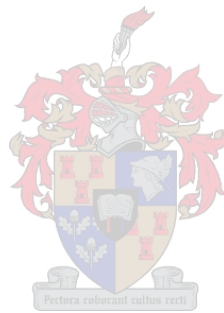


**RASTAFARI BUSHDOCTORS
AND THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSFORMING
NATURE CONSERVATION IN THE BOLAND AREA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Lennox Edward Olivier

March 2012

SUMMARY

In 2007 the National People and Parks Programme was rolled out as a platform for co-management between successful land claimants, indigenous natural resource user groups and conservation authorities. It aimed to promote social ‘transformation’ in conservation management by responding to the needs of all South Africans. This thesis engages with the efforts made by CapeNature Conservation Board and RasTafari bushdoctors in the Boland area to resolve a conflict around the illegal harvesting of indigenous medicinal flora from protected areas.

An investigation into the discursive and material practices of the RasTafari bushdoctors reveal what they present as a substantially different way of being-with-nature in comparison to the historically produced dominant conception of nature. This difference cannot be understood outside the complex relations from which they emerge and allows a better understanding of the social condition for the possibility of Bossiedokters’ voices to be heard today.

This thesis culminates with a critical analysis of recent dialogues between Bossiedokters and CapeNature around co-management platforms. These I argue reveal that the inequalities voiced by the healers are once again silenced by government practices ostensibly designed to uplift them. Conceptualising this conflict through the lens of ‘environmentality’ suggests its usefulness as well as its limitations in grasping contemporary South African dilemmas about transformation of nature. While RasTafari bushdoctors want to reclaim their social authority, the question remains how and whether they will be able to transform conservation practice before conservation practice transforms them.

OPSOMMING

Die Nasionale 'People and Parks' program was in 2007 aangekondig as die platform vir medebestuur tussen suksesvolle landeisers, inheemse natuurlike hulpbronnengebruikersgroepe en natuurbewaringsowerhede. Dit het ten doel gestel om sosiale "transformasie" in natuurbewaring te bewerkstellig deur gehoor te gee aan die behoeftes van alle Suid-Afrikaners. Hierdie tesis vertolk die pogings aangewend deur CapeNature Conservation Board en RasTafari Bossiedokters in die Boland ten einde die konflik te oorkom rondom die onwettige oes van inheemse medisinale flora van uitbeskermdede gebiede.

Die ontleding van die diskursiewe en materiële praktyke van die RasTafari Bossiedokters openbaar hoe hul vertolking van hul unieke wyse van omgang-met-natuur staan in kontras met die dominante histories-geproduseerde opvatting van die natuur. Hierdie verskil kan nie verstaan word buite die komplekse sosiale verhoudinge waaruit dit materialiseer nie, en kan bydra tot 'n beter begrip van die sosiale toestande benodig om te verseker dat die Bossiedokters se stemme meer helder gehoor kan word.

Hierdie tesis ontwikkel as 'n kritiese ontleding van onlangse dialoë tussen Bossiedokters en CapeNature soos gevoer rondom medebestuur platforms. Die dialoë openbaar dat aanklagtes van sosiale ongelykheid gemaak deur die Bossiedokters, bloot stilgemaak word deur die regering se strukture, ten spyte daarvan dat die strukture oënskynlik ontwerp was om hierdie ongelykhede aan te spreek. My konseptualisering van hierdie konflik as 'n voorbeeld van 'environmentality', toets die toepaslikheid sowel as die tekortkominge van hierdie konsep om sin te maak van kontemporêre Suid-Afrikaanse dilemmas aangaande die transformasie van die natuur. Die RasTafari Bossiedokters poog steeds om hul sosiale aansien te herwin, maar die vraag bly staan of hulle in staat sal wees en hoe hulle teweerk moet gaan ten einde natuurbewaring se praktyke te verander voordat natuurbewaringspraktyke hulle verander.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
A brief note of method: Participatory action research	6
Beyond environmentality?	10
Chapter One: The emergence of “conservation” in South African environmentalist discourse	12
Contemporary struggles	17
The ‘nature’ of apartheid	20
Conservation, race, and the Union	26
Uprooting the terms of nature protection	33
Chapter Two: An alternative to environmentalism, or an alternative environmentalism: RasTafari Bossiedokters and the re-claiming of nature	43
RasTafari Bossiedokters: Sakmanne and Kaalvoetmanne	45
Sacred Harvesting, Sacred Healing	48
<i>Cannabis</i> : practices and prosecution	55
Different mythologies of heritage	58
Tradition as enactment and exchange	65
Chapter Three: CapeNature, co-management and environmental justice	72
Apparatuses of environmentality	74
Interaction between CapeNature and Bossiedokters	81
The Community-based meetings	102
Towards a resolution	104
Conclusion	108
Bibliography	112
List of Interviews and Meetings	123
Appendix one: Minutes of Access Meeting 16 October 2009	124
Appendix two: Shortened List of complaints and Recommendations compiled by People and Parks Steering Committee chairperson 2008-2010	126
Appendix three: Colonisers Manual to deal with the local natives: Know how to handle them.	128
Appendix four: Objectives of Cape Bush Doctors Not-for-Profit Organization	130

Introduction

In 2010, a group of local RasTafaris Bossiedokters – or bushdoctors – in Stellenbosch applied for permission at CapeNature Conservation Board to host their annual seven-day Nyahbinghi rituals in Jonkershoek Mountain Reserve. The rituals involved keeping a single fire burning for seven days, while RasTafaris would engage in traditional drumming, singing of traditional ‘chants’, praying and fasting. Medicinal herbs would be collected from the surrounding mountain slopes and consumed as purification teas or burnt for ritualistic cleansing. Reserve managers responded that conservation rules clearly state that no fires are allowed inside the park, no one is allowed to stay overnight, and under no circumstances would it be allowed for anyone to pick any plants. Besides, Bossiedokters are not allowed to go to the nearby waterfalls for their ritualistic washing of dreadlocks, since the waterfalls are a popular tourist attraction and the managers take measure to avoid any ‘conflict of interest’. RasTafari Bossiedokters turned to the new infrastructures provided by CapeNature to contest this decision. This new infrastructure included community liaison committees and the National People and Parks Programme. Their list of complaints and concerns were documented and entered the bureaucratic structures, but with no positive responses received up to the time of writing.

This is not a new conflict. From the early 1990’s the marriage between environmental conservation and land restitution developed into what became known as the “people and parks discourse”: nature came to be employed as a key apparatus of economic development, creating conflict between the public good of land restoration with other public goods that are linked to the land in the present (Walker, 2010). The National People and Parks Programme rolled out in 2007, aimed at creating a platform of co-management between successful land claimants, indigenous natural resource user groups and

conservation authorities. Its core concern was to promote social ‘transformation’ in conservation management and respond to the needs of all South Africans, particularly the previously disadvantaged and marginalized Black communities in neighbouring reserves. This was an attempt to recognize not just that the voices of Black South Africans had been neglected, but that they had a stake in both access to the land and the understanding of the relationship between people and nature. However, the newly mandated co-management programmes have come under harsh criticism from Sangomas and Bossiedokters in the Western Cape. Known as ‘natural resource user groups’, traditional healers whose practices depend on medicinal plants often only obtainable from protected areas affirm the programme is nothing other than “lip service”, as no harvesting projects nor permit applications inside parks have yet been approved.

In my thesis, I look critically at how the conflict between Cape Nature and RasTafari Bossiedokters has emerged. Focusing on the harvesting of indigenous flora from protected areas, I look at how people and institutions involved speak of the conflict, how they conceptualise themselves and each other, and how they have considered the possible political and technical alternatives to resolve this conflict. My research is an effort to answer three main questions: first, what is the historical specificity of conservation discourse in South Africa and how has the unfolding of the discourse over two hundred years been connected to racial and cultural inequality? Second, who are the Bossiedokters and how do they situate themselves in relation to the conflict with conservation agencies? Third and lastly, how do Bossiedokters experience and understand co-management apparatuses and consider it an apparatus for a political solution? In answering these questions, the main approach I used was participatory action research (PAR). Action research is defined by Kurt Lewin (1946) as a method of generating data about a social system while simultaneously attempting to implement change within the system. PAR

supplemented a more generally ethnographic approach in my second chapter, and a close reading of historical literatures on the environment in the first.

Chapter one provides a critical engagement with the concept of ‘nature’, as used in environmental science and political discourse, by articulating the historical forces at play in contemporary competing definitions of ‘nature’. I analyse the emergence of conservation discourses in South Africa, starting with a summary of contemporary struggles in environmentalism, and how scientific conservation discourse changed over time, tracing back to Apartheid and the Union, to its emergence as something of political and economic value. If, says Goldman (2000: 575), “there is no one-to-one correspondence between nature and its representations”, I assume that the relationship between any knowledge and the social practices that constitute this knowledge, is also productive. The phenomenal appearance of nature as an object of knowledge is mediated by what Escobar calls the “traffic between nature and culture” (1996: 340). The material implications of the relationship between nature and culture to a more culturally-encompassing understanding of nature will help me to historically position and characterize this ‘traffic’ in relation to the character of advanced, or what Comaroff and Comaroff (2002) call millennial capitalism.

Chapter two explores how Bossiedokters make sense of themselves, their social roles in their communities and how their discursive and material practices articulate what they understand as a substantially different way of being-with-nature, an engagement with the environment that is in conflict with institutional conservation practices. This chapter focuses on the social conditions that would allow the voice of Bossiedokters, previously silenced by colonial history, to contest current forms of market and state *environmentality*. I draw on Ingold’s comparative ethnographic studies of indigenous peoples’ “dwelling perspective”, which situates them within a context of interactive engagement with surroundings to establish a relational-ecological-developmental synthesis (Ingold, 2000: 5).

I examine both how discursive and material practices articulate what Bossiedokters understand as a substantially different way of being-with-nature, and their account of the difference between the RasTafari and ‘Western’ or ‘modern’ ways of being. I begin by characterising Bossiedokters’ engagement with nature, based on my interviews and extensive observation.

Ingold (2000) approaches human engagement with their environment through a critique of the construction of ‘culture’ versus ‘biology’. Comaroff and Comaroff (2000) warn us that very divide is constructed largely within European practices of representation, and thus a product of Western knowledge. If notions of ‘tradition’ and ‘modern’ (Ingold) are produced and not immediate reality, so ‘ethnicity’ (Comaroff and Comaroff) is historically mediated and cannot be understood outside the complex relations from which they emerge. This raises a critical analytical challenge for this project, especially for my approach to the Bossiedokters in their relation with nature as ‘traditional’. As I hope to show in my following chapter, they appear at odds with mainstream environmentalism, while they seem simultaneously aware of, and engaging with, the market value of ‘tradition’. As Comaroff and Comaroff (2009:28) suggest,

[I]t is not just that culture is being cumulatively commodified. Or that vernacular ways and means (“tradition”) are made and remade, visibly, in the course of their transaction (cf. Handler and Linnekin, 1984). It is that commodity exchange and the stuff of difference are inflecting each other, with growing intensity: just as culture is being commodified, so the commodity is being rendered explicitly cultural - and, consequently, is increasingly apprehended as the generic source of sociality.

Finally, in chapter three, I critically engage recent dialogues between Bossiedokters and CapeNature as a result of their active participation in co-management and community programmes facilitated by the agency. My interviews suggest that what appeared as a

struggle between indigenous peoples rights at odds with environmental rights, takes shape of a more complex form of environmentality, one which silences the inequalities it aims to confront. What future do the Bossiedokters imagine for their own traditional practices in relation to the new institutional dispositions provided by the state? It is likely that Bossiedokters' generalization of Western culture ideologies and practices as "Babylon", I suggest, might not be strategically productive for the healers any longer – it might even make the transformations in society they are trying to promote more difficult. I argue that ritual and social practices of Bossiedokters and the scientific authorities of nature conservation can only be better understood not isolation but in relation to each other, and as influencing and being influenced by this very social exchange.

I conclude the thesis with an attempt to grasp the theoretical underpinnings of such exchange. I consider the political and economic interest in discourses of nature and nature conservation, and how they seem both to endorse and contradict the Foucauldian-inspired notion of environmentality. To ground this conclusion, I employ Cepek's (2011) argument that the conceptual framework of environmentality is insufficient to grasp the complexity of indigenous knowledge and practice, and arrive at similar conclusion in relation to Bossiedokters. I also argue that this particular form of co-management inevitably demands indigenous groups to 'strategically' compromise their ethnic difference to become, using the words of Comaroff and Comaroff (2009: 1), "more corporate, more commodified, more implicated than ever before in the economics of everyday life".

Bossiedokters remain critical of the burdensome and often unsustainable practices demanded by conservationists and CapeNature scientists. Bossiedokters also appear to be aware of the commodification of their own practices at the same time they attempt to transform their knowledge into something more legible to modern science. They are willing to sell their products, medicinal herbs and consultations to the 'Western' world, but strictly

according to their own customs, and in ways that do not threaten their value system and the moral integrity of their practices. Bossiedokters continue to see scientific intervention as something outside of their community logic and needs. They seem to hope, nonetheless, that science will still prove that healers have been right all along in their approach to nature. They are aiming at promoting shifts in political power through co-management and to implement their own cultural and political perspectives into the management of protected areas. Instead of seeing it as a ‘proper’ example of governmentality, I agree with Cepek (2011) in that indigenous people find in the incorporation of ‘Western’ technologies and market an appropriate way to pursue their own objectives.

A brief note of method: Participatory Action Research

As a sociologist, I chose to combine three distinct methods. The first is a critical reading of historical sources in framing the relevant literature, which I critically engage in chapter one. Chapters two and three rely on a combination of ethnography and what is known to sociologists as Participatory Action Research (PAR). In this section, I will discuss this method vis-à-vis my own research practice, and the challenges that ethnography and participatory action research raise in the context of highly unequal research domains, reflecting on the issue of ‘barefoot’ anthropology. Participatory Action Research demands that the people who experience the problem addressed by the research should collaborate in the research process (Prozesky 1998: 16), and demands all participants to become “co-researchers” (Chesler 1991: 760), with their knowledge receiving equal status as the contributions of the academic researcher. My role as researcher in this project extended to that of a go-between and catalyst throughout the research process. Towards the end of the first year of research I was asked by Bossiedokters to act as administrator for their organization, and I was often asked to represent the organization during meetings and

report back to them with an analysis of various situations, providing ideas, advice, suggestions and strategies how to engage with authorities more effectively. Towards the end, I was asked to compile my observations and comments during meetings with CapeNature, and a committee of healers used this data to construct the objectives, values and activities of their new organization.

My objective throughout the research process was to participate in the debate with critical and reflexive implementation of social theory and methodology, to design and implement harvesting projects for the healers that would include continuous assessments and reports to be conducted by participants. The knowledge generated within the projects assisted in the formalisation of the RasTafari Bossiedokters' medicinal knowledge, ensuring that it captures accurately their unique usage of indigenous Fynbos. According to Sarri and Sarri (1992) participatory action research seeks to redress inequity and redistribute power, therefore aims towards social transformation. Brown (1993) refers to this kind of research as outside the Anglo-American context, rather in grassroots research in developing countries that follow a transformational approach. Based on that, I aimed to assist CapeNature in the development and implementation of policy that would result change in practice to a more inclusive, socially just and sensitive way to approach the complexities of local healer communities, their diversity, and specific socio-economic needs.

My participation prioritised the recognition of – and, most importantly, the preservation of - their cultural knowledge, while emphasizing the needs of the people who produced this knowledge. According to Cornwall and Jewkes (1995: 1669) four modes of participation are distinguished in participatory action research; namely contractual, consultative, collaborative and collegiate participation. I made use of prolonged participant observation, formal and informal interviews, group dialogues, analysis of formal records,

and informants' own records. Prior to this project, I have participated in Stellenbosch and Paarl RasTafari community since 2003 and used my network of friends to identify the informants I consulted during my fieldwork. This project, initiated in February 2009, was by definition long-term and cyclical, and although my dissertation is now completed, I will continue to participate and even consider extending it into further doctoral study.

This project had the concerns of Bossiedokters in its heart and was intended to benefit their needs and initiate improvements from their perspective. I always felt far more accountable to the healers than to CapeNature, and I continue to express a strong concern for the obvious power inequalities that continues to exist between them, despite all the efforts made towards transformation. This reflects what Rahman states (1988: 128 in Prozesky 1998) about Participatory Action Research, as an attempt to return to the participants the “legitimacy of the knowledge they are capable of producing through their own collectives and verification systems..., and their right to use this knowledge – not excluding any other knowledge but not dictated by it – as guide in their own action”. The hope towards a possibility for grassroots groups with limited political power to potentially benefit from research, such as aimed for by the various co-management programmes in conservation practices resonates Michael Cepek's critique of the concept of 'environmentality'. The central question is whether such programmes dictate knowledge to participants as oppose to becoming a platform for knowledge exchange that could guide further actions to mutual benefit.

The distinction between Participatory Action Research and Participatory Research is the way in which PAR extends participation to full 'co-management', making the participants true “co-researchers” (Chesler, 1991: 760 cited in Prozesky, 1998: 16). In anthropology, according to Scheper-Hughes, “the idea of an active, politically committed, morally engaged anthropology strikes many anthropologists as unsavoury, tainted, even

frightening” (1995: 415). Reflecting on how many younger anthropologists have become alienated from their own fieldwork and research methods as a result of becoming oversensitised by the objective of anthropological non-engagement, she presents the argument that the decision to implement non-involvement was already an ethical and moral position with consequences. She suggests a shift is needed in anthropology where “observation” should become witnessing, turning the previously passive but “fearless spectator” into an active voice that is morally committed to take sides, thus turning anthropology into a critical tool where its writing “can be a site of resistance” (Scheper-Hughes, 1995: 419-421). She argues social scientists can identify with the needs of the powerless and assist them to resist the interest of bourgeois institutions, something which she calls “barefoot” anthropology. This ‘barefoot’ approach allows development of comradeship with participants that go beyond the usual roles and statuses of academic or scientific research.

In responding to Scheper-Hughes, Gillespie and Dubbeld (2007) warn that we should take caution when rendering anthropology in terms of utility and be wary of assuming power relations are transparent. They argue that unquestioned interventions in the past created larger problems, and stress the need for careful reflection and critique as central to anthropology - rather than ‘witnessing’ alone. Although this thesis comes close to the barefoot approach suggested by Scheper-Hughes, where I became involved in representing the plight of those I regard as suffering unequal poor relations, I have also attempted to present a critical voice in writing this thesis. The involvement that I discuss in the final parts of the thesis is an aspiration towards more a sustained intervention, but I am mindful that, should it fail, the reasons might lie with complex power relations that prove that no easy intervention is possible.

Beyond environmentality?

When reality does not coincide with deeply held beliefs, human beings tend to phrase interpretations that force reality within the scope of these beliefs. They advise formulas to repress the unthinkable and to bring it back within the realm of accepted discourse. (Trouillot 1995: 72)

According to Agrawal (2005), ‘environmentality’ – a term coined by Luke (1999) –, represents the idea that “environmentalist logics, projects, and movements are forms of governmentality in the Foucauldian sense” (Cepek 2011:501). In this logic, governmental power is implemented via the systematic internalisation and appropriation of knowledge by its facilitators as well as the target subjects, most often presented as honest attempts to improve the latter’s well-being. It therefore presents itself as rational justification for the apparatuses used by authorities to guide the subject’s actions through the development of individual capacities, values and even their desires. According to Cepek, Agrawal (2005: 226) applies this to the way in which people are guided by conservation agencies to adopt a certain orientation to the environment, thereby creating subjects that think and act towards their environment in a manner that forces them to conceptualise nature as an object “that requires regulation and protection”. Agrawal calls such individuals to have been ‘environmentalized’ by projects and programmes, producing people who direct their action “toward care for the environment” (Cepek, 2011: 504).

The question which emerges in my thesis is whether environmentality implemented through CapeNature technical apparatuses and within dialogues with traditional healers inescapably result in state subjectification and commodification, despite historical, cultural and political differences of Bossiedokters. While re-inscribing their different being-with-nature in market terms, Bossiedokters find in their own commodification the only way in which, as ‘nature’, Bossiedokters themselves can be “conserved”. In other words, these dialogues represent a process of transformation in the ways conservation agencies view and

accommodate indigenous people participation, while indigenous people, in the process of being “environmentalized”, engage in the construction of novel ways to use techno-managerial apparatuses to pursue their own political aims.

Chapter One

The emergence of “conservation” in South African environmentalist discourse

The self-evidence of the world is reduplicated by the instituted discourses about the world in which the whole group’s adherence to that self-evidence is affirmed. The specific potency of the explicit statement that brings subjective experiences into the reassuring unanimity of a socially approved and collectively attested sense imposes itself with the *authority* and *necessity* of a collective position adopted on data intrinsically amenable to many other structurations. “Nature” as science understands it – a cultural fact which is the historical product of a long labour of ‘disenchantment’ (*Entzauberung*) – is never encountered in such a universe. (Bourdieu 1977: 167)

Our understanding of nature and the language we use to conceptualise our experience thereof, is mediated by historically and socially located discourses and competing definitions of “nature” itself. This mediation seems to take place in South Africa within institutional struggles for authoritative definitions of nature, among and between distinct discursive communities. Contemporary ‘environmentalism’ – as a heterogeneous field and social practice – relies largely on environmental studies for a scientific validation of nature which appears in it as self-evident and ideologically neutral (Yearley 1994, Beck 1992, Buttel and Taylor 1994). But if, as Wynne (1994) suggests, scientific knowledge production reflects and reproduce normative models of social relations while presenting those relations as socially neutral, I take issue in this chapter with the concept of ‘nature’ as it is presented in environmental science and reproduced to justify political strategies of nature conservation. My aim here is to articulate the historical forces at play in competing definitions of ‘nature’ in a field to which such definition is not just part of, but the very

raison d'être. In the following pages, I hope to give voice to and critically engage that which Wynne called the “unspoken and moral commitments” of scientific knowledge (1994: 188), including the marginalized, neglected voices these commitments help to suppress. I will do so by tracing the emergence of conservation discourse back through Apartheid and the Union, and even further back to its emergence in South Africa as part of the colonial epoch.

It appears that discourse of environmentalism in South Africa is an effort to ‘naturalize’ the character of social relations from which scientific facts emerge. More conspicuously, it appears that this concealment of social relations tends to hide the fact that institutions which articulate environmental concerns are the ones which have been historically implicated in the past in the political oppression and systematic silencing of indigenous black people of South Africa (Dubow 1995, Rich 1990, Thompson 1985, Nelson 2003). A post-Apartheid legal vocabulary of restitution, compensation and rehabilitation of natural resources emerges as a subsidy to the technomanagerialist remedy (Goldman, 2000: 575) of wounds left by racial capitalism and colonialism. In spite of this well-intentioned effort, I hope to show in the entire thesis and in chapter three in particular, how legal apparatuses are still not able to address, let alone demobilize, the predominance of institutional and scientific discourses over indigenous voices in dialogues of environmentalism and nature conservation. This legacy, with its historical kinship with apartheid and colonial interventions, finds in the scientific platform not only a niche for articulating a political strategy of action, but also the epistemological bondage of “nature” itself, in the ways it prescribes a model of relationship with the environment, and ascribes a cultural position to nature which can be socially (if not ontologically) different in indigenous cultures. In the same way that science defines the epistemological boundaries of nature – boundaries which are a result of power struggles, social contestation, and

ideological commitments, but nonetheless appear as empirical, objective, neutral and therefore “real” – South Africa’s democratic institutions have geographically inscribed their political power as gates of new protected areas.

