

**REMAKING /XAM NARRATIVES IN A
POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA**



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**A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Arts in History,
University of the Western Cape, May 2010**

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Abstract

Public history has become a dynamic new field of study in South African historiography during the post-apartheid period. As a field of applied history, it has been engaged with analysing the highly contested nature of knowledge production across a wide range of public sites. These include museums, art galleries, archaeological digs, theme-parks, shopping malls, tourist attractions and heritage sites. The wider national cultural and political challenge has been that of working towards restoration, healing, and reparation in the wake of a colonial and apartheid history marked by particularly acute brutality and dispossession.

This thesis analyses the attempts of one public institution, the Iziko South African Museum, to negotiate the remaking of public history in the post-apartheid period. Unlike some of the newer sites of cultural production, such as the Cape Town Waterfront and the West Coast cultural village of !Kwa-ttu, the South African Museum has a century-long history of complicity in generating images of racial and cultural others, notably *Khoisan* communities. The thesis begins by exploring this history and the ways in which the South African Museum has tried to come to terms with this legacy in its post-apartheid policies: firstly, in the discussions and debates around the closing of the *Bushman diorama* (2001), and secondly, in the creation of a new exhibition on San rock art which draws extensively on the Bleek-Lloyd Collection (*!Qe: The Power of Rock Art. Ancestors, Rain-making and Healing*, 2003 to the present).

The Iziko South African Museum has not been successful in its attempts to meet the challenge of coming to terms with its history of collecting human remains and creating body casts and putting them on display. I argue that the measures it has introduced over the last twenty two years, including the 'revision of the Bushman diorama exhibition' (1988-89), to *Miscast* (1996), and the closure of the diorama (2001), are little more than window-dressing and staged productions, with lip-service being paid to transformation. In the place of the effective opening out of debate and discussion about the Museum's history of racial scientific research, we have seen the presentation of a new framework of knowledge about *Khoisan* communities through the 'lens of rock art research' and the Bleek-Lloyd-/Xam records. I see these as a way of sanitising the story about colonialism and apartheid. In making these arguments I draw upon a number of scholarly works by academics involved in public and visual history; recent literature on trauma narratives; Foucauldian discourse; and newspaper

clippings, e-mail correspondence and interviews. I argue that the making of new meanings has been impaired rather than enabled, owing to the minimal consultation of, and participation by, groups with bona fide interest in these displays; while access is restricted and communities are increasingly marginalised by development issues and the digitisation of rock art.

The last section of the thesis looks at what I see as a more dynamic and responsible attempt to engage with the issues of Khoisan cultural history and public representations of that history, albeit on a much smaller scale than the *Bushman Diorama* and the */Qe* exhibition. Here I argue that a recent exhibition entitled *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, which was held at the Universities of Cape Town and the Western Cape between 2006 and 2008, provides a more fluid, open-ended and negotiated concept of knowledge production and also, importantly, attempts to address the issues of dispossession and trauma which are at the heart of Khoisan history and cultural experience in southern Africa. I conclude by reflecting on the contrast between the institutional inertia at the Iziko South African Museum and the emergence of some more exciting recent displays on the fringes of its institutional culture, and especially in community museums, in the post-apartheid period in South Africa.



Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my husband Ashley and my children Kaylen, Matthew and Aidan for their unconditional patience, love and motivation while completing this thesis. I also thank my parents and in-laws who never had the opportunity to pursue secondary or tertiary education themselves, but who have provided me with constant support and assistance.

My primary intellectual debts are to members of staff in the History Department at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Heartfelt thanks to my supervisor, Andrew Bank, for his frank support, patience, motivation, reminders and feedback. Andrew Bank was particularly helpful in providing close editorial assistance and guiding me in the work of writing and rewriting during the final stages of the thesis. I'm also equally appreciative of the dedication and commitment of Professors Leslie Witz and Ciraj Rassool, my mentors in the MA in Public and Visual History coursework programme which laid the foundations for the writing of this thesis. My fellow UWC student, friend and colleague Fiona Clayton also deserves special mention as she often provided information, expertise, support and careful advice.

Administrative assistants seldom get the recognition they deserve. Janine Brandt, Jane Smidt and Lameez Lalkhen, the administrative managers of the History Department and Centre for Humanities Research at UWC respectively, have provided support and assistance over many years. I am also grateful to the generous informants who granted interviews and shared in rich detail their experiences of contributing to museum projects, most notably Janette Deacon, Jenny Sandler, Roger van Wyk and Geoffrey Blundell. Gerald Klinghardt of the Social History Department of Iziko South African Museum and Sadeeck Casoojee in Library Services at Iziko SAM provided documents, e-mail correspondence and photocopies, while the libraries of UWC, UCT, the University of the Witwatersrand and UNISA provided access to requested materials.

The Research Directorate workshops at UNISA were a further source of support in the late stages of this thesis. Colleagues and staff, notably Hannes van Vuuren in Academic Literacy at UNISA, need to be thanked for ongoing support and granting study leave. I also thank my former colleagues at the UWC Writing Centre like Fatima Slemming, Mauritz van Bever Donker and Lincoln Bernardo who in the earlier stage of the thesis informally inducted me in

the aspects of reading and writing, and provided moral and intellectual support. A word of thanks also goes out to Jill Weintroub and Siona O’Connell who gave me permission to cite from their theses.

Special thanks to Marjorie Gettliffe and her husband Barry for their intensive editorial work on the final drafts of this thesis. My M.A. in Public and Visual History was partially funded by the National Research Foundation. I am grateful for their assistance, although they are of course in no way responsible for the views expressed here.



Introduction

I was first taken to the South African Museum, now the Iziko South African Museum (SAM), in Cape Town by an aunt in the 1970s, when I was still a very small child. Although I was too young to comprehend its meaning fully, the display of lifelike figures in the *Bushman Diorama* struck me as something quite tragic and melodramatic. I went there again as a primary school child; and when others laughed, I pretended to laugh along with them, although I was not sure what was so funny. During a large part of my working life from 1990 to 2005, as an educator at several secondary schools in the Western Cape, I took learners beyond the confines of the history classroom to the Castle, the Cultural History Museum (now the Slave Lodge), the South African Museum, the Bo-Kaap Museum, the Robben Island Museum and the District Six Museum. As we tried to make sense of these sites, displays, images and exhibitions, I realized the extent to which our very identities were caught up in these representations of the past.

The *Bushman Diorama* with its cast figures was closed or ‘archived’ by the Iziko SAM in 2001. I enrolled four years later for the Postgraduate African Programme in Museum and Heritage Studies at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and subsequently for the Masters Programme in Public and Visual History. I have in retrospect come to realize that my motivation to enrol for these courses was somehow tied to those ambivalent feelings I had as a child when confronted by my failure to grasp the underlying meaning of the *Diorama*. These formative experiences and ambivalences have brought me down this research path in a search for meaning and identity.

In August 2009 the Iziko SAM announced the imminent reopening of the *Diorama* with the cast figures.¹ In May 2010 I contacted Susan Granville-Zini in the public relations office at Iziko and she explained that owing to several ongoing projects and a pending change of CEO, the *Diorama* was now only scheduled to reopen sometime in 2011 or later.² Thus it is in anticipation of the reopening of the *Bushman Diorama* that I am writing this mini-thesis.

¹ C. McKune, ‘Iziko’s San diorama to stay shut, but museum plans to fast-track its reopening’ in *Cape Times Online*, 20 Aug, 2009.

² Susan Glanville-Zini, telephonic correspondence 13 May 2010, Susan Glanville-Zini Director: Institutional Advancement, Iziko Museums of Cape Town.

Before and after the closing of the *Diorama*, there was intense debate among different scholars about sensitive collections, the ways in which meanings are made of displays and the process of exhibition-making surrounding this particular contentious exhibition. At the same time we had the variously called ‘claimant’, ‘descendant’ or ‘*bona fide* interest’ communities reacting to the *Diorama* with laughter and in a sense disavowing it. Within the context of the *Diorama* it is important to understand and even analyse the irony of this response and reflect upon the complexity of the public debate.

Public history in post-apartheid South Africa

This examination of the debates concerning the *Bushman Diorama* and relating to post-apartheid representations of San culture and history needs to be located within the context of the emergence of public history as a highly dynamic field of study in post-apartheid South Africa. One of the new studies in the field is Steven Dubin’s *Transforming Museums: Mounting Queen Victoria in a Democratic South Africa*, published in 2006. Dubin argues that the SAM and the South African National Gallery (SANG) have made significant progress in transforming their exhibitions. He draws attention to the revisions that were made to the *Bushman Diorama* of 1988 and to the *Miscast* exhibition of 1996. Despite these changes, he notes, the SAM particularly received a “blistering critique” from Nelson Mandela on Heritage Day in 1997 for its continued willingness to display cultural *others* next to animals in a Natural History Museum rather than in a Cultural History Museum.³ Dubin believes that the issue of intellectual property rights is at the heart of the matter.

To long-time SAM curator Patricia Davison and artist and frequent SAM exhibitor Pippa Skotnes, this is where the ‘cultural broker’ or proprietor steps in. It is the role of this broker or proprietor to mediate the stories, to take care of the complex notions of agency of the ‘marginalized’, the ‘authentic’, the ‘community’, the ‘local’, and to communicate them in a national or international or global context. Discussing the reactions to *Miscast* and the way people respond to the *Bushman Diorama* with laughter, Dubin argues that many audiences ‘just don’t get it ... Daily life in contemporary South Africa often contains this distinctive

³ S. Dubin, ‘Using War to Put Food on the Table: Reflections on a Decade of Democracy’ in S. Dubin, *Transforming Museums: Mounting Queen Victoria in a Democratic South Africa* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 1- 111.

sense of having been scripted by an absurdist playwright.⁴ Taking into account the lack of funding for the SAM from the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) and the “weight of the colonial legacy bearing heavily against the SAM”, he argues that the changes must be viewed as a “White Step in a Black Direction”.

To be candid, indigenous people did not have the specialized training, resources, professional connections, or knowledge and access to relevant materials that would have enabled them to stage a museum exhibition in 1996. Their long history of oppression had guaranteed that they were unequal players in virtually any public discussion or decision taken in relation to them.⁵

Here the idea of consultation with descendant communities is simply brushed away as an issue of differential levels of expertise. The implication appears to be that the debates around the *Bushman Diorama* should remain confined to those curators and experts with the requisite cultural knowledge. This, as I will argue, is indeed how the Iziko SAM itself has approached the issues around revising, closing and more recently planning the reopening of the *Diorama*.

In another recent study in the field, *History after Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a democratic South Africa*, published in 2003, Annie Coombes attempts to unpack the political processes of myth-making and democracy-building in ‘the visual landscape’ of post-apartheid South Africa. Coombes discusses the local and national debates about re-imagining apartheid monuments, sites and images. She attempts to explore how the static and fixed icons of the past are being rethought in the post-apartheid present. This involves analysing the processes of renegotiating and remaking meaning of the visual and material culture of the apartheid-era. In her case study of the District Six Museum, for example, she looks at how people with vested interests became involved in remaking narratives in a post-apartheid South Africa. As in the case of Dubin’s study, however, Coombes leaves important questions to be answered about how ‘the public’ is constituted. Missing from her book is any significant attempt to engage the audiences, including descendant communities, who react and respond to such ‘contested’ sites. She fails to present a clear vision of who these ‘publics’ might be and how such dynamics change over time. Furthermore, she does not recognize the extent to which audience reception must be taken into account as exhibitions and narratives help to shape world views and knowledge to provide particular ways of seeing and being. We need to be aware that audiences can still make contrary meanings or develop counter-

⁴ Ibid, 11

⁵ Patricia Davison cited in Dubin, Ibid., 59

narratives. They may resist or plainly misunderstand. This is a critical and key issue in relation to the constitution and remaking of meaning.

Coombes's analysis of the visual dynamics of display also seriously underestimates the complexity of the micro-politics behind the making and remaking of exhibitions in post-apartheid South Africa, in terms of production as well as reception. Museums and other sites of display are erratic organizations in their multiple and often conflicting goals. They respond to myriad demands from collectors, funders, communities and government. At the same time museums are closely connected to other institutions and sites like art galleries, libraries, fairs, expositions, theme parks, popular media and schools. They are involved in nation-building and establishing a sense of authority and legitimacy. Who has the power or agency to negotiate for transformation or contestation?⁶

Ivan Karp and Corinne Kratz's landmark edited collection *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, published in 2006, provides a far more open and thoughtful approach, one that takes better cognisance of the complex processes associated with the production and reception of museum exhibitions. In their introduction, Karp and Kratz emphasize the way in which museums have long functioned as arenas for constituting community identities and the nation state. They draw attention, however, to the very rapidly changing politics of contemporary museums and exhibition-making, to how curators are increasingly interested in mobilizing and marketing an international - perhaps global - sense of local identities and histories. They acknowledge that though the globalisation of museums can produce disconnection and isolation, it can also produce new relationships and opportunities. "Within global processes and movements, new audiences and communities are re-imagined and produced in the light of new policies and practices." Many museums, cultural centres and heritage organisations have launched digital projects as part of their collections management, making information about their collections more widely accessible, and Web promotion has become an integral part of marketing plans and outreach.⁷ They use the term 'museum frictions' to encapsulate the concept of the complex of processes at work in the making and consumption of images and representations in contemporary museums.

⁶ This part of my critique draws on S. Levine, 'Review of A.E. Coombes, *History after Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa*' in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 10 (4), 907-8.

⁷ C. Kratz and I. Karp, 'Introduction' in I. Karp, C. Kratz and T. Ybarra-Frausto, eds., *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* (Duke University Press, 2006), 27.

Drawing to some extent on the theoretical insights of Karp and Kratz, Ciraj Rassool and Leslie Witz showcase recent developments in the field of Public History in South Africa in an important article 'Making Histories' in a 2008 edited collection in *Kronos*. Witz and Rassool challenge the notion of history as a discipline-in-crisis in the post-apartheid period, a notion that has been articulated yet again in *History Making and Present Day Politic: The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa*, edited by Stolten and published in 2007, a collection of essays authored mainly by 'revisionist' or radical historians. Witz and Rassool argue that this notion of crisis is based on a narrowly positivist understanding of South African historiography, one that takes little or no account of the energetic turn in post-apartheid scholarship towards the analysis of the representations of productions in a range of public domains, of which museums are just one. They challenge the typically hierarchical way in which the production of history is conceived in this positivist tradition as a process by which experts 'mine primary sources', often in the form of oral interviews with 'authentic' community representatives. They suggest that 'primary sources' and archival documents should no longer be regarded simply as original sources, but rather as sites of knowledge production in themselves with particular and complex histories.⁸ As history-making has shifted to the public domain, formal histories, produced by the historian as authority, are now questioned. Instead, Rassool and Witz call for what might be termed a more democratic conception of knowledge production, arguing that what is sometimes dismissed as 'lower order [forms of] history', like heritage and memory, may be seen to be altering the very concept of the profession.

Another important trend that they identify in post-apartheid historiography is the blurring of the boundaries between history and fiction.⁹ This has sometimes been explored in relation to particular historical figures and the ways in which their memories and memorialisation have been contested. Thus they note that:

Leslie Witz, Carolyn Hamilton and Sifiso Ndlovu have sought to understand the iconic figures of Shaka, van Riebeeck and Dingane and how altered meanings came about given contemporary politics and contested and differing narrations of their lives. The importance of how, why and which stories, in which forms, did or did not gain currency at certain instances are looked at.¹⁰

⁸ L. Witz and C. Rassool, 'Making histories' in C. Rassool and L. Witz, eds., *Kronos: Southern African Histories, Special Issue: Making Histories*, 34, Nov. 2008, 6-15.

⁹ Ibid, 6-15

¹⁰ Ibid, 6-15

“In his essay in *Making Histories* entitled ‘Writing, authorship and I.B. Tabata’s biography: From collective leadership to presidentialism’, Ciraj Rassool draws on the work of David William Cohen”. He argues for an approach which explores biographic forms of production in different spheres and the associated mediations. He calls these ‘transactions of knowledge production’ and notes:

It is more the case that one enters into discussions and debates with these institutions as a series of knowledge transactions. Thus, we suggest ‘history frictions’ as an extension of ‘museum frictions’ for ongoing meanings to be made.¹¹

How may we apply the more complex and self-reflective theoretical approach set out in *Museum Frictions* and *Making Histories* to the issues and debates around ‘Bushman’ representation that are under examination in this study?

Such approaches suggest that we situate the debate in the context of the complex micro-politics of institutions which put sensitive collections in exhibitions, here specifically the Iziko SAM. A forum held at the Slave Lodge on 12 May 2009, entitled ‘Casting new light: Rethinking the role of human casts in museum exhibitions at Iziko Museums of Cape Town’ is a useful starting point in this regard, though the details of the micro-politics will be more fully discussed in later chapters. This forum drew together several museum personnel, including Lalou Meltzer, Patricia Davison and Gerald Klinghardt, and academics like Ciraj Rassool, Pippa Skotnes, Fiona Clayton and Annette Hoffmann. The brief was to discuss the “recontextualisation” of the archived *Bushman Diorama*.

I was present at this forum, and interpret Ciraj Rassool’s comments as offering a way of applying exactly the theoretical insights required to the particular institutional context of the Iziko SAM. Rassool located the *Diorama* within the specific history of the South African Museum as an institution marked by particular legacies of research and knowledge production.¹² He called for a different and more contemporary notion of the museum as ‘a space of transaction’, in which there are contestations over knowledge and an engagement with descendant communities in ways that challenge the older models of museums as part of an ‘exhibitionary complex’. Here he referred to Tony Bennet’s description of museums as instruments that shape the constitution of the citizenship in modern nation states, prescribe

¹¹ Ibid, 6-15.

¹² For a discussion of the history of human remains collection at the South African Museum, see M Legassick and C. Rassool, *Skeletons in the Cupboard* (Cape Town and Kimberley: South African Museum and McGregor Museum, 1997).

certain civilized forms of behaviour and, in the case of anthropological displays for example, are very often ordered in terms of an evolutionary hierarchy of categories. Rassool called for attention to the issue of the *Diorama* being hidden away under the pretext of ‘archiving’ and suggested that this drew attention away from the deeper issues, notably the SAM’s long history of collecting human remains and producing body casts.¹³ To “de-accession” these collections, he insisted, would be to paint or coat over the histories of trauma, racial science and the production and representations of *otherness* that have been part of the organizing principles of this institution. How, Rassool asked, do we remake the post-colonial museum as a contested space?

I have also been influenced by a recent review article in which Rassool has challenged, more specifically, the way in which SAM exhibitions have used the Bleek-Lloyd Collection as what he terms “the cult of salvation”.¹⁴ Here he suggests that in exhibitions such as the */Qe: The Power of the Ancestors and Rock Art*, the Bleek-Lloyd research project serves as a way of sanitising the uncomfortable history of colonial relations with the San, as an overly simplistic story of ‘remarkable equality’. The archaeologist Janette Deacon was primary curator of this exhibition, and some of the photographic images in the exhibition, taken by her co-author Craig Foster, appear as well in Deacon and Foster’s book. In his review article Rassool questions the way in which Deacon and Foster project the faces of the main /Xam informants back into the landscape through sophisticated techniques that nonetheless show a certain political naivety. Jorma Puranen’s *Imaginary Homecoming*, an implicit shadow text, is much more sensitive towards the complexities and political difficulties involved in resituating dispossessed historical agents into their original landscapes.¹⁵ These are important arguments that will be developed in much more detail in Chapters one and two of this thesis.

In addition to the closer analysis of micro-political contexts, audience response is one of the other broad themes that the Karp/Kratz collection highlights. Here I would like to return to laughter, the response of my fellow pupils to the *Diorama* on my early visits to the Museum. In an edited collection entitled *Cheeky Fictions* published in 2005, Reichl and Stein note that

¹³ Tony Bennet, ‘The Exhibitionary Complex’, *New Formations*, 6(4), Spring 1988, 73-102. For analysis of the evolutionary model in relation to the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, see A.E. Coombes, *Re-inventing Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), chapter 2.

¹⁴ C. Rassool, ‘Beyond the Cult of “Salvation” and “Remarkable Equality”’: A New Paradigm for the Bleek-Lloyd Collection’, *Kronos*, 32, Nov. 2006, 244-51.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 249

the audience, characters and authors are drawn together through laughter, which raises the ambiguous question: ‘who it is that is being laughed at?’¹⁶ They continue to argue that: “For postcolonial scholars interested in analyzing humour, laughter, though a clumsy tool, seeks protection from or insulation against pain and suffering. The ancient link between the comic and the tragic is recognized by scholars of humour. The comic vision balances the grief but at the same time highlights the grief and tragedy.”¹⁷

The laughter centre and the crying centre are side by side in the left frontal lobe of the brain, and their close proximity has provided neuroscientists with a clue as to why laughing and crying are so interconnected. This I believe is the paradox of the reaction to the *Bushman Diorama* : that ‘laughing’ at a people who have been cast for exhibition and traumatized by constructions of racial science through exhibition making, should in truth be seen as ‘laughing with tears’ and creating ‘communities of laughter’

[L]aughter is always caught up in the kinds of distinctions between centre and margins every society employs to establish and stabilize its identity: in one society, the predominant form of laughter can be that which aims from the side of the ideological or power centre at what is to be marginalized or excluded altogether; in another the most significant form of laughter can arise from the margins, challenging and subverting the established orthodoxies, authorities and hierarchies.¹⁸

Post-colonial studies in humour theory show that laughter is often used by ‘communities of laughter’ to build complex relationships of shared identities and shared references as a device for the inversion or subversion of constructions of race, stereotypes and *otherness* to change the order of things or weaken an established political system or government. These theorists or analysts of satire, parody and the comic, view post-coloniality as synonymous with laughter theory as agency for the marginalized or post (colonized).¹⁹ Laughter in such settings may bring about healing, avert conflict and cross the cultural divide. Here ‘laughing back’ is akin to writing-back.

Humor’s peculiarity lies in its elastic polarity, it operates for and against, den [ies] or affirm[s], oppress or liberate. On the one hand, it reinforces pejorative images, on the other hand, it facilitates the inversion of such stereotypes...In the absence of cosmological affirmation, and humour fills a void. Boskin writes that humour is a form of rebellion against unbearable social conditions.²⁰

¹⁶ Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein, eds., *Cheeky Fictions: Laughter and the Postcolonial* (New York, 2005), 6

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 18

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 9

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 2

²⁰ Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein (Eds.), 2005: 11

The research problem and approach

This thesis asks: how has the Iziko SAM attempted to make new meanings of the *Bushman Diorama* in the context of the discourses of transformation, healing and reconciliation in the post-apartheid period? The *Diorama* was formerly known for its stereotypes of race, *otherness* and skin colour and the objectifying of gender and sexuality. Remaking the *Diorama* requires, in my analysis, an unmaking or undoing of these old racial stereotypes, grids of evolution and *otherness*. This involves a remaking of the self when a people have been ‘othered’. ‘A people’ here refers not to a homogenous group, but to heterogeneous identities. Kratz concedes that globalization does separate places and people from each other, but suggests that it may also bring about new relations or ‘museum frictions’ where museums become contested spaces. This is the underlying theme of this thesis. How do we think about converting museums into more contested spaces? How do we tackle the museums’ claims that tangible artefacts, and intangible memories, no longer belong to the people from whom they were appropriated, but to the structures that now display them? The issue of sensitive collections and human remains is still unaddressed, as shown by the intense debate in the April 2009 workshop referred to above and the continuing delays in making decisions about the future of the *Diorama*.

In the thesis I argue that the exhibitions in the post-apartheid period reproduce the same stereotypes of race, ahistoricity or timelessness and essentialism. In my analysis of the */Qe* exhibition and the use of */Xam* narratives from the Bleek-Lloyd archive in the exhibition space (chapter two), I challenge the simplistic logic involved in casting the project as a “story of remarkable equality”. Here I draw on Andrew Bank’s arguments for the complexity and “situated” character of these narratives, each deeply shaped by the specific personalities and backgrounds of the narrators and researchers, as well as the highly specific and unusual circumstances of their telling.²¹ I argue that there are great dangers in reproducing in this exhibition de-contextualised selections of extracts from the Bleek-Lloyd notebooks that function almost like artefacts, as self-contained, bounded and disembodied blocks of knowledge divorced from the circumstances in which they were produced.

²¹ A. Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World: The Remarkable Story of the Bleek-Lloyd Collection of Bushman Folklore* (Cape Town: Double Storey, 2006).

Today in South Africa, bona fide descendant communities remain marginalised. US scholars like Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully have produced outstanding biographical work on Sara Baartman, but still refer to their 'subjects of study' as living on the 'sprawling outskirts of the Cape Flats' and townships, in a way that objectifies Baartman's descendants. Crais and Scully, whose analysis of Baartman's return is discussed as a context for the closure of the *Diorama*, are so much more persuasive when dealing with the more distant past (the story of Baartman) than when analysing the micro-politics of the debate over the return of Baartman's remains. When discussing the local, national and international politics surrounding the return of Baartman's remains in 2002, they make little or no attempt to locate their discussion in the context of the dynamic field of public history (discussed earlier in this Introduction) in post-apartheid South Africa.

My own approach is deeply concerned with issues of violence and trauma, which are undercurrents flowing through the /Xam narratives. In rereading these narratives in Chapter three (which addresses an exhibition entitled *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, displayed at the Universities of Cape Town and the Western Cape between 2006 and 2008, with Andrew Bank and Leslie Witz as curators) I argue that a literature on trauma and healing is highly appropriate as a framework for the analysis of the /Xam narratives. The deeply personal and strongly biographical approach presented by Bank in his book (which like the exhibition is entitled *Bushmen in a Victorian World*) is carried through into the exhibition, and can be explored at a psychological and even subconscious level. I read these narratives as narratives of trauma and, in this chapter, cast their telling as a form of therapy. I argue that the reason the project sustained its momentum had more to do with such deeper motivations on the part of the story-tellers than any desire to make their tales known by way of books (as Skotnes claims) or the creative, adaptive dynamics of the social relations between researchers and their /Xam 'informants' (as Bank argues).

I also raise questions, especially in the chapter dealing with the *Diorama* closure debate (Chapter one), concerning the issue of consultation, given the deep inequalities between descendant communities and the institutional or cultural brokers who seek to represent their histories and cultures. Given these inequalities, can stereotypes in fact be subverted by new stories or narrations of nationhood? Remaking meaning has its limits when the cast of characters doing that remaking remains unchanged: here, the museum 'experts' at the Iziko SAM. 'Negotiated meaning' by implication assumes that there should be some degree of meaningful dialogue between the partners involved in these negotiations. This raises

important questions about the agency of descendant communities in this process. How has consultation with these communities been managed in these attempts to negotiate identity and meaning?

Here I have been influenced by Siona O’Connell’s thesis, ‘No Hunting: Finding a New F. Stop for the Bushmen’ (Unpublished M.Phil.thesis, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 2008) on the ways in which the histories and cultures of the San individuals and groups at a tourist site on the West Coast, some 70 kilometres north of Cape Town, have been represented. On the basis of some seven months of engaged research, working with San people at !Kwa ttu, O’Connell produced an exhibition which attempted to explore in an open-ended, sensitive, but also honest and direct way, the notion of San self-representation. In her thesis she presents a powerful critique of the lack of engagement with descendant communities in other such projects, notably those of which UCT artist Pippa Skotnes has been the curator. Who, O’Connell asks, is the audience for these images? What efforts have been made to make the images available to descendant communities? Are they just manufactured in books, exhibitions and, more recently, digital archives to be circulated among a small community of white scholars? In her radical challenge to the SAM’s history of casting and stereotyping, O’Connell had herself cast in plaster and photographed through the stages of casting at the Iziko SAM.²²

I have written at some length here about O’Connell’s approach because my thesis might also be conceived as a form of radical critique influenced by post-colonial scholarship, as well as a self-reflective exploration of the issues of self-identity and of the relationship of this history of stereotyping with my own identity as a ‘Coloured’ subject. I pursue this theme in chapter three, in a partial critique of my involvement on the margins of the *Bushmen in a Victorian World* exhibition. While I support O’Connell’s use of post-structuralist and post-colonial theory, notably the arguments of Michel Foucault and Edward Said in relation to the power-knowledge complex, in approaching the /Xam narratives, I have focused more on the recent literature on trauma narratives. This literature suggests that within the unfolding debates about the remaking of the *Bushman Diorama* and the embedded stereotypes of racial science and *otherness*, there is a need for unmaking, for undoing the past and making anew. To remake meaning, rewrite or re-story narratives, to recover, replace and reclaim after loss, there is a need to confront the traumatic past in order to arrive at new understandings of the

²² S. O’Connell, ‘No Hunting: Finding a New F. Stop for the Bushmen’ (Unpublished M.Phil. thesis, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 2008).

self. There is a need to replace a legacy of feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness with a sense of agency, by reclaiming a more positive self-identity. To remake the self is to pick up the fractured pieces and re-tell one's story, as well as to reconnect with others and the world. Traumatic events are experienced as culturally embedded (or framed) and are remembered as such (in both traumatic and narrative memory). They are shaped and reshaped in memory over time according, at least in part, to how others in the culture of the survivor respond. How does one remake the self from the scattered shards of disrupted memory? How may we account for this process of 'mastering the trauma through the repeated telling of one's story', in relation to the /Xam narratives in particular?

Here I have been influenced by comparative literature. Marianne Hirsch calls the post-memory of the Holocaust a collective identity of its new country. In attempting to reconstruct coherent narratives, she notes, there is the difficulty of regaining one's voice, one's subjectivity, after one has been reduced to silence - or worse, made into someone else's speech, 'the medium of another's agency'. Those entering Nazi concentration camps had the speech of their subjugators imposed upon them, sometimes literally engraved on their bodies. 'You no longer have a name. This is your new name.' The trauma victim's body has also been used as someone else's speech or language. Putting together, or piecing together, a self requires a working through, a re-engagement with traumatic memory that involves going from being the medium or object of someone else's (the torturer's) speech to being the subject of one's own. As Susan Brison puts it:

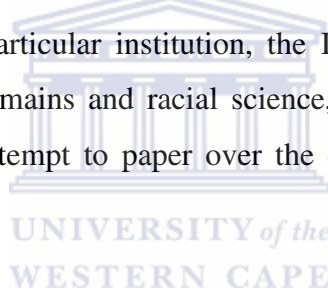
Those who don't understand the past may be condemned to repeat it, but those who never repeat it are condemned not to understand it. There is an experience in unlearning when we listen and repeat our stories. Survivors of trauma did not only need to survive in order to tell their stories but they also needed to tell their stories in order to survive.²³

I attempt to apply these insights to the particular case of the /Xam narratives. There is, as is now well known, a vast and still growing literature on the Bleek-Lloyd-/Xam project within the field of Khoisan studies. The structuralist-influenced literature of the 1980s attempted to locate the /Xam narratives within the wider framework of 'pan-San consciousness' and rock art (in the work of David Lewis-Williams) or of a pan-Khoisan 'mythological stock' (in the work of folklorist Matthias Guenther, based on a comparison of /Xam and Nharo folklore).²⁴

²³ Susan Brison, *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University, 2002), 39-40.

