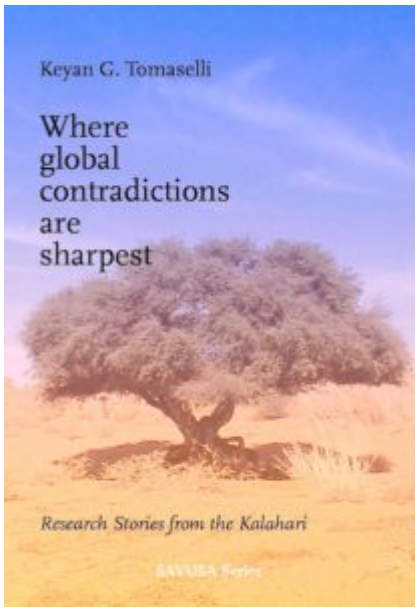
Where Global Contradictions Are Sharpest ~ ‘Dit is die Here se Asem’: The Wind, Its Messages, And Issues Of Autoethnographic Methodology In The Kalahari



The wind. One of my research assistants, a student in Afrikaans literature, told me about the wind. Formerly a physiotherapist, Nelia Oets has spent a lot of time in the Kalahari Desert on photographic safaris. I have also spent a lot of time in the desert. I had not previously experienced the wind. We woke to the wind on 8 July 2001, at Ngwatle Pan. It was unremitting, it was uncomfortable, it destabilised our tents, and blew away some of our camping items. It swept the campfire’s flames onto two of our camp chairs, our only luxuries, and burned them to cinders. Caleb woke in his tent staring up at the moon – which should not have been visible. He had to retrieve and tie up his flysheet with his bootlaces. He later remarked about my requirements that everyone bring spare laces. Nelia had warned us about the wind.

Nelia’s warning, together with the experience, reminded me of two other references to the wind. The first was by Paul Myburgh, whom I had interviewed on *People of the Great Sandface* (1989). He talked about the wind as some kind of existential and elemental force, listening to the desert speak (Myburgh 1989; cf. Gordon 1990b). Belinda Kruiper revealed a similar description to us in August 2000. Both descriptions have spiritual connotations, ‘It’s the ancestors speaking’, we were told. The !Kung whom Elizabeth Marshall Thomas (1959: 126) met in the 1950s, called the spirits of the ancestors the ‘*kwe be ha ki*’ (‘person who is not here’). ‘These spirits travel in the wind – not the open, blowing wind, but in whirlpools’, which living people try to avoid. Perhaps someone who is no longer here inhabited the wind that blew Caleb’s flysheet away in 2000? When our long-

standing friends, Johannes and Baba (Kort-Jan) Nxai, joined us at Ngwatle, we asked them about the wind. They just complained about the cold, the discomfort, and asked us to give them warm jackets. This chapter continues on from Chapter 2. The same characters appear. Some new ones are introduced. I am again concerned with methodology rather than ethnographic description, with the nature of relations between observers and observed, and with problematising relations between observers.

Hunting With Pampiere ('Papers')

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

Kort-Jan and Johannes relived their memories of Masetleng Pan, where a now derelict borehole had once serviced their site. We photographed the remains of the installation, and ate berries from nearby trees. They took us to another of the campsites where Johannes had helped the contractor, Keith Viljoen from the Hukuntsi Trading Store, to build. We climbed up the hide and looked into the distance, surrounding us on all sides, the pan to the south, and trees, shrubs and grass to the north. I remembered being here in 1995, just after Waldron and

//Huru!ka (Petrus) Nxai had hunted a bat-eared fox. This was the Pan where Conrad Steenkamp had found some Stone Age flints.

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

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

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

Methodology: Just what are we doing?

I think about the self-reflexive, open-ended, flexible, and totally unscientific methodology we have developed in documenting the experiences and perceptions

of many of the Ngwatle sojourners (Simões 2001b; McLennan-Dodd 2003; Lange 2003b). In 1995, because none of us spoke Tswana, we talked only to Petrus and Kort-Jan, in their relatively archaic Afrikaans learned when they worked for some white farmers in 'Suid-Wes' (South West Africa, now Namibia). I did not understand some of it. At the time I did not know why. My Afrikaans-speaking associates, Chantel Oosthuysen and Nelia, who joined the project in 2000 and 2001 respectively, described the Ngwatle Afrikaans dialect as being of their grandparents' and great grandparents' generations.