Such gates are not new. Natural scientists since the 1970’s have attempted to produce scientific facts which compose the field of environmentalism, as a mode of representation of environment that could put an end to the degradation of natural resources. As the power of “nature” to mobilize political and financial resources started to grow, the idea of social and economic development began to include concerns about the conditions of nature’s preservation and the preservation of nature’s cultural and economic value. This pairing of nature and development had as unintended consequence, as Meskell (2009: 76-77) suggests, the rendition of the “park neighbour” as “an ignorant other lacking in environmental values”. This permeation of scientific discourse in development has therefore turned contemporary conservation practices into an example of homogenizing ideological practice. Hegemony relies on ideologically charged apparatuses to an extent that, using Comaroff and Comaroff’s (1992: 28-29) words, “the ‘agentive’ mode...become[s] invisible”. In other words, hegemony is effective once its ideological postulates are ‘naturalized’ and cease to appear ideological at all. The political oppression of indigenous Black cultures, religion and practice, which now relies on this ideological objectified notion of nature, appears as a remnant in the political agenda of environmentalism, in which indigenous black communities appear as the “park neighbour”, while complicit connections with previous racial regimes are made invisible.

Therefore, as Goldman (2000: 575) states, “there is no one-to-one correspondence between nature and its representations”, that is, this correspondence is never immediate. The relationship between any knowledge and the social practices that constitute this knowledge, the “continuity between cognizant self and the world”, is a signifying,

productive one. My repetition of the claim that nature is socially constructed is not employed here to oppose the scientific to indigenous people's relation to nature with a characteristic pastoralizing naiveté, but the opposite: to show how indigenous knowledge is also a result of historical dialogues with dominant discourses, and the contested object of "tradition". I don't mean to suggest that there is no 'real' nature out there, but that this 'outthereness' of nature, the phenomenal appearance of nature as an object of knowledge is mediated by the dialectical movement between the material representation of nature and the representation of its materiality – the "traffic between nature and culture" (Escobar, 1996: 340).

But can one attempt to theorize this "traffic" and its implication to a more critical understanding of nature? And more poignantly, how can one attempt to historically position and characterize this traffic in relation to the character of advanced or millennial capitalism (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001)? If the argument I am trying to put forward relies on the dialectic of nature and culture, it is necessary to tease out here some of the epistemological implications of understanding it within a Marxian framework, according to which all kinds of human practice appear under the spell of commodity logic and its fetishistic power – a logic which, as Dubbeld suggests, converts the vital and organic matter into something "calculable, hollow, and ultimately lifeless" (2011: 83). How can we account for a substantial distinction in the relationship of indigenous people with nature, against the spectre of commodity form and in its universal exchangeability to capital, which seems to underplay, if not erase, cultural differences? How to account for the historical continuities of cultures which emerged before the arrival of capitalist mode of production without stepping in the tantalizing terrain of *bon savage* nostalgia and the romanticization of "indigenous" as a national memorabilia?

Jacklyn Cock, a prominent South African sociologist, has contributed significantly towards shaping a progressive environmental movement in South Africa. Since the 1990's, the progressive movement contributed to the eradication of 'environmental racism' (Walker, 2010: 280) addressing land dispossession - which was the hallmark of apartheid land policies. New meanings were attributed to social equity in relation with democracy and an incipient neoliberal political agenda of 'sustainable development' and 'environmental justice', and began to address land claims in protected areas. Cock (2010) shows how neoliberal capitalism has appropriated the sustainability discourse, and its capacity to add market value to nature. It has become a market tool employed strategically by corporations, even the ones which contribute most to the neglect of sustainable agenda. I argue that the incorporation of sustainability in business vocabulary has contributed, among other things, to *fetishize* nature, to the de-politicization of sustainability discourse and to acceptable lack of historical specificity in the language of conservation strategies. Nature, mediated by corporate sustainability, has been systematically divorced from the commitment with social justice and political struggles within which it appears in the first place, as if "a cause without conflict" (Acselrad 2002: 18).

This fetishisation of nature depends, thus, on the active silencing of nature as a site of struggle. Ultimately, it is a silence of the voice of the other and the voice of political contestation. My informants have described their experience in this struggle for restitution as overcoming what Nelson calls "environmental colonialism" (2003: 65), or what Bonner refers to as (1993: 286) "eco-colonialism": their relationship with nature become a struggle against the epistemic domination of nature by conservation managerialism, and its complicity with economic and, most importantly, ideological domination of indigenous people of South Africa. Trouillot (1995:48) speaks about the historical silencing as a "silencer silences a gun", an active, transitive process as a dialectical counterpart of

mentioning, in which history appears as synthesis. In the following subsections I will address this silence in relation to, respectively, the contemporary struggles of indigenous peoples, against apartheid epistemologies of nature and its segregating implications, and finally the uses of nature in colonial scientific discourses.

Contemporary struggles

From the early 1990's the marriage between environmental conservation and land restitution developed into what became known as the "people and parks" discourse. Conservation and restitution have different *temporalities*; if the ANC government political agenda of redistribution of land was aimed at addressing past land inequalities, it also followed the new Constitution (section 24 (b)) disposition of environment 'protection' "for present and future generations". When land begins to be employed as a key apparatus of economic development, it immediately attempts against the very constitutional values of "protection" (Walker 2008b: 17). This conflict between the public good of land restoration with other public goods that are linked to the land in the present (Walker, 2010: 277), seem to add another layer to the ideological struggle over nature. The commission on Restitution of Land Rights concluded in 2009 that land claims in protected areas would be settled by restoring "ownership in title... to claimants while the land continues to be used for conservation purposes" (GCIS 2009b, in Walker 2010: 277). While successful land claimants would receive ownership in title, marginalized communities neighbouring protected areas were invited to conjoin existing conservation practices through access, benefit sharing and co-management programmes. All protected areas remained exclusively used for conservation purposes.

The “people and parks” discourse has become dominant in many interventions by the ANC to achieve and implement the fourth and fifth of its new official Strategic Objectives (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2001), namely to:

- “Contribute to sustainable development, livelihood, green and inclusive economic growth through facilitating skills development and employment creation; and
- Contribute to a better Africa and a better world by advancing national environmental interests through a global sustainable development agenda.”

These objectives are in agreement with broader international environmentalist agendas, focusing on the increasing of conservation awareness, cooperation and capital investment towards the promotion of environmental sustainability. The use of ‘sustainability’ as an environmental as well as developmental jargon seems to privilege its economic benefits over socio-political ones. Accordingly, “People and Parks” Programme, to be implemented nationally, aims to create a platform of co-management between successful land claimants, indigenous natural resource user groups (NRUGs) and conservation authorities. It suggests that by initiating community representative steering committees and by facilitating regular meetings, it can assist conservation agencies in identifying and addressing community needs. This should make it possible to articulate in the level of government community projects and local economic development initiatives, within and surrounding protected areas. The programme reflects government efforts towards implementing a ‘transformation’ in conservation management. As an aim of the Department of Environmental Affairs, the programme is part of the department’s attempts “[t]o become a truly people-centred organisation that responds to the needs of all South Africans” (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2011).

However people-centred its purposes, the assessment of viability of any community-based project prior to implementation remains in the hands of the scientific

committees of conservation agencies. They continue to be the authoritative gatekeepers of any community project implementation, ensuring that projects do not threaten the sustainability of existing biodiversity. The result is that no harvesting projects or permit applications inside parks have yet been approved in the Western Cape. In addition, very limited access for traditional spiritual practices has been granted, due to very strict policies regarding the making of ritual fires inside these gates. The 'People and Parks' programme has been criticized by *sangomas* (African spiritual healers) and RasTafari Bossiedokters (or herbalists), who suggest that the programme is not as inclusive as it claims to be. In a climate of distrust of the conservation authorities, several traditional healers have withdrawn from discussions, which suggest that the problem is of interpretation rather than of policy itself (see chapter three).

The presupposition of scientific reasoning over other forms of knowledge underlines the terms of protocols applied to community access and harvesting applications, enlists the requirements for permits and licenses, and decides on the language of evaluation processes testing compliance, whether applicants meet the scientific requirements or not. But the more neutral scientific agreements try to present themselves, the more they silence their economic and political variables. Large parts of the mountain slopes in Stellenbosch, for example, remain covered with invasive alien pine forestation under the management of Mountain to Ocean (MTO), and under allocated 'conservation' status. This is despite the fact that pine has been declared an invasive alien threatening indigenous biodiversity, plus it having a negative impact on agricultural water levels in rivers and dams. Very little has been done to end this environmentally 'unfriendly' economic venture in the Western Cape, since MTO is renting the land for significant amounts from the state. However, the logic of exclusive protection of certain demarcated areas/parks, according to Adams (2003:116 in Walker, 2010: 275), implies that conservation needs have been met. This implication

allows development of private land for agricultural purposes at cost of indigenous biodiversity to continue and to be largely overlooked, since the risk of exhausting natural resources and permanent loss of biodiversity and unique local species are assumedly sufficiently contained inside these parks. This “fortress approach” in conservation transformed parks into ‘islands under siege’ (Carruthers, 1997: 126): nature is assumed to exist only inside these islands separated from modern society. Protected areas/reserves become generally a site of unproblematic scientific experimentation, with little public accountability, turning agricultural and indigenous natural resources into cultural collectables with surplus recreational and touristic value.

The ‘nature’ of apartheid

Meskell (2009: 74) notes, “South Africa has been highly regarded internationally for their species conservation success during the last century”. The contemporary success in species conservation probably resulted from apartheid state’s preoccupation with protection of soil, waters, forests and wildlife. State interventions disregarded Black South Africans in their conservation agenda, and segregation policies supported land expropriation and allocation of land for conservation purposes (Zamponi, 2008: 5). Access to what was considered ‘sacred areas’ of indigenous people were denied access and restrictions were raised on many other cultural practices, even threatening livelihoods. It was assumed that Black South Africans did not know how to manage nature; were considered ecologically irresponsible and one of the national threats to nature. Even so, the close ties between Black Africans and nature were always emphasized. Africans were commonly referred in apartheid documentation under the Afrikaans term *naturelle* (Bosman, 2007: 3) – as in ‘Naturelle-grondwet’, ‘Naturelle-sake’, ‘naturelle-reservate’. The meaning of the term relates to a reified appearance of ‘nature’, which turns people, as landscapes, into ownable

and manageable objects by state officials. As Fanon (1971) argues, this metaphorical mechanism which attributes animal characteristics to African people, is a powerful (neo)colonial strategy. The logic of the ‘fortress conservation’ approach relied on the culture binary of human and nature, in which an implicit evolutionary narrative of civilization determines the historical encounter of the savage with the civilized. ‘Unspoilt’ nature, once analogous to backward *naturelle*, is presented in apartheid as a trope for justifying segregation policies and alienating traditional healers and their harvest from protected areas.

Creig, considered a groundbreaking natural scientist from the Cape Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation in Stellenbosch, introduced the idea of genetic conservation and the negative effects of translocation of species. In 1979 he wrote (58-59) how “human society expects its trained ecologists to act as environmental watchdogs, it is surely our plain duty to speak out”. He was the first to suggest ‘genetic conservation’ as the new focus and redefined conservation practice as “the full recognition that the long-term conservation of life depends upon the maintenance of the rich store of genetic variation bequeathed to us by aeons of evolution” (Creig, 1979: 58). In 1951, the so-called Bantu Authorities Act declared the lands reserved for Black Africans as independent nations, and by 1971, they had become residents of the new “homelands”. Government-declared conservation areas, or nature reserves, which became prohibited to non-whites unless employed by conservation authorities. At this stage, wildlife conservation’s agenda resulted in a national parks system with an approach that caused evictions of many African communities from their traditional land (Brockington, 2002, Wolmer, 2007).

In 1980, one year after Creig’s publication, the World Conservation Strategy emerged. The strategy proposed the central objectives of conservation as “maintaining essential ecological processes; preserving genetic diversity; and sustainably utilising

species and ecosystems” (Meskell, 2009: 75-76). It suggested the integration of conservation and development, understanding environmental crisis as a result of the lack of proper training and low education of conservation personnel, as well as public ignorance regarding ecological knowledge. In Zimbabwe, the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (Campfire) emerged during the 1980’s as one of the first Community Based Natural Resource Management programmes, an innovative approach that attempted to merge conservation and rural development through the idea of environmental sustainability (Hutton, Adams and Murombedzi, 2005: 345). However, in South Africa the World Conservation Strategy appeared to reinforce existing assumptions that indigenous agricultural and traditional practices represented a threat to nature and scientific farming. The Executive Director of the National Parks Board from 1953 to 1979, Knobel, referred to parks as ‘a few remaining islands of unspoilt grandeur’ (Carruthers, 2003: 30 in Meskell, 2009: 74). One of my informants, who refers to themselves as an academic “watchdog” at CapeNature Conservation Board, also suggested during a telephonic interview that the parks were the only comparative sample of ‘unspoilt’ nature left for scientific research and educational purposes, and should be protected from people interfering and disrupting its fragile balance. The difficulty here is how to define the terms in which “desired” and “undesired” people come to be defined.

The institutions in control of environmental protection and improvement were part of a wide and rigid state control system. Environmental discourses often served as legitimisation, apologies or justification for forced removals of Black people from their traditional land. Indeed, interventions were often based on a discourse of necessity toward environmental protection goals, combined with the protection of valuable agricultural soil from ecological degradation. Interventions were composed of technocratic tools, rules, and mechanisms that were to be maintained within future processes of land reform and rural

development even in the post-independence period (Zamponi, 2008: 5). The Apartheid conservation authorities caught up very late to the World Conservation Strategy's objectives. There was one positive response in 1982 when a group of environmentalists and teachers established the Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa. This association rose alongside a "brand of conservation education called social ecology", which focused on privileged school park visitors (Meskell, 2009: 75). The World Conservation Strategy reshaped the constitution of environmental education; particularly in terms of how research topics became framed and by casting research subjects as objects of nature. The strategy also influenced various other emerging disciplines such as environmental economics, environmental management, environmental law, and so on. The scientific community uncritically adopted many of the psychosocial tools and methods provided by the World Conservation Strategy, since it fit snugly into existing Afrikaner nation-building agendas, education structures and development ideals. As a result, it encouraged conservationists to increase the reinforcement of park fences, patrolling of fences, and to intensify penalties for trespassing and resource harvesting (Carruthers, 1995). Meanwhile, indigenous values of Africans systematically eroded and became replaced with an ever-increasing hostility and resistance towards conservation institutions, considered an intermediary of the oppressive Apartheid state.

Beinart (2003: 325) mentions documented awareness of indigenous species protection from the 1950's onward, accompanied by what was then a novel idea of maintaining the "balance of nature". It was accompanied by a rise of aesthetic priorities in South African environmental literature. Rubidge published papers displaying complex views of ecological control and intervention suggestions. He suggested, for example, locust poisoning would simply upset the laws of nature and will not eradicate the insects. His theories contradicted older scientific theories that had for decades been implemented by the state, such as

funding poisons for insects and vermin, and subsidizing the shooting of jackal and large predators to reduce loss of livestock. Another example is the ever-increasing focus on the problem of erosion and overstocking. Scientists believed that the traditional system of nightly kraaling was to blame for the above-mentioned problems. The state spent huge amounts to subsidize the fencing of farms and reserves, encouraging the camping of livestock in its stead. Only by 1991, the practice of camping and fencing, confining livestock to small areas, was suggested as an ecologically inappropriate intervention, and the removal of barriers to stock migration was once more suggested to be the way forward (Beinart, 2003: 373). Beinart mentions how

[f]or a century, experts on South Africa's natural pastures argued for a controlled system of grazing, with fencing, rotation of camps or paddocks, and especially the abolition of kraaling. Nightly kraaling (bringing animals back to a central byre), they stridently believed, spread disease, starved the pastures of renewing dung, and led to the trampling out of vegetation through daily movements of millions of animals. These practices no longer seem to be priorities in range ecology. Unfenced communal pastures are seen to be more productive than those which are fenced and rotated. (Beinart, 2000: 295)

The 'conservation' discourse of the past led to the protection of certain animals, and was mostly linked to agricultural values. In terms of hunting activities, it often entailed the encouragement to hunt certain animals to protect particularly sheep, goats and cattle. For example, the hunting of indigenous wild predators such as lions, leopards, eagles and jackal mostly responsible for killing livestock, was encouraged by the state for most of the twentieth century. In the early 1900's, the government paid a monetary reward per predator killed. Scientific conservationists provided detailed strategies to the state, including "predator control, fencing, rotational grazing, regulatory legislation, and reduced numbers"

to “bring more stability to livestock farming”; and even though many of the methods clearly contributed to the opposite effect, it is still believed that in the longer term it did succeed to some effect (Beinart, 2003: 234).

One more example of such rapid turnaround in scientific ‘facts’ is the more recent awareness of ‘natural’ clusters of co-habitant species, named ecoregions and biomes. It entails the recognition that each geographic area contains sensitive biodiversity infrastructures that exist in harmony, in balance with a subtle inter-dependence with one another. If this balance is disturbed, it can result in permanent loss of certain species. Since, it has become an invaluable consideration in conservation management. However, prior to and for most of the twentieth century, environmentalists were ignorant of this threat. For example, the state invested much on a national level to protect the mountainous areas from deforestation, believing that it would help to increase rainfall during droughts. So their efforts were combined with extensive support to farmers to plant any kind of vegetation on the mountain slopes, particularly fast growing shrubs and trees such as wattles, pines and eucalyptus. Ironically, the list of trees planted under recommendation of state conservationists, are the exact list of ‘invasive aliens’ that have since become considered the biggest threat to biodiversity. It is the same species prioritised by contemporary conservationists groups, such as Working for Water, who are actively felling trees in their ongoing battle to conserve water. Today, natural scientists are convinced that the alien trees are decreasing the water levels of major rivers and dams. The millions spent on removal of invasive alien species from protected areas, and the budget allocated to scientific research to minimizing further impact and prevent of alien invasions, make it hard to believe that biodiversity loss was never anticipated.

Even before apartheid took place, the Union government was already invested in practical solutions to protect fertile agricultural soil and to increase productivity. At this

stage, the ideal of economic development through agricultural production was pursued heavily, due to a rising concern about decreases in raw material yields from the mining industry, accompanied by ever-increasing demands. The state initiated 'betterment' planning in 1939 to improve agricultural land and presented it as conservation of the land. This approach evolved in the betterment programmes originated in the regulation of white farmers, designed not to restrain agricultural production, but to increase viability and efficiency (Beinart 2003: xvii). The ideology of conservation, according to Zamponi, is an instrument of "divisive politics", whereby the state implemented its own "villagization of African settlements, fencing of communal pastures and the separation of arable land from residential and grazing" (2008: 10,12). One of the broader aims of the betterment plan was the transferring of Africans to the Bantustans/homelands, which formed part and parcel of Apartheid segregationist politics (Delius & Schirmer, 2000). In the following subsection, I will articulate some of the intricate relationship that exists between an incipient scientific race theory in the nineteenth century and the practices of nature conservation in the Union.

Conservation, race, and the Union

By 1906, F.E. Kanthack, Director of Irrigation at the Cape, again picked up the theory that forest reserves should be rapidly increased to promote large-scale afforestation, irrigation and fire control. "He was convinced that wooded hillsides, especially those at the right angles to prevailing sea winds, induced precipitation by cooling the winds" (Beinart, 2003:180-181). Kanthack escalated the fencing of the reserves, starting with the areas that bordered African settlements, thus preventing Africans from entering. This reflects the general conviction amongst authorities and particularly white farmers that Africans were partially to be blamed for the drought, since they started fires, chopped trees and did not fence their land. Education was reserved particularly for poor whites and Boers, who were believed to have the genetic biological ability to progress, unlike the Blacks. Kanthack was

the first conservationist that actively argued the ‘nature protection’ discourse as an official approach in the Union, suggesting that the state needed to increase reserves and to limit human access (that is, Black access) more strictly. Charles Legat, Lister’s successor, continued the tradition of preventing Africans from entering forest reserves with their livestock for grazing (Beinart 2003: 181). The state officials were all using the ‘objective’ language of colonial science (Zamponi, 2008: 5), often interweaved with Christian religious ideas presented as the ‘virtuous face of colonialism’ (Beinart, 1989: 159). According to Meek (1968), conservation as ideology under colonial rule legitimised and reflected ‘paternalistic authoritarianism’ (Berman, 1990) and control, which the white state exercised over nature reserves (Zamponi, 2008: 5). The same paternalistic authoritarianism is the very characterization that is being challenged in conservation agencies today, a century later and 17 years after the end of Apartheid.

Heinrich Sebastian du Toit, from the Department of Agriculture, was probably the most influential figure in the conservationist movement of South Africa between 1906 and 1933 (Beinart, 2003: 237-264). In 1905 he visited the United States where he was received as a ‘Boer war hero’. In New York he was received by the American Scouts after which it was reported that “thousands and ten thousands of other people came to see a Boer” (Beinart 2003: 239). He even signed a declaration of intent to become a United States citizen. After being introduced to ‘dry-farming’ methods he returned to South Africa though, believing it would revolutionise South African agriculture. He continued to maintain close relationship with the United States throughout his career as a political figure and agriculturalist. He had strong influence in the construction of Afrikaner environmentalist aims and ideals, and was convinced that white Afrikaner development was only achievable if the Boers adopted American scientific farming methods and technologies. He thus continuously rallied to turn farming into a scientific profession,

which he considered to be “no longer merely an occupation for peasants...only the properly trained, deep thinkers and the active could reasonably hope for success” (Beinart, 2003: 252). Du Toit stressed the need for all farmers to see nature as a systematic experiment, to see themselves as part of the international scientific community working together to overcome drought. He supported ‘proven’ scientific methods for systematic vermin and predator control, soil conservation, afforestation, water conservation and management, disease control and more generally, the prevention of any waste of natural resources. Du Toit wanted to reach out to the neglected Afrikaner rural population and blamed them for ‘going down’ due to their weak mindedness. According to Beinart (2003: 257), “There is an element here of eugenicist discourse as well as assumptions about the links between science, knowledge and national progress” that also formed the basis of Apartheid separatist development discourse.

Du Toit made loans available to Boers for fencing, jackal control, locust eradication, prickly pear control, irrigation development and he negotiated borehole subsidies (Beinart, 2003: 261-265), in line with Afrikaner Nationalist priorities. One of his biggest efforts was to eradicate transhumance and he went to lengths to develop alternatives. However, Beinart reminds us, we cannot link conservationism directly to white South Africa or Afrikaner nationalism or completely subsume scientific ideas with these ideologies. Conservationism at this stage was linked to an understanding of ‘progress’ and agricultural capitalism, and many indigenous African modernizers also applied these methods. Scientific discourse and methods emanated from colonial scientists though, and claimed the ability to control and resolve environmental difficulties, thus surpassing the supposed ignorance of traditional practices and epistemologies. The ability for logical, rational and systematic thinking became assumed to be biologically determined through genetic development, following the logic of scientific racism that provided race-based

‘natural’ hierarchies of human evolution. Scientists and politicians shamelessly deployed their anxieties about miscegenation and concern with the ‘degeneration’ of poor whites that displayed laziness and backwardness, suggested to be the nature of Blacks (Dubow, 1995: 9). Apartheid would provide a practical scientific-based solution to miscegenation, preventing poor whites to regress to a lower level by preserving genetic difference. Eugenics was “explicitly designed as a scientific solution to the perceived needs of society, namely the need to promote racial ‘vigour’ and prevent ‘deterioration’ (Dubow, 1995: 10), something that can be used here as analogous to the conservationist framework of nature.