²⁴ See D. Lewis-Williams, *Believing and Seeing* (London: Academic Press, 1981); M. Guenther, *Bushman Folktales* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1989).

scholars of the 1990s and 2000s have shown more interest in contextualizing the narratives: firstly, within the context of a closer knowledge of the landscape (Deacon, whose work dates back to the 1980s)²⁵ and secondly, within the context of a fuller exploration of the backgrounds and social and physical contexts within which they were produced (Bank). There has also been a burgeoning industry in the production of artistic books (Skotnes and Szalay), the rendering of narratives as prose stories (Lewis-Williams), or more commonly poetry (Watson, Krog and the debate between them), or as dramatic performance (Fleishmann), or as inspiration for a narrative of travel (Martin), or most recently for a documentary film (van Schaik).²⁶ In very recent years there has been a closer engagement with the texts themselves; and although this study is about the use of /Xam narratives rather than an analysis of the texts, my argument here for reading them much more closely, as trauma narratives building on the now rich contextual work, could be applied as readily to a detailed reading of the texts.²⁷ More immediately though, the chapters that follow are an attempt to apply this approach towards the narratives to a vigorous critique of the institutional politics of representation in a particular institution, the Iziko SAM, with its ongoing and unaddressed legacy of human remains and racial science, where the /Xam narratives have merely been introduced in an attempt to paper over the cracks, to use the words of Ciraj Rassool.



²⁵ See J. Deacon, 'Archaeology of the Flat and Grass Bushmen' in Deacon and Dowson, eds., *Voices from the Past: /Xam Bushmen and the Bleek and Lloyd Collection* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1995), 245-70.

²⁶ P. Skotnes, *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1996); P. Skotnes, *Claim to the Country* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2008); M. Szalay, *The Moon as Shoe* (Zurich: Weiddeger Verlag, 2002); D. Lewis-Williams, *Stories that Float from Afar* (2002); S. Watson, *The Return of the Moon* (1991); A. Krog, *The Stars Say 'Tsau'* (Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2004); on the debate see Wessels, *Bushman Letters*, chapter 12; M. Fleishman, *Rain in a Dead Man's Footsteps* (Cape Town: Llarec, 1999); J. Martin, *A Millimetre of Dust: Visiting Ancestral Sites* (Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2008); S. van Schaik, director, *The Broken String* (VPRO, 2010).

²⁷ This is in keeping with the call of Michael Wessels, whose recently published book of essays makes a case for a complex reading of motifs across the texts. See M. Wessels, *Bushman Letters: Interpreting /Xam Narratives* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2010).

Chapter outline

Chapter one examines the debate surrounding the closing of the *Bushman Diorama* within the context of the South African Museum's history of *Bushman* research and exhibitions. I interpret the closing of the *Bushman Diorama* in 2001 as a staged production, in the light of the failure of the Iziko SAM to remake meaning of the *Diorama*, and of the cultural politics of the Iziko SAM in a post-apartheid South Africa. I analyse newspaper clippings, press statements, and discussion forums held at the Iziko SAM on the closure of the *Diorama* in 2001, along with published interviews with its former director Jack Lohman. I make the argument that in the 'absence' of the *Bushman Diorama*, the Bleek/Lloyd or Lloyd/Bleek Collection has taken its place in post-apartheid exhibitions on the *Bushman* or Khoisan. In presenting the rituals of closure as a performance, what I term a staged production of transformation, I locate this contemporary moment within the context of the history of this exhibition and the intermittent attempts to revise its meanings. I argue that the *Miscast* exhibition of 1996, held at the time when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was promoting a discourse of reconciliation and healing for the nation, was one such moment linked to the broader remaking of public historical spheres in South Africa. In addition, I reflect on present-day exhibitions, outside Iziko, at the Sterkfontein Caves, to show the tenacity of *Diorama*-type constructions of evolution, based on cast-making, and the use of human and physical remains, with archaeology the discipline which serves as the scientific affirmation of these practices.

Chapter two, on the exhibition *!Qe: The Power of Rock Art: Ancestors, Rain-making and Healing*, begins by presenting a close reading of how the exhibition was produced and reflects on the politics of representation associated with it. I make use of interviews, conducted in December 2008 and January 2009 with scholars, curators and designers connected with this exhibition, to explore the processes and discourses that went into its making. I argue that this permanent exhibition held at the Iziko SAM is profoundly essentialist, particularly in regard to belief system, in its display of the */Nu* speakers and */Xam* people. I argue that this is especially apparent in the way that the 'trance metaphor' is used to explain the meaning of rock art in relation to the authentic or ab/original hunter-gatherers. In fact, I argue that stereotypes of the *Bushman Diorama* and the later *Miscast* exhibition are merely covered over and repeated within, rather than fundamentally challenged by this exhibition.

The discourse on rock art in South Africa remains dominated by the *interpretative narrative of shamanism*. The /*Qe* exhibition is a prominent example of such a construction in the post-apartheid public sphere. The exhibition at the Origins Centre in Johannesburg is only touched on here, but has very strong similarities in terms of its ordering within the discourse of shamanism. This discourse was set in motion not only by prior exhibitions or publications, notably of course the work of Lewis-Williams, but also by the introduction of ideas about ‘intangible heritage’ as a vehicle for transformation in museums.²⁸ In turn, ‘intangible heritage’ paved the way for the Bleek-Lloyd Collection to be reconstructed as a ‘living or authentic’ source of the ‘extinct’ /Xam voice. I will argue that, in this exhibition, the narrative of *when, where, why, and by whom* rock art was made, is marked by incoherence. This incoherence is not only the product of an overly simplistic shamanistic discourse on rock art, but also the product of a linear and restricting ‘narrative of the nation’. This incongruence is symptomatic of the marginalisation experienced by these very so-called /Nu speakers or /Xam people within the nation state, and I provide a critique of the lack of consultation with descendant communities during the making of the exhibition. While there is lip-service paid to National San or Khoisan identity politics in the introductory video, descendant communities effectively played no role in the production and planning of the exhibition.

Chapter three analyses the exhibition called *Bushmen in a Victorian World* at the Universities of Cape Town and the Western Cape between 2006 and 2008. I argue that this exhibition sought to challenge through parody the dominant, official, institutional museum discourses in relation to the Bleek-Lloyd Collection. The exhibition, in my analysis, sets up mirror images to mimic the dominant discourse and uses of this Collection. In its juxtapositions of photographs and texts, it constantly challenges the notion of a single ‘authentic’ oral tradition and challenges the idea of using extracts from these texts for a shamanistic reading of rock art. The curators promote an open-ended approach towards the display, but also one which, in keeping with current scholarship on orality, literature and history in Africa,²⁹ emphasizes contingency and context in the making and negotiation of narratives.

²⁸ Intangible Heritage is described by the heritage sector and museum professionals as that of song, dance, traditions, music, artefacts Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *From Ethnology to Heritage: The role of the Museum*, <http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/web/SIEF.pdf>. Retrieved on 5 June 2009.

²⁹ For example, see I. Hofmeyr, *We Spend Our Years as a Tale that is Told’: Oral Historical Narrative in a South African Chieftdom* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1993); I. Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of ‘The Pilgrim’s Progress’* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004).

While the chapter provides an exploration of what I read as a rich and challenging approach, I also develop the argument (as indicated above) that the narratives might be related more directly to the current literature on trauma narratives and the psychological processes associated with the reconstitution and healing of self. Bank and Witz show that the informants could use their narratives or “scars with stories” in ‘the household’ of Bleek and Lloyd as a “grammar of performance”. This performance should also be read in more subjective and subconscious ways in relation to the psychology of the story-tellers. Here I find it useful to think of Brison’s suggestion that the remaking of self for //Kabbo and other narrators involves “trauma narratives” or “speech acts of memory”. //Kabbo, Dia!kwain and /Han=kass’o remained in the household in an attempt to turn their trauma narratives into narrative memory and become the subjects of their own voices.

I attempt to situate the exhibition in relation to the institutional politics of its location. I argue that the exhibition must be considered in the context of the efforts made by UWC’s Centre for Humanities Research and History Department to provide a self-reflective approach towards the making of historical knowledge. I see the exhibition as part of an exploration both of the production of meaning in relation to /Xam narratives, and of the way this production of meaning relates to the rewriting of history in a post-apartheid South Africa. I conclude by reflecting briefly on the unresolved institutional legacy of the Iziko SAM. Here I reiterate my call for a more radical approach, one that requires a much more direct and effective confrontation of the history of the institution’s complicity with racial science, before any more dynamic or inclusive remaking of meaning is possible. The underlying approach seems to remain one of damage control, plastering the cracks and painting over the more uncomfortable aspects of the legacy of racial science. As long as this is the case, the Iziko SAM *is* unlikely to emerge as a new potential model for energized, experimental and challenging ways of presenting and re-presenting the past in the present.

Chapter One:

Closing the *Bushman Diorama*, April 2001

I've come to bring you home...

I have come to wrench you away –

away from the poking eyes of the man-made monster who lives

in the dark with his clutches of imperialism

who dissects your body bit by bit ...?

For I have come to bring you peace...

I have come to take you home

where the ancient mountains shout your name.

I have made your bed at the foot of the hill,

your blankets are covered in buchu and mint,

the proteas stand in yellow and white –

I have come to take you home where I

will sing for you, for you have brought me peace.

(Diana Ferrus, 30 April 2002)³⁰

In foregrounding this extract from a poem, written by Diana Ferrus, that became the catalyst for the release of the remains of Sara Baartman from the Musée de l'Homme in France to South Africa in 2002, I hope to make the debate surrounding human remains central to the understanding of the *Bushman Diorama* and the closure of the *Diorama* in April 2001. The *Bushman Diorama* refers to a number of body casts that were made in the early part of the twentieth century and were used, in a display showing a constructed hunter-gatherer camp, at the SAM from 1959 to 2001. In this thesis, however, I extend the term to include the larger associated collection of human remains and casts which is held by the SAM and the medical

³⁰ Extract from D. Ferrus, 'Welcome home, Saartjie Baartman rest in peace in the lush foothills of your motherland', *Cape Times*, 30 April 2002.

schools at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and the University of Cape Town (UCT).

This chapter will explore the debate surrounding the closing of the *Diorama*. It serves as a background context for the two chapters that follow which discuss two recent exhibitions: */Qe: Power of Rock Art* (Chapter two) and *Bushmen in a Victorian World* (Chapter three). In this chapter I argue that the closing of the *Bushman Diorama* in 2001 had more to do with the cultural politics of the Iziko South African Museum than with any genuine attempt to revisit representations of bushman culture and identity in post-apartheid South Africa. I argue that the closing of the *Diorama* may be viewed as a kind of cultural production, equivalent to a performance or a play, on the part of the Museum, with the Museum's director Jack Lohman, museum curators Patricia Davison and Reinhold Rau, and specialist consultant Pippa Skotnes, the director of Michaelis School of Fine Art, as its main actors. Other potential role players, notably descendant Khoisan communities, were only accommodated as fringe players or extras. They occasionally featured in the debate in letters to the editors of local newspapers. To support this argument, I will analyse local newspaper articles, press statements, discussion forums held at the Iziko SAM and published interviews with the Museum's director.

Furthermore, I will argue that in the 'absence' of the *Bushman Diorama* the Bleek-Lloyd Collection (or Lloyd-Bleek Collection as it is sometimes known) has taken its place in post-apartheid exhibitions on the *Bushman* or Khoisan. However, this displacement obscures the long and troubling history of the collection of human remains and the use of sensitive collections in displays like the one in the African Cultures Gallery, and others housed in the Iziko SAM that are now closed off or 'archived'.³¹ There is still a deep reluctance on the part of the SAM to face up to the issues that surround these human remains and sensitive collections, and the history of their use in displays and images. Whilst the closing of the *Diorama* has silenced one area of the debate, the Bleek-Lloyd archive serves as a comfortable surface that covers and shuts down the deeper and more disturbing history of human remains collection by the Museum.

³¹ For a powerful analysis of the early part of this history, see M. Legassick and C. Rassool, *Skeletons in the Cupboard: South African Museums and the Trade in Human Remains, 1907-1917* (Cape Town: South African Museum, 1999).

Moreover, in tracing what I think of as the ‘staged production of transformation’, I track some of the intermittent production processes from the early twentieth century through to the ‘revised’ *Diorama* of the 1980s and the *Miscast* exhibition of 1996. The year 1996 marked an important point in the making of public historical spheres and exhibitions. This was the year in which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings were broadcast as an attempt to find the way forward in terms of reconciliation and healing for the nation. The TRC forms an integral backdrop to the making of the exhibitions under discussion.

Integral to the debate about human remains is the area of Khoisan identity politics and the way this has impacted on remaking or negotiating meanings of exhibitions and their associated collections. The Iziko SAM has repeatedly claimed that it met and consulted with descendant communities when considering the closure of the *Diorama*. I will show that these claims are highly problematic. In addition, I will reflect on present-day exhibitions outside the Iziko SAM, notably at the Sterkfontein Caves, to illustrate the tenacity of the *Diorama*-type display, with its continuing use of cast-making and human remains, in ongoing constructions of the history of evolution, (archaeology being the science that most affirms and reinforces these notions). To tie these arguments together, I draw upon discussions at the Iziko SAM in October 2007, and more recently on 12 May 2009 at the Slave Lodge, regarding how to grapple with the legacies and issues associated with human remains collections and the *Bushman Diorama*.

A context for the *Diorama* debate: the homecoming of Sara Baartman, and the ‘body politic’ of the nation state

The closure debate coincided with continuing negotiations for the return to South Africa from France of the remains of Sara Baartman, the so-called ‘Hottentot Venus’. I suggest that the two events became inextricably entangled in the process of decision-making in public historical spheres, particularly at the Iziko SAM. The dialogue about the return of Baartman’s remains began in about 1996 at the time when the TRC was taking place. One senses that there was no way of justifying the continued public exhibition of the *Diorama* in the emotional climate that surrounded the negotiations for the release of Baartman’s remains. Even though the ‘Hottentot Venus’ was displayed in Europe during the nineteenth century, her public image and the portrayed stereotyping of racial *others* became enmeshed in the construction and subsequent exhibition of the *Diorama* in the twentieth century. Therefore I

think it is useful to regard the negotiations for the return of Baartman almost as a dress rehearsal for the closure of the *Diorama*.

Bridgette Mbandla, Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology at the time of the return of Sara Baartman's remains in 2002, said that while many people regarded the casts of Baartman's body parts as artefacts, these casts should be afforded the same dignity as if they were physical human remains.³² The Department of Arts and Culture insisted in their discussions relating to the return of Baartman that only the so-called experts, the physical anthropologists Prof. Philip Tobias in South Africa, and Henry de Lumley in France, should be permitted to handle Baartman's remains.³³ In many ways then, the museum, the archive and the post-apartheid nation state came together in the decision-making regarding human remains, body casts and the issue of repatriation to descendent communities. The return of Sara Baartman became a key moment in public memory making and a way for us to trace the processes of configurations of power and the making of public historical spheres in the post-apartheid nation state.

In April 2002 the newly elected CEO of the Iziko SAM, Henry Bredekamp, claimed that the return of Baartman should become a catalyst for the return of all human remains and skeletons held at universities and museums in South Africa and abroad.³⁴ In November of 2002, following his highly publicised involvement in the repatriation of Baartman, Bredekamp succeeded Jack Lohman as the CEO of the Iziko SAM. Baartman was reburied on 9 August 2002 at Hankey. Members of descendant communities were critical. Dr Willa Boezak contended that Baartman's return had been nothing more than a political show. She continued by saying that, every day, Baartman's descendants were dying of starvation and poverty, but all of this now seemed to be disguised by a state which had appropriated the burial ceremonies from families or descendant communities.³⁵ Descendants of the Chonaqua protested that this was more than anything a great show by the ANC government, an international affair belonging not to the Baartman family but to the nation.³⁶

³² T. Oosterwyk, 'Saartjie to return home', *The Cape Argus*, 1 February 2002.

³³ Oosterwyk, 'Saartjie to return home'.

³⁴ Oosterwyk, 'Saartjie to return home'.

³⁵ W. Boezak cited in *The Cape Times*, February 2002.

³⁶ C. Crais and P. Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009), 163.

In their recent biography of Sara Baartman and discussion of the cultural politics of repatriation and reburial, historians Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully reveal that a budget of between R8, 7 million and R10, 35 million was put together, while a Reference Group that included Yvette Abrahams, Diana Ferrus, Philip Tobias and other academics was charged with overseeing the repatriation and reburial procedures.³⁷ Crais and Scully show how Baartman was appropriated by Khoisan groups, who rode the wave of 'indigeneity', knowing that large sums of money were at stake. The Griqua National Conference, for example, received money at this time for the broader development of the Ratelgat Community Project.³⁸ Crais and Scully demonstrate that Baartman's burial site was in a neglected state just a few years after the much celebrated re-burial and that it is now surrounded by green bars to keep vandals away, whilst a small amount of revenue is generated from the few tourists who visit the site.³⁹ Their story echoes Boezak's argument that the underlying motivations associated with the return of Sara Baartman were political and economic, benefiting only a few key players, at the expense of the larger communities of Hankey and the surrounding areas that remain marginalized and poverty-stricken.

It is for these reasons that Crais and Scully argue that, although the Hottentot Venus was buried, the nation state is still haunted by Sara Baartman.⁴⁰ In the light of the contradictions and discord that attended her burial, one may well wonder if her spirit is at peace. As events unfolded, the anomalies became manifest. In what could almost be seen as a breach of the law of *habeas corpus*, it was the nation state, under the banner of the African National Congress that appropriated her remains, rather than the descendant communities or the Baartman family. Furthermore, it was felt that one descendant group, the Griqua, received more government benefits than other Khoisan groups like the *Chonaqua*, who protested about the procedures. In addition, the proceedings were dominated by men (Bredekamp, Little, Tobias and Upham) while women, (Mbandla, Abrahams and Ferrus) were relegated to consultative roles. Crais and Scully point out the strongly gendered character of the processes.

³⁷Ibid, 153

³⁸ Ibid, 154-5

³⁹ Ibid, 168-9

⁴⁰ Ibid, 142-4

A striking feature of the politics is the dominance of men, who seemed to lead the effort to claim Sara Baartman while relegating women to largely consultative role. Possession of her body had become not simply a political but an economic good, a kind of hyperbolic version in which men continued to possess women and control their reproduction. Sara Baartman had become a commodity in three senses: as a body to be held, as a woman owned by others, and as economic capital that could generate additional resources, indeed, give birth to new identities in a post apartheid South Africa.⁴¹

Krotoa, or Eva, was a Khoisan woman who acted as translator for van Riebeeck and was married to Pieter van Meerhof. She was banished to Robben Island by the colonial administrators of the Cape, and was buried there. Those like Mansell Upham, who claim to be descended from Afrikaners, consider Krotoa to be their ancestor and even recognise her as the mother of the nation. She was reburied by descendant communities at the Castle in Cape Town in 2000, but this ceremony was not given anything like the publicity afforded to that of Baartman.⁴² It is not coincidental that the debates concerning the closing of the *Diorama* occurred at about the same time as Baartman's return and burial. Similar concurrent processes and seeming alignment between the SAM and those who called for the 'return' of Baartman could also be discerned in 1996, the year when talk of the return surfaced, the TRC took place and the *Miscast* exhibition was hosted at the SANG (a close partner of the Iziko SAM).⁴³ These events formed part of the narrative of mythmaking as transformation and reconciliation on the part of the Iziko SAM and the nation state.

Sara Baartman has become part of the narration of the nation state in what the social anthropologist Steven Robins calls the 'body narrative'. For Robins, the nation state deploys the 'body politics' or 'narratives of the body' to forge a collective or totalizing memory.⁴⁴

Questions of identity, memory and historical representation surface in the narration of the brutal past.⁴⁵ However, individual or personal memories or narrations are often 'spliced', merged or compromised in order to render a totalizing or credible memory of the nation.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Ibid,158

⁴² 'Saartjie, die "baardman"', *Die Burger*, 17 July 2004.

⁴³ In all of these cases, the processes of consultation were flawed. In the case of the return of Baartman there was a privileging of the Griqua group at the expense of other descendant communities.

⁴⁴ S. Robins, 'Silence in my Father's House: Memory, Nationalism and Narratives of the Body' in S. Nuttall and C. Coetzee, eds., *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1998), 120-1; A. Coombes, *History After Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2004), 23.

For Alan Barnard, the majority of Khoisan research has taken place in the context of the construction of Khoisan identities on the part of academia and the nation state, as well as descendant Khoisan communities.⁴⁷ According to Barnard, the construction of a Khoisan identity is beset by numerous historical problems in relation to defining such identities as Khoi groups, pan-Khoisan, pan-Bushman, language-groups and official classifications of people deemed to be descendants, such as the Griqua, Basters, Damara, Cape-Coloured and Karretjie-mense or Donkey-cart people. So, the Karretjie-mense sees themselves not as urban-brown or Cape Coloured, but as yellow-blooded because of their Indian or Asian heritage. We should conclude then that Khoisan nationalism is not 'natural' but culturally constructed with 'locality and kinship (soil or blood)' as twin pillars in the creation of Khoisan identities.⁴⁸ Herein resides the complexity in dealing with issues of identity, reclamation, restitution, appropriation and 'consultation.'

According to Crais and Scully, the ANC saw in the image of Sara Baartman an opportunity to secure the Coloured vote in the Western Cape.⁴⁹ In 1994 the Griqua under the Griqua National Conference (GNC), with Mansell Upham as its advisor, were asserting their national identity and making claims for Ratelgat as their territory. Soon thereafter Sara Baartman became not only a government concern, but an international one, when the Griqua cited the UN Declaration of Human Rights alongside the issue of reparations of human remains. Between 1996 and 1998 the South African president, Nelson Mandela, and the French prime minister, Francois Mitterrand, began negotiations for the return of Sara Baartman.⁵⁰ It is believed that Mbandla approached Philip Tobias, (who had been excavating the Sterkfontein caves for 40 years) and asked him to enter into dialogue with his French colleagues at the Musée de l'Homme. The government sensed that through Tobias, who knew Henry de Lumley, the return of Sara Baartman could be de-politicized. In France, museum personnel were resistant as they anticipated that her return could fuel demands across the globe for similar repatriations. They were also concerned that the memory of Georges Cuvier, the

⁴⁵ Friedlander cited in Robins, 'Silence in my Father's House', 121.

⁴⁶ Robins, 'Silence in my Father's House', 123.

⁴⁷ A. Barnard, 'Problems in the Construction of Khoisan Ethnicities' in A. Bank, ed., *Proceedings of the Khoisan Identities and Cultural Heritage Conference* (Cape Town: Infosource, 1997), 51.

⁴⁸ Barnard, 'Problems in the Construction of Khoisan Ethnicities', 54.

⁴⁹ Crais and Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus*, 153.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 153

esteemed French scientist, would be tainted by public association with racial science. As a trade-off, it was decided that Baartman's return would be but a 'sacrificial object' and not part of larger repatriation. It was also said that her identity was known and traceable and therefore could be reconstructed.⁵¹ It is little wonder that all the fanfare surrounding the repatriation of Baartman obscured the bigger issue of the human remains still held by the historical institutions of former colonial powers across Europe. Sadly, Sara Baartman's bodily remains became part of the 'body text' of the nation.

This lack of transformation with regard to repatriation is endemic in the post-apartheid state. In April 2003, the South African Museums Association (SAMA) briefed the South African Parliamentary Committee about the presence of human remains in museums. It was proposed that a national audit be taken, with the DAC held accountable. It was recommended that a team be formed to review international research and policy, including UNESCO's policies, and draw up a South African framework.⁵² Neither of these recommendations has been followed through. The lack of a national audit on human remains in museums, universities and medical schools means that the issues associated with the unethical acquisition of human remains, the storage or safekeeping of human remains, and associated questions of access and repatriation are still not being addressed.

The debate around the human remains uncovered at Prestwich Place on Somerset Road in the centre of Cape Town highlighted again the complexity of and the lack of state action on issues relating to human remains. Valmont Layne, then Director of District Six Museum, commented bitterly about the continued exhumations of some 3,000 individuals of so-called mixed descent at Prestwich Place and said it was a 'bitter reminder of apartheid's step-child treatment' of identity issues regarding 'Colouredness' and 'hybridity'. In a study of the exhumations that took place at Prestwich Place between 2003 and 2005, Julian Jonker notes the lack of repatriations, even after Sara Baartman's much publicized reburial at Hankey in 2002. Repatriation has been made more difficult by issues of identity. The rights of developers at Prestwich Place can be seen as a delaying tactic being used by a state that is unwilling to address the issues of the reclamation of land and human remains of marginalised

⁵¹ Crais and Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus*, 154-5.

⁵² Arts and Culture; South African Museums Association; briefing, Parliamentary Monitoring Group. <http://www.pmg.org.za/minutes/20030331-arts-and-culture-south-african-museum-association>. Retrieved on 24 March 2009.

descendant communities.⁵³ Historians Ciraj Rassool and Martin Legassick from UWC maintain that there is an outright resistance from museum personnel and archaeologists towards dealing with the repatriation of human remains to their descendant communities.

Since our research was first presented there has been some debate in workshops and in print with curators and researchers on the issues of repatriation and reburial. On the whole there has been ... a marked desire to retain possession of these bones. Alan Morris has argued that the bones continue to tell us about physical anthropology ... David Morris and Leon Jacobson suggest that human remains ... can yield significant and unique historical insights, including testimony to the very origins of humanity in Africa.⁵⁴

The bittersweet homecoming of Sara Baartman and the lack of repatriation serve then as a background to my discussion about the *Bushman Diorama* in the section that follows.

The South African Museum re-invents its history: the Diorama in retrospect

Whilst the negotiations from the mid-1990s onwards for Sara Baartman's homecoming had a major impact on the debate around the closure of the *Diorama*, I locate the debate in terms of the history of the construction of the *Diorama*, its revision in 1988 and the *Miscast* exhibition of 1996. In her 1991 Ph.D. thesis, 'Material Culture, Context and Meaning: A Critical Investigation of Museum Practice with Particular Reference to the South African Museum', Patricia Davison presents a history of the construction of the *Bushman Diorama* as well as the processes involved as she and other like-minded scholars in the Museum attempted to revise the stereotypes associated with this display during the 1980s.

Davison argues that the casting project was a 'quest for simulated naturalness' as the 'pure Bushman' was conceptualized, materialized, objectified and then institutionalized at the South African Museum from 1905 onwards. The casting project was a scientific enterprise drawing upon the support of a network of colonial officials to study a people called the 'Hottentot' or 'Bosjesman' and reduces them to artefacts. Psychometric measurement, photography, physical anthropology, skin tone/colouring and cast-making became the scientific tools for the collection of data on a people deemed to be 'pure Bushmen specimens'.⁵⁵ The authority of science was invoked by the Museum Director Louis

⁵³ J. Jonker, 'The Silence of the Dead: Ethical and Juridical Significances of the Exhumations at Prestwich Place, Cape Town, 2003-2005' (University of Cape Town, M.Phil 2005), 36.

⁵⁴ Legassick and Rassool, *Skeletons in the Cupboard*, 12.

⁵⁵ Davison Patricia, 'Material Culture, Context and Meaning: A Critical Investigation of Museum Practice with Particular Reference to the South African Museum' (Unpublished D.Phil., University

Peringuey, his modeller of casts James Drury and a supporting network of colonial administration including constables, officials, missionaries and magistrates in Kimberley, Bechuanaland, Upington, Prieska and other districts.⁵⁶ Importantly, control played itself out in terms of unequal power relations between the casters and the cast. The dispossessed and the convicted had no rights to resist the colonial officer, the scientist and the taxidermist. The taxidermist or museum modeller, James Drury was sent by Peringuey in 1907 to begin the work of casting and spent over seventeen years in Kimberley, Grootfontein, Sandfontein, Prieska, Carnarvon, Gabarone, Windhoek and Upington. He made 65 lifelike casts of people identified as ‘thoroughbred Bushmen’.⁵⁷

After the casts were made, they were placed in the Museum collection and categorized under accession numbers by racial type, sex and age.⁵⁸ Not only were the casts made under artificial circumstances, but the lifelike impersonations of the ‘nearly extinct race’ were institutionalized by the South African Museum when it put its plaster cast collection on public display in an Ethnological Gallery in 1911.⁵⁹ The South African Museum housing the plaster casts became the leading institute that would institutionalize both racial science and public stereotypes about the so-called *Bushman*.

From 1988 to 1990, the SAM tried to take the emphasis away from the inherent stereotypes and make the *Diorama* more acceptable by adding labels and showing the public how it was constructed. The process of revision was managed by Patricia Davison. In the revision of the *Diorama*, attention was redirected towards the processes involved in its construction: that is, to the Diorama as professional museum practice displaying (amongst other things) artistry and taxidermal specialisation.⁶⁰ This critique may be seen as an attempt to render the exhibition as a ‘partial truth’.⁶¹ For O’ Hanlon an exhibition is not merely a construction on the part of the anthropologist or curator, but a complex series of negotiations between the

of Cape Town, 1991), 145-58.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 146-7

⁵⁷ Ibid, 148

⁵⁸ Ibid, 152

⁵⁹ Ibid, 152-3

⁶⁰ Ibid, 158

⁶¹ O’ Hanlon in Lidchi, ‘The Poetics and the Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures’ in S. Hall, *Culture, Media & Identities: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 179.

communities on display and the 'cultural broker'.⁶² James Clifford, however, questions the extent to which communities are effective partners in co-authoring ethnographic displays.⁶³

More recently, Davison has argued that the power of the state is limited because the negotiation of the past, present and future is at play in memory and in exhibition-making. She suggests, in what I consider a highly problematic passage, that in removing the offensive typecasts that the *Diorama* presented, the meaning of exhibition can be 'made and remade' over and over again on the part of its producers, the Museum professionals, the nation state and the visiting public. Her arguments are, however, based on the assumption that descendant communities have been consulted and are effective partners in a process of restructuring.⁶⁴ There is little substance to this, and we will see this rhetoric surfacing again during the debates over the closure of the *Diorama*.

It was in part owing to this notion of the ongoing and multiple readings that can be made of the *Diorama* that Davison and other staff members collaborated with artist Pippa Skotnes in the making of the controversial *Miscast* exhibition. *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of Khoi and San History and Material Culture* opened in April 1996, under the curatorship of Skotnes, at the South African National Gallery.⁶⁵ At precisely the same time, the TRC hearings were playing before the South African public via television broadcasts, and the negotiations for the return of Baartman had begun. The *Miscast* exhibition necessitated moving the fragmented bones and skeletons between the Iziko SAM and the SANG. This process, as well as the *Miscast* exhibition itself, can be viewed in the artist's digital archive that features prominently in what she terms the Lloyd-Bleek collection.⁶⁶

Whilst a minimum of text was used in *Miscast*, the 'body politic' of the *Bushmen* was used as text or narrative. The body casts were put prominently on display. This caused an outcry from Khoisan descendant communities. One can see how the presentation of materials from the Lloyd-Bleek folklore collection was intended to serve as a counter-point to the casts, rifles and other instruments of colonial construction. The Lloyd-Bleek texts offered a kind of

⁶² Ibid, 180

⁶³ Ibid, 180

⁶⁴ Ibid, 160 and 192

⁶⁵ Coombes, *History after Apartheid*, 230.

