

"I went hunting today and I brought back a can  
of pickled fish . . . ."

*In the Tradition of the Forefathers* is a study of the 'traditional' hunter-gatherer identity of a group of Bushmen who exhibit themselves to tourists at the Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve in the Northern Cape of South Africa.

Hylton White argues that the Bushmen's identity has been created in reaction to the experiences of dispossession and wage labour. The emphasis that the Reserve lays on preserving Bushman cultural heritage bestows ambiguous benefits on the Bushmen.

Like exhibits in museums, the controversy Kagga Kamma reflects, over how to preserve people's vanishing culture, continues unresolved.

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IN THE TRADITION OF THE FOREFATHERS

HYLTON WHITE

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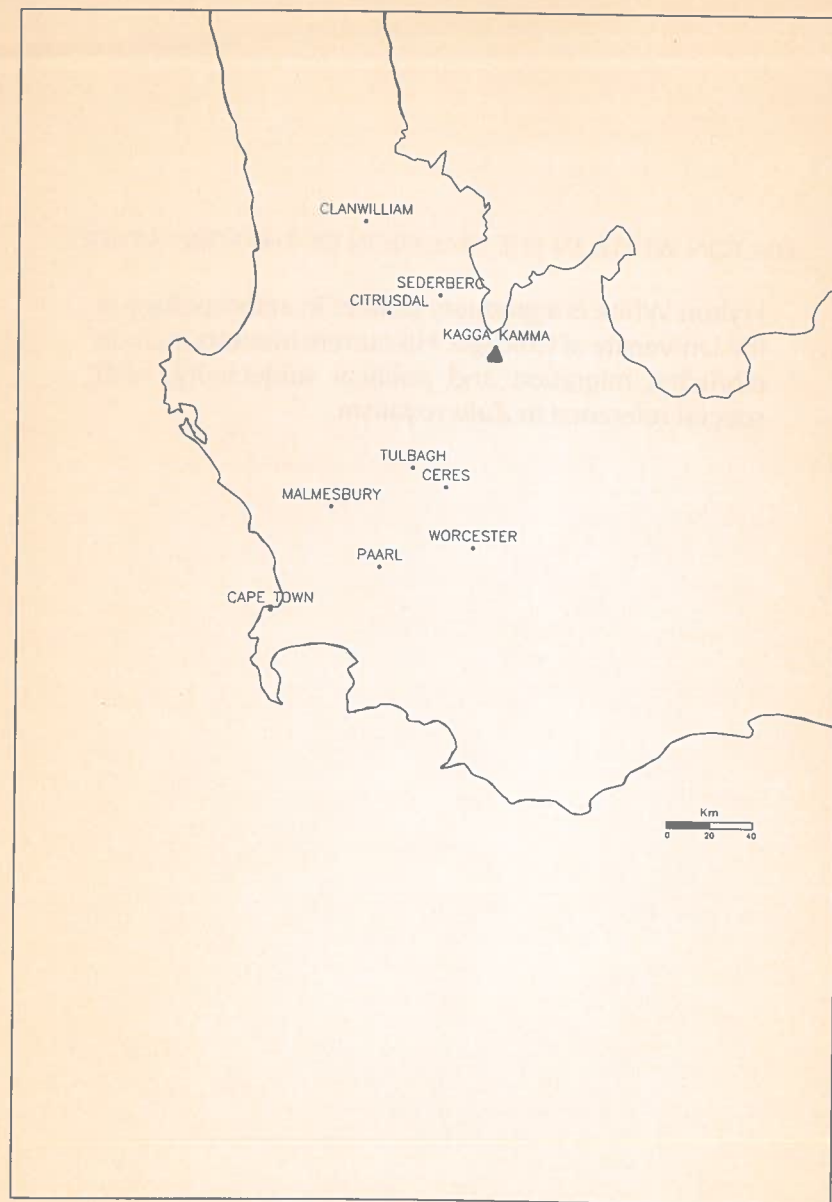
*Bushman Traditionality at Kagga Kamma*

Hylton White



HYLTON WHITE: IN THE TRADITION OF THE FOREFATHERS

Hylton White is a graduate student in anthropology at the University of Chicago. His current interests include ethnicity, migration and political subjectivity, with special reference to Zulu royalism.



