his flysheet with his bootlaces. He later remarked about my requirements that everyone bring spare laces. Nelia had warned us about the wind.

Nelia's warning, together with the experience, reminded me of two other references to the wind. The first was by Paul Myburgh, whom I had interviewed on *People of the Great Sandface* (1989). He talked about the wind as some kind of existential and elemental force, listening to the desert speak (Myburgh 1989; cf. Gordon 1990b). Belinda Kruiper revealed a similar description to us in August 2000. Both descriptions have spiritual connotations, 'It's the ancestors speaking', we were told. The !Kung whom Elizabeth Marshall Thomas (1959: 126) met in the 1950s, called the spirits of the ancestors the '*kwe be ha ki*' ('person who is not here'). 'These spirits travel in the wind - not the open, blowing wind, but in whirlpools', which living people try to avoid. Perhaps someone who is no longer here inhabited the wind that blew Caleb's flysheet away in 2000? When our long-standing friends, Johannes and Baba (Kort-Jan) Nxai, joined us at Ngwatle, we asked them about the wind. They just complained about the cold, the discomfort, and asked us to give them warm jackets. This chapter continues on from Chapter 2. The same characters appear. Some new ones are introduced. I am again concerned with methodology rather than ethnographic description, with the

nature of relations between observers and observed, and with problematising relations between observers.

### *Hunting With Pampiere ('Papers')*

We agreed to take Kort-Jan and Johannes to the hunting grounds at Masetleng Pan three hours drive away. But they did not hunt, their dogs were sick, and they did not have their *pampiere* (Afrikaans, archaic 'paper/permits'). Previously they could hunt in terms of quotas. Now they had to have their papers as well. '*Jag met pampiere*' ('hunting with papers'), is how they referred to hunting after 2000. Paper is exchanged for meat. Both are in short supply, due to the *pampiere* limitations on quotas, species, and seasons. [i] So we went sightseeing, or so we thought. In fact, they wanted to reminisce about what once was, what might have been, and what could still be, should they be allowed to return to the Pan, and if the borehole could be fixed. We followed gemsbok, blue wildebeest, impala and ostriches at the pans, watched the ungainly *poue* (Kori Bustards), and talked about camels, which the Trust introduced to the area for tourists. We'd never been to the hunting grounds before in only one vehicle. Usually two are necessary in case one breaks down. The first time, April 1995, Rob Waldron's Land Rover had overheated. This was its second engine. He sold his vehicle shortly thereafter. Being stuck in the middle of nowhere is a scary experience. The second time, June 1999, Waldron videoed a hunt sequence with Kort-Jan and Johannes. Kort-Jan told us that God gave him the jackal. This time we had two hunters with us who couldn't hunt - no dogs, no permits, and no motivation. So we discussed life, land, and lien. We returned without mishap to Ngwatle later that day.

Kort-Jan and Johannes relived their memories of Masetleng Pan, where a now derelict borehole had once serviced their site. We photographed the remains of the installation, and ate berries from nearby trees. They took us to another of the campsites where Johannes had helped the contractor, Keith Viljoen from the Hukuntsi Trading Store, to build. We climbed up the hide and looked into the distance, surrounding us on all sides, the pan to the south, and trees, shrubs and grass to the north. I remembered being here in 1995, just after Waldron and //Huru!ka (Petrus) Nxai had hunted a bat-eared fox. This was the Pan where Conrad Steenkamp had found some Stone Age flints.

We asked about the wind. Johannes described the Masetleng Pan area as a place filled with bushes, which cut down on the wind that sweeps through Ngwatle plains. The wind at the Pan was described as warm, friendly, not cold and

unforgiving. *'Die wind is die Here se asem'* ('The wind is the Lord's breath'), Johannes explained. In June 1999, Gadiphemolwe Orileng told us that his parents said that if you hear yourself drawing breath, you know it's God. After watching a film on Jesus screened by the JFP, Gadi said that he knew that the Lord is a wind. Belinda Kruiper, who spent a week in Durban working with our students, further explained: 'I believe life and death is about breathing. The wind is a breath of fresh air; it brings about change and indicates God in both life and death as a tangible force. Back home the wind can bring the message of death, rain, fire' (Belinda Kruiper, interview, October 2001). Metonymically, the wind is the Ngwatle community's sign for freedom, for mobility, for life. Were it not for the broken borehole pump, they'd come back to Masetleng Pan.

When the wind is cold and cutting, 'it's Satan speaking', observed Johannes. Ngwatle is where Satan's wind rules. '... when your breath closes up ... then you are going to die' (Orileng, interview, 1999). Ngwatle has become an area of *inkomers* ('incomers') of Bakgalagadi who *vry* ('ravage') their daughters. **[ii]** Cattle, goats and firewood collections have denuded the foliage, creating open spaces through which the wind sweeps the sand. Ngwatle is associated with fixity, helplessness, in the face of greater unseen structural evil forces impacting their independence. The cold wind blows away everything that Masetleng Pan stood for. To continue the reverse signification initiated in Chapter 2, Ngwatle is cold and Masetleng is warm.

There were between 120 and 150 people who were originally brought to Masetleng Pan by Joep, a white farmer from Namibia, 'who took care of us', they said. Now, with the incomers, the Bakgalagadi cattle herders, there are over 200 people living at Ngwatle, jostling in the wind for limited natural resources like water and grazing.

### *Methodology: Just what are we doing?*

I think about the self-reflexive, open-ended, flexible, and totally unscientific methodology we have developed in documenting the experiences and perceptions of many of the Ngwatle sojourners (Simões 2001b; McLennan-Dodd 2003; Lange 2003b). In 1995, because none of us spoke Tswana, we talked only to Petrus and Kort-Jan, in their relatively archaic Afrikaans learned when they worked for some white farmers in 'Suid-Wes' (South West Africa, now Namibia). I did not understand some of it. At the time I did not know why. My Afrikaans-speaking associates, Chantel Oosthuysen and Nelia, who joined the project in 2000 and

2001 respectively, described the Ngwatle Afrikaans dialect as being of their grandparents' and great grandparents' generations.

In 1996, Belinda Jeursen, Gareth Morgan, Kaitira Kandjii and I went much further north, to Nyae Nyae, where we met all the Ju/'hoansi made famous by John Marshall's cameras between 1952 and now, and others who had acted in a Discovery Channel programme. Our single tape recorder broke, so we observed and wrote down our questions, and the answers. But we did talk to the people in Herero, **[iii]** Afrikaans and English. Their opinions and experiences opened up wider horizons for us, and it was here that I began to develop the contours of what was to become a much larger project than merely writing about the way the San are imaged in the media. We did not always write up our impressions on the spot, though Sonja Speeter (2000), a German PhD-student who joined us, was fastidious about this. We were doing too much, but not recording our thoughts and impressions sufficiently. Time always weighed heavily on our research teams - insufficient funds, long and demanding school teaching terms, and endless departmental administration. Daily post-apartheid transformation and never-ending restructuring of our universities, faculties and departments made us strangers in our own milieu on our return barely a few weeks later. And then there are the distances to be travelled - thousands of kilometres at a time, most on gravel roads, in and on dunes, *dongas* (deep ditches) and other sandy tracks sometimes incomprehensibly indicated as roads on the map. These all impeded our ability to spend extended periods of time in the field. So we learn incrementally. I always built in time for writing, only to again be regularly undermined by different university terms and the need for our schedule to fit into the competing commitments of my students.