⁶⁶ \Aluka - Lloyd and Bleek Collection files\~Lloyd Bleek Project~.htm LLAREC:
<http://www.lloydbleekcollection.uct.ac.za>. Retrieved on 07-10-2008.

mythological template that could potentially redeem the brutal colonial past that was represented in the surrounding exhibition space. Pippa Skotnes consistently contrasted and juxtaposed the violence of the *Diorama* with the ‘remarkable’ Bleek/Lloyd collection, which was portrayed as an embodiment of Khoisan humanity and agency.⁶⁷ However, this mythmaking or ‘narrativising’ of the past was not as innocent as it seemed. It was part of the wider cultural politics of the post-apartheid state. Roland Barthes argues that: ‘Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification ...’⁶⁸

As the history of the *Diorama* can be traced and tied to places, communities, archaeologists, colonists, linguists, curators, taxidermists, historians, museum personnel and anthropologists, Legassick and Rassool question why the *Diorama* has been allowed to perpetuate the representations of racial science. They insist that the *violence* of the *Diorama* is being recycled in exhibitions and the public historical sphere as long as the human remains are still held by museums and universities. They locate this contemporary politics in terms of a long institutional legacy of craniological collections. They note that the collections of skulls grew steadily from 24 held by the SAM and 62 held by the Albany and McGregor Museums in 1907, to 217 specimens of Khoisan remains and 106 complete skulls at the SAM in 1917.⁶⁹ The taxidermist or museum modeller, Matthew Drennan (UCT Medical School) and Raymond Dart (Wits Medical School) became actively involved in physical anthropology after 1919 by means of the craniological collections.⁷⁰

/Khanako was one of the subjects of physical anthropological research linked to the universities. She was part of a group of over seventy *Bushmen* who were studied ‘in the field’ in the early 1930s by researchers on a farm at Frankenwald under the auspices of the University of the Witwatersrand. Patricia Hayes and Ciraj Rassool trace the journey of /Khanako from Namibia to Johannesburg, and later Cape Town, in the 1930s. They show the

⁶⁷ See P. Skotnes, Introduction, in Skotnes, ed., *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1996); Skotnes, ‘The Politics of Bushman Representations’ in P. Landau and D. Krispin, eds., *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Post-colonial Africa* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 252.

⁶⁸ Barthes cited in S. Hall, ed., *Culture, Media & Identities: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*, 12.

⁶⁹ Legassick and Rassool, *Skeletons in the Cupboard*, 6. See also S. Dubow, *Illicit Union: Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1995), 35.

⁷⁰ Dubow, *Illicit Union*, 38-9.

intrinsic connections between racial science and spectacle making (typified by the making of casts of *Bushmen* in the twentieth century, and their continued use in exhibitions today), as both racial science and spectacle making stereotype *others* as primitive and sexualized objects.⁷¹ Even though /Khanako served as an interpreter, she was singled out to become the modern ‘Hottentot Venus’, under leadership of Raymond Dart.⁷² Casts of /Khanako’s finger, head and genitalia were made by Drury from plaster of Paris moulds ordered for research and pedagogical purposes.⁷³ At about the same time, the anatomist Matthew Drennan of UCT Medical School was afforded the opportunity of studying 53 Bushman men, women and children who were deemed to be under the care of Donald Bain, a man who campaigned for the creation of a ‘Bushman reserve’. Thus the identity of /Khanako and many other individuals whose human remains are held in collections at UCT, Wits and the SAM are known and traceable or claimable. Should they not be repatriated and given over for burial to their descendant communities?

Not according to Davison, who appears in a 1998 article to make little connection between casts, deemed to be ‘artefacts’, and the collections of human remains at these institutions. Instead she seems to be of the opinion that one can at random make new readings of the casts as artificial but official masterpieces and renegotiate meaning in a multiplicity of ways.⁷⁴

Casting light on the *Diorama*: its making, reinterpretation and closure

The history of the *Diorama* and the cast-making process was reinvented by the Iziko SAM at the time of the closure of the *Diorama* in April 2001. On the part of the museum, there was now an attempt to show the *Bushman* people primarily as hunter-gatherers, rather than as physical types. In this way museum curators held that the offensive stereotyping would be removed. Davison claimed at the time that the *Diorama* on display was partly an affirmation that the San were the ‘first people’ of South Africa. Instead of showing only ‘other cultures’,

⁷¹ C. Rassool and P. Hayes, ‘Science and the Spectacle: /Khanako’s South Africa, 1936’ in W. Woodward et al, (Eds.), *Deep Histories: Gender & Colonialism in southern Africa* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002).

⁷² Rassool and Hayes, ‘Science and the Spectacle’, 117-8

⁷³ Rassool and Hayes, ‘Science and the Spectacle’, 127

⁷⁴ P. Davison, ‘Museums and the Reshaping of Memory’ in S. Nuttall and C. Coetzee, eds., *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1998), 143-60.

the new exhibitions were said to ‘focus on themes that embrace all people’.⁷⁵ In her now much more sanitised view of the history of the *Diorama*, Davison began by noting that archaeological evidence showed that hunter-gatherers had lived in the semi-desert Karoo for thousands of years before Europeans reached southern Africa. By the start of the nineteenth century, /Xam hunter-gatherers from the Karoo had survived thirty years of conflict with Dutch colonists; and displaced Khoekhoe people had little choice but to become labourers and servants. Davison went on to refer to the Bleek-Lloyd-/Xam project and how /Xam people were imprisoned in Breakwater Prison for stock theft and murder in 1869 and 1870, several of them becoming informants for Bleek and Lloyd. This version of the history of the casting project describes the procedure for making plaster moulds of sections of the body using only the natural heat generated by the plaster to harden the moulds ‘swiftly and safely’ (with no mention of the extreme discomfort that this process involved). The plaster of Paris casts produced from these ‘two-piece waste-moulds were cut and jointed for assembly into a complete figure’. Due to extensive field studies of Kalahari hunter-gatherers, in 1982 figures were clothed for the first time in an ‘ethnographically correct pattern’.⁷⁶ The emphasis here is markedly different from that of Davison’s doctoral thesis chapter on the casting project and its history. Davison’s evaluation in 2001 of the ‘remarkably equal’ relationship between informants and the researchers (Bleek and Lloyd) contradicts her earlier view, which highlighted the coercive nature of relations between colonial officials and the/Xam. Dorothea Bleek is presented unquestioningly as a champion of indigenous people, despite the extensive evidence that has been accumulated indicating her complicity, and collusion with James Drury, in the casting project.⁷⁷ In this new narrative there was great emphasis on the European expertise involved in the cast-making.

Cast-making was a painful process for those who were subjected to it. Once applied, the plaster had to be heated in order to set. Larger surfaces covered with the substance had to remain immobile for several hours or even days until it set, or the plaster would crack. During the hardening process the heat could cause major burns. Also, a chemical in the plaster, calcium sulphate, could cause poisoning or severe skin irritations. Upon setting, the cast

⁷⁵ Events @ SAM: April 2001, Volume 2, Number 3: Debating the museum. SAM library photocopy.

⁷⁶ DOCUMENT RE THE SAN DIORAMA: Report on the Iziko Forum on the Future of the San Diorama, Email correspondence attachment from Dr Gerald Klinghardt on 14 January 2009.

⁷⁷ See Legassick and Rassool, *Skeletons in the Cupboard*.

became very heavy, dense and uncomfortable.⁷⁸ Another internet source reveals that to toughen and harden plaster and allow it to set more quickly, chemicals like borax and alum can be added and the plaster heated to between 140° and 170° Fahrenheit.⁷⁹ In the exhibition *What we See* curated by Annette Hoffmann that was on display at the Slave Lodge from February to May 2009, the discomfort and horror of the cast-making process has been described in relation to the 1930s cast-making of a German physical anthropologist, Lichtenecker, during his journey through Namibia.⁸⁰ In the light of all of this, how plausible is the sanitised story of cast-making told by Davison in 2001? In her account, physical anthropology is supposedly redeemed because the cast figures have been clothed and imbued with a 'culture' of hunter-gatherer ecology or ethnography.

In a conflicting vein, the SAM released a press statement by Reinhold Rau, a retired taxidermist still closely affiliated to the museum. Rau argued for the retention of the *Diorama* and claimed that 'distorted' media images were the reason for the calls for it to be removed. Rau was employed in cast-making from 1959, while Drury was still alive, and related how the process of cast-making was undertaken carefully in view of respiratory dangers involved. Even though cast-making from life was unpleasant, 'especially when hairs get stuck', he was of the view that the rewards of seeing the end product overrode the discomfort of the experience. Rau argued that the calls for the closure should be sidelined as this collection was a scientific enquiry of anthropology, ethnography and archaeology.⁸¹ He went on to say that if it had not been for the additional storage space needed for its vast collection of Dutch furniture and artefacts in the 1960s, the SAM would have remained a general museum and would not have become a natural history museum. Rau's comments not only ignore the obvious ideological motivations behind the museum division between 'culture' and 'nature', and the racist allocation of the *Bushmen* to the former category, but also fly in the face of extensive evidence of how extremely uncomfortable the cast-making process was for those who were subjected to it – very often prisoners, who had no right of refusal.

⁷⁸ Plaster. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plaster>

⁷⁹ mhtml:file:///C:/unzipped/docs[1]/Hardening and Toughening Plaster of Paris.mht. 'Hardening and Toughening Plaster of Paris. Retrieved on 30 March 2009.

⁸⁰ A. Hoffman, ed., *What We See: Reconsidering an Anthropometrical Collection in Southern Africa* (Basel: Baseler Afrika-Bibliographien, 2009), 7-8, 18-21.

⁸¹ Reinhold Rau, Press release, *Die Burger*, 4 April 2001.

Let us now turn to how then CEO of the Iziko SAM, Jack Lohman, a British citizen and heritage professional, conceived of the closure of the *Diorama*. One of the clearest expressions of Lohman's thinking at the time can be found in an interview with the British heritage magazine, *Locum*, in 2002. Lohman's interview presents a grandiose rhetoric that pays lip-service to the 'miracle of transformation, democracy' and negotiation in making meaning. Lohman claimed that the closing of the *Diorama* had involved the 'radical recasting' and transformation of museums in challenging apartheid and colonial histories. Mandela and Tutu would remain the backbone of South Africa's soul and spirit. Owing to criticism, mainly from Mandela in 1997, regarding the continued display of people alongside animals in the SAM, the Museum wanted to reinvent itself by 'filling the gaps', 're-interpreting the collections' and having a so-called 'TRC' for its collections. This was why an evaluation or audit of human remains was made, and the *Diorama* was closed. The language was airy and grand: "The shutters have drawn on the *Diorama* that has titillated white audiences and this signals democracy. The Board of Trustees will serve as a 'crucible' that shapes a new nation." The brand name Iziko is a Xhosa word meaning 'hearth, the place where ancestors meet to tell stories' and a centre of cultural interaction for negotiation of meaning through a diverse audience. This is felt to be in keeping with museums such as the Robben Island Museum and the Nelson Mandela Museum, that have introduced memory work and narrative approaches to museums serving diverse audiences. The museum director of such an institution was cast in indigenous idiom as a kind of modern day *sangoma*, in the words of Lohman "a politically empowered healer with a passion for heritage".⁸²

One of the most obvious problems with this 'Rainbow Nation' conception of closure relates to the role of descendant communities in the process. In a newspaper article, Patricia Davison is quoted as claiming that descendant communities were consulted in the closing of the *Diorama* and that the public was drawn into debate over the issue. Davison said that such a closure is to be seen not only as part of a commitment to transformation, but also as a means to elicit debate from the public, especially from Khoisan descendant communities. It was also said that the National Khoisan Consultative Conference, held between 29 March and April 2001, declared the need for ongoing consultation and partnership so that new audiences can be represented and then inclusive ownership could be engendered.⁸³ There is very little

⁸² Interview with Jack Lohman, 'The trouble with history. Iziko Museums of Cape Town and the healing of South Africa', *Locum*. Vol. 8, 2002, 52-55. www.locumconsulting.com/pdf/LDR_8_Trouble_with_History.pdf. Extracted from website in March 2009.

evidence to suggest that Khoisan descendants or communities were consulted in any effective way.

In contrast to the Museum's views, one may contend that Khoisan leaders coming together at the conference in 2001 were ambivalent about the closing and were sceptical of the notion of change. They argued that the Museum had no intention of including and consulting with Khoisan leaders. In addition, no money had been allocated to descendant communities. For Gabeba Abrahams-Willis, a staff member of the SAM who spoke at the KhoiSan Consultative Conference in 1996, the issue of consultation was fraught with problems, especially if the process was to be used as a means of legitimising and creating credibility and if the methods were not appropriate or culturally sensitive. "The issue at stake here is about resources and materials to better the lives of those like the Khoisan that has been dispossessed and disinherited".⁸⁴ It becomes apparent that the particular timing of the closing of the *Diorama* on 1 April 2001 should be viewed in relation to the KhoiSan Consultative Conference, held on the same date so that an impression of transformation and consultation between these structures could be publicly and explicitly demonstrated.

In evaluating the reasons given for the closing of the *Diorama*, I reiterate that it was a production or exhibition on the part of the SAM to affect its 'window dressing' regarding change and transformation. It was strategic for Lohman and other museum staff to tell this particular narrative of transforming the SAM's displays, exhibitions, internal structures and collections. It was important that the SAM's narrative fitted into that of the grander, national narratives of post-apartheid museums in South Africa. The very appointment of Lohman had signalled that the SAM wanted to transform the image of Iziko and its fifteen museums to that of professional heritage institutions, run on sound business principles to generate funding. Thus the decision to close the *Diorama* was made because of pressures on the Museum to change, tensions regarding its collections and exhibitions, the need to increase visitor numbers and revenue, and because of what was ongoing in other public-historical spaces at the time.

Soon after the *Diorama* closed in April 2001, articles about the condition of the SAM appeared in two major newspapers in Cape Town. From these one can gain further insight

⁸³ Press statement of Jack Lohman held by SAM library.

⁸⁴ G. Abrahams-Willis, 'Debating the Role of the Museum in Khoisan Identity and Heritage' in A. Bank, ed., *The Proceedings of the KhoiSan Identities & Cultural Heritage Conference* (Cape Town: Infosource, 1998), 291. The Conference was held at the South African Museum, Cape Town from 12-16 July 1997.

into the reasons for the closure. A *Sunday Times* journalist wrote that the South African Museum was a maze of levels that were poorly lit, that its visitor numbers were stagnant. In a survey it was shown that seventy per cent of visitors were white and thirty per cent foreigners.⁸⁵ Alongside transformation and getting visitor representation right, performance management plans were being put in place. A *Cape Argus* reporter noted: “Ben Ngubane said that the government spent over R100 million a year on museums and therefore they must be held accountable to the public. A diverse visitor audience reflecting a multicultural South Africa is not seen and thus all communities are not represented”.⁸⁶

In his interview with *Locum*, Lohman bemoaned the fact that the SAM had been on the margins of change due to its being treated as a “cultural stepchild”, even though the Museum had shown a commitment to change. Once again this speaks about the fact that the DAC had been reluctant to breathe funding into the SAM, especially as it did not envision real change. Elsewhere, Lohman suggested that the SAM was moving away from being dependent on government funding, and becoming an autonomous structure able to finance its own collections and displays.⁸⁷ Thus, the archiving of the *Diorama* should be viewed as contributing to this autonomy, because it enabled the Museum to hold on to its prized possession, while continuing (in its semi-autonomous state) to receive more funding from the public sector.

Further evidence of the SAM’s lack of will for genuine transformation is their continued display of stereotypical racial images in the African Cultures Gallery, very near to where the *Bushman Diorama* was formerly exhibited. Leslie Witz of the History Department at UWC criticizes the fact that in the absence of the archived *Bushman Diorama*, tour operators take their visitors to the African Cultures Gallery instead, where cast figures in simulated settings repeat the kinds of racial terms and categories that were on display in the *Diorama*. Here visitors encounter the same offensive stereotypes of physical types, and captions about *Bushman* steatopygia and ‘storing of fat in their buttocks’.⁸⁸ In a recent workshop revisiting the issue of the SAM’s legacy of cast-making and human remains collections, museum

⁸⁵ *The Sunday Times*, 5 June 2001. Newspaper clippings held by SAM library.

⁸⁶ *The Cape Argus*, 11 May 2001.

⁸⁷ Interview with Jack Lohman, ‘The trouble with history. Iziko Museums of Cape Town and the healing of South Africa’, 55.

⁸⁸ L. Witz, ‘Transforming Museums on Post-apartheid Tourist Routes’, Paper presented at the Museums and Global Public Spheres Conference, Bellagio, Italy, 22-15 July 2002, 19-20.

professionals like Fiona Clayton highlighted the continued similarities between representations in the *Bushman Diorama* and the African Cultures Gallery.⁸⁹

The continued circulation of problematic and ideologically loaded racial stereotypes through casts is by no means confined to the Iziko SAM in post-apartheid South Africa. These stereotypes are still manifest in contemporary displays offering representations of race/culture/ethnography, evolution and the ‘missing link’, at Sterkfontein Caves and Maropeng (or the ‘Cradle of Humankind’). In October 2008, I visited Sterkfontein Caves and Maropeng. Eight kilometres north of Sterkfontein, positioned on a koppie to mark the setting of a huge man-made burial mound or ‘tumulus’ of teardrop shape is Maropeng, which opened on 7 December 2005.⁹⁰ While it may be a burial place for human remains, at the same time it is a scientific laboratory for DNA testing and an area where excavation for human remains continues. Maropeng brings together the Furneaux Stewart GAPP (FSG) consortium, the University of the Witwatersrand, and the Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Conservation, Environment and Land Affairs, with budgets amounting to R8, 7 million for improved access, tourism and job creation. It would seem that these developmental concerns of modern humanity are of lesser weight than the theories of evolution that are promoted at the sites.

Philip Tobias presented Mrs Ples at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, with Thabo Mbeki, Mr and Mrs Kofi Annan, archaeologist Jane Goodall and Jacob Zuma on stage. When Thabo Mbeki opened the Maropeng Centre three years later, he did so in the language of nation-building and universal knowledge production. “Through Maropeng, a tourism public-private partnership project, we offer the people of the world the opportunity to connect with the golden chain of life and to our human evolution”.⁹¹ Tied to evolutionary teaching is the celebration of the ‘discoverers’ of the ‘hominid remains’ and evidence of evolutionary theory. Philip Tobias was honoured on his 80th birthday in October 2005 by the Royal Society of South Africa, along with the physical anthropologist Robert Broom. The Royal Society of South Africa also brings together the Balzan International Prize for Physical Anthropology and the Charles R. Darwin Lifetime Achievement Award of the American

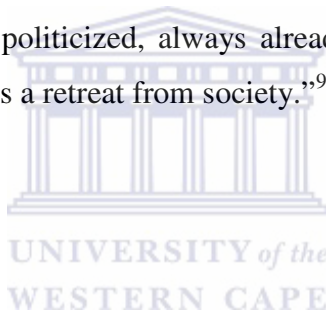
⁸⁹ Clayton Fiona is the curator for the Social History Collection at *Iziko* Slave Lodge and hosted the discussion, ‘Casting new light’ on 12 May 2009.

⁹⁰ Lucille Davie, ‘Mbeki opens Maropeng Centre’, 8 December 2005.

⁹¹ Thabo Mbeki cited in Lucille Davie, ‘Mbeki opens Maropeng Centre’, 8 December 2005.

Association of Physical Anthropology.⁹² As I made my way to the *Cradle of Humankind*, I noticed a large sign advertising the services of a taxidermist.

Nick Shepherd argues that shifts in the curriculum of archaeology in post-apartheid South African universities indicate an emphasis on development issues and notions of cultural tourism. Notions of multiculturalism and multiracialism are closely connected to colonial archaeology, and this has been officially sanctioned in the contexts of restitution, recovery and African Renaissance. At the same time, archaeology, a science that took hold in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, has been used post-1994 as a ‘broad antidote to various politicized pasts’. As Shepherd puts it, “[t]he promise of the idea of archaeology as science is a powerful one: to trade in the messiness of the present for the clean, aseptic certainties of a sure knowledge of the past.” He warns against such naïve images of the discipline and insists that it is always socially constructed and politically or ideologically informed. His comments are pertinent to the lack of self-reflection in images of archaeology from the SAM to Maropeng: “Archaeology is always already politicized, always already implicated in the present. The notion of archaeology as science is a retreat from society.”⁹³



Conclusion:

On 22 June 2007 a forum came together in the SAM’s Rock Art Gallery to discuss the future of the *Diorama*. Invitations had been extended to the forty-seven selected participants, who included Museum staff and delegates from representative stakeholder organisations that included the San at the ! Khwa ttu Centre (a congregation of San leaders from all over southern Africa who were meeting at the time), the National Consultative Conference of the Khoisan or NKOK, the Western Cape Education Department and DAC as well as archaeologists and historians from UWC and UCT. Davison said that the Iziko Advisory Committee on Human Remains had declared that there was no problem in displaying the casts but that such display had to be “re-contextualised”. Ciraj Rassool highlighted the importance of seeing the *Diorama* as part of the intellectual history of the SAM and the “problems associated with the erasure of institutional histories”. He proposed that the re-contextualisation of the *Diorama* should take the form of an exhibition of the history of

⁹² *UCT News*, 2005.

⁹³ N. Shepherd, ‘State of the Discipline: Science, Culture and Identity in South African Archaeology, 1870-2003’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29(4), Dec. 2003, 23.

anthropology and racial science which foregrounded anthropological processes of interpretation in colonial institutions. Sandy Prosalendis argued that there should be a dialogue with the *Diorama* in terms of recorded life histories and knowledge production, as a means of celebrating the memory of /Xam people and their sense of freedom⁹⁴. The proceedings of the forum were to be published and clarity gained within a year.⁹⁵ At the time of my correspondence with Dr. Klinghardt on 3 March 2009 and at the discussion forum ‘Casting new light’ on 12 May 2009 the discussion proceedings were still awaiting publication and access by the public. The cogs are turning very slowly.

In the latter section of this chapter, I have argued that the closing of the *Diorama* should be viewed as a stage-managed production by the SAM and its representatives, primarily former CEO Jack Lohman and curator Patricia Davison. Despite Davison’s earlier seminal critique of the history of the Bushman *Diorama* in her 1991 doctoral thesis, her contribution to the debate surrounding its closure was an attempt to sanitise the offensiveness of the display. The *Bushman Diorama* has since been archived and concealed from the public. The closure of the *Diorama* has been cloaked in a language of remaking meaning and attempts to show the cast-making process in a new light. This process began with the revisions made to the *Diorama* between 1988 and 1990, which retained the display without effectively challenging its stereotyped representations and racial categorisation. However, the very closure and archiving of the *diorama* constitute a remaking of meaning. They should be seen as window dressing, as a silencing of the questions about the cast-making process and the SAM’s human remains collection. This window dressing, this silencing, suggests self-interest on the part of the Museum and reluctance on the part of the nation state to commit itself to the issue of repatriation of sensitive collections.

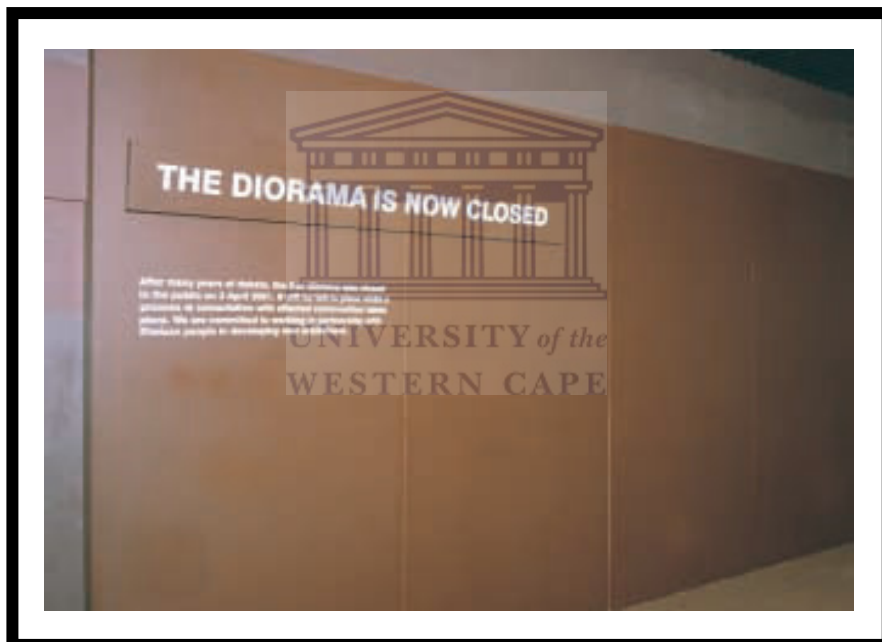
To draw attention to this wider context, in the early part of the chapter I set the closing of the *Diorama* in the context of the political and economic trade-offs associated with the return of Sara Baartman’s remains from the Musée de l’Homme. Drawing on the work of Crais and Scully, I argued that this event was appropriated by the nation state, by emergent Khoisan groups like the Griqua, and by influential figures in the Iziko South African Museum. The flowery rhetoric of nation-building, and the lack of effective involvement of descendant

⁹⁴ DOCUMENT RE THE SAN DIORAMA: Report on the Iziko Forum on the Future of the San Diorama, Email correspondence attachment from Dr Gerald Klinghardt on 14 January 2009.

⁹⁵ Email and telephone correspondence with Dr Gerald Klinghardt, Curator of Anthropology in Social History Collections Department: Iziko SAM, Klinghardt to Hendricks on 17 March 2009.

communities silenced the ghosts of the past, in the form of the still vast collection of human remains held by colonial institutions like the Musée de l'Homme. The Baartman burial that was accompanied by great fanfare was as empty a gesture as the closing of the *Diorama* without any self-reflection or effective redress on the part of the South African Museum.

I argue that the Bleek-Lloyd or Lloyd-Bleck project has come to serve as a comfortable replacement that serves to plaster over the ideological and institutional cracks in the SAM. In Chapter two I explore the way in which the /Xam narratives collected by Wilhelm Bleek and his sister-in-law, Lucy Lloyd, have come to perform that function, as texts in the *Diorama*'s effective successor, the Museum's leading Khoisan exhibition, */Qe: The Power of Rock Art. Rainmaking, Healing and Ancestors* which opened two years after the closing of the *Diorama*.



Chapter Two:

The Iziko South African Museum and the cultural politics of rock art: /Qe, *The Power of Rock Art. Ancestors, Rain-making and Healing*, 2003-2011

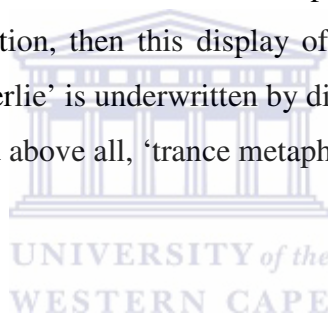
In this chapter on the exhibition /Qe: *The Power of Rock Art. Ancestors, Rain-making and Healing*, I provide a detailed analysis of the spatial layout of the exhibition, as well as of the history of the exhibition and the politics of representation associated with it. I make use of interviews held with scholars connected to this exhibition and engage with their views on the unfolding process of exhibition making. I argue that this permanent exhibition, that opened at the South African Museum in 2003, is profoundly essentialist in its images of the /Nuspeakers and /Xam people. I suggest that the stereotypes of the *Bushman Diorama* and the later *Miscast* exhibition are layered and repeated within the rock art exhibition. I argue that this essentialism is especially apparent in the way that the ‘trance metaphor’, which is associated with the authentic and ab/original hunter-gatherers, is used to explain the meaning of rock art. A number of recent publications in the field of rock art, by anthropologists, artists, linguists and archaeologists including Janette Deacon, Nigel Crawhall, Bradford Keeney, Craig Foster, Pippa Skotnes and David Lewis-Williams, can be seen as feeding into this paradigm.

The discourse on rock art in South Africa is dominated by an interpretative narrative of shamanism. This discourse was set in motion not only by prior exhibitions and publications, notably in the latter instance the much celebrated *Believing and Seeing* by David Lewis-Williams (1981), but also by the introduction of the concept of ‘intangible heritage’ as a vehicle for transformation in museums.⁹⁶ In turn, intangible cultural heritage paved the way for the Bleek/Lloyd Collection to be employed as a ‘living or authentic’ mainstay of the ‘extinct’ /Xam voice. Furthermore, in this intangible heritage-Bleek/Lloyd-authenticity complex, the discursive practice of conservation and the issue of World Heritage Status (WHS) for rock art sites entered into the production process of the exhibition. Whilst World Heritage Listing needs to be considered in terms of making meaning of rock art, I will argue that the ‘remaking’ of /Xam narratives by the /Qe exhibition is but a modification of the

⁹⁶ Intangible Heritage is described by the heritage sector and museum professionals as that of song, dance, traditions, music, artefacts. For analysis of this concept, see G. Minkley, ‘“A fragile inheritor”: The post-apartheid memorial complex, A.C. Jordan and the re-imagining of cultural heritage in the Eastern Cape’ in C. Rassool and L. Witz, eds., ‘Making Histories’ Special Issue, *Kronos: Southern African Histories*, vol. 34, Nov. 2008, 16-41; B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, ‘World Heritage and Cultural Economics’ in I. Karp, C. Kratz and L. Swaja, eds., *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* (Duke University Press, 2006); ‘From Ethnology to Heritage’, <http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/web/SIEF.pdf>. Retrieved on 5 June 2009.

Bushman Diorama, with renewed layers of shamanism that serve to place the */Qe exhibition* within the discourse of ‘unity amidst diversity’ by the post-apartheid nation state and the museum sector. Moreover, the narrative of *when, where, why* and *by whom* rock art was made is marked by incoherence, so that it fits not only the discourse on rock art but also the ‘narrative of the nation’.

This exhibition seeks to suggest that putting rock art on display and invoking the discourse of development can in some manner empower ‘indigenous’ people and bring about healing, restitution and reconciliation. This is incongruent with the experience of the so-called /Nu speakers or /Xam people in the nation state. Furthermore, it is interesting to see the ways in which the politics of representation has played out in national San or Khoisan identity politics. In reality, Khoisan communities remain marginalised and ravaged by poverty. Contrary to the claims of the curators, these communities were not effectively consulted in the making of the */Qe exhibition*. If exhibitions are scripted for and by the nation state to narrate the politics of representation, then this display of rock art is a ‘superlie’, to adopt McCannel’s concept.⁹⁷ This ‘superlie’ is underwritten by discourses of scientific archaeology, ‘discovery’, myth or folklore, and above all, ‘trance metaphor’.



Constructing /Qe

The */Qe* exhibition opened on 6 December 2003, after the closure of the *Bushman Diorama*. The main motivation behind this exhibition was the concept put forward by the *Miscast* exhibition, that rock art and /Xam narratives had rarely graced the halls of museums in South Africa. There was also a desire on the part of the South African Museum to put on display its large collection of rock art artefacts.⁹⁸ The exhibition also reveals the findings of the past thirty years of research on artefacts that have been in the museum collections for over a century.⁹⁹

In the */Qe* display there is virtually no overt representation of the violent colonial past, but rather there are images of healing and harmony that fit in with wider discourses of national

⁹⁷ McCannel in Chapter 3 The Identification of Cultural Villages as Examples of Cultural Tourism <http://ujdigispace.uj.ac.za:8080/dspace/bitstream/10210/778/9CHAPTER%203pdf>. Retrieved on 25 June 2010.

⁹⁸ Interview with Janette Deacon, South African Museum, 23 December 2007.