Area map showing Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve

## In the Tradition of the Forefathers

Bushman Traditionality at Kagga Kamma  
The politics and history of a performative identity

*Hylton White*

Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town





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Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve Brochure

"I went hunting today and I brought back a can of pickled fish . . ."  
are the words of Hendrik Kruiper. See the full quotation on page 49.

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# Foreword

The study of cultural identities has become an important focus in Social Anthropology, motivated by the goal of moving beyond primordialism to an understanding of how identities are forged in complex local and global processes. This volume is a study of the 'traditional' hunter-gather identity of a group of Bushmen who exhibit themselves to tourists at a nature reserve in the Western Cape of South Africa. Based on fieldwork undertaken at the reserve, the argument of this book is that the Bushmen's identity is created in reaction to experiences of dispossession and wage labour, and as a strategic response to opportunities of patronage based on the global interest in images of 'traditional' Bushmen. The current operation of this identity strategy at the reserve is ambiguous in the benefits it confers – an ambiguity which reflects underlying limitations of the strategy itself.

Throughout the text I have used the anthropological convention of writing in the "ethnographic present". It must be recognised, however, that all the descriptions of conditions at Kagga Kamma presented in the volume refer only to circumstances as they pertained in the period late 1991 through September 1992. Since then there have been various management personal changes and many developments aimed at improving conditions for the Bushmen at Kagga Kamma. In broad principle, however, circumstances were still much the same in September 1994, and as argued in Chapter 6, the parameters under which Kagga Kamma operates militate against any major substantive changes in the future.

*Hylton White*

## Chapter One

# Introduction

Some films can kill. One such film was the blockbuster *The Gods Must Be Crazy*, which played to packed houses in the United States, South Africa and elsewhere. This film, with its pseudoscientific narrator describing Bushmen as living in a state of primitive affluence, without the worries of paying taxes, crime, police and other hassles of urban alienation, has had a disastrous impact on those people whom we call "Bushman" (Robert Gordon 1992a:1).

I am an animal of nature. I want the tourists to see me and to know who I am. The only way our tradition and way of life can survive is to live in the memory of the people who see us (Dawid Kruiper).

For all the world of difference between their subjects and meanings, these two reflections – by an anthropologist and a Bushman respectively – raise a common problem that also lies at the centre of the ethnography and analysis presented here: the indubitable – if complex – relationship that frequently exists between the fortunes of marginalised people and the images of them held by those who have the power to affect their futures, images that in the modern world are more often than not produced, disseminated and consumed precisely through mass media such as those of film and tourism.

The subjects of this case study are members of a group of about thirty Bushmen, who currently live at the Kagga Kamma Nature



Reserve – a privately owned tourist resort in the Western Cape Province of South Africa.<sup>1</sup> Since January 1991, when they settled at the reserve, they have been displayed to curious visitors as the last relics of southern Africa's aboriginal population who remain true to their traditional foraging culture.

In 1991 the Kagga Kamma enterprise generated a flurry of discourse in the media, explored in Chapter Two, which focused primarily on the morality of exhibiting people to tourists in this manner, and on the cultural authenticity of the Bushmen concerned. For anthropologists, both the enterprise and the surrounding discourse cannot but resonate with a particular clash of intellectual wills that has proven extraordinarily contentious and persistent over the last decade or so: the Great Bushman Debate, which has been fought precisely over the identity and representation of southern Africa's Bushmen. It is primarily a dissatisfaction with the terms in which the Great Bushman Debate has been conducted that has inspired the research and analysis presented here, and so I begin with a discussion of the lines of that conflict.

### *The Great Bushman Debate*

In the words of Spiegel and Gordon (1993), the problem that lies at the heart of this argument is whether Bushmen are the "products or survivors of history". This apparently elementary formulation points to the nexus of a range of historical, theoretical and political questions which are far-reaching in their significance.

