

**Reflections on Two Field Trips:  
Intercultural encounters at Rob Roy cultural village  
(KwaZulu Natal) and at the Kalahari (Northern Cape)**

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Date: December 2000

Published: No

Type of Product: Unpublished research essay. Critical comment welcome. Part of a broader research project on cultural tourism and visual anthropology being conducted by the Graduate Programme in Cultural and Media Studies under the leadership of Professor Keyan Tomaselli.

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This is not an essay in the conventional sense. It does not come up with a question to be answered or an assumption to be argued. Rather, it is reminiscent of a narrative or a story, which serves to clarify my position on the phenomenon of cultural tourism. Therefore, the main concern of this essay is to theorize some of my personal experiences during two field trips to South African, so-called cultural sites: the Rob Roy cultural village (KwaZulu Natal) and the !Khomani Bushmen community (Northern Cape), the Kruiper family, in the Kalahari Desert. Basic premise of this paper is the recognition that an analysis of others results from interactional encounters and processes in which we are personally involved (Coffey, 1999: 115). In order to make sense of and give frameworks to some of my experiences, interactions and positions in the field, I will reflect on the interaction between observer, the 'Same', and observed, the 'Other', in the light of cultural tourism and the phenomenon of cultural tourism itself. An investigation of the representation of Bushmen and Zulu identity at the two sites concerned will be given. This essay has to be understood as a highly subjective, reflexive approach to the topic of cultural tourism. Given my agency in the field trip as an active participant, the subjective selection of the material and its reconstruction involve a biographical dimension and narrative, in the pursuit of identifying some of the contradictions and problems I see with cultural tourism.<sup>1</sup> Thus, seen in reflexive light, this essay is an account for personal communications, face-to-face interactions and encounters.

Cultural tourism has emerged in the mid-1980s (Craik, 1999) and is still a relatively new field of study in the broader scope of the tourism industry and the academic discipline of tourism. While 'conventional' studies on tourism have tended to

<sup>1</sup> Although conventional accounts of the field in the positivist and Cartesian tradition place comparatively little emphasis on the autobiographical practices of the researcher-self, the ethnographer, media professional or tourist, nevertheless, seems to be involved in biographical work of their own, while visiting cultural sites, such as the ones mentioned above. In Coffey's words (1999), fieldwork is a site for identity work for the researcher, and the outcome of it equals two processes of learning: learning about other cultures and learning about the self. Coffey, further, states that writing the self into the ethnographic process can be seen as an attempt to present a more realistic account, although it may serve to do so in a crafted, self-conscious and even artificial way. "The autobiographical mode of ethnographic writing reflects wider cultural emphasis on self-revelation and confession, and an appeal to subjectivity and lived experience. Placing the biographical and the narrated self at the heart of the analysis can be viewed as a mechanism for establishing authenticity" (118).

emphasis the political and economic dimension of tourism, such as trends in economic development towards service-based, consumer-orientated industries, cultural tourism highlights – as the term indicates – the cultural component of tourist experiences. "This focus has entailed rethinking the nature both of tourism products, re-defining tourist experiences, addressing the cultural impacts of tourism, and dealing with the changing culture of the industry itself" (Craik, 1999). Being a niche form of tourism that emphasizes the cultural dimension above all, cultural tourism encompasses a range of phenomena from targeted tourism based on culture to the unintended cultural components of mass tourism. Cultural sites, such as the Rob Roy cultural village and Kagga Kamma, for example, are marketed as primary tourist experiences. These often include the creation of purpose-built cultural attractions for tourists, such as the 'real' kraal at Rob Roy cultural village. The role of culture in this process is multi-faceted: culture is simultaneously a resource, a product, an experience and an outcome (Craik, 1999).

Cultural villages in the tourism industry have been set up to appear as sites 'preserving' culture, heritage and history. What is presented in these sites is 'sold' as 'authentic' by the management and the performers, and, therefore, often believed to be 'authentic' by the tourists. The Rob Roy cultural village, for example, markets itself as the "authentic Zulu experience", and, I suppose, it is not any different with the marketing of Kagga Kamma as the 'real' Bushmen experience. However, Tomaselli (1999) has argued that the basic aim in the reconstruction of cultural villages, theme parks and sites is to attract tourists and their "gaze" (202). Put slightly different, cultural sites cater for the cultural imaginings and fantasy-like/held dreams of the tourists, offering them a sort of manufactured cross-cultural experience in an easily accessible way. They have, therefore, been named 'living museums' before (Tomaselli, 1999: 202).