⁹⁹ Interview with Janette Deacon, South African Museum, 23 December 2007.

reconciliation. Janette Deacon, an archaeologist who has done extensive research on /Xam peoples, genealogies, space and land, is the master narrator behind the exhibition, responsible for the greater part of the text in this exhibition. Aaron Mazel, a former director of the Iziko Slave Lodge, provided the initial proposal for the exhibition but had to leave for the United States and later the United Kingdom.¹⁰⁰ An interview with Jenny Sandler, who is credited with designing /*Qe*, revealed that the production of the exhibition and texts was largely undertaken by Deacon. Sandler recalled that her own contribution was reducing and editing the texts written by Deacon.¹⁰¹

Deacon claims that the idea behind the exhibition had nothing to do with the concept of the ‘salvage’ of the ‘bushman voice, as Ciraj Rassool has suggested in his critique of this and other exhibitions based on the Bleek/Lloyd archive.¹⁰² Instead she highlighted the institution-driven motivations of the Iziko SAM and how it sought to make use of its long-held rock art collection. When funding from the National Lotteries was allocated, the task of making the exhibition fell mainly onto Deacon’s shoulders, as she had also been directly involved in the drafting of the proposal. The pervading feeling, she explained, was that the interpretation of rock art was a gap to be filled by telling, and at the same time answering, the story of *when*, *where*, *why* and by *whom* rock art was made. In her view the interpretation of rock art was about providing empirical knowledge about a people’s way of life and how their belief system flowed from this lifestyle. Deacon did, however, express some regret that the exhibition did not turn out quite the way she had envisaged. In particular, she expressed her disappointment that visitors would often walk straight pass the rock art exhibition to the fossil and dinosaur displays. She related this to the lack of contemplative or working space, and suggested that this might have been related to the design of the exhibition.¹⁰³

Interestingly, during our walk-through interview Deacon discovered a few ‘sequential mistakes’. The numbers did not line up correctly with the texts that told the narrative alongside the image of the shaman-in-trance. Deacon felt that to remedy the ‘mistake’ the transparency should merely be removed and replaced by another containing the ‘correct’

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Janette Deacon, South African Museum, 23 December 2007.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Jenny Sandler, 19 January 2008.

¹⁰² C. Rassool, ‘Beyond the Cult of “Salvation” and “Remarkable Equality”’: A New Paradigm for the Bleek-Lloyd Collection’ in Andrew Bank (ed), *Kronos*, 32, Nov. 2006, 244-51.

¹⁰³ Interview with Janette Deacon, South African Museum, 23 December 2007.

data. In this sense, she suggested, using removable transparencies could create ongoing meaning for a diverse audience.¹⁰⁴ The language here was reminiscent of that of Patricia Davison and her almost 'cut-and-paste' attitude towards the process of revising the *Bushman Diorama*. It did not suggest a thorough-going acceptance of the underlying need for a more radical revision.

According to Deacon, the exhibition was compiled and created as a powerful vehicle for the emergence of indigenous knowledge systems. She indicated, however, that the South African Coat of Arms which featured prominently at the beginning of the exhibition was an incidental result of National Lottery funding rather than a conscious choice on the part of its makers. This view of the relevance of the national Coat of Arms seems to be in opposition to the one expressed by Jacob Zuma in his opening address to the National Khoisan Consultative Conference of South Africa (NKCCSA) in 2001. Here Zuma explicitly alluded to the way the San people, conceived as a timeless and ahistorical people belonging to no specific ethnic group are represented within the Coat of Arms, which has a unifying role to play.¹⁰⁵

The exhibition makes use of evidence discovered and reconstructed at known sites across southern Africa, including World Heritage rock art sites; archaeological excavations; photographs of landscapes, caves, and dwellings; rocks; moulds; casts of rocks with paintings; /Xam artefacts (loincloths, beads and digging sticks); video clips and experiments with pigmentation. After my interview with Deacon in December 2007, I returned in January 2008, and found the additions of a touch screen, seating and 'correct' numbering of the sequence in which the shaman goes into a trance and sees geometric and iconic images for the painting of rock art.

Having noted the introductory panel acknowledging the contributors, researchers, producers and institutions involved, in 2007 and 2008 I approached various Iziko staff members to find out further details about the production processes behind this exhibition. I was told that the Iziko staff members listed in the acknowledgements had had limited involvement. Electronic media and the SAM's annual report of 2003-2004, however, describe the curator, Carol Kaufmann from the SANG, as part of a team of curators of the */Qe* exhibition. She too

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Janette Deacon, South African Museum, 23 December 2007.

¹⁰⁵ Address by Deputy President Jacob Zuma at the Opening Ceremony of the National Khoisan Consultative Conference, Oudtshoorn, 29 March 2001. Issued by the Office of the Presidency. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/zuma/2001/jz0329.htm>.

claimed that she had had little role in its production.¹⁰⁶ It was only on visiting the Origins Centre at Wits University's Rock Art Research Institute (RARI) that I learnt that Deacon was indeed the main player in the production of the exhibition.¹⁰⁷ It was through her extensive archaeological research, conservation work, publications, and her affiliation to boards of various committees and organisations, which included the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), the Trust for African Rock Art (TARA) and the South African San Institute (SASI), that the negotiation process for the exhibition was able to unfold, bringing together other archaeologists, linguists, film-makers, Khoisan representatives and photographers.

Roger van Wyk and Iain Low from the UCT School of Architecture were responsible for the architecture supporting the exhibition. Van Wyk revealed that the costs of renovations to the inside of the building had taken up most of the modest R1 million budget. There was only a small sum left over to be spent on the installations.¹⁰⁸ Low won a prestigious award from the Cape Institute of Archaeology for his spatial engineering of this exhibition.¹⁰⁹ Both Deacon and van Wyk were particularly proud of the 'horizon' photographs in the main display area, as they saw these as reinsertions of the /Xam or /Nu speaking or Khwe people into the landscape.¹¹⁰

A reading of the exhibition spaces

As visitors enter the /*Qe* exhibition space they encounter an introductory panel with a DVD or video clip that plays for about twenty minutes and repeats. The southern Africans shown on the video collectively suggest that they relate to rock art because it is about culture, spirituality, ancestors, rainmaking, healing, empowerment and emotional attachments, and because rock art provides a window into the past. One participant, the daughter of one of the museum personnel from the Iziko, refers to rock art as 'Bushman art'. The people featured in

¹⁰⁶ Telephonic correspondence with Carol Kaufmann, 20 January 2008.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Geoffrey Blundell, 18 November 2007.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Roger van Wyk, 18 January 2008.

¹⁰⁹ *University of Cape Town Research Report* (Cape Town, 2005), 1.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Roger van Wyk, 18 January 2008; Interview with Janette Deacon, 23 December 2007. For Deacon's earlier work along these lines, along with the photographer Craig Foster, see J. Deacon and C. Foster, *My Heart Stands in the Hill* (London, Cape Town, Sydney and Auckland: Struik Publishers, 2005) and for a vigorous critique of the lack of nuance and self-reflexivity involved in this project, see Rassool, 'Beyond the Cult of "Salvation" and "Remarkable Equality"', 248-50.

the DVD are variously identified as coming from the Kalahari San Group, Botswana, Rwanda, Upington, Schmidtsdrif, Burundi, the Northern Cape, Namibia, the !Xum from Angola, the Khomani San Educational Trust, the KhoiSan Consultative Conference, the DRC and Cape Town.¹¹¹ One is given the impression that these participants are the authentic descendents of those who made the rock art. One may also assume that they stand to benefit from the display. Therefore the video conveys the impression that the process of making the */Qe* exhibition was one of consultation, empowerment for ‘descendant communities’, and ownership, and that the rock art is to be seen through their eyes. This recording or compilation was, however, made just a month before the opening of the exhibition. Any effective incorporation of such voices and views into the exhibition itself was no longer a possibility at this late stage.

Surmounting the screen in the wall recess is the South African Coat of Arms. The Coat of Arms depicts the */Xam* motto: *Ke e/xarra //ke*, meaning ‘People who are different join together’, or *Unity in Diversity*. Close to this are featured the acknowledgements to the intellectuals and stakeholders involved in the exhibition-making. These include NGOs like TARA, the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities (WIMSA), SASI and NKCCSA and individuals like Roger Chennells and Nigel Crawhall.

In the same area, and directly opposite the video clip, is a wall map of Africa identifying rock art sites that have been carbon-dated as being between two thousand and ten thousand years old. These sites are in Algeria, Libya, Niger in the Western Sahara, Zambia, the Kolo district of Tanzania, at Tsodilo in Botswana, the Matobo Hills in Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and the Eastern Cape and the Drakensberg in South Africa. Rock art images of geometric shapes, human figures, finger paintings, animals and shamans or medicine men are shown on this map as being found in these regions. There is text explaining that rock art is to be found almost all over Africa and that hunter-gatherers and farming communities of the distant past were responsible for this art form.

Equidistant from the video and the map is the well lit angular ‘test tube’ shaped glass box reaching towards the ceiling. Roger van Wyk claimed that this had nothing to do with creating a focal point for the Blombos Cave remains as particularly scientific evidence of ‘Middle Stone Age’ (MSA) life, but was the product of ‘structural constraints’ related to the

¹¹¹ Introductory video clip from */Qe*, 2003-2008.

building.¹¹² The display in this rectangular glass box documents the archaeological discoveries made at the Blombos Caves in Stilbaai by Royden Yates and Christopher Henshilwood. Archaeologists believe that these artefacts from the Blombos Caves yield valuable evidence about people like the hunter-gatherers, who lived in the MSA, and that they signify ‘early modern behaviour’ providing evidence for ‘symbolic material culture.’¹¹³ A photograph of the entrance to the Blombos Cave is displayed alongside evidence consisting of ochre, stone tools and shell remains that have been dated using a process called the ‘luminescence method’. The luminescence method is a new dating method that can go back further than the carbon method to estimate the ages of objects that are too old to be dated by the carbon process. This method is controversial. Some archaeologists contest it on the basis that there are too many variables to consider and dismiss it as unreliable.¹¹⁴

Adjacent to the introductory or welcoming panel is the rectangular light box running along a recess in the wall. Under the box is depicted a time line, running from 90 000 B.C. to 100 B.C. The glass box contains artefacts found at a number of sites from the Blombos Caves on the Cape coast to sites in the Eastern Cape, France and Brazil. Dates of the findings are shown in the context of the timeline. The brochure describing the exhibition suggests that the San used loose stones that have been dated as 2 000 to 6 400 years old with rock paintings on them to cover burial places and that most of the paintings on rock shelters in the Western Cape probably date from the same period.¹¹⁵

The narrative in this opening exhibition room is thus constructed in a linear way. The chronological timeline and the map of Africa answer the questions of *when* rock art was made, and *where* rock art sites are to be found. The questions that remain to be answered are *why*, and *by whom*.

This exhibition, that deals with ancestors, rainmaking and healing is framed along linear and scientific lines (but in direct dialogue with the ‘authentic voice’). The message that is implicit alongside the display of artefacts seems to be that the empirical background is sound and

¹¹² Interview with Roger van Wyk, 18 January 2008.

¹¹³ Henshilwood in G. Blundell, ed., *Origins: The Story of the Emergence of Humans and Humanity in Africa* (Cape Town: Double Storey Press, 2006), 81; Interview with Geoffrey Blundell, November 2007.

¹¹⁴ See Paul Tacon, *Tracking Time. A Human Concern*, <http://www.abc.net.au/science/slab/tacon/story.htm> Retrieved 05/06/09.

¹¹⁵ */Qe: The power of rock art* (Cape Town: Iziko Museums of Cape Town, 2007): Pamphlet.

viewers can now proceed with confidence to the trickier business of interpretation. As you leave to enter the main exhibition a /Xam text about N/ǀ speakers reminds you that /ǀ, the place you are entering is ‘power’ and that it is ‘God’s power’. “It is the power of the grandfathers. This is the world that stands here. Thus we are empowered”. The display indicates that the quote comes from Una /Khasi Rooi, her sister Antje /Khasi and other members of the /Nu speakers.¹¹⁶

Alongside this text is quoted the view of rock art scholar David Lewis-Williams, that “the complexity, beauty and spirituality of rock art can be related to the San knowledge system as codes of meaning in so many myths and the flexible metaphors of transition in myths”. Here is yet another example of categorising and labelling in that the /Nu speakers are the ‘living evidence’ of the narrative that will unfold in the subsequent text and exhibition. The /Nu speakers as the ‘living’ narrators stand in direct relation to the /Xam speakers from the Bleek/Lloyd Collection. A website of the South African San Institute (SASI) reveals that the surviving population of the /Nu speakers numbers 23 adults. The !Xu and the Khwe currently living at Schmidtsdrif, 80 kilometres outside of the Northern Cape provincial capital, Kimberley, number 3,500 and 1,100 respectively. All three groups claim an indigenous identity on the basis of their languages and culture. SASI and WIMSA only work with groups who are deemed to be coherent communities, based on shared language and practices.¹¹⁷

On one wall of the main display area is a glass panel containing a display called ‘Power from paint: the artist’s palette’. The term ‘palette’ makes an association here with European painting, and such parallels are common among authors writing within the shamanistic paradigm. Lewis-Williams, for example, is fond of comparing caves with rock art to cathedrals in Christian Europe, while the /Xam notebooks are frequently referred to as ‘the Rosetta Stone’ of San culture, the supposed key to unlocking the mysteries of their belief system.¹¹⁸ ‘Power of paint’ documents the research done by Iona Rudner on the pigments used in rock art. On my visit to the exhibition in 2005 as a postgraduate student of Museum and Heritage Studies, the SAM’s education officer related to me how he and his colleagues

¹¹⁶ /ǀ: *The power of rock art*: Pamphlet 2007.

¹¹⁷ Kalahari People’s Network: ‘General - Who are the San people?’
<http://www.kalaharipeoples.net/article.php?i=1&c=1> Retrieved on 5 June 2009

¹¹⁸ See D. Lewis-Williams, *Believing and Seeing: Symbolic Meanings in Southern San Rock Paintings* (London: Academic Press, 1981); J. Deacon and T. Dowson, eds., *Voices from the Past: /Xam Bushmen and the Bleek and Lloyd Collection* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1996).

had devised this panel, because of the frequent questions from visitors about the issue.¹¹⁹ The panel shows that the red, purple and yellow paints were made from natural pigments in iron oxide, white clay, black charcoal or manganese oxide, and that pigments were also produced from blood, plant juices, egg, fat, sand and urine.¹²⁰ It is believed that the paints were then applied with ‘brushes’ made out of hair, feathers, quills and reeds. Sometimes the paints would be applied using the fingers. Some etched paintings reveal that rocks were ‘scraped’ or ‘pecked’ to create three-dimensional effects and contrasts between lighter and darker rocks or paints. Recently, the digital archive (compiled by Pippa Skotnes) of the Lloyd/Bleek Collection has been added to the space next to the panel, with single seating and a monitor.¹²¹ The Lucy Lloyd Archives Resource and Exhibition Centre (LLAREC) contain the entire *Miscast* exhibition in digital form, with links and a visitors’ book.¹²² Some of these features bear a close resemblance, though very much downscaled, to what can be seen at the Origins Centre at Wits, that also provides a history of rock art and rock art interpretation in southern Africa.

Next to the display ‘Power of paint’ is a greatly enlarged photograph of the mouth of a cave in the Cedarberg, taken by Craig Foster. Thus, when viewers enter this space, the darkness in the room and the great photograph of the cave opening create the illusion that the audience has stepped inside a cave and is being drawn into an engagement with its interior. Along the same wall is another text, headed ‘Power of ritual in rock art’. Here the rituals of initiation and trance are explained. Near to this is a panel called ‘Powerful things’, in which various /Xam artefacts, including digging sticks, bags, a //ho and an ostrich bead necklace, are displayed inside a glass box. These objects are all associated with the initiation of /Xam girls. The same box also contains an artefact made from the hair of a hyena, an animal which is deemed to be associated with supernatural capacity and to relate to the overall theme of shamanism. Arrows and quivers are also to be found in this display. The dim lighting and the

¹¹⁹ Educational officer, Iziko: 2005.

¹²⁰ /Qe: *The power of rock art*: Pamphlet 2007.

¹²¹ /Qe exhibition space, January 2008.

¹²² LLAREC, Lucy Lloyd Archives Resources and Exhibition Centre is located at the Michaelis School of Fine Art at UCT and established in 1996 to house the *Miscast* archive as a collection. The digital archive was established in 2002 under Pippa Skotnes with financial help from De Beers, ScanShop, UCT and Mellon Foundation. Co-owned by Iziko, SAM, UCT and National Library. <http://www.lloydbleekcollection.uct.ac.za/dynapage.jsp?id=23>. Retrieved on 7 October 2008.

grey wall against which the text and objects have been placed, convey a sense of foreboding and 'darkness' appropriated to the themes of the spiritual and the supernatural.

On the opposite side of the wall, beginning at the opening to the main display is a summary explanation of the */Qe* exhibition. According to this summary, there are over 15 000 known rock art sites that contain the 'belief and knowledge systems of the earliest inhabitants of southern Africa'. The summary states that the exhibition aims to answer the questions: who the artists were, how old the rock art tradition is, how the engravings were made and what they mean. Furthermore, the exhibition claims to convey the meaning of rock art 'from the perspective of their San artists and their ancestors'. The power of animals, such as the eland, is said to be related to trance-healing and rain-making, which are held to be the central themes in rock art.

Along the same wall is a panel called 'Preserving Memories', which depicts how Wilhelm Bleek, Lucy Lloyd and Dorothea Bleek, in collaboration with */Xam* informants, recorded the narratives that provide the key to unlocking meaning. According to this panel, which resonates with panels in the *Miscast* exhibition, this collaboration was a project of colonialism, but is to be seen as an act of resistance on the part of the narrators. The story is presented as a tale of great sacrifice and loss to which all South Africans can relate.¹²³ The glass box near this panel on the Bleek-Lloyd-*/Xam* collaboration contains the Linton rock paintings. The Linton rock is a slab of rock with rock art on it. Approximately two metres long and seventy-five centimetres in size, it was removed from its cave shelter in the early twentieth century on the instructions of Louis Peringuey, then Director of the SAM. It has since been part of the SAM's rock art collection. It is believed that great numbers of rich rock paintings were destroyed during the process of carving out the Linton rock from the solid rock- face of the cave. The */Qe* exhibition, however, makes no mention whatsoever of this process of destruction, or (by extension) of other acts of appropriation committed by the SAM in its acquisition of a wider collection of such artefacts.

Instead, the panel alongside, called 'Power from the ancestors, rock art and rain making' tells of the water bull and the 'she-rain that is softer than the he-rain'. Here the exhibition links the 'who made the rock art painting?' to myth-making and ritual. According to anthropologist and folklorist Mathias Guenther, the male/culture (hunt) versus female/nature (rain, initiation,

¹²³ For this type of interpretation in the published literature about the Bleek-Lloyd-*/Xam* project, see especially P. Skotnes, *Heaven's Things* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1997).

water) binary has become a universal construction amongst social anthropologists across the world. For him, the interpretations of rock art based on folklore and narratives are deceptively good arguments but are based on the ‘false’ assumptions of a homogenous and coherent *Bushman* society. Guenther makes a persuasive case for a complex and diverse range of meanings in rock paintings that transcend the single-stranded shamanistic paradigm. He points out that rock paintings do depict social scenes, hunting scenes and a range of rituals, and are not, therefore, to be so easily reduced to a single theme. He argues that the Bleek-Lloyd /Xam narratives and other narratives, like those of the Nharo, which he has collected are often at odds with the themes in the rock art rather than simply reflective of them as is so often assumed.¹²⁴

In the same panel is a photograph of Una /Khasi Rooi as she points to a rock art painting and tells us that this is where power is. I traced this image of Una /Khasi Rooi to the cultural mapping done with the Khomani-San for their land claims. At the time, from 1996 to 2002, the /Khomani-San, with the assistance of Crawhall via SASI, via UNESCO, via WIMSA, via the NKOK, were primarily engaged in a land claim concerning an area lying both within and outside what had once been the Kalahari Gemsbok Park. Crawhall and the /Khomani-San felt it was important to map cultural landscapes and indigenous knowledge of places, hunting territories, ethnic or language boundaries, spiritual life, elders’ knowledge and family territories.¹²⁵ The /Khomani-San had to map the land that was relevant to their land claim, and thus individual trees, sites and landscapes were mapped to provide tangible evidence for land claims.¹²⁶ The elders’ narration of life stories, timelines, genealogies, oral histories and memory work were offered as methodologies for collection of stories and views of elders. I argue that the image of Una /Khasi Rooi pointing to the rock in the exhibition was deliberately included to point up the work of Lewis-Williams and others, which interpreted rock art as shamanistic, to take attention away from the issues of land claims and restitution. In the work done with the /Khomani-San there is no mention of shamanism as an explanation of rock art. In 2001, as the result of the mapping done between 1999 and 2000, the government restored to the community 65 000 square kilometres of land in what is called the

¹²⁴ M. Guenther, ‘The Relationship of Bushman Art to Ritual and Folklore’ in T. Dowson and D. Lewis-Williams, eds., *Contested Images: Diversity in Southern African Rock Art Research* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press), 257-73.

¹²⁵ N. Crawhall, ‘Giving New Voice to Endangered Cultures’ (Working Paper), 3. http://www.iapad.org/publications/ppgis/crawhall_nigel.pdf.

¹²⁶ Crawhall, ‘Giving New Voice’, 6.

Kalahari. The land is now crisscrossed with farms and fences for enterprises that include conservation, farm management, anti-poaching activities, game counting, tourism, arts and crafts, tourist guides, community educators and tracking skills.¹²⁷

Photographic images of two of the Bleek-Lloyd informants, Dia!kwain and Jan Rondebout, are shown alongside the 'Preserving Memories' panel. More Linton rock art panels are lined up below in the glass box. At the centre is //Kabbo, a man called 'Dream', in a panel headed 'Power of belief': Power of trance'. These panels are well lit and cast against red, orange or mustard walls, so that the information stands out and the display echoes the colours of the pigments used in the making of rock art. Here the references to the rain-making of *!giten* (shamans) are explicit. An explanation of trance healing is provided, showing how the medicine person or shaman lays hands on sick people and supposedly enters the spiritual realm through trance to 'draw the arrows of sicknesses into their own body.'

In his chapter-length biography of //Kabbo, based on a close reading of //Kabbo's own stories recorded in the notebooks, Andrew Bank has challenged the exclusive emphasis on //Kabbo as shaman. In Bank's analysis there is little sense of the mystical or supernatural about this man, who was the primary informant of Bleek and Lloyd, and the man responsible for almost half of the entire notebook record (fifty-five of some hundred and twenty notebooks). Instead he emerges in Bank's work as 'A Husband and A Hunter', an expert at veldlore, but also a man with a prodigious recollection of genealogies and family history. Here //Kabbo is seen in terms of his detailed accounts of how to cut up an ostrich rather than in terms of trance-visions and shamanism.¹²⁸

As one leaves the main display area a video clip plays in total darkness in a small room, dramatising the act of trance dancing. This is the end or climax of the */Qe* exhibition. Women clap their hands around a fire whilst the 'shaman' enters a trance or 'dream state'. Crinkly faces and naked upper bodies grace the screen. The scene is interrupted by a participating tourist, who Deacon surmises may have been 'holding forth unto the shaman while he walks in the footsteps of the healer'.¹²⁹ In a recent article, Bradford Keeney, who has worked for almost fifteen years with the *Ju'hoansi*, is highly critical of this film. Keeney argues that it presents an overly simplistic image of the shaman undergoing 'entoptics' when falling into a

¹²⁷ Crawhall, 'Giving New Voice', 11.

¹²⁸ A. Bank, *Bushman in a Victorian World: The Remarkable Story of the Bleek-Lloyd Collection of Bushman Folklore* (Cape Town: Double Storey Press, 2006), chapter 5.

¹²⁹ Interview with Deacon, 23 December 2007. This image is in the exhibition.

trance. Furthermore, he argues that there is no single progression or sequence of images during the trance: the trance dancer does not ‘sequentially’ see lines, grids, dots, zigzags, chevrons, u-shapes, filigree and the forming of iconic images.¹³⁰ The forming of visual images is not as important as heightened feelings of love, peace and joy. A visionary experience of a ‘visitation’ (Kabi) is not a mere dream, but a special dream while asleep and does not involve part- animal, part- human (‘therianthropes’) transformation, as Lewis-Williams has argued in his research on rock art.¹³¹ Moreover, like Guenther, he emphasizes that the meanings derived from rock art can be ascribed to many different interpretations and inspirations.¹³² Interestingly, both Keeney and Lewis-Williams indicate that they worked in the Kalahari with Megan Biesele, with the /nom-kxaosi; but they developed highly divergent theories.

This film has been altered since its initial screening. The upper bodies of the clapping women are now covered and the participant holding onto the medicine person has been cut from the scene. During my walk-through interview with Deacon, I suggested that the crinkly and naked upper bodies were a reminder of the *Bushman Diorama* and that this might have had something to do with the alterations. In other words, I was of the view that here again there was a revising, a papering over, rather than a rethinking.

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***/Qe* in context: the cultural politics of a rock art exhibition**

In tracing the history of this exhibition, I looked at some key events which happened alongside the closure of the *Bushman Diorama* and its replacement by the */Qe* exhibition. In so doing, I attempted to set the exhibition within the context of decisions made at government and museum or heritage levels, as well as seeing representations of rock art in terms of contemporary KhoiSan identity politics, including the successful land claims of the */Khomani-San* as */Nu* speakers in 2001. It would seem that when land restitution took place, the global or international politics pertaining to rock art entered into the making of meaning as various rock art sites were designated or listed as World Heritage Sites. I suggest that the

¹³⁰ B. Keeney, ‘Batesonian epistemology, Bushman n/om-kxaosi and rock art’ (Paper presented at the California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, 2007), 8.
<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/Insight/viewPDF.jsp?Filename=html/Output/Published/EmeraldFullTextArticle/Pdf/0670360705.pdf>.

¹³¹ B. Keeney, ‘Batesonain Epistemology’, 10.

¹³² B. Keeney, ‘Batesonain Epistemology’, 15.

conferring of WHS status or listing on many rock art sites belies the realities experienced by the descendant Khoisan communities today in the post-apartheid state: the realities of impoverishment and marginalisation.

This is well documented by WIMSA, which was established in 1996 to provide a platform for minority communities in South Africa and Namibia. The !Xun and Khwe Community Property Association serves on the WIMSA Board. In its 2003-2004 report, WIMSA shows that the San are still dispossessed and economically dependent, with a high incidence of alcoholism and a large percentage of people with HIV/AIDS. For the most part, San communities are experiencing abject poverty while there is a lack of basic services. WIMSA works in the areas of political recognition, fundraising, financial assistance, education programmes, human rights, access/management to natural resources and the reclaiming of identity.¹³³

The First Indigenous People's Conference was convened in Oudtshoorn from 29 March to 1 April 2001. Here the *Griqua*, *Nama*, *Khwe*, *!Xu* and *Khomani-San* amongst others, calling themselves the National Khoisan Consultative Conference of South Africa (NKCCSA or NKOK), came together for the first time. In his opening address, then Deputy President Jacob Zuma identified this as a key moment in African Renaissance. He said that it was important to note the Khoisan's struggle against colonialism. The rights of identity and land restitution had been afforded to the Khoisan under the Constitution and Bill of Rights, by the Pan South African Language Board, the Department of Land Affairs and the National Resources Act. The South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) was named as the heritage body that would ensure equal access by landowners and the indigenous people where rock art sites and graves are to be found.

A *KhoiSan Legacy Project* was also set up under the guidance of SAHRA in 2000, to establish a *KhoiSan Heritage Route*. Whilst poverty alleviation amongst the Khoisan communities was supposed to be addressed by the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) and the Archaeology and Geography Departments at Wits University, would see to the conservation management of rock art sites and the development of rock art tourism. UWC's Institute of Historical Research (which was closed down in 2002 and superseded by the new

¹³³ WIMSA Report, April 2003-March 2004, Part 1. <http://www.san.org.za/> For an account of the alcoholism and economic marginalization of San communities in the mid-1990s, see R. Hitchcock in A. Bank, eds., *Proceedings* (Cape Town: Infosource, 1998).

Centre for Humanities Research) was to affect a study of community centres in rural Khoisan communities for Integrated Sustainable Rural Development. The RARI and the Wits School of Archaeology (via the DEAT) were given the task of developing four rock art sites for tourism. Three of these needed to be near Kimberley. The rock art site in Platfontein was identified as belonging to the !Xu and the Khwe and subsequently they had to move from Schmidtsdrif. The fourth rock art site, which is in the Drakensberg's uKhahlamba Park, has been declared a World Heritage Site. The /Xam language records have also been listed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Project.¹³⁴

From this opening address it is evident that at the time of the construction of the */Qe* exhibition the state had mobilized the 'indigenous' or 'authentic' voice of the so-called San people by way of legislation and through interlinked projects working towards identity building, tourism development at rock art sites, and land restitution. While the state recognized the importance of rock art sites to the identity of the San people, it did not give any significant degree of support or protection to San communities from further exploitation or oppression. A closer examination of WHS listing will reveal that conservation is at the heart of this process, and many would argue that conservation is rooted in colonial practices. Interestingly, the state named Wits and RARI as key components for scientific (archaeological) enquiry into the development of rock art tourism and conservation, whereas UWC was associated with aspects of 'community development'. Conflicting interests are at stake in this continuum of poverty alleviation, tourism development, conservation and indigenous community development. The notion of 'intangible heritage' became tied up in this relationship and reinforces the impact of conservation policies and WHS listing on rock art sites.

At a conference on 'intangible heritage' held in Croatia in 2004, the new Iziko CEO Henry Bredekamp, appointed a year earlier as the successor to Jack Lohman, spoke about the transformations in museums, and how intangible heritage had been given particular significance in the post-apartheid years. In the absence of a coherent national museum policy, the White Paper on 'living heritage' or intangible heritage had involved a systematic process of restructuring museums. After the first decade of democracy, the status of intangible heritage in the context of transformation in museums and post-apartheid South Africa saw 'an increasing emphasis on cultural tradition, oral traditions, history, popular memory,

¹³⁴ Address by Deputy President Jacob Zuma at the Opening Ceremony of the National Khoisan Consultative Conference, Oudtshoorn, 29 March 2001.

performance (song, dance and music), rituals, skills, techniques, indigenous knowledge and the holistic approach to nature and social relationships'. The International Network on Cultural Policy (INCP) included reference to the importance of meanings of places and objects. Similarly, UNESCO had adopted a policy of the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Ministry of DACST had worked closely with the National Archives to bring about the National Indigenous Music and Oral History Programme in promoting 'living heritage'.¹³⁵

The Iziko SAM, like earlier structures, produces or limits meanings as a result of artefacts being located in classificatory systems without any proper historical context. In this sense, the */Qe* exhibition/ethnographic display, introduced under Bredekamp's supervision, presented the San rock painting as the intangible heritage of the authentic original San. The Bleek/Lloyd archive (as a form of living culture) would be retained as providing multiple readings of rock art, whilst decisions were being made regarding the 'archived' *Bushman Diorama* and its re-contextualisation.¹³⁶ In November 2003, Lalou Meltzer was appointed head of a research team to devise a conceptual framework that would draw all nine Social History sites together. The central organising themes were to include the peopling of the sub-continent, the history of slavery and resistance, the struggle for human rights and the social history of Cape Town.¹³⁷ Thus with the introduction of intangible heritage came an overarching generic narrative for Social History Collections in South Africa and Cape Town. The existing rock art collection at the Iziko SAM was twinned with the Bleek/Lloyd archive in a relationship that provided evidence of tangible heritage or living culture. It was in this context that the more particular processes described above went into the production of the */Qe* exhibition.