The period leading up to the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, entailed significant efforts from various ‘experts’ to resolve the looming “native question” (Dubow, 1995: 12). The South African Native Affairs Commission of 1903-1905 played an important role in the conceptualisation of the policy of racial segregation. It was informed by the South African Association for the Advancement of Science (SAAAS), also founded in 1903. In 1905, the British Association held its annual meeting in South Africa, and gave “tremendous fillip to the status of its colonial offshoot” (Dubow, 1995: 12). When the British Association returned in 1929 to meet once again in South Africa, the local scientific community grew into a self-assured organisation with a strong sense of national pride. The Afrikaner and the British finally shared a common goal, to maximize scientific education of whites and particularly the farmer communities. At the 1929 meeting, Jan Hofmeyr celebrated the scientific achievements of the past years, and in his opening address he referred to the “South Africanisation” of science, proudly suggesting that South Africa has a unique contribution to offer the world (Dubow, 1995: 13). According to him, South Africa’s highest intellectual achievement was the discovery of *Australopithecus* in 1924, referred to as the ‘missing link’ between primates and humans.

At the National Convention of 1908, thirty-three representatives from all four colonies agreed on a draft Constitution that suggested the formation of the 'Union'. British Imperialists vigorously promoted such a union, since it followed the recent examples of Australia and Canada. On 31 May 1910 The Union of South Africa was finally conceived. White people were previously divided into two main camps, the British Imperialists and the Afrikaner Boers, now officially united as a united white dominion, in which Parliament would be supreme. According to Hardie (FW de Klerk Foundation, 2010) the aim of the Act was "to unify the white races, to disenfranchise the coloured races and not to promote union between the races of South Africa... everything in the new dispensation was geared to accommodating, and reconciling, the interests of the white groups - including recognition of the equal status of Dutch and English and protection of white economic interests". The emerging scientific racist theories were developed by German doctors such as Schultze, Dansauer, Jungels, Mayer and Zollner, as well as the infamous geneticist Eugen Fischer, who co-authored 'The Principles of Human Heredity and Race Hygiene' with Erwin Baur and Fritz Lenz. His recommendations resulted in the prohibition of interracial marriage throughout the German colonies by 1912, since he 'proved' in his analysis of Herero and Nama Khoisan body parts and skulls that the latter were 'in fact' not human. He sourced his samples from the death camps of the Herero/Nama genocides in South Africa's neighbouring German colony, South-West Africa/Namibia.

For a white public seeking to rationalize its social supremacy, it was not always necessary to have direct access to or understanding of the details of scientific debate; a broad awareness of the existence of a body of knowledge justifying racism was sufficient. Thus, claims by farmers to 'know the native mind' did not depend on intimate familiarity with psychological and anthropological projects designed for that purpose. Nor was it necessary to be conversant with the literature on mental testing in order to pronounce on the innate superiority of whites' intelligence. Popular prejudice may not have

relied on theoretical expositions, but it was certainly sustained by knowledge of their availability (Dubow, 1995: 9).

White supremacy based on genetics was considered internationally accepted scientific facts, and everything associated with African indigenous culture, religion and practice was assumed factually inferior to western European culture, religion and practice. By 1910, traditional beliefs and ritualistic practices associated with traditional healers, mostly referred to as witchdoctors, were already demonised by the various institutionalised Christian religions. Cannabis, locally called 'dagga', was known to be one of the most revered plants of traditional healers and rainmakers being a central ingredient of many traditional rituals. Traditional beliefs and witchdoctor practices formed part of the 'native question' to be resolved, along with crime, conservation, health and other concerns. In 1911, only one year after the formation of the Union, cannabis was officially outlawed in South Africa. South Africa was one of the very first countries in the world to outlaw this plant, soon followed by the United States of America. The rationales provided were primarily religious and politically motivated, but strongly supported by scientific racism. It was considered poisonous, harmful, psychoactive or an addictive drug, and according to eugenic discourse it was particularly attractive to and dangerous for the weak minds of the inferior races, who could not control their strong animalistic aggressive nature once intoxicated (Watt, 1961). Christian religious discourse suggested that the drug induced 'demonic' spirit possession that can cause loss of self-control resulting in crime, violence and disillusion. Cannabis was considered part of 'black magic' and ancestral visions and dreams, which were considered a primitive misunderstanding of the illusions caused by either demons or due to toxic side effects. In practice, the ban on cannabis instantly gave the state institutional power to arrest any traditional practitioner in

possession of their most sacred plant, criminalizing all ritualistic or medicinal use thereof. 'Dagga' became synonymous to 'kaffir', devil worshipping, backwards, irrational, enchanted, and everything else associated with inferior black and sacrilegious practice and logic. The social impact of this legislation on the power and authority of the African traditionalist was incommensurable.

In a similar manner the 'nature protection' discourse in South Africa developed alongside legal and political discourse loaded with racism and colonial prejudice. It became reinforced by assumptions of international scientific discourse supremacy with intellectual linkages to America, Germany, Canada, Australia and England. Scientists continued to overlook their own mistakes and failures of the past in predicting and sometimes even causing natural disasters. The fact that their often-incomplete theories and experiments sometimes caused huge environmental problems, not to mention social conflict, was considered as the inevitable costs of progress. Scientists and environmentalists remained focused on what they all could agree upon, namely capital growth, progress and separate development and advancement of the white population. Behind almost every nature conservation policy or law, there lingered an opportunity for white farmers and state authorities to disempower the local black populations. It allowed whites to access more land through legal coercion and to increase the authority of the state to suppress traditionalist practices of indigenous populations. Despite all the differences in opinion, coalitions emerged among those concerned about the negative effects of human intervention on nature and others who were primarily interested in control, profit, scientific progress, and possibilities for recreation (Arnscheidt, 2003: 103).

Uprooting the terms of nature protection

Dutch and the British colonial states officially introduced natural science to South Africa three centuries prior to the formation of the Union. All their policies and rules were then based on knowledge produced in Europe. Although there was interaction and reciprocal knowledge exchange and even co-production of knowledge between the periphery and the motherlands, European capitalism unquestioningly remained the ideological and economic source of scientific practices in all the colonies. Dutch settlers were the first permanent colonial agents in South Africa and thereby also the first European influence on indigenous populations of the Cape. The Dutch maintained power in the Cape from their arrival in 1652 until the end of the 18th century when the British Crown took control. Travelling by ship in those days were long, hazardous, uncomfortable and extremely unhygienic ventures. The major initial European interest in the Cape was to establish a crucial supply post for European trading ships venturing back and forth around Africa to the East. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) dominated this route at the time, having its major colonial interest in Indonesia as a source of spices, hard timber and various other natural resources marketable in Europe. The Dutch enslaved entire populations in Indonesia to produce their crops and to harvest resources, maximizing profits by minimizing expenditure on labour and land, and slaves soon became one of the biggest and most profitable commodities from Indonesia. When attempts at 'peaceful negotiations' in the Cape between the Dutch and local Khoi-Khoi and San tribes failed, slavery was implemented.

The Dutch imported slaves from Indonesia and turned the Cape systematically into a slave-society, slowly expanding its influence inland. Due to the large demand for fresh water and food supplies for the VOC ships, the Cape soon became an ineluctable centre and permanent rendezvous point for adventurous seafaring Europeans who shared the

untamed oceans, seeking profits through industrious, capitalist colonization endeavours. Indigenous peoples were considered either as a resource of labour, or an obstacle to be removed or conquered and managed. Arnscheidt (2007: 69) identified three scientific discourses emergent from Dutch-Indonesian (VOC) documents in Indonesia, reporting on nature and environmental management during the 18th century. The first, the 'Rational Forestry' discourse, emerged from official rules and regulations implemented by the VOC. It reflected a sense of crises or a shortage of supply in the near future. This idea was created by the Dutch Colonial states of the time to motivate officials to manage the exploitation of nature more systematically. It appears the idea of 'sustainable development' can claim to have roots on the Rational Forestry discourse.

Beinart (2003) shows that conservationist ideas started to appear in the colonial Cape records from about 1770 onwards. These ideas were, similar to Indonesia, in response to colonial agricultural production concerns. All attempts to conserve and manage natural resources, whether by private landowners or government-related officials and/or departments, were justified by a rising awareness that nature is ultimately a finite resource. The ever-increasing needs of the colonies and a growing demand for supplies of raw materials from Europe created a sudden sense of looming shortages in the future. It resulted in the first implementation of preventative state control, while rivalry increased amongst European competitors for greater control over colonial land. In Indonesia from 1777 onwards, the VOC started to instruct overseers to spread the exploitation of the oldest and largest trees, as oppose to focussing on older forests only. By 1808, they started to divide forests into sections, cutting only one section per annum (Boomgaard, 1988: 69-71). Botanists were assigned to investigate the situation, particularly for valued teak forests. Only from 1795 onwards was teak planting initiated as an attempt to ensure future supplies.

South Africa drew more attention towards its pastoral potential. From the VOC's arrival at the Cape in 1652, a very similar 'crisis' emerged around wood supplies. The dominant indigenous vegetation of the Cape was grasses and shrubs, not trees. Showers (2010: 296-297) states, "By 1660 forests close to the original Cape Town settlement had been cleared, and by 1679 there was little accessible timber within 300 kilometres". According to Showers, even Jan van Riebeeck, the first VOC official in the Cape, attempted to regulate the cutting of indigenous trees to manage wood supply, but he had no means to enforce effective regulation. One of the first scientific botanist ventures in the Cape was the construction of the Companies Botanical gardens. By the 1690's, thousands of alien trees were planted to serve the needs of the colony, and used as experiments to establish which species would flourish best in the local climate. By 1694, Simon van der Stel introduced a policy of compulsory tree planting for all colonists, institutionalising the idea of alien tree importation. By the mid-eighteenth century, observers noted the 'disappearance of grass and the springing up of small bushy plants in its stead' (Hall, 1934: 189-190). P.J. van der Merwe, a historian of the trekboers, cited evidence of overexploitation of the veld as "a major feature of early settler pastoralism" (Beinart, 2003: 67). Anders Sparman (1977), a Swedish Professor of natural history and pharmacology, spent time in the Cape between 1772 and 1777 collecting natural specimen to take back to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.¹ He highlighted for the first time what became

¹ Sparman wrote in his official report to the Academy, "In direct contradiction to the custom and example of the original inhabitants the Hottentots, the colonists turn their cattle out constantly into the same fields, and that too in a much greater quantity than used to graze there in the time of the Hottentots; and they keep not only a number sufficient for their own use, but likewise enough to supply the more plentiful tables of the numerous inhabitants of Cape Town, as well as for the victualling of the ships in their passage to and from the East-Indies...In consequence of the fields being thus continually grazed off, and the great increase of the cattle feeding on them, the grasses and herbs which these animals most covet are prevented continually more and more from thriving and taking root; while, on the contrary, the *rhinoceros bush*, which the cattle always pass by and leave untouched, is suffered to take root free and unmolested, and encroached on the place of others...[T]his punishment for their sins (as they call the rhinoceros bush) together with several other dry, barren shrubs and bushes is found in greater abundance than anywhere else near their farms" (Beinart, 2003: 67).

known as ‘overstocking’, ‘overgrazing’, and ‘vegetation change’. He also mentioned that the Cape wildlife and pasture was becoming imperilled due to ‘profligate’ shooting.

The Dutch East India Company passed proclamations that aimed at limiting the excessive killing of what was considered valuable wild animals, but again, implementation power was lacking. Sparrman was the first to propose game farming, and his writings suggested a very “sophisticated view of the balance of nature” (Beinart, 2003: 68). Between 1803 and 1806, De Mist advocated grazing systems that made use of walled paddocks in his official Memorandum of Commissary. Environmentalists aimed to rationalize veld management, very similar to the rational forestry discourse described by Arnscheidt. Controls and restrictions to prevent overgrazing and careless hunting of wild animals became a scientific endeavour, but focused on serving the economic needs of the VOC. This ‘rational’ discourse explicitly supported the ongoing exploitation of nature for commercial purposes. Nature, for the VOC, the Dutch and the British colonizers, needed no subjugation (Arnscheidt, 2007: 71). Nature was a resource for economic benefit. Nature was not something to overcome in order to demonstrate power or control; it was simply an object in need of proper management, so that benefits obtained from it could be increased. Nature was a commodity to be exploited by rapidly rising capitalist expansion processes.

The scientific enterprise concern was to “classify nature and discover economic uses for plant and animal species” (Beinart 2003: 66). The ‘rational discourse’ introduced scientific concepts and categories defining nature in economic terms, and considering the potential limitations of unchecked exploitative practices. It was often met with resistance from colonial farmers, who wanted to continue unrestricted exploitation of their environment, oblivious of the long-term threats that their practices entail. This discourse institutionalised nature as a “production site for cash crops” (Arnscheidt, 2007: 75). The second discourse category used by Arnscheidt emerged directly from European scientific

theories. Beinart (2003: xiv) shows how the periphery inversely influenced the evolution of Western conservationism. Grove, Worster and Crosby (1995) shows how colonial experiences in the periphery allowed new ideas, considerations and practices in European environmentalism to evolve, but always towards the economic benefit of the colonizer. It is during the early 19th century that the scientific theory emerged suggesting that cutting of forests and natural vegetation could influence the climate, ultimately causing droughts and floods. This particular theory permeated colonial practices, and resulted in the ‘Protection against disaster’ discourse.

There were two theories, the ‘sponge’ theory and the ‘desiccation’ theory. To keep it simple: these theories held that cutting forests in mountainous areas would either result in floods or droughts.² Thus, to prevent both such disastrous situations, the scientists argued, forests covering the slopes of mountains needed to be protected and deforested areas needed to be reforested – at the expense of competing resource claimants, most notably cash crop producers and swidden farmers. What was new about these arguments was that they pleaded for protecting nature not for sustaining its direct exploitation (as had been the case with the teak forests), but rather for its capacity to protect humanity from disaster (Arnscheidt, 2007: 77).

According to Beinart (1003: 76), Pappe was the first Colonial Botanist in South Africa who voiced concerns about the preservation of the Cape’s unique plant kingdom (Beinart, 2003: 76). He largely condemned the burning of veld and went as far as comparing any such practices to acts of arson, calling for stronger measures by the state against perpetrators. Fire was identified as a major threat and when it became combined with observations of declining rainfalls and drought from the end of the 18th century, the

² Potter 1988, p. 32. For summaries of hydrological arguments see, for instance, Donner 1987, p.142-147 and Galudra & Sirait 2006.

Cape settlers became committed to coerce Africans to convert to colonial farming methods. It resulted in severe persecutions³ of local traditional pastoral farmers whom, according to pre-colonial custom, burnt their grazing veld once a year to encourage the re-growth of pastures. This anti-fire discourse quickly escalated into colonial authorities blaming the drought on transhumance or nomadism as practiced by most of the Khoi-Khoi and Xhosas, but also by the Dutch Boers, referred to by British colonial authorities as ‘half-wild Europeans’ (Beinart, 2003: 69-87).

The British occupation of the Cape colony in 1806 was met with strong resistance from the Dutch/Afrikaner Boer community, who refused to submit to British rule. Alongside political ‘anti-British’ incentives motivating the ‘Great Trek to the North’ (starting in the 1820’s), the Boers were faced with a pressing issue of a large decline in rainfall. Beinart (2003: 78) writes, “When it rained in an area farmers descended onto it with their stock, rapidly exhausting the veld”. Along with this rush for greener pastures, a sudden increase in international wool prices motivated farmers to increase livestock. Between 1840 and 1850 Merino stocks doubled and by 1860 wool export increased fourfold. Accordingly, Charles Rubidge published an article in 1857 in the Eastern Cape Monthly Magazine, titled ‘Evils of Over-pasturage’. It claimed that sheep farming is ruining the Cape. Sheep pull grass up by the roots and form paths in the veld that conveys rainwater rapidly to the rivers leaving the soil dry and less soaked. His solution to this problem was better irrigation and once again, scientific forestry.

In line with the theory that deforestation caused droughts and climate change, Harrison, the first conservator official for the British Crown, passed Act 18 of 1859 that prohibited ‘unlawful cutting of Forests or Herbage in the Colony’. This law in practice only

³ The punishment for arson at this stage was public execution, the perpetrators were chained to the ground and a fire was build around them, enclosing them gradually with flames and thereby slow-roasting them to death.

Source: <http://cape-slavery-heritage.iblog.co.za/2008/04/12/crucifixion-in-cape-town-for-over-a-century/>

applied to Crown land and not to private land, since it had very little influence on the Boers/farmers. Permission to cut trees on private land only required a letter of permission – ‘leave and licence’ from the owner (Beinart, 2003: 96)⁴. Again, enforcement proved difficult and therefore remained lacking. Generalizing from my interviews with private land owners and conservation officials over the past three years, it seems that owners and farmers still assume that the state should have no rights, or very limited rights, to interfere with private land management and practices such as the removal of indigenous plants, the killing of indigenous animals, or dictating the species of plants they cultivate, and so on.

The third scientifically motivated discourse, namely the ‘nature protection’ discourse, emerged alongside the ‘protection against disaster’ discourse. The ‘nature protection’ discourse suggested the best way to prevent overexploitation, is to demarcate certain territories and declare it reserved for exclusive use for scientific research and recreational purposes only, with strict controlled access. By doing this, freedom of exploitation could be allowed on private land at the discretion of the individual landowners. At this stage though, ‘nature’ referred to all living things (except humans) and conservation referred to ‘wise use’ thereof for economic and to some extent, for aesthetic reasons (Comrie-Creig, 1979: 58). The Dutch continued to put huge efforts into the planting of European deciduous plant species, with particularly large focus on pines brought in by the Huguenots, eucalypts (especially Blue Gum from Australia), as well as wattles, Hakea and Port Jackson. The British Crown glorified tree-planting landowners as model farmers and by the 1860’s the Cape State invested most of their efforts in afforestation, irrigation and more careful livestock management. In the Cape, as in Indonesia, “agrarian accumulation and colonial development were becoming linked to environmental regulation and conservation of resources” (Beinart, 2003:98).

⁴ Cape Nature Conservation Board still allocates licenses without hesitation for the harvesting of any indigenous plants on private land that is not yet on the ‘endangered to become extinct’ list, provided the owner provides the applicant with written permission to do so.

John Croumbie Brown was appointed as Colonial Botanist in 1862, and he was an “eclectic polymath of the natural sciences”, demanding “more intense and rational use of natural resources with their conservation” (Beinart, 2003:101). According to Brown the root of the problem was still fire, and as before, he connected this problem directly with the Tswana and other indigenous tribes’ traditional practices. Brown was also a theologian, mixing his Calvinistic Protestant religious ideas and ethics with scientific logic. He argued that God gave nature for the use of men. The more man uses nature, the more it will improve. His Calvinistic ideas fit well into the Dutch Reformed farmer’s religious framework, providing him with a fair amount of support from the Boers. He proposed that the state had a responsibility to punish people who ‘failed to carry God’s baton and improve the earth’ (Beinart, 2003: 113). This settler attitude understood the destruction of wild life as a part of “clearing the land” to encourage agriculture and “expedited the progress of civilization” (Carruthers, 1995:11). State conservation was therefore focused on the protection of water through afforestation, and the prohibition of fire, particularly when the concern arose that mineral wealth might also be thinning, leaving more settlers dependent on agriculture.

In 1846, the Volksraad (parliament) of Andries Ohrigstad became the first to put a western conservation measure to regulate wildlife exploitation into place in the Transvaal (Carruthers, 1995: 11). A resolution was passed that exhorted ‘burghers’ to limit their hunting to what could be used immediately and made it illegal for any foreigners to hunt in that district. However, a strong resistance emerged amongst the Voortrekker Boers towards game legislation, considered as part of the restricting British laws from which they wished to escape. The first hunting law⁵ for the Transvaal as a whole was passed in 1858. It was aimed to ensure a sustainable yield of ivory to the state, and thirteen of its nineteen clauses

⁵ “Wet tot het beter regelen van de jagt op olifanten en ander wild in de Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek” (Law for the improved regulation of the hunting of elephant and other wild animals in the South Africa Republic).

restricted African access to wildlife (Carruthers, 1995: 12-13). Blacks were only permitted to hunt if they were in possession of ‘passes’, considered ‘trusted servants’ and when accompanied by whites who were to control all firearms. This law also prevented Africans from obtaining firearms alongside its aim to conserve wildlife. From the 1860’s onwards, conservation discourse in the Transvaal became increasingly more intertwined with Afrikaner nationalism and racial capitalist concerns. According to Carruthers (1995: 48), the importance of creating national parks “took place at the same time as clear demonstrations of an aggressive, though perhaps still nascent, Afrikaner nationalism, and a search for a white South African national identity”. She suggests that by the mid-1920’s conservation goals, and specifically the creation of a national park, played a unifying role between the English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking whites, which she describes as “yet another strand in the consolidation of white interests over African” (Carruthers, 1995:48). For example, white landowners were allowed to hunt without licenses on their farms, while Africans had to pay for a license to do so. Wildlife as a resource previously available to all, systematically became “reserved first for Voortrekkers alone, then for whites, and subsequently for the wealthy or landowning white elite” (Carruthers, 1995:18).

Despite the many changes brought by and described by natural conservation discourse, today it appears that most Black South Africans and stakeholders are merely fighting for a space within existing scientific-based conservation structures, with little audience for their demands and scarce recognition of traditional episteme and practices. In the next chapter, I will look at the process through which my informants – namely a group of RasTafari Bossiedokters – believe they have been neglected in the environmentalist agenda of modern capitalism. Not unlike biological invasive species, Bossiedokters face today a systematic restriction of their access to environmental landscape, even if in the Bossiedokters’ discourses what appears ‘alien’ is the very scientific framework of

governmental protocols and policies. Through a qualitative analysis of my informants' accounts, I hope to show how identifying historical 'silencing' might be the condition for the possibility of its own demise.

Chapter Two

An alternative to environmentalism, or an alternative environmentalism: RasTafari

Bossiedokters and the re-claiming of nature

Despite the proliferation of sustainability discourses and attempts to motivate ‘greener’ forms of capitalism, many scholars remain sceptical about the latter’s ability to ‘fix’ ecological disaster (Cairns, 2010; Cock, 2010; Foster & Clark, 2009; Foster, 2009; Friedman, 2008). The 2009 Belem Ecosocialist Conference, for example, expressed much of this scepticism in relation to greener corporate initiatives while “imperialist powers fight among themselves and with the global south for continued control of the world’s diminishing resources”, with the warning that “human life may not survive” (Angus et al, 2007). In this chapter, I will show how a particular group of those cast as having indigenous knowledge – the Stellenbosch and Paarl RasTafari Bossiedokters (or *bushdoctors*) – claim that their manner of living represents an alternative way of being-in-the-world with nature, or simply being-with-nature. These traditional healers express how in their way of life and mode of production, concepts of agency and awareness which are usually associated with human beings, are also applied to elements of the environment. Here, I examine both how discursive and material practices articulate what they understand as a substantially different way of being-with-nature, and their account of the difference between the Bossiedokter and the ‘Western’ or ‘Babylon’ ways of being. I begin by characterising Bossiedokters’ engagement with nature, based on my interviews with Bossiedokters, government and traditional authority, and extensive observation. My aim in this chapter is to analyse how Bossiedokters understand their being-with-nature as in conflict with, and as a possible alternative to current forms of market and state ‘environmentality’.