The debate is essentially a response to the dominant images of Bushmen that have been produced by anthropologists and other scholars and given popular authority through a wealth of museum displays, ethnographic documentaries, and mass consumption items such as postcards and coffee-table anthologies. From the scholarly side, the lineage runs from the path-breaking linguistic and folklorist efforts of Wilhelm and Dorothea Bleek in the nineteenth century, through to the 'salvage' ethnography exemplified by the Harvard Kalahari Project (e.g. Lee and DeVore 1968; Lee 1979). More famous popular depictions range from the relatively respectable ethnographic vignettes of the

Marshall family (e.g. 1959, 1961, 1976) to the unabashedly sentimentalist productions of the mystic Laurens van der Post and the director Jamie Uys.

This obviously begs the question of what it is that makes Bushmen such a cornucopia of representation? As Gordon (1990:1) has suggested, Bushmen are "one of the most heavily scientifically commoditised human groupings in the academic endeavour" – and the economic metaphor invoked here holds literally in the field of popular cultural consumption as well. The answer lies in the evocative image of Bushmen communicated in these discourses, namely as the ultimate cultural and evolutionary 'Others' to Western modernity.

As hunters and gatherers practising a palaeolithic mode of subsistence in peaceful and spiritual equilibrium with each other and their Kalahari desert environment, Bushmen are held to represent a striking contrast with the materialist individualism of the late modern world. Isolated (in some cases until as little as a few decades ago) from the rest of humanity and thus from the development of pastoral, agricultural and industrial civilisations, they supposedly offer an invaluable window onto the world of earliest humanity. To their loss and that of all people, however, this precious heritage is now being degraded through the devastating encroachments of the outside world on their previously simple existences. As such it must be documented and protected in order to preserve it for the future.

Perhaps unfair to more sophisticated works in its necessary generalisation, this encapsulates the image of Bushmen that most will recognise. This image has recently been subjected, however, to a series of revisionist intellectual critiques which have interrogated its most fundamental precepts on a number of levels.

It has been acknowledged for some time in historical and anthropological circles, for instance, that the genetic, economic and socio-cultural boundaries between Bushmen and the rest of the pre-colonial southern African population, especially Khoi pastoralists, are less coterminous and far more fluid than is commonly assumed. Similarly, and in terms of the same markers, Bushmen do not by any means constitute an homogenous pre-colonial social category (Elphick and Malherbe 1989:4-5).

Add to these complexities the transformations wrought by European colonial expansion in the region, and there remains little possibility of speaking coherently of *the Bushmen* at all. To borrow a phrase from Marx, all that is solid melts into air; and the revisionist wisdom is that Bushmen are most accurately portrayed as a fluid lumpen-category that has been propelled towards the margins of the regional political economy in the course of its historical development, dominated first by more powerful indigenous populations and later by European settlers. The essential hunter-gatherer is thus dissolved in a history of clientship, banditry, slavery, guerilla warfare, and wage labour on the farms and the mines (Marks 1972, Gordon 1986, Wilmsen 1989, Gordon 1992a).

Given these discrepancies between the iconography and the revisionist historiography, critics have argued that the dominant Bushman image holds a mirror up to its Western disseminators far more than to its referents (Gordon 1990, Davison 1991, Wilmsen 1991). Treating the icon as an historical problem in itself, it is now contended that its origins lie precisely in the devastating process of colonial expansion that most dramatically reduced Bushmen's fortunes in the region.