In the absence of 'living heritage' providing 'real' or authentic evidence, the Bleek/Lloyd Collection as an archive of */Xam* voices from 1870 to 1884 came to stand in for tangible heritage, alongside the evidence of folklore or myths and ritual as told by *//Kabbo* or *Dia!kwain* and currently by the */Nu* speakers. These were seen to give meanings to rock art paintings and to make the associations with shamanism. Skotnes disagrees with the shamanistic model of Lewis-Williams and Dowson. Like Guenther, she argues for the

¹³⁵ H. Bredekamp, 'Transforming Representations of "Intangible Heritage" at Iziko Museums, SA' (Unpublished Paper, Croatia, 2004). <http://www.museumnett.no/icme/icme2004/bredekamp.html>.

¹³⁶ Bredekamp, 'Tranforming Representations'.

¹³⁷ *Iziko Annual Report*, 2003-4: 14.

richness and diversity of meanings in rock art, but also calls for an appreciation of the art as aesthetic rather than simply as functional evidence of a belief system, and indeed one motif within that belief system. For Skotnes, the rock art needs to be viewed partly as *art*, as a creative cultural expression, and she is critical of the tendency to reduce rock art to the ‘fine black line’ seen in reproductions of rock art by archaeologists seeking abstract meaning.¹³⁸ As noted above, Guenther calls for a clear distinction between folklore and art. He argues that the art is not primarily of a spiritual nature, but is most frequently associated with physical survival and social interaction. Guenther draws attention to how humans in the rock art are involved in greeting each other in passing, hunting, raids or political-economic activity.¹³⁹ In the exhibition, these contested views have been suppressed and reduced to the one ‘fine black line’. Even if visitors are told about these divergent theories on visitor’s tours, the overall message remains the reinforcement of the dominant ‘narrative of shamanism’. Here Foucault’s comments on the nature of discursive formations seem pertinent. ‘The term discursive formation refers to the systematic operation of several discourses or statements constituting a ‘body of knowledge’ which work together to construct a specific object/topic of analysis in a particular way and at the same time limit the other ways in which that object/topic may be constituted.’¹⁴⁰

The */Qe* exhibition brought together different scholars from different institutions, often with competing discursive practices or formations. These included Wits (RARI, School of Archaeology, Department of Geography), UCT (Michaelis School of Fine Art, School of Architecture, Manuscripts & Archives), the Iziko (SAM, SANG, Michaelis School of Fine Art), state departments (DEAT and DACST) and UNESCO. This had a major impact on how the politics of representation played itself out in the exhibition. Thus I perceive this exhibition as marked by incoherence, as the *when*, *where*, *why*, and *who* have been set up to impart different narratives, while the pervading interpretation is that of shamanism. This is evident throughout the texts.

Importantly, this agenda is also underwritten by another script that of world tourism on rock art, in the form of conservation management policy and WHS listing. Janette Deacon suggested in 2006 that a conservation management plan was needed, which included

¹³⁸ P. Skotnes, ‘The Thin Black Line: Diversity and Transformation in the Bleek/Lloyd Collection and the Paintings of the Southern San’ in Dowson and Lewis-Williams, eds., *Contested Images*, 234-44.

¹³⁹ M. Guenther, ‘The Relationship of Bushman Art to Ritual and Folklore’, 257-9.

¹⁴⁰ Foucault cited in S. Hall, ed., *Culture, Media & Identities*, 12.

international oversight under the auspices of the World Heritage Committee. The plan was to draw together all known rock art sites across South Africa.¹⁴¹ Replicas were deemed to be important conservation mechanisms and the circulation of digitized images was encouraged, especially given the high visitor numbers.¹⁴² Deacon wrote of the shared conservation ties between RARI, the Living Landscape Project in Clan William (John Parkington) and the South African Rock Art Institute (Getty Conservation Institute).¹⁴³ She noted that a Memorandum of Understanding had been formulated between Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa in conferring WHS status to Mapungubwe Cultural Landscapes drawing together 100 rock art sites.¹⁴⁴

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett makes a powerful argument against World Heritage listing, particularly the ‘Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity’. She foregrounds the dangers inherent in cultural economics and Americanised culturalisation of heritage production, and the placing of American heritage professionals in a position of authority to determine UNESCO’s World Heritage List and subsequent conservation policies. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues that the inscription of intangible heritage on to a World Heritage Site list changes the relationship between culture and the ‘owners or authors or orators’ who identify with it.¹⁴⁵ In her analysis the WHS List is viewed as not only a homogeniser but also as a by-product of the global economy.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, the diversity of cultural artefacts is ignored as it becomes a listed item for global and universal ‘humanity’ to benefit from with no one having special claims to it:

The enterprise affects a series of shifts, from local to national to world heritage. Or more recently, from local to world heritage, that is, from a privileged relationship to a cultural good deriving from notions of ancestry, descent, and inheritance to a relationship based on interest, choice, freedom, democratic notions of inclusion, participation, and investment.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ J. Deacon, ‘Rock Art Conservation and Tourism’, *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, 13(4), Dec. 2006, 391.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 385

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 388

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 391

¹⁴⁵ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, ‘World Heritage and Cultural Economics’, 1-2.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 3-4

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 21

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett asks: to whom does intangible heritage belong? This analysis is taken up by Karp and Kratz, who examine how museums and heritage involve vast cooperation in terms of exchanges at transnational and global level. These cause tension between the 'global' and the 'local'. How, they ask, do museums express relationships that are not necessarily 'national'?¹⁴⁸

Added to these voices is that of TARA, which deems all rock art to be a world heritage. TARA is a non-profit NGO, registered in Kenya and America and committed to the conservation of Africa's rock art heritage through the setting up of a digital archive of rock art images. It receives support from the Ford Foundation, the Andrew Mellon Foundation and the National Geographic Society. TARA is digitizing over 20 000 images of African rock art for its online archive ArtStor, which provides access to researchers and students across the world. The Kalahari People's Fund acts as the co-advocacy and education group for San/Bushman communities in Namibia and Botswana and is part of TARA. Integrated rural developmental projects include ecotourism, craft projects and other income-generating community education projects and national policies favouring the use of San languages.¹⁴⁹ Thus, rock art and the meanings to be derived from it have become gridlocked between these structures and organisations that are not necessarily local or national.

In foregrounding the conservation or WHS 'script' for rock art, I wish to show how this supporting 'narrative' imposes itself onto the 'authentic voice' and constructs an image of essentialism. For me it is incomprehensible that the artificial process of conservation can be put next to the 'real' or 'authentic' in relation to the conflicting ideals of tourism and poverty alleviation. How is it that the so-called Khomani-San or /Nu speakers cannot manage their own resources, or funding, or intellectual property rights and are controlled via a Board, the CPA and NGOs? As the result of the completion of a digital archive for rock art, the intellectual property rights will no longer belong to the descendant communities and it will no longer be necessary to consult them. In fact, the 'masters' of rock art have seemingly come to the fore in the form of the sundry 'experts' (archaeologists, conservationists, filmmakers, photographers, linguists, and anthropologists) that are listed in the exhibition credits. The

¹⁴⁸ Karp and Kratz cited in C. McCarthy, 'Museum factions: the transformation of museum studies', 2007, 179. <http://www.le.ac.uk/ms/m&s/Issue%2015/mccarthy.pdf>.

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.africanrockart.org/home/>. 'African Rock Art is amongst the oldest surviving art, predating writing by tens of thousands of years. TARA, the Trust for African Rock Art, is dedicated to the awareness and preservation of African rock art'.

records show widespread abuses and coercive practices in the Kgalagadi (formerly Kalahari) Game Park and how the ‘fences have come up’, keeping the Khomani-San ‘outside’ of politics.

The Kruiper family is one family who have been involved in tourism and putting themselves on display as *Bushmen* in the Kgalagadi Game Park. They are protesting about how they are still on the periphery of resources and income, whilst many international organisations are benefitting from their heritage. In 2004, David Kruiper, leader of the //Sa, and five relatives hitchhiked, wearing loincloths in the middle of the winter, to the Cape Parliament to speak to President Mbeki about the return of land, ‘but we still have nothing and there are things happening in the Kalahari over which we have no control’.¹⁵⁰ The land resettlement includes the land in what is now the Kgalagadi National Park as well as in six farms outside the Park. The agreement was that half of the land be used for traditional cultural settlement and tourism projects and the other half for commercial farming. Kruiper claims that since the land restitution took place the people remain marginalized and poverty-stricken, with no respect accorded to traditional practices. Furthermore, the system of land management under the Community Property Association (CPA) is coercive and undermines the community, which is only ‘consulted’ when signatures are needed for fund raising and Intellectual Property Rights.¹⁵¹

Samantha Reindeers reports on the ‘trackers’ in Andriesvale receiving a measly living given the advertisement budget. The film industry is huge around Andriesvale but local communities get paid negligible amounts for their participation.¹⁵²

There is a haunting eloquence in Belinda Kruiper’s words that have echoes of Diana Ferrus’s poem dedicated to Sarah Baartman:

The Bushmen have never been allowed to be just people, like everyone else. They’re always a symbol, an exhibit, a display item on somebody else’s agenda. That’s where the Bushman spirit stays trapped, between the truth and the lie, the myth and the reality, frozen in the amber of the past. In the high soaring notes of the song was the inexpressible sorrow of being Bushman - the deep psychic pain of being a scattered people, the mourning for the dead mothers and fathers that was never properly done; the inconsolable yearning for the lost heritage of the past; and the grief of the present ...¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ M. Gosling, ‘Bushmen wait at Parliament to tell Mbeki their Problems’, *Cape Times*, 18 August 2004.

¹⁵¹ M. Gosling, ‘Bushmen wait at Parliament to tell Mbeki their Problems’, *Cape Times*, 18 August 2004.

¹⁵² S. Reinders ‘The Bushmen of Andriesvale’, Vodacom blog: 6 September 2007.
<http://samreinders.blogspot.com/2007/09/bushman-of-andriesvale.html>.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to show that the politics or communication of representation of this exhibition is located within an interpretative shamanistic narrative based on a disjointed text of *when, where, why, and who*. The subject of this text, rock art, is layered within the representations of the *Bushmen* in the *Bushman Diorama* as hunter-gatherer communities, timeless, half animal-half human, and ‘living artefacts’. These representations replay themselves in essentialist notions. This rock art as text is deemed to be the tangible evidence of intangible heritage that can in part be authenticated or interpreted for meaning. The Bleek/Lloyd Collection of notebooks has come to be seen to play a similar role. The Bleek/Lloyd Collection has come to stand for intangible heritage, and in this way conservation and WHS listing practices have gained a foothold. I have also shown that this intangible heritage is not only ‘staged authenticity’, but is based on a ‘superlie’, in that diverse and heterogeneous peoples have been homogenised under the labels of /Xam or /Nu speakers, ‘aboriginal’ people and hunter-gatherers for the purposes of authenticity, tourism and conservation.

Essentialist stereotypes are reflected and manifested by modern day *Bushmen* like the Kruiper family, who find themselves marginalised, exploited and confined to the *Kalahari* where they have become ‘living museum artefacts’ for international tourists. The narrative of rock art within the context of the nation state after apartheid in South Africa underscores the notions of timelessness, ahistoricity and a people not belonging to any group. The convenient and comfortable images of *healing* and *rainmaking* and *unity amidst diversity* render this exhibition more of myth whilst the state fails to decisively intervene in negotiating meaning of exhibitions and matters related to national Khoisan politics. It would seem that this exhibition and, in juxtaposition to it, national Khoisan identity politics, are caught between the stereotypes of the colonial/apartheid past and post-apartheid discourses of nation-building in South Africa.

My concern here is that the shamanistic theory involving ‘trance’ and the invocation of the supernatural is but a new language of *otherness*. There are dangers that the shamanistic theory may smother the possibilities of more open-ended and contested understandings of the meaning of rock art. Unless we challenge these stereotypes, we will continue to regard the *Bushmen* or /Xam or /Nu speakers or *Khomani-San* as people who are confined to the

¹⁵³ Belinda Kruiper cited in *Iziko Annual Report*, 2005.

Kalahari. As this exhibition puts on display the Bleek/Lloyd Collection, conservation practices and the World Heritage Committee, which is embedded in colonialism and seeks to impose a global order on rock art paintings and sites, one asks whether any transformation of heritage practices or structures is possible. It would seem that the disciplines of history, the history of anthropology and museum studies have reached an impasse in resolving the issue of the archive or colonial archive and its role in the post-apartheid nation state. In their joint exhibition *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, historians Andrew Bank and Leslie Witz explore the very notion of the colonial archive in relation to the Bleek-Lloyd Collection. This is the subject of the next chapter.



Chapter Three:

Mirror images: *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 17 October 2006-December 2008

In October 2006 Andrew Bank, the author of the book *B in a Victorian World: The remarkable story of the Bleek-Lloyd Collection of B folklore*, in collaboration with his colleague Professor Leslie Witz of the History Department at University of the Western Cape (UWC), was both author and curator of an exhibition that was based on his book¹⁵⁴. With close cooperation from the designer, Jenny Sandler, an exhibition was held at the Centre for African Studies (CAS) at UCT on 17 October 2006 and a second exhibition, consisting of similar photographic images and texts, was held at the Centre for Humanities Research (CHR) at UWC on 31 October of the same year¹⁵⁵. The exhibition was on display in the Gallery of the CAS for two weeks, after which it was dismantled and reassembled, to be displayed at the CHR for more than two years. At the beginning of 2009 the installation was taken down and replaced by a painting of Table Mountain and Cape Town by Premesh Lalu, the current director of the CHR.

I argue that in this exhibition Bank and Witz parody or mimic the images of the Bleek/Lloyd Collection as they appear in existing scholarship and in recent displays like */Qe*. I will argue that their exhibition provides mirror images through which to view the Bleek/Lloyd archive. Their very title suggests a parody because, in bringing together the words *bushman* and *Victorian*, it emphasises the contradictory nature of the juxtaposition of these two worlds. These two terms have often been used next to each other to put forward a romanticised and nostalgic idea of the making of the archive and present the relationship between Bleek/Lloyd and the informants as equal and humane.

In thinking about this exhibition, I was reminded of the almost ubiquitous presence of mirrors in daily life and I use mirrors as an organizing metaphor for interpreting this exhibition. In earlier times, mirrors were luxury items for the rich, until they became more accessible as a result of cheaper manufacturing processes in London and Paris. Today, mirrors of any size can be found in almost all homes. Consider, for example, the fact that mirrors are not only aids to grooming, but are also used in cameras, televisions, vehicles, optical lenses, for

¹⁵⁴ A. Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World: The Remarkable Story of the Bleek-Lloyd Collection of Bushman Folklore* (Cape Town: Double Storey Press, 2006), 422 pp.

¹⁵⁵ Email correspondence: Between Jenny Sandler, Leslie Witz and Andrew Bank: *Exhibition proposal*, 8 Aug 2006; *Exhibition follow up*, 9 Aug 2006; *Exhibition proposal*, 10 August 2006; *Exhibition revised draft*, 10 August 2006; *Exhibition mock up*, 13 August 2006.

filming or surveillance (two-way mirrors), and in architecture, art and entertainment. To exhibit or mimic his absolute control and power King Louis XIV of France created the Hall of Mirrors, (*La Galerie des Glaces*) in the Palace of Versailles. This *Galerie des Glaces* contained 21 mirrors opposite each of the 17 arcaded windows: in all, 357 mirrors. In 1919, the Peace of Versailles was concluded in the very same famous hall.¹⁵⁶

Mirrors, or looking glasses, in varying formats have multiple purposes to perform. They show images that are produced by the reflection of light (made possible by the silver or aluminium applied to the reverse side of the glass). Depending on the thickness, size, or shape of the glass, and the colour or tone of the glass and the backing, the light can produce different images, hues, patterns or shapes. The light, however, can also cast shadows, suggesting darkness. So the mirror is also associated with superstition, omens and magic tricks. Narcissism and voyeurism are also associated with mirrors.

In the sections below I discuss the exhibition in terms of these metaphors, including shadows, the violent nature of voyeurism, the multiplicity of images, the ambiguities of optics. It is necessary, however, to begin by locating the exhibition within a literature that reflects on the archive in general and on the Bleek-Lloyd Collection in particular.

A more complex and self-reflective approach towards ‘the archive’

The exhibition takes a similar approach towards the archive to the one adopted by Jill Weintroub in a recent thesis on the making of the Bleek-Lloyd archive. Weintroub argues that the Bleek-Lloyd Collection has been used as a ‘trope’ of African ‘indigeneity, triumphalist narratives and universalized postcolonial identities’.¹⁵⁷ She continues:

By revealing the archive as site of ethnography and indeed, as process rather than place, I show how the Bleek-Lloyd materials become inserted into the master narrative of the nation, which narrates the past as a story about the triumph of the human spirit over adversity ..., the result of an encounter between colonized and colonizer, to become redeployed and presented as a redemptive interaction in which roles are romanticized and hero-ised, and disturbing/uncomfortable aspects downplayed ... The reconstitution of the archive as ‘archive of truth’, repository of the nation’s pain, and site of national recovery, however runs the

¹⁵⁶ The Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles
<http://www.parisdigest.com/monument/galeriedesglaces.htm>. Retrieved on 9 November 2009.

¹⁵⁷ Jill Weintroub, ‘From Tin Trunk to World-Wide Memory; The Making of the Bleek Collection (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 2006), 18. See also J. Weintroub, “‘Some Sort of Mania’: Otto Hartung Spohr and the Making of the Bleek Collection’, *Kronos*, 32, (Nov. 2006), 114-138.

risk of silencing the unsettled and unresolved nature of the past.¹⁵⁸

Rather than simply telling ‘the remarkable story’, Bank and Witz show the ‘uncomfortable’ elements of violence inherent in the making of the archive. In fact, we have to understand the term *Bushmen* as a term of violence and trauma. Why else would Bank and Witz employ the term nineteen times in the exhibition? It is to show the context of violence in the formulation of racial science in juxtaposition to the making of the archive. The title is also a play or refrains on the words ‘*The remarkable story of the Bleek-Lloyd Collection of B folklore*’ used by its authors (like Skotnes) in what Ciraj Rassool describes as ‘The Cult of “Salvation” and “Remarkable Equality”’.¹⁵⁹

This violence has often been subverted under the illusion of coherence and totality of the archive. As Weintroub argues, the closed nature of the archive as totalized memory or knowledge production negates the fragmentary, open-ended nature of archival records. It is within this framework that we are invited to approach the Bleek-Lloyd Collection that is distributed among three different Cape Town institutions (UCT, SAM and the National Library of South Africa). “The order that prevails in the Archive... is not that of mere chronology, but that of writing; the rigorous process of inscribing and decoding... a linear process of cancellations and substitutions, of gaps.”¹⁶⁰

Similarly, Verne Harris likens the archival record to a very tiny piece of glass, a ‘sliver’ of social memory. Harris’s ‘sliver of a sliver of a sliver of a window’ metaphor is explained in terms of the temporal limitations of the archive as well as the large scale sanitisation of records between 1990 and 1994 which led to the erasure of apartheid secrets and social memory.¹⁶¹ While archives are often understood as documentary repositories ‘reflecting reality’, the archival record (Harris insists) is fragmentary. The minute pieces or slivers ambiguously mirror the illusion of stability and coherence. This brokenness is evident when we consider the many flows of people (archivists, researchers, management, researchers) who

¹⁵⁸ J. Weintroub, ‘From Tin Trunk to World-Wide Memory’, 7, 36.

¹⁵⁹ C. Rassool, ‘Beyond the Cult of “Salvation” and “Remarkable Equality”’: A New Paradigm for the Bleek-Lloyd Collection’, *Kronos*, 32, Nov. 2006. See Skotnes, *Heaven’s Things* for such romanticized images.

¹⁶⁰ J. Weintroub, ‘From Tin Trunk to World-Wide Memory’, 22-23.

¹⁶¹ V. Harris, ‘A Shaft of Darkness: Derrida in the Archive’ in C. Hamilton, V. Harris, J. Taylor, M. Pickover, G. Reid and R. Saleh, eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), 61-81.

filter this public or social memory. Furthermore, Harris suggests that in the ‘sliver of a window’ metaphor, the window is not only a medium through which light travels. It also reflects light transposing images from ‘this side’ and disturbing images from the ‘other side’.¹⁶² I will argue that the brokenness of the record is an echo of the undoing or instability of the self as a result of violence and trauma. This sense of reading the narratives as records of trauma is an important part of my own approach towards the Collection and ways of reading it.

Mirrors and mimicry

The *Bushmen in a Victorian World* exhibition in itself adopts an attitude of mimicry in that it explores the making of the *Bushman* as the construct of a white colonial world where the view of the ‘reformed’ *other*, or the *other* shown as ‘almost white but not quite’ is determined by power relations, inequality and control. Thinking of the exhibition as a set of mirror images explains the ambivalent nature of the installation. Bank suggests that this archive, though violent in nature, provides a catalyst or may serve as agency for the remaking of not only history but also the re-narration of the self or people deemed as *Bushman*. Though the inherently violent nature of the social relations informing the Collection is clear, Bank suggests that the informants could use their narratives or ‘scars with stories’ in the household as a ‘grammar of performance’. Ironically, this involves immersing oneself, as a researcher, into the episteme of the archive and celebrating the archive, though this holds some suggestion of redemption, salvage and veneration of the colonial apparatus. Rassool has paradoxically pointed out in his review that Bank’s publication is a labour of love, ‘beyond the cult of salvation’.¹⁶³

A wider literature on narratives of trauma is relevant here. Brison suggests that the undoing of the self due to inflicted trauma involves the use of ‘trauma narratives’ or ‘speech acts of memory’ in the remaking of the self. The remaking of the self involves a shift from ‘being the subject of someone else’s (the perpetrator’s) speech (or other expressive behaviour) to being the subject of one’s own.’ Trauma memory can be transformed into narrative memory which leads to the remaking of the Self.¹⁶⁴ Bank suggests that there is evidence of informants like

¹⁶² V. Harris, ‘A Shaft of Darkness’, 65.

¹⁶³ Rassool, ‘Beyond the Cult of “Salvation” and “Remarkable Equality”’, 249

¹⁶⁴ Susan Brison, *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton

//Kabbo, who posed for portraits in the studio, becoming aware of their own agency in rendering themselves as subjects rather than remaining passive objects of observation. In their spoken words too, //Kabbo and other informants attempted to turn their trauma narratives into narrative memory and become the subjects of their own voices. This might be part of the explanation for their remaining with the Bleek-Lloyd family after the end of their prison sentences. The idea of exploring their underlying motivations is something that warrants further reflection. Skotnes's emphasis, drawing on a comment from Lucy Lloyd, that //Kabbo stayed on so that 'his knowledge might become known by way of books' takes us only part of the way to an understanding of his deeper psychological motivations¹⁶⁵.

Seeing the exhibition as mirror-like helps us to understand how the lines between the self and the *other*, the real and the imaginary, the coloniser and the colonised, the victim and perpetrator, often blur or dissolve. The film *Rashomon* underscores the disintegration of the boundaries between victim and perpetrator. *Rashomon* does not make an attempt to present a coherent story, but provides for one of reflective shards of narrative where everyone (both perpetrator and enemy) involved in the event of trauma and violence becomes embroiled in the web of violence, and all, even the perpetrator, undergo trauma and an undoing of the self.¹⁶⁶

Through the exhibition, the curators attempt to re-humanise not only research subjects, but also the researchers themselves. In the publication Bank demonstrates, referring to Johannes Fabian, that Bleek himself became undone or was often 'out of his mind' while he was doing research.¹⁶⁷ Bleek had to surrender himself to the experience of the /Xam informants and was, at least partially, able to begin to step outside of his abstract Western scientific paradigms. Bank argues that Lloyd was better able to do this because of her lack of any formal university training.

University, 2002), 48-49.

¹⁶⁵ Pippa Skotnes, "Civilised Off the Face of the Earth": Museum Displays and the Silencing of the /Xam in *Poetics Today*, Vol 22, (Summer 2001), 308.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/poetics_today/v022/22.2skotnes.pdf
P. Skotnes, *Heaven's Things* (Cape Town: Llarec, 1997), 14.

¹⁶⁶ Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, *Rashomon in Kurosawa: film studies and Japanese cinema*, (Duke University Press 2000), 471

¹⁶⁷ See J. Fabian, *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa* (Los Angeles: UCLA Press, 2001)

The concept of mirroring is evident not only in the reflections upon the complex identities of researcher and researched, but in the very spatial layout of the exhibition(s). Here Bank and Witz worked closely with exhibition designer Jenny Sandler. Like a hall of mirrors in an amusement park, the framed images in the exhibition were hung along the walls of the Gallery of the African Studies Centre and the Seminar Room of the CHR, as if they were decorative collections of scholarships or certificates. The careful choice of size and neat glass framing conveyed the impression that they were pictures of trophies.

Ironically though, the same images parodied or mocked self-achievement. It is in the moment of reflecting on the *self* (the perpetrator, the enemy, and the dark side) and the *other* (the primitive, authentic voice, victim, real site of memory) that self-awareness develops. It is in this moment that illusions may fall away and one may be inspired to make new efforts to set the record straight. In a sense, this exhibition is an admission or confession by Bank and Witz of their complicity in the production of knowledge and the making of meaning of the archive. Given the notions of fragmentation, brokenness and violence, this exhibition - with its juxtaposition of framed images - challenges the European conceptualisation of aesthetics or beauty in relation to wholeness, mass global culture and progress.

There is also a sense of institutional mirroring. *B in a Victorian World* was exhibited for over two years in the Seminar Room of the Centre for Humanities Research at the UWC (although it was first displayed at UCT's Centre for African Studies). The location is significant and might be thought of in terms of an inward gaze or reflection regarding knowledge production: here in relation to /Xam scholarship, but more broadly in relation to the rewriting of history in post-apartheid South Africa. The self-reflectivity is in keeping with ongoing National Research Foundation-funded projects on knowledge production and circulation in the Heritage Disciplines directed by Witz.

This reflectivity signals mirror images of broader processes surrounding /Xam studies in a post-colonial or post-apartheid South Africa. In fact, this exhibition is a reflection of the production of the Bleek/Lloyd Collection or archive that has not only become almost over-circulated in the past few years, but is now inscribed in the digitized archive called LLAREC as World Memory. The exhibition thus mirrors broader processes within post-apartheid South Africa that pertain to the reconstitution of archives, and the issues of identity, memory-making, oral narration, visual records or photography, history or historiography that are associated with them. It echoes prior exhibitions in that it recasts light on the *Diorama*, the closing of the *Diorama* and */Qe: Power of rock art*.

The two exhibitions of *B in a Victorian World* were mirror images of each other. Each provided a mirror for Bank's book, published under the same title as that of the exhibition. I would suggest that the 'mirror effect' is not always an effect of true likeness, or of complete opposites, but may be one of multiplicity and open-endedness. However, the mirror likeness is also about ambivalence, parody, mirage, ambiguity, irony and paradox of representations of the self (identity) and the *other*, or coloniser and colonised.¹⁶⁸ Such reflections allow one to understand that the images are but an illusion of solidity and coherence (of the archive and the self). These mirages are borne out of the fragmentation and disjointedness, or incoherence, of the Bleek/Lloyd collection as an archive. While we come to terms with the fracturing of the archive and the Bleek/Lloyd collection, we trace how this has obscured the embedded violence and trauma in the collection. Implicitly, this exhibition mirrors the potential for the violent and traumatic past to be re-enacted and repeated in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Before turning to analyse the exhibition materials in more detail, it is necessary to say something about the institutional tensions that emerged over the funding and staging of the exhibition in the period leading up to its opening.

Institutional contexts and tensions: debates over the exhibition /book launch

The decisions about the location of the exhibition and the funding for its opening revealed tensions between the Universities of Cape Town and the Western Cape. Andrew Bank, the author of the book behind the exhibition, felt that the Centre for African Studies would be the most appropriate venue for the opening of the exhibition, given that the research for the book had been conducted in the Manuscripts and Archives Department, which is housed in the same building as UCT's Centre for African Studies. An additional reason was the possibility of displaying the original notebooks in a glass case, in a niche of the African Studies Gallery, where the exhibition was to be set up. Bank, independently, approached then Director of the Centre, Brenda Cooper, for financial assistance towards the book launch-cum-exhibition opening.¹⁶⁹ Cooper offered R2 000 towards the event. The Director's e-mail correspondence

¹⁶⁸ See H.K. Bhabha, *Of Men and Mimicry: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse* in *October*, Vol. 28, *Discipleship: A special Issue on Psychoanalysis* (Spring, 1984), 125-133, MIT Press
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/778467?seq=3>

¹⁶⁹ E-mail correspondence: Andrew Bank to Carmen Timm over launch costs and invoice for snacks, 15 September 2006; Charmaine McBride to Andrew Bank over launch and invoice, 14 August 2006. I am grateful to Bank, Witz and Sandler for making available to me their behind-the-scenes correspondence relating to the exhibition.

with the Centre documents their discussions about the costs of the launch and related matters. Witz initially proposed that, because of her previous publications in the field, Pippa Skotnes might be an appropriate guest speaker at the event, despite the degree of divergence in their attitudes towards the Bleek-Lloyd (or as she would term it the Lloyd-Bleek) Collection.

Leslie Witz, the co-curator, was more cautious about the choice of venue. In discussions with Bank he questioned whether the CHR at UWC might not be a more appropriate venue for the exhibition, given their joint institutional base. This change of venue was also related to finances, as the Project of Public Pasts (directed by Witz) could offer a more extensive funding package for the exhibition. The relocation of the exhibition to the CHR would, in Witz's view, be particularly appropriate in light of the explicit treatment of racial science in the display, and the challenge the exhibition offered to racial science and the ambiguous institutional legacy of UCT, in particular its Medical School and Department of Anatomy in the early decades of the twentieth century. (I discuss the issue of 'serving racial science' below.) An amount of R25 000 was allocated to the making of the exhibition, to cover the costs of the framed photographs and remunerate Sandler for designing the panels and installation. It would seem that hosting this exhibition at UWC rather than UCT could be viewed as shifting the balance and moving meaning towards more inclusive methodologies and approaches.

In the end there was a compromise, and while the book launch/exhibition opening took place at UCT's Centre for African Studies, the exhibition was to move a fortnight later to the CHR Seminar Room, where it would be installed for a longer period of time. The book launch/exhibition at UWC was made possible by the Project on Public Pasts, a National Research Fund (NRF)-funded project based at the History Department, UWC, and consequently the photographic exhibition would become a permanent or temporary installation at the CHR there. One of the important driving forces of the African Programme for Museum & Heritage Studies, which was co-hosted by UCT, UWC and the Robben Island Museum, was to challenge such institutional legacies and to examine the ways in which history, anthropology, archaeology, linguistics and other disciplines in South Africa during the era of segregation and apartheid had contributed to them. Witz and Rassool believe that UCT's affinity with the colonial past (like that of the SAM) has limited the possibilities of contestations, engagements and negotiations at various levels for representation, ownership

and intellectual property rights.¹⁷⁰ They argue that important shifts have to occur in order to bring about a fairer balance of power. Locating the exhibition at the CHR at UWC would engender such a transfer of energies and cast new light on /Xam scholarship.