This chapter draws on Ingold's comparative ethnographic studies of indigenous peoples' "dwelling perspective", which situates them within a context of interactive engagement with surroundings to establish a 'relational-ecological-developmental synthesis' (Ingold, 2000: 5). While Ingold grapples with ontological differences between 'traditional' hunter-gatherers and 'modern' thought and science, Comaroff and Comaroff (2000) warn us that this divide is neither static nor unambiguous, since it is constructed largely inside the European practices of representation, and thus itself a result of Western knowledge production. If notions of 'tradition' and 'modern' do not lend themselves to study as immediate reality, so 'ethnicity' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009) – largely derived from or influenced by those concepts – is also historically mediated and cannot be understood outside the complex relations from which they emerge. This raises a very important question for my project and for my approach to the Bossiedokters in their relation with nature as "traditional" – which, as I hope to show in my third chapter, seems to be at odds with mainstream environmentalism, while simultaneously aware of, and engaging with, the market value of "tradition".

In the next subsections, I will explore some of the Bossiedokters modes of self-representation, and how they position themselves in relation to environmental authorities. I will also tease out the ways in which Bossiedokters, contrary to what authorities might believe, seem to be aware of the ways in which they are represented and the importance of re-claiming their own "tradition" to re-assert themselves in the debates and institutional decisions over nature. If in the first chapter I focused on how history silences the Bossiedokters' voice, this chapter focuses on the social conditions for the possibility of Bossiedokters to speak and be listened to today.

RasTafari Bossiedokters: Sakmanne and Kaalvoetmanne

RasTafari Bossiedokters are a small group of healers and part of the larger RasTafari community. I estimate there are no more than two hundred Bossiedokters in the country, and they live and work mostly within the Coloured communities of the Western and Northern Cape. They provide their own and other communities with medicinal and spiritual herbs and counselling, often supplying *sangomas* and African black RasTafaris with medicinal plants. Although the majority of Bossiedokters are men, there are several women who enjoy equal status and recognition as healers. They speak Afrikaans, usually called ‘kaaps’⁶, with elements of KhoiSan and often infused with Jamaican RasTafari lexicon and English puns. Bossiedokters interviewed express a desire to become fluent in a KhoiSan language, which some believe to be a holy language that grants spiritual powers. They also claim historical and genetic kinship with KhoiSan, whose culture is perceived to be lost. As RasTafaris, they are encouraged to preserve what is called their ‘original cultural roots’, mostly by refusing their dependence on what is perceived as ‘western’ lifestyle. To RasTafaris, their way of life is the result of a relationship built with and within nature over thousands of years.

The Sakmanne (*bag-men*) and Kaalvoetmanne (*bare-feet men*) are two smaller segments within the Bossiedokters, considered the most spiritualist members of the RasTafari community. Sakmanne are easily distinguishable from other Bossiedokters by their dress. They do not wear shoes and only wear self-tailored shirts and trousers made from brown hessian bags, referred to as ‘sackcloth’. Many Bossiedokters affirm they have been Sakmanne at some stage of their life. They refer to the Sakman-practice as being “in Sak”, a practice mostly engaged in during apprenticeship years. There are a few ‘Elders’

⁶ ‘Kaaps’ shows the difference between Coloured and White use of Afrikaans – an indigenous mixture of Dutch and African languages. A common saying among Bossiedokters suggests the Dutch “stole their language” from their KhoiSan ancestors by forcing them to speak Dutch.

who have been *in Sak* for over 20 years. Some say they wear *sak* in memory and reverence for their great grand fathers who, at the end of the nineteenth century, were forced to wear such self-tailored bags while imprisoned by German colonial powers during the Herero and Nama genocides in Namibia and Namaqualand⁷. Sakmanne take this logic of resistance to acculturation to everyday life embodied in the refusal to wear modern or ‘western’ clothes. They believe their *sak* to honor Black people’s suffering under colonial rule, and a reminder that this suffering has not yet come to an end. Sakmanne ‘sacrifice’ all things perceived to belong to ‘Babylonian’ European culture (Olivier, 2010a: 29). Although RasTafari lifestyle already involves the abstinence from things of ‘Babylon’, Bossiedokters – and especially the Sakmanne – are considered to be the strictest followers. Their status within the RasTafari community is acquired through their efforts to abstain from what they perceive as ‘Babylon’ traps, such as alcohol, processed foods or drinks, branded clothing, chemically produced drugs, preservatives, food colouring, sugar and artificial flavouring. They are mostly strict vegans, and many eat only fresh organically grown fruits and vegetables called *ital*. Some even ‘sacrifice’ metal pots and pans, and cook vegetable roots in the hot ashes of an open fire made with wood. Overeating is also avoided, as it shows lack of self-discipline. Food is shared, and fasting is considered an important method to strengthen the spirit as it accelerates the detoxification of the body, besides improving a healer’s intuition and divine abilities, increasing his/her ability to predict the cause of discomfort or disease in patients. These rules are sacred everyday rituals and therefore always accompanied with ritualistic prayers.

Healers wear their hair in dreadlocks in varying lengths, shapes and sizes, not ever combing or cutting it. Dreadlocks are often referred to as their ‘load’: if someone has very

⁷ According to local myth, Nama San Prisoners were stripped from their traditional clothing, were told that they ‘stink like animals’ and therefore, like animals, they had ‘no need for clothing’ (Interview June 2010 with an elder Bossiedokter from Paarl).

long dreadlocks, it is called a ‘heavy load’. Since dreadlocks take very long to grow, a ‘heavy load’ is a sign of perseverance and commitment to the community. Fake dreadlocks artificially done in hair saloons are called “deadlocks”, and considered powerless. The Bossiedokters only wash their dreadlocks in natural water found in mountain springs, sometimes rinsing it with fragrant herbal and water concoctions. Some cover their hair when they travel in urban areas and only uncover it when they reach the mountain slopes, preventing it from pollution. They believe that the dreadlocks provide them with physical and spiritual strength, wisdom and enhance their senses, healing and observational abilities and help ‘sense’ where specific medicinal plants are to be found. It is believed to increase their ability to intuitively know if people have good or evil intentions towards them, and to help expose people possessed with negative spirits called *duppies*. These spirits, when confronted by a healer with dreadlocks, will make its host speak out against the ‘dreadful’ appearance of the healer. According to them, dreadlocks also allow them to identify undercover police, informers or gangsters who wish them harm. During Apartheid, it was a common practice for police to shave the healer’s dreadlocks when they were caught trespassing or ‘poaching’ herbs from private land or conservation areas.

Kaalvoetmanne distinguish themselves by never wearing shoes. They believe, like the Sakmanne, that African soil is a ‘holy ground’ which hosts the Ancestral warrior spirits of all Africans who have died resisting colonial oppression. They walk barefoot in order to be in constant physical contact with the soil, thereby showing respect to ancestors, strong in spirit and resistant to disease or any bodily harm. Most Kaalvoetmanne wear a mixture of brown and green camouflage material, which is believed to help them blend in with surroundings when they harvest herbs. They often refer to themselves as RasTafari soldiers or warriors, “*hunting* the knowledge and *gathering* the herbs”, in identification with what is imagined to be pre-colonial, KhoiSan ‘hunter-gather’ societies. Younger Sakmanne and

Kaalvoetmanne may be recognized as legitimate collectors of herbs prior to being acknowledged as full-fledged healers. Their elders instruct them where to find the scarce herbs they need, and by harvesting the herbs from the steep slopes of the mountains, they learn the ways of the mountain and they learn how to communicate and become accustomed with the environment. To become healers, they have to spend a certain amount of time harvesting only, displaying their ability to find the correct herbs by “dwelling in the heights” and “treading the slopes” of the mountains, until they know exactly where all the different plants are to be found. Collectors are also encouraged by the healers to learn about the plants through experience and through self-discovery. They make a living by trading the scarce and harder-to-get-at herbs with other Bossiedokters and *Sangomas*. The collectors spend most of their time in the mountains, and are usually very secretive about their favourite harvesting ‘spots’. Some live an entirely nomadic lifestyle, their movements guided by the seasonality and availability of their medicinal plants.

Sacred Harvesting, Sacred Healing

Philander’s investigation into the pharmacopoeia of Western Cape RasTafari Bossiedokters found that they frequently experiment with well known herbal remedies which “illustrates a striking level of cross-cultural adaptation... drawing upon European influence and traditional herbs used by the KhoiSan, Zulu and Xhosa peoples” (Philander, 2011: 1). While Bossiedokters utilize various exotic plants, they insist their knowledge about indigenous Fynbos is exclusive, learned from the KhoiSan, and that all the other traditions in South Africa borrowed from them. Cingiswa, a Xhosa Sangoma from George, People and Parks Western Cape Steering Committee chairperson and provincial representative for the traditional healers from 2007-2010, confirms this claim: “we as traditional healers have our traditions and rituals and it all connects together with the ancient San people”

(Interview, January 2011). According to her, Xhosa and Zulu medicine depend upon teachings from KhoiSan healers about the specific medicinal uses of indigenous plants, which gradually became integrated in their own practices. The most significant difference between healers is the use of animal materials such as bones, blood or skins, as commonly used by the other groups during rituals but not in RasTafari ones (Wreford, 2008).

The Stellenbosch and Paarl Bossiedokters who participated in Philander's study recognized eighty-two species of indigenous plants. None of these plants are classified poisonous, endangered or potentially harmful when consumed, unless in very large amounts over a long period of time. One of the elder RasTafari healers from Paarl affirms he uses over three hundred different plants, and that Philander's study tends to over-emphasise the circulation of plants, even if Bossiedokters actually use very little plants from outside the Cape Provinces. They believe plants found locally to be far more effective in healing local problems than plants imported from afar. As I have observed, Bossiedokters frequently compare and openly share their medicinal plant knowledge with each other, but are reluctant to reveal information to outsiders. Some walk long distances with their mixed bags of herbs, from one town to the next, to barter and trade with other herbalists and to see patients. They nonetheless interact with other regions at regularly-held RasTafari festivals, where herbs endemic to certain areas are bartered for herbs from other areas. The trading and consumption of herbs and roots form an integral part of the RasTafari cultural practice, and is an essential part of all their rituals. By participating in the various rituals at these festivals, Bossiedokters engage in what they believe to be authentic, indigenous practice – the harvesting and consumption of medicinal herbs – and in so doing enact in the present what they consider to be a link to their past.

Bossiedokters and collectors consider their practices a divine calling. Those who 'run away' from the calling will suffer extreme unhappiness, constant bad luck and perhaps

even die a horrible and sudden death. However, when the calling is embraced and the new healer adheres to the disciplining purification process prescribed by their elders, it is believed he/she will be rewarded with health, physical and spiritual powers and will finally be granted exclusive access to an 'ancient' body of natural wisdom and knowledge. This knowledge can only be obtained through frequent dwelling in the mountains, since they believe mountains are spaces in which the influence of 'Babylon' is arguably limited. They are called or chosen to this practice through a vision or dreams, in which they are ordered by Jah or by their ancestors to give up their normal lives and purify their bodies in order to serve their people with healing herbs. The calling implies a duty to heal and prepare themselves first, before they can share in any sacred information. Apprentice healers obtain purification through the guidance of other experienced healers, whom they will follow, observe and imitate, until they are 'strong' enough to receive spiritual information for themselves. The knowledge of a full healer is only learned through prolonged engagement and participation in the harvesting and consumption of medicinal plants, combined with extensive engagement in the various healing practices; such as walking in the mountains bare feet, preparing of herbal remedies, participating in healing rituals with patients, and so on.

When dwelling in the mountains, the healers claim to leave the 'Western/Babylon' concept of time and the limitations of modern man behind. By dwelling in the mountains with a clean body and purified mind, the healers provide a suitable vessel to the ancestral spirits to wake, to become flesh, become reborn and alive in this world once again. When an ancestral spirit occupies a suitable 'vessel', information can become transferred to the host compared to how a father/mother would transfer knowledge to his/her child. The illusions of Babylon disappear and the healer can see the world as it really is, as it has always been and how it will be in the future. Even Bossiedokters that usually wear shoes

remove their shoes when they arrive at the mountain paths out of respect for the ‘holy ground’ they are about to step on. They consider their frequent walks in the ‘holy mountains’ the most important cleansing ritual and opportunity to directly engage with all the natural spirits that also ‘dwell’ there. Before any interaction can become possible between them and the spirits, participants have to consciously acknowledge this space as a holy place. The healers will therefore ‘open’ their walk with a smoking ritual and prayers that includes a verbal greeting of all the various elements around them, showing respect and recognition of the presence of the spirits. The air, the soil, the water, the plants, the sunrays, the animals, the rocks, the insects, all become part of their interactive meditation. Only after the prayers are completed, can the walk commence. From hence onwards, nothing they experience is considered coincidental any longer. Every sound, every smell, every movement and every thought becomes observed and interpreted as significant and meaningful. Listening to nature is to listen to the collective voice of God and the ancestors communicating with the healers, awaking certain thoughts and stimulating the awareness of certain senses previously not noticed or ignored. Only few words are exchanged during such walks and when talking becomes necessary, it is done with respect and often in whispers. Elders will point out certain plants to the younger healers, which they harvest from and move on.

Ras Naphtali explains how healers’ experiences in the mountains cannot be adequately explained in words, rationalized or accurately described to others; it can only be felt through direct experience, or else one risks distorting it. When I asked him to try to put it in words, the response was short, simple and final: “who feels it knows it” (Ras Naphtali, Jonkershoek Nature Reserve, 27 Jan 2010). Dan, a Bossiedokter in his late thirties, elaborates on how, during the walk, the healers aim to empty their minds from blockages and resistance presented by everyday logic and thinking processes, until “the heavens

becomes clear and open enough to allow the sensations and resonation of the ancestral consciousness, the sound made by the ancestral spirits to become sensed and understood". Once freed from these constraint, the rocks become familiar faces, the trees become people, the animals reveal their true spiritual nature and the healers can clearly hear the singing and talking of their 'anceients' and respond to it. When the healers pass a stream, they wash their faces, hands and feet and drink large amounts of the fresh water. Often they will wash each other's feet and perform various spoken rituals and prayers, always accompanied with the burning and smoking of cannabis and other herbs. Once the washing is completed, they believe the healing spirits will guide them further to the different plants needed by their patients. When such a plant is identified, a short communication occurs between the healer and the plant. Some healers believe one has to know the ancient name of the plant, and be able to pronounce it correctly to invoke its healing powers. They whisper its name; say for what purpose it is harvested and sometimes even mention the name of the patient for whom it is intended. They always pick a small piece first, smell it, taste it and pronounce its virtues. It is harvested in a manner believed to encourage the growth of the plant. Only small amounts are taken from each plant and the healers will move from one plant to the next, harvesting from each plant until they feel they have enough. Each healer is only allowed to harvest as much as he/she can comfortably carry in one bag.

Not all plants are believed to have healing spirits/properties, but all plants do host life, which is considered a spirit, and all plant spirits have significance, regardless whether it is known or unknown to the healer at the time. Plants in general are therefore treated with utmost respect. Animals are considered equally sacred, and it is completely forbidden to RasTafaris to shed the blood of any animal encountered in the wild. Several Bossiedokters claimed they would rather starve to death than eat the flesh of any animal body. After the harvesting is done, they seek out the nearest favourite waterfall and wash their dreadlocks.

Some will submerge their whole body in the water. The mountain water is believed to dispel any lingering negative thoughts, emotions and fears, stress and negative feelings, all believed to be associated with disease. The healers seem to share the belief that ignorance of the use of indigenous herbs and the various purification spirits hosted therein, detaches one from the natural human ability to heal oneself from any given disease. Someone who suffers from such ignorance and who carelessly indulges in 'Western/Babylon' lifestyles, become detached from him/herself and the natural ability to maintain a healthy body and spirit. It is therefore a lack of knowledge that causes a dependence on others to mediate between oneself and the spiritual world. All healing is accompanied by the use of very specific mixtures of herbs placed in boiling water and left to steep, then drunk by the patient several times throughout the day. However, the healer who harvests the herbs is primarily responsible to activate and enhance the healing powers. Knowledge of plants in itself is not enough to facilitate healing. The level of commitment as practiced by the harvester in everyday life, and the personal integrity of the healer also determines his/her ability to heal others with the herbs. This includes the general state of health and 'fitness' of the healer, as well as the level of dietary self-discipline and emotional control. Healing powers and abilities can thus increase through regular fasting, cleansing rituals, frequent meditation and visitation to the mountains and by completely avoiding poisonous elements found in processed foods and so on. Temporary abstinence from sexual activity prior to harvesting and performance of certain rituals is also prescribed, but complete abstinence is considered potentially dangerous thus not recommended. Healing abilities are always increased by the rules of conduct towards others, and social confrontations are often interpreted as a spiritual test, or opportunity to display control and restraint, resulting in increased healing potency.

The Bossiedokters believe the cause of a disease can intuitively become known by anyone who lives a 'pure' enough life; it is considered a natural ability attainable by all. However, most people lack the discipline and knowledge to allow self-healing and self-diagnosis, therefore they need a healer with a good reputation and disciplined practice to assist them with the process. Bossiedokters believe the artificial poisons people consume on a daily basis, combined with pollution and processed food causes an imbalance in the body, which in turn causes mental confusion and disease to develop. They believe that this lack of spiritual connectedness and interaction allows disease to develop and prevents natural healing to take place. Several of the healers indicated they believe the Babylon economic system is designed for this very purpose, that is, to keep people dependent on such unhealthy food and lifestyles allowing them to become sick and remain 'slaves' of the system. The healer's duty therefore is to guide and encourage the patient to initiate a self-healing process, an awakening of the natural healing abilities accessible to all, thus facilitate the patient with spiritual counselling combined with the necessary herbal purification to allow the body to heal itself. The patient is always reminded that healing comes from within, and disease is always linked to the social and to elements of everyday lifestyle and interaction with the environment.

You know, we are not just healing people from diseases caused by chemicals, germs or unhealthy lifestyles. We also resolve disputes, quarrels and fights amongst our people. We ask questions and we listen to the answers, and we link the diseases to the person and how that one lives with other people. Sometimes people need fix things they did to others, a bad conscience can also make you sick, if people are angry at each other both can get sick. So we help them also. (Ras Levi, April 2010, Franschhoek)

Ingold provides insight into how other forms of being which are not human could become imagined to enter social relations without reverting into an 'alternative cosmology'

approach or a multi-cultural political discourse that reinforces a culture/nature divide. If the Bossiedokters claim to extend a human-like social relation and ethic to their non-human environment, then the potential for them to be able to present an alternative and extremely promising holistic environmentalism increases significantly. According to Ingold (2000: 48), Western thought situates the human species in a fundamentally unique position exactly because “personhood as a state of being is not open to non-human animal kinds”. He writes about “the capabilities of action and perception of the whole organic being (indissolubly mind and body) situated in a richly structured environment” (Ingold, 2000:5). He suggests that skills are regrown in each generation, passed on through developing human organisms who practice and perform particular tasks through training and experience; not transmitted as sets of capacities or “compartments of a universal human nature, with specific cultural content” (Ingold, 2000: 5). This allows him to argue that people are always actively engaging with their surroundings and through this action become realized as organism-persons. These surroundings are “beings of manifold kinds”, in relation to which people are a “sub-set of ecological relations”. However, the credibility of the Bossiedokters’ “dwelling practices” is threatened by the most stigmatised, yet arguably authentic KhoiSan medicinal and spiritual ritualistic plant: *cannabis*.

Cannabis: practices and prosecution

The use of cannabis, which the Bossiedokters refer to as *ganja*, accompanies most RasTafari rituals and it is by far the most commonly used plant. It is sometimes smoked in combination with dried Kanna [*Sceletium*] or kougoed, an indigenous succulent endemic to the Northern Cape. Kanna combined with ganja is believed to assist the inducement of visions and divination healing. Kanna protects the healer from unwanted spirits that might be invoked along with the healing spirits, while calming and preventing the healer from

losing focus. This use of Kanna is unique to the Cape and has according to Smith (1996) been reported by 18th century European travellers as a popular practice amongst the Khoi and San groups, who chewed it (Thunberg, 1794) and also smoked it in combination with cannabis (Paterson, 1789)⁸.

The Bossiedokters have many uses for ganja. They insist though, that the cannabis they use is not to be compared with the cannabis sold by drug dealers (called *dagga*). Similar to other medicinal herbs, cannabis needs to be prepared and used with the necessary rituals, incitation, respect and reverence according to the particular purpose it is utilized for. If cannabis is used in combination with chemical drugs, alcohol or even tobacco, it is believed to be potentially dangerous and harmful. They believe that if you mix a medicinal plant with such poisons, the medicine is also turned into poison and will have a very different effect on the user than when used according to the proper procedure and protocol. When ganja is used correctly with the proper ritualistic citations and prayers, and in combination with other healing herbs, it contains the power to release the medicinal powers of the herbs, as well as invoke the healing and guiding spirit needed to link the consciousness of the diseased with that of the healer. For example, many of the Sakmanne refuse to touch any other people except for the purpose of healing. They believe that evil spirits can be passed from one person to another through physical contact, and they will only touch a sick person to draw out the unwanted spirit causing the sickness. The healer will then dispel the spirit by drinking a certain mixture of bitter herbs, accompanied with ganja smoking rituals and prayers. They combine the ‘spirit’ of fire, air and earth (spiritual plants) to produce a purifying heat that results in the smoke that is inhaled. The soothing

⁸ Paterson (1789), a traveller, wrote in his journal about the San, “This is called the Channa Land: and derives its name from a species of *Mezembryanthimum* (sic), which is called Channa by the natives, and is exceedingly esteemed among them. They make use of it both in chewing and in smoaking (sic); when mixed with the Dacka (sic) is very intoxicating, and which appeared to be of that species of hemp which is used in the East Indies by the name of Bang.” Cannabis is commonly called Indian hemp, and in India it is often referred to as Bang or ‘ganja’ believed to be derived from the Sanskrit word for cannabis, ‘ganjika’.

‘spirit’ of water and earth (healing plants) is used to balance or cool down the heat caused by the fire, resulting in a ‘normal’ purified healthy state. The healers burn and smoke *cannabis* while preparing the medicinal herbal teas. It is always smoked before, during and after harvesting. *Cannabis* is burned during most ceremonies, smoked during fire and drumming rituals and also consumed as medicinal tea.