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

In 1999, we had two Tswana speakers, Jeffrey Sehume and Gibson Boloka, both PhD-students. This was the first time that any visitors had arrived with black South Africans who spoke the Botswanan national language, and with whom they could talk. Their ability to speak Tswana, and their blackness, helped quick

identification and relationship building. Rob Waldron's assistant, Ellie Moloka, was also a first language Tswana speaker. While the Tswana dialects are not always easy to understand, Jeffrey and Gibson managed, with the help of third party intermediaries like Pedris Motshibane, to get a handle on their responses and comments. He always carried a pen and notebook with him. He spent a lot of time with us, acted as a guide, interpreter, and was a key informant on community issues, and with regard to his interpretation of scenes in *The Gods must be crazy* (Uys 1980).

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

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

Baboons, wisdom and othering

Caleb used the experience at Ngwatle 2000 to formulate his ideas for his dissertation on pro-poor tourism (Ashley *et al*. 2001), to be completed 18 months later (Wang 2001). Gibson's engagement occurred within a globalising

framework. The 1999-trip was the first time he had visited another African country. His travel experiences through border posts and passport offices, cell phone signal footprint cut-offs, and seeing satellite dishes on even small rural *pondocks* (small dwellings), grabbed his immediate attention. In theorising what he observed, he connected the macro with the micro, the global and the local, and explained other issues like centrefolds of South African soccer stars in San houses, in terms of resistance (Boloka 2001).

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

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

In 1995, the bulk of the village was located in a closely-knit *kraal* (circular settlement). In 1999, we noticed that the *kraal* was derelict and that ten or so families had dispersed over a kilometre in diameter. Only in 2000 did we learn that the reason was that a government official had asked them to move in order

for formal houses to be built. No houses were built, but the community remained locationally fragmented, the heart of the community abandoned to the wind, cattle and foraging goats, cows, horses and donkeys, and the wildlife passing through. The result was a *vlakte* ('plains') through which the wind relentlessly blew an alienating feeling of impending desolation. In July 2001, the men were drunker than usual, for longer than usual, and more often than usual. They used the money we paid them for their artefacts and services to buy sugar to make alcohol. The women warned us that if we waited until 3 pm to distribute the clothes we had brought them, all the men would be drunk. So we brought the time forward to 1 pm. Only one woman was obviously drunk.

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

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

mannetjie ('middle hump') of sand and grass in the centre of the cutline. Unlike the previous year, we did not lose anything off the Sani.

On arrival, we had driven to Kort-Jan's abode. He was sitting outside with a neighbour. He told us that he had been thinking about us and that he could feel it in the middle of his forehead, where Lobsang Rampa**[v]** would locate the third eye, and where he said the baboon felt things. On hearing the vehicle he knew we had arrived (SBB had told the village of our impending trip). Kort-Jan said he 'knew' that we had brought a jacket for him. While we had brought lots of second-hand clothes for the community, we did not know if a jacket was included. We'd see when we distributed the goods the next day. On unpacking the clothes donated by ourselves, our families and students from the Universities of Natal, and the North, I reserved a jacket for him: its Adidas Club-logo looking old and forlorn in this very remote area.

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

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

That morning about 40 members of the community welcomed our camp. Two children arrived first, followed by Kort-Jan, Kaptein, Johannes Nxai, many more young children and about 8 women with their babies whom we had previously met. We offered the women the regards from the females, Anthea, Meredith, Susan and Charlize, who had previously accompanied us. After a lot of talking they left, planning to return at 1 pm when it was agreed that we would distribute the clothing. Since neither Miriam nor the SBB-gatekeeper was present, there seemed to be no women on the local committee, if one indeed still existed. The

SBB-gatekeeper**[viii]** was now also working for the Land Board in Hukuntsi. Later, two children joined us at the campfire and waited until the community returned. We were all making notes in the Sani, out of the wind, which nevertheless reminded us of its presence by its incessant sound, whipping against its open windows, and mercilessly shaking the vehicle. The community gathered quite quickly, with their dogs and donkeys, 70 adults and about 20 children.