Reviews of Bank's book have pointed to some of the ways in which it does challenge the assumptions in the existing literature. In his review of the book, Rassool locates Bank's research within contestation of the archive, complex histories and biographies and not merely genealogies. Furthermore, Bank's book is to be seen as highlighting the violence of the camera, the subjective experience of the informants as they sat for anthropometric photography. According to Rassool, Bank's research surpasses 'paternalism and cultural atonement' and underlines the fact that the relationship between Bleek and the /Xam informants was not 'remarkable or equal'. Bank also shows how the Breakwater and Studio photographs were made, by depicting the proceedings as 'performative' amidst dehumanising racial portraiture and the subjective experience of the /Xam speakers.¹⁷¹ Nigel Penn observes that Bank in his examination of Bleek and the unfolding /Xam narratives by //Kabbo, Dia!kwain and others in the household, visited the region of the 'protagonists' origin and was able to corroborate their biographies.¹⁷² Michael Wessels offers another review of Bank's publication and explains that, according to the author, Bleek became personally involved in the lives and stories of the informants, describing their tales as 'wonderful' or 'extraordinary'. Through the notebooks collected by Bleek and Lloyd, Bank reconstitutes the life stories of the informants as stories of agency, collaboration and resilience despite colonial constraints of imprisonment and subordination.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Taking electives in Museum & Heritage Studies in 2005 and MA coursework attending classes with Leslie Witz and Ciraj Rassool as lecturers have led me to draw such an interpretation. Leslie Witz's work on Jan van Riebeeck also alludes to this notion. See L. Witz, *Apartheid's Festival: Contesting South Africa's National Pasts* (Bloomington, Indianapolis and Cape Town: Indiana University Press and David Philip, 2003).

¹⁷¹ Rassool, 'Beyond the Cult', 244-249.

¹⁷² N. Penn, 'A Remarkable Introduction to a Remarkable Collection', *Journal of African History*, 2009, 151-3.

¹⁷³ M. Wessels, 'New directions in /Xam studies: some of the implications of Andrew Bank's Bushmen in a Victorian world: the remarkable story of the Bleek-Lloyd collection of Bushman folklore', *Critical Arts*, 22(1), 69-82. Published online on 1 July 2008. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02560040802166250>. Downloaded on 29 Sept 2009.

For the purposes of my discussion on the book launch cum photographic exhibition, I will consider the two intermittently and attempt to interpolate and intersect these dimensions, as the book and exhibition should be read in close relation to each other. It should be stressed that Leslie Witz's presence is strongly felt in this exhibition owing to the way that he negotiated knowledge transactions in the making of the exhibition, not only with Bank, but also with colleagues like Ciraj Rassool and Patricia Hayes, in the History Department at UWC.

Pippa Skotnes was the guest speaker at the opening of the exhibition at UWC. In her presentation, Skotnes praised the work of Janette Deacon and the whole host of scholars and authors who celebrate the Bleek/Lloyd collection. She also spoke of how the book had moved her, but indicated that she was far less impressed by the exhibition.¹⁷⁴ This might have been in defence of her personal expertise and style of exhibition making across many display spaces using the Bleek-Lloyd Collection. Or it might have been a reaction to her discomfort with some of the exhibition's more explicit challenges to the assumptions of the existing literature, including her own, such as the foregrounding of racial science in the exhibition (an aspect of the legacy of the Bleek-Lloyd Collection that is largely invisible in her books and displays).¹⁷⁵

Just as mirrors often serve as experimentation devices the exhibition offers a ground for testing processes unfolding at the CHR, the History Department and Project on Public Pasts at the UWC. The exhibition is delineated by a backdrop of ten panels hanging in a straight line to suggest linear, interdisciplinary /Xam scholarship. The ten black, A3 sized frames enclose A4 or A5 frames that contain photographic images or sketches drawn by the informants. Not only does this bring forth the interconnectedness of the narratives, it also underscores the fragmentary nature of the record. Each of the A3, black-framed images is accompanied by a text below, so that one reflects on the other: another form of mirroring, or here perhaps juxtaposition.

¹⁷⁴ Pippa Skotnes appearance at UWC on 31 October 2006.

¹⁷⁵ For a rare exception see M. Godby, 'Images of //Kabbo' in Skotnes, ed., *Miscast* though Godby seems to try to explain away Bleek's ambiguous motives in photographing /Xam subjects naked at the Breakwater Prison (including //Kabbo) in terms of personal and governmental pressures suggesting that he himself would most likely have viewed such work critically (though there is little explicit evidence of this in the records at the time). Godby is surely correct in emphasizing that Bleek later changed his views.

The space of the CHR is used for the weekly interdisciplinary seminar series, postgraduate lectures, meetings, book launches and more. Between the rectangular windows and the wall against which the exhibition hangs in the CHR Seminar Room there are joined tables and seating. The scholars, seated with their backs to the wall (with the exhibition as a background behind them), themselves become a backdrop, as well as a mirror and reflection, for the scholars seated facing the exhibition (or the *galerie des glaces*). The drama of the narratives plays itself out in the CHR as the meetings gather to witness the oral life histories of the Bleek-Lloyd informants, and thus the scholars and their lives are mirrored in the testimonies.

Personal reflections in relation to the making of the exhibition

In writing this thesis, and following undergraduate and postgraduate courses of study at the History Department of my Alma Mater for over two decades, I too see my reflection in the exhibition. When I was gathering the data for this chapter, Witz, Bank and Sandler sent me the e-mail correspondence on the making of the exhibition. Bank warned me that my close involvement in the making of the exhibition might make it difficult for me to analyse it. Even though some fifty e-mails were sent to me, and I attended the openings of the exhibitions as well as two meetings leading up to the openings, I decided to retain a stance of critical distance. Premesh Lalu, in his publication *The Deaths of Hintsa*, calls it *parabasis*.¹⁷⁶ Parabasis or bracketing (suspending judgement) indicates the notion of making meaning by standing inside, but at the same time outside, the colonial archive. This could be the reason for the ambivalence I felt towards the Bleek-Lloyd Collection and the exhibition.

I have spoken to Witz and Bank on separate occasions about the exhibition, and read Bank's and Witz's publications, but that did not ameliorate the situation of having to think about the exhibition both within their frames of reference and within/outside my own. Reading through the e-mails, and given that there was probably more left unsaid than said, I felt a distance open up between myself and the curators. Some days I experienced a sense of being cast or stereotyped as a 'coloured' person descended from the *Bushmen*, who felt compelled to study and write about a subject of which I was a part. On other days I marvelled at Witz's ability to mediate the contested field of knowledge production, and at Bank's publications, dedication and expertise on /Xam scholarship. Thus they have inextricably become part of my fractured mirror image of being an outsider/insider.

¹⁷⁶ P. Lalu, *The Deaths of Hintsa: Postapartheid South Africa and the Shape of Recurring Past* (Cape Town: H.S.R.C. Press, 2009), 18.

At some institutions, notably the South African Museum and UCT's Centre for African Studies and Manuscripts and Archives Department, which I felt to be insular structures, I felt like an outsider. It occurs to me now why I never returned to the Manuscripts and Archives Department to do any research there. It was as if the trauma of being cast and stereotyped had returned to me and I could not reconcile the broken pieces of my identity. Ironically, during the course of writing this thesis, I relocated to Johannesburg and was able to access information which I could not obtain in Cape Town, information provided to me by institutions like the Origins Centre. This has in some ways restored and re-humanised my experiences of those institutions that I considered to be dominated by white academics. In many ways I still struggle to reconcile myself to the unspoken structural violence that lies beneath the institutions of post-apartheid South Africa. As the literary critic, the late Edward Said commented in relation to the problem of irreconcilability: 'Why should you reconcile? Why should one try to assume wholeness when, as Adorno says, "the whole is false?"'¹⁷⁷

My sense of personal discomfort and ambiguity in relation to historically white institutions and the continued legacies of *Bushman* stereotypes is echoed by Siona O'Connell in her Master's thesis on !Kwa-ttu, the San tourist site developed on the West Coast, north of Cape Town, in the late 1990s.¹⁷⁸ O'Connell's thesis brings to the fore issues of representation and reflections on the Bleek Collection and the Manuscripts and Archives Department which houses the notebooks. She too views the latter as a 'white space', one resonating with the violence and trauma inflicted upon, which she describes as the 'image-Bushman'. O'Connell points to the virtual capturing and imprisonment of violent representations of Bushman-ness and how this impacts on the remaking of self for the people at !Kwa-ttu Centre. For O'Connell, the continued violence and the almost inescapable *otherness* in the community are symptoms of the violence of representation. While O'Connell's research engaged the trajectories of exhibition making on *Bushmen*, she writes of coming to terms through this engagement with her own identity as 'Coloured', and her in-betweenness. One chapter in her thesis describes her experience of allowing herself to be cast at the SAM, with some of the San descendants at !Kwa-ttu as participants and observers. She yielded to the process of cast-

¹⁷⁷ E. Said cited in Michael Lackey, *Twenty-First Century Conrad Studies*, Journal Article: *Studies in the Novel*, Vol. 39, 2007, Terry Collits, *Postcolonial Conrad: Paradoxes of Empire*. New York: Routledge, 2005, p208. Mario Curreli. *The Ugo Mursia Memorial Lectures*, Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2005, p315. Carola Kaplan, Peter Lancelot Mallios and Andrea White, *Conrad in the Twenty-First Century: Contemporary Approaches and Perspectives*, New York: Routledge, 2005, p288.

¹⁷⁸ S. O'Connell, 'No f-stop for the Bushmen' (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 2008).

making, an experience that she found moving, healing, conflicting and liberating at the same time and even described her plaster cast as ‘armour’ .

I am conscious of being marked by the lines on my torso and the application of a thin layer of Plaster of Paris. More layers are applied and the women comment later that it evoked a sense of healing. The plaster is becoming progressively thicker and I start to think of it as armour ... Plaster becomes hot on my body and then I feel it being peeled from my body. Maria comments that it is like giving birth. I have a strange ownership over this lump of plaster...¹⁷⁹

As part of her research and the setting up of an installation at !Kwa-ttu Centre that depicted the ‘image-Bushman’, Siona O’Connell engaged with the UCT Manuscripts and Archives Department. She argues that it echoed the ‘white cube’ of the !Kwa-ttu gallery space. Access to the UCT Manuscripts and Archives Department was restricted and controlled by a magnetised metal gate. The author/researcher felt like an outsider in a place she describes as ‘white space’. As Verne Harris argues more generally, little of the apartheid archival system was dismantled with the advent of democracy. While many black archivists have been employed in non-public institutions, the dominant control over archives remain in the hands of whites.¹⁸⁰ According to Bhekikizwe Peterson, the complexities of identity, gender, race, class, ethnicity, culture and nation will remain under-theorised while the archive is retained ‘in all its whiteness’.¹⁸¹

O’Connell criticises the digitisation within this confined institutional space of the Bleek-Lloyd archive, and the re-cycling of images of the *Bushman* bodies. O’Connell points out that the usefulness of the digital project on San communities and the people of !Kwa ttu or any bona fide communities will produce no impact because the very people that it hopes to serve are being sidelined and excluded in the process of decision making. For her it is an illustration of how colonialism remains embedded in the archive. It is in this sense that she sees the archivists as the gatekeepers of research and criticizes UCT, the Manuscripts and Archives Department and LLAREC (with Skotnes as its director and moving force) for not having established any dialogue on participatory processes in order for these images to be freed from being controlled from white spaces. O’Connell notes that in Skotnes’s digital LLAREC archive there is not a single essay by a *Bushman*, or even evidence of permission

¹⁷⁹ S. O’Connell, ‘No f-stop for the Bushmen’, 92-94.

¹⁸⁰ V. Harris, ‘The Archival Sliver’, 135-159. These comments also apply to the Manuscripts and Archives Department at UCT Libraries.

¹⁸¹ B. Peterson, ‘The Archives and the Political Imaginary’ in C. Hamilton at al, eds., *Refiguring the Archive*, 29-35.

having been granted by San groups, or access to this resource having being granted to anyone from the !Kwa-ttu group. Within the space of digitisation, it is not clear to whom intellectual property rights belong. How it is possible, she asks, for UCT to be oblivious to these matters of digitisation? The Mellon Foundation, an ALUKA partner, De Beers and UCT largely funded the LLAREC in the name of research and education. Scan Shop also funded the LLAREC. O'Connell is at a loss to explain UCT's 'celebration of digital culture and internet of image-Bushman whilst marginalizing their subjects'.¹⁸²

"Let them make tapestries, you can't go wrong with black fabric". Thus said Skotnes in relation to the people of !Kwa-ttu. For O'Connell this summed up the discursive location of LLAREC's digital archive and the publications and exhibitions related to it.¹⁸³ When O'Connell wanted to use photography as the focal point of the exhibition, Skotnes's response gave the impression of wishing to confine the participatory group to a type of art found in various curio shops. As the group did not own a single snapshot of any family or kin (and did not have access to the LLAREC project), the distance between the research subjects of Skotnes and the institution (here, UCT and academic circles) became clear. Management at the Centre wanted a clear layout of the final product very early, and did not see the usefulness of including sensitive, emotional material, such as images of dislocation, death and violence. Thus the curatorial team was expected to produce an aesthetically pleasing exhibition that would appeal to a white audience.¹⁸⁴ The exhibition itself attempts to subvert this mandate.

O'Connell's research uncovered the dimensions of the gallery space as 'mediated sanctum' that takes over the world of the art object. The 'Bushmen on show' became synonymous with real, lived experiences, as males are employed as tour guides and hunting trackers, while females work as cleaners and waitress at the centre. Low wages keep the residents confined, while the youth are reduced to ABET schooling, from which they will never graduate. One of the problems at the centre is violence by the men, the result of alcohol abuse. As the curatorial team consulted with their participants in setting up the exhibition, O'Connell was assured by management that broader consultation processes were taking place at the centre, but O'Connell found little evidence of this. For O'Connell, such inequalities and imbalances

¹⁸² O'Connell, 'No f-stop for the bushmen', 65-74

¹⁸³ See P. Skotnes, *Claim to the Country* (Cape Town: Jacana Media, 2008) which has a copy of the Bleek-Lloyd notebooks and other materials on a CD in digital form packaged for its readers inside the back cover.

¹⁸⁴ O'Connell, 'No f-stop for the bushmen', 49-53

are linked to decision-making that is largely dominated and informed by western-style frameworks of development at the Centre. In addition, the ‘white cube’ of the !Kwa-ttu gallery space suggested similar places of worship where inaccessibility and hierarchical structures reign. Challenging these hierarchies in the spaces of the gallery, academia, management, art and photography threatens the employment and advancement of the people who are cast here as gendered domestic workers and hunting trackers.¹⁸⁵

Franz Fanon’s more general theoretical reflections seem relevant to this process of representation and the violence and trauma associated with it. O’Connell quotes from Fanon in her thesis. According to Fanon, the black man’s alienation is not an individual problem. He argues that the origin of this trauma does not begin in the family structure, but originates from a wider trauma in society. He argues in his studies of the late 1960s and early 1970s that the white world brings about this story of violence and trauma inflicted upon the black man. Borrowing from Carl Jung, Fanon writes that there is a white ‘collective and cultural unconscious’ that entails a complex of prejudices, myths and collective attitudes towards a given group. Images, and the violence of their representation (via comic books, television, magazines) allows the Negro to be cast as sinful and evil and thus act as a ‘collective catharsis’ for the white world. The Negro who views such programs identifies with the ‘strong’ (white) and thus sees himself as white. Thus the trauma and the violence of representation recur and continue for the black man or the *other*. Thus the black Self becomes constituted by the look of the Other. The look of the Other becomes one’s own conscience and the look of being constantly watched prevents any possibility of ambiguity because the Other is the mirror in which one sees oneself.¹⁸⁶ As Fanon puts it in *The Wretched of the Earth*: “I am given no chance. I am over determined from without. I am the slave not of the “idea” that others have of me, but of my own appearance.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 18-27

¹⁸⁶ Françoise Vergès, Creole Skin, Black Mask: Fanon and Disavowal in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol 23, No. 3, Front Lines/ Border Posts (Spring, 1997), p 582-3, 578-595.

¹⁸⁷ Fanon cited in O’Connell, ‘No f-stop for the bushmen’, 17

A close reading of the panels of photographs and text

I will now return to my examination of the Bushman in a Victorian World exhibition.

The introductory panel depicted the invitation to the exhibition, which was composed of the front and back cover of Bank's book. Co-author Leslie Witz did not initially want Bleek or Lloyd to feature prominently in the display.¹⁸⁸ In the end though, Bleek's image did appear on the opening panel, on the invitation to the exhibition and in one of the two photographs depicting 'a house for research', The Hill, where Bleek is shown outside, looking at a flower bed in his front garden. The texts below the images direct one to the importance of Lucy Lloyd in the recording of 'Bushman Folklore'. According to Bank, many scholars have failed to note her role as a recorder of Bushman daily life and culture, as her role was often downplayed, or secondary to Bleek's own work.¹⁸⁹ The notion that rock art contains plain readings rather than shamanism is also introduced in this panel. The title of the exhibition is also the title of the publication. For me the title is a tongue-in-cheek play on the countless times the subject has been framed as a 'remarkable story'. This idea stands in relation to the 19 times that the *b* is repeated and echoed in the exhibition. Bank responded to this critique of mine by saying that the term *b* was used to signify the context within which it was used as well as in the construction of 'race'.

¹⁸⁸ Personal communication with author at exhibition planning meetings

¹⁸⁹ Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 194



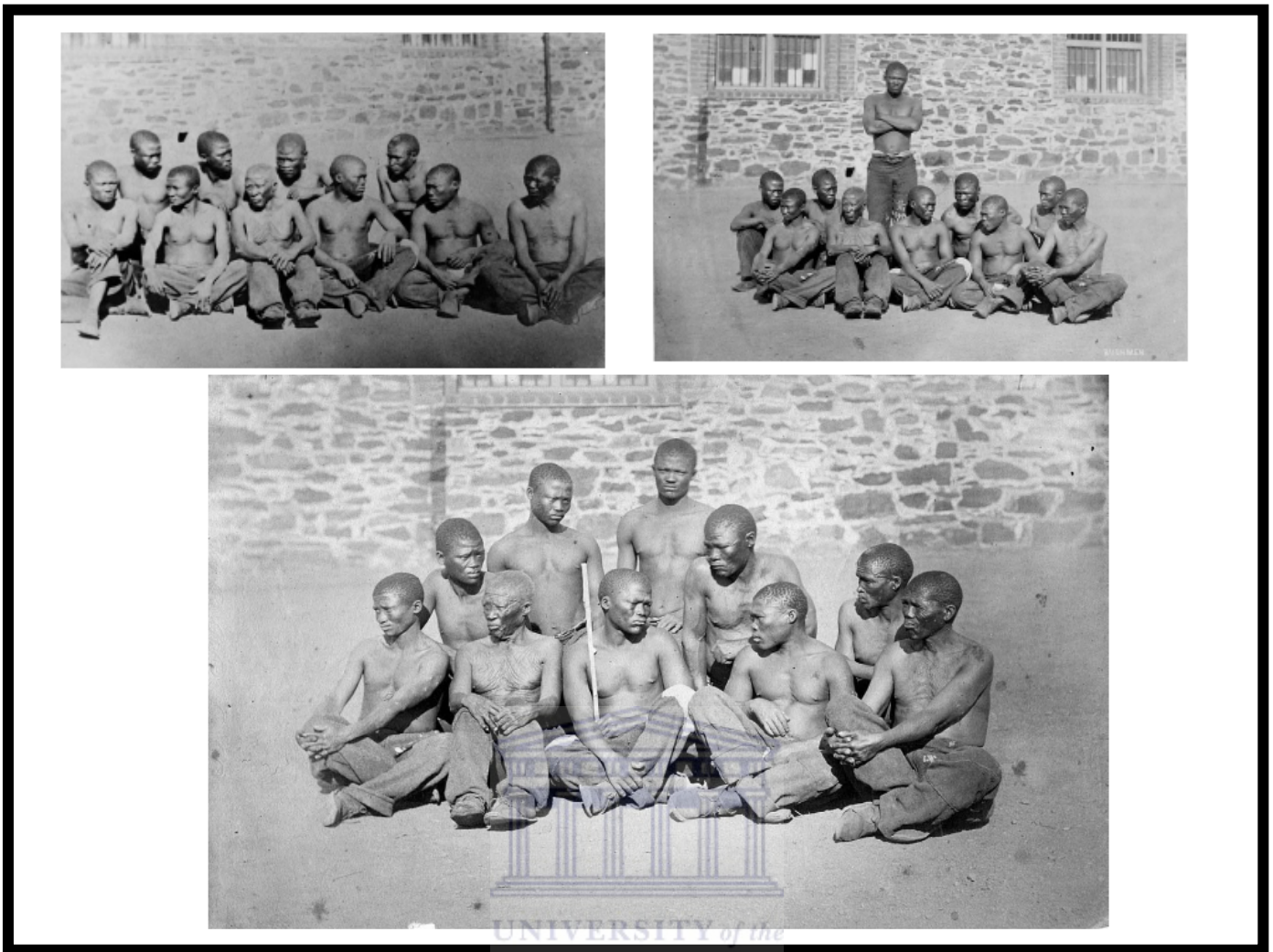
Bushmen in a Victorian World

Bushmen in a Victorian World

This exhibition explores the human relationships behind the Bleek-Lloyd Collection of /Xam Bushman language and folklore. It presents a selection of visual images that the researchers created of their subjects of research, first at the Breakwater Prison and then their Mowbray homes. A detailed contextual interpretation of the photographs and a painted portrait reveals hidden meanings.

The second sets of objects on display are those that Lucy Lloyd used to elicit information from her /Xam interviewees. In the early stages of research she selected drawings from the pages of travelogues in the family library. She later presented cultural artifacts and copies of rock art.

Their comments on rock art copies are of particular interest. Contrary to much recent rock art scholarship, which claims that these interpretations were typically symbolic or shamanic, their readings were most often highly literal.



Serving Racial Science

In 1869 some of the surviving /Xam Bushmen were arrested in the Northern Cape for stealing sheep. Taken in chains to a magistrate's court in Victoria West, they were sentenced to two years at the Breakwater Prison in Cape Town. The following year Wilhelm Bleek was put in charge of a project to photograph the "races" of the Cape Colony by Henry Barkly, governor of the Cape. These group portraits taken in the Breakwater Prison yard were among the photographs Bleek supervised.

The Bushmen were first arranged in two straight lines, but the photographer's equipment cast a large shadow. They were then rearranged and one of them was asked or ordered to stand at the back. Finally, Bleek and the photographer staged a triangular composition with the central figure holding a measuring stick, indicating that this was a scientific photograph. The angle of the heads of the Bushmen is constant through the sequence suggesting that they were asked to present a specific graded profile view to the camera.

Panel 1: Serving Racial Science

The next panel, entitled 'Serving racial science', depicts the informants at the Breakwater Prison as they were ordered to pose for photographs to be used for anthropometric studies and physical anthropology. The text below refers to the informants' being arrested for the 'stealing of sheep', held at the Breakwater Prison and then being subjected to racial photography and anthropometric measuring. The measuring stick is shown in the image. This panel provides the overarching context for the reading of the exhibition or the book or the Bleek/Lloyd archive, setting the photographs that follow within the background context of colonial racial science and suggesting that Bleek was complicit in this. This reading reinforces my argument about the exhibition title's being ironic, a challenge to those who romanticize the Bleek-Lloyd project as simply a 'remarkable story' or 'remarkable collaboration'. E-mail correspondence reveals that the curators decided on the title of this panel while in the process of shaping the exhibition, rather than right at the outset. An e-mail from exhibition designer Jenny Sandler, written on 10 August 2006 (some two months before the launch) records the opening panels as 'Panel 1: Introduction; Panel 2 Early Learning with /A!kunta; Panel 3 Scars with Stories'.¹⁹⁰ This would suggest that in the initial planning the Breakwater photographs were not going to feature as prominently in the display, and that the story of interaction between researchers and informants would be the guiding theme. The choice to foreground racial science and the colonial context encourages the viewer to read the panels that follow in a different light.

The following panel, titled 'Scars with stories' draws our attention to the racial measurement, but also to the broader stories of the informants' lives before they were taken to Bleek's homes for research, mainly on language and mnemonics. This is one of the most interesting and suggestive panels, and it is important to locate the ideas conveyed in this panel in the context of their formulation in Bank's book. In his publication, Bank draws on Elizabeth Edwards's work, *Raw Histories*. He introduces the idea of photographs as 'performative'. He examines how photographs taken at the Breakwater Prison in 1871 were staged, like a theatre performance. He also argues that, if read closely, the photographs in effect 'recover' life stories or biographies as well as genealogies (family histories) of the /Xam.¹⁹¹

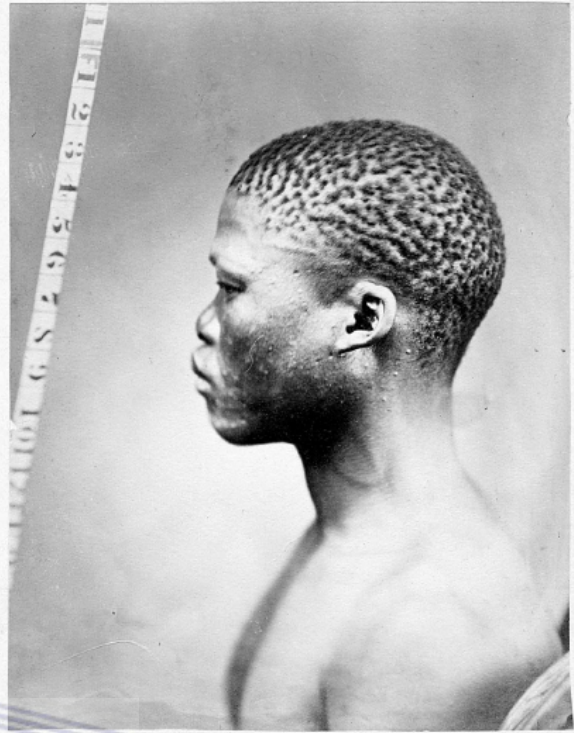
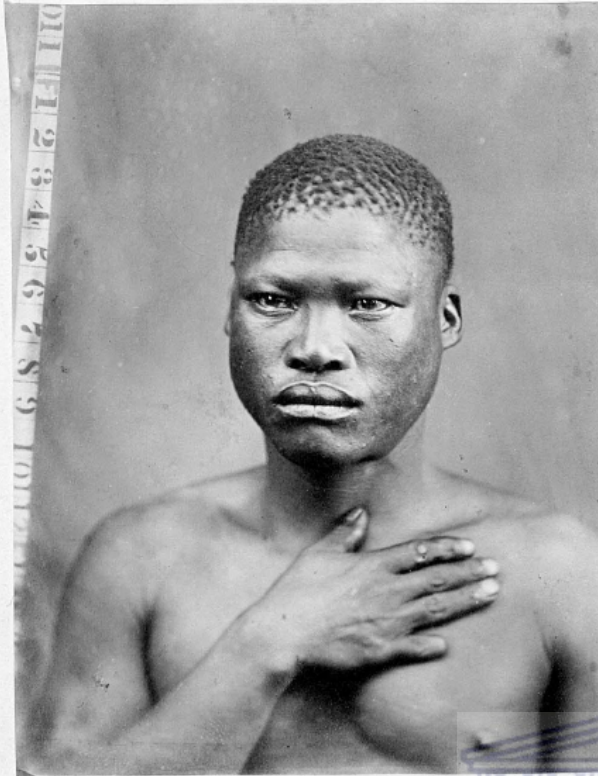
¹⁹⁰ Sandler to Bank and Witz, e-mail correspondence, 10.8.2006

¹⁹¹ Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 394. Here he also draws on Edwards' arguments about anthropometric photography and the possibilities of cultural readings of even this genre of photographs in relation to the Huxley project. See E. Edwards, *Raw Histories* (Oxford: Berg Press, 2001), chapter 6

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Bushman

Scars with Stories

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Bleek commissioned individual portraits of ten of the prisoners. Each was photographed in front and side profile view, first seated and then standing naked. According to Bleek, these photographs were intended to represent “three distinct races of men (and families of languages) extant in South Africa”.

//Kabba-/hin was one of the Bushmen selected to represent his “race”. But the cut finger that he is holding across his chest draws our attention to his culture. Two months after the photograph was taken, another prisoner explained to Bleek:

A little boy has this hand cut [showing the top joint of the little finger of the right hand]. A female child has this hand cut [showing the top joint of the little finger of the left hand]. Because she is a girl, she has her female arm cut, because this is her female hand. The little boy ... has this hand cut, his male arm, for they shoot with this hand.

Panel 2: Scars with stories

The grid, pinchers and measuring stick in these photographs illustrate the methods being employed in visual anthropology and anthropometric photography at the time. But this is to be seen not only in the context of 'home-made anthropology', 'family relations' and human interaction, but also that of anthropometric measurement.

Ascribing performative value to photographs brings the concept of human agency to life. Though the term 'script' is implicit in performance, it is suggested that the people in the portrait photographs were also active participants in the making and production of their life stories. According to Bank, Edwards also calls this performance 'theatricality'.¹⁹² During its performance or representation the details usually on the margins are brought centre-stage.¹⁹³ Further, oral narrative itself, from which Edwards's model is drawn, penetrates all levels of historical relationships with photographs, not simply in terms of a verbal description of content, but the way in which the visual imprints itself and is absorbed, 'played back orally, "narrativising" the past where no one speaks but events or photographs are seen to tell themselves'.¹⁹⁴ Therefore in contrast to 'Bartesian loss' which is about disappearance, silence and invisibility, anthropometric photography should be viewed as multiple and competing life stories, narrative and genres unfolding in the frame.¹⁹⁵ While the author recognizes that some loss or dispossession of the subject has taken place, Edwards assumes that putting photographs into museums, archives and other public spaces opens up possibilities for contests of meaning and multiple narratives. While the theoretical and practical impetus has come from wider issues of cultural politics of representation, identity and sovereignty, the effect has been the gradual opening of spaces for 'indigenous counter-narratives', fragmenting the authoritative and monolithic power of the 'The Archive'.¹⁹⁶

Bank suggests that Edwards's notions of photographs as 'performative' are strongly applicable to the supervised Bleek photographs taken at the Breakwater Prison.¹⁹⁷ In the Bleek collection it would appear that the body marks of subjects provide a starting point for past-present narratives or a historicised anthropology to emerge. The knob on //Kabbo's

¹⁹² Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 17

¹⁹³ Ginzburg cited in Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 18

¹⁹⁴ White cited in Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 2

¹⁹⁵ Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 11

¹⁹⁶ Douglas cited in Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 11

¹⁹⁷ Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 107

shoulder tells of the individual's story as well as the history of his familial relations: it was, oddly, a wound inflicted on him by his wife rather than by any act of colonial violence as one might otherwise have assumed.¹⁹⁸ Also, the finger cuts seen in photographs of !Gubbu and //Kabba-/hin, cousin of /Alkunta, bring to light the cultural practices of the Cape Khoi, Xhosa and /Xam; and the photographs allow for reflections on the origins and variations of such a practice among different groups.¹⁹⁹ Bank also shows how //Alkunta, //Kabbo and their families, as active participants (though imprisoned by a colonial system) could use Bleek's anthropological intervention as a way to gain freedom. Also, in the telling of their life stories, the genealogies of the informants could be reconstructed.²⁰⁰

Such a grammar of performance, which I relate to Premesh Lalu's arguments about the 'grammar of domination',²⁰¹ is to be seen as highly politicized. Lalu argues that the narratives of Hintsu's death/s are restricted by the very make-up of the pervading colonial archive in the story line and that this is made to fit a nationalist history, within Xhosa historiography, portrayed within a 'corrective colonial history'. 'Integrating agency as a way of radicalising history often belittles essentialist identity politics that aims to recuperate the marginal subject of history and so we intensify our efforts by producing more histories.' Lalu concentrates on how the killing of Hintsu reflects agency as being embedded in the discourse of the colonial archive. His observations also have relevance to museum exhibitions. He notes how, in exhibiting colonial history at the Albany Museum in Grahamstown, multiple interpretations and contested histories are provided.