Bossiedokters will often cover their faces with cannabis ash when moving around in the townships, believed to keep negative energies and bad spirits at bay. The ash is also used to heal wounds and skin disorders. Ganja tea helps for stomach cramps, nausea, restlessness and insomnia, loss of appetite, aggression, stress, glaucoma, fever, muscle pains, and arthritis. According to a Bossiedokter from Cloeteville, their struggle for recognition and liberation has become synonymous to their struggle to use cannabis freely. He believes that the ban on cannabis means that Africa is still under colonial rule. He believes the European empires know that if cannabis is legalized in Africa, it will allow Africa to rise economically as well as spiritually. Also, according to him it allows European Christian organisations to demonise and criminalize African traditional systems and to legally oppress the traditional healers, since the ban on ganja criminalized all their sacred activities and forced the group to remain underground and in constant hiding (Interview, Cloeteville, 10 November 2009). The stigma around the non-ritual, recreative use of *cannabis* as a harmful addictive drug has resulted in Bossiedokters being considered unlawful, drug-dealers and addicts by state authorities. Cannabis is strongly associated with RasTafari religious practices in general and particularly amongst the Bossiedokters, who make absolutely no secret of their almost unrestricted use thereof, despite it still being an illegal substance. They are proud of their association with cannabis and indigenous medicinal plants, and are willing to suffer poverty and persecution resulting from their practices. Every Bossiedokter I interviewed has been imprisoned for the possession of

cannabis. The study done by Philander (2010) showed that seventy-three percent of the Bossiedokters she interviewed have suffered police harassment from collecting medicinal herbs from the wild or for being in possession of cannabis, varying from fines to imprisonment and sometimes even as severe as being shot at by land owners with rifles or being attacked by dogs. Seventy-six percent of the interviewees earned far less than R1000 per month. It is evident that the Bossiedokters' commitment to their practice goes beyond the socio-economic hardships they are inevitably confronted with.

Different mythologies of heritage

Bossiedokters contrast their understanding of the relationship between people and nature explicitly with what they refer to as Western Christianity. In their understanding, mainstream Christianity, at least in the form that travelled to South Africa during colonization and colonialism, assumed that people – and white people in particular—are inherently superior to nature. The Bossiedokters suggest that the KhoiSan people rejected this human over nature hierarchy. For them, the spirit abiding inside a human, animal or plant at any given time, determines the importance of the material vessel containing that spirit, whether plant or animal. This spirit of nature supersedes humans, and the most that humans can do is learn to understand the ways of nature; not to master, control or manipulate nature, but in order to move with it, to yield to it, befriend it and thereby become co-creators by dwelling with nature.

According to Ras Dan from Paarl, the Protestant European settlers in the Cape saw the endless and invaluable richness of nature in biblical terms as the 'promised land' overflowing with 'milk and honey', given to them through grace being the 'elect of God'. The challenge the Europeans faced in Africa was to obtain control over the indigenous people, who occupied, protected and exercised traditional control over their environment,

restricting the exploitation of the land's 'resources' with the same affection they would protect their kin. Christianity became a mechanism to overcome this challenge:

When them European pirates come here in Azania, [South Africa] them just see money... lots and lots of money. We show them the trees, the animals, the birds... our families, all them see is money. My people, you know, my people, the Khoi-Khoi and the San people... we saw quickly how... them... we see them... them are not irie [good], them are not like us... them are like mosquitoes... hey? Vampires from another world. Them grab everything and run with it back to Europe. Then them come again. Them even grab some people here forcing them to work for them. Them sloer [eat] all our things... Duppies! [Demons]. Until today... they're still sloering [eating]... and their children are sloering [eating]... from OUR land, our animals, our plants and them still take our things, our diamonds and our gold... take whatever them want... them grab it and run to their lands. They even take away the name for our land Azania to change it... And now they want our medicine also. That's why we are still broken. Ja, man, now we can vote, and we did vote already, but still we nah [do not] get any land. Them still control the land. Really... my people forget who they are, where they come from... we're cut off from our own culture and our holy land. (Ras Dan, Bossiedokter, Paarl, November 2009)

Ras Dan reveals a sentiment that suggests that the most recent generation of white people are still benefiting from the economic foundation provided by slavery and Apartheid instituted by their forefathers. He confronts what he suggests to be a popular claim made by the colonizer's children, that they had no share in the wrongs of the past, and that those things should be buried in the past. But for the healers, the situation in a post-apartheid or so-called postcolonial world is not experienced as qualitatively different; it is still ruled by the same Babylon system, a very similar dominant ideology and power hierarchies. They believe that other Africans willing to comply with existing rules and regulations are employed to enforce the Babylon system onto the rest of the people.

According to Ras Dan, the European missionaries assisted considerably to convert locals, one by one, to accept the supremacy of western religion, ways and knowledge. The belief in sacred spirits manifested in nature had to be overcome, and the persons to convince first were the chiefs or kings of the land. The individuals with whom the debate, or ‘showdown’ was held, was the traditional healers or rainmakers, since they served the chiefs and communities as consultants, providing access to the spiritual and ancestral world. Ras Dan explains how the missionaries had to convince the locals that their traditional healers and rainmakers did not possess any real powers over nature and that their manipulation of rain was faked. They had to be convinced that only faith in Christ could save them from their ignorance, and in doing so, God will bless them with rain, prosperity and health. The missionaries had scientific technology and medicinal knowledge to utilize to advantage their arguments.

They gave us the Bible and taught us to pray with our eyes closed, to show that we trust God and we have no fear. So we prayed and when we opened our eyes they already stole our land, leaving us only with the Bible...but we know they even stole the Bible, because the Bible is history of ancient Africa and Israel, not of Europe. Europe was the colonizer even in the Bible... you see Babylon, Rome, Caesar, Herod, they were always the oppressors, its in their nature.

(Reuben, Bossiedokter, January 2010, Stellenbosch)

Van Sitters, a Bossiedokter activist, social science graduate from Stellenbosch University and a member of the national Khoisan Volksraad, is currently studying the San language in Namibia, and teaching indigenous herbalism and local history to Coloured students and other Bossiedokters. He refers to his personal interactions with Chief T.F.M. Kooper, the 17th generation leader of the ‘Rooi Nasie’ Khoi-Khoi, now living in the Great Namakwaland, and how Chief Kooper described to him the lasting myths of how his

ancestors fled the Cape between 1680 and 1690, due to the unbearably violent treatment of the Dutch. Van Sitters translated some of the stories of how indigenous rebels opposed the Dutch, suffered public torture and execution by means of whipping, scourging, burning at the stake, slow choking, beheading, the “strappado” – hung by with a rope and repeatedly dropped to the ground until their bodies were pulverised – and breaking of bones. Their corpses were left tied to a wagon wheel just outside the VOC Castle gate, to be consumed by the birds and other predators. According to him, the severity of the treatment caused the majority of the Khoi-Khoi who survived the second Dutch-Hottentots War of the 1670’s to flee the Cape and settle permanently North of the Orange River (Interview, Bradley van Sitters, 17 February 2011).

It appears from Van Sitters’ oral history that what the early Dutch state implemented through violence, the missionaries animated through religious discourse. The logic of this discourse implies that if a person were able to subjugate nature and the spirits inhabiting it, he/she would be instantly be considered more civilized, evolved, and inherently more human and less ‘primitive/natural/animal’. According to Van Sitter, cultivation and hunting yields were shared with chiefs to reward and motivate further cooperation. For those who did not buy into the ‘new’ method of mediation between God and man, life was made unbearable, as can be read in the memory and myths of the Rooi Nasie. Rules that emerged from this ‘subjugate-and-rule’ discourse were aimed at monopolizing resources previously considered as common goods. When negotiations and attempts at conversion failed at obtaining access to KhoiSan land peacefully it was taken by force. The colonial powers also restricting certain traditional activities of locals, for example, prohibiting them from seasonal burning of the *veld*, as was their custom. Van Sitters suggested how cooperative chiefs were convinced, bribed or coerced to implement colonial rules, and punishment was issued under the authority of the Almighty God. Since a

fearless mastery over humans and nature signified 'spiritual' and social power, Christianity gradually displaced the faith people had in the traditional healers and rainmakers' ability to master and negotiate with spirits. According to Van Sitters, those who openly resisted the new religious discourse became the crucibles of Progress and were blamed and punished by the colonizer for any misfortunes that befell their people. The damnation of the gods befell those who dared to disobey any of the rules, and there is no shortage of historical texts of Dutch and English disciplining activities. Those who persisted in their traditional practices soon had to flee to save their lives and the lives of their people.

Comaroff and Comaroff (1992) recount the missionary tale from diaries of Livingstone, of an encounter between Livingstone and a Kwena (Southern Tswana) rainmaker. While they relate the eventual overcoming of African's faith in rainmakers and local religious figures, the Comaroffs paint a complex picture of how colonization occurred over time, slowly dividing Africans between one another and inculcating a faith in a rationality and eventually Christianity whose legacy continues to this day. While Van Sitters explicitly focus on "divide and rule", he emphasizes colonialism as producing among coloured people a complete cultural amnesia. Akin to the rainmakers in the Livingstone's account, Bossiedokters suggest they revive and perform a cohesive social role in their communities, unlike modern medical doctors who only treats physical symptoms. Different from the Comaroffs, for whom what constitutes both tradition and Christianity shifts over time, Van Sitters sees a Manichean world dividing colonizer from colonized, indigenous from modern, RasTafari from Babylon. He reproduces a dichotomous framework inherited from colonialism between modernity and tradition, Western and indigenous, past and future, a literal black and white picture. Modernity became "associated with progress, development, 'the West', science and technology, high standards of living, rationality and order, while tradition associated with stasis, stagnation,

underdevelopment, poverty, superstition and disorder” (Robins, 2001: 835). Van Sitters, in line with RasTafari discourse, inverts the naturalized hierarchy of this dichotomy by reframing indigenous tradition in terms of environmental sustainability and social morality that he believes is “exceedingly superior” to that produced by ‘Western’ modernity.

Ras Gad, a RasTafari Priest of the Paarl Nyahbinghi Order (Interview, 27 November 2009), an experienced herbalist and spiritual counsellor in his community, proclaimed the only way forward in terms of achieving true liberation in South Africa is the restitution of the social status of traditional healers. That is, for traditional healers to once again become socially respected and honoured. He believes South Africa will never rid itself from “its current health problems” until the traditional healers are restored to fulfil their “traditional roles as trusted doctors and practicing diviners for the people”. They must be allowed to access the “holy mountains” freely in order to harvest the correct quality of medicinal plants and receive the knowledge from their ancestors whose voices have become silenced “through the ignorance of their children”. But also, they demand recognition as “invaluable social advisors” and consultants to state authorities and political leaders, since they believe they are the only people who have access to the traditional authentic African indigenous knowledge needed to repair their country. According to Ras Gad, the ongoing political turmoil in what has become a society “divided by politricks”, results from the new state officials who are “reinforcing Apartheid and colonial divisions” based on racial differences between indigenous groups. He believes that neoliberal multi-party democratic government politics are playing the various ethnic groups up against each other in its aim to win over individual votes. According to him, this artificially created ethnic and racial divisions, focus on small insignificant differences amongst Black people, while allowing the continuation of a shared suffering under ongoing Black poverty, social injustice, and inequality.

He argues that the new government is causing indigenous peoples to ignore the obvious fact that they are still systematically marginalized by white-owned economic infrastructures. Except for what he calls, ‘the few sell-out elites’, who have joined the ranks of the capitalists. He echoed the earlier statements of Ras Dan, pointing out that the economic legacy of colonial rule, which effectively concentrated financial capital into the hands of white-owned businesses, has been passed down to their white children and grandchildren. The children, in turn, deny their participation in past oppression, but continue to enjoy the privileges passed down to them from the ‘guilty’ generations. Ras Gad suggested that only once traditional healers are officially recognized as traditional authorities and gain significant influence over local and national environmental matters, could it be said that restitution and transformation is happening in practice. The Bossiedokters are often misunderstood though by state officials due to arising confusion about their complex amalgam of claims to indigenous South African cultural heritage combined with anti-slavery North and Central American discourse. Their answers and explanations for their suffering and the suffering of their people are constructed on various and complex mixture of sources and draw from rich historical reference and diverse global influences, as I argue elsewhere (Olivier, 2010a). Bossiedokters claim both a genetic link to the KhoiSan people, and to Ethiopians, and especially to the bloodline of Solomon through Emperor King Haile Selassie I, who they refer to as “the last King of Kings of Ethiopia”.

Healers claim their KhoiSan ancestors would travel from the Cape to Ethiopia to trade herbs, to expand their body of healing knowledge and to pay respect and give recognition to the Ethiopian royalty and African Orthodox Church. Bossiedokters claim they obtained this memory through visions and they sense, when in ritual trance, that they share the Royal blood of the Ethiopian Kings and Queens. This is the reason why they follow RasTafari religion, and they believe their affiliation is not merely ideological, but

based on genetic resonance. In 2002, the American Society of Human Genetics presented a study based on genetic analysis supported the claim that “only the Ethiopians share with the Khoisan the deepest human Y-chromosome clades (the African-specific Groups I and II)”, confirming the “paternal ancestral affinity between the Ethiopians and the Khoisan, which has previously been suggested by both archaeological and genetic findings” (Semino et al., 2002: 265). I have communicated the existence of such study to an elder Bossiedokter, Naphtali, to which he replied that science would come to confirm the Bossiedokters’ knowledge. He also said that “the Jamaican RasTafaris are often still seeking their African roots when they come here to Africa, but us, we *are* the roots.” (Interview, Paarl, Naphtali, October, 2010). Since the broader RasTafari movement inspire all black people to “reconstruct their African identity lost during oppressive Westernisation processes such as slavery, colonisation and neo-colonisation” (Olivier, 2010b: 128), it follows that in the Cape, the RasTafari Bossiedokters became motivated to revive the memory of their indigenous KhoiSan ancestors. According to the healers, the KhoiSan people have lost themselves a long time ago due to Dutch and English colonial oppression, and were kept in the dark about their own royal blood and history by modern education and religious institutions. RasTafari Bossiedokters believe they have preserved some of the essence of what has been lost both as history of a people and as history of a practice which they believe scientific reasoning and classification systems have sought to undermine.

Tradition as enactment and exchange

Those of I and I [us] who are sons and daughters of the soil have a very deep link...the Eurocentric world cannot translate I and I [our] connection to Africa... (RasTafari Elder informant)

Archaeological evidence indicates that the various Khoi-Khoi herders, and what is suggested to be even older San (or *bush men*) hunter-gatherers, were the original inhabitants of the Cape. Some of the Khoi and San rock paintings are dated by science as ten thousand years old and the oldest human tools found in the Blombos Caves in the Western Cape is dated to be seventy-five thousand years old (de'Errico et al., 2003: 4). South Africa hosts over a thousand 'Stone-Age' sites providing records of a way of life and history of people which scientists estimate to have been present for nearly two million years. The remnants of San-people have become presented to the world as "living embodiments of Late Stone age hunter-gatherers", what Robins (2001: 15) describes as "tenacious primordialist fantasies" of Europeans about the San people that "emanate from a variety of sources including anthropologists, filmmakers, museum curators, donors, NGOs, journalists, tourists and so on". These fantasies allow, when part of tourist attraction, the spectacle of practices of tradition with a surplus of authenticity. Indeed, the very idea of 'authentic' pre-colonial KhoiSan cultural practices uninfluenced or artificially shaped by the market and modernization is a modern construct. Yet, acknowledging this would not sit well with tourism-based organisations that claim to provide previously marginalized and impoverished indigenous communities with an opportunity for economic development by displaying their pre-colonial ethnicity. The tourist market draws on reconstructions of a given 'ancient' culture which can be sold as entertainment, while the social relations which this culture is part of are veiled.

To Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) the concept of 'ethnicity' has become increasingly more corporate and implicated in everyday economics, allowing the re-emergence of post-colonial cultural identities to become shaped by their market value. What is presented and sold as authentic culture is inevitably shaped by the ideas and fantasies that were naturalised over centuries by modern society, a burgeoning market for 'real life' examples

of cultural difference. These ideas are based on very uncritical accounts produced as far back as the seventeenth century Portuguese, Dutch, English and French travellers (Schapera, 1933: 1). If ethnicity can be defined as “the object of choice and self-construction, typically through the act of consumption, and the manifest product of biology, genetics, human essence” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009: 1) so the Bossiedokters claim of having ‘access to the past’ through an alternative engagement with nature is a reclaiming of their ethnicity and of tradition through the re-asserting of nature as a site for exchange and production of value. This re-assertion is the only opportunity Bossiedokters have to legitimise their social authority over nature and to forge a space for their voices in public spheres dominated by scientific environmentalism. The problem seems to be not so much that Bossiedokters in this process tend to over romanticise their self-representation and their animistic relation to nature, as they are often charged with, but that this poetic language is already an ideological claim: here it is important to notice how Bossiedokters in their mode of being-with-nature are associated with their consumption of *dagga* in ways that put into question their “rational” judgement. If anything, what appears as disconnected, discontinuous modes of communication between Bossiedokters and authorities is not a supposed effect of *dagga* but the very “ontological” characteristic of traditional healers’ language as being in dispute with scientific jargon.

The Bossiedokters are disempowered in conflicts with authorities, arrested and prosecuted for their practices, restricted in their access to land and then assaulted with the feeling of “not being taken seriously”. They feel denied the right to practice and preserve their KhoiSan heritage, a practice which depends on access to conservation reserves and the use of their medicinal and spiritual plants. Their connection – imagined, socially constructed but not less real – with pre-colonial ancestors through nature, legitimates their way of being, festivals and mode of production. However, cultural difference takes under

capitalism the form of a commodity. This is also true for indigenous identity, which appears as an autonomous thing, divorced from the very social relations that produced them in the first place. This process of commodification does not separate, but condenses scientific and market strategies and permeates the indigenous discourse itself. Take for example, Ras Naphtali, who is currently studying phytotherapy at the University of Western Cape. His traditional discourse is not incorporated, but incorporates discursive practices, scientific reasoning and language, while believing his spiritual inclination is not put into question. Ras Naphtali suggests the herbs growing in the mountains contain “high levels of minerals and microelements”, such as required by the human body to maintain a strong immune system. He defends that processed food lacks the necessary nutrition values, minerals, vitamins and microelements required by the body to remain healthy. He also suggests that a diet of processed foods, high levels of additives, preservatives and drugs combined with high stress and anxiety impacts negatively on the immune system and weakens the physical body. When the body is physically weakened, the spirit and emotional body also becomes imbalanced and are similarly weakened. Herbs harvested from unpolluted and uncompromised natural environments such as the mountain reserves, supplements the body to help restore physical balance, boosting the natural physical immune system. If the herbs are processed with machines, compressed or extracted with alcohol, they lose most of their healing powers, and the healing potential or “spirit released” by the plant is minimal and sometimes reduced to zero.

Medicinal plants cultivated in tunnels and through monoculture techniques are, according to his experience, very weak and often useless. The plants need to be harvested from the wild, high up in the mountains where the soil would be rich and unspoilt, the air is unpolluted and the water pure. They also need to be harvested by designated human hands that respect and understand the “quantum healing process” that will animate the revered

healing spirits hosted by the plants. It is perhaps noteworthy to see a Bossiedokter's willingness to study at the very institutional spaces of 'Babylon' his lifestyle seems opposed to, but what is of importance here is to analyse the assertion of a traditional healer in debates over traditional use of nature making use of scientific jargon and market strategies. There are nonetheless a number of difficulties which arise in my argument of the Bossiedokters (re-) claiming of nature through tradition. One of them is how the concept of Babylon works as a *shifter* for the healers. Almost everything the healers experience as negative is conveyed as Babylon. White supremacy, oppression, capitalism, egocentrism, pollution, commodification, inequality, racism, sexism, disease, individualism, and so on, are all referred to as Babylon or caused by Babylon system. With such extreme generality, its multiple meanings render it to appear vague, too blunt an instrument for understanding or critique. If Babylon structurations accept and include the healers, it is hard to identify when and where it ceases to be Babylon at all. And if it is the case that it never ceases to be Babylon, it is hard to define, based on my fieldwork, if healers want to be beneficiaries of Babylon's appropriation of nature or not. Here, it is important to say again that nature is not a transhistorical notion, but always mediated, even the nature with which Bossiedokters claim their ontological bondage. In the conditions of modern capitalism and neoliberal governance, what Bossiedokters and their practice expect to become, in other words, if healers are 'government-certified' and their activities regulated, does it mean to be the end of their struggle? How do they suggest their own future to be, how do they see themselves fit into global capitalism where their chance to gain recognition lies somehow in the recognition of their market value?

In my interaction with the environmental authorities, the difficulties in how to implement and control the legitimisation of traditional healers emerge clearly. Questions raised are, for example, whether the Bossiedokters are really descendants of the KhoiSan,

and to what extent this identity is constructed, or how can their claim be proved scientifically. In response, some Bossiedokters reportedly subjected themselves for DNA tests sponsored by an NGO, with the result that they could ‘scientifically’ claim a genetic kinship with indigenous KhoiSan peoples. It is obviously beyond the scope of my project (and of my scientific abilities) to defend or contest such procedures. It is also irrelevant for my research if those claims can be considered sound or not. More importantly, they seem to show how indigenous knowledge has to agree upon constant scientific surveillance and scrutinizing, and to be filtered in terms which – albeit highly speculative – it can dialogue with the language of environmentality. In the same token, discursive practices among RasTafari are not impermeable in relation to scientificisms. Coloured Bossiedokters claim they are often charged with Black RasTafaris’ claim that they are of mixed race, ‘genetically compromised’, not pureblood Black Africans. That seems to show how difficult it is for an ethnographer – let alone a scientific department in environmental agencies – to make scientific claims about people’s genetic makeup, since they are already intertwined with the political one.

I have often heard a Bossiedokter refer to another RasTafari as being “ruled by Babylon”, “a wolf in sheepskin or a fake”, a “sell-out”, at times referred to as “Afropean”. And this brings us back to the question, and the value, of authenticity. It is important to see how authorities develop criteria to evaluate authenticity, since as I will show next, authorities are under pressure to allow healers access and support in the legitimisation process of their practice. The question of authenticity brings forth competing claims to authenticity based on different ‘histories’, something we have seen in the previous chapter is also composed of silence. What do the healers have to do to interact effectively with this new world, which still involves dealing with the “Babylon system”, while maintaining their links to a past world. Their struggle for liberation seems far from complete when we start to

consider the changes needed for them to fit into the framework provided by the post-colonial, post-apartheid society. In other words, what do the healers stand to lose through this process when authorities create a space for them, but not without certain limitations and restrictions? And on the other hand, what do they stand to gain?

Indeed, as we shall see, this is neither a novel issue for the healers, who are apparently aware of their own organisational shortcomings, nor something they resist engaging in, since they have already initiated various processes to facilitate their own internal ‘house cleaning’:

We are stuck with too many corrupted people who are fakes and who don't know anything about the spirit of healing, but who claim to be healers, but those are not healers, they are witches...

(Cingiswa, Sangoma, 23 January 2011)

The claims the Bossiedokters are making is for an environmentalism that links existing conservation practice with medicinal value as part of their liberation and perhaps even, on some levels, their religion. It also demands that conservation principles become more strictly imposed even in private land. But, to generalize and continue to consider it all as the same thing, as Babylon, might not strategically be the most productive approach for the healers any longer – it might even make the transformations they are trying to promote more difficult. In the next chapter I hope to show how the Bossiedokters practice and the scientific authorities of nature conservation can only be understood in relation to each other, and through this very social exchange.