In search of deep and meaningful intercultural communication, self-discovery, origins and cultural forms 'untainted' by civilisation, tourists, often, are attracted by the Otherness of destinations, peoples and activities because they offer the illusion of fantasy of Otherness and of difference. This Otherness attracts with the possibility of adventure and the discovery of the exciting, the unusual and exotic from a First World perspective. Tourist perceptions of Otherness tend to be shaped by powerful stories and media images of the Other, such as films like *Shaka Zulu* (1986), Jamie Uys's *The Gods Must be Crazy* (1980, 1989) and the more recent, award-winning and dream-provoking movie *The Great Dance* (1999) by Craig and Damon Foster. Such films and, arguably, tourism in general address peoples' longing to practice – in Caleb's words (in speech) – a type of 'canned anthropology' and to experience the mythical, timeless, authentic 'native' way of life, preferably "in a contained and accessible manner" ([www.museums.org.za](http://www.museums.org.za)). "Such private visions are frequently fuelled by socially constructed fundamentalist attitudes, which underpin myths and ideas about "imagined communities". Tourism suggests the possibility of cultural contact, which is often understood to be a chance to experience an unthreatening multiculturalism, and the viewing and attainment of even a superficial knowledge of ethnicities. It is a statement about an interest in difference, and a chance to see 'the other'" (ibid.), and a form of escape from everyday life.

If audiences are interested in cultural myths, the management of Rob Roy, as well as the Kruiper family in the Kalahari have realised and internalized this invisible 'rule'

very well. The Kruiper family markets the visit to them as a unique hunter and gatherer 'experience of the oldest culture of South Africa' in their brochure. The management of Rob Roy cultural village has used the myth of the 'Zulu warrior' successfully in its German language edition leaflet to attract German speaking tourists by inviting them to meet the 'authentic' Zulu warrior. It is only the leaflet in German that emphasizes the warrior myth (and, on a self-reflexive note, I do not intend to discuss the possible reasons for this – being German, I wish to naively believe, though, that it is not for Germany's brutal history). The English edition, in contrast, emphasizes the Zulu's crafts heritage. Therefore, different tourists are targeted in different ways, which leads me to two possible conclusions: Firstly, tourism managers seem to categorize and target tourists according to the tourist's prior knowledge, expectations, fantasies and mythologies generated in the his/her origin culture. Secondly, it is not only the tourists who approach the 'other' with a pre-set mind, but management and performers of cultural sites do make use of their perception of tourists as well.

Bruner (Nd.) has theorized this phenomenon, which I would like to call some kind of 'mutual Othering', and concluded that tourism can be seen as the meeting of two sets of stereotypes and myths. Another example of the 'Othering' of visitors, including tourists, can be found in the Kalahari Desert. There, the Kruiper family, which itself has become the primordial focus of tourists, seem to make no distinction between the different Western visitors. In an interview, Dawid Kruiper, the leader, for example, reduced the huge variety of visitors to the Western 'Same' and spoke of them as the people with money and power. This view seems to manifest itself in the communities' policy on how to charge visitors for tourist services rendered, such as performances, participation in films and others. For example, all visitors, whether they are media professionals, academics or backpackers, are being charged an amount of 25 Rands if they want to capture a picture of a community member in Western clothes. The cost for a photograph in traditional outfit is 50 Rands. Therefore, there is no distinction being made between the visitors, whether they, in turn, make money from the pictures, use them for research purposes or simply for the family album.