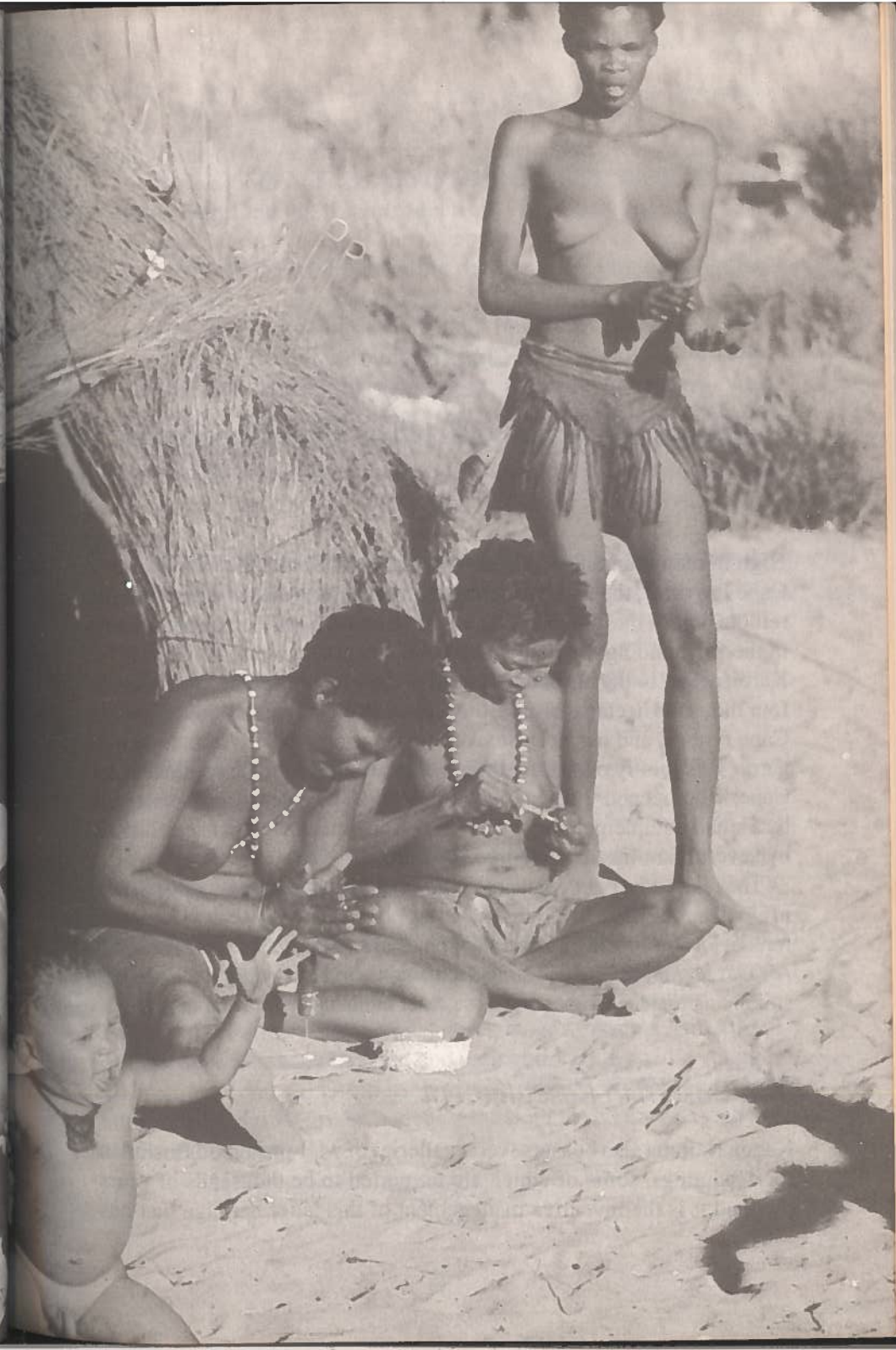
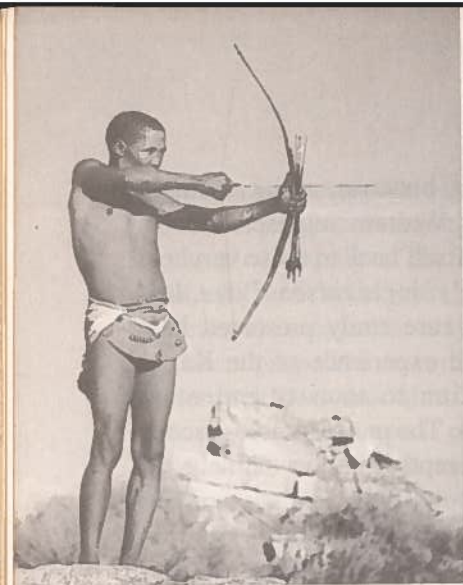
Crudely put, the contention is that settlers interpreted the frontier and legitimated their brutal conquest of it by depicting Bushmen as sub-humans beyond the bounds of the civilised order.<sup>2</sup> Drawing upon and resonating with an older European discourse of 'Otherness' (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:86-125), this image captured the interest of nineteenth century metropolitan intellectuals – under the heady influence of evolutionary theories themselves – resulting in Bushmen's more positive re-representation as specimens of unique scientific and cultural value (Guenther 1980). With consummate irony, the rarity that made Bushmen so prized was itself the demographic product of the genocidal frontier that brought them to scholarship in the first place.