Chapter Three

CapeNature, co-management and environmental justice

The New Constitution of South Africa adopted by the ANC in 1996, states in number 24 (b) of its Bill of Rights that “everyone has the right to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that (ii) promote conservation...” and “(iii) secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.” Number 31 (1) of the Bill of Rights states that “Persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community – (a) to enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language; and (b) to form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society. As a part of post-Apartheid land restitution processes, the Department of Environmental Affairs rolled out the People and Parks programme in 2007 with the aim to consummate the state mandated marriage between environmental rights and the rights to cultural belonging. Successful land claimants settled for co-management agreements with existing conservation agencies, thereby receiving ownership in title while the conservation status of protected areas remained intact (Walker, 2010: 281). Pledging the prioritisation of environmental rights, the People and Parks programme was to facilitate co-management implementation and in the Western Cape, CapeNature Conservation Board was given the mandate to implement it. Bossiedokters were already participating in CapeNature’s Community-Based Natural Resource Management programme and were invited to participate in the national programme with other traditional healers. In this chapter I look into the run-up to implementation, and the social implications of progressive policies which aim at including communities in environmental co-management. More

specifically, I present the relationship between Bossiedokters and CapeNature as a case of limited implementation of co-management policy.

I will analyse how Constitutional discourse provided a framework for new environmental laws to ensure environmental management promoted social and political transformation, through recognizing the cultural needs of marginalized indigenous peoples and including them in protected area planning and management⁹. For that, I look into CapeNature's Community and Reserve managers understanding of People and Parks programme I engage critically their discourse on co-management strategies. Here, I employ Cepek's (2011) exploration of the concept of *environmentality* to explain why a Foucauldian approach to environmental forms of governmentality could benefit from a better conceptualisation and the historical specificity of what co-management in South Africa actually represents. I present an ethnographic account of CapeNature's attempts at social transformation, and the dialogue between CapeNature and Bossiedokters. Reading this dialogue closely will allow me to argue that CapeNature does not have the capacity to implement co-management policy, for three main reasons. Firstly, the dominant understanding of the 'fortress' character – that in which people and nature remain separated – of environmentality. Secondly, the bureaucratic machinery of this agency, or differently put, the hierarchy of expertise which tends to limit more democratic participation. Thirdly, the manner in which unequal power structures and provides the platform for the communication between different insiders and outsiders continues to privilege the first at the cost of the other. While co-management in protected areas emerged as a way of addressing racial and economic inequality, a more radical approach seems to be what Bossiedokters demand.

⁹ Relevant legislation includes National Environmental Management Act (1998), Biodiversity Act (2004), Protected Areas Act (2003) and National Forests Act (1998).

I begin by describing the government agencies' attempt at progressive environmentalism. I combine the official discourse of CapeNature in official media vehicles, with CapeNature's staff interviews, and the interviews and participant observation of Bossiedokters and CapeNature dialogues. While images of traditional healers are displayed as colourful examples of cultural diversity in CapeNature reports and marketing campaigns, Bossiedokters seem convinced CapeNature contributes to reinforce oppressive practices inherited from Apartheid. They believe their continued exclusion is justified through CapeNature's sustainability concerns, which demands from traditional healers a model of scientific research to monitor and govern their engagement with nature. The conflict which underlies this dialogue resides not only in the laws and institutional protocol, Bossiedokters believe, but especially in the fundamental cultural differences regarding nature and conservation. What appeared as a battle between environmental rights at odds with human rights takes shape of a more complex kind of environmentalism: one which silences the very social inequalities which it aims at confronting. But how exactly does this silencing happen?

Apparatuses of environmentalism

[C]onservationists are acting as gatekeepers to a discussion table that does not have a place set for those whose homeland's future hangs in the balance... In the real world, conservation of forests and justice for biodiversity cannot be achieved until conservationists incorporate other peoples into their own moral universe and share indigenous peoples' goals of justice and recognition of human rights. (Alcorn, 1993: 426)

According to Cock (1991:1), the “people and parks” discourse linked “the struggle against social injustice and the exploitation of people with the struggle against the abuse of the environment”. After 1994, the idea of co-management as a model for protected areas, started to feature in the objectives of international Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) movements, linking social justice with environmental management agendas (Walker, 2010). In effect, it demanded a place should be set at the conservation discussion table for indigenous peoples to become an integral part of the transformation and change in conservation management, an alternative model to the forms of top-down management practiced by conservation authorities (Brosius, 2005: 28). It is founded on the premises that local populations are greatly invested in the sustainable use of natural resources, more informed about the “intricacies of local ecological processes and practices” and are competent to effectively manage their resources through their own forms of access (Brosius, 2005:1). Since 1995, this is considered by many international conservationists the most effective democratic model for emancipatory enterprise in conservation management, a managerial apparatus that is able to address and contribute to the eradication of social, cultural and economic injustice.

Cape Nature implemented its own version of this model after 2003. According to Cingiswa (Interview, Stellenbosch, 29 February 2011), a Sangoma who has been involved with CapeNature since the beginning of its CBNRM program and who served for three years as the chairperson of the Western Cape People and Parks steering committee, the decision to finally involve communities in conservation in South Africa through legislation resulted from the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in August 2002. While many non-governmental organization representatives characterise the Summit as a failure (World Summit, 2002) Cingiswa affirms the Summit particularly illuminated the lack of government strategies to ensure community involvement in

conservation management. According to her, despite other shortcomings, the Summit motivated the Department of Environmental Affairs to act upon the already common sense that there is indeed a space for communities to benefit from environmental protection programmes. This notion was an important premise of the “people and parks” discourse within the ANC land restitution projects, since the outcomes of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 (Walker, 2010:280).

In 2003, the World Parks Congress was hosted in Durban. Three thousand delegates attended, including resource managers, scientists, civil servants, industry leaders and NGO’s. One of its aims was to produce a practical guide to not only involve governments and businesses, but also to give a platform from which communities could speak and be heard. According to its official report, the Congress aimed at the “incorporation of protected areas in government policy, the development of protected areas as sound business propositions and the sustainable management thereof with the involvement and support of local communities” (World Parks Congress, 2003). A long list of official recommendations resulted from the Congress, and amongst it was an urgent call for governments, intergovernmental organisations, NGO’s, civil societies and local communities to “establish and implement mechanisms to address historical injustices caused through the establishment of protected areas...with special attention given...to access natural resources and sacred sites within protected areas” (Oteng-Yeboah et al., 2005: 139-218).

The recommendations called for mechanisms that facilitate the restitution of land, territories and resources for indigenous peoples after their land was declared protected areas during Apartheid. Protected area authorities were summoned to support any initiatives aimed at revitalizing traditional practices and knowledge of indigenous people regarding land, water and resource management. It called for a critical review of existing conservation laws and policies impacting on indigenous people’s livelihoods, and to ensure

community participation in the review process. Finally, it also recommended that all members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) should carry out a program of work, “with the full participation of indigenous peoples, to support indigenous peoples’ initiatives and interests regarding protected areas”, and to provide support and funding to indigenous peoples for “community-conserved, co-managed and indigenous-owned and managed protected areas” (Oteng-Yeboah, 2003: 139-218). These recommendations became foundational in Cape Nature’s Community Based Natural Resource Management program, and were also referred to when developing the National People and Parks Programme a few years later. Of importance here is to notice how the rights of ‘indigenous people’ and ‘restitution’ of ‘traditional practices’ and ‘indigenous knowledge’ featured as a primary concern, demanding community participation to assure that reviews and adjustments or changes made in conservation laws and policies are implemented in a manner that would result in a access of traditional practitioners to natural resources.

According to a statement issued by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (2004), representatives from a number of rural communities who lived in or near protected areas in South Africa (Richtersveld, Khomani San, Riemvasmaak, Makuleke areas and iSimangaliso/St Lucia) attended a meeting at Cape Vidal on the eve of the World Parks Congress. The Director General of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism also attended, and agreed to facilitate a follow-up meeting to allow elaboration of the important issues raised. The aim was to formulate a plan to ensure that government and conservation agencies would assist in the protection and upholding of the rights of communities affected by conservation programmes. These meetings became known as the People and Parks Forums. The following year, in October 2004, the first People and Parks session were held in Swadini Forever Resort in Hoedspruit, Mpumalanga (People and

Parks, 2011). Representatives from government, conservation agencies, citizens' organisations and several other stakeholders in protected area management attended. Here the focus shifted to allow all indigenous people with interests in protected areas to share their experiences and compare challenges faced. Most of the participants at this stage were land claimants. Finally, after two more conferences, one in 2006 and another in 2008, an Action Plan was developed to provide a structure and framework for the national implementation of the People and Parks Programme. The program was shaped by the needs of land claimants who received title of ownership in several protected areas, and now had to become active in co-management arrangements. It therefore originated primarily as an attempt to find working and lasting solutions for difficulties arising from such land claims, a central part of land restitution processes. It aimed at 'empowering' and preparing the owners for full management in the future.

Meanwhile, in the Western Cape, CapeNature was implementing their Community-Based Natural Resource Management Program which formed together with their Local Economic Development projects the two legs of their socio-economic development activities. It resonated harmoniously with the new broad objective of the National Environmental Management Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003, to promote "the sustainable use of protected areas for the benefit of the people" (CapeNature Annual Report, 2008/2009). The programme set out to involve local communities in CapeNature activities, while continuing to preserve the ecological character of their reserves. CapeNature encouraged disadvantaged community members to access protected areas and increase their conservation awareness by facilitating various educational workshops. It followed a clear logic that communities were required to become educated in conservation management first, prior to any 'co-management' in the protection of their own natural resources. The idea that local communities knew how to manage their natural resources effectively

through traditional forms of access did not feature much in CapeNature's educational approach. Socio-economic development became structurally framed as one of the three cornerstones of CapeNature's general strategic approach to conservation, referred to as their 'golden triangle' (CapeNature website). The other two corners of this golden triangle are 'sustainable biodiversity conservation' and 'tourism'. Interestingly, it states on the official CapeNature Web page that sustainable biodiversity conservation is "inextricably linked" with socio-economic development and tourism. The objectives and aims of the Department Of Environmental Affairs are clearly reflected in the public texts of CapeNature. The web page states CapeNature prioritises projects that aim towards higher levels of inclusion of marginalized Black people in protected areas, and that they are actively busy reconstructing existing conservation protocols to make it align with the fight against poverty and inequality.

Although the Community-Based program was in principal a response to the new Environmental Act, its approach aligned CapeNature with the co-management developments and decisions made at the People and Parks Forums. There have been no successful land-claims in any of the CapeNature conservation areas in the Boland District so far, therefore here, as in most of the Western Cape, it was the traditional healers who were to become 'empowered' as community representatives. CapeNature's community liaison committees initiated under their existing Community-Based program consisted mostly of Natural Resource User Group (NRUG) representatives, who are traditional healers, not new landowners. The status of community participants in CapeNature's existing program was therefore significantly different from the status of community participants invited to join the People and Parks programme in other provinces, them being the new landowners of the reserves. The People and Parks Program's focus to facilitate co-management presented itself as a useful vessel by which government could simultaneously

uncover the environmental and social needs of indigenous groups, whether they were claiming land or merely claiming rights to access protected areas. The aim of the programme in protected areas where land claims have not produced new owners was to source 'authentic' community representatives and provide a platform for interaction with conservation authorities through the construction of community Steering Committees. The Steering Committee representatives were to become the voice of 'the people', channelling their needs and concerns to conservation authorities via the People and Parks platform provided by the Department of Environmental Affairs.

On the local level, interaction and collaboration between community representatives through local Liaison Committees and local reserve managers were supposed to result in the implementation of projects that would allow community participation, sustainable harvesting and conservation awareness, and allow communities to benefit from various economic development projects, through the implementation of co-management. Reserve managers were given the task to act on a local level in creative collaboration with community groups and think of resolutions for local problems with local projects accommodating local knowledge and skills. In this manner, conservation agencies remained the gatekeepers of protected areas, and the only authority to manage how, when and what activities 'the people' would be allowed to engage with inside protected areas, whether they are the owners or User Groups. The power 'the people' have in conflicts or disputes which emerge during their interaction with authorities is, nonetheless, very limited. That is the case of the Bossiedokters, and the nature of their conflict with CapeNature.

Interaction between CapeNature and Bossiedokters

Up until 2008, the creation of Community-Based forums in CapeNature was considered by Bossiedokters a respectable, groundbreaking progressive first step towards ‘co-management’ in the Western Cape. The well-defined aims of CapeNature’s programme were believed to promote a ‘true African liberation’. They figure in CapeNature’s discourse as the guardians of an almost extinct indigenous medicinal KhoiSan knowledge, and as having access to the material upon which their practice is grounded, the indigenous Kaapse Fynbos (or Cape Fine Bush). In the Boland area, Bossiedokter’s aspirations were not concentrated on ownership of land in protected areas, or on managing and sharing of economic benefits to be made out of eco-tourism or other conservation practices, but on unrestricted access to perform their rituals and primarily to obtain legal permission to harvest medicinal plants. CapeNature explains the focus of Community Based Natural Resource Management activities to be concentrated on “the restoration of traditional values and systems whilst relieving pressure on natural resources; utilisation of the protected areas for neighbouring community cultural, spiritual and traditional practices; utilisation of the protected areas for sustainable harvesting of natural resources; increased community participation in the management and enjoyment of the CapeNature Protected Areas” (CapeNature, 2011). Their vision statement reads as “[t]he establishment of a successful ‘Conservation Economy’ embraced by all citizens of the Western Cape and to transform biodiversity conservation into a key component of local economic development in the province”. Their goals and objectives feature key phrases such as ‘transformation’, ‘partnerships’, ‘human capital’, and also ‘sustainability’, ‘equitable access’ and ‘community participation’, which the Bossiedokters came to understand as forms of “freedom”.

The Siyabulela Brochure – which translates from isiXhosa as “we are grateful” – already suggests that CapeNature’s Community-based and Local Economic Development programmes have successfully implemented various community-based projects (Van Vuuren, 2007). The CapeNature Annual Reports from 2007 up to 2010 shows statistic of the programmes to have benefited hundreds of community members in terms of job opportunities and increased participation in conservation practice, exactly as planned. Significant efforts are made to market and present these projects to the public sector and various local and international stakeholders and funding organizations. The reports testify of successful efforts of CapeNature to organize communities into forums and to host community meetings, where community representatives voice their needs and work through their issues. It assures CapeNature’s commitment to community participation, and to providing opportunities for training and education of communities in issues of conservation and sustainable development. However, every year less emphasis is put on restoration of traditional values, sustainable harvesting of indigenous medicinal plants, and community access to parks, co-management, or any new community-based projects initiated since 2007. It appears that recommendations made after the World Parks Congress held in Durban in 2003 have slowly become watered down to quasi-successful development of a few liaison committees and a rather powerless People and Parks Steering Committee.

When one carefully reads the statistics provided in CapeNature Annual reports from 2008 to 2010, a huge decline can be noticed in the numbers of community members accessing parks for spiritual and cultural purposes. Particularly RasTafari activities and other traditional healer activities, referred to in the report as “traditional healing, patients and trainees”, have dropped significantly: from 517 entries logged in 2009 to a mere 44 entries logged in 2010 (Cape Nature Annual Report, 2010: 19). Cape Nature’s Community-

Based programme categorized this as a completely separate interaction from the accompanying harvesting practices of the Bossiedokters. CapeNature's policy also stipulates that no individual applications for individual 'spiritual and cultural' interests would be considered. Individuals can only obtain special access to restricted areas by becoming members of an organization, whose representatives then negotiate access on behalf of its members. Only after a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between the local reserve manager and the relevant organization, would access be allowed. This policy caused the formalization of, and in some areas, the construction of new user group organizations whose members were previously mostly very informal and unstructured. Many traditional healers who previously functioned independently from any formal structures now joined healer organizations as their only hope to gain land access.

In Paarl and in Stellenbosch, two such Memorandums of Understanding have been signed with the Nyahbinghi RasTafari churches, since the church structures were 'organized' sufficiently to negotiate their access. The first one was signed in Paarl in September 2005 and the second one in Stellenbosch in 2010. The Memorandums served partially to help formalize a relationship between the Nyahbinghi churches, the Xhosa traditional healers, the RasTafari Herbal Counsels, the independent Bossiedokters and the CapeNature park managers. It allowed registered group members to access reserves for spiritual and cultural activities, and intended to set the stage for the development of the long awaited and very much sought-after Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The Agreement would be signed with the RasTafari Herbal Councils as opposed to the Nyahbinghi churches, and would only allow Bossiedokters who are registered members of the Herbal Councils to apply for harvesting permits.

For the Boland RasTafari Bossiedokters, the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding indicated the end of incarceration and prosecution for the 'poaching' of

medicinal plants. It suggested the beginning of a formal recognition of their currently still illegal medicinal and spiritual practices due to the promise of an Agreement to harvest that would soon follow. The Understanding was a symbolic first step towards finally ending what they speak of as “legacy of colonial oppression”. Since they affirm that there is no acknowledgement from government agencies that the legal status of the Bossiedokters’ practices are in need of revision, Bossiedokters believe that CapeNature would become the podium to carry their voice to government authorities. The Memorandum of Understanding signed with the RasTafaris, stipulates that all members of the RasTafari Nyahbinghi church have free access to the reserves for spiritual and cultural purposes. The administrators of the church had to inform Cape Nature at least seven days prior to a visitation, and provide exact numbers of entries and exactly where they intend to go and when they will return. This arrangement did not suit the Bossiedokters at all. The Bossiedokters have dreams or visions during rituals after which they are often instantly inspired to go to the mountain. It is only when they reach the mountain that they are “guided” where to go next. Obviously, since they have not been allowed to harvest any plants, the core of their practice is impractical. The Bossiedokters therefore decided to utilize the agreement for access for church rituals only.

Testing the viability of the Memorandum of Understanding, the Stellenbosch Nyahbinghi church applied to host their annual ‘seven-day’ Nyahbinghi ritual in Stellenbosch Jonkershoek mountain reserve. The ritual entails a small fire to be kept burning for seven days. Participants stay around the fire and engage in traditional drumming, singing of traditional ‘chants’, praying and fasting. Herbs are also collected from the surrounding mountain slopes for preparation of their various mixes of cleansing and purifying teas that is consumed by all participants in large quantities throughout the ritual. The reserve manager insisted on adherence to existing reserve rules stipulating that

no fires are allowed inside the park, no one is allowed to stay overnight, and under no circumstances would it be allowed for anyone to pick any plants. Also, the RasTafaris are not allowed to go to the nearby waterfalls for their ritualistic washing of dreadlocks, since it is a popular tourist attraction and the manager wanted to avoid any 'conflict of interest'. Using the new infrastructures provided by CapeNature for such negotiations, such issues were first raised at community liaison meetings. The matter was then referred to the senior managers at head office by the local managers and an 'Access'-meeting was scheduled. At this meeting issues were discussed and argued more extensively. When no final resolutions could be obtained at this level, due to an official being absent, the matter was taken to the next provincial People and Parks meeting. Access cards were discussed, fees were discussed, methods to control members were discussed, but until November 2011 no RasTafari rituals have been allowed in the reserve. The ritualistic 'washing of dreadlocks' was understood by CapeNature officials to be more 'recreational' than a spiritual or cultural activity. According to a staff member "the lines blurred a bit" and RasTafaris would have to pay for access, unless they can prove that their activities are in fact 'spiritual and cultural' in nature. More than one official said that if CapeNature allowed one particular religious group to access the river free of charge to go 'swimming' in the pools, they could surely not refuse the next group.

RasTafaris were asked to consider whether it would be 'fair' to allow free access to the hiking trails and waterfalls, and then refuse the Dutch Reformed Church (with its thousands of members) if they also apply for permission for their members to go 'swim' in the pools on Sundays. The Bossiedokters responded that the routes now sold to tourist as the 'waterfall hiking trails', were carved by the feet of their Khoi-Khoi ancestor traditional healers who walked that route when taking apprentice-healers for healer initiation rituals high up in the mountain falls. They insisted that they should be able to follow their

ancestors' footsteps and go show their children the traditional paths. The Stellenbosch reserve manager, Patrick Shone, subsequently generously offered an alternative river some distance from the hiking trails where RasTafaris could go wash their dreadlocks. However, the RasTafaris were vexed about the blatant refusal to compromise on the 'original' routes, the fire restrictions, the arguments about the legitimacy of their proposed activities as being 'spiritual and cultural' or 'recreational' and the refusal to allow them to pick herbs for immediate consumption. They were further annoyed when six months went by without any action taken to implement the formal decision made by CapeNature to issue membership cards to all Bossiedokters. The cards would allow cardholders to enter reserves without seven-day notice, but before it could be implemented, central management blocked the decision. As of November 2011, these cards have not been issued yet.

Many Bossiedokters have also withdrawn from further negotiations with the managers. The church members decided they would rather continue using the area they have been using in the past, than having to "beg permission" from the reserve manager whenever they want to enter the reserve. This area is outside the park and really not suitable for their purposes. It is situated in an extremely wet, muddy and small space below a main road, and littered with rubbish dumped there illegally by 'unknown elements'. However, the RasTafaris at least are confident that they will not be disturbed or interrupted there by any state police, conservation officials or "nosy tourist" who wants to disrupt their rituals (Interview, RasTafari Elder, Cloeteville, 14 May 2011). At one stage, it was suggested that tourists could join or observe the RasTafari traditional rituals, or received guided tours to identify medicinal herbs that grow along the walking routes, but so far, the Bossiedokters have refused. They say the sacredness of the rituals would be compromised with such interference and would spoil the purpose of the rituals. If such

'tours' were to be considered at all, it would be something completely separate from the authentic rituals as currently practiced by the church and the healers.

The remaining RasTafari representatives recently identified an unused area in the reserve. It is secluded and a safe place to make a fire, big enough to host Nyahbinghi rituals and far from the main tourist route. According to the Bossiedokters, it is not close enough to where Khoi-Khoi healers were initiated prior to the introduction of Conservation control during Apartheid, but it could serve as a suitable compromise. This area falls just outside CapeNature's boundary though. It is still on government-owned land, under conservation status and inside the main gate manned by CapeNature staff, but is under the management of Mountain to Ocean (Pty) Ltd. This company leases the land from government for commercial pine (*Pina*) forestry, an invasive alien species that could be considered as one of the biggest threats to indigenous Fynbos (Le Maitre et al., 2002: 144). Very few indigenous plants survive in a pine forest and are often actively removed to reduce chances of fires breaking out in the forests, while allowing easier access for harvesting machinery. Yet, the area is still considered a conservation area. The RasTafaris in turn, believe that here the line between conservation and commercial is blurred.

CapeNature, in line with their approach to increase dialogue between communities and authorities, arranged and hosted a meeting between the RasTafari representatives and a manager from Mountain to Ocean. The manager listened patiently to the RasTafaris request to hold rituals at the proposed area. They explained in detail and with frequent inputs from the CapeNature community manager why this space is considered so suitable and safe. However, without much hesitation, the Mountain to Ocean manager responded by a blatant refusal to compromise on existing policy, and would not suffer anyone to stay overnight. The area identified by the RasTafaris is situated right next to the main river, a few hundred meters away from the nearest pine forests. According to CapeNature's managers, it could

without much effort be prepared to ensure that a single controlled fire would not be a fire-threat to surrounding vegetation. However, the manager insisted that fire laws were not negotiable. It appears as if the manager was willing to continue negotiations as long as CapeNature remained a mediating partner, but for now he insisted that it was not in his power to allow any of the proposed activities (MTO Meeting, Jonkershoek, 24 June 2010).