Remembering my astonished 'disbelief', slight feeling of offense and clear disappointment at the outlook of not being able to take pictures during our stay without having to pay, I wonder if tourist responses to such a policy might ever be favourable. Turton (in Tomaselli, 1996: 40) remarks, for example, tourists' showing and feeling a great deal of moral indignation at being asked by the Mursi for money in return for photographs. "It is almost as if they see such a transaction as lowering the quality of the experience they have come to enjoy: of making it more mundane, less exotic. This is sometimes presented as a concern that the people should not be 'corrupted' by Western influences of which tourism itself, of course, is a prime embodiment" (ibid.). A policy, which not only charges tourists for pictures, but also does not differentiate between the visitors and their agendas' might impact negatively on these visitors, by denying them an understanding of the reasoning behind such a policy and 'robbing' them of their romantic, idealized longing for the 'harmless' 'Other'. The West seems to dream about this 'Other' in terms of an idealized 'creature', which resists commercial corruption by Western influences and lives in harmony with nature. In other words, Western, urbanized people seem to mourn this seemingly 'free' lifestyle, at times, even though in practice they regard it as primitive, and take offense if what they find does not fit this constructed picture. Visitors, in short, might feel betrayed of their 'authentic' experience

when being asked to pay for pictures, for which they think they 'own' the rights without having to pay.

Taking into account the unequal power relations in terms of money between observers and observed, a policy on picture taking and its strategy, whether logical in the Western sense or not, does not seem to make any difference to the community members. I suppose that, from their point of view, no fault or irregularities are to be found, as long as they do not feel exploited and betrayed of their 'images' anymore. After all, the assumption that tourists, anthropologists and media professionals do have a right over others, in this case the Bushmen, and their imaging is quite an egocentric and egoistic one. Although applicable to a different context, this reminds me of Agar's (1996) statement on the practice of ethnography in general: "Ethnography is really quite an arrogant enterprise. In a short period of time, an ethnographer moves in among a group of strangers to study and describe their beliefs, document their social life, write about their subsistence strategies, and generally explore the territory right down to their recipes for the evening meal. The task is an impossible one. At best, an ethnography can only be partial" (91). In the case of tourism, it is doubtful that issues of studying the other come to the fore at all. More likely, tourists are concerned with their cultural 'Same' as opposed to the 'Other' for the 'Others' sake.

If anything else, this field experience shows that fieldwork and other intercultural encounters are about the coming together of lives and biographies – those of ethnographers and other visitors, sharing the research or tourist endeavour, and those of the visited and observed. In Fabian's words (1985), "the Self and the Other are inextricably involved in a dialectical process" (20). In a way, all participants of a cross-cultural communication and interaction, be it field research or tourism, are involved in the negotiation of the telling and experiencing of the individual, collective and cultural lives (see also Coffey, 1999), not necessarily shared or agreed, and in the construction of their own biographies. The unequal power relationship between observer and observed shows that fieldwork and the representation of it, as well as tourist visits in general engage in the construction of the lives of others by leaving behind traces, whether positive or not, whether shared and agreed or not.

Coffey (1999) suggests that "by taking our writing back to those we write about, the implied reciprocity of ethnography can be both challenged and confirmed" (130), which reminds me of the *Sunday Times Lifestyle* article 'Kalahari dreaming' we showed to Belinda Kruiper at Blinkwater and her critical reaction to it. Among other aspects, this reaction was caused by the misrepresentation of some of the Bushman healing practices and by the publication of a photograph portraying Lace, a community member, half-naked and in a 'sexualized' pose. Belinda's disappointment and anger seemed to be worsened by the fact that she knew the journalist, who had previously stayed with her community for six months, but never mentioned that she planned on publishing an article on their shared lives and experiences. Here, issues of ethics come to the fore, which have been discussed elsewhere. The point I wish to make, referring to Coffey (1999), is that people and places of study are implicitly involved in the shaping, crafting and reconstructing of our lives and identities and those of the other. Our own 'selfhoods', for example, are defined and interpreted by others in the field, as well as ourselves as biographical actors.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> A personal example of this is Professor Tomaselli's remark that I was an artist as opposed to a photojournalist when I was taking time for a photograph during our trip and its effect on me. This

As a result of globalization, Bushmen have become an extraordinary international focal point. Photographers, TV and film crews, anthropologists, tourists and others have chosen especially the Kruiper family as a destination, maybe due to the relatively small community size with, roughly, 300 people, and their visual 'attractiveness'. This photogeneity owes largely to their physical size and their – from a Western point of view – interesting facial looks. The Kruiper's are, thus, actively part of the "process of imaging, discursive contestation and appropriation" (Tomaselli, 1999) and use their 'Bushman identity' for exchange value, such as the payment and food for information, for inter-village transport, for acting in films and for cultural performances. The visual production of images of the Kruiper family should be understood as part of general social and cultural practices of, for example, tourist and the media industries. They are part of the value and belief systems of the picture taker and his/her culture of origin, involving power relations, interactions, ideological practices and political and economic factors.

