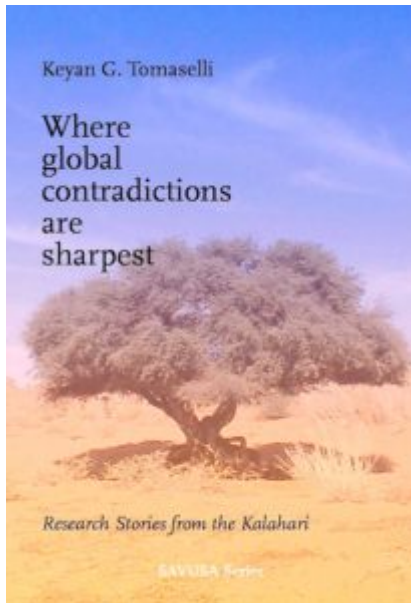


# Where Global Contradictions Are Sharpest ~ 'Op die Grond': Writing In The San/d, Surviving Crime



*I must go away. There to the sand, to the sand. To that Kalahari I must go. Where the grass is*  
(Anna Swart, interview, 2000).**[i]**

## *Getting there*

*Out of these sands and sunshine deeply embedded in our past is our future -*  
(Botswana World Tourism Day poster, 27 Sept 1999).

July 12, 2002. The armed guard at Makro, a giant wholesaler in Durban, was wearing a bulletproof vest. We were doing our last minute shopping. I'd never seen a guard *in-store* before. During apartheid, unarmed, mainly black guards, would, on entry to a store, politely and gingerly search customers' bags for bombs, guns and grenades. Nelia Oets, already in Upington, 1200 kms to the northwest, called just before my group left Durban. She had been mugged and had hurt her ankle, and might have to cancel her participation. This was serious as Nelia's 4X4 was crucial to the trip. We arrived at the Upington Protea Hotel, owned by Mary Lange's brother-in-law, 24 hours later. Nelia had called us by mobile phone earlier. She was on her way to the Molopo Lodge, her foot in a brace.

## *At the periphery*

The next morning in Upington I filled up with petrol. The attendant told me to

lock my car. A local gang was casing us. A retired couple at the Molopo Lodge 200 kms north mentioned to us later that they had been targeted while at an Upington supermarket. The receptionist at the hotel in Upington mentioned the busload of Taiwanese tourists who had recently been held up, Ned Kelly style, on the Maputu corridor highway. Two white members of our party complained of being closely shadowed by a security in-store guard: no one was above suspicion. At the supermarket a newspaper vendor insisted on pushing my trolley. He refused to loosen his grip until Vanessa McLennan-Dodd and I had unpacked its contents into the Sani. He was allowed to sell papers at the front of the store provided he prevented trolley theft. Stolen shopping was usually taken to the *lokasie* ('location' - black dormitory area near Upington) where there are few shops, where most of the working class, poor, and unemployed live. While clinging onto the trolley, the vendor vigorously shooed away the odd beggar and other would-be helpers/assailants/muggers. Not a policeman in sight. I bought a *Sunday Times* from the vendor in gratitude and paid off the ever-watchful car guard. In the newspaper the 'Careers'-section reported that the Western Cape was experiencing a recruitment boom, though hiring was flat in the other eight provinces (*Sunday Times Careers* 14 July 2003: 1). Maybe Upington, in the Northern Cape, was at the epicentre of this flatness?

When we got back to the hotel, ready to leave for the Kalahari, we learned that Marit Sætre, an MA-student from Norway, had become violently ill. It must be the soapy water, we thought. She explained that the four Norwegians registered in our Programme in Durban during 2002 periodically succumbed to a 24-hour tummy bug. In the future, I'll not make fun of First World students whose overseas doctors tell them not to drink the (very clean) Durban tap water, eat the salad, or forget their malaria pills. So we left Charlize Tomaselli and Lauren Dyll with Marit at the Hotel, which offered them free lodging. Both later complained of having been accosted by drunken white men in the streets during broad daylight. Vanessa and I drove on to Witdraai, two hours north on tar, where we were to meet Nelia, graduate students Linje Manyozo and Tim Reinhardt, Damien Tomaselli and Sherieen Pretorius, who had arrived there on the 11th.

Charlize reported that Marit was admitted to hospital that afternoon. The hospital demanded R1,000 in cash up-front for the ward. The manager refused to accept Marit's Norwegian medical insurance, her father's card number, or my gold card and ID-numbers, which I phoned through from the Lodge. Wealth before health!

Or, perhaps the fear of Marit not settling her debt was as great as was the fear of the vendor losing a trolley? A matter of degree perhaps? Eventually Charlize persuaded the hotel to advance the hospital's charge. The hospital obviously had little understanding of how to deal with international visitors or global insurance companies, in an otherwise remote province, which prides itself on its unique tourism attractions.

The retired couple had been scammed by credit card fraud in Upington - Nigerian cartels, they said, had ways of making impressions of cards, with accomplices in the banks. I remembered in Durban that MasterCard had declined to pay some of my large pre-trip purchases because of my Bank's suspicion that it had been stolen. Perhaps losing R30,000 is less painful than a broken ankle? A mini-bus had broken down near Loubos. The passengers were waiting for a local associate to bring a welding machine. We had seen and heard them the previous day at the Molopo Lodge, as they had stopped off for lunch and a booze-up in the camp *boma*, listening to the kind of *boere musiek* (Afrikaner country music) never played on KwaZulu-Natal radio stations, but repetitively relayed on the Lodge's music system. These fellows, as with most of the Lodge's guests, were the epitome of Leon Schuster's comedic movie characters: seventeen heavysset, Afrikaans-speaking men, clutching Castle Lager beer cans. Their demeanour - straight backs, beer bellies - was vaguely familiar. When we stopped to help them the next day near the Namibian border, they identified themselves as (plainclothes) policemen. Now I understood - in bygone apartheid times I would have instantly assumed them to be political enforcers - and avoided them like the plague. Now, we cooperated against criminals.

The three students arrived from Upington on 16 July, just in time for some exceptionally cold weather. That morning I talked to the <sup>1</sup>Khomani craftsmen across the dusty road from the Lodge, at their small fires, their tiny mock huts, and craft displays. Silikat van Wyk, the artist, came over, dressed in a tatty sports jacket covering his open chest and loincloth. Two tourists stopped and there was some light-hearted banter from the white male about 'ware *Boesmans*' ('real Bushmen') not feeling the cold, and being dressed in '*Westerse gedrag*' ('Western garb'). Silikat's response was that just as *Boere* feel the cold, so do the Bushmen. There I met Toppies, who had painted the rock art impressions at the Kagga Kamma Game Park Hotel, 1200 kms south. I asked about Danie Jacobs, previously cultural manager at Ostri-San, in the North West Province, which we visited in

2001, where he, Isak and Abraham had worked. Danie had returned to Kagga Kamma, from where he had left in mid-2000 with a group of Kruipers to establish these other cultural sites.

I also asked Toppies about where the reeds from the *Groot Skilpad* (large grass structure looking like a tortoise) had gone. Toppies (interview 2002) explained that it had been removed bit by bit and used to repair the roofs of homes. The San organisations had not replaced the reeds, which had to be imported from another area. What was originally an imposing eye-catching structure was now just a bare skeleton, silhouetted against the cold blue sky - a metaphor, perhaps, for the cultural and physical state of this socially skeletal community. Someone in our group mentioned Maria Carey's alleged remark in a satirical interview that, 'when I watch TV and see those poor starving kids all over the world, I can't help but cry. I mean, I'd love to be skinny like that, but not with all those flies and death and stuff'.

On arrival at the Lodge, Vanessa and I learned that our researchers were scattered along 46 kms of road doing interviews, exposing video, game viewing, dune surfing, and conducting photo-elicitations with photographs taken by Sian Dunn in April. Vanessa was soon engaged as a translator, and was given a hard time by Jon Kruiper about 'taking knowledge' **[ii]** from the community:

Linje wants me to translate for him while he interviews Jon Kruiper about the photographs in Paul Weinberg's book. I find translating awkward because I can speak enough Afrikaans to give people the impression that I understand them clearly, when in fact I only grasp about half of what they're saying. This becomes a problem when we reach a dispute about payment for this interview. I'm not entirely sure what we agreed on in the first place and Afrikaans classes at school did not incorporate modules on negotiation and diplomacy. I try to explain that what we want to do for the Bushmen is about recognition and respect, not handing out money, but he isn't buying it. Eventually I hand over R20, and tell Jon I hope he will understand our intentions when he sees the results of our work and that information is in fact sent back to our informants. He seems happy with me after that (McLennan-Dodd 2003).

### *A liquid economy*

Our team voiced many complaints, not so much about the often drunken state of particular ≠Khomani individuals who had claimed the prime retail location in front of the Lodge, their insistent begging, or constant requests for money, meat

and *mielie* ('maize') meal, but about the inconsiderate and often sexist attitudes of the mainly white men who visited the Lodge, who made a noise in the camp site, and who looked askance at this motley and strange crew partly consisting of long-haired, ear-ringed male (white) students. That a black Malawian was amongst them raised no eyebrows at all - racial tolerance in the post-apartheid transition had forged ahead at least. Nelia and I concur - stereotypes of white men do indeed encode a kernel of truth - that is why Schuster's movies are so successful (cf. Olivier 1992; Steyn 2003).

Sherieen, a representative for a national liquor company, was taking a 'working' holiday. She checked out the Molopo Lodge Liquor Store, being interested in the locally harvested plonk the ≠Khomani individuals were buying so cheaply. The roadside craft sellers were keen to make immediate sales, claiming that they were 'closing' soon. Sherieen realised that what was 'closing' was not the stall, but the liquor store either for lunch or at night - that's why the sale needed to be made in all haste! The consumption-production cycle involved small transparent liquor bottles as inputs: a) the liquid at 23 per cent alcohol permits almost instantaneous intoxication, especially on empty stomachs; b) the empty bottles are then recycled by filling them with colour sculpted sand patterns for sale to passing tourists; and this c) generates further cash with which to purchase yet more alcohol. When cash is harder to come by other means are used: the lavatory bowl from the ablution facility at the Witdraai *tentepark* (camp site) had been stolen - apparently for resale. No one admitted to knowing the culprits. The result was that no more tourists were expected to use the site. On talking to Joe Viljoen, a store manager at Hukuntsi, Botswana, we learnt that shortly after supplying meat he had shot on behalf of the Zutshwa residents' Trust, the town of Hukuntsi 40 kms away, would be awash with venison, and that the Zutshwa residents would use the proceeds to buy alcohol. Hunting and gathering was being replaced with an economy liquefied/liquidated by alcohol.

The original intention of the traditional ≠Khomani had been to house in the *skilpad* lean-to all the stages of their crafts industry for tourist viewing; now they sat at the roadside hoping that their meagre stock, small *skerms* (!Kung: 'grass hut'), and half-dressed individuals, would attract attention. Toppies (interview, 2002) then explained by means of an abstract drawing in the sand the enddistanced relation between the '*tradisionale mense*' ('traditional people') at Witdraai on the one hand, and the San organisations and '*Westerse San*'

(‘Westerners’ - pastoralists) on the other, locating the ≠Khomani Community Property Association (CPA) at the middle of the diagram. He explained that he was ‘*ongeletterd*’ (‘illiterate’) and that this inadequacy impeded his discussing the community’s problems with official San organisations. I suggested that our students’ research might be helpful in bridging this seeming communications gap. Toppies said he would bury his sketch in the sand, where it lay, and would recover and refer to it again when Lauren talked to him the next day. The future could be in the sand. But it’s also in government policy.

We were due to travel to Ngwatle, Botswana, on the 20th. The entrance fees to the ‘Wilderness Trail’ on the Botswana side of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park cost us an arm and a leg, as Botswana restricts access to one convoy per direction. Thus is total privacy ensured for the traveler. This attention to tourist needs contrasts sharply with the experience of the Central Kalahari Bushmen who were at that time being deprived of their rights to live in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) by the Botswana government - all in the name of development and civilization (Vinding 2002: 412-16). A court case brought against the government in 2004 by Survival International (SI) had resulted in international exposure for this displaced group and a growing militancy amongst Bushmen throughout the country.

The Botswana side of the Transfrontier Park has no facilities: we had to take all our water, petrol and food for the next 12 days, as we headed for Ngwatle. The South African side, however, was a veritable traffic jam with all kinds of 4X4s taking their dusty annual ‘off-road’ excursions where ordinary cars can go but which are worse for the wear on their return home. Tourists who stopped at Silikat Van Wyk’s stall opposite the Lodge 40 kms south, complained that even 4X4s were being damaged. **[iii]** A few days later my split battery charger refused to work. A local electrician over-rode the system, restoring power to the fridge and my laptop. The fear of my laptop not working was worse than my apprehension of the Sani breaking down. How would I record my story if my laptop faltered? I am too old to read my own handwriting any more. Thus have we become the slaves of machines, electronics and electricity.

Belinda Kruiper suggested that these difficulties were signs initially portending against the onward travel to Ngwatle. But she concluded that the ‘voices of truth’ through the research team were necessary in the light of the frustrations expressed by many of our Witdraai sources because of: i) their lack of education;

ii) the alleged extraction of knowledge by so many opportunistic researchers without due acknowledgement: 'We trust what goes out there is what we say. We don't get things back ...' (Belinda Kruiper, interview, 2001a); and iii) the fact that the community leaders often become a barrier between the development NGOs and ordinary people. She was concerned that NGOs take on lives of their own and lose touch with those they claim to be representing. Informing the Ngwatle group of comparative conditions would be useful, something she had realised when accompanying journalist Rupert Isaacson (2001) into Botswana.

On travelling onto the Botswana side of the Park, Charlize announced that she had lost her passport. When we arrived at the Kaa gate at the north of the Park two days later, the passport official advised that we return via the Park as the border formalities would be less difficult than going through a formal border post as we had intended. So we steeled ourselves for another two days of arduous deep sand driving which had already torn my spare wheel off the underside of my vehicle.

#### *At the core/centre*

I discussed a conference paper with Belinda that I had delivered two weeks earlier in Finland (cf. Chapter 7). This study differed from my previous publications on the Kalahari. It was explicitly conceived of as theory, an epistemological sojourn, in which I stood back from dramatic narrative, experience, and description, to reflect on what we had been doing methodologically for the past eight years. That the paper was delivered near the North Pole was an advantage, because I needed to get away from the dust of the Kalahari, the extreme stresses of being an academic during the relentless materiality of political, educational and ideological transition, and to think about my/our research practices without these encumbrances. Ironically, one delegate took me to task for being 'anti-theory', expressing severe reservations about E.P. Thompson's (1968) notion of 'experience', which I had invoked. She improbably linked it to George W. Bush's use of the term (sic). I am not anti-theory, but I question narrow enddistancing tantalisation, cut-'n-paste applications, the refusal and/or inability to interrogate Western-derived theory in terms of local perspectives, and theory which ineluctably assumes dualist Cartesian perspectives. Belinda commented that this reluctance might also indicate fear of the personal domain:

What's happening in the bush, the personal stuff that you don't want to know

because it's not relevant to your studies, because it's actually in your own home – but if one can find a way to talk about it without the judgement then whether you live in a house in Hout Bay or a squatter camp it could be very much the same except for the material stuff. It could be spiritually right there, spiritually rich here, or spiritually poor there or here (Belinda Kruiper, interview, 2002).

Belinda Kruiper described the research team's work as 'a voice of truth' and as a 'platform' for the community to make their voices heard (interview, 2002). I am transcribing Belinda's comments from tape as an old Ngwatle woman takes up residence in our camp, wanting to sell us a *gai*, two days after we have informed the community that we have already spent our P2,000 budget. We repeat that we have no more pula. She lies down on the sand, covers her head, and goes to sleep. We are not sure how to respond. As much as we would like to purchase the item, this single act would open us to a flood of other vendors. So we leave her sleeping in the sand just before sunset and get on with camp life. A student later gives her some food. She thanks her profusely, eats it, gets up, and leaves. Is this an example of the 'personal', which Belinda is talking about? Do we fear our own cultural inadequacies, class guilt, and asymmetrical power in dealing with such situations?

Or, perhaps we do live on different ontological and psychological planes. What, for example, does one make of the following comments by an initially sceptical white community worker (an accountant for the ≠Khomani Sîsen Craft Project) on the relationship between sand, San, and spirituality:

It's harsh here ... they're out of sand, they fit here, they are part of the trees, the bushes and the plants and the medical things and the spirits going on here. I see them each and every day eat sand ... This is something Lena Malgas told me...But eating sand is part of her. It cleans her. They sleep on the sand because, like she said, it's like a massage for her. It's a free massage. It's comfortable. Even there they go to cook. They cook their food on sand. Spirit, the spirits are in the sand. The food we eat, this is a desert, the food we eat, comes out of the sand. Underneath the sand they know much about, not on top of the sand but what's underneath the dunes. They will start digging a hole there ... There's a plant. They can survive. They can dig a hole and sleep in it ... then Jakob Malgas said that if he walks without shoes, on 56, the sand will be up to 60 degrees. He will walk 15 kms on hot, hot, hot sand and then he can't wear shoes. I asked him why doesn't he wear shoes because it was his birthday and I said let's buy him a pair



of shoes and he said, 'No!' You need to be in contact with the sand the whole time ... his magnetic field does not touch his soul when he's not on the sand (Kleynhans, interview, 2002).

I think about the relationship between researchers and researched, existentialism and essentialism, San and sand. How do I analyse this ontology and experience so obviously alien to my own? I came up with the following considerations:

- a) Are my/our informants/hosts/co-researchers able to recognise themselves and their experiences in my/our story/ies?
- b) Is our writing intelligible to our informants/sources/hosts, as represented/translated?
- c) Does the resulting narrative include, if implicitly, a theory (explanation) from below? Does it critically engage with whatever theories or methodologies we bring to the encounter?
- d) Are we using theory strategically? Is it useful in our sources'/hosts'/informants' daily lives? If so, how? Are our encounters mindful of power relations, deceit, and manipulation?
- e) Where does the noumenal world described by Kleynhans fit in?
- f) What do we return, symbolically, to the community?