The politico-theoretical inspirations for this critique lie clearly in the postmodern mood that has generally arisen in anthropology over the last two decades – drawing partly on the post-structuralist turn in Continental hermeneutics and partly on radical critiques of the cultural logic of imperialism – and it is precisely on the grounds of its relativisation of knowledge that the critique has itself been questioned in rearguard defences of the older ethnography (Lee 1992).

Whatever the merits of either argument, however, an increasingly introspective and reflexive discussion of Western representation is doomed to aridity if it is unable to connect itself back to those very real 'Others' whose lives remain anthropology's single *raison d'être*. It is with this consideration in mind that the case study presented here explores the significance, to the lives and experience of the Kaggga Kamma Bushmen, of their representation to tourists and other consumers as traditional stone-age foragers. The most suitable place to begin that exercise is at the site of their representation, namely the Kaggga Kamma Nature Reserve itself.

Figure 1 (next page): The Kaggga Kamma Promotional Brochure





## Chapter Two

# The Place of the Bushmen

High in the mountainous Cedarberg region of South Africa's Western Cape Province, the Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve lies in a particularly remote part of the country. There is little evidence of human settlement in the surrounding district, which lies in an arid ecology bordering the Karoo desert to the north and is used mainly for sheep farming. Almost four thousand hectares in area, the reserve itself is sparsely covered with Cape fynbos, and has been stocked with various species of indigenous game. It is jointly owned by three wine farmers from the southwestern Cape, who opened it to the public in 1989. The enterprise is managed by a small complement of 'white' staff while manual work is performed by several families of 'coloured' labourers.

The resort advertises regularly in national and regional newspapers, and in brochures distributed through travel agencies. Aimed at wealthy local and foreign tourists seeking a safari experience in an isolated and unspoilt South African setting, among its vaunted attractions from the outset have been its striking natural landscapes and its stock of indigenous flora and fauna.

### *The Bushman Resettlement*

Kagga Kamma also boasts several galleries of well-preserved Bushman rock paintings, some of which are purported to be thousands of years old, and it is the inventive management of this latter heritage that has

brought fame to the enterprise. Since January 1991, Kagga Kamma has been the home of the group of thirty-odd South African Bushmen mentioned in the Introduction. Previously they had been squatters and farmworkers in the far northern Cape, on the southern fringes of the Kalahari desert in the region of the famous Kalahari Gemsbok Park.

A series of documentaries on their impoverishment had been televised by the South African Broadcasting Corporation in 1990, attracting the attention of Kagga Kamma's owners who subsequently travelled to the northern Cape and approached the group's leader Dawid Kruiper with a resettlement offer. Accepting their proposal, he mobilised twenty-seven of his kin and other local Bushmen for an initial move that received extensive media coverage.