In 1999, we had two Tswana speakers, Jeffrey Sehume and Gibson Boloka, both PhD-students. This was the first time that any visitors had arrived with black South Africans who spoke the Botswanan national language, and with whom they could talk. Their ability to speak Tswana, and their blackness, helped quick identification and relationship building. Rob Waldron's assistant, Ellie Moloka, was also a first language Tswana speaker. While the Tswana dialects are not always easy to understand, Jeffrey and Gibson managed, with the help of third party intermediaries like Pedris Motshibane, to get a handle on their responses and comments. He always carried a pen and notebook with him. He spent a lot of time with us, acted as a guide, interpreter, and was a key informant on

community issues, and with regard to his interpretation of scenes in *The Gods must be crazy* (Uys 1980).

In 2000, Anthea Simões brought a softer touch to the open-ended tape-recorded interviews, which often meandered from here-to-there, from time-to-time, and which had little structure. These were mainly done at our campsite, or outside the villagers' homesteads, in Afrikaans and Tswana. We were all very impressed at the quality of the descriptions we heard, and on the ability of the community to make sense of their remote world despite their lack of formal schooling. Anthea supplemented these more formal interviews by simply going for walks with Miriam, who had returned to the village after failing to complete her matric. Miriam's presence was crucial, as she was one of the few who had some kind of analysis of labour relations with Safaris Botswana Bound (SBB), which now managed the area and the community.

Anthea and Miriam discussed much more personal things on their walks than did the men. Later, Anthea tape-recorded more formal discussions of the same issues with Miriam's permission. Anthea had a very clear idea of what she wanted to know, while at the same time she was highly concerned that her work would be a tribute to her informants, rather than merely objectifying them. While the men would tend to be more formal in their interviewing techniques, our version of the 'walk' was the 'drive'. With two or more hunters in the back seat, travelling to Masetleng Pan, Hukuntsi and other places they and others wanted to go, we would tape record our passengers' responses over long periods, getting both their chatter and their more serious comments. They loosened up dramatically in 2001, and for the first time they told us of their hopes and fears, their likes and dislikes. They spent a lot more time with us than before.

### *Baboons, wisdom and othering*

Caleb used the experience at Ngwatle 2000 to formulate his ideas for his dissertation on pro-poor tourism (Ashley *et al.* 2001), to be completed 18 months later (Wang 2001). Gibson's engagement occurred within a globalising framework. The 1999-trip was the first time he had visited another African country. His travel experiences through border posts and passport offices, cell phone signal footprint cut-offs, and seeing satellite dishes on even small rural *pondocks* (small dwellings), grabbed his immediate attention. In theorising what he observed, he connected the macro with the micro, the global and the local, and explained other issues like centrefolds of South African soccer stars in San

houses, in terms of resistance (Boloka 2001).

In both 1999 and 2001, we interviewed Johannes, Kort-Jan, Pedris and Tshomu while driving to and from Masetleng Pan. We talked about the film *The Gods must be crazy* (Uys 1980), God, hunting, wildlife, and Satan. Johannes, like the Kruiper clan, agreed that Satan is a '*wit mense se id e*' ('a white people's idea'), which he borrowed from them. He said he wouldn't accept camels at Ngwatle; '*dis 'n lelike ding*' ('it's an ugly thing'), which break into homesteads when smelling meat. Pedris, who had returned from Tshabong for a few days where he was learning to ride and train camels, explained that he had been unable to persuade Johannes that camels don't eat meat. Kort-Jan said he would leave Ngwatle if the camels would come. Donkeys cost P50 and horses P700. Camel meat is terrible, he said. **[iv]**

We discussed baboons and *apies* (monkeys), and what they signify. We were still trying to understand the allegedly racist scene in *The Gods must be crazy* because, my American colleagues argued that the director, Jamie Uys, had reduced Xi, one of the main characters, to the level of an animal. Pedris had told us in 1999 that baboons and monkeys look like people, that Bushmen would therefore never hunt them. Belinda Kruiper said that of course the character Xi will talk to the baboon, he's walking through its territory. Kort-Jan was sceptical; baboons are '*slim*' ('clever') but they can't talk, he observed. I remember the Sowetan comrade who in 1991 expressed bewilderment at the American scholar's claim of racism: 'You *mulungus* (Zulu - 'whites') are very strange, you talk to your dogs, cats and canaries! Does that reduce you to their levels?' Then Kort-Jan and Johannes metaphorically equated the *inkomers* and the Bakgalagadi with baboons and *apies*; these are people who steal their things, beat them, and flout the law.

In 1995, the bulk of the village was located in a closely-knit *kraal* (circular settlement). In 1999, we noticed that the *kraal* was derelict and that ten or so families had dispersed over a kilometre in diameter. Only in 2000 did we learn that the reason was that a government official had asked them to move in order for formal houses to be built. No houses were built, but the community remained locationally fragmented, the heart of the community abandoned to the wind, cattle and foraging goats, cows, horses and donkeys, and the wildlife passing through. The result was a *vlakke* ('plains') through which the wind relentlessly blew an alienating feeling of impending desolation. In July 2001, the men were drunker than usual, for longer than usual, and more often than usual. They used

the money we paid them for their artefacts and services to buy sugar to make alcohol. The women warned us that if we waited until 3 pm to distribute the clothes we had brought them, all the men would be drunk. So we brought the time forward to 1 pm. Only one woman was obviously drunk.

We noticed, in comparison to our visit a year earlier (2000), which was a relatively good year in comparison to earlier ones when we had passed through, that some of the men were much more tatty and short of clothing. Tshomu was wearing one of the T-shirts I had given him in July 2000. He acknowledged my gift and presence by pointing to me and calling me 'teacher?' He was also wearing the Adidas-cap Gibson had given him in 1999. One man had top quality army boots, and the women wrapped themselves in blankets, with babies on their backs, and were both fashionable and warm. Some men had good anoraks, but others like Kort-Jan and Tshomu wore rags in various states of disrepair. The gatekeeper, Kaaitjie, like in 2000, turned up in a new leather jacket at the handover of the second-hand clothing, and again took her fair share. This time, it was an old woman who tried to inveigle extra items for herself, or at least items of her choice, in the face of the random distribution by family that had community consensus.

We had arrived from South Africa the previous evening. We passed one government Land Rover and two road graders. Where the previous trip had taken us three hours to cover 80 kilometres over a sandy, tortuous and windy ditch, this time we travelled in a straight line, and were surprised to arrive barely 90 minutes after our departure from Hukuntsi. Our only difficulty occurred with the Sani's wheel gauge as it did not fit on the tyre tracks made by trucks and the graders. We slid from side to side, sometimes alarmingly so. In the KD/1 area, the rules of the road are: narrow gauge vehicle tracks are usually on one side of the road, with wider gauge tracks on the other. When two vehicles of the same gauge meet in a showdown for a single track, the vehicle on the wrong side makes way for the other one coming towards him by diverting onto the raised *middel mannetjie* ('middle hump') of sand and grass in the centre of the cutline. Unlike the previous year, we did not lose anything off the Sani.