The panel 'Scars with Stories' is also relevant to O'Connell's photographic project and ideas about photography and violence. In setting up the photographic exhibition in the gallery space at !Kwa-ttu centre, Siona O'Connell implicitly suggests the violence of representation. For her a photograph is fraught with difficulties in its production of meaning through imagery, language, power relations, and discourse. She cites Susan Sontag's comments on the violence embedded in photography, on how both photographer and viewer are drawn into the act of violence. For O'Connell the colonial camera became the contusions or marks of the

¹⁹⁸ For this observation, see M. Godby, 'Images of //Kabbo'.

¹⁹⁹ Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 111-115

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 114-117

²⁰¹ P Lalu, *The Deaths of Hintsu*, 31-64

haunting scars of trauma and violence.²⁰²

She comments on the responses of !Kwa-ttu residents to their work with photography and also to seeing photographs in the archive. Roman Ndeja spoke of the camera not as a weapon or rifle, but in terms of openings and gaps. For Ndeja the terms aperture and shutter speed were replaced by 'klein gat' and groot gat'. Aperture thus became the open lens or gap for viewing the scars and open wounds as well as the silencing of these gaps. Photographs collected from archival collections and the LLAREC, however, elicited sadness, anger and disbelief from the group. Maseko Emmanuel, an elderly !Xun man, expressed the notion that death, memory and forgetting, power and injury are caught up in these performances in response to the archive. The members of the group voiced the anger and sadness of the dead subjects in the photographs who are unable to defend their nakedness.²⁰³

'Scars with stories' are followed by 'Houses for research' which opens up the idea of context and how this impacted on the stories told by the informants. In an e-mail written during the late stages of exhibition production (20 September 2006), Bank commented that this panel was meant to make the transition from the Breakwater to Mowbray and that a photograph of The Hill would be more effective in this than a plan of the house layout. He proposed the caption 'A House for Research' (initially the panel was only going to feature The Hill rather than The Hill and Charlton House) or 'Researching a "primitive language" for this panel.²⁰⁴ Again this seems to suggest an emphasis on challenging the assumptions that Wilhelm Bleek brought to the research project, rather than simplistically celebrating them. Witz opted to focus on the changes of spaces and to use the title 'Houses for research'.

²⁰² O'Connell, 'No f-stop for the bushmen', 29-30.

²⁰³ Ibid., 53-57.

²⁰⁴ Bank to Witz and Sandler, e-mail correspondence, 20.9.2006.



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A House for Research

In 1870 Bleek and his family moved into a large house in Mowbray. It presented new possibilities for his research into the Bushman language. He wrote to the Cape governor:

You are aware, Sir, of the importance of this subject, totally distinct as the language is from that of any other nation in South Africa. Its affinities to other languages are as yet unknown, but its apparently primitive character promises to throw a great light upon many questions regarding the origin and development of speech...

I have every hope of gaining a thorough insight into the character of the Bushman language, if I have sufficient access to at least one of them. This, I find, is only practicable when I can have him at my own dwelling-place. Interviews first took place in Bleek's study, on the right hand side of the house, but later moved to the sitting room on the opposite side.

Panel 3: A House for Research

In this panel the photography of The Hill is juxtaposed with that of Charlton House, serving to show the interplay of the interactions between the researchers, the informants, storytelling and the study of 'primitive Bushman language'. Bank discusses the issue of oral narratives or language being a 'grammar of performance' whereby communication takes place via interaction and 'everyday life'. In contrast to Guenther, Bank argues for a 'grammar of performance' in the light of the fact that the recordings did not take place in a 'clinical' or 'stilted' setting, as human movements and interaction on the part of the 'household' can be gleaned from the notebooks recorded with /A!kunta.²⁰⁵

In regard to the research that took place across the two homes, Bank argues for the notebooks to be seen as a 'dramatic script.'²⁰⁶ The notes taken by Bleek and Lloyd were 'real' events to stimulate fluid communication with informants at dinnertime, whilst Jemima was breastfeeding, sewing, in the garden or under the stars.²⁰⁷ Bank argues that the dates of recordings were in fact closer to days and weeks, not years as claimed by Guenther.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, some sort of coercion and power relation is apparent in Bleek's recording of sexually explicit *b* terms for body parts and sexual intercourse, that he tried to elicit from Adam Kleinhardt in 1866 at the Breakwater Prison and from /A!kunta in 1870, at Mowbray.²⁰⁹ Still, it is argued by Bank that when we consider the daily household setting, the grocery list, the use of the sitting room for the study, Lloyd's more personalized recordings, the informants looking through their grated window, seeing the landscape and animals, more complex matters seem to be at stake here than mere hostility or alienation or 'science'. According to Bank, the homely Mowbray settings were not an inhibition on story-telling, but rather a source of the richness of the stories that unfolded first at The Hill and later at Charlton House.

Seventeen /Xam informants came to live at the Mowbray homes between 1870 and 1884. In 1874, Dia!kwain (David Husar) and his sister !Kweten ta//ken (Rachel) and her husband, !Kasin (Klaas Katkop), were living there, along with their four children. It is reported that, though they had previously been separated by distance, they were related by kinship ties, as

²⁰⁵ Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 394.

²⁰⁶ Finnegan, Scheub, Barber, Vail & White and Hofmeyr cited in Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 95.

²⁰⁷ Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 96.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 85.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 98.

well as the stories passed on from mother to son. Nostalgia, homesickness and worry about their family back home tinged their stories.²¹⁰ Further suggestions of melancholy accompany the tales told by Dia!kwain about the abundance of gemsbok before the Boers arrived. Such sadness can be sensed in the tales about the Jackal-Trickster who beats the greedy Lion and manages to protect the ‘Bushmen’ children. Also, Klaas Katkop’s stories may be seen in the light of ‘protest literature’ as the parallels between Jakkals and Lion and Boesman jong and Boer-baas are drawn.²¹¹ Bleek conceded that some of the stories were influenced by encounters with Europeans and Dutch farmers. All the informants had Dutch names and spoke a little Dutch. The stories the researchers wanted were the more traditional ones, but if the informants had told them in their true setting they would have consisted of land loss, raids by the Koranna, the encroachment of frontier farmers, cattle raids and theft, wagons, dams, kraals, exploitation, injustice and gardens. According to Bank and in relation to Guenther and Deacon’s theories of resistance, Dia!kwain’s and #Kasin or Klaas Katkop’s stories are somewhat intertwined, as they were brothers-in-law, they both had four children, and they had been arrested and sentenced together for culpable homicide committed at Gifvlei near the Bitterpits.²¹² Bleek elicited sexually explicit /Xam terms from #Kasin.²¹³ In light of the fact that #Kasin’s wife and children were also kept at the Hill, the possibility of voyeurism on the part of Bleek becomes apparent. Perhaps the narratives of resistance obscure Bleek’s rendering of the informants as sexualized objects of research.

In addition to these undercurrents and motives, the narrative styles assumed by the narrators differed and had an impact on how the same story was told. //Kabbo, for instance, adopted voices and clicks for the different characters in his //Kaggen stories and was said to be the most knowledgeable due to his advanced age. /Han#kass’o’, the son-in-law of //Kabbo, used repetition five times, and chanted phrases and songs in his narratives about the trickster who was creative and helpful rather than outrageous. The third narrator, Dia!kwain, was much more serious and matter of fact, and seldom used repetition or chants in the telling of legends to his audience.²¹⁴ While it would not be possible to convey all this information about

²¹⁰ Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 197

²¹¹ M. Guenther, ‘Attempting to Contextualise /Xam Oral Tradition’ in Deacon and Dowson, *Voices from the Past*, 92.

²¹² Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 220-2

²¹³ Ibid, 226

²¹⁴ Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 95



A painted Portrait

This chromo-lithograph of //Kabbo was based on a painting by William Schroeder. The painting won first prize at an exhibition in Cape Town in October 1872 and was then donated to Bleek as a gift. He put it on his study wall, which would seem to suggest that he had commissioned it in order to capture a dignified image of “a great teller of stories”.

But when Bleek sent the portrait to a fellow member of the Berlin Anthropological Society, it became apparent that he had other motives. He defended the ethnographic accuracy of the painted portrait – and in particular its true rendering of the skin colour of the Bushmen.

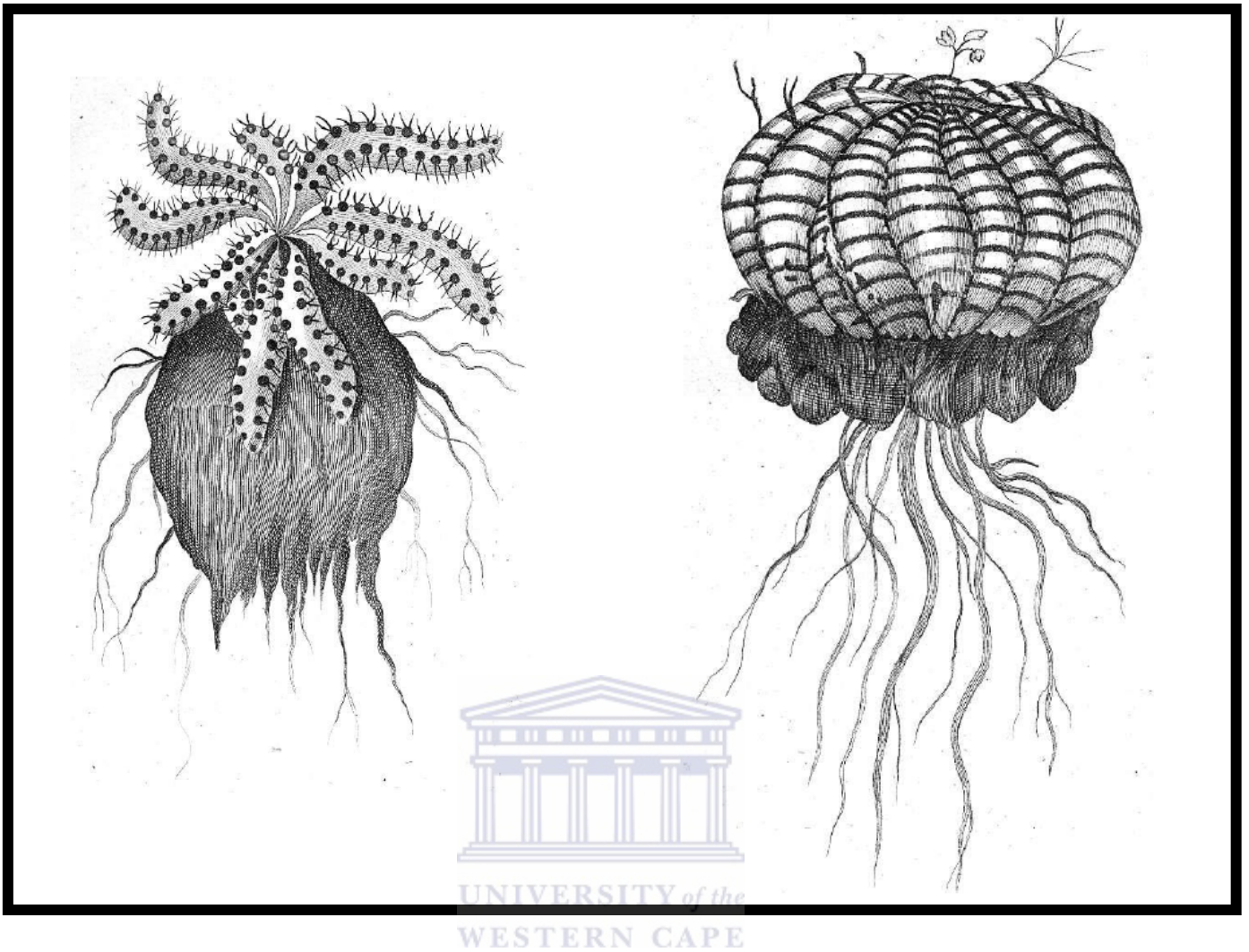
//Kabbo told Lucy Lloyd that he felt the portrait “never did him entire justice (as to his usual expression), as he had set his mouth very firmly with the intention of keeping himself still for the artist and this gave him a rather different expression.”

Panel 4: A painted Portrait

narrative styles and contextual influences in a single panel with two photographs and 150 words of text, 'Houses for research' attempts to convey the sense that the setting is an important starting point for analysing the narratives. There has not been much interest shown in this in earlier scholarship, like that of Lewis-Williams and others, who laud the 'Rosetta Stone' texts without examining the specific circumstances which produced particular forms of testimony. The interest in context, but also in the background of racial science and anthropology, is carried forward into the next panel, which is entitled 'A painted portrait'. This shows the now widely circulated painted portrait of //Kabbo. Bank suggests that Bleek hung the portrait on his study wall. Several tensions arise between the way Bleek used this coloured illustration of //Kabbo to show that the *b* were closer to Europeans than to the Bantu, and how this was related to his argument that their language was closer to European languages than to *Bantu* languages. He had initially developed this theory in the early 1850s in his doctoral thesis on the Nama language and its supposed affinities with European languages. Bank documents the discussions about the same painting at two meetings of the Berlin Anthropological Society, where the interest was on how accurate a representation it was of the Bushman as racial type, including the issue of whether the painter had rendered the skin colour of the subject accurately or not. In his work on languages Wilhelm Bleek developed the analytic separation of race, language and culture, and the systematic and scientific ordering of meaning and value that he drew from his 'specimens'. The study of Zulu, Xhosa, Nama, and /Xam language at the Cape as a natural and primitive language became Bleek's 'pioneering work'. In 1874, however, he wrote to Haeckel that there was no such thing as a primitive language and that all languages, including the /Xam language, belonged to the higher or original spoken language. Instead of examining written texts for his study, he studied languages as they were spoken by 'living' communities.²¹⁵

'Learning by pictures' is the next panel. It shows how 'lexical crutches', which enabled the /Xam language to be rendered in European writing, were used. These included makeshift dictionaries, letters, Roman numerals, visual cues, travellers narratives, plants, sketches, objects, tools, implements, musical instruments, children's books, plants (aloes), animals,

²¹⁵ For a discussion of this painted portrait, see Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 184-9. On Bleek as an early student of living languages, see R. Thornton, "'That Dying Out Race": WHI Bleek's Approach to the Languages of Southern Africa', *Social Dynamics*, 9(2), 1983, 8-10.



Learning by Pictures

The Breakwater Prison to Wilhelm Bleek's home in Mowbray. /A!kunta spoke very little English and the researchers knew little of the Cape Dutch dialect that he had picked up from farmers in the Northern Cape.

He taught Bleek and his sister-in-law Lucy Lloyd the /Xam language. They worked with pictures: some from children's books, others from travelogues in the family library. One of these books was François le Vaillant's *Voyage dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique*. When /A!kunta was shown the drawing from this book of the "caterpillar" euphorbia he said: "It is by the groot rivier, the Bushman use its poison." He then gave the Cape Dutch word for poison: "de giff", as well as the /Xam words "/ggoaken" and "/ku". When shown the "melon segment" euphorbia he called it a zebra on account of the stripes.

Panel 5: Learning by Pictures

landscape and objects around The Hill.²¹⁶ Some songs and fables were also recorded and movement was enacted. The notebooks reveal that the book *Ancient Customs, Sports and Pastimes of the English* by J Aspin, and published travelogues such as *Drei Jare in Sud Afrika* by Gustav Fritsch, *Voyage dans l'interieur de l'Afrique* by Francois Le Vaillant and *Reizen in Sudlichen-Afrika* by Heinrich Lichtenstein were used by the Bleek and Lloyd family as visual props.²¹⁷ These volumes remain accessible at the UCT libraries and archives. These published works also served as reference material for Bleek who studied Fritsch's work closely and perhaps became part of the context for the notebooks.

In their presentation in the exhibition of this phase of the research, Bank and Witz select an image and interpretation of an image that highlights the gap in communication and culture between the /Xam informants and the researchers. The illustration of a striped plant is reproduced from Le Vaillant's *Voyage dans l'interieur de l'Afrique*, and the text below explains that /A!kunta interpreted this as a picture of a zebra because of the stripes. Here again the curators chose to challenge the conventional wisdom about the testimony of the /Xam informants. In existing studies there has been little recognition of the possibilities of miscommunication, misunderstanding, and mistranslation. Instead the emphasis has always been on the 'remarkable' sympathy, understanding, and communication, and the reliability of the texts produced through these relationships. Here the curators are questioning whether the notebooks can be read at face value. This is a theme they take up in the final panels on rock art.

It is interesting to note that there was some debate between Bank and Witz over the placing of this panel in the exhibition sequence. The behind-the-scenes correspondence reveals that Bank proposed this as Panel 2 to follow the introduction. He wanted thereby to set the images that followed in the context of uncertainty of meaning, but might also have had in mind the chronological ordering followed in his book, in which the conversations with /A!kunta that produced these words and misreading preceded the Breakwater photographic project. Witz suggested that 'Learning by pictures' be introduced only after the context of colonial knowledge and racial science had been presented as a theme. He also indicated that associating the reading of pictures in this panel with those on rock art which followed soon (though not immediately after this one) would make more sense.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 87-95.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 94-98

²¹⁸ Bank, personal communication, March 2010. For e-mail correspondence on the initial placing of

The darker side of anthropology is a wider theme in the book. Johannes Fabian has written of the often ignored underside of anthropology: mistranslation, what he calls “the perils of context”. In recounting how German explorers on expeditions wanted to collect ethnographic knowledge in Central Africa, Fabian speaks of their losing control in the midst of their ‘discovery’.²¹⁹ Bank alludes to one argument put forward by Fabian (2000) and comments on the paraphernalia that Bleek carried to Africa.²²⁰ Often these explorers or ethnographers or anthropologists had to listen to the music or a story of their informants, and this called for ‘surrendering to an experience’ instead of being in control.²²¹ This brings to mind Lloyd’s listening to a song sung by /A!kunta in 1870 and her recording of the songs and musical notes of Han#kass’o between 1878 and 1879.²²² Bank alludes to Bleek’s frame of mind from 1872 to 1873 and suggests that the researcher, who was often sick, was in fact ‘losing touch with his materials’.²²³ Bank also shows that there were moments, in the recordings with /A!kunta in 1870, when Bleek was angry with this informant. This is an example of what Fabian would describe as the irrational side of anthropological fieldwork.²²⁴ This other side (one not often referred to in earlier literature because of its potential to bring the politics of the research work into question) is also exposed in the section of Bank’s book that documents Bleek’s subtle coercion in extracting tales and information involving sex and the genitalia from first Kleinhardt, , then /A!kunta and later #Kasin.²²⁵

In ‘capturing’ the /Xam language, Bleek and Lloyd also ‘captured’ themselves in the act of appropriation by transcription, translation and recording. /A!kunta himself commented on this process by referring to the ‘shadow of Bleek’s hand when he was recording the stories told and how he himself does not write’.²²⁶

this as Panel 2, see Sandler to Bank and Witz, 10.8.2006.

²¹⁹ Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*, 102

²²⁰ Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 25-26

²²¹ Fabian, *Out of Our Minds*, 120

²²² Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 99 and 365

²²³ *Ibid*, 194-196

²²⁴ *Ibid*, 97

²²⁵ *Ibid*: 37, 98, and 226.

²²⁶ Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 86

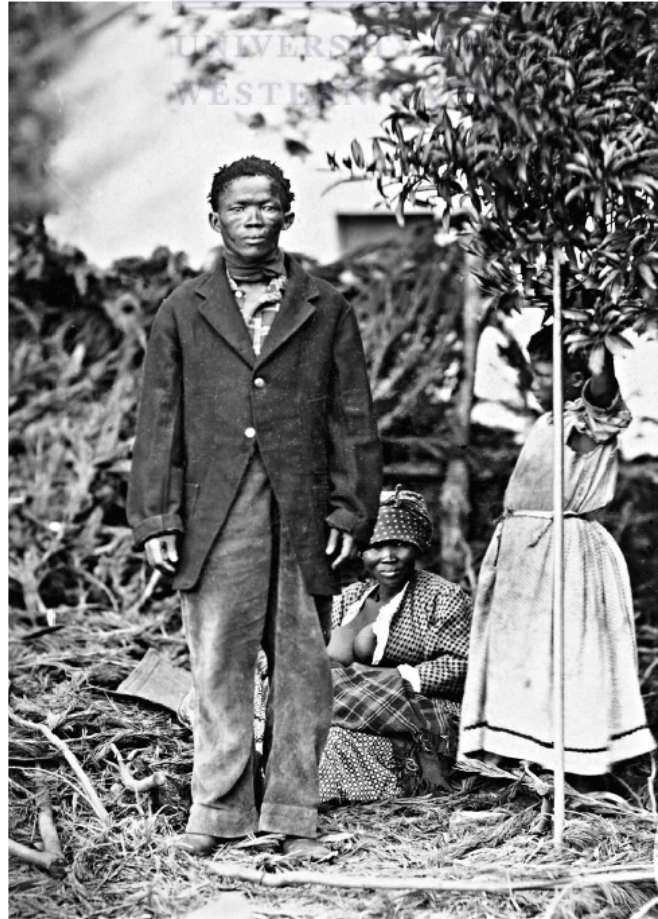
A photograph of Lucy Lloyd among her sisters is included on the invitation to the exhibition opening as well as in the panel 'Family portraits in the garden'. The curators compare two family photographs: that of Lloyd and her sisters, and one of #Kasin, !Kweiten-ta//ken and their children. Both were taken in an outside setting at The Hill, and they were taken at about the same time (1873 and 1874). In the book, Bank brings out Lloyd's painful past of growing up with hostility and finally being banished from her family, and speaks of her personal relationship and identification with the informants' stories (especially those of //Kabbo and /Han#kass'o) of pain, bereavement, nostalgia and loss.²²⁷ However, in the exhibition there is a marked distancing between the style of the photograph of the Lloyd sisters and that of the photograph of #Kasin, !Kweiten-ta//ken and their children. Whilst the sisters are clustered together in Victorian -style portraiture, the informants and their children have been loosely posed, with the measuring stick visible. For this panel, Witz consulted his colleague Patricia Hayes for advice regarding the positioning of the images. In the initial drafts, the two images were simply going to be arranged alongside each other, but this would have conveyed a sense of equivalence, with echoes of *Miscast* and */Qe, the power of rock art*.²²⁸ By presenting the images as opposed and polarized, one above the other, the notions of distancing and inequality are reflected by this panel.

In their own writing of visual history in relation to photographs in Namibia, Hayes and her co-authors describe that when such photographs are freed from the holdings of archival spaces and collections, it is as if power is released. These scholars suggest that photographs have the potential to reconstitute social spaces once they are re-circulated and brought near, rather than being distanced from, human contact. In 'The *Colonising Camera*' and '*Picturing the Past*' the scholars attempted not to show one-sided photographic agency, but to show the representational strategies of both coloniser and colonised as complex and indistinct. For the audience, the scars of history are immediately exposed. 'They share an intense moment in someone's life: it is the thing and its shadow at the same time, the source and its index. They are no longer viewers but participants'.²²⁹

²²⁷ Ibid., 44-71, 185 and 393.

²²⁸ E-mail correspondence, Andrew Bank and Leslie Witz, 17.8.2006.

²²⁹ P. Hayes, J. Silvester and W. Hartmann, 'Picturing the Past in Namibia: The Visual Archive and its Energies' in Hamilton et al, *Refiguring the Archive*, 133. See also Hartmann, Hayes and Silvester, *The Colonising Camera: Photographs in the Making of Namibian History* (Cape Town and Windhoek, 2002).

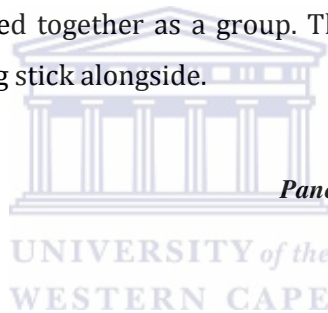


Family portraits in the Garden

There are no photographs of /Xam Bushmen in the same frame as members of the Bleek or Lloyd families. These two family portraits were taken, probably by Wilhelm Hermann, on separate occasions, in the back garden of The Hill in 1873 and 1874.

One portrait shows the Lloyd sisters: from left to right, Fanny (standing), Jemima (seated), Julia (standing), Lucy (seated). This is a typical, late nineteenth century, middle class family group portrait. The sisters are in formal Victorian dress, looking away from the camera.

The portrait of two of the /Xam Bushmen that Lucy Lloyd interviewed in 1875 owes more to the genre of anthropometric photography. #Kasin is standing in the foreground, and his wife, !Kweiten-ta-//ken, is breastfeeding their child on the ground behind him. #Kasin and #Kweiten-ta-//ken face the camera directly and are isolated rather than clustered together as a group. Their daughter is presented in side profile with a measuring stick alongside.



Panel 6: Family portraits in the Garden

Kratz offers another view of photographic exhibitions. Corinne Kratz travelled around Kenya and the USA with her photographic exhibition on the O’Kiek in an attempt to deconstruct the stereotypes of ‘other’. Kratz found that images and their representations are, once established, hard to dissolve.²³⁰ The terms of engagement make it difficult to challenge the resilient stereotypes involved: amongst others, ethnicity, gender, class, race, other social groups and identity. Sometimes exhibitions can add to existing stereotypes and reinforce their ‘empirical proof’.²³¹

In line with Kratz’s thinking, Efraim Sicher warns against the dangers of ironic ambivalence and that the violence of the past can be repeated.²³² The invention of post memory, or counter memory as Marianne Hirsch calls it, has to do with serving a diverse and multi-cultural society, restoring dignity and humanity.²³³ In post- Holocaust memory making through popular culture, memory is being mediated by processes that sanitise the past of certain memories. In an attempt to reconcile the enemy and the victim by the invention of post memory, photographic images are deemed to have the capacity to repair memory, but the process may not necessarily recover historical knowledge and it may misrepresent meanings. Also, collective identity and a totalizing memory are being promoted rather than individual memory that defies nationalist frameworks. The third generation readership obtains its knowledge from the second generation, who had to mediate the stories as ‘strangers themselves to their own stories and identities’. The second generation may also transfer their feelings of hate, guilt and anger to the third generation. Furthermore, second generation narration can recycle the violence of Nazi Germany, whilst taking the ghost out of the skeleton can open wounds from which survivors had recovered.²³⁴

‘Dialkwain’s sketches at Charlton House’ can be called the transitory panel that moves the narrative of the exhibition from Bleek and Lloyd as researchers, to Lloyd as the primary researcher (shifting the emphasis from language to culture, or even social anthropology). A

²³⁰ C. Kratz, *The Ones that are Wanted: communication and the politics of representation in A Photographic Exhibition*, (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2002), 89.

²³¹ Ibid, 105

²³² Marianne Hirsch in Efraim Sicher, *The Future of the Past : Countermemory and Postmemory in Contemporary American Post-Holocaust Narratives* in *History & Memory* 12.2 (2001) Indiana University Press, 56-91, p 84. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/history_and_memory/v012/12.2sicher.html

²³³ Ibid, 59

²³⁴ Ibid, 80

sketch of a family of ostriches is represented as the picture that Dia!kwain drew the morning after Bleek asked him if he could draw.



Dia!kwain's sketches at Charlton House

!Kweiten-ta-//ken's brother, Dia!kwain, was interviewed next. When his sister and her family returned to the Northern Cape in January of 1875, he stayed on. In February he moved with the Bleek and Lloyd families from The Hill to Charlton House.

By this time Bleek had begun to show an interest in Bushman rock art. In later years Lloyd recalled:

"One evening, at Mowbray, in 1875, Dr Bleek asked Dia!kwain if he could make pictures. The latter smiled and looked pleased; but what he said has been forgotten. The following morning, early, as Dr Bleek passed through the back porch of his house on his way to Cape Town, he perceived a small drawing representing a family of ostriches, pinned to the porch wall, as Dia!kwain's reply to his question."

Dia!kwain's sketch may also have been associated with a story that he was telling at the time. In this tale the lions trick the ostriches into performing a song and dance, killing them and appropriating their voice. This was how lions acquired their roar.

Panel 7: Dia!kwain's sketches at Charlton House



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Instructions in /Xam culture

/Han#kass'o was the last of the /Xam Bushmen to be interviewed in Mowbray. He stayed at Charlton House from January of 1878 to December of 1879.

The research had now taken on a different character. Wilhelm Bleek had died in August of 1875, leaving Lloyd to continue the work alone. She was fluent in /Xam and had become more and more interested in /Xam culture. Like //Kabbo, /Han#kass'o was a masterful storyteller. But he was also the source of a wealth of new information about /Xam culture.

His studio portrait captures this moment of transition. Lloyd was now using specific artefacts, like hunting bows and animal skins, as cues in acquiring information about customs and rituals. She also got him to talk about arrows, musical instruments, dancing rattles, and bones or sticks used for preparing or eating food.

Panel 8: Instructions in /Xam culture

'Instructions in /Xam culture' features a studio photograph of /Han#kass'o dressed in a western suit, with a musical instrument called a !goin-!goin. A measuring stick protrudes from his clothing. Bank argues that after Bleek's death, Lloyd increasingly moved away from language and folklore to the field of social anthropology, and the collection of material culture and objects.²³⁵ Bank suggested the title for the panel as he wanted to allude to the ambivalence about who is instructing whom.²³⁶ In the accounts of /Han#kass'o one is able to detect the presence of Lucy Lloyd and see how her recordings reveal the more 'humane' stories or sensitive stories of 'everyday life'.²³⁷ The shift in meanings of stories that she encountered pushed her into pursuing 'Bushman' way of life or culture in detail by placing her 'native' informants in assumed 'everyday' settings.²³⁸ Between 1878 and 1879 Lloyd recorded various narratives from Han#kass'o about /Xam material culture. While Lloyd showed an intense dedication to her practical studies, it would appear that she adopted the anthropological notions which Bleek and the Berlin Anthropological Society shared. She was primarily interested in material culture: hunting practices, musical instruments, tradition, customs, rituals, language and the everyday objects of the /Xam. Narrative performance, songs and the making of clay pots were of particular interest to her. In this regard she was influenced by the work of the British social anthropologist, Edward Taylor.²³⁹

How Dia!kwain and /Han#kass'o interpreted the copies of rock paintings by Orpen, Stow and Schunke, that were shown to them by Lloyd, is discussed in the last two panels, called 'Dia!kwain interprets rock art' and '/Han#kass'o's cautious comments'. The images that are addressed by this exhibition and publication are not only in the form of photographs but also in the form of rock paintings, which are discussed in relation to the Bleek/Lloyd collection of ethnography, folklore and mythology. In addition, the examination of rock art can also be deemed as a response to the */Qe: Power of Rock Art* exhibition that was being held concurrently at the SAM. The panels again need to be read in relation to the detailed treatment in the book of the theme of /Xam interpretations of rock art copies.