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

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

Pedris took us to see Miriam at Monong, 47 kms from Ngwatle. She and Pedris told us a little of the history of the Basarwa at Ngwatle. Most lived at Hukuntsi, and some, like their parents, were born at Ngwatle, others like Kort-Jan, at Ukhwi. The Hukuntsi headman asked them to leave Hukuntsi because the Bushmen were thought to be stealing cattle and goats belonging to the Bakgalagadi townspeople. So the Motshibises moved to Ngwatle. Now the

Bakgalagadi were also moving in, with their cattle that were despoiling the waterhole dug up in the pan, meant for human, not animal consumption. The !Xoo complained to the government about the Bakgalagadi cattle and incomers. A government official scolded them. Kaptein, however, remained a sign of unity. As Gibson suggests, 'Kaptein is a symbol of the hybrid community of Ngwatle (being a mixture of !Xoo and Kgalagadi). It is through him that one has to understand this community, hence we have to ask permission from him before pitching our tents in the area'. As Gadi had told us in 1999, on being interviewed by Waldron:
I am a Bushman, I say I'm a Bushman, it's just my skin that's black, my father's skin, also nerves and my blood and my mercy. I just know I'm a Bushman because the life that I live is the life of a Bushman … The language that I speak is Kgalagadi …

Hybridity brings its own angst. As Gadi explained:
I grew up amongst the Bushmen. And the only mercy that I had was the Bushman's mercy because I was smart around the Bushmen and I saw all sorts of things in the Bushman and I knew how life is through the Bushmen.

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

Dependencies and demands
On this, our fourth arrival, we were considered 'friends', and so the men directly asked us for gifts. 'Where are my clothes?', asked Pedris, a day after we had handed them all out. I told him this. He still wanted 'his' clothes, so I gave him my spare pair of pants and a safari waistcoat. The next day he wanted P50 to get the bus back to Tshabong. I paid him P10 for the bus and P10 for an interview. Kort-Jan wanted 'his' jacket; someone tried to sell us two necklaces immediately on our arrival. Tshomu wanted to know if we brought him his radio battery, and the water truck driver demanded the videotape of the 2000-trip. The only thing that was negotiable was whether or not we wanted to buy artefacts. Prices, however, are rarely negotiable. Did we set up the expectations in 2000 when we handed out 500 items of clothing? We were not the first to do so, but we were the first to ensure a fair distribution mechanism. In 1999, Waldron was very edgy about giving anything to the community, for fear of unleashing dependency

relationships. His method was to pay for items bought, and for services rendered, like Petrus teaching him hunting. But we saw and felt the biting cold, and we believed that they had a right to choose whether or not to receive the clothing we had brought them. We noticed that some are much more acquisitive than others as they yelled and shouted, demanding and subverting whatever distribution process had been communally agreed to. We were told that because Tshomu only has three family members, he should not get as much as the other families, which average ten. The last item was a bunch of sewing items in a cake tin. I suggested that these should be a donation to the community, as everyone could make use of them. The Kaptein said he would hold the items in trust. There were loud objections. Each wanted his/her families' share, a zip here, a button there, some thread and a few needles. The noisy woman got a one-piece swimming costume. She complained loudly, then went to a tree and put it on under her dress. Others received bras, bits of material and even lounge wear. I wondered at the appropriateness of some of these items. I reserved a jacket for Kort-Jan. He is very old, and in need of one, I justified this to myself, but I only gave it to him that night, when no one was looking. At the end of the distribution, the Kaptein, whose family had a member collecting clothes, asked me where was his jacket? The next day he turned up for his *mielie* (maize) meal – he was very drunk on the first night of our arrival. He was marginally less drunk now.

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

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

fur lined leather jacket, bought at a new South African chain store in Hukuntsi.

At Monong a new red and purple brick school intrigued us. We saw the same structures with small cottages for the teachers at Ukhwi. We drove past the Monong pre-primary school also squatting in the sand. The brick structure had pictures of the boy Tarzan, two of Mickey Mouse, one of Goofy, a green turtle and a cartoon impression of what, after much discussion, we decided must be Nelson Mandela as a boy. It was school holidays, so we didn't have the opportunity to ask the children or teachers about these incongruous images in the desert; we just videoed them.