I started my interviews with the CapeNature reserve managers in 2009, almost a year prior to the meeting with Mountain to Ocean. I listened to, recorded and took extensive notes of their explanations of the problems they experienced over the years with the RasTafari healers, and I was sympathetic towards CapeNature at the time. They were convinced the practices of participating healers, if managed in a constructive manner, posed no serious threats to biodiversity, and everyone genuinely wanted to find a way forward. They expressed tolerance to differences, and would even sometimes bend certain rules and regulations (off the record) to hasten the process, but there were always endless administrative demands, prerequisites and guidelines to adhere to. These demands were passed down to local management from central management, who reported directly to the ‘gatekeepers’ - the scientific department – who usually made the most crippling demands, always justified by their shared concern to protect nature from being destroyed by ignorant and uneducated people.

CapeNature managers from the Boland area provided the following explanations, or what they referred to as “Issues and Stumbling blocks” hampering the success of RasTafari community participation (Interview, Paarl, 26 October 2009). Firstly, CapeNature is in need of a champion(s) to assist them with implementation of the RasTafari projects. The single Conservation Community Manager assigned to manage the whole Boland Area, cannot cope on his own with the responsibilities. In short, CapeNature is under-staffed. Secondly, the high turnover in community management staff since 2005 caused a lack of

continuity. Sometimes, months elapsed before a manager was replaced. This resulted in previous groundwork to become lost during turnovers. Thirdly, reserve staff were not trained in community management. One manager, Patrick Shone, honestly referred to this as “an embarrassing fact” and “a relic of the apartheid era where the reserves were managed in isolation” (Interview, Paarl Reserve Manager, 26 October 2009). He suggested reserve staff often do not have the most basic theoretical tools or knowledge how to manage communities. Reserve staff were not resistant to change at all, “but they need to know the process behind it”. Fourthly, CapeNature officials experience RasTafaris’ mistrust of authority. Fifthly, the RasTafaris believe their knowledge of the veld to be sacred and it could not be shared with just anyone, particularly not with state authorities, or “Babylon”. Sixthly, the RasTafaris were hoping for a “quick fix” in 2005, when the first formal community meeting was held with the Nyahbinghi church in Paarl. When the RasTafaris realized it was going to take some years of research before any harvesting could become allowed, many became despondent and retired from participation.

I found the issues mentioned above relevant and contributing to the lack of progress. However, I do not believe the resolution of these issues would result in the issuing of harvesting permits. It would take more than a couple of champions or a ‘few years’ of scientific research to prove empirically that the Bossiedokter practices are indeed sustainable. The high turnover in staff sounds like a reasonable explanation if there was more groundwork done in the first place, but for the last two years there has been no turnover in community managers and there has also been almost no progress in the implementation of the promising new harvesting policies either. Indeed, the Stellenbosch Herbal Counsel chairman is convinced that the last two years made it clearer that even if community participants and community managers and reserve managers agreed on the issuing of harvesting permits, it would still not be allowed by the scientific department. The

distrust which RasTafaris have towards managers is being reinforced by the fact that no resolutions have emerged out of close to ten years of negotiations. RasTafaris have shared a lot of their knowledge with researchers and reserve managers over the past five years despite it being considered sacred knowledge, and to almost no result. If RasTafaris had to participate in research voluntarily, without any financial structures in place to help support them, or any alternative support to see them through ‘some years of scientific research’ needed to allow them to obtain harvesting permits, then alluding their withdrawal due to them “looking for a ‘quick fix’” is perhaps not suitable terminology after several years of unsuccessful participation in seemingly fruitless dialogue.

An interview with the provincial community programme manager (Bellville, 28 August 2009), revealed a significant limitation in CapeNature’s capacity to implement their new harvesting policies. At the time, the final edit of the new CapeNature ‘Policy on Consumptive and Commercial Utilization of biological resources from protected areas and surrounds’, was yet to be distributed amongst local reserve managers. I obtained a copy of an outdated edit of the policy, marked with the letters “DRAFT” across every page, from a reserve manager two weeks earlier, which was according to him still under final review. During the interview with the provincial community programme manager, he claimed the new policy has been accepted and been in place since 2007. According to him, it was the responsibility of community representatives and their organizations to engage through the CBNRM forums with their local reserve managers and apply for harvesting permits, as easy as that. Everybody simply had to familiarize themselves with the requirements and criteria stipulated in the policy statements, and follow the clear guidelines in the policy...which at that stage has been not been distributed to the managers as yet...?

I took out the “DRAFT” copy, and asked him if this was the policy he referred to. He looked at it and said it was. I then asked him about the requirements in the policy regarding

monitoring and assessment of “the socio-economic influence on sustaining the resource sector, and sufficient measures being put in place to monitor and regularly audit the harvesting and associated impacts” (Cape Nature, 2007 “Draft” Policy on Consumptive Utilization. 1. (h), (i)). The following discussion emerged:

Interviewer (L): Regarding the assessments spoken about in the first point [of the policy], is Cape Nature aiming to do those assessments, or do the project applicants have to do them?

Project Manager (M): Firstly, we start by saying that our approach to any harvesting application is a reactive one. We don't go out proactively and say, you know, we request proposal from communities to do this. We...

L: But if there is an application you will respond to it?

M: Yes, and the quicker response... would be, if people want to harvest exotics... that we encourage... even the policy says we encourage harvesting of exotics, whether its alien fish or its alien invasive plants. Yes, and in there we are not even interested in more science about... around... cause if there is alien fish in a certain dam we would encourage people to harvest, but we give input in terms of project design and we will take responsibility there. It won't be as... uhm, laws... they will want to know how much was taken out, you know?

L: Also things like black wattle and pine?

M: But that would be a quick project, the only problem we have at this stage is an institutional capability to deal with harvesting of indigenous resources.

L: Protected ones, yes?

M: Yes, because now there must be a monitoring done, who is going to do that monitoring?

L: Exactly, that is what I was asking about?

M: Yes, we don't have staff... its been backed... we have been trying to get more funding... to get more people... to be ready for that... But we don't even have people to do the same as actually what you have been talking about... to say... uhm... to engage with the NRUG's around projects... these projects... on a more focused basis.

L: Ok

M: To say fine, this is an application for... whatever.

L: So there is a need for that, in fact?

M: There is a need for people to do that, that's what the policy will talk about... staff to do the monitoring, the harvesting levels... who will determine the harvesting levels? You know? Because at this stage there is no records where people have been harvesting, there has been no information that have been recorded.

L: So it would be preferable if a project application includes such considerations.

M: It must have a focus on people who will be doing the monitoring, cause we need that information, we need to know the... we need to understand the patterns, you know... uhm, if this... what's their harvesting methods? What do you hurt to that species and to the broader of that area? So those scientists will need to be able to focus on those kind of things... We don't have in our budget.

In short, the manager suggested it is up to the user groups to provide researchers and/or source funding for monitoring and impact assessments, since CapeNature do not have staff or money to do so. It is also up to the user groups to come up with research proposals and harvesting proposals that include monitoring and evaluation in the design that would suffice the scientific department. The proposals have to show how the proposed harvesting will be empirically sustainable, what impact it will have on the environment and what records will be kept in order to provide the necessary evidence that practices will remain sustainable in the future. It also has to include a business plan with detailed discussions of their market analysis, product or service development, marketing strategy, financial data, organization structures and management, ownership structure, risk factors, sales profitability objectives, cash flow projections, asset acquisition schedules, projected profit and loss statements and the list goes on. For very obvious reasons, this has so far been unobtainable by the Bossiedokters. For businessmen and economic enterprises this may appear like fairly standard, and very 'reasonable' rational expectations, to the Bossiedokters and their 'organizations', it appears like just another method used by Babylon structure to exclude them without breaking any of the inherited laws.

According to the Bossiedokters, the Department of Environmental Affairs allocated a significant budget to CapeNature in 2007 to implement the People and Parks Programme. However, according to the programme manager there was never enough money available for the implementation of any community projects to assist Natural Resource User Group members to cultivate medicinal plants, or to initiate the necessary research that would convince the scientific department to allow sustainable harvesting in the reserves. The problem is here conceptualised as lack of “institutional capability”, but how much research and empirical evidence would be sufficient to prove empirically that the harvesting of a minimum count of eighty-three medicinal plants currently utilized by the Bossiedokters, is indeed sustainable. How much would this research cost, and does the actual impact the Bossiedokters have on biodiversity justify the cost of the research? What remains obvious from this dilemma is that the healers remain completely powerless. The policy allows them theoretically the right to harvest, but in practice, it remains impossible to do so with very little hope of obtaining permits in the near future. As long as CapeNature lacks the necessary funding to implement their new agreements and responsibilities to the communities, the Bossiedokters will remain poachers. Point nr (7) of the final policy clearly states:

CapeNature will establish a monitoring and evaluation system by which to record data and other information on harvesting activities, monitor the impact on the protected area and its biodiversity of activities performed in terms of the agreement, and monitor compliance with the agreement and any set norms and standards, in particular with regard to international best practice. (CapeNature Policy on Consumptive Utilization, 2007)

Meanwhile, community and reserve managers have made the Bossiedokters complete other requirements, leaving the most complicated issue until last. The hope being it will prepare the Bossiedokters for final application once they have all requirements

checked with only assessments and monitoring left to resolve, since this was CapeNature's responsibility. The RasTafari Herbal Counsels provided lists of all members with photos, copies of identity documents and other personal details. Representatives provided official letters with letterheads from their organizations stating they are indeed authentic representative members. Bossiedokters provided detailed lists of plants, amounts used, where and how much they wanted to harvest, prices herbs are sold at, methods of harvesting, and so on. When the Stellenbosch Bossiedokters asked to fill out an official harvesting application form themselves, the local community manager could not produce one. His last response on the matter was in September 2011, "I do not think that there are such forms available yet" (Interview, Community manager, Jonkershoek, 22 September 2011). This is four and a half years after the Consumptive Utilization policy has been accepted for implementation. In other words, all applications are being processed verbally, and very little records are kept of discussions between community managers and community members.

Until 2009 none of the healers in Stellenbosch and Paarl had access to email. It was only after my research started that a paper trail of access and harvesting negotiations started to materialize. By then most of the healers had already given up hope in the Community-Based Natural Resource Management programme, but in 2010, their plan of action changed. Bossiedokters decided to create a paper trail of all negotiations, record all past grievances and create wish lists and recommendations to submit at the People and Parks provincial meetings. The hope was that Bossiedokters interactions with local managers would be properly documented, it could be channelled through the system to the relevant higher-level authorities, and eventually reach the Department of Environmental Affairs. The Bossiedokters decided that they could no longer trust the community management team of CapeNature to mind their interests for them. The fact that over five years of

negotiations with the park managers have not been able to go beyond restricting access permits, the establishing of authentic ‘spiritual and cultural’ activities and negotiating of issues such as whether the making of a small fire during rituals was not allowed, many RasTafaris perceived any further attempts to gain permits for harvesting a waste of time. On the other hand, reserve managers claimed they received insufficient information and guidelines from their superiors, and they are in a limited position to improvise, since they will be held responsible if things go wrong. The policy guidelines clearly stipulate no harvesting must be allowed unless a proper impact assessment has been completed, and an implementable plan for monitoring and evaluation is in place.

When interviewed, the head of the scientific department proclaimed that although park managers should follow the guidelines where possible they should allow the process to continue even if all guidelines were not met. He suggested that the guidelines provided in the policy were not intended as laws that could prevent implementation. This contradicted the information given by local and area managers. When I asked him why traditional healers are getting impatient to the extent that they are withdrawing completely from the programme, he told me the healers must be willing to take baby steps, and that change is not to be expected in a hurry. This was also a topic of a workshop a few months earlier, when an official told a Bossiedokter he must always remember, “Rome was not built in a day”. But Bossiedokters believe that if they are not even successful to negotiate a single permission, and if their family members are not allowed to accompany them to the waterfalls for ritualistic cleansing and washing of dreadlocks without having to pay entrance fees, they simply cannot access the reserve. Also, if they are not allowed to pick fresh herbs for consumption (only during rituals) in the park, the Memorandums they have been signing served very little purpose. In short, the conditions of access offered are not sufficient. Bossiedokters assume that the only compromise the authorities have been

willing to make so far, is to allow them to not pay for entrance fees, and still excluding their direct family.

At the latest signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in 2010, the Executive Director of Operations was disappointed with the low turnout of Stellenbosch RasTafaris. He suggested the community appears 'not serious' about the agreement, insinuating they were wasting CapeNature's time. When those who attended heard about his comments, they became furious. According to them, CapeNature officials informed the community of the signing event only one day in advance. CapeNature provided transport for the members from Cloetesville to the CapeNature offices in Jonkershoek. They sent a big truck usually utilized for fire fighting operations in the reserves. RasTafari woman and men were dressed in their traditional garments, which made it even harder to climb up the steep and slippery metal ladder of the truck. Some of the older members took one look at the truck, turned around and went back home.

Why can't they send their mini-buses to come and fetch us? Now they send this old truck and expect us to climb up the side of it like baboons. These people have no respect for us, imagine that, if they had to go and fetch whites from town, would they expect them to climb up and down this truck. We are elders, we are not youths or kids. We are really tired of this same old treatment. (Elder RasTafari woman, Jonkershoek, 10 June 2010)

After this incident, Bossiedokters decided to approach the top-level senior executive management of Cape Nature directly. It appeared the directors were unaware of conflicts at local and central management level. Not one Bossiedokter or RasTafari church member had entered Jonkershoek reserve gates prior to or since the signing of the Memorandum in Stellenbosch in 2010. From 2008 onwards, CapeNature community management became absorbed in the implementation of Western Cape People and Parks community meetings.

They have been very successful in organizing quarterly meetings at various venues around the Western Cape, transporting representatives to and from meetings and accommodated them in guesthouses for the duration of the meetings. CapeNature officials facilitated the formalization of a Western Cape Steering Committee, facilitated the democratic election of a chairperson, secretary, treasurer and so on, and went to great lengths to ensure that there are always sufficient representatives of each area present at meetings. These meetings have become a space where community representatives from different areas could interact, share experiences of struggles and identify shared needs with each other. It also provided a space where concerns could be raised and information could be exchanged about conservation practices.

Cingiswa viewed the first year of the Programme especially enthusiastically. Everyone felt the involvement of Department of Environmental Affairs would speed up the process, and put more pressure on CapeNature to respond to the needs of the people. The user groups also heard rumours of a budget allocated to implement the programme, and everyone hoped the Programme would be able to facilitate CapeNature to improve on the shortcomings of the Community-based projects. Their hope was rekindled for the initiation of harvesting and cultivation projects. However, after two years of quarterly People and Parks meetings, the renewed hopes were gradually smothered once more. The short reply from CapeNature to the ever-increasingly frustrated user groups remained the same: There is no money available for project implementation. Money allocated by government was apparently spent on the hosting of People and Parks meetings. When the chairperson and the secretary demanded the Steering Committee should have access to a breakdown of the budget, the reply given by the provincial programme manager was that Steering Committee members would never gain access to budget information, not as long as he has a say in it.

In July 2010, the Steering Committee instructed their chairperson and their secretary to compile a comprehensive list of community complaints as recorded since 2008, to submit at the annual national People and Parks meeting hosted in Durban. Their hope was that their complaints would reach the ears of the Department of Environmental Affairs. The Steering Committee noticed that CapeNature officials often omitted inconvenient complaints raised at meetings from the meeting minutes, and even when recorded in the minutes it was omitted from the following meeting's agenda. Tensions increased with time, and meetings became more heated and sometimes even aggressive, and needless to say, also unproductive. The Steering Committee members felt their voices fell on deaf ears, the most important issues were simply ignored, and as time went by the members became more verbal about their frustrations. They started to openly accuse managers of incompetence, omitting issues raised selectively from the agendas, and silencing members who raised complaints during meetings in a disrespectful manner. They believed managers disregarded the committee's abilities to manage their own affairs. They wanted information about the spending of the People and Parks budget, and demanded clarity on the purpose of attending meetings if CapeNature had no intentions to include them in any decision-making or respond to their problems, concerns and grievances. As soon as a representative withdrew from participation, community managers would replace them with new people from different areas.

New members were often openly misinformed on why previous members were replaced. The situation came close to a breaking point towards the end of last year, when the programme manager suspended the Steering Committee secretary prior to an investigation, for smoking cannabis in a minibus hired by CapeNature to transport members back home after a quarterly meeting in George. The secretary initially reported the bus driver for reckless driving, speeding and talking on his cellular phone while

driving. He also reported the driver for refusing to stop to allow the Bossiedokters to do their usual prayer and smoking ritual at the onset of the road trip. The driver was apparently in a hurry to another appointment and told the Bossiedokters to smoke in the bus, as long as everyone else in the bus agreed to it. When the secretary filed a complaint of reckless driving against the driver, the owner of the minibus emailed a complaint to the programme manager, accusing only the secretary of smoking in a non-smoking bus. The CapeNature programme manager then suspended the secretary, accusing him of breaking the code of conduct, which states that members are not allowed to abuse drugs while participating in CapeNature activities.

After the six months suspension was announced, the local community manager and the Boland area manager were asked to start an investigation. After several interviews with relevant participants, they recommended the secretary be given a written warning not to smoke under any circumstances in public transport again, and to resume his duties as secretary without any further delay. The programme manager overruled this decision once more, reinstating a six months suspension. This is when the secretary instructed me to draft a letter to the CEO, explaining the situation. A meeting was scheduled with the CEO, who insisted that she could not lift the suspension until the programme manager submitted his report on the matter. The report was not submitted for another three months. A meeting was scheduled with the Executive Director of Biodiversity who agreed to look into the matter urgently. Several consultations were held with the legal department who confirmed the suspension as unusual and previously unheard of procedure. By now the Bossiedokters have collected a long record of emails and voice recordings of all the discussions and verbal agreements, and it took just over seven months before the six months suspension was finally revoked by the CEO. The secretary was finally restored in his position and instructions were given that the code of conduct should be revised in collaboration with the

Western Cape Steering Committee members. The Bossiedokters insisted that the ritualistic use of cannabis could not be defined as drug abuse. However, most importantly, the list of complaints compiled by the secretary was not submitted at the National People and Parks meeting. The official who imposed the suspension nominated another representative to go to Durban, without consent of the Steering Committee. CapeNature management was apparently at the time still unaware of the list. The only official informed about the list was not coincidentally, the same official who implemented the suspension. The replacement community representative selected by the official made no mention of any of the complaints or the suspension at the national meeting.

Many of the Steering Committee members, including the chairperson at the time, were convinced that the smoking incident provided an opportunity to suspend the secretary at least until after the national meeting, thereby preventing the list from reaching Durban. Considering the distrust and already existing frustrations, it was not surprising the kind of suspicion the suspension raised. Meanwhile, the secretary decided to email the list directly to the CEO, who distributed it to the relevant directors and managers. Since the list was compiled and undersigned by the chairperson from her own minutes kept since 2008, the list appeared to be her initiative. The list openly attacked and accused the senior community managers responsible for People and Parks quarterly meetings, mentioning their names and accusing them of misconduct, disrespectful behaviour towards Steering Committee members, hiding of information, selectively omitting important inputs of community representatives and abuse of power. The chairperson recommended at the last quarterly meeting in 2010 that only people who are fluent in English should be nominated for steering committee positions. They should also be able to perform the administrative duties expected from them. She requested for local meetings to be held prior to the next Annual General Meeting, so that candidates that are more suitable could be nominated for

provincial meetings, since many of those nominated by CapeNature were not competent to fulfil their tasks. Many of the committee members could not write or read English, could not take minutes, could not read or write CapeNature's reports and expected the chairperson and the secretary to handle all the administrative work. Most members had no Internet access and were computer illiterate.

CapeNature officials accepted this recommendation. Community managers were instructed to call local meetings prior to the next Annual General Meeting, and the re-election of more suitable representatives for the provincial People and Parks Steering Committee were placed on top of the agenda. It was recommended that representatives had to be fluent in English, must be able to read and write and should preferably be computer literate. When the local community manager in the George area called a meeting, the chairperson who lived in that area was not invited. She was removed as community representative in her absence, without any further explanations. The same representative who went to Durban when the secretary was suspended took her position. She was also not invited to the 2011 Annual General Provincial Meeting while still acting as Western Cape Provincial People and Parks chairperson, and an official member of the National People Parks executive Steering Committee. She never had the opportunity to present her annual report or to hand over her chair position to the next 'democratically elected' chairperson. She was never formally informed why she was removed and was never thanked by CapeNature for the three years of unpaid services rendered as People and Parks provincial chairperson. According to her, she was not the first steering committee member to be removed in this manner, and she suggested she would not to be the last. At the Annual General Meeting, the new chairperson elected for 2011 was the same representative who went to Durban without any list of complaints to be put on the National People and Parks

co-management progress reports. The ex-chairperson provided the following response about her dismissal:

What I have seen to be happening in Cape Nature is this. The community managers only have one aim, and that is to ensure that they organize the meetings they were told to organize annually. They make sure they get enough community representatives around the table so they can show that they have the necessary representation required to make it look legit. Then they get the communities' opinions and complaints and comments from the representatives, and they selectively minute the ones they find useful and easy to implement or address. Difficult questions are ignored, and difficult representatives are strategically worked out. As soon as you become stubborn, you are not going to be invited to the next meeting. The good ideas and easily implementable proposals are then presented by them as if it were their initiatives. It is then placed on their yearly reports as 'success stories'. Where is the voice of our people for whom the People and Parks programme was intended, I ask you, where are the voices of the people? If our aim was to take part in a collaborative and co-management interaction, now I know for sure that under these conditions the process has failed. (Cingiswa Chairperson, interview, 14 June 2011)

The Community-based meetings

When Bossiedokters and Sangomas speak about their experiences attending Community-Based meetings, they refer to efforts made by officials to educate them on what conservation is and why it is essentially important for them to comply to CapeNature's rules and regulations. Many of the healers reported that they went to a few of the workshops and then decided to withdraw, since they experienced it as a waste of their time.

These conservation people think we are stupid, they tell us all these things as if it's the first time we hear about biodiversity and conservation of nature and these invasive species and all these things. They really think... they

think we are ignorant of these things. They think we are uneducated and we only know how to destroy nature. Do you know how many times we told them it is not us pulling the plants out by its roots and that we don't even use the barks of the trees? They want us to listen to them only and they show us pictures of poachers and plant collectors. They even show pictures of how they harass our brethren in the market places selling herbs to the sick people. They say we are poachers destroying nature. We are RasTafaris, we don't kill animals for medicine, we don't eat meat, we don't trade in blood. We only use plants and we know how to take care of our plants. We are ancient healers, we know from creation how we trod [walk] in nature. (Bossiedokter, Idas Valley, 2010)

According to the Bossiedokters, it is CapeNature that needs to be 'educated' about the differences amongst various traditional practices of healers. CapeNature also needs to learn to differentiate between healers, collectors and poachers. The healers suggest even though collectors often do sell herbs to healers, the bulk of large-scale poached herbs are sold to various small white-owned factories, where plants are processed and active ingredients are extracted for export to pharmaceutical companies. These factories are licensed to trade in medicinal plants cultivated and harvested from private land. But some apparently do not question the origin of the plants when it arrives at their gates in big bags. And a lot of these freshly harvested plants are harvested from 'the wild', that is, from protected areas. According to the healers some owners turn a blind eye, since plants harvested from the wild are known to have higher levels of the sought-after active ingredients, and are in general of a higher quality than cultivated crops. Healers I interviewed denied their participation in such bulk harvesting operations. The healers affirm they are willing to help expose what they refer to as 'hit and run' or 'fly by night' harvesting practices. Several healers reported to have arrived at their favourite and nourished harvesting areas, only to be greeted by bare soil and large holes in the ground, clear evidence of hurried and ruthless bulk harvesting where old and mature plants are

often completely uprooted and carried away. Healers I encountered indicated that they would volunteer assistance to Cape Nature to report and prevent such type of harvesting, if only Cape Nature would allow them to harvest sustainably and legally in their ‘secret areas’. They believe they cannot prevent such activities while they themselves are classified and categorized as ‘poachers’ along with the ‘hit and run’ collectors.