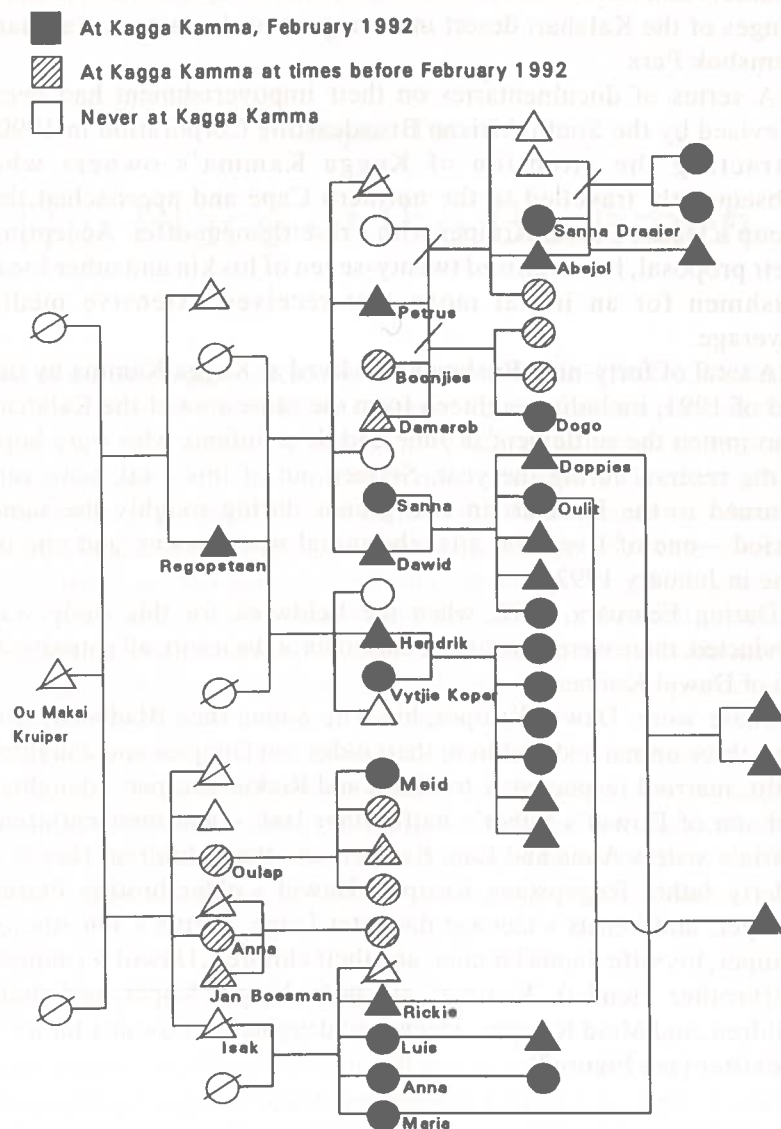
A total of forty-nine Bushmen had lived at Kagga Kamma by the end of 1991, including eighteen from the same area of the Kalahari who joined the settlement in June and three infants who were born at the reserve during the year. Sixteen out of this total, however, returned to the Kalahari in two groups during roughly the same period – one of five soon after the initial resettlement, and one of nine in January 1992.

During February 1992, when the fieldwork for this study was conducted, there were thirty-three Bushmen at the resort, all patrilineal kin of Dawid Kruiper.

These were: Dawid Kruiper, his wife Sanna (nee Bladbeen) and their three unmarried children; their older son Doppies and daughter Oulit, married respectively to Maria and Rickie Kruiper – daughter and son of Dawid's father's halfbrother Isak – and their children; Maria's sisters Anna and Luis Kruiper, and their children; Dawid's elderly father Regopstaan Kruiper; Dawid's older brother Petrus Kruiper, and Petrus's teenage daughter Dogo; Petrus's son Abejol Kruiper, his wife Sanna Draaier, and their children; Dawid's younger halfbrother Hendrik Kruiper, his wife Vytjie Koper and their children; and Meid Kruiper, a teenaged daughter of Dawid's father's halfsister (see Figure2).



Figure 2: Dawid Kruiper's Kindred



## Heritage Exhibition

Since their arrival the Bushmen have been incorporated into the commercial operation of Kagga Kamma as its central tourist attraction. Retitled the "Place of the Bushmen" in its advertising campaigns, the resort's main promotional thrust is now the marketing of encounters with the group, which is portrayed to this end as a unique relict population, comprising living representatives of an ancient hunter-gatherer way of life.

A press advertisement, for instance, calls on tourists to "Visit the near extinct Bushmen".<sup>3</sup> The resort's promotional brochure is similarly illustrated with photographs depicting the Bushmen as 'traditional' foragers – 'Other' to the urban and industrial world that constitutes familiar experience for tourists – while its text tantalises the consumer to an anachronistic and exotic meeting of cultures and times:

Kagga Kamma ... Place of the Bushmen. An evocative name, a magical situation. Imagine yourself [...] in the company of [...] unbelievably, several families of stone-age Bushmen ... A unique experience for visitors is the privilege to step into the world of the authentic Bushmen. Here they let you share in their age old skills of hunting and fire-lighting, and in the beauty of their handicrafts, dancing and story-telling.