Borders, lost safaris and othering

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

The Afrikaans-speaking farmer told us he could speak some South Sotho, as if trying to impress us. I told them that I have an aircraft compass in my Sani, which is how I don't get lost; also because I always travel with someone who knows the area. So I showed them where they were on my map, and they sketched in the

roads on theirs. Then I drew an imaginary line of the road they needed to take from Zutshwa to get to the Park. One of the men's young daughters recognised the name and said that someone along the way mentioned the village. The other man told me he was a veterinarian, and asked us if we were biologists. Gibson tried to tell them how to find the right roads, but they thought he was our general *factotum*, and told Darryn that '*onse swartes*' ('our blacks') to whom they had talked *en route* knew more than did Gibson. Gibson, like them, is a South African, but because he is black, he was othered. They were in a hurry as they had a booking at the Park. I told them to go ahead, as they wanted to travel fast. They hared off in a cloud of dust. We told them to wait for us, or ask for Kort-Jan or Johannes, who speak Afrikaans, if they were unsure about the turnoff. If they were surprised that people speak Afrikaans in Botswana they didn't show it,**[ix]** they just reminded us that one of their number spoke a little South Sotho. We sent the farmer, the vetenerarian and their respective families on their way, and the Sani shook with mirth at the stupidity of our own countrymen.

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

The Afrikaans-speaking community was also declining, centred as it was around Kort-Jan's family, with his sons spread out between Ukhwi and Kaa. Not speaking Tswana or Kgalagadi in this shifting community structure is a serious impediment for the !Xoo. Kort-Jan tells us he is trying to learn Tswana.

When we ask why the !Xoo don't own cattle, we are told that they don't know how to look after them. Darryn exclaims that they could learn! This reminds me of the same relationship which existed between the Ju/'hoansi and the Herero, evident in John Marshall's early 1950s filmed outtakes. The San seem to work within client-patron relationships, but do little or nothing to ensure balance or reciprocity.

Aiming for the Northern Cape

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

We went to the Park gate. Two coloured officials told us that we could not take the road south unless we had a permit. I offered to buy one, but they told me that I had to get it in South Africa. They told me that the entrance is in South Africa, not here, and that only vehicles in a convoy of two or more are permitted. I must go back via Hukuntsi – a terrible road under construction where Gibson and I previously got partly lost. I told the officials that I didn't have enough petrol to get to Hukuntsi, but I would have sufficient to get to the camp at the Mabuasehube game park, where I could scavenge for petrol from another camper. I showed them the map and they agreed that we should travel southeast along the perimeter of the adjoining Transfrontier Park, 148 kilometres, to get to Mabuasehube. They were concerned as this was not a well-travelled road. I told

him that the road back to Hukuntsi was travelled only by SBB, and that their vehicle was in Ukhwi. So they radioed the camp office at Mabuasehube and asked the official to come looking for us if we didn't arrive in three or four hour's time. We left disheartened. 148 kilometres is a helluva long way in the sand. It's a straight southeast line except for a slight eastern tilt 40 kms from the gate. As we reached this co-ordinate, and as the compass reflected the small change in direction, a loud cheer went up from Darryn, Gibson and Caleb. I was unaware that they were so apprehensive. They remarked that Jon-Jon might have saved us a day's drive by telling us about the permit.

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

Gob-smacked by 'civilisation'

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

The bus station was closed. Passers-by assured us that the bus for Johannesburg would come through at 7 or 8 pm. We phoned – the next bus was Sunday morning, and it was full. We went to the Spur steakhouse, and watched a car guard running this way and that, ushering vehicles into parking spaces, much to the bemusement of their drivers. At least in Durban the car guards are polite, official and wear identifying vests.**[x]** They don't harass the drivers, and are gracious if they are not paid anything. My students explained that many car guards also are the backbone of drug distribution networks. Car guarding absorbs the vast urban unemployed class protecting our property from the overwhelming

criminal element. The Durban car guards are not drunk, they do not nag, and they don't use children to pull on the guilt strings of those more fortunate than them. This man was obnoxious. By 2005, however, the Upington car guards wore yellow vests sporting the police emergency number, though the drunken itinerants were still plying their trade.

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

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

that he told the villagers not to nag us. Only Silikat van Wyk, an artist, turned up to sell me something. Caleb, who met him again later, said that Silikat was very excited to meet me, as I was the 'professor' who had sent Belinda Kruiper my book on the San. He did not remember me from the Oudtshoorn conference, but my book had stuck in his mind.