### *Fire, method and symbolic exchange*

Answering these questions is our collective intention. I will dwell on some here. On symbolic returns and noumenal experience, the answer was gratifying. At Erin in the Northern Cape, Charlize had performed an aboriginal fire dance for the ≠Khomani. The spectators were in awe, and commented vigorously during the performance about the possibility of Charlize hurting and burning herself. In contrast, at Ngwatle, Kort-Jan's family were initially afraid and covered their eyes, fearing that the fire would bewitch them. After the first two of four dances, Charlize complained of being ignored by the group, huddled as they were around their own fire on that bitterly cold night, many with their eyes closed, singing, their backs to her. Then the !Xoo became interested, and they finally incorporated Charlize's performance into their own fire and trance dance. The two fires and performances initially ran parallel, and then merged as Charlize herself 'became' the fire. The dancing women formed a crescent around Charlize in her performative space. The Bushmen did three dances: an enactment of a trance dance; the enactment of a buck and a jackal, by the men, joined by a small child; and the women's dance. By this stage the women had bridged the space

between their fire and Charlize's fire. A ying-yang relationship fused what had previously been separate, almost antagonistic, but closely adjacent, performative events. No one had ever danced for the Bushmen here, though one old man, no doubt in response to the swirling fire chains, was gesturing wildly and shouting 'karate!' and 'Bruce Lee!'. Vista, one of Kort-Jan's sons, told him he was nuts (cf. Reinhardt 2003; Sætre 2003).

Earlier the community had thought we had asked them to perform a fire dance for us, and they wanted to charge us - groups of men and later women visited our site over two days to inform us of the costs involved. Mary explained that Charlize would perform for them, 'from the heart'. They could watch the dance, or not. We would not pay them to dance - our money had run out. Two days later, when they realised our intention, they danced spontaneously. What had started as an extended negotiation over commodification ended as an organic, intercultural unity. Two days later Charlize again performed the dance, mainly at the request of women who had not seen it. This time she performed in the enclosure of Kort-Jan's abode. The prediction made by Mary that the developing organic fusion of the first performative event would not be repeated was borne out - this time the women and some male spectators watched spellbound - the separation between performers and audience now firmly established.

Our own group had different takes on the process: two students were videoing, Tim's wider frame identifying the incomplete semi-circle forming around Charlize, with himself included on the other side, completing the circle; Marit, close to the fire, described a sensurround feeling of inclusion, of both us and the Bushmen, with the singing and clapping, a woman chanting words inches from Nelia's face, a crouched, face-to-face demonstration of how to make the clicks. Where Tim videoed wide shots, Marit had the frenetic Rouchian character of a *Les maîtres fous*. For three other students it seemed chaotic: Lauren feared that the initial exclusion of Charlize would be disappointing for her, and Vanessa described the strange mixture of the metaphysical/spiritual and performance unfolding, fearing a general charismatic meltdown of sanity. Later, however, she realised that perhaps 'healing could be effected through the unification of the group in dance, through the catharsis of self-expression' (McLennan-Dodd 2003b). For a few moments, the two cultures united as a group. Mary was the one who first identified the nature of the existential interaction. Vista was directing the Bushmen, commentating what would be done next, requesting that Charlize

dance again once her paraffin (kerosene) had burned out. The question of payment was never mentioned again.

### *Being there*

How does one respond to accusations of 'bias', lack of objectivity, and so on? I realise that I am now concerned with perception, memory and experience. If this is what people think or feel, then it is real, for them at least, if not for others participating in these relations. How do we understand what we are told, what do we ourselves experience during the encounter? Material veracity or otherwise can be checked, but it is necessary that the perceptions be taken seriously by all concerned as it is in the realm of the discursive that interpretation is in fact constructed. But, given Ngwatle's first encounter with the request, that they assumed that we wanted them to perform for us; and that for us the encounter originated in our desire (an emotion) to perform for them; the resulting explosion of unexpected interpretations clearly had a completely different sense of the encounter because of the unexpected way the experience turned out. In effect, the series of performances, reactions, responses, and discussions, all began with the two divergent encounters, and yet these outcomes showed a qualitative growth from their respective beginnings despite being something quite new. A wholly new semiosis had taken place under our collective noses.

What does this kind of interaction tell us about how we relate to, and interact with, the plethora of trusts, NGOs, committees, safari companies, government departments, local officials, and other bodies all jostling for, and claiming jurisdiction, over people and places, access and interaction? Power relations are at work everywhere. Not everyone benefits equally. The 'subjects' of 'development' are acutely aware of their positions in the chain of relations.

How do we absorb and learn from the experiential dimensions of intercultural interactions? 'Being there' is the prime mode of knowing for us; textualism mainly operates through codes - knowing via theory. The screening of *Kalahari fires* (videoed at Ngwatle in 1995) in July 2002 from the back of the Sani reconnects those depicted with a viewing of their 'labour' as 'actors'. They feel empowered in the process, especially when they recognise people and places. Kort-Jan became very emotional when he recognised his late brother, Petrus. Others expressed great appreciation for the distance we travel every year to visit Ngwatle, which they realised for the first time on seeing the map in *Kalahari fires*. Us watching the audiences watching the video is a greatly emotional experience as the

audiences interact with the images, talk to each other, and recognise themselves.

One Tampere delegate suggested that all this to-and-froing, endless discussion of our papers around campfires, on dusty verges, driving around to meet the clan all over the Northern Cape, Botswana and Namibia thousands of kilometres away from Durban must be time-consuming and an impediment to productivity. Papers may take a long time to prepare, but when they are published I know that they are, for the most part, consensual ethnographies. They are process rather than product, we theorise and write about everything we experience and can remember and/or record. Mary explains to Kort-Jan and Johannes as we drive to the hunting grounds that my Sani is my office, that I work as I drive, type on my laptop, and read and copy-edit when I am a passenger, and conduct seminars with the passengers, asking questions, reading narratives, discussing theory and observations. These kinds of writing, videoing, narrative, also reveal much about ourselves, our own insecurities and intra-group conflicts (cf. Sætre 2003), our own hang-ups and beliefs, to those with whom we work in the Kalahari. We are seen by them to be people like them, rather than just as passers-by, travellers-in-time, or as conducting information-trading/raiding parties. They also learn something about us. Damien was immediately treated with great respect by the <sup>1</sup>Khomani and felt an instant bond, contrasting with his experiences in urban Upington. This from a 20-year-old who, when first venturing onto the fringe of the Kalahari during a family holiday at the age of 14, asked, 'Is there M-Net (pay-TV) there?'

### *At the spiritual*

Dialogical autoethnography, as I shall now refer to our research practice, in the Third and Fourth Worlds at least, needs to examine the relations between both the real and noumenal dimensions. The positions inhabited by the ancestors are all important (cf. Kasoma 1996). Where Christians and Moslems cite their printed texts when calling on the 'truth/s' offered/interpreted by their respective deities, like all oral societies the <sup>1</sup>Khomani simply collapse signifiers into signifieds, and then persuade some of their more analytically inclined colleagues like Lizelle Kleynhans to do the same. Belinda Kruiper gave essence to the notion of '*op die grond*':

... they know every dune, they know every sand grain, they know the wind of death, they know the wind of joy, they know the rain of death and the rain of joy ... And, it's the sand, it's the crystals in the sand, and I think it's the magic of the

Kalahari, because, ever since I've been there from the first day I kept on feeling there's healing powers in the grains. There's just something about the sand, and they're out of the sand. And Tannie Antas said to me one day, '*ek weet, as ek bloei en ek gaan lê op die sand, daai bloed, dan word ek weer een met waar ek vandaan kom*' ['I know, if I bleed, and I go and lie on the sand, then I become again one with where I came from']. That's why, when we bleed we put a plaster on, they immediately cover it with sand, and it will stop the blood ... And Ouma Antas once said to me, every time you cut yourself or you hurt in the desert, you have to mix your blood with the sand, because you are the blood, you are the Kalahari (interview, 2001b).

*They lie, we lie: Getting on with anthropology* (Metcalf 2002) is the title of a book that comes to mind. Nelia said she wasn't always able to tell when she was being strung a line, though the increasingly elaborate yarns about why we should give to begging ≠Khomani were easily transparent. The point, however, is about issues of representation, and what our hosts want (or will permit) to go on the record. I wouldn't call what we do oral history, but we are producing something of a type-scripted record, writing the ≠Khomani and the Ngwatle community into history without eliminating their personalities and names. That's what seems to be confounding to some of our NGO-critics: they demand a balanced, objective, and logically dispassionate description, written up by 'trained anthropologists', from which the machinations of 'trouble-makers', whom we prefer to identify as organic intellectuals (Gramsci 1971), like Belinda, are eliminated. Articulations and disarticulation, methodologies that can capture and represent memory in dialogical and dynamic ways, are at the core of what we are trying to understand. It is in these relations of force, indeterminacies of translation, and ontologies that bypass each other in the wind which we are trying to (discursively) root in the shifting sands of (interacting) experience. For example, at Klein Masetleng Pan, after a day of seeing few animals, Kort-Jan (interview, 2002) told us, 'this is a very sly pan because it knows that people (us) used to live here and a lot of people (tourists) come here. So it doesn't allow the animals to come during the day, they only come at night when it knows the people are asleep'.

When first applying for a grant to pursue our studies of cultural tourism in the Northern Cape, the National Research Foundation's (NRF) panel pointed out that the ≠Khomani were over-researched; a SASI official complained that the Kruipers were being researched to death; why not find another set of subjects? In contrast,

Roger Carter, then manager of the Lodge, told us he would refuse to talk to us on his and the Lodge's relationship with the ≠Khomani if we were 'bunny huggers'. He wanted to test whether we also opaquely had our 'heads in the sand', like so many development workers and agencies. The August 2000 thirty-minute interview stretched into two hours, then five years, of fruitful interaction and discussion. Roger told us about William Ellis, a University of the Western Cape agricultural researcher, who shared our position, who described the Kruipers as 'a text book people' engaged in 'organised begging', and whom development had passed by notwithstanding the R8 million which the government and donors had sunk into the area since early 1999. Belinda commented that little of the NGO-donor funding trickled down to the community. The main beneficiaries seem to be bureaucrats, NGOs, local committees, and the individuals associated with them. This, we agreed, is the bureaucratisation of development. The *tradisionele mense* ('traditional people'), certainly, have little to show for this investment - not even the roof of the roadside lean-to. If being researched to death was indeed occurring, perhaps a different set of questions was indicated? What drew this community in the first instance to a kind of poor-on-purpose existence? Why do they want to cling onto their 'traditions', now refracted through and responding to the Western World's construction of a pure, primitive people, who do not 'feel' the cold? Why, unlike the far greater number of ≠Khomani who are pastoralists and settled in small towns, does this small Kruiper clan persist in wanting a traditional existence? Apart from the more obvious explanations involving internal clan power relations (cf. White 1995), educational deprivation, and apartheid, something else appears to us to be at work, as indicated in the comments reproduced above from Belinda and Lizelle. 'The freedom to be', suggests Belinda, written on a plaque in her Blinkwater grass kitchen. 'They don't like to work when the wind blows. In the apartheid years they had to work for farmers, for the Gemsbok Park, and their freedom turned them into where they are today; they want to just not do anything for anybody but themselves. It's choices' (Belinda Kruiper, interview, 2002).

For our sources, the idiosyncratic choice made by the Kruipers seems to offer a connection in recovering an existential, essentialist, understanding of life and freedom. Our photo-elicitations identified such narrative streaks (cf. Mlauzi 2002). The condition chosen by the Kruipers cannot simply be measured in terms of freedom from poverty, from the presence/lack of material possessions (cf. Jeffries 2002), from spiritual dependency on the environment. '*Op die grond*', a

recurring epithet amongst our sources, is another take on the concept of freedom. Belinda contrasts the relative freedoms of the Kalahari and Durban: You could sleep in the Molopo Hotel and you could have the wines and dines, but you can have that every day. Every day! You can never have the sand and the risk of a scorpion and the risk of a snake, and just relax, and sleep and wake up, and realise that you're actually not dirty, you actually don't stink. It depends on where you are and what part of the country. In Durban I find I'm stinking all the time. And this morning Prof.'s wife spoke about the coast and the muck and then I realised that's why Glynis [Belinda's sister-in-law] and everybody's so cleansing here. **[iv]** Now I know it's necessary, but being so cooped up I suddenly just wanna be in the Kalahari because there's not such a big ... about washing your clothes all the time, because it's dust. It's pure sand. It's such a privilege to be there, because it's just crystals. It's just iron oxide and crystals, so who could be dirty? If you think in terms of the Kalahari dunes being a bath full of iron oxide and crystals, and it's rejuvenating for your body, and the stars as your blessings and the sun and the wind, because even if the sand blows in your eyes, it's just healing your skin as you go along, then research students can think about coming there differently, and see it as an adventure and just to be vulnerable. And trust Prof. Tomaselli, he knows (Belinda Kruiper, interview, 2001b).

As I type this first draft in the very cold and dark Molopo Lodge Lounge - I now mention that I am recovering from a nasty viral infection, which is why I did not visit the Kruipers with my students today - I am distracted by a large screen TV with a Discovery Channel documentary on Africa on my right, rock 'n roll music emanating from the pub behind me, children and their parents wondering through and playing snooker at the bar. Later, Tina, who asked for a lift home with her water canisters, filled up by a road worker from his truck, says that because she hasn't got anything to give me for the lift - she can sing to me. Tina and Toppies serenade us from the backseat as impala dart across the road in the sunset. Silikat and Jon-Jon hang onto the roof racks, urgently yelling directions that I already know. These are the ordinary people, the folks who feel ignored by the official organisations. The Discovery documentary is one about environmental romance, great rivers and spectacular sunsets, not about poverty, communal alcoholism, dispossession, and spiritual alienation. It's from the white, English-speaking Western presenter's perspective. When the three remaining students arrived from Upington, the first thing they commented on was the TV-set - they thought they were coming to the wilderness. That's next week, in Botswana, I tell

them.

'Groot' Koos Lamprecht, the then huge and imposing manager of the Molopo Lodge, tells me that business is good and that we are able to book a room at short notice for our injured and ill members. Koos' brother, who owns the Bimbo's fast food chain (my students' late night favourite), bought the Lodge in 2001. Belinda says she also heads straight for Bimbo's in Upington - it's clean, good and affordable. The Lodge's staff assure me that the fountains of water bursting through the sand in the campsite near our tents, despite the occasional wafts of soak pit smell, is just the swimming pool back wash, not raw sewerage. I just hope the stream bypasses our tent city - six in all. In the distance I see my Sani weaving over the countryside in the students' search for informants and those to whom we need to return photographic representations of themselves exposed on our previous trips. Damien, Sherieen and Linje, comment on how enthusiastically they are received by the ≠Khomani. On his arrival at Witdraai, Damien phoned and told me that the people they spoke to think of me as some kind of God. So when I get there I make myself scarce, later explaining that I needed time to get over my infection. They tell me they also have been ill. We agree implicitly - we are all human, imperfect. They also need to realise that we are a team, that I am merely a facilitator, not a saviour. Nelia, thanks to her Afrikaans fluency and empathetic personality, is the female deity - but she explains that none of us will give lifts to intoxicated individuals. They agree and apologise for harassing us the previous night - and then nag us again the next day.

Nelia is given an ankle massage by Elsie, who diagnoses a crack in the bone. Formerly a physiotherapist, Nelia later muses on the contradictions: illiterate Elsie had been totally drunk the previous night; the next morning she was demonstrating a sophisticated informally learned skill, repeating exactly what Nelia's doctor told her, expertise which Nelia joked had taken her nearly four years to master! I wonder why they need the alcohol. Belinda suggests that the 'true' ≠Khomani artists are the ones who tend to be drunk and possibly use their inebriation to retaliate against the alienation caused by disempowerment by disrupting CPA-meetings. I also wonder why spousal abuse is so rife. I wonder why this group is, in the words of Carter (2000), committing 'communal suicide' in their very moment of freedom. I think about Toppies' analysis of the situation illustrated in his buried sketch - is he perhaps an organic intellectual of the Gramscian kind, but one who feels let down by the technical intellectuals who



wield the real influence - compounded by the disempowerment he feels because of his own illiteracy? The politics is sometimes as complicated as it was in Gramsci's Italy of the 1920s (cf. Davidson 1977), but the resolutions are too often drowned by waves of alcohol, multiple cycles of dependency, and existential alienation. How does any development project respond to these kinds of difficulties? I explain that we can help to communicate Toppies' compelling illustrated analysis to the powers that be, but that he should not expect any miracles.

### *Chains of relations, relations of chains*

We know about the Enron, World.Com, and Xerox cowboys arrogantly riding off into the sunset with their ill-gotten fortunes, imperilling national and global economies, with Bush wailing on about the need for good corporate governance. Here in the bitingly cold desert sunset we wonder at the seemingly obscure chain of relations, and relation of nations, NGOs and beneficiaries, which seem to encircle the San, and possibly First Peoples everywhere. Toppies and his group say they have no idea if anyone pays the permissions requested, and if so, where the money is invested. Linje wonders at the incongruity of it all. Just who is dependent upon whom? This reminds me of the Botswana safari company's injunction that we get permission from the area's Trust to visit the Ngwatle community that invites us as 'friends'. Why do we need third party permission to visit them? Belinda does not need permission from the Durban municipality to visit us. But then, the city is not concessioned out to business, NGOs or anyone else, though Westville did once have a MacDonald's. The nearest Bimbo's is on Westville's border with Durban. Is this the ultimate commodification? **[v]** The ambivalence/indeterminacy/ambiguity of the researcher in the postmodern world, itself fractured into multiple realities, evades analysis, and eschews logic other than that of Thatcherist cost recovery by one means or another. What, then, does the safari company expect our research to look like? During apartheid the masses would chant: 'We shall break free of our chains'. Agitprop actors were often arrested for having chains amongst their props. What symbolic form do the post-apartheid, postmodern research, post-Thatcherist chains take?