²³⁵ Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 356

²³⁶ E-mail correspondence, Bank to Witz, 1.9.2006

²³⁷ Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 50

²³⁸ Ibid, 351

²³⁹ Ibid, 352



Dia!kwain interprets rock art

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Another set of objects that Lloyd put before /Han#kass'o and Dia!kwain were copies of rock paintings. In November 1875 she showed Dia!kwain images from the rock art copyist George Stow. Dia!kwain's interpretation of the different figures was literal and sometimes associated with stories:

- (I) A male ostrich.
- (II) A lynx it is, people are carrying it. Two Bushmen are carrying the lynx.
- (III) The Bushmen who stands before watching this thing, stands looking up at it.
- (IV) He wants to shoot it. I have not seen it, but my mother's people have told me about the things which are in the water which are like this. They bite us people. And when we go into the Orange River's water, they kill us in the Orange River's water.
- (V) This thing is a hunting leopard. It is not angry. For when people see it, they wish that it may become stiff.

Panel 9: Dia!kwain interprets rock art

George Stow, a trader, made numerous forays with the help of missionaries into the caves of the regions called Queenstown and Kaffraria, and made copies of the paintings there from 1867 to 1870, because he thought they would soon be lost alongside the people (Bushman) who made them.

Keeping close contact with George Stow, and acting on his advice, Wilhelm Bleek developed an interest in rock art paintings in about 1873. Another person with an interest in the rock paintings was Orpen, who was magistrate in a mountainous region of the Drakensberg and had to act as negotiator when rebellion broke out. Orpen seized upon the offer of a Bushman interpreter called Qing, to take him on a tour of the cave paintings. He came across the caves of the Melikane, Sehonghong and Kraai Rivers, and made reproductions of paintings there in 1873. These copies, with input from Qing, were sent to Nobel, editor of the *Cape Monthly Magazine* and later, in 1874, to Bleek. This coincided with Dai!kwain's return that same year to the Bleek household, where the stories that were told were deemed to be interpretations and translations of the rock art copies. Bank accounts for the stories of the water-cow or water bull and the 'sorcerer in conflict with the community as result of rainmaking' in reference to the images of the Orpen copies.²⁴⁰

As far as Bank is concerned, Bleek's reconstruction of the narrative of the rock paintings had more to do with his own theories and ideas than with what the informants had to say about the copies of the rock paintings. He commented that the paintings showed 'modes of warfare, the chase, weapons, disguises etc'. These reproductions that Stow drew free-hand as 'cartoons' were transported from Kimberley to Mowbray in 1875, with the assistance of colonial governor Sir Henry Barkly and Richard Southey,. With the Orpen copies in mind, Bleek had requested Stow's 'cartoons' to show to Da!kwain. Bank argues that many scholars, like David Lewis-Williams, have only used the selected narratives of Dia!kwain to account for the shamanistic theory of rock art. In doing so, Dia!kwain's narratives of 'learning and education, on the lessons of parents, elders or sorcerers' or mundane daily experiences have been sidestepped and brushed with 'exotic and symbolic' explanations. Bank argues that the interpretations that specific informants gave about specific images need to be related to their life histories and the contexts of the conversations rather than simply being read as a transparent record of 'Bushman' or San views of rock art. To take one example from the book:

²⁴⁰ These and other references to the book here are taken from the chapter 'Readings of rock art', 1874-5 & 1878', 302-339.

The image of a group of people wearing gemsbok caps prompts him to tell a story about how sorcerers ('they') 'try', 'observe' or 'test' the educational accomplishments of the young children. Lessons from childhood were, as we have seen, the dominant theme of Dia!kwain's narratives in this periods from January to July 1875.... advice of parents and elders about such practical matters as the proper way to eat and speak...What 'the old woman' who are sorcerers' teach the young ones can only be understood properly in the context of his own life history and ... the overwhelming importance of parental advice in shaping his imaginative world as a child.²⁴¹

Dia!kwain's interpretation of Stow's cartoon 3 ,and extracts from Lloyd's notebooks, have been used extensively by David Lewis-Williams (1981) to account for the bleeding of the shaman's nose when he had gone into trance. Bank argues that we cannot tell for sure whether this was the 'correct' reading as scholars have pointed to the inaccuracy of Stow's copies. The evidence is gone. By 1928, when Dorothea Bleek visited this site along the Riet River near Cradock, most of the rock art had disappeared. The recordings by Lloyd ended the following year as Dia!kwain left for his home.

An article published in the *Cape Monthly Magazine* of 1876 provides some information about HC Schunke, an artist copier of Bushmen rock art, who was a follower of Bleek's work on philology and mythology. He set out to make reproductions of rock art paintings in the Jagdpanfontein, which was referred to as Jagdpan by //Kabbo to Bleek. Between March and May 1875, Schunke made copies of cave drawings in 'the Oudtshoorn area near Kammanassie Wagen Drift'. In April 1875, he made copies of Mr Ballot's reproduction of the cave paintings in Ezeljagdspoot. A month later he made facsimiles of paintings at 'Snee's cave in Tafelbergskloof, south of the Oliphants River, in the Kam'nasi Mountains in Oudtshoorn'.

These copies by Schunke of rock art paintings were given to /Han#kass'o by Lloyd, in 1878, to interpret. Apart from the hardebeest, kudu and eland that /Han#kass'o was able to identify in the sketches, he could not identify the other animals redrawn by Schunke. Bank notes that this was not surprising as these creatures were not part of his visual world. Perhaps they were not to be found in the Kenhardt district where he had grown up. Also, the identification of the

²⁴¹ Ibid, 316-7



/Han=kass'o's cautious commentaries

/Han=kass'o appeared unsure what the figures in copies of rock art paintings represented. He was unfamiliar with the form of drawings on loose pages. And, back home, he had only seen rock engravings, not rock paintings.

When Lloyd showed him a pair of watercolours copied from a cave in the Oudtshoorn district by HC Schunke, he responded: XIV – Nyauki ≠en-na – I do not know. The round spot in the more upright line, he says it is like a water pit. The dotted lines to the left of the spectator, he says are like blood, the blood of the people; also the spots in the upper part of the picture. The great dark space at the top, he does not know. One of the figures has a head like a steenbok. XV – Thinks that the largest of the three human figures may be a white man, but is not sure whether this or a Bushman. The head of the bird to the left resembles an ostrich. Is not sure whether the principal human figure holds a knife, or a knobkerrie, in his hand.

Panel 10: /Han=kass'o's cautious commentaries

eland, hardebeest and kudu could possibly be ascribed to Lloyd, who had given /Han#kass'o a children's book depicting these species, a few days before. Comments by /Han#kass'o on Schunke's copies of complex drawings reveal that he could not give a full explanation of the series of images. Apart from identifying a water pit, a small dot and a steenbok wearing a cloak, /Han#kass'o said: 'Nyauki#en-na I do not know'. This is part of the text cited in the exhibition panel along with a reproduction of the drawing that was shown to Han#kass'o.

Lewis-Williams argue that this set of images represents the 'trance buck' seen by the shaman while in trance. Bank argues rather that the interpretations were literal descriptions of what /Han#kass'o had experienced in real life. /Han#kass'o's comments on the Ezeljagdspoor reproductions have drawn out much debate. Bleek described certain figures as 'Watermaidens' in reference to a legend and this is deemed to be in keeping with his interest in mythology. Bank rectifies this by noting that 'Watermaidens' probably refers to the 'ichthyoid (fish-like) creatures'. Similar imagery has been used by Lewis-Williams, Dowson and Deacon to account for 'Bushman shaman-artist hallucination of swallow-shamans engaged in a rain-protection ritual', of which Bank holds a different interpretation. According to Bank, /Han#kass'o comments on rain ritual but makes no mention of trance. Moreover, Dia!kwain's comments on some of the same images differed from those of /Han#kass'o. /Han#kass'o identified Schunke's copies as depicting rainmaking, whilst Dia!kwain made similar reference to the water cow in Orpen's copies. Bank's conclusion, which the last two panels on rock art seek to convey in their emphasis on the possibility of misreading, and the need for caution, challenges the 'shamanistic paradigm' which dictates how the /Xam narratives are used in the /Qe exhibition at the SAM.

On the basis of what two of the Bleek-Lloyd informants actually said about the rock art copies, the fit between ethnography and the shamanistic explanation...is far less apparent than some scholars suggest The responses of Dia!kwain and /Han #kass'o were complex, divergent and often misleading... To me it therefore seems simplistic to claim that Dia!kwain and /Han#kass'o both clearly understood the shamanistic religious metaphors in the rock paintings.²⁴²

It was with this sense of Bank's literal interpretation of rock art that the display ended.

Towards the end of the process of the production of the exhibition, Bank suggested a concluding panel. Witz wanted to leave this space open-ended and said that the exhibition could be read backwards as well.²⁴³ The exhibition refuses a sense of closure and suggests

²⁴² Bank, *Bushmen in a Victorian World*, 339

fleeting or evanescent images that can be renegotiated. Can this exhibition, with its view that rock art is to be understood literally and not in shamanistic terms, turn the tide of opinion now that so many rock art sites are enshrined as World Heritage Sites? How are we able to undo past representations and knowledge transactions?

Conclusion

Amidst the lack of foreclosure and an opening up of difficult meanings, various conclusions based on the exhibition cum publication may be drawn. I suggest that through the 'mirror' metaphor of fragmentation, disjuncture, multiplicity, irony we begin to understand the complexity not only of remaking /Xam narratives but also of the remaking of the self and history. In understanding the book and exhibition as mirror-like we may begin to comprehend the shattered past where the archive is anything but whole or coherent. The Bleek-Lloyd Collection is reflective of mirror images where nothing is stable and we are left with fleeting or evanescent images that often dissolve or bleed into one another. In other words the boundaries between self and the other, or coloniser and (post) colonised, are indistinct.

My reading of the exhibition is reflective of the fragmentary and discontinuous nature of the Bleek-Lloyd Collection. Such ruptures or interruptions in the collection are symptoms of the undoing of the self caused by the traumatic past. Bank and Witz in their exhibition are using the uncomfortable silences of the archive to open up multi-dimensional meanings for the remaking of the self via mimicry or repetition. On the one hand, repetition acts to re-humanise not only the colonised subject but also the 'wounded' coloniser. On the other hand, repetition is utilized to show how the traumatic and violent images will return if the brokenness or scars or wounds or contusions are not attended to. At the same time, repetition or parody is used here to bring about disillusionment as a starting point for more humane changes in post apartheid or post memory or post history settings.

The exhibition with its mirror- like images raises feelings of discomfort by using mimicry or repetition as a lens to pause and consider the fragments and discontinuities while creating multiple and open-ended meanings. In his musical composition *Form IV: Broken Sequence*, Stefan Wolpe uses repetition, to accentuate an 'ever-restored and ever advancing moment'. Here sequences are both straightforward and discontinuous, displaced and connections

²⁴³ Witz to Bank, e-mail correspondence, 25.9.2006

interrupted at the same time but these are ephemeral and transient moments holding a richness of potential called ‘particularity by virtue of that event or moment by being part of wide ranging processes’.

To accentuate the richness or potential Wolpe relies on massive repetition much of it close but never exact. Repetition is used to express – to begin again and thereby carve recognizable objects out of a flow of sound. Here repetition is not comfortable, it is always new in the sense that the objects we hear are changed by picking up diverse characters from other objects or by introducing new, unheard of characters. The change is often so complex that we may wonder what we are in fact, recognizing. Wolpe’s variation technique return often turns us as much away as back, toward transformations into an ‘opposite’ character or quality or toward something new and yet strangely familiar.

This exhibition draws the reader or listener into a sharp awareness of the distinctiveness of the event or the making of the Bleek/Lloyd archive while endless possibilities are highlighted. ‘Far from bringing closure, it breaks the piece open and show how rupture brings connectibility to the parts allowing a scattered past to bleed into the immediate present.’ Wolpe asks us to enter the never-cohering moment by retaining a ‘witnessing memory which evades the sling of the past’. Richness is situated in the individual whereby it is happening for itself and simultaneously happening as a stage or theater for the whole of the world at that moment. Here discord and fragmentation serves as post narrative or memory that will bring about harmony and intensely heightened moments’.²⁴⁴ Fragmentation is seen from the perspective of richness or abundance in ‘the moment ever-restored, the all- inclusive moment’ and therefore everything becomes connectable and possible to view from multiple sides.²⁴⁵

Such rupturing or breaking open of the event allows us to see and hear about the specificity of the violent past. When trauma occurs, disconnection from the self, the world and others takes place.²⁴⁶ Reconnecting to the world is largely dependent on others. The difficulty of a survivor’s reconstructing subjectivity is connected to the difficulty of regaining voice after it has been repressed and the voice of the perpetrator ‘inscribed onto the flesh’. ‘When a survivor creates a fully realized narrative that brings together the shattered knowledge of

²⁴⁴ Stefan Wolpe in Hasty, Christopher, Broken Sequences: Fragmentation, Abundance, Beauty in *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Summer, 2002), p 164. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25164491>. Accessed on 15 February 2010.

²⁴⁵ Wolpe in Hasty, 2002: 165

²⁴⁶ Susan J Brison, Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self, 41.

what happened, the emotions that were aroused by the meanings of the events, and the bodily sensations that the physical events created, the survivor pieces back together the fragmentation of consciousness that the trauma has caused'.²⁴⁷ We live in a society that, conversely, places pressure on the survivor to move on and forget. Often forms of public memorialising are about forgetting. The trauma does however not go away as result of this erasure or repression.²⁴⁸ This exhibition draws on the experiences of the research subjects and researchers Bleek and Lloyd to revisit the traumatic past in order for reconnection to society and a remaking of the self to take place.

Pierre Nora presents the idea of *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) undermining *milieux de mémoire* (real sites of memory). The production of more histories to retain everything before it disappears is an indication that very little of memory remains. It would seem that traditions, customs and culture are fast disappearing as result of historicity and the emergence of democracy, progress and a mass global culture. This signifies our current concern with *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) as a product of fractured memory and history rather than *milieux de mémoire* (real environments of memory). Memory and history have become polarized in the process. The rise of a history of history or historiographical consciousness has engendered the rupture between memory and history. A history of national development has taken up collective traditions: quintessential *milieux de mémoire*. But a history of history undercuts memory-history and *milieux de mémoire*. When history begins to write its own history we question our identity as well as our heritage and at the same time divorce ourselves from memory. While remaining critical and aloof we are bound by *lieux de mémoire* by visits to the archive, library, museums, memorials, cemeteries, festivals, exhibitions, anniversaries and celebrations²⁴⁹. The *B in a Victorian World: The remarkable story of the Bleek/Lloyd Collection of B folklore* shows us our need to revisit such *milieux de mémoires* in order for more humane post histories to emerge.

Embedded in the traumatic past is the entangled relationship between the self and the *other*, or the victim and perpetrator. By focusing on racial science as 'home anthropology', the exhibition asks that we ponder humanizing the Bleek/Lloyd collection so that the coloniser

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 48

²⁴⁸ Susan J Brison, Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self, 80.

²⁴⁹ Pierre Nora, Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Memoire*, p1-18.
<http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/classes/201/articles/89NoraLieuxIntroRepresentations.pdf>

and the colonised can be re-humanised and ‘trauma scripts’ be rewritten. So this exhibition, based on the book, reads like an anti-colonial novel that invites the perpetrators to come to terms with the painful past and at the same time reclaim their own sense of humanity, ‘a humanity shattered by the atrocities they committed’.²⁵⁰ It is, then, no ‘accident’ that the exhibition resided in the Centre for African Studies Gallery at the foot of the staircase leading to the Manuscripts and Archives Department for two weeks before it was taken to the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape.

In a publication called *A Broken Beauty* aesthetics is considered within notions of otherness, thereby offering the possibility for physical, mental and spiritual brokenness to be seen as beauty, in contrast with Western perceptions of aesthetics or beauty. Moments of suffering, loss and injury challenge Western views of the body’s capacity for beauty, despite the fact that brokenness is accepted as part of the human condition.

Moreover, if we write more humane stories more humane political programmes for change will be developed and put in place. Edward Said and other 21st Century Thinkers have revisited novelist Conrad’s uncompromising brokenness as the basis and foundation for a more hopeful, compassionate, tolerant, and humane political agenda. Conrad’s fiction calls for political action, which paradoxically springs from disillusionment and is rooted in irony. In his book, *Postcolonial Conrad*, Terry Collits argues “life and the world are irremediably fragmented. The bits and pieces in which they offer themselves to the eyes of the baffled perceivers represent the disorder, the contingency, the puzzling multi-facetedness that characterizes the Modernist approach to the notions of truth, understanding and experience”²⁵¹.

²⁵⁰ Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, Trauma, forgiveness and the witnessing dance: making public spaces intimate, in *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 2008, 53, p 170-172.

²⁵¹ Michael Lackey, Twenty-First Century Conrad Studies, Journal Article: Studies in the Novel, Vol. 39, 2007, Terry Collits, Postcolonial Conrad: Paradoxes of Empire. New York: Routledge, 2005, p208. Mario Curreli. The Ugo Mursia Memorial Lectures, Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2005, 315. Carola Kaplan, Peter Lancelot Mallios and Andrea White, Conrad in the Twenty-First Century: Contemporary Approaches and Perspectives, New York: Routledge, 2005, 288.

Conclusion

In the *Mail & Guardian* and commenting on 16 December 2009, Day of Reconciliation; Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela refers to post-apartheid South Africa as a “wounded nation” because of its traumatic past, and shows how this is manifesting in the present day re-enactment of violence and crime²⁵². According to Gobodo-Madikizela, this is due to people’s continued affliction and unresolved trauma. She refers to this as unclaimed experiences and thus the trauma remains unresolved or ‘unfinished business’.²⁵³ Scholars have also drawn attention in recent years to the deeper psychological wounds in their analysis of trauma narratives. In fact, Caruth calls it a ‘wound that cries out’. Thus Caruth shows that if trauma is an unclaimed experience, it manifests again and again in the unconscious ‘lived memory’ and is passed on to the next generation.²⁵⁴

In this thesis I have traced the representational politics of the production of images of the Khoisan in post-apartheid South Africa, focusing primarily on the politics of representation in one important institution: the Iziko South African Museum. Drawing on the existing literature I have sought to trace the history of colonial representations of the San in the contentious *Bushman Diorama*. I have analysed Iziko SAM debates and displays regarding the San in more detail in the post-apartheid context, making use of the *Miscast* exhibition of 1996 (at the nearby SANG), the discussions around the closure of the *Bushman Diorama* in 2001 (along with debates about the return of Sara Baartman), and the underlying politics and ideology of production that went into the making of */Qe: Power of rock art*. My central argument here is that */Qe* and the Bleek-Lloyd-/Xam stories which feature so prominently in it serve as a sanitised and comfortable way of presenting San history which allows the SAM to avoid tackling the uncomfortable legacy of its representation of Khoisan peoples. I also highlight the lack of negotiation with descendant communities in the making of the */Qe* exhibition. There remains, in my view, ‘unfinished business’, a ‘wound that cries out’, in the way in which the SAM has papered over its past.

²⁵² Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, ‘A wounded nation’, *The Mail & Guardian online*, 23 December 2009.

²⁵³ Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, Trauma, forgiveness and the witnessing dance: making public spaces intimate, In *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 2008, 53, p 174.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 174-5

In this core section of the thesis I have also pointed to other sites where the debates about representations of Khoisan history and culture have been negotiated, debates which help provide a wider context for my analysis of the politics of representation at the Iziko SAM. These sites include the Origins Centre at RARI (Wits), the African Cultures Gallery installation at the Iziko SAM, the Cradle of Humankind at Maropeng, the *What we See* exhibition by Annette Hoffman at the Iziko Slave Lodge and the display at the !Kwa-ttu centre on the West Coast. I visited some of the sites myself and played some part in the production of *Bushmen in a Victorian World*.

In developing my analysis, I have drawn on interviews and works of scholars and curators, who included Patricia Davison, Pippa Skotnes, Janette Deacon, Jenny Sandler and Roger van Wyk. I have challenged what we might call the Iziko SAM's approach (as articulated by Patricia Davison) that endless possibilities are feasible for renewed meanings of the *Diorama*, as well as the underlying assumption of Pippa Skotnes that the Lloyd-Bleek Collection that produced some 12,000 pages of transcribed notebooks was based on a 'remarkable and equal relationship'. My own approach draws on Rassool's formulation of the 'Cult of Salvation', but in a way that emphasises the underlying violence and trauma articulated in these narratives. I propose that they should be read more closely as narratives of trauma; and I draw on a theoretical and comparative literature which describes the use of this approach in other contexts, notably that of the holocaust. It is the emphasis on 'scars with stories' in the *Bushmen in a Victorian World* exhibition, along with its more self-reflective and open-ended approach, that informs my analysis of this exhibition.

The most recent study on the Bleek-Lloyd-/Xam Collection, *Bushman Letters* by Michael Wessels, develops this approach in relation to a close literary reading of the texts. Wessels draws on the work of Andrew Bank and Derrida by lodging an appeal to rereading /Xam narratives as open-ended, lacking foreclosure, incomplete in interpretation, multi-faceted, fluid and unfinished. Wessels shows that the narratives do not belong to a 'common or single Khoisan tradition', but are rich sites of particularity, specificity, creativity and tension. Wessels challenges the tradition of interpreting Khoisan culture in terms of concepts of social evolution, racial differentiation, universal story-telling, lost origins and timelessness. He argues that the stories should not be relegated to the distant past, but should be explored in terms of the implications they hold for being African in South Africa 'Now'.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁵ M. Wessels, *Bushman Letters: Interpreting /Xam Narrative* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press,

In general I follow Witz and Rassool in arguing that in the context of post apartheid public historical arenas, the production of various images and texts for exhibition making, collection policies, identity formation and memory work of the Iziko SAM and university departments like the history department should be contested spaces for transactions of knowledge and negotiation for meaning to take place²⁵⁶. Increasingly, scholars have called for self-reflectivity. I have endeavoured to investigate in a self-reflective way the traces and processes underscored by a remaking of what I have called ‘/Xam narratives’. This has included reflection upon the wider international contexts (globalisation or WHS listing, museum collections and practices), national contexts (notably the remaking of /Xam narratives in a post-apartheid South Africa emerging from the TRC) and more personal considerations, such as my reflections about my own ambiguous feelings towards the *Bushmen in a Victorian World* exhibition.

There are new and dynamic public sites where more contested and more community-based models of exhibition and display have been developed. Community museums like the District Six in Cape Town and Lwandle Museum near Somerset West are two examples of institutions which have adopted more fluid and socially responsive approaches towards the making of histories. It would be instructive to analyse how the institutional politics and representational politics that have gone into the making of particular exhibitions at these sites differ from the politics underlying the Iziko SAM’s approach towards the *Bushman Diorama*, but space constraints do not allow for a full comparative analysis of these community museums in the post-apartheid period.

There are also signs that Iziko Museums of Cape Town are developing in new directions. One exciting new display is the *Ghoema and Glitter* exhibition, which opened at the Castle of Good Hope on 5 June 2010. The focus of this exhibition is on carnival participation from generation to generation. It traces the New Year Carnival’s roots and its transformation as well as its relationship to social life, politics, identity, popular culture and ritual. This exhibition is a celebration of carnival and community and uncovers the story of the performances of Malay choirs, Christmas bands and klopse [minstrel] troupes. In some of the visuals we see *The Malay Choir* perform a *moppie* or comic song. There is a multi-media

2010).

²⁵⁶ L. Witz and C. Rassool, ‘Making histories’ in C. Rassool and L. Witz, eds., *Kronos: Southern African Histories, Special Issue: Making Histories*, 34, (Nov. 2008), 6-15.

presentation of voice and moving images along with photographs and text. I imagine that much of the thinking behind this exhibition was intended to engender new narratives highlighting ‘communities of laughter’ and finding new forms of expression that cross the divides and bring about healing, restoration, and reconciliation

This thesis has sought to raise the question as to how this more open-ended, flexible and community-based approach may be applied to the conflicted and contested space that is the Iziko South African Museum. Is it possible that, through being more transparent about its legacy and representational history, the Iziko SAM can be transformed into a creative space for display, one that does not remain rooted in the legacies of essentialist representation or fall back on comforting stories about ‘remarkable equality’?



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D. Newspaper articles

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Edwin Lombard, 'Museum to dust itself off', *Sunday Times*, 3 June 2001

Sarah Kope, 'Tourists will be the losers', *Tabletalk*, 12 April 2001

Stevenson C, 'San diorama to be consigned to the dustbin of history', *TableTalk*, 12 April 2001

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Pippa Skotnes, 'Unmaking the San', *Cape Times*, 6-12 April 2001

Diana Ferrus, 'Welcome home, Saartjie Baartman rest in peace in the lush foothills of your motherland', *Cape Times*, 30 April 2002

'Power of poetry freed Saartjie', *The Cape Argus*, 1 February 2002

Oosterwyk Trevor, 'Saartjie to return home', *The Cape Argus*, 1 February 2002.

Eric Ntabazalila, 'Remains to be handed over on Monday: After 186 years, Saartjie Baartman will be home soon', *Cape Times*, 26 April 2002.

Johns Lynne, 'Tug-of-war over Saartjie Baartman: Reference group to discuss burial place', *Cape Argus*, 8 May 2002

Boezak Willa, 'Saartjie not yet free', *Cape Times*, 7 May 2002

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Craig McKune, 'Iziko's San diorama to stay shut, but museum plans to fast-track its reopening', *Cape Times Online*, 20 Aug. 2009

Anton Ferreira, 'Kalahari San want royalties for rock art', *Sunday Times*, 11 October 2009

E. Pamphlets

Saartjie Baartman: Unearthing Heritage, Burying the Past (Iziko South African Museum, 2002)

Events @ SAM, April 2001, 2(3): Debating the museum

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F. Reports

WIMSA Report, April 2003-March 2004, Part 1. <http://www.san.org.za/>

Iziko museums of Cape Town. Annual Report 2003-4, 1-61.

http://www.iziko.org.za/iziko/reports/Iziko_Annual_Report_0304.pdf.

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University of Cape Town Research Report (Cape Town, 2005), 1.

Documentation Re the San Diorama,

I. Press Statement

II. Information about the 'Bushman Diorama'

III. The Diorama Label

IV. Introductory Document For The Workshop on the Future of the San Diorama held in June 2007 in the T. H. Barry Lecture Theatre, IZIKO: SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM

V. Report on the IZIKO FORUM on the Future of the San Diorama, (Gerald Klinghardt, 14 Jan 2009)

G. Interviews

Blundell, Geoffrey: 18 Nov. 2007

Deacon, Janette: 23 Dec. 2007

Sandler, Jenny: 19 Jan. 2008

Van Wyk, Roger: 18 Jan. 2008

Kaufmann, Carol: telephonic & e-mail correspondence, 20 January 2008

Klinghardt, Gerald: telephonic and email correspondence on 14 Jan 2009 & 17 March 2009 as well as 12 May 2009

Clayton, Fiona: 12 May 2009

Glanville-Zini, Susan, telephonic interview, 13 May 2010



H. E-Mail Correspondence relating to the making of the exhibition *Bushmen in a Victorian World* (August-October 2006)

From Leslie Witz

Subject: *Exhibition mock up* (12 Aug. 2006), Subject: *Another caption* (17 Aug. 2006)

Subject: *second caption* (17 Aug. 2006) Directed to Andrew Bank

Subject: *photo query* (21 Aug. 2006) Directed to both Andrew Bank and Jenny Sandler

Subject: *scars and houses* (19 Aug. 2006)

Subject: *scars and houses* (21 Aug. 2006) Directed to Andrew Bank

Subject: *two edits of captions* (24 Aug. 2006) Directed to Andrew Bank to ask him what he thinks of the edits.

Subject: *next set of caption done* (24 Aug. 2006)

Directed at Jenny Sandler and telling her about the next set of captions which Andrew Bank had written and he (Leslie Witz) has edited.

Subject: *next 2 captions* (25 Aug. 2006)

Directed to Andrew Bank to ask him what he thinks of the edits. The Dia!kwain sketches a bit thin and space to add more.

Subject: *guest list* (15 Sept. 2006) To Andrew Bank

Subject: *rock art 1* (16 Sept. 2006) To Andrew Bank

Subject: *format of UWC launch* (16 Sept. 2006) To Andrew Bank

Subject: *A house for research* (20 Sept. 2006) Tells Andrew Bank that he cut it down to 155 words.

Subject: *captions continued* (20 Sept. 2006) Directed to Andrew Bank

Subject: *intro* (24 Sept. 2006), Subject: *Do we need a concluding board?* (25 Sept. 2006)

Subject: *caption edits* (2 Oct. 2006)

Lalou Meltzer not happy with email publishing and restrict circulation of long essay.

Subject: *Bushmen invite* (2 Oct. 2006)

From Jenny Sandler

Subject of e-mail: *Exhibition proposal* (8 Aug. 2006)

Discusses submitting draft compilation of material based on book. Refers to meeting where Sandler, Bank and Witz got together. Images selected for purposes of developing the script or text.

Subject: *Exhibition follow up* (9 Aug. 2006)

Subject: *Exhibition ps* (10 Aug. 2006) To Andrew Bank

Subject: *Exhibition revised draft* (10 Aug. 2006) Directed to both Witz and Bank

Subject: *Exhibition ideas* (17 Aug. 2006) Directed to Andrew Bank

Subject: *sketches revised and rough /Han=kass'o* (3 Sept. 2006) To Andrew Bank

Subject: *title question* (10 Sept. 2006) To Andrew Bank

Subject: *launch at UWC* (10 Sept. 2006) To Andrew Bank

Subject: *title question* (11 Sept. 2006) To Andrew Bank: Han=kass'o and Dialkwain captions final.

Subject: *caption edits* (2 Oct. 2006) To Andrew Bank

From Andrew Bank

Subject: *Exhibition mock-up* (12 Aug. 2006) Directed to Leslie Witz

Subject: *Another caption* (17 Aug. 2006) Directed to Leslie Witz

Subject: *second caption* (17 Aug. 2006) Directed to Leslie Witz

Subject: *Exhibition ideas* (17 Aug. 2006) Directed to Jenny Sandler

Subject: *scars and houses* (21 Aug. 2006) Directed to Leslie Witz

Subject: *two edits of captions* (24 Aug. 2006)

Subject: *next 2 captions* (25 Aug. 2006) E-mail to Leslie Witz

Subject: *sketches revised and rough /Han=kass'o* (1 Sept 2006) To Leslie Witz

Subject: *Apologies and launch date* (4 Sept. 2006)

Apologising to Prof. Brenda Cooper (Director for African Studies, Dept of English Language and Literature) with regard to launch dates in view of generous offer.

Subject: *title question* (10 Sept. 2006) Caption for further edits to Leslie Witz

Subject: *title question* (10 Sept. 2006) To Leslie Witz

Subject: *guest list* (15 Sept 2006) Asking Witz if he knows how to put a guest list together.

Subject: *rock art 1* (16 Sept. 2006) To Leslie Witz

Subject: *format of UWC launch* (16Sept. 2006) To Leslie Witz

Subject: *A house for research* (20 Sept. 2006)

Subject: *captioned continued* (20 Sept. 2006) To Leslie Witz

Subject: *captions continued* (20 Sept. 2006) Subject: *launch* (20 Sept. 2006)

Andrew Bank received an email from Charmaine at UCT regarding the transference of money towards the launch where drinks and snacks were going to be supplied. He replied.

Subject: *two captions completed* (24 Sept. 2006) Relates to Leslie Witz

Subject: *Intro* (25 Sept. 2006)

Subject: *Do we need a concluding board* (25 Sept. 2006) To Leslie Witz

Subject: *Caption edits* (2 Oct. 2006) To Jenny Sandler

Subject: *Bushmen invite* (3 Oct. 2006) To Carmen Timm