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

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

Methodology and customer relations

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

Land is not capital. As local white farmers and business people repeatedly told us; land is only useful if its owners 'add value'. Value, in fact, was being subtracted from the land by the traditionalists, we were constantly told.**[xi]** Only the

pastoralists were using their land productively, and without the same kind of state financial support as the 'traditionalists' were getting. But what irks the traditionals and Belinda Kruiper the most, apart from their poverty, is the alleged acquisitive attitude of researchers, photographers and journalists, who are not seen to reciprocate adequately.**[xii]**

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

Visiting Witdraai is quite unlike our reception at Ngwatle, where no one begs or assumes that they are necessarily entitled to handouts. Many engaging in begging in the Northern Cape do have jobs, while others engage in informal income earning activities. Some traditional ≠Khomani have branded themselves as 'poor'. Two NGO-workers told us in September 2004, that ≠Khomani individuals approach stopped cars with the plaintive refrain, 'I'm ≠Khomani San, give me R10'. Is begging the postmodern equivalent of foraging perhaps? I dismiss the

thought as being sociobiologically deterministic, especially as exchange relations have typified our experiences amongst the !Xoo and Ju/'hoansi further north. In 2001, travel agencies warned their clients not to stop at the Witdraai road stalls, as tourists were sometimes sworn at, and occasionally had to negotiate roadblocks, when they failed to buy anything (Carter, interview, July 2001). The *WIMSA Annual Report* (2001/2: 30) carries an item on tourism training for the San, focusing on 'a general basic understanding of visitors from abroad, their needs and expectations and their 'strange' way of doing and seeing things'. The WIMSA report however makes no mention of customer relations, the need to treat tourists with dignity, nor of the need to develop entrepreneurial skills, no doubt implied in its course curriculum. Tourists, we were told by the local business people and others who trade, are simply seen as a convenience, rather than as a market to be cultivated with proper service. A deep sense of entitlement seemingly fostered by NGOs, development workers, lawyers, state officials, academics, and so on, has located the ≠Khomani not only within a variety of dependency relations, but has also imbued them with unrealistic expectations of what to expect from tourists and those hoteliers who do offer to assist them.

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

The problem in dealing with individual needs within structurally induced destitution is the bugbear of all development NGOs. Policy work of the kind conducted by agencies like SASI and Farm Africa takes time. Implementation via donors and state agencies takes much longer if recommendations are accepted. But destitute individuals have real and pressing daily needs. The concluding section below thus attempts to explain the apparent contradiction which occurs

when researchers who were ‘here’, return home to the academy or NGO ‘there’, and why individuals, personalities, and informants, and the concrete nature of storytelling, disappear in the generalized writing up of what was learned.

From ‘there’ to ‘here’: Methodology

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

Conceptual innovation sometimes occurs by accident. On my return to Durban in August 2001, I had to write a tenure evaluation on Nate Kohn’s work (cf. 1998; 1994a; 1994b). Much of my recent work has been written using a similar self-reflexive, semi-autobiographical style, in which I use my own research experiences to elucidate theory, subjectivity, process and form. Kohn, however, is a past master at this kind of analysis, being popularised in publications like Norman Denzin’s *Cultural Studies: A research volume* and *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies*. My own work derives to some extent from Kohn, while my earlier forays only achieved delayed publication: neither I nor journal editors knew what to do with this kind of writing, now published as the ‘Preface’ to my book, *Appropriating images* (1999b) and elsewhere. On reading Kohn’s Personal Statement, the penny dropped. We are partly doing ‘autoethnography’, defined by Mary Louise Pratt (1999) as ‘a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them’. At the Blinkwater campfire, Vetkat and Klein Dawid, backed up by Silikat, spontaneously composed songs about us, about research and researchers, and about their condition, to the accompaniment of a guitar, a drum and bouncing xylophone type of instrument sent to Silikat by an appreciative German tourist.

We want to return to listen to, and learn from, these melodious representations of our work and ourselves. Namibian linguist, Levi Namaseb, concludes that Belinda's criticisms and these songs are 'the fruits of the listening by means of an article like this'. What can we learn from them about what they have learned from their encounters with us? This was the first time in a long while the men had so spontaneously played music, Belinda told us; such was the despair of the ≠Khomani community at large. Only that week, one old woman at Welkom, Ouma Antas Kariseb, Dawid's sister, had died. She had been the key source for many an academic thesis and article, and doctoral students,**[xiv]** who had allegedly failed to return the results of their work to them. Belinda Kruiper again:
Surely copies could be made … the researcher goes back, and transcribes and sends … Knowing this is not just about taking knowledge and going away … it's an education sharing, it's exchanging cultural information, from this whole thing … people are being cured, tablets are being made (cf. Hawthorne, 2001). Why is the process always outside the place where people live? Ouma Antas wanted me to get all the research material so that I can make sure the children get something back one day. That's all she ever wanted [from the exchange]. She doesn't trust what's out there. And she's dead today. A student came, took her knowledge, and now has a job and a car (interview, 24 July 2001).