"The media have brought previously remote Fourth World societies into the global public gaze. But the images circulated tend to be the mythical constructions rather than the self-perceptions of those imaged. Cultures have been turned into commodities even if the subjects of these ways of life do not themselves feel commoditized or integrated into the global relations of image production" (Tomaselli, 1999: 205). Certain members of the Kruiper family have contributed to the communities' commodification by capitalising on the stereotypical images of themselves as 'harmless', 'infantile' and 'cute' 'First People'. They, for example, pose for visitors in traditional clothes (as opposed to their normal, daily 'Western' clothes), and exchange them for cash income. Dawid Kruiper's response to Professor Tomaselli's inquiry on the issue of his communities' commodification has, I suppose, its own right. To paraphrase, he said something like: "I am telling the truth. And it is up to the people what to make out of it. They are taking away our knowledge, so I might as well charge them."

In the case of the Rob Roy cultural village, the posing for tourists in traditional clothes seem to be part of the job and the routine. My encounter with a performer at Rob Roy rushing to 'dress up' and decorate his colleague, who was in underpants, in feather wear at the sight of me getting prepared to take pictures, clearly signifies two things. Firstly, the tourist camera has a stimulus response effect on the cultural performers of Rob Roy, who – like Pavlov's dog – at once get started, 'disguise' in their traditional outfit and pose for the tourist 'gaze'. Secondly, it signals the power that photographic cameras in general have over people and their feelings, often resulting in the aim to present oneself in the most favourable light. This notion of 'favourable light' either refers to how the photographic object itself defines it or what the photographed believes the camera persons' understanding of it to be in order to meet the assumed expectations. The camera 'performance' at Rob Roy exemplifies that the cultural hosts at the village do, in turn, expect their visitors to behave in a certain way. In this case, they assume them to behave like picture-'snapping' tourists, who want to take home a relict of their visit and take proof of their 'real-life' encounter with the 'Other', 'the topless Zulu'. "The camera signifies to the subjects that they have to 'do' something for it-dance, play at being

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statement made me overthink my professional self-understanding and I have to admit that it is true in the way that I do consider myself as both, an artist in terms of composition, lighting and exposition and, according to the job I am doing, a photojournalist.

savage, dress up in grass and skins, and so on. They incorporated tourist images and meanings of themselves into their own modes of self-representation and thought" (Tomaselli, 1996: 102).

The issue of posing in traditional clothes for the tourist gaze leads me to the discourse on 'staged authenticity', which has been raised by MacCannell (1989). Cultural tourism is marketed as the 'real' experience and its architectural set-up, for example the construction of a traditional homestead at Rob Roy including a hut for the Chief (in this case, with an in-built theatre stage), appears as and creates the impression of an 'authentic' cultural village. The village has been designed with a separation of what MacCannell (1989) calls the front and the back stage. The front stage is the space where the meeting of hosts and guests occur and the performances take place. In the case of Rob Roy, this is the 'kraal', which exists of several huts for different purposes. For example, the kitchen, the boy and girls' huts, the hut for the chief and – as a special tourist attraction – the hut for the visitor wanting to spend the night, in order to experience 'real' Zulu culture. Patrick, our 'tour guide', though, had to admit that to his knowledge not a single person has stayed overnight. Tourists obviously prefer the comfort of the "First World" treatment at the Rob Roy Hotel, in spite of the 'authentic Zulu' plastic hangers and the plastic 'ukuphalaza' – a bucket, which is used for vomiting after taking traditional cleansing medicine – provided for the 'pleasure' of the visitor in the guest's hut.

It seems that, at Rob Roy cultural village, the tourist enjoys the advantage of experiencing difference during the opening hours of the cultural village, without having to give up the comforts and benefits of Western culture after hours. Craik (1999) argues that, although tourists think that they want authenticity, most want some degree of negotiated experiences which provide a tourist 'bubble' (a safe, controlled environment) out of which they can step at any given time. Rob Roy is a case in point: Neither does the tourist, in particular, the German one, have to fear for his/her life at the sight of a Zulu warrior, nor does he/she have to do without the safe comfort and luxury of his cultural home environment. A further sign of the commercial emphasis on the Zulu heritage at Rob Roy cultural village are the hotel's souvenir shops, which provide for a 'first-world' type, cultural shopping experience.