Towards a resolution

Within the first two months of my interactions with the People and Parks Steering Committee members in 2009, the chairperson and the secretary already indicated a need for the traditional healers of the Western Cape to become organized under a non-governmental organization. The Department of Environmental Affairs assumed CapeNature’s community officials would support the communities in their area, and would provide them with opportunities to benefit from conservation activities while facilitating their cultural practices within and around the reserves. Bossiedokters were particularly excited with the idea that the People and Parks programme would support their belief that government had to clamp down on private property in terms of the protecting of indigenous biodiversity by means of conservation laws and restrictions. The Bossiedokters claim that not nearly enough is done by the Ministry of Environmental Affairs to prevent private developers from destroying the environment outside reserves, and that the strong focus on restricted areas is allowing development outside reserves to go unchecked. They believe they are being targeted while the serious environmental threats posed by pine forestry and the wine industry are being ignored. CapeNature is structured by a long history of techno-managerial strategies, top-down implemented infrastructure and commitments to a range of financial institutions who sponsor their ‘evidence-based’ conservation methods. These methods have

been politically and scientifically justified for so long that its authority remains unquestioned, albeit faulty and socially exclusive. If post-apartheid political discourse demands social change, dominant discourse over nature ought to secure power and not represent traditional practices as unstructured, informal, and potentially destructive. This representation is not only reflected in conservation practices, but *produced* by it: Bossiedokters can only appear as a danger to the 'nature' of political management because they are already placed outside of it. So the fences and gates in conservation reserves are a material and symbolic mechanism that works at the same time at securing political power to CapeNature, while turning outsiders, who are excluded and who in fact suffer the violence of fence exclusion, into a 'natural' threat.

It is not a surprise that healers never really identified with the platforms provided by CapeNature as their own. They desired their own independent political space, a place of refuge and which reflects their own political aspirations. In 2010 I started to design with key figure healers serving on the People and Parks Steering Committee, the Cape Bush Doctors (Kaapse Bossiedokters) Not-for-Profit Organization. By August 2011 a team of twelve executive members accepted the founding constitution based on my research data, at the first general executive meeting of the Cape Bush Doctors NPO. The executive consists of seven traditional healers, two academics, one lawyer and two business owners. The main objective is formalizing and protecting of all traditional healers and indigenous medicinal knowledge in the broader Cape. The following comment of Cingiswa (Interview, January 2011), reflects on the position of healers in relation to this organization:

[We] take care of nature and people, for us nature and people sit together. This connection is kept alive through rituals that is done mostly in protected areas... we must be recognized and informed about the policy-changes we have been waiting for in such areas where we practice our rituals. Our ancestral lands, plants

and animals awaits us... they need us as we need them, so the true healing can follow.

The healers' organization focuses on assisting healers to become active agents of their own development and the development of the broader community. It works towards recognizing and acknowledging healers and indigenous communities, and leaders who will assist their local municipalities and politicians to protect nature inside and outside reserves, with and for the people. The organization also aims to protect traditional healer knowledge from biopiracy, and to develop a certification programme for the standardization of sustainable harvesting methods and invasive alien management.¹⁰ Healers believe it is time for them to collectively confront conservation organizations that are in many ways compromising instead of promoting their participation in environmental protection and that of their community. They believe a unified healer organization will become the first step towards such a project.

Not unlike Cepek's discussion of Environmental and Conservation Programmes implemented in Zabalo and other Cofan communities in the far north-eastern Ecuador, the Bossiedokters appear to maintain, at least to some extent, a critical consciousness of their own practice by viewing their actions "in terms of their political agendas and their cultural perspectives rather than the rationales of Environmental and Conservation Program agents" (2011: 505). Bossiedokters believe that the value and authenticity of their practice would be compromised if rendered a sellable product to tourists, suggesting they are somewhat conscious of the potential threats presented by the manner in which the market inflects culture and ethnic differences. Their refusal to exchange their sacred harvesting practices for money, and beliefs that science attempts to transform their sacred knowledge into

¹⁰ Biopiracy is "the practice of commercially exploiting naturally occurring biochemical or genetic material, especially by obtaining patents that restrict its future use, while failing to pay fair compensation to the community from which it originates" (Oxford Dictionary, 2011)

something more legible to modernity and the market, is a sign of resistance. They are willing to sell their products, medicinal herbs and consultation to the modern world, but according to their own customs and cultural infrastructures in a manner that preserves their value systems and the integrity of their practices. The question remains, following Comaroff and Comaroff (2009), to what extent this claim of ‘authenticity’ and ‘purity’ are produced within the very colonial and postcolonial social exchanges between indigenous and non-indigenous people.

It is evident how Bossiedokters continue to see scientific intervention as something outside of their community logic and needs. But, on the other side, they believe that science will eventually confirm through research that their herbal knowledge and healing practices have ‘real’ medicinal value and their approach to nature could assist in developing a more relevant environmentalism that is informed by traditional knowledge. In this context, the Bossiedokters’ situation seems to suggest that co-management should not be conceptualised as merely another example of governmentality, rather as a way of indigenous people to pursue their particular political aspirations. Healers want to reclaim their social authority over nature – and ultimately over their own practices – but the challenge seems to be how they will be able to transform conservation practices before conservation practices transform them.

Conclusion

In 2010, the manager of the Tygerberg Hills Reserve (City of Cape Town Municipality) was invited to a People and Parks Steering Committee meeting to discuss the problem they encounter with Sakmanne poaching mountain garlic from her reserve. She showed pictures of the four bags they recently confiscated and made a sincere plea to the Steering Committee that they should ask ‘their people’ to stop poaching the garlic. One Bossiedokter asked her what they did with the garlic bulbs once they confiscated it. She replied that they keep it alive until the court case is completed to replant it in back in ‘its home’ in the reserve so that they can ‘continue with its lives’. The Bossiedokter asked if the reserve management would consider collaboration with the Steering Committee members to cultivate bulbs from cuttings to become replanted where older bulbs are removed. He also informed her that when he uproots larger garlic bulbs elsewhere, he removes the smaller ones attached to the large one and replant it in the hole. He suggested that fly-by-night poachers would never do this, since they are pressed for time and in a hurry to avoid being caught. She responded in a somewhat irritated fashion that they would not consider any form of harvesting from their reserve.

Some of the Sangomas then offered to provide her with traditional medicine that prevents thieves from entering and to arrange a field trip to her reserve to observe the site to show her how to prepare the medicine. The manager responded nervously that site visits are not allowed. The healers laughed aloud while suggesting to each other that she was afraid they were going poach from her reserve also. I maintained contact with her, but after three months she informed me the management team of the reserve turned down the proposal for cultivation. According to her, the reserve is too small and they cannot risk such a project without ‘surety’ of its sustainability. This is an example of a reserve not under CapeNature management where dialogue in the People and Parks programme served

only as a platform for reserve authorities to convince healers to stop poaching from their reserves. Instead, the healers are accumulating knowledge and gaining experience, learning how to communicate more effectively with authorities, with the hope of developing a dialogue that could resolve their poaching dilemmas. There are also signs that the authorities are realizing the various levels of misconception and gross underestimation of the knowledge healers have about nature and its protection, for instance a recent trial project granted to the Bossiedokter for limited harvesting in the Jonkershoek reserve from January 2012.

In my first chapter I engaged critically with the concept of ‘nature’ tracing the emergence of conservation discourse and revealing the historical forces at play in the definitions of ‘nature’. Conservation discourse changed with the changes in political, economic and social structures of each epoch. The racial and cultural inequalities of the past were maintained in the understanding of nature as something separable from the social and political. In practice the managerial bureaucratic apparatuses inherited from the past silenced the coercion and oppressive activities that removed and denied Black people from participation in protected areas. More than ten years into the post-apartheid era, political issues of land, indigenous practice and natural resources as a public good and a cultural right reveals how the discursive gates of conservation continues to shut indigenous people out of their own indigenous environmental heritage.

In my second chapter I explored the views of the Bossiedokters, how they see themselves in comparison with the outside world and how their engagement with nature caused them to construct an identity that resists and stands in conflict with institutional conservation practices. I considered how their dwelling in nature allows them to justify separation from a rejected and rejecting outside world on which they construct their ‘difference’. Their practices, they believe provide a challenge to the systematic pressure of

the market to reduce their difference to something manageable and sellable. The question remains if it is possible for the healers to preserve their way of life once it becomes cast in terms of the market.

In my third chapter I presented some of the intricacies of the recent dialogues between Bossiedokters and CapeNature officials. I applied the lens of environmentality when thinking through the co-management process. Indeed, conservation authorities applied the co-management platforms to educate healers on the existing logic of scientific environmentalism, an attempt that could be conceptualised as ‘environmentalization’. The healers hoped for their voice to become heard and result in shifts in conservation practice that would accommodate their needs and free them from being presented as ‘poachers’ and destroyers of nature. The last two years of dialogue reveals the voice of the healers is not amplified beyond the walls of CapeNature, and is silenced by the very programme designed for transformation. Despite progressive legislation, in practice co-management in CapeNature has done more to reinstitute existing conservation practices than support any form of restitution of traditional knowledge or authority.

Although environmentality served us well to conceptualise this conflict, the Bossiedokters situation suggest that co-management should also be understood as a way for indigenous people to pursue their own political objectives. Co-management failed to produce subjects via its popular discourse of ‘empowerment’ suggesting an uncritical appropriation of the authority of scientific knowledge production. Instead, it resulted in the healers becoming more informed and sophisticated in their approach and strategies to engage with authorities. The co-management dialogue motivated the healers to refine and solidify their own objectives into a strategy to unite under their own organization, starting a new cycle in their struggle for recognition and the legitimation of their practices. It remains to be seen whether a collective voice would be enough to bring about substantial

transformation, or if there are other perhaps larger and more complex power struggles to overcome.

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List of Interviews and Meetings:

Bradley van Sitters, KhoiSan activist, Bossiedokter, Interview, Stellenbosch, 17 February 2011

Bossiedokter, Interview, Cloeteville, 10 November 2009

CapeNature Reserve Manager, Interview, Paarl, 26 October 2009

Cape Nature Community manager, Interview, CapeNature Conservation Offices Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch, 22 September 2011

Cingiswa, Sangoma/People and Parks Chairperson, Telephonic Interview, 23 January 2011

Cingiswa, Sangoma/People and Parks Chairperson, Interview, Stellenbosch, 29 February 2011

Cingiswa, Sangoma/People and Parks Chairperson, Interview, Stellenbosch, 14 June 2011

Elder Bossiedokter, Interview at his homestead, Paarl, 4 June 2010

Dan, Interview, Jonkershoek Nature Reserve, 27 Jan 2010

MTO Manager Meeting, CapeNature Conservation Offices Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch, 24 June 2010

Ras Gad, RasTafari Priest/Bossiedokter, Paarl, 27 November 2009

Ras Levi, Interview at medicinal garden, Franschhoek, 14 April 2010

Ras Naphtali, Interview Stellenbosch, 25 February 2011.

Ras Naphtali, Jonkershoek Nature Reserve, 27 Jan 2010

RasTafari Bossiedokter, Interview, Idas Valley, 1 August 2010.

RasTafari Elder Man, Interview, Cloeteville, 14 May 2011.

RasTafari Elder Woman, Signing of MOU at CapeNature Conservation Offices Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch. 10 June 2010.

Reuben, Bossiedokter, Interview, Stellenbosch, 12 January 2010

Appendix One: Minutes of Access Meeting 16 October 2009



Minutes of the Access meeting 16 October 2009

Present: Deon Rossouw
 Lucinda Witten
 Donna La Loux
 Lunga Mazoko
 Lennox Olivier
 Arnelle Van Noie
 Tammie Pontsana

Apologies:

Copies: Dian Dreyer

No	Issue	Action	Report Back
1	Background	<p>Arnelle, Lunga and Deon had a meeting with Lennox Olivier who is doing his masters on Rastafarian integration into Protected Areas. The point of the meeting was to discuss facilitation between CapeNature and the Rastas (with specific emphasis on the Nyahbinghi church) and how to manage the access to Nature reserves.</p> <p>One issue that we discussed at length was the cost of access. We realise that the Rastas form part of the HDI groups and should therefore specifically be allowed access to the reserve, however when it came to access for spiritual and cultural reasons the lines blurred a bit. If a Rasta family group enters the reserve for recreational purposes, they should therefore pay the entrance fees, but for the Rasta family entrance to the reserve for recreational purposes IS spiritual. How are we going to differentiate the two? If we allow the Rasta's in for free, then the NG kerk is also going to demand that their families are allowed in for free as well (for example).</p> <p>Is there enough justification that the Rastas are a previously disadvantaged group and therefore are allowed to access for free, or do we say that they need to pay for their families. We discussed a "wild card" type system that would give access in the form of access cards for family groups at a discounted annual rates for those activities that we see as recreational, eg picnicking or hiking. This will also have the potential to include other PDC's from local communities in terms of access into our protected areas.</p> <p>This obviously needs a lot more thought from other parties and therefore we think that this warrants an internal meeting with CBNRM, Marketing, Booking, and reserve management. Can I propose 16th October at Head Office at 10H00</p>	

		<p>MELIKHAYA's REPLY</p> <p>Dear Collagues</p> <p>The People and Conservation Programme led access to protected areas for spiritual purposes is meant for church specific services not recreational purposes. We were informed in our consultation with rastas(Daniel & co) in Paarl that rastas have a calender of church events, hence the content of the MoU.</p> <p>I have no doubt that in broad terms in the long term, there need to be a fixed access rate for HDIs, this will then be applicable to NRUGs as well. However, one cannot be incorrectly be seen to be prioritizing access fees and not promoting HDI enjoyment of the natural heritage. I stand to be convinced, I am of the view that the introduction of fees now will spoil all 5 years efforts of relationships with NRUGs that is dictated by PA Act and other pieces of legislation.</p> <p>Regards</p> <p>Melikhaya</p>	
2	Discussion	<p>Lennox confirmed that the spiritual matters for the Rastas are very defined so access for ceremonies and spiritual gatherings will be able to be arranged before hand, but the day to day access was still a point of contention.</p> <p>It was agreed that all tourism nodes such as Tweede tol, the hiking trails and other tourism facilities would all be considered as recreational and therefore if Rasta's and Traditional Healers (TH) wanted to access these areas they would have to pay unless otherwise discussed with the Reserve Manager.</p> <p>Donna was concerned that there was not a definite line between Recreational access and spiritual access and that this could create precedents that could land us in hot water. As discussed we cannot be seen to be favouring other groups</p> <p>When these functions do occur then the Rastas involved will have to go through the same process that the other church groups go through to be allowed access and a possible discount</p>	
3	Access Cards	<p>There is no policy on this issue but we all agreed that w would not be able to get Infinity to create another profile for this issue. It was agreed that CapeNature would issue the cards but only after a process has been followed. The Rastas would have to get a letter from the church stating that they are a member. They would then come to the reserve office where we will get all the relevant details and make the card. The card will be issued per person</p> <p>Lennox will arrange from the Paarl area how many cards will be needed and then we will use this as a pilot project. Lunga to discuss this with all the other Rastas groups and get the buy-in. It is not guaranteed that all the people applying for the cards will get because it is about numbers. Lucinda and Donna will be involved with this part of the process.</p>	

Appendix Two: Shortened List of complaints and Recommendations compiled by People And Parks Steering Committee chairperson 2008-2010.

(The names of officials and personal complaints present in the original list have been omitted here)

1. Since conception of People and Parks, the Steering Committee members have been requesting an opportunity to meet separately from CapeNature officials, in order to define and determine our own aims, goals and objectives without being influenced, manipulated or dominated by any of the officials. This has not been granted.
2. There is a large amount of inefficiency and repetition due to the general top-down approach being implemented by officials who are continuously dictating to members, while officials are often withholding information from new members regarding decisions made and issues raised in previous meetings.
3. Elections procedures were dictated to members by ----- and this resulted in individuals being elected into position of which some did not have the necessary capabilities to fulfil their responsibilities. If members were given the opportunity to volunteer for positions according to skills and experience obtained, we would have had more suitable individuals for each position. Officials underestimate the abilities of members to organize themselves. Officials use their powers to discard “unwanted” members or ideas while the committee regarded them suitable. Who gave the officials these powers?
4. Members are informed only one day or sometimes less than a day in advance about meetings and logistics such as travel arrangements etc. leaving no time for members to prepare sufficiently for meetings, or to prepare reports and agendas.
5. CapeNature always provides their agenda for meetings while the agendas of the member is completely ignored. How can we govern ourselves if officials constantly dominate us?
6. CapeNature officials insist on maintaining the secretarial position. This has resulted in the manipulation of minutes to protect their own interest. Reports are never presented to the steering committee before it is submitted to higher officials. No feedback is given on decisions or issues raised at previous meetings. Often serious problems raised are simply left out of the agenda of the next meeting.
7. No year plan or calendar has been provided to members in order to plan their availability for meetings.
8. The steering committee does not have access to any official reports on existing projects or activities in reserves about its status or procedures followed with implementation, or budget allocation. How can we respond with advice or assist if we are not informed?
9. Most of the CBNRM Forums established are not operational. Activities in nature reserves needs to be discussed more transparently and reports must be made available for the committee members in order for the committee to be able to influence decision particularly regarding the local community’s access to these areas.

10. The Steering Committee experiences a lack of consistency between local and provincial management in CapeNature. Things decided by local management on local issues are often simply overruled without proper feedback or procedures by the provincial manager, -----
11. ----- must consult with the Steering Committee before any decisions can be made regarding election, attendance or participation of People and Parks members. It appears that the provincial manager has power to overrule any P&P steering committee decisions and we are concerned whether this power is legitimate or merely being assumed. Two key figure P&P steering committee members has been victimized by the abuse of this power through unofficial suspensions without following proper procedure. This is experienced by us as manipulation of power and disrespect of our positions as steering committee.
12. New P&P members are openly being misinformed by officials during meetings about other members that have been removed from their position without proper explanations or procedure.
13. The Steering Committee has numerous requested to be informed about the People and Parks budget and spending thereof. The steering committee is convinced that the budget can be used more effectively in order to increase projects. For example it has been suggested that less provincial meetings be held so that money spent on transportation of members can become available for sustainable projects in need of start-up funding. This has been ignored completely, ----- refused to discuss the budget.
14. On several occasions the steering committee requested to meet with the CEO in order to establish a more personal and direct relationship and to ensure that the grievances and recommendations of the committee is communicated to the CEO, but according to officials she is simply NEVER available.
15. The steering committee has over the past years received numerous complaints from the community representatives of the Cape Metro, Boland Mountain, and Kogelberg areas that their interactions with Cape Nature officials have resulted in nothing, no access, no harvesting permits, no training, no projects, no contracts or employment opportunities since 2004.
16. If our aim was to take part in co-management interactions, it is clear that this process has failed. We need to manage our own money, our own meetings and our own projects and natural resources. We do not need to be dominated by CapeNature officials any longer.
17. Lets remember the National logo: **Conservation for the people WITH the people.**

Appendix Three: COLONISERS MANUAL TO DEAL WITH THE LOCAL NATIVES: KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THEM

Twenty ways to take away treaty rights

1. Make the NATIVE a non-person. Convince them that their ancestors were savages, the violent drunkards that made them wards of the state.
2. Convince NATIVES that they should be patient. What's 163 years? Tell them progress is being made.
3. Make NATIVES believe that things are being done for their own good.
4. Get some NATIVE people to do the dirty work. There are always those who will act for you to disadvantage their own. (Find the "chief to be"/quislings).
5. Consult NATIVES but don't act on what they tell you. Tell NATIVES that they do have a voice indeed.
6. Insist that NATIVE people go through the proper channels. (This is very expensive and cumbersome. Until they run out of energy and/or resources, finances and never achieve their goals).
7. Make the NATIVES believe that you are putting a lot of effort into working for them and they should really be appreciative. It is particularly rewarding when they thank you.
8. Allow a few individuals to make the grade, point to them as an example. (Well if XYZ of the ABC-people - etc. - can make the grade - read 'our' grade! - so can you. You can do it if you only try. If you don't 'succeed' that's your fault!).
9. Appeal to the NATIVE sense of fairness or love or god fearing. Tell them that even though things are pretty bad it's not good for them to make strong protest. (We won't discuss your grievances with you or deal with your complaints until you stop protesting - ie: stop that land occupation before we will talk to you).
10. Encourage the NATIVES to take their case to the council or even to the Court. This takes much time and energy and is very expensive, therefore a safe strategy because the laws (colonial laws) are still stacked against them.

11. Make NATIVES believe that things could be worse. Instead of complaining they should be grateful for the state owned houses they're renting and the plots they get allocated for their subsistence.
12. Set yourself up a pretend court with no power like a Tribunal. Impress on them that things will be given back. Accuse them of greed when they point out nothing has been (or is being) returned.
13. Pretend that the reason for the loss of human rights is for some other reason than the fact that the person is a NATIVE.
14. Make the situation more complicated than is necessary.
15. Insist on unanimous decision making. Tell them that when all NATIVES of that clan or tribe can make up their minds and speak with one voice then you will act. You have plenty of opportunities to always find some quarrelsome guys among them.
16. Select very limited alternatives which have little merit and tell NATIVES that they indeed do have a choice.
17. Convince NATIVES that the leaders who are the most beneficial to them are actually dangerous and not to be trusted. Or simply lock them up on some trumped up charge like disturbing public order or driving with no car lights
18. Talk about what's good for everyone. Tell the NATIVES that they can't consider themselves when there's the whole country to think of. (Farcical envelope).
19. Remove rights gradually. Manifest the changes in new laws.
20. Rely on reason and logic (scientific reason and logic) instead of rightness and morality.

Appendix Four: Objectives of Cape Bush Doctors Not-for-Profit Organization

1. Formalization and protection of all traditional healers and indigenous medicinal knowledge in the broader cape.
2. Rally for formal recognition of traditional healers.
3. Increasing conservation awareness through the cultivation of a traditional African understanding of the complexity of biodiversity and associated ecosystems to ensure a more sustainable use of natural resources.
4. To provide collective representation for all members being the keepers of aboriginal knowledge of the medicinal fauna and flora of the broader cape.
5. To provide an economic network to members and serve as a conduit through which traditional healers can become agents for their own development and the development of their communities.
6. Provide the resources and support needed for traditional healers to realise and exercise their agency, as well as increasing solidarity within and amongst existing infrastructure.
7. Serve as a medium for social bridging and bonding activities
8. Ongoing research and development of indigenous medicinal knowledge systems aiming to reconstruct and revive pre-colonial African spirituality and medicinal traditions and cultures.
9. To protect the right of use and access to medicinal plants from being patented and prohibited for administration and consumption by external bodies