On arrival, we had driven to Kort-Jan's abode. He was sitting outside with a neighbour. He told us that he had been thinking about us and that he could feel it in the middle of his forehead, where Lobsang Rampa[v] would locate the third eye, and where he said the baboon felt things. On hearing the vehicle he knew we

had arrived (SBB had told the village of our impending trip). Kort-Jan said he 'knew' that we had brought a jacket for him. While we had brought lots of second-hand clothes for the community, we did not know if a jacket was included. We'd see when we distributed the goods the next day. On unpacking the clothes donated by ourselves, our families and students from the Universities of Natal, and the North, I reserved a jacket for him: its Adidas Club-logo looking old and forlorn in this very remote area.

Kort-Jan and another took us to meet the Kaptein, the nominal chief. **[vi]** His companion queried why we needed to meet him, as he no longer had any authority. **[vii]** In attempting to find our previous campsite, after a number of false starts in total darkness, we simply stopped between two familiar looking trees. As Caleb said, he now remembers that everything looks both familiar and the same in the Kalahari, but that nothing is familiar or the same.

The city students (of whom two had previously visited Ngwatle) were not used to the protocols and safety procedures of camping. Not only did they not douse the fire in the high wind, but they also left it flaming when they retired for the night. Hence the meltdown of the two chairs. Fortunately, they did not cause a *veld*-fire. They also failed to zip the tent mosquito-netting overhang, which flapped all night, and resulted in dust and grass covering the veranda area and my backpack. The next day I set down some basic rules for camp life.

That morning about 40 members of the community welcomed our camp. Two children arrived first, followed by Kort-Jan, Kaptein, Johannes Nxai, many more young children and about 8 women with their babies whom we had previously met. We offered the women the regards from the females, Anthea, Meredith, Susan and Charlize, who had previously accompanied us. After a lot of talking they left, planning to return at 1 pm when it was agreed that we would distribute the clothing. Since neither Miriam nor the SBB-gatekeeper was present, there seemed to be no women on the local committee, if one indeed still existed. The SBB-gatekeeper **[viii]** was now also working for the Land Board in Hukuntsi. Later, two children joined us at the campfire and waited until the community returned. We were all making notes in the Sani, out of the wind, which nevertheless reminded us of its presence by its incessant sound, whipping against its open windows, and mercilessly shaking the vehicle. The community gathered quite quickly, with their dogs and donkeys, 70 adults and about 20 children.



Tshomu confirmed that we would not be charged for camping, as we were their friends. Camping fees had been introduced the previous year at the built campsite. We were told that the arrangement with SBB was working, but that the meat was sometimes slow to arrive. Some hunters had signed over their quotas (*pampiere*) to the company, which was asked to deliver the meat to families owning the quotas. Some men still went hunting, but now hunts might take up to three days. Surprisingly, for the first time we saw a number of species of game near the village. The *pampiere* dominated most conversations.

On one of our visits we drove with some hunters to the middle of the Ukhwi Pan's encrusted grey sand, which stretched for a circumference of 10 kilometres plus. The dried mud had the appearance of an infinite circular jigsaw puzzle. The silence was broken only by the gentle wind and the soft crunching of our shoes as we walked light-footed and silently around the Sani. The wind was heard sometimes, depending on the inflection of one's head, but it was always felt. In the distance were five boys playing soccer with a tennis ball. On another side were some ostriches and buck. Our tyre tracks and footprints, which had cut through and messed up the centre of the jigsaw would be gently brushed by the wind, until the dust loosened by our intrusion disappeared across the pan. The tyre and foot impressions will remain, and the magic of the puzzle will linger, though trespassed upon, until the next rains and winter draining. Belinda Kruiper, on our departure from their home had a similar vision: 'The wind cleared their footprints, took them out of the Kalahari, new beginnings for all. New footprints in the sand'.

Pedris took us to see Miriam at Monong, 47 kms from Ngwatle. She and Pedris told us a little of the history of the Basarwa at Ngwatle. Most lived at Hukuntsi, and some, like their parents, were born at Ngwatle, others like Kort-Jan, at Ukhwi. The Hukuntsi headman asked them to leave Hukuntsi because the Bushmen were thought to be stealing cattle and goats belonging to the Bakgalagadi townspeople. So the Motshibises moved to Ngwatle. Now the Bakgalagadi were also moving in, with their cattle that were despoiling the waterhole dug up in the pan, meant for human, not animal consumption. The !Xoo complained to the government about the Bakgalagadi cattle and incomers. A government official scolded them. Kaptein, however, remained a sign of unity. As Gibson suggests, 'Kaptein is a symbol of the hybrid community of Ngwatle (being a mixture of !Xoo and Kgalagadi). It is through him that one has to understand

this community, hence we have to ask permission from him before pitching our tents in the area'. As Gadi had told us in 1999, on being interviewed by Waldron: *I am a Bushman, I say I'm a Bushman, it's just my skin that's black, my father's skin, also nerves and my blood and my mercy. I just know I'm a Bushman because the life that I live is the life of a Bushman ... The language that I speak is Kgalagadi ...*

Hybridity brings its own angst. As Gadi explained:

*I grew up amongst the Bushmen. And the only mercy that I had was the Bushman's mercy because I was smart around the Bushmen and I saw all sorts of things in the Bushman and I knew how life is through the Bushmen.*

It is this deep sense of identity, which in 2001 was being eroded by conditions beyond their control. Kaptein's loss of authority was simply an indicator of broader problems now stressing the community as a whole. It was six months later that Darryn showed me a photograph he had taken of Kaptein. His T-shirt read: 'Endangered Species'.

#### *Dependencies and demands*

On this, our fourth arrival, we were considered 'friends', and so the men directly asked us for gifts. 'Where are my clothes?', asked Pedris, a day after we had handed them all out. I told him this. He still wanted 'his' clothes, so I gave him my spare pair of pants and a safari waistcoat. The next day he wanted P50 to get the bus back to Tshabong. I paid him P10 for the bus and P10 for an interview. Kort-Jan wanted 'his' jacket; someone tried to sell us two necklaces immediately on our arrival. Tshomu wanted to know if we brought him his radio battery, and the water truck driver demanded the videotape of the 2000-trip. The only thing that was negotiable was whether or not we wanted to buy artefacts. Prices, however, are rarely negotiable. Did we set up the expectations in 2000 when we handed out 500 items of clothing? We were not the first to do so, but we were the first to ensure a fair distribution mechanism. In 1999, Waldron was very edgy about giving anything to the community, for fear of unleashing dependency relationships. His method was to pay for items bought, and for services rendered, like Petrus teaching him hunting. But we saw and felt the biting cold, and we believed that they had a right to choose whether or not to receive the clothing we had brought them. We noticed that some are much more acquisitive than others as they yelled and shouted, demanding and subverting whatever distribution process had been communally agreed to. We were told that because Tshomu only

has three family members, he should not get as much as the other families, which average ten. The last item was a bunch of sewing items in a cake tin. I suggested that these should be a donation to the community, as everyone could make use of them. The Kaptein said he would hold the items in trust. There were loud objections. Each wanted his/her families' share, a zip here, a button there, some thread and a few needles. The noisy woman got a one-piece swimming costume. She complained loudly, then went to a tree and put it on under her dress. Others received bras, bits of material and even lounge wear. I wondered at the appropriateness of some of these items. I reserved a jacket for Kort-Jan. He is very old, and in need of one, I justified this to myself, but I only gave it to him that night, when no one was looking. At the end of the distribution, the Kaptein, whose family had a member collecting clothes, asked me where was his jacket? The next day he turned up for his *mielie* (maize) meal – he was very drunk on the first night of our arrival. He was marginally less drunk now.