Located out of sight of the 'traditional' compound, the craft shops and their "selection of curios produced for tourists who buy them as mementos of their experience (real and imagined) of another society" ([www.museums.org.za](http://www.museums.org.za)) cater for the current tastes, trends and fashion. As objects they are "produced by one group for whom subject matter becomes a series of generic signifiers of a romanticised other culture" (ibid.). Tourists take back home commodities, which capture the perceived authenticity – proof that they have visited an exotic destination and which, therefore, act as status markers of an authentic experience. "Across the economic divide, the shopping or the collecting phase is an essential part of the tourist's activity. As tourism leads to commodification, ironically, it also leads to a loss of the very authenticity the tourist was so keen to experience" (ibid.).

The case of Rob Roy cultural village shows how a 'cultural' phenomenon, the Zulu culture, and its products, such as craft works, can become – in Craik's words (1999) – the 'linchpin' of a tourist industry. In the case of Rob Roy, it serves to complement and revitalise the Rob Roy Hotel, understood largely as an older nature-based form of

tourism. The Rob Roy Hotel is set in the stunning Valley of a Thousand Hills, where most surrounding communities reside. The 'authentic' cultural identity becomes a commodity in the process of producing, packaging and consuming a range of sites and activities under that mantle.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, it provides a rationale and unity to diverse attractions and encourages the proliferation of a range of attractions – first to attract tourists and then to keep them occupied. In a way, the same applies to the Malopo Lodge and its plans to do business with the Kruiper community.

The back stage relates to the space where the performers prepare and retire after the show. This is the social space where they live in 'real' life, wearing 'Western' clothes and, probably, listening to the radio or watching soap operas like *The Bold and the Beautiful*. The employees of Rob Roy do not live in the 'kraal', which is purely designed for tourist purposes, such as the performances. Instead, the performers have to walk across the valley in order to get to their houses, while there exists the provision of a constructed hut just outside the 'kraal', which allows them to prepare for the performance and take 'unsurervised' breaks. The stage-like construction, manifested in front and back stage, clearly emphasizes the "staged authenticity" of cultural villages. It demonstrates that the Zulu identity represented at Rob Roy for the tourists does not coincide with the real identity of the performers who dress up and go home after the 'show' and who, according to the interviewed persons, consider the activities at the cultural village purely as employment.

While the Kruiper family also tries to earn a living from their visitors by selling their "Bushman identity", their case is slightly different. They do not yet have a front and back stage in the way MacCannell (1989) has defined it. In contrary, their stage seems to consist only of a back stage in the form of their family homes, which at seemingly unpredictably times tends to be prone to invasion from outsiders. In a non-MacCannell sense, then, one could argue that this back stage at times turns into an unofficial front stage in that it refers to the communities' private space that has to cater also for the encounter between the Bushmen and their visitors in lack of other meeting points. This lack of artificially constructed settings among other aspects, of course, is what makes the encounter with the Bushmen in the Kalahari Desert so much more interesting and adventurous than the pre-determined encounter with the Zulu performers at Rob Roy cultural village. It has to be mentioned, though, that the community has employed a volunteer intermediary in Anna Festus whose task it is to communicate between tourists and community members and to arrange their meetings. However, as we have experienced ourselves, this does not work smoothly all the time, and in connection with this I will comment on an interesting encounter.

When we arrived at our first arranged interview at a private home on the community grounds, our interview partner refused to welcome and speak to us. While Anna Festus was leading the negotiation with the lady concerned, our group stood a few meters from the scene, seemingly robbed of our agency, like 'puppets on a string', deemed at waiting for the things to come. From a subjective point of view, the incident reminded me of a movie scene showing in front of my eyes and condemning me to passivity. The teenage daughter of the house continued to do the dishes without paying us any attention, the

<sup>3</sup> "MacCannell goes as far as likening the 'all-consuming tourist' with a sort of symbolic cannibal, where tourists consume not only resources and material goods but the very cultures in which they are located, thus paralleling one of the motivations for some types of cannibals: to subsume or incorporate certain characteristics or the victim such as strength or endurance" (Burns, 1999: 47).