Heading the itinerary are the "Bushman visits" that take place daily in the late morning. A Landrover safari takes tourists on a winding game route through the reserve, at the end of which they come to a reconstructed Bushman camp where they see the Bushmen dressed in loincloths and sitting under a rock overhang or in two small grass huts. During winter the visit takes place in a thatched shed that has been constructed at the same site for this purpose. Disembarking from the vehicles, tourists are given a brief talk by their guide – normally the 'white' game warden – on the Bushman group, their history, the resettlement, and a few aspects of the culture they are about to encounter.



Following this they move over to the Bushmen, who pause in their activities and give the tourists a 'traditional' greeting. Interaction is initially facilitated through the guide while Dawid Kruiper fields questions in Afrikaans. Some of the men bring out bows and arrows, and demonstrate hunting techniques by shooting at a mock target propped in the sand. Male tourists are encouraged to imitate them and are photographed in hunting poses whilst being instructed in tracking skills and the game that is 'traditionally' hunted.

The Bushman women sit in small circles drilling beads made of wood or ostrich shell, and threading necklaces and bracelets which tourists can purchase. They mind their children, and those who have infants nurse them, talking about 'traditional' child-rearing practices and allowing visitors to hold the children and be photographed with them. After an hour the guide brings the visit to a close and the visitors receive another 'traditional' greeting as they step away from this timeless evocation of a primitive idyll.

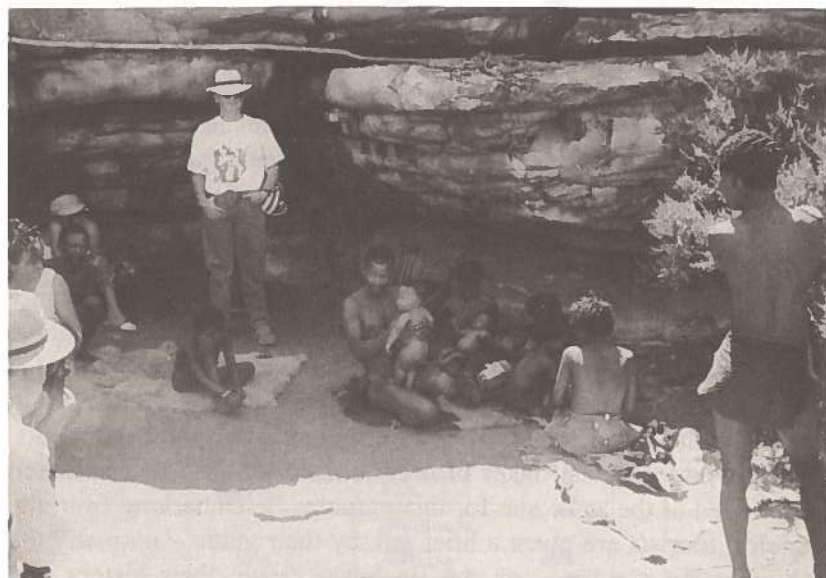


Figure 3: A "Bushman Visit"

On occasion the Bushmen perform at night in an amphitheatre near the tourists' accommodation. Here they entertain with story-telling, music, singing, and dancing. Natural history hikes through the veld can also be arranged with Bushman guides who point out rock paintings, animal spoors, and the qualities of various species of plants. At the local curio shop, tourists can buy handicrafts manufactured by the Bushmen and postcards depicting both the Bushmen and the local rock art.

### *Heritage Conservation*

Perhaps the most striking theme in the Kagga Kamma discourse is the depiction – by the owners and in sympathetic reviews – of the venture as a bold conservation initiative aimed at saving the Bushmen themselves from extinction. The public is told that the latter were destitute in the Kalahari and facing the tragic disintegration of their way of life. At Kagga Kamma, by contrast, they can supposedly maintain their 'traditional' hunter-gatherer culture and survive through their participation in the enterprise:

Dawid and his group now once again are free to roam wherever they like and to practise their own culture and crafts; even to hunt when they want to. Here they are living again in their traditional grass huts and are earning money by making indigenous handicrafts which they sell to visitors.<sup>4</sup>

Kagga Kamma is held in this discourse to be a particularly appropriate site for such an initiative by virtue of the historical implications of the Bushman rock art found on the reserve. What has been celebrated in the promotion of the venture is that the resettlement marks the return of the last of the South African Bushmen to ancestral territory. It is thus claimed that the initiative has ended a centuries-long exile following the violent expansion of European settlers into the Cape interior in the eighteenth century.