Where do they get the drink? From payments made by the government for work done in the Ngwatle Pan, digging up the 'cement' for the roads. Perhaps the backbreaking nature of the work drove them to drink? At least the roads are better for this work. 'Don't the women gather?', Darryn Crowe asked Pedris. 'No, they just eat porridge', was his reply. The men still hunt to some extent, but now it is the women who prefer to buy their starch, and are unadvisedly content to eat meals that are not nutritionally balanced.

At Monong we learned that Pedris' father, who lived at Ngwatle, had cattle there. Miriam was there because she was very ill after the birth of her baby, and needed regular access to a clinic. She spent two weeks in hospital at Hukuntsi. She was there the previous day when she learned that we were trying to find her. News travels fast in this world that has no phones, post boxes or Internet. Miriam dusted and brought out three plastic chairs from the open-air kitchen, at her sister's house where she was staying. She fetched her baby and sat on the doorstep with it swaddled in a beautiful blanket. Miriam was well dressed with a fur lined leather jacket, bought at a new South African chain store in Hukuntsi.

At Monong a new red and purple brick school intrigued us. We saw the same structures with small cottages for the teachers at Ukhwi. We drove past the Monong pre-primary school also squatting in the sand. The brick structure had pictures of the boy Tarzan, two of Mickey Mouse, one of Goofy, a green turtle and a cartoon impression of what, after much discussion, we decided must be Nelson

Mandela as a boy. It was school holidays, so we didn't have the opportunity to ask the children or teachers about these incongruous images in the desert; we just videoed them.

### *Borders, lost safaris and othering*

On the way to Monong, in the middle of nowhere, Pedris urgently asked us to stop, to back up, and to get out. We wondered why and what's wrong? We stopped. He then pointed to a linear expanse of savannah on both sides of the road, and told us that this is the boundary between KD/1 and KD/5. I imagined that Gibson must be interested, as his PhD is about porous borders. Pedris then told us that KD/5 is also working on setting up a trust, to charge visitor fees for those entering the area. Thus is even the remotest desert area commodified, packaged and bordered in terms of markets, travellers and permits. That afternoon we had been flagged down by the male drivers of two Toyota Land Cruisers, filled to the brim with camping gear, wives and children. They were trying to get to the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. They were totally lost, going west-northwest when they should have been driving east. Despite their Global Positioning Systems (GPS), they had asked the locals for directions. It turned out that the local Botswanans sent them here, there and everywhere. I pointed out that the locals wouldn't necessarily know the new name for the Transfrontier Park, and that the area they were standing on was one of the eight Kgalagadi districts. These South African Afrikaans-speaking white travellers were paradoxically asking for directions to the places at which they had already arrived. I pulled out my Shell map and they pulled out theirs. We noticed that they were different. 'When did I buy mine?' they asked; theirs was much older and did not have the roads indicated on my map.

The Afrikaans-speaking farmer told us he could speak some South Sotho, as if trying to impress us. I told them that I have an aircraft compass in my Sani, which is how I don't get lost; also because I always travel with someone who knows the area. So I showed them where they were on my map, and they sketched in the roads on theirs. Then I drew an imaginary line of the road they needed to take from Zutshwa to get to the Park. One of the men's young daughters recognised the name and said that someone along the way mentioned the village. The other man told me he was a veterinarian, and asked us if we were biologists. Gibson tried to tell them how to find the right roads, but they thought he was our general *factotum*, and told Darryn that '*onse swartes*' ('our blacks') to whom they had

talked *en route* knew more than did Gibson. Gibson, like them, is a South African, but because he is black, he was othered. They were in a hurry as they had a booking at the Park. I told them to go ahead, as they wanted to travel fast. They hared off in a cloud of dust. We told them to wait for us, or ask for Kort-Jan or Johannes, who speak Afrikaans, if they were unsure about the turnoff. If they were surprised that people speak Afrikaans in Botswana they didn't show it, [ix] they just reminded us that one of their number spoke a little South Sotho. We sent the farmer, the vetererarian and their respective families on their way, and the Sani shook with mirth at the stupidity of our own countrymen.

I asked Gibson to inquire as to the relationship between the Basarwa and the Bakgalagadi. The Bushmen visit us, but the Bakgalagadi avoid us, except the Kaptein. We noticed cattle where there were none previously. Where did they come from? An old man, Verby, and the Kaptein said they belonged to the Bakgalagadi. Why are the Bakgalagadi here? We are told that they follow the Bushmen and they leach off them. They come to marry the !Xoo girls, with promises of *lobola* ('bride price'). But when the cattle are watered they leave with their animals, not having married the girls, or paying their dues. They come one at a time, then followed by a brother, or another relative. Soon, there are many; some stay because they know that the Bushmen get support from the Trust, and various other donors. We learn that they are like parasites, which feed off the Bushmen. The !Xoo do not chase them away because they are in the minority, are second-class citizens in Botswana, and have no right to be at Ngwatle. They fear that their daughters will leave with the more powerful, wealthier Bakgalagadi, and they worry about the break-up of their once vibrant community. None of this was evident in any of our previous visits to Ngwatle. This is the first time we have heard Kort-Jan, Johannes, the old man, and the Kaptein actually complain about the Bakgalagadi. Kort-Jan's pejorative reference to them as '*apies*', was not, then, simply a spur-of-the-moment remark. It referred to ongoing colonisation, invasion, and ultimately further dispossession, by the more powerful scavenging group. Hence the longing to return to Masetleng Pan, where the wind is God's breath. The Afrikaans-speaking community was also declining, centred as it was around Kort-Jan's family, with his sons spread out between Ukhwi and Kaa. Not speaking Tswana or Kgalagadi in this shifting community structure is a serious impediment for the !Xoo. Kort-Jan tells us he is trying to learn Tswana.

When we ask why the !Xoo don't own cattle, we are told that they don't know how

to look after them. Darryn exclaims that they could learn! This reminds me of the same relationship which existed between the Ju/'hoansi and the Herero, evident in John Marshall's early 1950s filmed outtakes. The San seem to work within client-patron relationships, but do little or nothing to ensure balance or reciprocity.

### *Aiming for the Northern Cape*

After a week we left for Kaa, about 200 kms southeast. We had little idea of how to get there, even if we did explain the route to the lost South African safari. But we have established from the National Park's office in Hukuntsi that there is a road, and that we can travel to South Africa to meet Belinda Kruiper and the ≠Khomani via the Transfrontier Park. The night before, Kort-Jan visited us to ask if we could take his son Jon-Jon to Zutshwa. The next morning we went to Kort-Jan's house and we learned that Jon Jon actually worked at SBB, and so we were pleased to have a guide. He found the shortcut mentioned by Viljoen - we couldn't even see the turn off even when he pointed to it in broad daylight. It's just as well that I did not mention the shortcut to the two Afrikaner families; they would never have found it in the dark. We got to the SBB-camp by mid-day. We had unsuccessfully tried to contact SBB the previous day on their radio at Ukhwi. We arrived at the camp to find that the guide and manager were at Ukhwi, his wife buying groceries at Hukuntsi. What a mess.