elderly men, sitting on the ground and facing the other direction, continued their talk without looking up and the children pursued their games, while only now and then glimpsing at us – in Vertov's words – "camera/kino eye". In my mind, I created the illusion of entering the world of a film. In reality, though, I was part of the plot. While watching a movie at the cinema or on TV, "we do so in complete safety, because our own world is as close as the nearest light switch. We observe the people in the film without being seen, assured that they can make no claims upon us. The corollary of this, however, lies in our ability to reach through the screen and affect their lives. Thus our situation combines a sense of immediacy with an absolute separation. Only when we try to invade the world of the film do we discover the insubstantiality of its illusion of reality" (MacDougall, 1995: 121). In our case, though, the seeming illusion of reality created by the film metaphor turned out to be the reality of the moment or our construct of it. We did have agency in it, although I did fail to acknowledge and sense it. Moreover, we did not bathe ourselves in illusionary safety by means of a nearby light switch and the outcome of the 'scene' did impact on us, on our experience, on our making sense and reconstruction of it and on Anthea Simoes' research project.

I suppose that, in contrast to our 'Zulu encounter' at Rob Roy, this was a 'real' and 'authentic' cultural experience of having little agency with 'real' and 'authentic' people who, although it was arranged, disliked the idea of being invaded by foreigners in their private homes. In a sense, the quest for authenticity and meaningful "cross-cultural communication", so often quoted as aims of cultural tourism, were fulfilled. While this encounter did just not correspond with the romantic, idealized and – probably – self-indulgent ideas of the intercultural experience we envisaged, the encounter with Belinda Kruiper and her male group did. Aspirations, such as non-essentialist insight into the 'Bushman soul' and glimpses of self-discovery, while sitting on a sand dune, talking to an inspiring free-spirited, hippie-like and 'really' wise, 'older' woman, for example, were definitely met for some time (the effect lasted longer within different members of our group, though).

As I have explained in my first assignment for the 'Visual Anthropology' course, an important finding of the trip to the Kalahari Desert was that, although early Western discourses of 'Othering' have systematically depicted the 'Other' in a negative light, the 'Other' can also be subject to idealization and romanticization. Apart from Professor Tomaselli, our group consisted of three female students and one female staff member. Only one of them is black. While I can only speak for myself, I wish to believe from the romantic comments that were made during the trip that none of us white students was completely free from idealizing the Bushmen and their fight to define their own presence. Our desire to experience the mythical, authentic way of life in contrast to our own cultural background seemed to be awakened by Belinda Kruiper, who held our attention for four hours by her eloquence, outspokenness and insight. She seemed to nurture our romantic longing for the 'real' Bushmen, who seemingly lives in harmony with nature and resists the 'dangers' of corruption by Western influences, commercialisation and commodification. In a way, the visit to Blinkwater not only fulfilled our search for a spiritual adventure and the discovery of the exciting and unusual, but also nurtured the 'Nanook theme' of humans struggling with a hostile environment for their survival.

The issues so far discussed are closely linked to the representation and understanding of the notion of identity, which seems determined by space, time, discursive representation

and language. The 'Zulu identity' represented at Rob Roy cultural village in its performance approximates a model of identity which is fully constituted, distinct, fixed and stable. Cultural identity as represented at the Rob Roy cultural village equals a static definition of a particular common origin or common experience. It, therefore, corresponds with Grossberg's recount (1996) of Stuart Hall's first model of identity. The representation of Zulu identity at Rob Roy wants the visitor to believe that Zulus wear traditional clothes at any given time, live necessarily in huts, cook mealie meal three times a day on a fire, dance only historical dances for entertainment and ceremonies and consult *sangomas*, the traditional healer, for their physical and emotional well-being. This critique, of course, does not imply that Zulus do not do these things at different times, but certainly not all the time and in the way and the chronological order it is presented at the village. In the case of Rob Roy and to a certain extent of the Bushmen in the Kalahari, the notion of a unitary or singular cultural identity based on a particular historical origin is being reinforced by their own agency in the making of their identity. This can be seen in their marketing strategies, which often correspond with or rather target the tourist's mythical understanding of their culture in terms of notions of distance in time and space, difference or idealization of the 'Other'.