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

In July 2001, Belinda was malnourished and stressed, and my vehicle (as have those of other researchers) became an ambulance for her and another woman

who needed to get to the Clinic 65 kms south. Nelia, Mary, her family, and I thus took on the role at different times of ensuring the provision of food and vitamins when we meet the Blinkwater community.**[xv]** Where were the NGO-workers, their vehicles and their institutional support, we were asked? Why do the occasional academic visitors have to take on this social work role, we asked? The traditionalists and those at Blinkwater only had donkey carts, which can take hours to coral and hook-up. Expectations of what academics (as opposed to NGO-officials) are able to deliver have thus perhaps become necessarily unrealistic.

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

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

Belinda translates and discusses our documents with her husband and others in her community around the campfire. They always wonder what happened to their stories and experiences when the researcher returns to the academy, where narratives coming from their very deep existentialist senses of being, personality and soul have been converted into abstract, generalized points of theoretical principle, in which the individual subjects, narratives, and story-tellers no longer feature in the ways experienced during the encounter. What is a legitimate objective for the academic and NGO-researcher is often alienating, disappointing, and is seen as dishonest by these researchers' subject communities, sources and

hosts.[xvi] Observers like academics, live in trajectories of mobility, change and difference, while those they observe, film or write about – the 'natives' – are often easily identifiable because they are relatively immobile and therefore knowable and reproducible in media and books. Local cultural knowledge is constructed, imaged and written to be understood by readers *beyond* the cultures and communities in which the author, photographer and filmmaker is working/visiting, or about which s/he is writing.

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

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

impacts on policies? That she previously worked for SASI gives her a good insight into how to impact issues and attitudes from a variety of perspectives. To dismiss the contradictory positions of intellectuals like Belinda as non-San, as outsiders, is to ignore their discursive, intellectual and kinship roles within the communities alongside or within which, or against which, they conduct themselves. Resources are lost, excommunicated and silenced.

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

Peroration

What is for now is the wind. Ouma Antas has become part of the wind. On leaving Ngwatle Pan at the end of a week's stay, I heard a different sound being made by the wind. It sounded like a Formula 1 Grand Prix. I realised that each pan has its own tone, its own timbre, and its own pitch, depending on the speed and direction of the wind, the direction and angle of one's ears, and the size of the pan. At

Ngwatle Pan, in July 2002, I realised that the wind plays music – it creates multi-tonal pipe music blowing through the barbed wire fence and the pipes holding it up. I talked to Tim Reinhardt's (2002) camera, discussing how the fence and the right-angled shadow were a metaphor for a variety of opposites: freedom and captivity/insiders and outsiders/the past and the future, that the fence and its shadow signified an uncertain future for Ngwatle. And then the music died. The wind had stopped the moment Reinhardt turned off his camera. The silence was eerie. Was the future as ominous? The wind is important for hunting, for disguising the smell of the hunter. The Formula 1 sound is indicative of our need to hurry, to get to the Northern Cape. Every time I visit the Kalahari, the wind takes on new significance: metaphorical, symbolical, metaphysical, methodological and climatological. Now, in 2002, the brief absence of the wind was also chilling. The Bushmen know the elements; they live their lives and wits by them. They hunt by them. They sleep outside on the coldest nights and the hottest days. They have an existential relationship with the land, the sky and the sand, shifting dunes, and the wind. The hunters at Ngwatle have learned to keep their *pampiere* safe from the wind. Without these papers they cannot eat meat. In the new Botswana economy, paper means protein, resources, and legitimacy. In the Northern Cape, paper means land. The !Xoo at Ngwatle are not permitted to hunt without their *pampiere*. They now have to negotiate the existential trials and legal constraints of modernity. The swish of the wind takes on a new meaning under these circumstances. This natural wind should not be confused with the rarefied gusts of academia.

NOTES

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

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

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

[iv] The need for permits to exercise hunting traditions, coupled with the community's signing over of their quotas to SBB, removes hunting as a central organisational economic activity. Their negative response to camels, initially

thought to be introduced like cows, is seen as just another indicator of communal-local displacement, perhaps also contributing to the substance abuse so evident during the 2001-visit (e-mail, J. Sehume, 13 August 2001).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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