Academics work under similar cycles of exploitation where everyone - largely other than us - make a mint from our labour, alienating us from our work (for example, multinational publishing industries being multiply subsidised by taxpayers in the so-called free market where the writers and their employers are

relieved from ownership of their own published work). We also thus locate ourselves in this nexus of epistemological, ideological and theoretical confusion in which we regularly sign away our intellectual property. One of the advantages of visiting remote areas is to get as stark as possible a view of the complexly interreticulated matrices of often-bizarre contradictions and messy empirical clutter. We academics can at least obtain a degree of psychic income by theorising about our chains of exploitation – this is less easy for the uneducated to understand or accept. Hence their constant complaints about feeling used and abused; and arguments over who owns information gleaned from interviews and surveys. Our ≠Khomani subjects do not realise that we are all used and abused: some of us realise this, most don't. Certain kinds of theft are legal; other kinds are illegal. Some of us who have a modicum of class power can live with this regime and engage it; the *Lumpenproletariat* complain about theft and get *dopped* ('drunk'), doped and dumped. Is the burden of realisation freedom, or alienation? Periphery-core relations take on a whole new meaning – inversion, reversal – under such conditions. Commodification processes in the periphery are seemingly in advance of developments at the core. I wonder about the Aboriginals now on the big-screen TV – the screen cuts to a large Australian city, and I lose interest. Now the set has been switched to *Reality TV*, a programme on mysteries and the paranormal – perhaps we have overly restricted ourselves to the 'normal' – the development paradigms of modernity don't understand the noumenal, the para-normal, and essentialistic spiritualistic realms of making sense. Why are there no less than seven churches in Loubos, which numbers but a few hundred people, a local white missionary from Port Elizabeth asks me. He answers his own question: it's a matter of class. Why have we forgotten class analysis in the postmodern world? Our aimless travels in the desert do sometimes come up with answers, if not the development solutions.

I worked through the first draft of this paper with Belinda in their prefabricated hut at Blinkwater, while Vetkat and Juri played their guitar outside in the sun, the students basking on the ground. Belinda offered instant comments as we scrolled down the screen. My wife and colleague, Ruth Teer-Tomaselli, called to say she was leaving for Barcelona, the International Association of Media and Communication Research Conference, where she is also discussing development communication. She is presenting it in the political economy section. There is certainly a lesson in this choice. Politics. Economics. Why do so little power, investment and benefit trickle down to the folks on the ground? This is a question

that has sorely exercised the minds of thousands of development studies scholars.

### *Returning home*

We return to South Africa via the Park. Astonishingly, a tourist found Charlize's passport. A note was enclosed complaining about the mess, and the noise we had allegedly made at the campsite at which it was found. We think she is writing about others - we don't know which day it was found. Back at the entrance to the Park we are told to check in at the border post. We immediately realise that we had been accepted into Botswana without legally departing from South Africa. The affable South African policeman says he will have to charge us with the offence. Thus are we all administratively made into criminals. The San who used to roam all three adjacent countries are now restricted to the respective countries of their residence only. The policeman relents and lets us go - as tourists we still have some travel rights, even if we do break the law. The sand may have an existential relationship for traditional Bushmen. But the sand/San have no rights to the internationally shifting dunes from which they take their being. They are confined within borders, restricted by border posts and managed by a variety of structures that seem largely remote from their ways of making sense. They may be *'op die grond'* but being on the ground is not necessarily the same as being part of it. As Ouma !Una told us on being asked about what the appellation 'San' meant to her: 'I am of the earth. This earth is the san[d]. <sup>1</sup>Khomani. <sup>1</sup>Khomani. From the san[d]'. 'San' has no meaning except in politics. Sand means everything.

### NOTES

[i] Anna Swart was responding to a question regarding her preferred use of naming. She said that she understood 'sand' but not 'San'.

[ii] Pretorius, who was studying business part-time, observed: 'When we arrived, I felt like some sort of demi-God from the Western world (*The Gods must be crazy*). I expected the Bushmen to be humbled by our civilized culture wanting to know their opinions. They wanted to know what they would receive in return and were quite argumentative about allowing us to ask them their viewpoints - although this attitude might also have been due to the fact that they had consumed vast quantities of alcohol'.

[iii] Work on reconstructing the road began in early 2005.

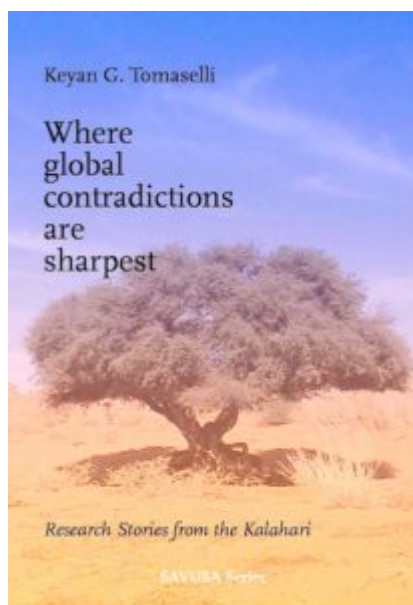
[iv] In response to Belinda's view about being dirty in humid Durban as opposed to not being dirty in the Kalahari, Pretorius observed wryly: 'At least in Durban one doesn't have to be in a constant state of non-sobriety just to cope with the

elements that she claims cleanse her. I think their spiritual connection to the sand/the elements might also be due to the constant innate use of marijuana as it is purported to invoke or inhabit one's spiritual side and I've heard many users of the drug claim that they feel more spiritual when they're under the influence of marijuana'.

[v] No, says Marit, as she checks her hospital bill on the way back. The bill itemises each and every item, even those costing less than \$0.10, and she wonders at the cost of the bookkeeping labour imposed on nurses who are required to spend inordinate amounts of time on trivial cost determinations when they should be looking after patients.

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## Where Global Contradictions Are Sharpest ~ Psychospiritual Ecoscience: The Ju/'hoansi And Cultural Tourism



The relation between knowledge and the visual, on the one hand, and knowledge about peoples on the other, is a prime concern in visual anthropology. The impact of the visual on the everyday life of the Ju/'hoansi is my concern here. The results of a field trip in July 1996 to Otjozondjupa (previously known as Bushmanland) in [i]Namibia, are discussed in terms of the question, 'How do subjects make sense of the anthropological?' Our 'subject community' was the Ju/'hoansi of Nyae Nyae. The 'texts' we interrogated via Ju/'hoansi popular memory were those made of them by documentary filmmaker John Marshall, South

African feature film director Jamie Uys, and a documentary made for the Discovery Channel.

### *'Science' versus 'priest-craft'*

The Ju/'hoansi and broader San populations, among many instances of Third and Fourth World peoples, have been argued to be quintessentially the Other to the historical Same of Europe (Mudimbe 1988). This relationship was predicated upon the differences assumed to define Europeans (the Same) in contradistinction to Africans (the Other). The encounter between Europe and Africa has spanned five centuries, and progressed through missionary contact, colonisation, interactions with anthropologists, archaeologists and ethnographic filmmakers, through to the economics of development in the post-colonial era. When the victorious 'scientific' order of knowledge was faced with cultures predicated on other kinds of world-views, it responded through two mutually exclusive avenues:

- the world view and behaviour of the Other was treated as 'priest-craft' [ii] and consequently something to be vanquished. The early history of contact between San and white (and black) settlers whom they encountered, for example, is dominated by extermination. Conversely,
- science tried to 'conserve' the Other in museums, in film, photographs and video, in body through mummification and even in the field itself. Rob Gordon (1985) calls this 'death by conservation'.

However, a third avenue characterized by postmodernity, has collapsed the modernist distinctions between science and priest-craft. The respective narrators of *Dancing at the future* (Stander 1996) and *The art of tracking* (Discovery Channel 1996) have, as I will argue in the next chapter, located ethnography at the intersection of these previously opposed discourses. Ethnography is then commodified via the language of cultural tourism, thinly dressed up in the semantics of 'conservation' and 'development'. This particular language of conservation is embedded in the mystique of 'priest-craft' and indigenous knowledge, and is evoked for 'scientific' and development purposes.

Claims made in the late 1990s, by researchers on the validity of 'ancient indigenous knowledge' in relation to 'science', however, blur the previous separation of the Western Same and the anthropological Other. The new ethnospiritual/ecoscience integrates the mystical, the empirical and the theoretical. These intersect within a meta-discourse of a global fraction of capital, that of eco-tourism. 'Man' - that is to say, some 'men' - e.g. the 'Bushmen' - are ontologically rejoined with 'nature', which has now become a 'scientific' pursuit in the interests of cultural tourism.

### *Anthro-tourism and human conservation*

When science draws on the paradigm of 'conservation' it tends to view indigenous cultures as autonomous objects of study and manipulation. Indeed, this 'scientific' value for the 'scholarly research' of creating reserves for Bushmen is a recurring call (Gordon 1992: 60, 64, 148). As *Dancing at the future* and *The art of tracking* suggest, rehabilitation through eco-tourism satisfies '... the practical demands of Western science' (*Dancing* 1996). N.A.A Davis (1954: 53), reports, for example, that the 1950s policy of the South West African Administration (SWAA)[iii] was to preserve 'the genuinely primitive Bushmen' and 'make them useful and contented people' (Davis 1954: 57). The SWAA-ethnologist KFR Budack classified the 'Bushmen' as quintessential hunter-gatherers, knowing no other economy. Assumptions which derive from this hold is that Bushmen: a) are incapable of future planning; b) lack objectivity with regard to the natural world; c) are 'conditioned' to killing animals and cannot therefore raise them; and d) have no experience or knowledge of farming (quoted in Volkman 1985). These are recurring motifs in the films discussed in this book. As Gordon (1992: 216) states: ... science has a vested interest in the Bushmen, for, as Trefor Jenkins said, from the vantage point of science, the Bushmen are 'southern Africa's model people' (Jenkins 1979: 280). Whereas filmmakers and journalists were the Bushmen image makers par excellence, it was scientific research that lent credibility to their enterprise.

Laurence Marshall, leader of the Harvard-Peabody Bushman Expeditions of the 1950s, commented that the Bushmen fill this scientific role because they were: ... a happy race, free from strains and stresses of civilization. Crime is unknown, and they are as honest as the day and would rather avoid than look for trouble. Even the lions seem to leave them alone. They never molest lions and the lions seem to return the compliment (Davis 1954: 57).

It is not clear which group of San Marshall is referring to here, as Gordon's (1992) study shows that the San have historically been part and parcel of environmental degradation, banditry and resistance, trade and travel. The 'enchantment of misunderstanding' derives from fascination with the exotic and the 'laws' of development (Gordon 1992: 216).

Where the early objective was to wean the 'Bushmen' from their 'nomadic habits' (Davis 1954), a variant of 'conservation' was the earlier SWAA-idea to establish a nature reserve in which 'Bushmen' would be encouraged to live as Neolithic relics

to prevent the 'biological crime' of their extinction (Reitz 1941, quoted in Volkman 1986; Gordon 1985). The 'Bushmen also provide a rare and vanishing opportunity to study people in the primordial social stage which our ancestors passed through ages ago', stated Edward S. Ross (1976: 23) of the California Academy of Sciences. Ross sees the return to 'nature', hunting and foraging, as conferring some kind of eco-human rehabilitation:

Those bushmen who still live as hunter-gatherers may well be termed 'the Legitimate People' for they have the prime legitimacy - ecological legitimacy. If left free of outside influences, they can live indefinitely on the annual productivity of an environment without damaging or destroying its capital assets ... (Ross 1976: 23).

The discourses intercepted by *The Gods must be crazy* (1980) not surprisingly, therefore, also interpellated the San as the primordial object of the tourists' gaze (Gordon 1992: 12). This gaze assumed the San as a cultural isolate, and living in ecological harmony. Philanthropist John Perrott (1992: 59) uncritically quotes adventurer and 'anthropologist' Jack Wheeler, who identifies the 'Bushmen' as a 'priceless treasure' in the 'living Paleolithic' (1992: 64). This enduring naturist discourse of 'genuine Bushmen' (Davis 1954), 'extinction' and 'racial mysteries' (Marshall and Marshall 1956: 11) underpins an eco-spiritual notion of the 'loss' of a timeless original culture before the Fall (in Eden).

The 1988 expedition to Botswana, which Perrott (1992: v) recounts, forms part of his funding appeal to assist organisations working for the survival of the San and their culture. The symbiotic relationship between the 'Bushmen' and wild animals[iv] is the discursive mechanism he invokes to petition Westerners who often seem more concerned with animals than people in Africa: '... if the animals could be protected, why not a few people who were still living nomadically?' (Perrott 1992: 164).

Perrott's description of Bushmen as 'wild' or 'tame' calls into question the Western Same's perception of the Other, with which this chapter was introduced. Calling on an early form of anthropological discourse, Perrott (1992: 169) observes that 'it would be a case of permitting a few wild Bushmen back into the few natural enclaves called parks - land where they can rejoin their animals'. He is, however, suspicious of this kind of anthro-tourism where the Ju/'hoansi 'would have been required to wear skins and pretend to be wild, what John Marshall calls "The Plastic Stone Age"' (Perrott 1992: 180).[v]

'Preservation' of San culture in the guise of a few remaining 'wild' hunter-gatherer Bushmen is Perrott's partial answer to the problem of vanquishment. But conservation also contains the seeds of vanquishment in the form of the touristic encounter: 'You can't bring throngs of people out here to gawk at them up close. Tourism would soon destroy what the tourists come to see'. This would be the final irony for, as Ross (1976: 23) avers, 'Man becomes less and less a bushman'; he simultaneously becomes 'less and less human'.

Early anthropology was popularly understood as the science of disappearing societies. This is evidenced by Perrott in his fear of a tourist overload, and by Ross (1976: 25) in his photographs of 'sadly-aculturated groups dependent on Bantu and European farmers'. This integrated economy, in which ex-primitives sometimes act in the contemporary world as real primitives (MacCannell 1990) while also participating in development projects and broader forms of modern and postmodern exchange, contributes of course to this disappearance. Perrott (1992: 180) is clear on the problem, which is why he makes a distinction between those 'tame Bushmen' who had made the transition into a mixed economy and those 'wild Bushmen' he claims have not. But he fails to realise that anthropology, too, is one of the catalysts in this destruction: 'At the very instance they [our subjects] become known to us as they are doomed' (Bastian, quoted in Fabian 1985: 10). This is the paradox facing indigenous societies, and those anthropologists, celebrities and environmentalists working with them to protect their natural resources. For example, one of the results of the Kayapo cooperation with environmentalist pressure groups is that the

... ensuing ideological consumption of 'nature', in which both the Kayapo and their environment may be regarded as being held 'hostages' by political decision makers at different levels, seems to pertinently raise a question regarding the compatibility between a Kayapo and Western conceptualisation of nature and the environment (Crawford 1995: 8).

The Body Shop's return to the Kayapo, for access to their indigenous knowledge of 'natural' health products, admits that priest-craft and science can successfully co-exist. But this occurs through a paradox: the Kayapo use video cameras to document - and perhaps reinvent - their own authenticity and alien incursions on their land and culture. They then deploy this authenticity to appeal internationally for justice. The question that remains to be answered is: have they found ways of being simultaneously both cultural isolates *and* world citizens?



Whereas in the age of modernity when Fourth World societies offered remote 'destinations' for academic endeavour, now in the postmodern age, they are the mass-mediated objects of consumption. Ontological differences and discrepancies of popular memories of the 'present' in relation to the 'past', offer new forms of visual exploitation. The Ju/'hoansi are both 'there' (in the desert) and 'here' (on TV *in* our living rooms). Filmmakers and TV-hosts, for example, sometimes try to *become* 'the other' by dressing both 'them' (the Bushmen) and themselves in skins and other 'traditional' garb (Anita in *Uit en tuis*; Alby Mangels in *Adventure bound*). This collapsing of both 'space' and 'time', 'us' and 'them', and 'far' and 'near' in the image and through tourist-bushman encounters, is the essence of 'cultural' tourism. Very little sustainable development accrues to the subjects of these representations because they are held in a kind of ecological suspension, on the margins of the international economic sectors exploiting them. Cultural or eco-tourism is basically the commodification by capital of the romance of anthropology. This kind of gaze is part of a broader global process in which the ethnographic has been appropriated into the public sphere. Commodification of 'the ethnographic' takes place within the context of a 'mobilized gaze' that is part and parcel of transnational media flows (Friedberg 1995).

### *Be-texting and be-coming*

Anthropology and film exhibit paradoxical representational processes in that both require presence and absence to produce meaning. The two-stage anthropological methodology involves first, 'interpellation into' the Other ('becoming'); and then enddistancing from this assumed subjectivity 'from' the Other through re-interpellation back into the Historical Same in producing the film or study. This relationship between 'becoming' and 'othering' involves manipulating the distance between 'them' and 'us' (Crawford 1992: 68-9). As noted, TV-presenters sometimes also assume (and revitalise) this 'becoming' role, thus conferring a spurious eco-anthropological legitimacy on the encounter. TV-presentation, however, has nothing to do with ethnography, which is the translation of the native's world of meanings into the anthropologists' terminology.

'Becoming' is itself a metaphor for participation which can never be complete. Neither is it a natural consequence of presence or insertion in the 'other culture' (Crawford 1992). The TV-image of Mangels, therefore, is merely visual - it has no methodological significance whatsoever. Mangels uses the travelogue technique of 'arriving' and being co-present as the basis of presumed authority to speak for

the other.