The popular myths and their manipulation for marketing reasons certainly influence the outcome of intercultural encounters between observers and observed, and, arguably, they do not only result in the commodification of the communities, but - in the case of the Bushmen - also in the communities' reconstruction of their 'modern' identity. Dawid Kruiper, for example, seemed to be convinced that he and his community presented themselves to the visitors according to their own self-understanding. Contrary to a perception of identity as static and, therefore, ahistorical, Zulu and Bushmen identities, as well as any other identities, seem to ask for a more complex understanding. Referring to Hall's second model of identity, I would prefer to define them as in a state of constant flow, impermanent and influenced by outside forces. In other words, Zulu and Bushmen identities should be seen as a multiplicity of identities and interpreted as fragmented, fractured, incomplete, relational and in process. While, concerning the Bushman community in the Kalahari, it could be argued that the opening to the tourist sector poses a threat to the maintenance of Bushmen heritage, it certainly points to the fact that culture evolves and is not static. As has been mentioned before, the tourist scenario is linked to the 'Western search for the original culture', shaped by the mythical and often distorted images which are produced by the media of the cultures visited. The tourist invests capital in attaining an experience of difference as compared to the 'real'. The romantic and idealized 'painting' of the Bushmen and Zulus, in a way, seems to suppress their 'real' conditions of life and create an illusion of it, which may have never really existed.

Reflections on my personal experiences at Rob Roy cultural village and in the Kalahari should be put into perspective. Coffey (1999) states that autobiographical texts can, just as any text, allow for the possibilities of multiple and critical readings. "Revealing the self in the text can highlight the tensions and contradictions of dichotomies such as self/other, writer/reader, and author/audience. Individual and collective experiences are connected and linked in productively meaningful ways rather than denied or forgotten" (Coffey, 1999: 133). Coffey (1999) further points out that there is an implicit assumption that an ethnographer investigates something 'outside' him/herself, that the knowledge he/she seeks cannot be gained solely or simply through introspection. On the other hand, one cannot research something with which one does not have any contact

and one is isolated from. All researchers are to some degree connected to, a part of, the object of research. "Depending on the extent and nature of these connections, questions arise as to whether the results of research are artefacts of the researcher's presence and inevitable influence on the research process" (Aull Davies, 1999: 3). The personal history of ethnographers and also the disciplinary and broader socio-cultural circumstances under which they work have a profound effect on which topics and peoples are selected for study. The relationships between ethnographer and informants in the field form the bases of subsequent theorizing and conclusions. They are expressed through social interaction in which the ethnographer participates. Thus, ethnographers help to construct the observations that become their data. Given the contribution of the ethnographer's socio-cultural context to the research, these contexts too must be considered. "They become a part of the research, a turning back in the form of cultural critique that has moral and political implications as well" (Aull Davies, 1999: 5).

My experiences on the two field trips were to a large extent of a visualized nature, which is the result of two processes: Being a photojournalist, I tend to perceive situations in a visual manner. Being German and not able to speak Afrikaans or any !Khomani, the language barrier forced me to visually make sense of our trip. This involved the study of hand signals, mimics and gestures. In comparison, I noticed a difference in the experiences at Rob Roy cultural village and in the Kalahari Desert in terms of the role I was playing. While I seemed to have a clear role at Rob Roy in terms of a paying visitor just as any other tourist, the experience in the Kalahari seemed much more open-ended and subject to the social relation and interaction with others. Our presence did not only impact on our own group, but also on the community members we interacted with. At times this took surprising and unpredictable turns due to misunderstandings or other reasons, as in the case with two Oumas ('old ladies', grandmothers), who were not happy about the payment arrangements. In a 'real' set-up like the Kalahari everybody involved in the intercultural encounter is open to 'culture-shock', whereas at Rob Roy the encounter seems much more regulated and determined by the preset schedule.

Overall, I considered myself as a student, who - at the very best - was beginning to walk on ethnographic grounds. As a result of the personal interaction in the field, I realized that the Bushmen did not necessarily fit the idealized picture I was unconsciously carrying around with me. The Bushmen we met and interacted with did not necessarily correspond with the loveable people I obviously expected to meet. They did not need any feelings of guilt and pity due to their sad history of suppression and their subsequent 'decline' in terms of alcohol abuse. Instead, I met human beings just like anyone of us with positive and negative characteristics, and this was an inspiring experience.

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