We went to the Park gate. Two coloured officials told us that we could not take the road south unless we had a permit. I offered to buy one, but they told me that I had to get it in South Africa. They told me that the entrance is in South Africa, not here, and that only vehicles in a convoy of two or more are permitted. I must go back via Hukuntsi - a terrible road under construction where Gibson and I previously got partly lost. I told the officials that I didn't have enough petrol to get to Hukuntsi, but I would have sufficient to get to the camp at the Mabuasehube game park, where I could scavenge for petrol from another camper. I showed them the map and they agreed that we should travel southeast along the perimeter of the adjoining Transfrontier Park, 148 kilometres, to get to Mabuasehube. They were concerned as this was not a well-travelled road. I told him that the road back to Hukuntsi was travelled only by SBB, and that their vehicle was in Ukhwi. So they radioed the camp office at Mabuasehube and asked the official to come looking for us if we didn't arrive in three or four hour's time. We left disheartened. 148 kilometres is a helluva long way in the sand. It's a straight southeast line except for a slight eastern tilt 40 kms from the gate. As we

reached this co-ordinate, and as the compass reflected the small change in direction, a loud cheer went up from Darryn, Gibson and Caleb. I was unaware that they were so apprehensive. They remarked that Jon-Jon might have saved us a day's drive by telling us about the permit.

On arrival at Mabuasehube, a Botswanan driver told us that there were seven lions on the road ahead. We travelled cautiously, and my petrol tank's needle hit zero. I joked about spending all night encircled by a pride of lions because we had run out of petrol. It was a dramatic sight; the lions came right to the car, scaring Gibson witless. Unlike Botswanans, the lions didn't complain about having their pictures taken by Darryn. Darryn anxiously mused on the dangers of camping at Ngwatle, 200 kms north, in a land where lions roam a fenceless terrain. We arrived to the campsite safely. Camping next to us was a four-vehicle convoy with a Desert Wolf kitchen trailer, known as a Kalahari Hilton. Caleb and I went across and asked if they had spare petrol.

### *Gob-smacked by 'civilisation'*

Gibson had to be back at the University of the North on Monday 16th - one day by Sani to a bus station at Upington, and two days by bus to Pietersburg. On arriving in South Africa, I took Caleb and Darryn to the ≠Khomani's camp at Witdraai, and then left at 4.40 pm for Upington 200 kms south, to get Gibson to a bus. I expected that they would set up camp and batten down the hatches. On arriving at the bus station in Upington, we were gob-smacked by 'civilisation'.

The bus station was closed. Passers-by assured us that the bus for Johannesburg would come through at 7 or 8 pm. We phoned - the next bus was Sunday morning, and it was full. We went to the Spur steakhouse, and watched a car guard running this way and that, ushering vehicles into parking spaces, much to the bemusement of their drivers. At least in Durban the car guards are polite, official and wear identifying vests. **[x]** They don't harass the drivers, and are gracious if they are not paid anything. My students explained that many car guards also are the backbone of drug distribution networks. Car guarding absorbs the vast urban unemployed class protecting our property from the overwhelming criminal element. The Durban car guards are not drunk, they do not nag, and they don't use children to pull on the guilt strings of those more fortunate than them. This man was obnoxious. By 2005, however, the Upington car guards wore yellow vests sporting the police emergency number, though the drunken itinerants were still plying their trade.

Inside the Spur, which uses native American iconography, I told Gibson that every time I take Americans to this franchise, I get an indignant lecture on Spur's opportunistic depiction of an Indian chief and a young prepubescent Indian brave. They tell me that it is not allowed in the US. I have enough battles to fight. I'm not going to fight theirs as well. We asked for non-smoking, and as usual, the non-smokers get the noisiest, busy sections of the restaurant, next to the kitchen. I asked to be moved to a quieter place. We were taken to the smoking area. I complained more loudly. I mused at the irony; we had just spent a week living around a 24-hour fire, and our clothes stank of wood smoke. I told the young white Afrikaans-speaking waiter that the area was under a pounding loud speaker playing US country and western music and that it was too close to the smokers. I complained that the establishment was breaking the new law by not partitioning off the smokers. The young waiter responded that he was unemployed and had a three-month-old baby to feed. We were back in South Africa, the powerhouse economy of Africa, where poverty rules, and laws are not enforced.

When I returned to Witdraai at 11.30 pm, Caleb and Darryn had only put up their own tent. Nothing was organised, and I assumed that they had spent the whole night in the restaurant and pub at the Molopo Lodge, and then had had to walk 2.5 kms back in the dark to the *tentepark* (camp) at Witdraai - a 'very scary experience' they told me later. I woke them up, as I needed some help with a petrol leak and my tent. Caleb simply relocated to the Sani and sent me into the two-man tent with Darryn. The next day, they went for walks and tried to find the shortcut to the Lodge's pub. I warned them that extended discussions with villagers are commercial transactions, not friendly neighbourly encounters. On their return they confirmed my caution. I was left alone writing up my notes in a still-unorganised camp. Darryn kept telling me how cheap the hotel was. ('Why are we camping when we can stay there?') They seemed to have lost interest - or maybe it was their youthful exuberance at being within walking distance to more familiar surroundings. A long discussion with Abraham Meintjies, the camp manager ensued but he also disappeared for the whole day. Later, we learned that he told the villagers not to nag us. Only Silikat van Wyk, an artist, turned up to sell me something. Caleb, who met him again later, said that Silikat was very excited to meet me, as I was the 'professor' who had sent Belinda Kruiper my book on the San. He did not remember me from the Oudtshoorn conference, but my book had stuck in his mind.



When entering Witdraai the previous night, I remarked at the dilapidated nature of the spanking new lean-to and entrance we had seen 10 months earlier, and the state of disrepair of the previously novel grass tables tucked against trees in the camp. The ablutions were fine, and Darryn spent a lot of time there, just as he did at Mabuasehube, where hot water showers and flushing toilets had just been built. Some basic luxuries suddenly seemed like five-star comfort! Caleb said that it was good that the day following our arrival, Sunday, was a quiet day, for writing, thinking and jogging. I wondered what the next day held, as the other students and Nelia were only expected on 18 July. Today, after some discussion, we agreed was the 15th.

Darryn left to do some early photography of the San in Kimberley. The project was not strong on this history, so his suggestion may prove to be a valuable addition to the project - if somewhat tangential to our contemporary focus. However, at a report-back-seminar in Durban a few months later, he explained that he wanted to compare photographic styles between the early Duggin-Cronin and our contemporary, Paul Weinberg (1997; 2000a; Crowe 2003), who is now being heavily critiqued for his alleged penchant for 'the spectacle' (Bester and Buntman 1999; Weinberg 2000b). Some of Weinberg's ≠Khomani subjects had complained to us about mis-naming, incorrect captioning, and his and other cameras' unexpected intrusions into their intimate and unguarded personal moments (Mlauzi 2003).