Anthropologists, while not absorbed into the Other, cannot be the same after the encounter (Hastrup 1986: 9-10). Only tourists remain the same - because while they have 'seen' everything, they have understood nothing - or very little. Mangels in a loincloth foolishly stalking elephants with a 'Bushman' hunter armed with only a bow is a stark and irresponsible confirmation of this. This form of cultural nomadism feeds a need in the West, which requires reassurance that it has not destroyed all vestiges of ecological legitimacy in its Cartesian-driven escape from primordialism.

Confirmation that some First Peoples have survived intact is somehow seen to hold a key to the West's own redemption. If there are still worlds to be explored - if only from our own living rooms - audiences can still be moved to awe. None of this, however, has much to do with anthropology, and it furthermore completely ignores the fact that, in our case, the San, have themselves played an active role in ecological devastation (Gordon 1992: 39). Projecting one's fantasies onto the people being filmed on the one hand - and learning from them on the other - is the difference, argues Marshall (1993), between *The hunters* (Marshall 1958) and *N!ai: Story of a !Kung woman* (1978).

### *Textualising the 'past'*

The 'naturalistic' mystique of First Peoples is both a resource and a curse. It is a resource because it provides opportunities for the 'Bushmen' to exchange the stereotypical image of themselves and their artefacts for cash income. But it is a curse in that the 'Bushmen' are frequently manipulated by discursive forces, often beyond their control and comprehension, to exhibit tourist-orientated behaviour, and to feed now largely academically discredited but popularly legitimate anthropological paradigms of a stone-age people frozen in time.

In the face of this, the Ju/'hoansi have partly absorbed their Othered exclusion by turning it into a resource. In a world of travelling images in which anthropology no longer has sole ethnographic authority, cultural tourism is a tactic some Ju/'hoansi and ≠Khomani have mobilized to attract resources to their villages. One of the symbolic commodities that can be sold easily is the image of 'poverty'. Historically having little material culture to exchange, the San became dependent upon transacting their authenticity. The mechanism of exchange is conducted through interviews and photographs, **[vi]** films and videos with and of the

Ju/'hoansi.

Ironically, inauthenticity is the result of the Discovery Channel's documentary about Ju/'hoansi storytelling, *Hunters of the Kalahari* (Discovery Channel 1995). When we asked villagers at N/aqmtjoha why they had cooperated with the filmmakers in representing themselves as traditionally-clothed pristine stone-age relics, they replied that they wore the skins because they wanted to look 'poor'. (These skins, as with some village dance groups we interviewed, were obtained by the filmmakers from curio shops, the local Dutch Reformed Church, and collectors.) Like all First Peoples, the Ju/'hoansi are increasingly self-conscious about their place in the wider world. If their narratives and images of their front-stages are understood by them to be commodifiable, then *Hunters of the Kalahari* and other films, therefore, offer a long-term ground for exchange - no matter the nature of their representations. Exchange relationships between the Ju/'hoansi and other visitors take some of the following forms:

- the cooperation of entire villages with filmmakers and other visitors, perhaps to indicate their legitimacy to the land in the face of Herero and Kavango incursions into Otjozondjupa;
- interviews become negotiating points for financial transactions; and
- transactions for information and photographs act like magnets to attract yet more visitors to these otherwise remote villages.

The Ju/'hoansi, !Xoo and ≠Khomani appear to make little distinction between anthropologists and linguists, zoologists and entomologists, tourists and friends, filmmakers and photographers, donors and development workers. All these social practices are reduced into the text of the Western Same, the people who have power and money, and whose largesse has made them dependent upon such tourists in terms of cash exchange, development projects and inter-village transport. As N!ai and her husband, /Kunta, indicated to us, they felt powerless to influence the kinds of films made, but were happy to take the income and goods derived. The Ju/'hoansi's textual self-construction is that of villagers who have interpellated themselves as 'past'. To be real 'Bushmen' means to appear 'poor'. N!ai, as in her film entitled *N!ai: Story of a !Kung woman*, continued to insist that life in the 'old days' was better than now: 'Now life is difficult. Now I do not even have money. I am eating here and I do not have maize', she told Kaitira Kandjii. (Commodification brings its own dependencies. Nutritious bush foods may be available from foraging, but pre-packaged store-bought food is obviously more

convenient, and often less nutritious.) Front-stage authenticity is communicated via a strategic friendliness and a transactional hospitality. In stark contrast are some traditional ≠Khomani who have little, if any, understanding of conventional exchange relations.

### *Speaking back to the same*

*N!ai* partly operates as a kind of 'guerrilla' film, in that it features scenes of the making of *The Gods must be crazy* (1980), in which the cast, now living in modernity, make sceptical remarks about the anthropological restorations and traditional clothes with which they have been fitted. **[vii]** The idyllic Eden-like representation of the 'Bushmen' in Uys' film evoked a storm of criticism from North American academics and Marshall himself (see Tomaselli 1992). Yet our research in July 1996 at /Aotcha Pan similarly revealed that *N!ai* and members of her family, also had reservations about some scenes in the film, *N!ai*. This related mainly to the sequence in *N!ai* which depicts drunkenness, decaying social relationships and *N!ai* accusing her daughter of being a prostitute. *N!ai* commented:

The quarrel with my daughter was not part of the film script. John had his cameras on. It was just a normal day and I was just quarrelling. That my son-in-law was jealous and he was accusing my daughter of sleeping with a black man. It was not true that's why I was angry (interviewed by Kandjii, 13 July 1996).

*N!ai*'s husband, /Kunta, added that 'I did not know that people will know about what I was saying to my wife'. When asked if they had discussed this scene with Marshall, /Kunta replied: 'Now that John has shown the film to many people, there is nothing that I can do'. Dependent personalities often feign powerlessness: 'It is up to John to think what he can do', replied *N!ai*. *N!ai* told Kandjii that Marshall 'has been very good' to her: 'When John is here he gives me all kinds of things - clothes, blankets and foodstuffs - John is "*Omuhona uande*" (Herero - 'my boss')'. **[viii]** The reference to 'my boss' in Africa may sometimes be a form of endearment, but it also indicates a client-patron relationship. Social relationships - like authenticity - are resources for dependent people. Researchers like ourselves offer opportunities for the forging of new client-patron relationships. *N!ai* and /Kunta possibly saw a relationship with Kandjii and me as worth cultivating. **[ix]** Further, some societies make unwarranted accusations as a means of controlling or balancing relationships, of controlling sharing and reciprocity, or enforcing equality. By suggesting that some visitors are stingy,

they might be hoping to elicit more generous responses from others.

During one interview at /Aotcha Pan, our interpreter, ≠Oma (Leon) Tsamkxao, sharply questioned the responses from some elderly informants on their lack of vision regarding possibilities for self-directed, sustainable development beyond the small scale transaction involving visitors. As he commented more generally: In terms of capacity building for Bushmen to film themselves, people here do not understand filming or making film about themselves or environment. Filming is something foreign to them. I want tourists and filmmakers who come here to bushmanland for filming to learn teach us how to film ... We also want to learn us to do things for ourselves. This is what I call development (interviewed by Kandjii, 12 July 1996).

≠Oma Tsamkxao's frustration in not having a camera is palpable, as he wants to video some of the real issues regarding the relationship, which results in the petty commodity exchange of small amounts of money for video and photographic images and cultural artefacts. **[x]** With the exception of Marshall's films, these are the myths that draw tourists to 'Bushmanland' in the first place. ≠Oma Tsamkxao knows that images can be both positive and negative *vis-à-vis* the projection of a people. **[xi]**

### *Otherring/becoming and the textual tourist*

My argument has been that the othering/becoming relations with regard to academic researchers, cultural tourists and filmmakers, have been partly orchestrated by the subjects themselves. Certainly, the appropriation of images from visitors, starting with the Polaroid snapshots handed out by Laurence Marshall to his contacts in the early 1950s, must have marked a significant moment in the ensuing exchange. **[xii]** Both parties in the encounter have since commodified ethnographic methods. In 'becoming', some visitors might have been seduced into an imported Western anthropological text constructed by the subjects themselves. This is the discursive resource they have developed in what they see as facilitating exchange relationships of one kind or another.

If the observers are seduced by this mercantile text which is interpreted as 'culture', but which masks something else, then it is they who have become the exploited rather than the exploiter (in academic terms of course). This exploitation occurs in the sense that the power to determine what meanings are exchanged during the encounter, is determined by the subjects. The last laugh is

on the observers as those who do the 'looking' are subverted by their subjects who have reversed the direction of this looking relationship in the act of exchange.

The notion of 'authenticity', the prime discursive resource embedded in the social (stereotypical) text, and strategically appropriated by indigenous people, has been popularised from the 'academic text' of the discipline by filmmakers, scholars and the media in general. The resulting myth of the 'Bushman' will provide fodder for all these constituencies for many years to come. These contradictory interventions and media interpretations will provide the ground for exchange for the Ju/'hoansi for as long as they continue. The new commodity is psychospiritual ecoscience, as negotiated and agreed upon by both parties to the encounter.

## NOTES

[i] ≠Oma Tsamkxao was employed as an interpreter by Sonja Speeter, a German anthropologist whom we joined for the duration of our ten-day-visit to the Otjozondjupa Region. Speeter had negotiated our access to the Ju/'hoansi through the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation and John Marshall. Her thesis topic was: *Family in the field: The polymorphic ethnography of the Marshall family*

[ii] The two kinds of scientific understanding clash with each other by virtue of an internal ideological inconsistency in the Western intellectual heritage: the Western tradition cannot make up its mind as to where the experiencing subject fits into our self-proclaimed intellectual marker of *Science*. Richard Rorty (1980: 328) has pointed out that there is, in Western thought, a very specific kind of dialogue within which valid knowledge-claims can be made, and that this debate draws its agenda from the judgement we today pass on those who, like the Inquisition's Cardinal Bellarmine, sought to refute Galileo's cosmological claims. For our modern culture, we tend to dismiss claims that fail to conform to a specific mode of justification, as the equivalent of Bellarmine's 'priest-craft' (cf. Shepperson and Tomaselli 1992).

[iii] South West Africa was at that time administered by the South African government on a mandate issued by the League of Nations following the First World War.

[iv] Ross (1976: 23) offers a similar analogy with practices of the 'Natural Sciences': 'I happen to need to hunt and gather insect specimens and photographs in untrampled regions'.

[v] As proposed by SWAA, the Ju/'hoansi would: a) be forbidden to keep cattle,

maintain gardens or practice subsistence farming; b) be permitted to hunt with bows, and gather with digging sticks; c) teach children at school how to hunt and gather; d) organise 'hunting bands', supervised by bush rangers, to be experienced by a 'special class' of tourists flown to overnight camp sites. Conservation officers, including eight Ju/'hoansi, would lead 'nature walks' (SWAA Administration 1984, quoted by Volkman 1986). In contrast, European tourists who demanded their removal (Hitchcock 1985) opposed inclusion of San in Botswana game parks.

[vi] Early anthropologists like Franz Boaz, and their expedition photographers, clicked for both ethnography and commerce. Native Americans, as subjects for these photographers, also partly constituted their clientele (Blackman 1980).

[vii] A comment recorded on the out-takes sound track of the film is a girl appealing to a man who has lost interest in 'long ago' stories: 'These things are going to another place like America - it's good to tell the old stories which long ago died so that people can hear them' (Bieseke, comments on transcriptions, 18.00-18.15).

[viii] N!ai had nothing good to say about Jamie Uys, whom she claimed had never paid her for her work on *Gods*. She also complained that G/aq'o, the star of both Uys films and three other feature films, had a house while she did not. (G/aq'o's house at Tjum!kui was built in 1994. He was paid a basic monthly retainer by Mimosa Films until his death in 2003.)

[ix] During the first two visits, N!ai showed little interest. The questions posed on the film, however, obtained her direct attention, on our third visit to /Aotcha Pan.

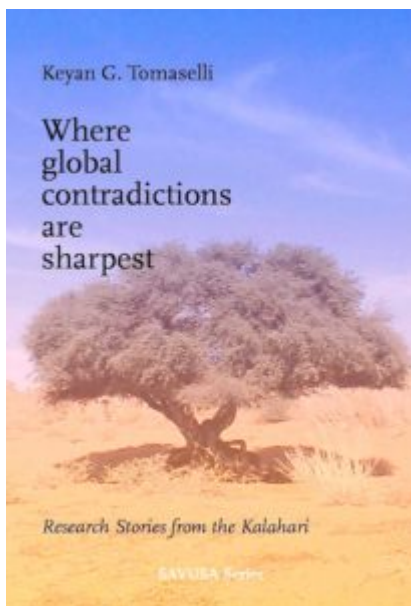
[x] The lodge owner at Tjum!kui who manages a cultural tourism company incorporates permission to take photographs into the price that visitors are charged, which is passed onto the indigenous performers. Americans buy everything; Germans only want traditional items; and the Japanese usually don't buy at all: 'They take photos' (Arno Oosthuizen, interview, July 1996).

[xi] Marshall had, in December 1995, taught ≠Oma Tsamkxao the basics of video production while he was at Documentary Educational Resources (DER) in Watertown, USA. Temple University's Department of Anthropology documented ≠Oma Tsamkxao's visit to the Smithsonian's Human Studies Film Archives and his viewing of out-takes from the various Marshall expeditions on a 16mm editing table, which occurred during this visit.

[xii] The still photographs taken by the Marshalls were never marketed. Some appeared in print in Marshall Thomas (1963) and Ruby (1993).

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# Where Global Contradictions Are Sharpest ~ Textualising The San 'Past': Dancing With Development



The 'exterminating' impact of Uys' *The Gods must be crazy* (1980) on the Ju/'hoansi, is a topic discussed by Robert Gordon (1992: 1). This film's use of tongue-in-cheek documentary codes includes the 'pseudoscientific narrator' humorously relating the central San character's first encounters with the signs of modernity (a coke bottle, tyre tracks in the sand, etc.). This narration draws on the naturist perceptions of the Other, so successfully popularised by early anthropology, and by commentators like Ross (1976), and Davis' informants (1954).[i]

Alby Mangels' commentary in *Adventure bound* (1993) sums up the debilitating Western common sense: 'They do not seem to carry the pressure of the past as we do in the West'. Trapped in time as the Bushmen are, all 'we' (the West) can do is 'dance' (with them) as the encounter straddles 'then' and 'now'. What is ironic in Mangels' commentary is that it unwittingly intercepts a root metaphor for Ju/'hoansi symbolic action. The ritual of dancing offers a way of accessing 'boiling energy' to effect spiritual contact, healing and to address dislocations in the harmony of quotidian life (cf. Katz *et al.* 2001; Katz 1982). Mangels' visualisation of this idea, however, evokes a Western view of the Bushmen as non-rational, given to instinctive impulses rather than intellectual cognition. The result is to exoticise an activity that has serious cultural and spiritual dimensions. I now turn to our negotiation of the multiple texts - popular memory, film, and social - that we encountered in Otjozondjupa.

*Development: Dancing with time*



Otjondjupa is serviced by the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDNFN) and various state agencies (Health, Environment, and through the often erratic provision of food rations). While we were there in July 1996, the average individual calorie intake was 2,500 a day. This dropped to 1,000 in 1997, when government rations were not delivered (P. Wiessner, Personal comment, 5 April 1998). We interviewed villagers at N/aqmtjoha and the /Aotcha Pan on the films about them, and especially on their perception of the Herero, who were pushing northwards into Otjondjupa with their cattle.

Photo-elicitation techniques applied by Jeursen and Morgan, with regard to a 1992-*Spoornet* calendar in which 'Bushmen' are shown to be living in traditional and environmental splendour, however, revealed no agreement that life 'long ago' was better than it is now. The 'old days' were a 'hard existence', the villagers of Kapteinspos told us.

Some informants at /Aotcha Pan explained that their contemporary settled existence was better in quality than the indeterminate time reflected on the calendar.[ii] Some of these informants included the now elderly people who had first met the Marshalls in the early 1950s - 'Kaptein' Kgau//au and !U, amongst others. From his experience of translating the sound tracks at DER in 1994, ≠Oma Tsamkxao observed that he had learned about the history of the Ju/'hoansi from these films: 'I heard about their complaint of how they lived in the old days and how they live now. I can say now that the Bushmen in the old days had no option or opportunity to have an education or lead a better life ... The children can go to school and study'.

The Ju/'hoansi conception of history in terms of "the old days" or "long ago", is described by Lorna Marshall (1976: 53):

Although they look respectfully to the past, they are not history-minded. They make no effort to hold actual past events systematically in mind or teach them to their children - neither events that concern the living people nor those concerning their forebears. They remember what they happen to remember their father and grandfathers telling them.

This observation was corroborated by John Yellen (1984), who found that no contemporary !Kung informants recognised Stone Age tools excavated in the area.[iii] Lorna Marshall (1976: 52) further observed that her informants from the 1950s showed little interest in the outside world. This world, however, has since

become much better known to them.

We explained that by looking so pristinely poor on film the N/aqmtjoha villagers, in fact, came across to Western audiences as living in primitive affluence; a pure condition that such audiences interpreted as idyllic and natural. We explained that Western audiences did not recognise the poverty that they wanted to convey in *Hunters of the Kalahari* (1995). The result was heated debate and a rejection of our argument. The R10,000 paid to the group by the Discovery Channel for their cooperation on *Hunters of the Kalahari*, no doubt contradicted our position. **[iv]**

John Marshall's response to *Hunters of the Kalahari* was as hostile as it was to the *The Gods must be crazy* films (interview, March 1995). Anthropological consultant and authority on Bushmen folk tales Megan Biesele, previous director of the Nyae Nyae Foundation, was berated for her association with the film. Yet, Biesele (1999 - with Hitchcock) had consistently warned the filmmakers of recurring problems: over-sexualising, factual inaccuracies, cultural incongruities, speaking 'for' the Ju/'hoansi, and tending towards a romantic *The Gods must be crazy*-flavour. In Barnard *et al.* (1996), Biesele and her colleagues stated that the only reason she had associated herself with the film was because of a request from the Nyae Nyae Farmers Cooperative (NNFC), which feared gross misrepresentation. Biesele explained:

The experience showed Biesele, as a translator-after-the-fact, a bit of the frustration felt by the often-voiceless indigenous subjects of ethnographic film. Lacking education, finances, and information, these people have little power to influence images made of them. The bottom line of creative control, particularly in film, seems to be *capital*, lacking in most communities (and indeed among consultants, translators, and others) (Biesele and Hitchcock 1999: 148).

In the USA, the actors in the reconstructed colonial villages assume multivocality in the way that they sometimes adopt bygone speech accents and grammar - a front-stage performance. They even temporarily distinguish themselves from visitors by forms of address like, 'in your society and time, but here and now we ...'. While the Ju/'hoansi spoke to us in their own contemporary Ju/'hoan language, those who understood English, Afrikaans and Herero were more than happy to talk to us in these tongues. Though wanting to create an impression of the 'old days', they nevertheless conducted their transactions in the present. The point is that this front-stage reception (which is often misinterpreted by visitors as 'hospitality') may be a strategy of engagement for visitors moving from transient

to more permanent forms of exchange. As ≠Oma remarked: 'People have decided to ask for money or any form of payment because they do not get any benefit from films and books about them'.

*Beating about the bush [text]*

When Kaitira Kandjii and I interviewed Hereros at /Gam, on ownership rights to this waterhole, we were accused of being spies for the Ju/'hoansi at Baraka (the Foundation's training centre and the headquarters of the Nyae Nyae Farmer's Cooperative). This occurred despite the fact that Kandjii had found and was subsequently interviewing members of his own extended clan: 'Tomaselli's (white) skin colour became an issue. He was associated with other white people who were fighting for the rights of Bushmen to have a right to the land. Staying at Baraka became a political issue' (Kandjii 1997).

The Ju/'hoansi at /Gam contradicted the Herero-claim of joint ownership of the waterhole. They were much more accommodating and, indeed, were resisting the Herero take-over by remaining at /Gam. They remained at /Gam regardless of the offer by the NNFC to provide them with facilities and sanctuary within the boundaries of the conservancy further north.

It was the association with the Foundation and popular Ju/'hoansi assent to our visit, that might have made them very careful in muting statements that might have goaded the more powerful Herero. No matter the village or the informant, the stock response to how the Ju/'hoansi identified the Herero, was: 'No, they did not have any rude words for these people'. This held despite the fact that the Herero had so often dispossessed them in the past, and that they had occasionally engaged in warfare with them. The Herero held, and still hold, San groups in labour and economic bondage. They thus concealed the boo words or common sense othering discourses (for example, Herero as 'thorn tree', as one informant eventually described them),**[v]** the sub-texts we were aiming to identify as an indication of historical social relations between the two groups (Kandjii 1997). Far from the Ju/'hoansi being unaware of the 'burden of the past' or the 'pressures of the future', their responses suggested an intimate and dynamic knowledge of historically contested terrains and social relations. By cooperating with tourist companies, they also claim common cause with the government to keep the Herero out of Otozondjupa (Benjamin Xishe in Gordon 1996).

One of the reasons we were able to identify this discordant sub-text was because

Kandjii and myself were less interested in confirming the 1950s-Marshall ethnographies, than in knowing what the Ju/'hoansi wanted to tell us in their own terms in the mid-1990s. Speaking Afrikaans and Herero proved to be a boon, as it was in these languages that the Ju/'hoansi sometimes undermined or inflected differently what they were telling the official interpreter in Ju/'hoansi (and from there to English).

### *Translating interpreters/interpreting translations*

What and where is Otozondjupa? Geographically, this is clear. Politically, it is less clear. Discursively, it is not clear at all. It is this latter aspect - authenticity - that is under contestation (Biesele *et al.* 1996). The notion of a 'conservancy', which gained currency in the mid-1990s, in which 'Bushmen' live in harmony with wildlife, underpins 'a strange alchemy of traditional Bushmen and modern science, with a team of unlikely scientists' (Narrator, *Dancing at the future*, 1996). This alchemy, which rehabilitates psychospiritual ecoscience via cultural tourism, is being pitted against John Marshall's (1996) modernist counter-argument for farming.

Ecological legitimacy is found in various forms and articulations in relation to cultural tourism: for example, in the guises of conservancy, living museums and cultural ecology.

### *Conservancy*[vi]

The idea of a 'conservancy' evokes in the minds of its detractors, the earlier image of a nature park. This zoological portrait works at a number of levels: first, is the expeditionary discourse of early films like *The Denver Africa expedition* (1926), a safari of observers through a kind of primeval human zoo-land (Gordon 1997b). Laura Bolton's description of her most treasured and poignant memory with the Bushmen is set in this indeterminate place and time. Tuning into the nightly short-wave music broadcast from Leopoldville occasioned the moment:

Forms moved from the darkness into the light of our campfire against the backdrop of the dark thorn trees. It was the Bushmen moving softly toward me out of the night, silently, stealthily, with movements usually associated with one animal stalking another. My body grew tense, in anticipation, but I soon realised that what had drawn them from the darkness was the radio several feet distant from me. With a shuffling, soundless dance step they moved circling past me, completely absorbed.

I wondered what they were feeling listening to the music, and as if in answer to my question they began to dance. Perhaps they danced in ancient ritual; perhaps they improvised as they went along. I only know that for me in that stupendous moment they danced to this symphony exactly as it should be danced to, with a profound primeval reverence. It was Beethoven's Ninth, the setting of Schiller's 'Ode to Joy', in which he proclaimed the brotherhood of men everywhere (Bolton 1969: 178-9).

'Dance' is a recurring reference in observations of the Bushmen, and as is explained below, buffers the utterer from any real material commitment in their encounters with the Other. It was this boundary, which melted when Charlize performed the fire dance at Ngwatle in July 2003 (Chapter 4).

### *Living museums*

Theme parks reconstruct earlier pre-modern conditions and lifestyles. These are designed mainly for the tourist's gaze as through the restoration of villages found in living towns like Colonial Williamsburg in the USA. 'Living museums' integrate surviving or relocated dwellings and buildings, with re-enacted forms of petty commodity production, enacted slave-master vignettes, and other social and cultural activities. The question here is whether the 'citizens' of these restored parks and towns are forcibly or voluntarily located; and whether they are simply employees entertaining and educating spectators via interpretations of bygone scenarios. How they relate to these roles of domination and subordination for paying audiences, especially those who may make few distinctions between historical reconstruction and Disneyfied entertainment, is a crucial point. At Klein Dobe, for example, a village where the Ju/'hoansi have a partnership with Arno Oosthuizen, owner of Tshumkwe Lodge. He brings tourists to a front-stage next to the village. The village remains a private and concealed back-stage. The front-stage is a clearing with three unoccupied *skerms* on view. The villagers then dance, sing and perform in the area demarcated for visitor use. Our interviews with some of the performers elicited the response that their public enactments were simply a way of making money. This was confirmed by 'Kaptein' Kgau//au of Kapteinspos. Tourist activities (also at Kapteinspos) included the possibility of hunting and gathering with villagers. The lodge owner and some Ju/'hoansi were more romantic - they saw the recuperation of the youngsters belonging to nearly lost traditions, now being rekindled by the elders through the profit motive, as one of the results of this commercial relationship.

The Klein Dobe people clearly distinguished between 'front-stage' acting in traditional garb for tourists, and 'back-stage' life for themselves where they re clothed in Western dress. Trance dancing mainly occurred back-stage across the track beyond the gaze of tourists, for example. These performers are well aware that they are 'acting', and were quite clear on how to negotiate levels of tourist access between front- and back-stages. They thus protected their affirmations of belief in their repertoire of rituals via this performative spatial distinction. The importance of this kind of agency is that trance dances are amongst the mechanisms available to San peoples for coping with the vortex of change (Gordon 1992: 212; Katz 1982; Lewis-Williams 1981; Guenther 1976).

A key question is whether or not the employers of theme citizens and cultural tourism see their business intervention as some form of 'ethno-survival' for a pre-historical remnant on the brink of 'extinction'. If employers or agents make no distinctions between front- and back-stage, then such re-enactments are necessarily advertised and sold in a naturalising way. As has occurred elsewhere, the vitiation of public rituals into paid tourist attractions evacuates people of the very meanings and social practices by which they organise their lives (Greenwood 1978).

The nature of the contractual relationships between Ju/'hoansi cultural troupes and entrepreneurs like Oosthuizen and Stander who have the wherewithal (telephones, faxes, four wheel drive vehicles, financial acumen, and capital) to facilitate cultural tourism, needs further research. The management of the NNFC has attempted to promote tourism, but conflicts have occurred between NNFC and some of the participating communities on the allocation of income. These appear to hinge on the question of decentralisation of authority to ensure that benefits also flow to the participating villages, households, and individuals (Hitchcock n.d.; Biesele and Hitchcock 1999). The perceived inequitable distribution of proceeds elicited strongly argued positions by the Kapteinpos and Klein Dobe villagers on their right to make their own contracts with whomever they wished - while recognising that the Cooperative might have some as yet indeterminate role to play in managing the process more equitably.

### *Cultural ecology*

The more difficult question of cultural ecology is raised by Crawford (1993) - the problem of the Western gaze at 'nature' as a form of consumption. The concept of nature in modernity, which helped define non-Western cultures as 'primitive' and

'traditional' in the first place, secures short-term advantages for Western consumers rather than the long-term survival of humanity in general. The relationship between the Kayapo and the Body Shop may be one particular globalised case; the relations between the lodge owner and the Klein Dobe community, however, occur mainly at the micro-level.

What is required is a structural multi-sectoral development plan for Otozondjupa as a whole. The Living in a Finite Environment Project (LIFE), a USAID and Government of Namibia initiative, is working on capacity building and the possibilities of tourism. However, the assumptions that underlie this sector are often at variance with local beliefs. *Dancing at the future* (1996), for example, outlines the benefit of a narrow-based conservancy in which the Ju/'hoansi and large carnivores are argued to share a common destiny. This film reveals its (in)authenticity by going back-stage (see Gordon 1997a) to uncover knowledge 'that we in Western science don't even know about' (Stander, *Dancing*). The hidden dimension of knowledge is seen in terms of its benefit to modern science, and not necessarily in the reverse.

Another contradiction is that the Ju/'hoansi's popular marketing resources are films and TV-programmes which are an anathema to critical anthropologists, but not necessarily to those depicted, as I have argued with regard to *Hunters of the Kalahari*. As G/aq'o, the hero of the two *Gods*-films told us in exasperation, they were just stories (fictions). Why would one say that Western audiences think that the situations in which the Bushmen are narratively located are real? Why would Americans think the films are pro-apartheid? *Gods* and other films like them, presumably, have a different historical relation to the societies they depict when compared to films like *The sound of music* and *The Salzburg connection*, which promote the city of Salzburg as one of Europe's premier tourist destinations.

Yes, some films might kill (Gordon 1992: 1), but more likely, they rearticulate 'culture', 'identity', and 'ideology' as economic resources in relation to travelling discourses. However, in a postmodern world where consumption is the driving force, very few people or communities are able to escape the effects of mediatisation. Survival now depends on producing symbolic goods which feed the frenzy of cultural and tourist consumption, whether of objects, artefacts, images, performances, or tourism.

*'Seeing is believing'*

The media have brought previously remote Fourth World-societies into the global public gaze. But the images circulated tend to be the mythical constructions rather than the self-perceptions of those imaged. Cultures have been turned into commodities even if the subjects of these ways of life do not themselves feel commoditised or integrated into the global relations of image production. As such, one of the recuperations has been the 'scientific gaze', now revalidated in a world which places high credibility on the act of 'seeing', now also in the context of the recuperation of 'indigenous knowledge'. 'Seeing [and hearing] is believing', especially when offered in the form of documentary, one of the forms mobilized by the *Gods*-films. For example, the narrator's mystical animist identification in *The art of tracking* of the hunter's strategy - 'In my imagination, I become the animal I am stalking' - is linked to the supposed San cosmology that animals derived from humans. **[vii]** Zoologist Charles Handley, who hunted with the Ju/'hoansi in 1952 while a member of that Marshall Family Expedition, explains more credibly that hunters 'could actually think like the animal enough so that they soon knew what its strategy was, where it was going. They could take shortcuts and intersect the trail again where they thought it was going to come' (interview, 26 February 1997).

Handley's explanation locates experience and interpretation as the talents used by hunters - not some kind of mystical ability unknown to outsiders. This means that the ability to track is learnt, not genetically encoded, and 'conservation' in the sense of cultural and geographical mummification is a positivist red herring.

When science as a discourse of realism (positivism) is chosen, which is the resource offered by the Kayapo to The Body Shop in the form of indigenous knowledge about herbs, medicines, perfumes etc., then conservation is impossible because the Other has validity only as an object of study in its 'raw' form. However, this relationship can also be a dynamic one which confers some influence to the Kayapo via the economic power of The Body Shop in global relations. Similarly, as 'Kaptein' Kgau//au stated, ironically contradicting the dichotomy between tradition and modernity assumed by Stander's assistant: 'It is better that you get up ... only then things will begin to happen ... and [people] will say: "This is how he worked, and these are the plans he made"' (*Dancing at the future* 1996).

When 'anthropology', also a realism, is chosen, the resource highlighted by Stander and the makers of *The art of tracking*, then ethno-spiritual/eco-science



takes on an ecological legitimacy. ≠Oma Tsamkxao, confirming his allegiance to Marshall's (1996) anti-tourist position, stated that:

I do not regard cultural tourism as being development ... Through cultural tourism people are seen as living in the 'old days'. Tourists come here to Bushmanland looking for Bushmen who live in a traditional way. If they do not find them, they go to other places and buy (traditional) loincloth and give them to the people to wear.

Recognising this problem, where tourists bluntly invade private cultural back-stages, the Namibian Airlines' in-flight magazine offers 'useful advice to travellers visiting Eastern Bushmanland'. Willie Olivier in the *Namibian Air in-flight magazine* (n.d.) warns that 'traditional societies are often offended by ill-mannered tourists' who 'sneak up' for photographs and haggle about the price of curios. ≠Oma Tsamkxao, implicitly recognising the tension between back- and front-stages, continues:

If the tourists want Bushmen to dance or sing they should let them do that in the cloth they are wearing. Tourists also demand Bushmen to dance and sing whenever they want them to do so. Bushmen have their own time of dancing. It is not good to decide for people when to dance and sing and also to film them (interviewed by Kandjii, 10 July 1996).

Dancing is usually associated with curing ceremonies, not entertainment for outsiders, unless allocated front-stage. The reference to 'dancing' is the driving motif of *Dancing at the future*. Here it is used as a healing metaphor in restoring social equilibrium ruptured in the clash between 'tradition' and the 'modern', the 'past' and the 'future', and 'us' and 'them'. This is itself an affirmative articulation in comparison to the depiction of 'dancing' as a metaphor of a 'lost' ecological balance, entrapping the 'Bushman' in a perpetual circular motion captured by the camera in the present, but whose significance and culture is located by the presenter in the 'past' (for example, *Adventure bound*). Bolton's (1969-1979) description of 'Bushman' dancing to Beethoven with 'profound primeval reverence' fixes this 'long ago' time in the observers' mind. Or, as Laurens van der Post (1988: 24) puts it, dance provided a way for Bushmen to endure the visitor's exacting presence. Dance sustained the 'natural Bushman' in the face of the 'wilful' Western lifestyle which influenced them by day.

The San have become, for the world's media, a diorama of moral values, **[viii]** a natural existence for man before the Fall. The genuflection towards 'conservation'

is perhaps an indication of the West's own moral failure: it is laundering its own anxieties[**ix**] through the 'Bushmen'. It does this by constantly drawing correspondences between 'genetics' and 'community', an ancient culture 'rekindled', and a modern culture that has 'lost' its innocence. By keeping the 'Bushmen' from 'extinction', contemporary filmmakers have encoded a parable, which keeps the idea alive that modernity might still save its own soul, and restore something of the ecological balance destroyed by industrial society. As the films analysed here suggest, this might be done via a mixture of science and priest-craft. Scientists like Flip Stander and Louis Liebenberg are presented in film as the facilitators who can 'unlock a huge reservoir of Bushman knowledge' which, as the rider states, 'could be applied to satisfy the practical demands of Western science' (Narrator, *Dancing at the future*, 1996). Even in its regeneration of priest-craft, science remains Cartesian and imperialistic.

### *Marketing ecological legitimacy*

What is a paradox for anthropologists is an opportunity for markets and the subjects of culture. Commoditising traditions - invented or otherwise - is one way of tapping into the economic benefits promised by the postmodern condition.[**x**] Salzburg, Austria, for example, promotes itself as 'The sound of music country', notwithstanding the scant legitimacy of that film in Austria itself. Here, the 'folkloric' is the late-20<sup>th</sup>-Century merchant character of Salzburg wrapped up in indigenous clothing (Lugar 1992: 195). The myth popularised by the film becomes the reality that tourists come to see. What they come to see becomes the reality that the Salzburger themselves promote. Film and video perform a similar function for Otozondjupa, though on a minimally organised scale when compared to the Austrian city.[**xi**] Tourists, photographers and filmmakers visit Tjum!kui to 'see' the Bushmen; 'tourists' (of the anthropological kind) visit to 'study' the Ju/'hoansi, who paradoxically sometimes negotiate their motives in terms of their mythical image of 'poverty'. 'Tourists' (of the botanical kind) walk the terrain to 'find' plants via which indigenous medicines can be re-legitimated and re-introduced for villages too far from, and too dependent upon, the Western medicine offered by the Clinic (Mirchoff of Health Unlimited, interview, Tjum!kui, 11 July 1996).