### *Methodology and customer relations*

Our hosts' expectations of our work, visits and writing, go to the heart of observer-observed relations, research ethics, and accountability. My observations are drawn from all our Kalahari visits, but obtain their sharpest edge amongst the ≠Khomani at Witdraai and Blinkwater.

Land is not capital. As local white farmers and business people repeatedly told us; land is only useful if its owners 'add value'. Value, in fact, was being subtracted from the land by the traditionalists, we were constantly told. **[xi]** Only the pastoralists were using their land productively, and without the same kind of state financial support as the 'traditionalists' were getting. But what irks the traditionalists and Belinda Kruiper the most, apart from their poverty, is the alleged acquisitive attitude of researchers, photographers and journalists, who are not seen to reciprocate adequately. **[xii]**

All manner of visitors, we were told, are taught local languages, culture, rituals etc. by elderly ≠Khomani individuals. These visitors allegedly forge their careers through their theses, articles and books, and publish and globally syndicate their photographs and writings. These documents then circulate and are rearticulated in ways which become quite alien to those depicted and written about. Some ≠Khomani feel a loss of control over how the information they have imparted is used, abused, repackaged, syndicated, and sold. **[xiii]** They no longer see, read, or recognise themselves in these documents, stories and pictures, when they do come across them. These studies require the ≠Khomani's knowledge, but in the writing-up phase, often eliminate the personalities involved. One result is that the ≠Khomani have commodified their knowledge, image and interactions, to sell these like they sell necklaces, bangles, and other crafts. Dawid Kruiper justifies charging because he claims that photographers are making lots of money on postcards at international airports. Only three such postcards exist, all taken a long time ago. But Dawid now at least feels they have earned something from the exchange. Tourists, however, feel uncomfortably hemmed in, manipulated, controlled, and othered; this resulting from an overt and demanding commodification, a visibly explicit form of sometimes sullen visitor management and interaction, and by tourists having to negotiate access to places, people and things, when they basically want to relax, take it easy and take photographs (cf. Von Strauss 2000). The last thing tourists want to do is to have to deal with communal drunkenness, being accosted by all and sundry with hard luck stories and the parading of dirty children to prove poverty.

Visiting Witdraai is quite unlike our reception at Ngwatle, where no one begs or assumes that they are necessarily entitled to handouts. Many engaging in begging in the Northern Cape do have jobs, while others engage in informal income earning activities. Some traditional ≠Khomani have branded themselves as 'poor'. Two NGO-workers told us in September 2004, that ≠Khomani individuals approach stopped cars with the plaintive refrain, 'I'm ≠Khomani San, give me R10'. Is begging the postmodern equivalent of foraging perhaps? I dismiss the thought as being sociobiologically deterministic, especially as exchange relations have typified our experiences amongst the !Xoo and Ju/'hoansi further north. In 2001, travel agencies warned their clients not to stop at the Witdraai road stalls, as tourists were sometimes sworn at, and occasionally had to negotiate roadblocks, when they failed to buy anything (Carter, interview, July 2001). The *WIMSA Annual Report* (2001/2: 30) carries an item on tourism training for the

San, focusing on 'a general basic understanding of visitors from abroad, their needs and expectations and their 'strange' way of doing and seeing things'. The WIMSA report however makes no mention of customer relations, the need to treat tourists with dignity, nor of the need to develop entrepreneurial skills, no doubt implied in its course curriculum. Tourists, we were told by the local business people and others who trade, are simply seen as a convenience, rather than as a market to be cultivated with proper service. A deep sense of entitlement seemingly fostered by NGOs, development workers, lawyers, state officials, academics, and so on, has located the ≠Khomani not only within a variety of dependency relations, but has also imbued them with unrealistic expectations of what to expect from tourists and those hoteliers who do offer to assist them.

While in the field I toy with some explanations for Belinda's frustration: 'the ambivalence of dependency'; or, 'dependent ambivalences'; perhaps 'ambivalence in dependency' is better; what about 'ambivalent dependence'; or 'contradictory dependency' might be best. In throwing some light on this kind of problem, Roger Carter suggests that the 'Bushmen are often their own worst enemy', and that 'good intentions are lost through the failure, of both or one of the parties, to recognise the value of the intentions or actual needs of the other party'. Other communities interacting with the traditional ≠Komanani thus come to incorrectly assume that they have no intention of improving their quality of life, and that they unfairly expect others to carry 'the burden of their excesses' (Carter, interview, July 2001). How to negotiate these semantic, cultural and psychological differences is the real issue.

The problem in dealing with individual needs within structurally induced destitution is the bugbear of all development NGOs. Policy work of the kind conducted by agencies like SASI and Farm Africa takes time. Implementation via donors and state agencies takes much longer if recommendations are accepted. But destitute individuals have real and pressing daily needs. The concluding section below thus attempts to explain the apparent contradiction which occurs when researchers who were 'here', return home to the academy or NGO 'there', and why individuals, personalities, and informants, and the concrete nature of storytelling, disappear in the generalized writing up of what was learned.

#### *From 'there' to 'here': Methodology*

Theories of political economy tend to (over)emphasise structural determination at the expense of human agency, experience, and values. Our research however, has

revealed how marginalized and dependent communities negotiate global processes and structures in pre-modern, modern and postmodern contexts. Even the remotest African community evidences aspects of all three periodisations. This is clear in David Kerr (2002) and Boloka's (2001) studies on communication in Botswana. Deirdre Donnelly (2001) and Simões (2001a) in turn, take account of social and cultural relations between the global and the local, and between isolated communities and globalising structures. All four provide ways of understanding local negotiations of global processes, and also suggest strategies for continuing this interstitial research in which ordinary communities can be actively included into explanations provided by the political economy paradigm. Human agency - and real people - are thereby returned to the analysis.

Conceptual innovation sometimes occurs by accident. On my return to Durban in August 2001, I had to write a tenure evaluation on Nate Kohn's work (cf. 1998; 1994a; 1994b). Much of my recent work has been written using a similar self-reflexive, semi-autobiographical style, in which I use my own research experiences to elucidate theory, subjectivity, process and form. Kohn, however, is a past master at this kind of analysis, being popularised in publications like Norman Denzin's *Cultural Studies: A research volume* and *Cultural Studies - Critical Methodologies*. My own work derives to some extent from Kohn, while my earlier forays only achieved delayed publication: neither I nor journal editors knew what to do with this kind of writing, now published as the 'Preface' to my book, *Appropriating images* (1999b) and elsewhere. On reading Kohn's Personal Statement, the penny dropped. We are partly doing 'autoethnography', defined by Mary Louise Pratt (1999) as 'a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them'. At the Blinkwater campfire, Vetkat and Klein Dawid, backed up by Silikat, spontaneously composed songs about us, about research and researchers, and about their condition, to the accompaniment of a guitar, a drum and bouncing xylophone type of instrument sent to Silikat by an appreciative German tourist. We want to return to listen to, and learn from, these melodious representations of our work and ourselves. Namibian linguist, Levi Namaseb, concludes that Belinda's criticisms and these songs are 'the fruits of the listening by means of an article like this'. What can we learn from them about what they have learned from their encounters with us? This was the first time in a long while the men had so spontaneously played music, Belinda told us; such was the despair of the ≠Khomani community at large. Only that week, one old woman at Welkom, Ouma

Antas Kariseb, Dawid's sister, had died. She had been the key source for many an academic thesis and article, and doctoral students, **[xiv]** who had allegedly failed to return the results of their work to them. Belinda Kruiper again:

Surely copies could be made ... the researcher goes back, and transcribes and sends ... Knowing this is not just about taking knowledge and going away ... it's an education sharing, it's exchanging cultural information, from this whole thing ... people are being cured, tablets are being made (cf. Hawthorne, 2001). Why is the process always outside the place where people live? Ouma Antas wanted me to get all the research material so that I can make sure the children get something back one day. That's all she ever wanted [from the exchange]. She doesn't trust what's out there. And she's dead today. A student came, took her knowledge, and now has a job and a car (interview, 24 July 2001).

The link between accessing information and careerism is a recurring complaint from disadvantaged South African research subjects. 'Stealing information and selling it without permission', is the way that Nigel Crawhall characterizes this kind of accusation. William Ellis asks how one measures the value of fragments of information supposedly 'stolen' by academics. Or, he asks, is it a 'twisted perception' of the notion of intellectual property? What is the relationship between personal entitlement (the private) and community benefit (the public realm)? Ellis draws a distinction between intellectual property and the need for public access to demographic and other data for policy and planning purposes (e-mail, 21 November 2001; cf. Ellis 2002). The only entities that profit directly from academic research, funded by the taxpayer, are multinational publishing companies. Academics themselves are captured in multiple layers and chains of exploitation through which they have to mobilise each and every minute of every day. This is not a ≠Khomani experience alone.

In July 2001, Belinda was malnourished and stressed, and my vehicle (as have those of other researchers) became an ambulance for her and another woman who needed to get to the Clinic 65 kms south. Nelia, Mary, her family, and I thus took on the role at different times of ensuring the provision of food and vitamins when we meet the Blinkwater community. **[xv]** Where were the NGO-workers, their vehicles and their institutional support, we were asked? Why do the occasional academic visitors have to take on this social work role, we asked? The traditionalists and those at Blinkwater only had donkey carts, which can take hours to coral and hook-up. Expectations of what academics (as opposed to NGO-

officials) are able to deliver have thus perhaps become necessarily unrealistic.

Researchers themselves, however, also set up dissonance, making promises they don't keep, failing to return their studies to the communities that helped them, and telling everyone what a '*jol*' ('party') they are having in the Kalahari. Kruiper tells of one NGO worker who allegedly told her that: 'I came to holiday in the Kalahari'. Belinda concluded that: 'It can be when you wine and dine on budgets where you could be sharing fire time at night with the locals feeling the cold, sharing, music, wine and song' (interview, October 2001).

Perhaps what we are doing is something of an autoethnography in which we are developing self-reflexive methodologies to explain the nature of our encounters with the people who talk to us, host us, and sing about us. This is connected to us trying to explain to our desk-bound colleagues the need to engage real people under the often-debilitating circumstances in which they live, love, and die. By inhabiting a new kind of liminal space between insider/outsider, refugee/chronicler, and theorist/practitioner, we as researchers also cross borders - language, cultural, locational, cosmological and spatial - in our aim to understand conditions of the other and the relation of this condition to the Historical Same. But, while we often have to ration water and food for ourselves, we've never been really, really hungry or unbearably thirsty.

Belinda translates and discusses our documents with her husband and others in her community around the campfire. They always wonder what happened to their stories and experiences when the researcher returns to the academy, where narratives coming from their very deep existentialist senses of being, personality and soul have been converted into abstract, generalized points of theoretical principle, in which the individual subjects, narratives, and story-tellers no longer feature in the ways experienced during the encounter. What is a legitimate objective for the academic and NGO-researcher is often alienating, disappointing, and is seen as dishonest by these researchers' subject communities, sources and hosts. [\[xvi\]](#) Observers like academics, live in trajectories of mobility, change and difference, while those they observe, film or write about - the 'natives' - are often easily identifiable because they are relatively immobile and therefore knowable and reproducible in media and books. Local cultural knowledge is constructed, imaged and written to be understood by readers *beyond* the cultures and communities in which the author, photographer and filmmaker is working/visiting, or about which s/he is writing.

Criticisms of such chroniclers are audible evidence of the location of writers, filmmakers and academics as living between 'here' and 'there' - where travelling is a mode of dwelling between themselves as observers and the subjects who are observed. When academics return 'home', they do so with new abstract knowledge that evidences a paradoxical relationship with their hosts: their need for abstraction now separates them from the concreteness of their subjects' experience, feelings, and knowledge.

While the concrete tangible returns to the host communities, they are not always immediate or even visible. They do impact broader institutional levels (cf. Crawhall 2000), and are often initiated by the communities themselves (cf. CRAM Project). For example, WIMSA (2001/2: 67) suggests that Crawhall's sociolinguistic analysis of southern San language speakers will help to consolidate the ≠Khomani's claim to the Park, and help to ensure their fair historical representation in schools and museums. Similarly, Chamberlin's (2001) work is designed to question the essentialism of assumptions of tracking, as a biological rather than that of a 'reading' talent. These are medium-to-long-term objectives. Literate individuals like Belinda living on the periphery of the ≠Khomani at Blinkwater, are organic intellectuals (Gramsci 1971; Tomaselli 2003b) of a kind. Where and how do people like Belinda fit into the client-patron relations found in the Kalahari? What are the contradictions and tensions between what the individuals/community expect from visiting researchers, and what the latter consider being their ethical responsibilities? For us, these are crucial questions. Belinda, like us, is insider/outsider ('family'), refugee/chronicler, and theorist/practitioner. She defies borders and policies and articulates what is often felt to be best left unsaid; she is both ally and adversary. These are positions she reserves for all who work with and/or against her. Embedded in her comments are both the 'ego' and the collective discourse. Which is which is not easy to distinguish. How does one disentangle all of this in terms of webs of relations and impacts on policies? That she previously worked for SASI gives her a good insight into how to impact issues and attitudes from a variety of perspectives. To dismiss the contradictory positions of intellectuals like Belinda as non-San, as outsiders, is to ignore their discursive, intellectual and kinship roles within the communities alongside or within which, or against which, they conduct themselves. Resources are lost, excommunicated and silenced.

Learning, being, and understanding from below, are also our objectives. Most

students who have been to the Kalahari come back changed (McLennan-Dodd 2003; Sehume 2001). As Belinda Kruiper told us in 2000: 'You can leave the Kalahari, but the Kalahari never leaves you'. We need to write about the nature of this change, and about how to mobilize it positively for both methodological and development purposes. One of the problems of this kind of approach may be that one finds one's self getting inside someone else's story, which may be a place where we don't want to be (Denzin, 1998). I have felt the warm wind of other peer approval in writing this story, but in facing up to methodological problems that few want to discuss in public, I was also seared by a chilling draught. One respondent was legitimately angry at the implicit way he felt Belinda had criticized him, for example. That's why the auto-ethnographic method - in our case - needs to be linked to the general experiences of the team and our informants/sources/friends/subjects, and how they perceive themselves within these communal experiences in which we are participant, but also within our respective individually written stories. That's one reason why we send our unpublished papers to our informants, and other researchers who may contest our analyses. We take our informants' comments and criticisms seriously, and write about them as distinct personalities who have their own agendas, needs and hopes (cf. Dyll 2003). In being buffeted by the angry wind of peer criticism in the writing of an earlier version of this chapter, I have to balance these agendas in one way or another. I therefore take the risk of only one party being satisfied with the way the scale eventually ends up.