The Bushman 'image' projected is derived from the merging of 'reality' and myth. It is this myth which can become an income generator for the Ju/'hoansi communities, *provided they want to play the role*. The heir to the cinematically

depicted Von Trapp family in Salzburg is the tourist industry; but the heirs of the Ju/'hoansi could be the Ju/'hoansi themselves. This is the difference, and is what underlies the conflict between the Cooperative and the villagers themselves.

### *Clash of the Ti-texts*

Clashes between John Marshall, who advocates farming, and conservancy advocates (which includes small-scale cattle husbandry), reached a peak in April 1996. Eighteen anthropologists objected to a scene in Marshall's promotional film, *A Kalahari family* (1994). This scene depicts the Nyae Nyae Residents' Committee, firing Axel Thoma, the then director of the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation (Bieseke *et al.* 1996).

Thoma, financially backed by the USAID Living in a Finite Environment Program, had argued for a mixture of cattle and vegetable farming interspersed with game areas. The eighteen anthropologists suggested that Marshall had misrepresented the cause of Thoma's expulsion (see Bieseke 1996 and Marshall's reply 1996). The struggle between these constituencies cut, of course, across the Ju/'hoansi themselves. The Chairman of the NNFC, /'Angn!ao /'Un, stated:

We do not want to leave off our ancient ways completely: we want to continue teaching them to our children along with the new things they are learning in our Village Schools Project. But outsiders [the Herero] want our resources for cattle ... [Cattle] compete, if they are too many, with the wild game of the bush we are trying to protect. We live from these game by hunting them in our ancient ways ... We also protect the game so that we can try to control and profit from tourism (nd. Duggan-Cronin Museum, Kimberley). **[xii]**

This statement encapsulates all of the discourses impacting on the Ju/'hoansi in the 1990s. It is, however, one that admits change, adaptation, and development. /'Angn!ao/U'un's assessment contradicts the ideology reproduced by Stander's assistant in *Dancing*. When addressing the camera in her capacity as 'expert' she, the cameraman and editor, dances with the problem of the Ju/'hoansi becoming appropriately modern. In failing to locate themselves within the social relationships of Nyae Nyae of which they are part, they are unaware that the condition described by her does not apply to the Ju/'hoansi in the film. Put differently, when 'man' exempts 'himself' from the activity paradoxically being imposed by him, environmental and human consequences always follow. The ecological legitimacy that Stander is calling for cannot be unproblematically accomplished within this contradiction. One aspect of this contradiction is that

foreign big-game hunters have been licensed to shoot lions; but the Ju/'hoansi are denied this, even when lions are killing their livestock. Lions, thus, have been described by ≠Oma Tsamkxao as '... the dogs of Western conservation' (Bixler *et al.* 1993).

### *Reaching for star-texts*

Negative developmental results have partly to do with the problems realised when people forget the original agenda within which an area of study came about. The need to 'subdue the earth', central to the methodological dispute between Galileo and the Church, becomes the objective. Farming, cultural tourism, and other forms of production and exchange in Nyae Nyae, are all products of this process. All are destructive in one way or another - there is no untainted solution.

Anthropology and, to a lesser extent, cultural studies, and least visual sociology, have tried to recover the subjectivity (that is, acknowledge the conscious presence of the body) of the analyst or actor within the system of relations being studied. Postmodern analysis, in contrast, is positively hostile to the idea that concrete 'authors' have anything to do with discursive developments. Otozondjupa exhibits aspects of pre-modernism, modernism and even post-modernism. Into this melange, the new 'alchemy' of science is meshed with priest-craft via development projects. The admixture offers a wealth of contradictions. As Belinda Jeursen observes:

The image we see so often in South African advertising of men, women and children walking in single file across a desert is not what I was expecting ... I also didn't expect to find a hut crammed to capacity with Ju/'hoansi men, women and children watching an old Bruce Lee film. As we put up our tents in the dark, a ghetto blaster somewhere else in the settlement provided a new set of sounds for the African night.

For a population long held to be the exemplar of the cultural isolate, their current lifestyle is a curious mixture of Hollywood movies (shown at Baraka), encounters with tourists, academics and development workers, *shebeens*, and a variety of languages, both European and African. Development agencies in the Nyae Nyae, can shape solutions within broader historical processes but they cannot change the general direction of history.

Whatever the outcome of plans for development in Nyae Nyae, it is clear that interests represented in the arguments from all sources include academics,

donors, aid agencies, wildlife departments, tourist capital, and the Ju/'hoansi themselves. Outsiders in all manner of media are really conducting the real dance 'at' the future: government and foundation reports, film and video, advertising, and scholarly articles. The discourses draw on all three paradigms: science, priest-craft, and ethno-spiritual/eco-science. The boundaries of these grids of signification are becoming increasingly difficult to identify, determined as they are by global and competing ideological and economic interests. The negative case is merging with the positive affirmation in a new ethno-code adopted by significant parties to the encounter and popularised through TV and video (Greenwood 1978: 137).

If we look at the intersection of all these debates and discourses, then perhaps it becomes possible to differentiate between the ends that different actors seek to reach. From the point of view of the Ju/'hoansi, art commerce and cultural tourism become not a resource for operators and entrepreneurs, but something else. What we found can thus be seen as a form of *principal tactic* that people use within the broader *strategy* of combining development with survival on their own terms. Maybe 'Kaptein', the Klein Dobe community and Angn!ao/Un have already glimpsed the future and have set some planning - and regulation - in motion.

## NOTES

[i] Professor L.S. Forsdick, Northwestern University; Dr. M. Gusinde, US National Science Foundation, and Col. W. Morden, leader of the Morden Africa Expedition of the American Museum for Natural History (Davis 1954: 57).

[ii] All respondents pointed out incongruities in the dress, posture, and locations of the subjects depicted.

[iii] Similar lack of recognition occurred in April 1995, when an archaeologist showed flints he had found on Klein Mesetling Pan in Botswana to two Central Kalahari !Kung hunters who had also worked in Namibia.

[iv] The R10,000 had been injudiciously spent within months of receipt in an area where the two meagre shops and scores of *shebeens* were 80-minutes drive or a day's walk away. This is the kind of lack of capacity that ≠Oma Tsamkxao was complaining about and which is echoed by someone in a *Hunters of the Kalahari* outtake: 'The money is used for drinking and the cattle are just sitting there (not being cared for). This is a bad way to do things' (Biesele 11.32).

[v] Biesele (1997) further develops this point.

[vi] The conservancy model is explained in Jones (1995), and a variety of

Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism documents. An agreement was signed in April 1998, between the newly created Nyae Nyae Conservancy, located in the Eastern part of the Otjozondjupa Region, and the La Rochelle Hunting and Guest Farm. This agreement grants the Ju/'hoansi hunting and farming rights, and La Rochelle occupancy of a former hunting camp at Klein Dobe (*The Namibian*, 15 April 1998).

[vii] Compare this comment with Laurens van der Post (1988: 18-19): 'The Bushman seemed to *know* what it actually felt like to be an elephant, a lion, an antelope, a steenbuck, a lizard, a striped mouse, mantic, baobab tree ... Even as a child it seemed to me that his world was one without secrets between one form of being and another'.

[viii] This phrase belongs to Jake Homiak.

[ix] This phrase belongs to Tim Burke (2002).

[x] Cultural Villages in 1996 earned about N\$200 a day, with about N\$60 for each additional participant in hunting and gathering activities.

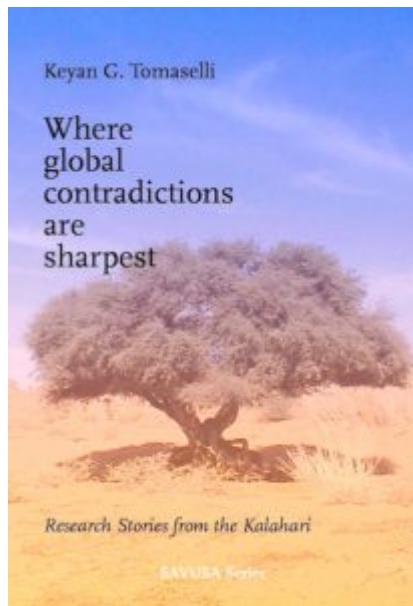
[xi] Polly Wiessner reports that in Vermont, where she grew up, the relocated Von Trapp family used *The sound of music* to attract tourists to this town. After the first ten years, younger generations of Von Trapps stood embarrassed as their elders dressed in traditional Austrian garb and sang, just as the Ju/'hoansi youth do. Maria's youngest son then expanded the lodges and offered riding, cross-country skiing, theatre, music, hiking, and hosted old car shows, but only events of very high standards. The younger generation moves forward, does not remain in the past, and business booms.

[xii] Translated from the original by Biesele.

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**Where Global Contradictions Are Sharpest ~ Stories To Tell, Stories To Sell: Hidden Transcripts,**

# Negotiating Texts



Post-Birmingham cultural studies have been severely criticised for offering little more than a “white on white” textual orientation’ (Giroux and McLaren 1994: x). Edward Said (1979: 93) writes of a ‘textual attitude’, which prefers ‘the schematic tendency of a text to the disorientations of direct encounters with the human’. The mess and confusion found in everyday life, as well as the supernatural is ‘bracketed out’ because they obscure the clarity of the structure (Husserl 1969). Texts become walls that academics insert between ‘us’ and ‘them’ to protect ‘us’ from having to deal with the ambiguities, contradictions, and confusion of everyday life (Malan 1995; Conquergood 1998; Pollock 1998). Students often delight in the prospect of analysing oral literatures in typed translation, via the application of the usual post-structuralist French gurus. The result inevitably is a white, usually French-shaped Eurocentric reading of oral and other narratives in non-European regions.

## *Reverse cultural studies: Voices from the field*

Academy-bound textualist scholarship claiming to be studying the ‘popular’, though often exquisitely analysed and written, tends to background quotidian empirical significance. Detail, immediacy, and self-reflexivity are as important as is textualised theory, in which human agency is described and recognised, and in which voices from the field, our ‘subjects of observation’, are engaged by researchers as their equals (in human dignity and thus as co-producers of knowledge).

The analytical textualist disjunction between distance and immediacy, separation and immersion, exploitation and collaboration, holds that ‘there is nothing outside the text’ (Jackson 1989: 184). Textualism thus legitimately ignores the flux of human interrelationships and the ways in which meanings are intersubjectively integrated, embodied in gestures and performance, as well as in words (Jousse 1997; Bakhtin 1986: 6). De Saussure’s semiological logic, for example, imprisons us in a nominalist world of linguistic structures. If semiology is itself one such structure, then trying to ‘see through’ it leaves nothing to which reference can be

made, except possibly some prior structure in a potentially infinite regress (Shepperson and Tomaselli 1999).

One result of textualism, and especially binary assumptions in some studies and the popular imagination, is to assume the myth that the 'Bushmen' have 'disappeared' and that when they were 'living', they always only had one 'way of life'. Such analyses, which pepper much contemporary literature, lack historical periodisation, and assume that all San speak/spoke only one language (cf. Wilmsen 1986a for a critique of this position; also see Chapman 1996: 21-31). This homogenizing effect is the result of antecedent theorising about the indigenous other as an undifferentiated mass, an authorising of the textual over its relationship with the contextual, and of assumptions about history.

In the postmodern age of hyper-mediated realities and fractured development periodisations, the Other becomes a resource for discursive rearticulation, integration, and expropriation. The mythical images, sounds, and values offered by so-called First Peoples are appropriated by advertisers to expropriate long-lost mythical images to sell something (in South Africa, for example, cars [Mazda], telephone services [Telkom], toothpaste [Colgate], railways [Spoornet], an Internet book store [Kalahari.net], Game Parks [Kagga Kamma], a cut price airline [Kulula.com], and others). What is sold has nothing to do with the 'actors' (whether real or imagined), but with the imperative of capital, which integrates anything that communicates into messages that encourage consumption. Ironically, the very people used to retail such products are themselves largely unable to afford them. They remain materially isolated from the very texts they are promoting, de-linked from consumption despite their performance, and in spite of their textualisation and inter-textualisation. Nothing - not epistemology, not ways of seeing - is unsettled in the exchange. They remain 'them'; we remain 'us', secure in our distanced otherness.

### *Being there: Pre-textual experience*

My studies in visual anthropology arose from my own often-extraordinary experiences in the field as both filmmaker and researcher (cf. Tomaselli 1997: Preface). Students participating in field trips, whose academic growth was often previously confined within a discipline of detached textualism and theoretical hegemonies, more often than not returned to the university; dusty, tired, and homesick. They generally discover that the Text is indeed a prison-house of language. The immediacy of their interactions, the depth of their intercultural



encounters, and the empathy which develops from their being touched by the experience, fundamentally changes not only their perception of who and what was previously the Other, but also of the way that textualism insists on the binary relationship of researcher and researched. Systematically delving beyond the text also locates students as participants in the encounter, inexorably *within* the community and system of relations being studied (McLennan-Dodd 2003; Lange 2003a; cf. also Brown 2001). These students come to realise that as necessary as abstraction is, that it can also be endistancing/alienating/reifying, if not for themselves, then most certainly for their subjects/hosts/collaborators, who constantly complain that they are unable to recognise themselves, their experiences and conditions in the written work of academics studying them. Some students are less sanguine about research outcomes. Belinda Jeursen, for example, counters with regard to inevitable self-interest: 'Perhaps part of what is being bought is "feeling good about ourselves", because we are helping the other instead of just exploiting them. We are also buying academic leverage/publishing power' (e-mail, 12 June 2002). Silikat van Wyk is well aware of this, but he, Belinda Kruiper, Vetkat, Dawid, and others point out the potential worth of academic studies for future generational knowledge on their community.

Finding ways of overcoming the epistemological divide between researchers and researched has been my objective. Researchers, development agencies and filmmakers certainly do have the power to see, to search, and to seize (Conquergood 1998: 3). They sometimes claim ownership of individuals, whole communities, and most certainly of the texts that they have taken from them. This power is well understood and resented by many who are subject to this kind of compulsive extractive gaze (cf. Hurston 1990: 2). The dependency of indigenous peoples on other people's records, which hold their cultural history, breeds hostility. Suspicions about textual (cultural, linguistic, spiritual) theft become rife, and texts come to be seen as both the means to liberation *and* subjugation.

Yet even those scholars who are critical of the academic compulsion tend to write in ways not easily accessible to those 'oppressed people everywhere [who] must watch their backs, cover their tracks, hide their feelings, and veil their meanings' (Conquergood 1998: 30). How to discuss these issues with our hosts/subjects/collaborators/co-researchers is a key element of our overall project. I am, of course, aware of the irony that this particular chapter may be just as opaque to our sources as any others. When theory is being enunciated, restricted codes are

the usual means of communication.

### *Recovering experience*

One mechanism by which to reduce the distance between our subjects and us is to restore E.P. Thompson's (1968) notion of 'experience' [i] to the analysis of structure and determination. Intersubjectival, observer-observed (both 'us' of 'them' and 'them' of 'us') interactions, and the nature of negotiations, which engage and lessen these kinds of separations, are constantly being explored. Our assumption is that in studying the 'other', we as researchers need to simultaneously interrogate our own subjectivities, identities, and motivations, as we ourselves negotiate and shape our encounters with our subjects. Jeursen, for example, concludes with regard to her own field experiences: 'Ethically, it was far too uncomfortable for me. "Otherness" was reinforced rather than reduced by my interactions. I became more aware of my "otherness" than theirs', uncomfortable with my own motivations' (Jeursen, e-mail, 12 June 2001). For most of us, however, sustained partnerships over the ten-year study period has returned both material and symbolic benefits to our hosts (for example, the publication of Bregin and Kruiper [2004], the exhibition of Vetkat's art nationally (see Tomaselli 2003; Lange forthcoming), Lange's large purchases of crafts, mainly from the Ngwatle community, and from specific ≠Khomani crafters for distribution to South African museums and schools, and visits by Belinda and Vetkat to work with students in Durban (piggy-backed on the exhibitions)). The making of videos on individual craftsmen for sale at their roadside stalls was negotiated in 2005, while a full-colour calendar of Vetkat's art was published in 2004 by an Italian environmental organisation. The funds raised from the sale of the calendar were donated to the establishment of a heritage and art centre at Welkom where Belinda and Vetkat took up residence in mid-2005. They are recipient of donations of various kinds. These are used at the centre and donated to the local school in Welkom. Professional TV-directors, on our recommendation, have been working with Belinda and Vetkat on documenting her book, his art, and broader community issues. The Protea Hotel in Upington bought scores of Vetkat's prints for display and is promoting this model of social responsibility within the wider hotel group. The multiplier effect for local communities of aspects of our work has been considerable. Our work is distributed to organisations like WIMSA and SASI, and our video documentation on dispossession, land and human rights, and other pressing issues is circulated to appropriate organisations when requested by particular communities.

Apart from their micro-ethnographies and contributions to developmental outcomes, students discuss relationships between observers and observed in terms of agency and dependency, resistance and domination, inclusions/exclusions, of borders and othering. (cf. for example Boloka 2001; Simões 2001a; 2001b; McLennan-Dodd 2004). Some, however, cannot initially see the wood for the trees: the prior theoretical text, the idealised development model is determining irrespective of contrary conditions and concrete evidence which they both witness and experience on the ground. This is the theoretical version of 'Simple Simon says ...'. In such cases, questions to be addressed need to relate to students' and our subjects' mimicry of textualism (Taussig 1993: 254-5). For example, the Ju/'hoansi in Nyae Nyae are among the most intensively studied of First Peoples and have learned the discourses of the academic traveller since they first interacted with the eight Marshall Expeditions in the 1950s. Contemporary cultural tourists are often told what they have come to hear - that which is already in the 'timeless' text. The text is up for sale, opportunistically dangled by the observed for purposes of exchange.