### *Peroration*

What is for now is the wind. Ouma Antas has become part of the wind. On leaving Ngwatle Pan at the end of a week's stay, I heard a different sound being made by the wind. It sounded like a Formula 1 Grand Prix. I realised that each pan has its own tone, its own timbre, and its own pitch, depending on the speed and direction of the wind, the direction and angle of one's ears, and the size of the pan. At Ngwatle Pan, in July 2002, I realised that the wind plays music - it creates multi-tonal pipe music blowing through the barbed wire fence and the pipes holding it up. I talked to Tim Reinhardt's (2002) camera, discussing how the fence and the right-angled shadow were a metaphor for a variety of opposites: freedom and captivity/insiders and outsiders/the past and the future, that the fence and its shadow signified an uncertain future for Ngwatle. And then the music died. The wind had stopped the moment Reinhardt turned off his camera. The silence was eerie. Was the future as ominous? The wind is important for hunting, for



disguising the smell of the hunter. The Formula 1 sound is indicative of our need to hurry, to get to the Northern Cape. Every time I visit the Kalahari, the wind takes on new significance: metaphorical, symbolical, metaphysical, methodological and climatological. Now, in 2002, the brief absence of the wind was also chilling. The Bushmen know the elements; they live their lives and wits by them. They hunt by them. They sleep outside on the coldest nights and the hottest days. They have an existential relationship with the land, the sky and the sand, shifting dunes, and the wind. The hunters at Ngwatle have learned to keep their *pampiere* safe from the wind. Without these papers they cannot eat meat. In the new Botswana economy, paper means protein, resources, and legitimacy. In the Northern Cape, paper means land. The !Xoo at Ngwatle are not permitted to hunt without their *pampiere*. They now have to negotiate the existential trials and legal constraints of modernity. The swish of the wind takes on a new meaning under these circumstances. This natural wind should not be confused with the rarefied gusts of academia.

#### NOTES

**[i]** The Nqwaa Khobee Xeya Trust had signed a one-year sublease agreement that gave Safaris Botswana Bound (SBB) the exclusive rights to conduct both hunting and photographic safaris in KD/1. The Trust sold 25 per cent of its wildlife quota to the company.

**[ii]** In Tswana social hierarchy, Bakgalagadi are regarded as a notch above the San or 'Masarwas'. Being themselves othered within Botswana as a whole, they tend to exert their higher ranking over the Masarwas in ways discussed here.

**[iii]** Kandjii (1996), a CCMS MA-student, is from Namibia and speaks Herero, English, and Afrikaans.

**[iv]** The need for permits to exercise hunting traditions, coupled with the community's signing over of their quotas to SBB, removes hunting as a central organisational economic activity. Their negative response to camels, initially thought to be introduced like cows, is seen as just another indicator of communal-local displacement, perhaps also contributing to the substance abuse so evident during the 2001-visit (e-mail, J. Sehume, 13 August 2001).

**[v]** Lobsang Rampa is the name of a spirit of a Tibetan lama that a British man named Cyril Hoskins claimed had taken over his body. Lobsang Rampa aka Hoskins wrote several books about his alleged experiences and childhood in Tibet. His first and most famous book is *The third eye*, published in 1956.

**[vi]** The position of the Kaptein or chief used to be hereditary, but Kort-Jan's late

brother Petrus was the Ngwatle community's last 'Kaptein' of this Bushman family line, as he died before he could select the next Kaptein (Johannes Nxai, interview, July 2002). The present Kaptein is a Mokgalagadi and not a 'real San' like Kort-Jan. He is, however, recognised to some extent as a leader or figurehead in the community. Waldron recognised this as well and this is why he paid courtesy calls to him on his first arrival (J. Sehume, e-mail, 15 August 2001).

**[vii]** Kaptein's legitimacy began to be challenged after SBB entered Ngwatle in late 1999. The clothes distribution incidents, 2000-01, are a typical example of this authority beginning to be questioned. Johannes (interview, July 2002) said that 'Kaptein' is 'only a name'. Patriarchy being what it is in Ngwatle, the female gatekeeper's role does, however, not extend much beyond controlling finances that accrued from gatekeeping for the SBB and the community (e-mail, J. Sehume, 15 August 2001).

**[viii]** Kaaitjie became the *de facto* power in the community, managing payments for entry, camping, etc., on behalf of the Trust and SBB. She is half Bakgaladi which, like the Kaptein, placed her in an ambivalent position as far as the Bushmen were concerned.

**[ix]** Later, when stopping for petrol at Tshabong, I conversed in Afrikaans with numerous coloured South African farmers working in Botswana, and with Botswanans themselves who said they learned the language from the South Africans.

**[x]** Such is the high rate of unemployment and crime that in cities like Durban, thousands of otherwise unemployed people are organised into teams of car guards who watch over shopping centre parking lots, street parking bays, and anywhere where cars are parked. Payment is voluntary.

**[xi]** Game was shot and sold at well-below-market prices to local farmers, for example. This decimation reduced the reproductive ability of those buck remaining. William Ellis (2000) of the University of the Western Cape has also documented these issues and local farmers' perspectives.

**[xii]** Belinda told us in July 2001: 'They [informants] get R50 a day [from researchers], and yes, lovely biltong for the day, anything, but when they leave, what then? ... These people are questing to learn, but when we learn and take away without returning ... I've turned around at death's doorstep twice because of hunger myself. And I ask myself in bitterness ... if I am so important, and if [name] can send me a letter, in writing, stating he has learnt more from me than from any other person in his entire time as an anthropologist, as a filmmaker, then why am I hungry, and ... with no capacity? I am not saying they have to feed

me, surely I have to work ... but that's my contribution'.

**[xiii]** For this reason the Cultural Resources Auditing and Management Project, Southern Botswana (CRAM) was established at the request of Dawid Kruiper. CRAM was led by Nigel Crawhall (2000) for SASI.

**[xiv]** Crawhall (1999) explains that 'when Elsie was "discovered" in February 1997 her presence was a profound shock to many in South Africa', because government, academics and Parks officials had claimed that no San remained in South Africa.

**[xv]** The Molopo Lodge, when managed by Roger Carter (1998-2001), assisted in the regular provision of affordable meat and offered many other services besides, services not being systematically provided by the Provincial government, NGOs working in the area, or the well funded community committees.

**[xvi]** WIMSA has recognised the problem, stating that the San seldom, if ever, are consulted on, or benefit from, research and reveals that San dignity and privacy are sometimes unethically exposed. WIMSA has therefore developed contracts for researchers and filmmakers, requiring payments to WIMSA. As laudable as this kind of intervention is, Belinda Kruiper contests its validity, observing that NGOs now believe they 'own the Bushmen' (July 2001). Louis Liebenberg (1990), who has written many books on tracking and advised on many films on the San, complains that these payments do not always directly benefit the San communities and individuals participating in these films and research. Dawid Kruiper now negotiates directly with film companies, rather than working through WIMSA (Abraham Meintjies, interview, 2001). For us, we prefer to work directly with our individual informants via their local structures.