The Kruipers, in contrast to the !Xoo and Ju/'hoansi, have constituted an economy of organised begging, based on allegations of theft of indigenous knowledge, poverty, and entitlement. For example, our party went tracking with a new venture[**ii**] at Witdraai in June 2005, only to find themselves part of a marketing text/tactic recovering traditional stereotypes. A Canadian journalist, in addition, felt cajoled, harassed, and humiliated. The defining moment was when the driver barrelled up the dune in a *bakkie* sporting a bow and arrow. The tracker took the weapon and struck the classic crouching hunting pose. 'This is not real, it's put on for us, its phoney', complained Catherine Dunphy. 'It's disrespectful of tourists who are interested in, and compassionate of, their plight. We had just been commodified, much as 'we' have commodified them. I doubted the authenticity of the show; there was no intimate cultural connection or attempt to really communicate who they were to us. I did not want a phoney photo op'. (This 'op' is in stark contrast to Isak Kruiper's desire for a meaningful interaction (see below)). The guide also demanded additional payment over and above the tracking/guide fee for the right of the tourists/students/the journalist to take photographs. Each and every shot was to be charged for, at the moment of exposure, with a surcharge added for video. 'If one has stop every few minutes to dig out money, it kills the intimacy of the aesthetic experience, because one is preoccupied with the transaction', observed Mashaya. Our group, however, negotiated a flat fee. Yes, the 'Bushmen' have stories to tell, but they also have

stories to sell.

In research transactions, academics and filmmakers pay for what they already know, sometimes erroneously thinking that they are the only owners of new 'information' presented, now in the form of mimicry, which is then simply repackaged and resold to the next visitor. The Kruipers have re-presented themselves in terms of the Western image of 'all' Bushmen. Any informal interaction between them and casual travellers passing through the area is conducted as a transaction to be paid for. As Dawid Kruiper told us:

I've realised that people just take photos. And then all of a sudden they're on brochures ... I saw this child sitting on the front page ... My child's child, Ladytjie, sits on the front page. And if you look at the thing like that, it's a brochure, then they just sell the brochure at the airport again to tourists. That's what I saw. He makes money easily, makes money out of my people. That's why I decided on a price (Dawid Kruiper, interview, 29 September 2000).

Thus even the most marginalized people have responded to the reach of commodification by placing a value on previously uncommodified relations. [iii] The question confronting students is to be able to determine when informal chats are just that, and when exchange relations are at play. Dawid Kruiper wants to know how the information he is asked about will be used so that he can determine a value: 'R500? If I had to say, "what did I give? What did I give?" Now, "what did I do?" And the interview that was conducted is flat on the table. Does it just stay here or does it go further? Does the interview go further or does the interview just die on the table?' (Dawid Kruiper, interview, 29 September 2000). As understood by Dawid, an interview is an oral form, intangible, it is what it is, and it exists in and of itself. It is however the *tangible* application of the story which finds additional circulation beyond his control and earning power which is of concern to him. He and some of his kin sometimes promote an interview or photograph's exchange value, but then at a later stage they object to its use value for the purchaser. The purchaser is thereby positioned by the seller as 'exploiter' and then required to make restitution for a legitimate purchase. Interviewers or photographers always find themselves in a double bind.

As individuals and communities have come to trust us, to open up to us, and to consider us as possible allies in their discursive struggles with other, perhaps less sensitive researchers, development agencies, journalists etc., the immediate pressure for commodification lessens, though bantering about what we are told

we 'owe' for 'taking' indigenous knowledge sometimes reaches stratospheric proportions. Key to a less mercantile relationship is our willingness to include *verbatim* quotes via which our informants believe - and can see their positions - to be situationally reflected. This approach means that the words still belong to our sources, while the argument belongs to the writer/s. They no longer inexorably use their (oral) texts/speech/(hard luck) stories as decoys to protect themselves from 'the white man' or 'the black man' whose hegemony they have to rely on/negate for survival. Such hidden texts are themselves negotiated and struggled over as researchers and researched try to find common ground. Sometimes they manifest as symbolic games (cf. Dyll 2003), and at other times blunt resentment is articulated. Unless the researcher can distinguish between which texts are being offered as red herrings and which are not, they will be deliberately misled, and in addition have paid for the privilege (cf. Grosskurth 1988). However, there remains the myth that one interview results in students being empowered with a whole degree, or better still, with automatic well-paying jobs, suggesting little understanding of how the knowledge industry - or exchange relations - actually work.

### *Negotiating exchange relations*

The question of power relations arises: who exactly is in control during the research encounter? Common sense suggests that the researcher is the dominant partner: they have the funds, the choice and the wherewithal. Researcher-researched negotiations, however, are often a lot more complex - the explicit level of appearance often conceals submerged processes at work. On our first arrival among the ≠Khomani at Witdraai in early 2000, first-time student researchers reported feelings of being controlled, circumscribed, and commodified by those they had come to get to know and interview. They were alienated by this discomfiting experience of reversal (Von Strauss 2000). While interviewing Dawid Kruiper, we took four days to negotiate an affordable payment for his interview via his personal assistant, Anna Festus, and then four hours to crack his attempts to feed us his 'anthro-tourist text' - to get into questions of context and previously concealed meanings, the 'hidden transcript' deployed by marginalized people as a tactic of evasion and camouflage (Scott 1990). As Belinda Kruiper revealed, 'we're just making up the story because *ai, tog*, the people they want to know! ... Ninety percent of the time they do not really say truthfully to a so-called white person what their hearts feel. They're still intimidated by the very past, the white thing' (Belinda Kruiper, interview, 23

October 2001). We try to examine the said (the text) in relation to the unsaid (performative – mobility, action, agency) (Conquergood 1998: 31). The said is relatively easy to get – one just has to buy it. The unsaid takes a lot longer; it takes trust, empathy, and immediacy. It takes time, participation, and experience; it assumes an acknowledgement of the noumenal (unknowable/spiritual) world, and it privileges knowing through feeling and participation (De Certeau 1988: 235) over comprehending via containment, inscription, abstraction, and closure (Ricoeur 1971). There is also a sense of investment felt by our sources in my students and myself. In June 2005, Silikat wanted to know why Vanessa and Caleb, with whom he had previously worked, no longer visited. I explained that Vanessa had emigrated to Australia and did not yet have a job, but that Caleb was working in Durban as a para-medic; that he and his fiancé had done a month's voluntary work for the Trust at Ngwatle after his graduation. Silikat sent Vanessa a text message via Mary's cell phone. Long-term relations are part of community expectations, but the issue of client-patron relations is never far below the surface.

Community reassurance emerges in the face of insecurities wrought by the academics' recurring mobility, extraction of knowledge, and its valorisation elsewhere. The tendency to commodify relationships then fades. '*Praat is werk*' (Afrikaans – 'talking is our profession'), Anna Festus told us in April 2000. The relationship changes significantly when talking is no longer automatically equated with 'work' or income. The observers are now allies, friends, and family – at least until allegiances change. Such new relationships can be a whole lot more complicated – and unsettling for researchers. Our subjects build up an entire set of relations and recognitions, a consciousness of who is 'in' and who is 'out' in a given environment, anchoring the idea of identity to that of 'community'. Being not a stranger somewhere entails some level of public conduct and commitment to a 'community'. Which community (political, alcoholic, temperate, 'western/pastoral', urban, rural, peri-urban, insider/outsider, modern/traditional, ethic, familial) of the many that criss-cross our subjects' lives and social networks is never quite clear. Manipulation often finds an alibi in participation: how do 'we' keep our guard?

Textualism, in contrast, offers a defence against incorporation, manipulation, empathy, and alienation. It may be oblivious to unwitting collaboration in hidden texts, beguiling strategies of co-optation, and the deployment of performance to

decentre from the text - ploys known only to the subject community (cf. Conquergood 1998: 26). Textualism offers a way of maintaining difference, distance, and differentiation. It relies on other texts for context. It does not impose researcher loyalty to the community, or require responsibility towards those about whom one is writing. Decentring mechanisms are assumed to find their traces in linguistic structure irrespective of performativity. The quotidian cultural clutter and institutional forms of oppression in which so many marginalized human beings live, love, and die, remain bracketed out of that to be studied. Fieldwork is not considered necessary in this approach. Those excluded, the subjects of fieldwork, however, cannot be easily understood 'on the basis of what books - texts - say' (Said 1979: 93). My students and collaborators from literary studies tell me something similar every time we go to the Kalahari. As Nelia Oets puts it:

Although text-bound research (or textualism) may (or may not) change one's view of and insight into the world around you, it often includes not only personal isolation during your research, but also detachment from, and unawareness of, the real lived experiences of real, marginalized people. It becomes the analysis of structures and power relations ... in words and through words only. It does not prepare you for the people you are writing about. These encounters open up unexplored spaces of one's own subjectivity and generate a whole new set of problems and questions regarding the way that we make meaning, the way that power relations operate and are being used in these encounters (e-mail, 11 June 2002) (cf. also Oets 2003).

Texts tend to conceal their contexts; they provide processed signification instead of spontaneous organic experience, and they interpret in advance of the encounter. Being there, however, as Oets remarks, leads to respect, not only in the sense of their different culture, but for them as individuals.

In stark contrast to the privileging of the Text, autoethnography, reflexivity and participatory methods are unsettling, confusing, and require one to take a stand. They raise our subjects' expectations, sometimes unrealistically so. Closure is almost impossible to attain, as indicated in recurring questions about the whereabouts and career paths of previous students. Subjects insist on responsibility and emotional energy, they demand political allegiance, and they bring their own sets of inclusions and exclusions, responsibilities and obligations. This new relationship is long-term, unsettling, and unpredictable. Belinda Kruiper

indicated to us that the fact that we regularly return to the community, and send back interview transcriptions, letters, and papers that relate to our interactions with them, indicates that they are respected and not exploited. The next time we met Dawid Kruiper in 2002 (and thereafter), no lengthy negotiations and large payments had to occur, even though the interviewer was new to him. During our first visit in 2000 we had to pre-negotiate every interview, pay for every photograph snapped, and painstakingly haggle over conditions of exchange. We felt trapped and controlled, used and abused. Now we have easier access, no longer commodified at each and every level of each and every interaction, except for formal tours such as the one on tracking mentioned above. I wonder about our use-value for the ≠Khomani.

In September 2004 a new gatekeeper attempted to isolate Dawid from us. I was required to pay him R20 for dope by his new personal assistant (PA), a divisive outsider from the Cape, who blatantly controlled access and our initial discussion, telling us that the 'old' (SASI, WIMSA, CPA), and the road side sellers were 'out', and that the 'new' was 'in' (a new San traditional house [council], //Makai, established by herself). Certain of the CCMS-party were included 'in', but I was informed that I was to be excommunicated because my University had published the Bregin and Kruiper (2004) book, Belinda and Vetket being 'out'. I was held personally responsible for the book's unacceptable content, which the PA claimed promoted 'lies' and negativity, though I'd had nothing to do with Belinda's interpretations or the book itself. **[iv]** (At the time, Belinda, Vetkat and Isak were US guests of *Journey into the heart*, a shamanistic group.) The next day Dawid and I chatted amiably on the roadside, much to PA's dismay, who was unable to re-insert the barrier of the previous night. Having sewn confusion in ≠Khomani politics, she was herself excommunicated before even a year had passed. Such is the bewildering complexity of shifting alliances amongst Kalahari communities.

We continue to work with our sources who are as concerned as are we about the 'new' politics. In June 2005, Silikat engaged Mary at length on her co-authored article, 'Meeting points' (2003), discussing the geometric patterns and the narrative she and her contributors wrote on them. In this context, Belinda Kruiper commented: 'So you see your own voice going out there linked with words like methodology and stuff, only in contexts because you've been partaking ... you almost understand what is being said' (interview, 23 October 2001). They have an original typed record of what they told us, and copies of the resulting



publications. The record is in itself a form of memory, and therefore available for mobilisation in a variety of conditions. Silikat indicated that he recognised this value in our work, and then suggested that I donate my Sani to him, as it was now part of Kalahari folklore.

The incessant requests/demands for money, gifts, and sometimes the parading by drunken parents of their dirty kids to manipulate white liberal guilt largely gave way to co-operation, to interest, and to a greater sense of involvement. This accessibility occurred because we had as a team, if of constantly changing researchers, possibly succeeded over the years in establishing our collective *bona fides* that have been able to withstand attempts by mischievous individuals like the PA to undermine them. Campfire dissemination and discussion of our work, feedback on our unpublished articles from the individuals/communities concerned, via scribbled letters, scratchy cell phone conversations, and invitations to Belinda and Vetkat to work with our students on campus in Durban, suggested to sections of the traditional ≠Khomani that we are listening, absorbing, perhaps in solidarity with their plight. We can facilitate in getting their own points of view across to other academics, development workers, agencies, and the state, which they perceive as not listening, not caring, not delivering: Whether they can identify with our analysis, is another matter.

In discussing our work and videos (shown on portable TV-screens and on laptops with DVDs when we visit), sitting around campfires, our hosts tell us that they feel (relatively) empowered in that they can recognise themselves in these forms of representation:

Suddenly a big envelope comes from the University of Natal, and [our] names are in academic circles. And they're seeing it. Before that the people come and talk and take photos, but they see nothing. Just seeing your name there brings out a new thing (Belinda Kruiper, interview, 23 October 2001).

Our subjects/hosts know that their voices have not been reconstituted into often incomprehensible abstractions from which they are now absent and, in fact, request that we translate more of our work more often into Afrikaans (cf. for example Tomaselli and Oets 2004). Our research teams are multi-ethnic, multiracial, multigendered, and multilinguistic. We are not just 'white' [or 'black'] men or women trying to know somebody else's business (Conquergood 1998: 30), even if that is how we were initially seen on arrival at Kagga Kamma in April 1999, and Witdraai in 2000.

Our 'being there', camping instead of always staying in the adjacent Molopo Lodge, was particularly significant. Belinda Kruiper said that in their experience with other researchers:

There was never just the human, just hanging out. That's why I always believe ... they're too quick, they fly into Upington, they pick up the people, and they start recording data. They haven't had time to necessarily sit at the home and just enjoy the fire first or sleep over. You can't just make assumptions on flying in or spending three hours and sitting in an air-conditioned vehicle and a hotel in the evening chatting ... (interview, 24 July 2001).

This, we all agreed, was the methodology of 'hanging out', and an important element in our practice. Things happen, we go with the flow, nothing is set in stone. Paradigm fundamentalism recedes as we try to make sense of often incomprehensible situations, encounters and stories.

### *Searching for methods: Semiotics from below*

How to find a method, which does not impose regimes of theory and interpretation, mimicry, or Western imaginaries on our subjects, is the task we are addressing. My own approach is a visual anthropological semiotics, which proceeds from C.S. Peirce (Hartshorne and Weiss 1931-1935; 1958). [v] Peirce's phaneron permits the study of mental interpretants by interpreters in contexts, providing a conceptual starting point within which to accommodate the potential indeterminacies of translation (Quine 1969) that exist between tourists/observers/filmmakers/researchers/missionaries on the one hand, and performers and their indigenous communities on the other. The phaneron contains the conditions for signification given the presence of a subject: all that is present to the mind during any encounter is its content. Different interacting minds may have different contents, different interpretations, and different expectations of the same encounters, and therefore, any encounter contains infinite conditions for potential misunderstanding and conflict. Any situation in space and time can contain a great many simultaneous phanerons. It is this phaneroscopic method, not theory, which is our starting point. The theory - in which the concerns of our subjects/hosts are inscribed - emerges from application of method.

Semiotics finds its origins in Peirce's attempt to *replace* Kant's systematic philosophy, and not in the projects possible within it. Although Peirce acknowledged a kind of 'unknowable' material reality, he accepted that this

reality could not be utterly divorced from experience. (In June 2005, for example, Belinda Kruiper told me that she gave the *Bushman shaman* book her hundred per cent seal of approval, even as I contemplated its misleading cover, questioned whether the spiritual is 'real' or not, and pondered on its mildly New Age appearance.)**[vi]** Signs, such as the relation between reality and experience, also had to be conceived of as fitting into Peirce's philosophy. Peirce saw the causal action of concepts not in the arbitrary will of an abstract agent, but in the general conduct of a community of people who seek to find something out about their worlds. Peirce's work, thus, is more relevant, especially with regard to understanding African ontologies, than that which has emerged from the European tradition after Kant.

Peircean semiotics begins from the essence of the human pragmatic relation with nature, the environment, and the noumenal world. Signification has substance in practice, within the common habits that evolve and change as practices become elaborated through time. By virtue of the connection between a sign and a habit in the formation of the interpretant, any phaneron will be defined by the pragmatic capacities of the signifying subject present at the time of the phaneron's realisation. For example, for filmmaker/anthropologist Jean Rouch, surrealism offers filmmakers a means of escaping the formal constraints of conventional film and observation. Via *ciné-trance*, and the handheld cameras that make this possible, one can detect Rouch's method for a freeing-up of the constraints of consciousness - a desire to 'write with the body', to dream, to tap the unexplored power of the unconscious in its overturning of 'reality', of system, of convention (Young 1995: 191; see also Stoller 1992). Healing follows these kinds of rules also (cf. Biesele 1993; Katz 1982; Keeney 2005). For me and Jake Homiak, however, we wonder what role marijuana plays in all this 'boiling energy'. The substance is rarely mentioned in anthropological studies on trance-dancing, healing, and shamanism. Dope is a ubiquitous commodity in the Kalahari.

Rouch's use of surreality in film aimed to document the scientifically unexplainable, the immense experiential overload of ritual possession: *ciné-trance* offers a method to visualise, in the movement between observation and participation and across disjunctive points of view; the crossings-over into the unconscious world, much as we experienced it during the fire dance at Ngwatle (cf. also Sætre 2003; Reinhardt 2003; Lange *et al.* 2003: 87-90). Subject and

Objects are reconnected in the phaneron, which can include the noumenal – the possession – which is itself unknowable within normal scientific categories. By these means Rouch believed it to be possible to at least represent the noumenal even if science could not explain the phenomenon as such. Perhaps this is what the film *Dancing at the future*, was attempting to document.

The necessity for praxis is what makes the phaneron an ideal vehicle within which to conceptualise the idea of a context, since the difficulty associated with the real situation of crucial contexts generating conflicting actions is hard to theorise in the usual textual environment. As long as there is an insistence on all parties in a single juncture having to signify in an identical manner, as Rorty (1980) suggests is the case in the ‘epistemological’ tradition of the West, then the need for uniformity of subjectivities will persist. This uniformity, in turn, can only be conceived of where subjectivity is a disembodied non-material ghost in the machine, not subject to the concrete constraints of the real world within which signs are both generated and propagated. The noumenal is a discourse partly adopted by Belinda Kruiper in her comments about ‘truth’ and ‘from the heart’, as she mobilises essentialism as explanation in her interactions with all manner of visitors, including ourselves.

The phaneron of signification in Africa, then, necessarily includes some degree of indeterminacy in the way expected interpretants will be generated. This would be the case because, if Frans Tempels (1959) was correct, there will be always one subject seeing a whole undissociated ‘common sense’ textualised object, and at least one other experiencing a dynamic relation of force. The point is that without a sympathetic intellectual approach to what Bushmen might experience, there is no way of telling whether a programme *affecting* them is *intelligible* to them. This situation is something of a limiting case, in that for the most part the people in question have a history of getting by, irrespective of how the requirements of the political centre (before, during, or after colonisation) have changed in translation.

Africans have become accustomed to seeing well-meaning development agencies, engineers, and sociologists traipsing across their fields and squatter camps. They have become equally accustomed to seeing their efforts fail abjectly. A shift in the ground of the West’s common sense, which will loosen the hegemonic grip of Cartesian objectivity on the activity of intercultural engagement, is one of the requirements of our method. I tell students that dreams are as important to their analyses as any other form of knowing: They are required to be in research mode

24 hours a day. In June 2005, Belinda Kruiper reminded me of a nightmare I had had when we first stayed over at Blinkwater in 2002. Her advice was for me to de-stress, hang out, and let things happen.

The utility of the Peircean approach is its sensitivity to the material, spiritual, and cultural needs of peoples in worlds where modernity remains both a problem and a goal. Such peoples transcend at least three periodisations: the pre-modern, modern, and postmodern. The problem is that the totalising conception of individuality inherent in post-structuralist thought is rarely found in the field where the tyranny of community sustains some degree of social cohesion in otherwise embattled and often alcohol-driven disintegrating social structures. Self-serving individuality, however, does break out every now and again, mainly in the scramble for scarce resources, political positioning and, on occasion, the need to get intoxicated.

The task, for me if not for all my students, remains the democratic empowerment of those whose marginalization is often exacerbated by theories that condemn people to predetermined speaking positions on account of suspicious theories of culture. Power relations cannot be negated. Like ideology, we can engage them, try to tame them, and negotiate mutual benefit to the best ability of all parties to the encounter. They exist at all levels, enveloping everyone and everything, both explicitly and implicitly. As development worker Fiona Archer points out, the problem is that academic subtexts are often written alongside development texts - the latter are negotiated with sources, but the academic texts which often derive from development texts, often (re)appear in journalism, photo books, TV, and dissertations without warning, approval, or the initial understanding of the subjects. That's why, she argued, Belinda felt exploited: 'She had applied herself fully to the development text that was written for the Kalahari - only to find later that she had been part of two texts, unknowingly and unnegotiated with her' (Fiona Archer, e-mail, 18 June 2002).

In phaneroscopic terms, the twin texts - development, academic/journalism - form the often-ambiguous transtextual location where our sources frequently find themselves positioned by researchers. Researchers/writers, however, rarely make epistemological distinctions between the different texts - outcomes are basically different genres of the same text: Field report, research article, media release, white paper, video production, web entry, etc. This disagreement over category of discourse/genre is a prime example of indeterminacy of translation: the

academics' phaneron, in which everything is interconnected, here becomes an unwitting transgression of the ≠Khomani's separation of the respective texts into: a) developmental ('helpful to us'); b) research ('helpful to "them" in their careers'); and c) extraction/export ('money making' by often unknown pictorial and known alleged information thieves.) In a world where most of the Same will do anything to get themselves in the media to secure their 15 minutes of fame, this resistance by the Other to 'being represented' has more to do with the consequences of inappropriate development and strategies than it does with not wanting to become famous.

### *Absorbing exclusion/surviving through structuralism*

Third and Fourth World-peoples are argued to be 'Other' to the historical 'Same' of Europe (Mudimbe 1988). This relationship was predicated upon the differences assumed to define Europeans (the Same) in contradistinction to Africans (the Other). As argued in Chapter 5, two mutually exclusive avenues emerged when the victorious 'scientific' order of knowledge was faced with cultures predicated on other kinds of world views: the world view and behaviour of the Other was treated as 'priest-craft' (Rorty 1980: 328), and was consequently in need of vanquishment.

Conversely, 'science' tried to 'conserve' the Other in museums, media, mummification, body moulding for dioramas, and cultural tourism. Saartjie Baartman, a late 17th Century Khoi, for example, was taken to Europe, exhibited at freak shows, forced into prostitution, and even in death suffered further indignity as pathologists cut up and studied her 'exotic' genitals, brain, and buttocks. Having been dismembered, she was then resurrected and again put on public/pubic display at a Paris Museum. (Baartman's body was returned to South Africa in 2002 to a hero's welcome, where competing constituencies within the Khoisan community contested ownership over her remains.)

Africans have, since colonialism, often absorbed and applied to themselves the categories and methodologies of the European tradition. In a reverse/perverse kind of way, the 'traditional' ≠Khomani and some Ju/'hoansi villagers have internalised the Western discourse on 'Bushmen', and now represent themselves to the world in terms of this mythical image. (The !Xoo at Ngwatle do perform for cameras and the odd tourist party, but theirs is an organic enactment, not based on media images of 'the Bushmen'.) For the Kruipers especially, the result is multiple dependencies - economic, cultural and social - which exacerbate Kruiper

(and Ju/'hoansi) interactions in a world which now voraciously consumes images of cultural myths re-enacted by supposedly pre-modern peoples who realise that their very 'primitiveness' may well be their prime developmental resource in a postmodern economy. 'Ostri-San: Pink ostriches and real Bushmen', the title of an unpublished article by Elana Bregin, provides some indication of how such images are constructed:

The name did not bode well, conjuring up disturbing visions of 'farmed' Bushmen penned up alongside commercial ostriches ... But despite all my misgivings, the chance to meet 'real' Bushmen in the flesh was too enticing to resist. So I'd needed little persuading to leap into the battered Sani and head off into the hot blue yonder: destination, to check out Ostri-San, North West Province's newest 'cultural' attraction, described in the brochure as 'Ostrich Show Farm and Working Bushmen'.

Situated in the scenic heart of the Magaliesberg tourist Mecca ... Ostri-San is a unique combination of commercial farming venture, cultural village, museum and exotic spectacle. Turning in past the sign with flying pink Ostrich and bow-wielding Bushmen, we are greeted by the cheerful welcome of Ndebele-design flower boxes and pots in full bloom ... we are very glad of the chance to cool off and unwind at the outdoor tables of The Bushman's Cove Restaurant and Coffee Shop. The décor is, appropriately, Bushman theme ... we are not surprised to find a menu heavily weighted on the side of Ostrich cuisine.

... The venture is partly Danie Jacobs' brainchild ... He explains that San and ostriches both inhabit the Kalahari. Both fit uneasily into the conventional categories of nature. And ostriches have always featured large in San survival. So for him, no other name would do.

He shepherds us off to the appropriately named 'White House'. The long, thatch-roof building is divided into the Ostrich Production Unit, where hatching machines incubate up to a 1,000 eggs at a time; and a section devoted to the Bushman display.

I'm not sorry to leave the clinical environs of the ostrich production unit behind us and wander across to the adjacent Bushman section. Here, the walls are hung with sandstone slabs of Rock Art - facsimiles of the genuine articles found in the sandstone caves of the Cape Cedarberg Mountains and Natal Drakensberg. These

are ... the work of Danie himself, who has reproduced actual scenes from the caves ...

Standing beside a tepee-shaped *skerm* woven from the thatch of Kalahari dune grass, Danie takes us through an engrossing demonstration of 'Bushman life as it was' ... One can't help being awe-struck by the amazing knowledge, skill and enterprise of the Bushmen people, their complete attunement to the environment in which they lived. Everything had its use and nothing was wasted. They epitomised economy, balance, and respect for their environment, belonging without ownership. Ironically, it was these very qualities that spelt their doom. There was no place for them in a mercenary world that saw accumulation, possession, and ambition as the hallmarks of human value. **[vii]**

Danie leads the way energetically up the gravel path, past the ostrich pens full of long-necked, long-toed, long-lashed birds doing their high-stepping ballet trots or kneeling; stubby wings fanned out in graceful swaying courtship dance. At the top of the slope, is the Bushman 'village', where, beside thatch *skerms*, the people wait around their fire, clad in the expected traditional skins, the younger boys in beaded *gxais* or loincloths, the women bare-breasted and sporting ostrich skin skirts ...

The adults are hard at work, making their popular crafts to sell to the tourists. With great precision, they burn their delicate animal, insect, and human figures onto bone shards and stone slabs; or string necklaces and bracelets from seedpods and eggshell beads ...

The Bushmen (the term they themselves prefer to San) ... say they enjoy meeting people from other cultures and are eager for the chance to talk to them face to face, so that they can explain what they are about and clear up some of the misconceptions. It hurts them that they are continually talked about and written about by others, without any idea of what is being said. 'The words never come back to us', says group leader Isak Kruiper, whose Nama name !Gnoap means Porcupine. 'People don't always write the truth about us. But we don't know what they say, so we have no chance to correct the wrong impressions'. They appreciate it when visitors take the trouble to try and converse with them - even if through an interpreter, so that they have the chance to answer their questions themselves. How is it here for them at Ostri-San? It is not home, they say, and their hearts long for the red dunes of their beloved Kalahari, where every plant,



animal, bird, and insect is known to them. But here is where survival is. They have a plentiful supply of Ostrich eggs to paint on, all the Ostrich meat they can eat, and the opportunity to sell their crafts to tourists ...

Although not everyone in the party shared my feelings, I found my encounter with the First People a truly unforgettable experience. I felt as though I took a little bit of desert magic home with me.

The magic, however, was short-lived. A few years later we learned that Danie had left Ostri-San, and that in 2005 Coetzee was investigated by social services for exploiting the children who were on display for tourists when they should have been at school. Yet another example of the endless exploitation by white showmen of the Bushmen? Isak, Lys, Silikat, and some others moved back to Witdraai in late 2004.

Being represented is not in itself the issue. Representation is both income-generating and offers the promise of power. Dawid, for example, told us that he wants the Cape Town Museum to make a mould of him, for public display, when he dies. This diorama, previously located in a Museum of Natural History, sparked in the mid-1980s and beyond, intense ideological struggles on the part of the Khoi/San who argued that apart from the negative image of Khoi primitivity being perpetuated, that this kind of museumological representation is sacrilegious. Kruiper, however, sees a financial opportunity, and the possibility of his continued posthumous appeal to protect 'traditionalism', by joining his publicly displayed forebears in moulded form. It seems that most of the pressure to ban the diorama came from the urban, Christianised, Cape Khoi community, whereas the San interviewed by anthropologist Frans Prins, are proud to be associated with the diorama and would like it to be reassembled at the !Khwatla San Culture and Education Centre just outside Cape Town (e-mail, 14 June 2002). In Baartman's case, the Western scientific objectifying gaze destroyed the subject. On her 'liberation', the subject was again objectified, this time in a struggle between political discourses and constituencies, being fought out by specific claimants of the mantle of First People status. The central issue here is that of ownership (ideological, of origins, and of control of representation).

Postmodernism collapses the distinctions between science and priest-craft. Ethnography is here commodified via the language of cultural tourism, and is thinly dressed up in discourses of 'conservation', 'development', and 'eco-

tourism'. The 'Bushman' need to be preserved because 'we' can learn from (and exploit) their indigenous knowledge. The subject is the living custodian of an object: A science currently unknown to the Western world. The subject/object is then objectified in a scientific (mainly zoological) discourse in order to valorise new forms of knowledge. This new psychospiritual paradigm can be empowering to both observers and observed, though for different reasons (Sehume 2001). It can also be exploitative as modernist science and TV again plunder the knowledge of the indigenous Other (Chapter 5).

Methods we have developed to bridge the difference with our hosts provide a way for our informants to develop and relate to, and develop, written accounts to impact both wider perception and policy via their own record-in-the-making (for example, Bregin and Kruiper 2004). In other words, they have learned to play the scripto-centric game via: a) subverting the textual epistemologies of outside chroniclers and agents; and b) the power and status conferred upon specific members/leaders of the community who have allied themselves to particular textual epistemologies encoded, for example, in the work of development and other agencies. In resisting writers/TV-producers and their texts about them (especially if they claim not to have been paid, or underpaid, for their cooperation), the traditional ≠Khomani - for all their complaining - work with us partially, I suspect, because our own texts are encouraged to document perceived instances of indigenous knowledge theft, inequitable power relations, and other transgressions, whether external, internal, or domestic, to the cooperating community.

### *Political economy: Negotiating differentiation*

Our research has revealed how even marginalized and dependent communities negotiate global processes and structures in pre-modern, modern and postmodern contexts, even in the face of globally determining structures, discourses, and processes (Boloka 2001; Simões 2001b). This work opens up previously unelaborated analytical spaces that account for the nature of social and cultural action between the global and the local, and between often-isolated communities and globalising structures. They provide ways of understanding local communal and individual intersubjective negotiations of global processes, and also suggest strategies for continuing this inter-interstitial research in which ordinary, often marginalized communities' experiences and statements can be actively included into explanations provided by the political economy-paradigm. Human agency is

thereby returned to the analysis, and previously hostile subject-communities begin to appreciate the symbolic value of being included in someone else's story. Perhaps the outcome is this: The (San) Other now has a vehicle by means of which to respond to and engage the (researchers') Same. This has very real policy implications.

It also has serious implications for the ways in which we as cultural studies-scholars go about our work. The question is, do we have the capacity to decentre the field's whiteness, its Eurocentricism and its growing textualist hegemony? If so, this requires that we consider, in this case, our sometimes literate, sometimes a-literate and more usually illiterate subjects, as co-producers of knowledge. They know where they stand in this uneasy relationship, but do we? Reversing the power relations, the intellectual gaze, and the value of our research is not just an intellectual exercise. It's an ethical one too.

## NOTES

[i] Allied concepts are Raymond Williams' (1958) 'structures of feeling', and Richard Hoggart's (1979) contention that literature is a way of knowing. These concepts are especially useful where historical analysis is concerned and where it is impossible for researcher to experience conditions first-hand.

[ii] Sponsored by the BBC Comic Relief group, most of whom had visited the project.

[iii] Perhaps Kruiper has a point. A recently published book, *Bushman Shaman* by Bradford Keeney (2005), based on research conducted in Botswana, carries a picture of the Kruipers conducting a dance by firelight in a cave at the Kagga Kamma Park, in the Western Cape, South Africa. The picture is copyrighted to a photographic agency, and its performers were not the subjects of the research. This disjuncture between the community photographed on the cover and those studied is not explained in the book.

[iv] Elana had joined us on a visit to Ostri-San in September 2001, discussed below, and had generated media publicity for Vetkat's art exhibitions in Durban, where she met Belinda and formed a relationship with her. Oets later drove Elana to Blinkwater in May 2003 where the genesis of the book took shape. The UKZN-Press is an independent organisation.

[v] Students have different ways of relating to their host communities: auto-ethnography (McLennan-Dodd 2003), surrealism (Lange 2003b), via travel writing (Jeursen and Tomaselli 2002), more formal 'textual' theories like Pro Poor

Tourism (Wang 2002), self-reflexive identity analysis (Ndlela 2002) to comparative identity analysis (Simões 2001a), the psychospiritual (Sehume 2002), and so on.

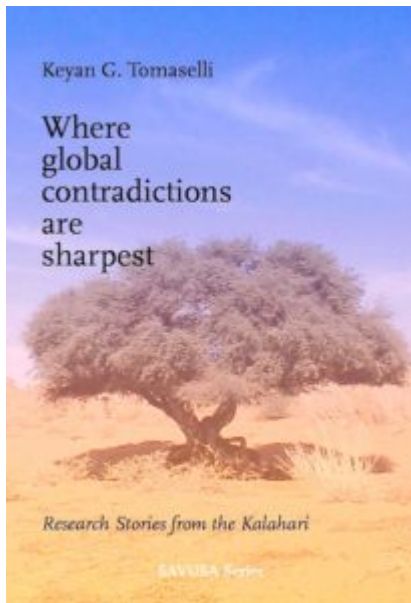
[vi] I had not been able to secure a copy of this book prior to publication, but the website blurb from New Age Eric Utne of *The UTNE Reader* states: 'Keeney's vision is leading the vanguard in defining and articulating the territory between psychology and the spirit'.

[vii] Danie Jacobs' association with the Kruiper family goes back many years; a relationship he built up as a youngster during his frequent family holiday visits to the Kalahari. A stint as a tour guide on the Kagga Kama private game farm in the northeastern Cape, where the Kruiper family were ensconced as tourist attractions - cemented the relationship. He still maintained the connection with his old friends the Kruipers, however, most of whom subsequently left Kagga Kama to move onto government-allocated land, where, with no income, infrastructure or development prospects, they were fighting a losing battle for survival in conditions of extreme poverty, degradation, and despair. When the opportunity came to join forces with André Coetzee and his commercial Ostrich Farming enterprise, Danie immediately saw the potential for involving the Bushmen in a sustainable income-generating venture (Bregin).

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## **Where Global Contradictions Are Sharpest ~ References**

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*This list relates to the first formal interviews conducted. Supplementary interviews were obtained throughout the ten-year study period. The dates of these comments are provided in the text.*

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