Authenticating both the cultural experience marketed by the resort and the rhetoric of conservation within which the venture is framed, the

local archaeological heritage is invoked as evidence of aboriginal Bushman settlement at Kagga Kamma, and continuities are drawn between its creators and the Bushmen who live there now. This theme of return is particularly salient in the various media on Kagga Kamma, inspiring visual depictions of the Bushmen in 'traditional' pose alongside the rock paintings.

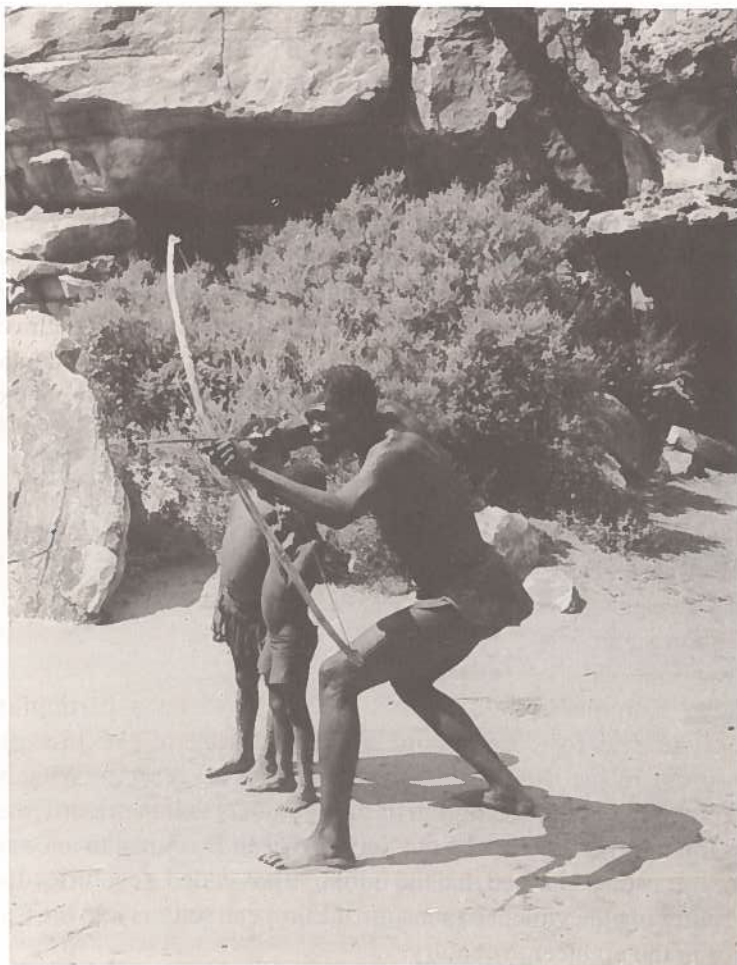


Figure 4: Abejol demonstrating his hunting technique to tourists

## *Instrumental Manipulations*

Ethnic tourist enterprises, commodifying essentialist images of 'unspoiled' indigenous African cultures to attract an international market to South Africa, have long been a vital and profitable sector of the local tourist industry (Spiegel 1989, 1994). In the past this phenomenon has taken the predominant form of material products such as postcards and curio artefacts which are held to depict or to have been produced by 'traditional' African subjects (Westerhout 1990, Ferguson 1990). These items have offered consumers a view on an exotic world that is profoundly 'Other' to their own.

Over the last few years, however, and in line with international consumer trends in the 'postmodern' era, the emphasis in the South African ethnic tourist industry has shifted increasingly to "hyperreal" encounters (Eco 1990) that promise unmediated and total experiences of this 'Other' world. An instance of this is the Shakaland village in KwaZulu, which claims to depict life in a 'traditional' Zulu village (Hamilton 1991, Plaice 1991, de Haas 1991, Preston-Whyte 1991).<sup>5</sup>

Kagga Kamma clearly falls within this new trend. In the various performative and media transactions that constitute the commercial venture, the Bushmen who live at the resort are presented to the public within the framework of an in situ cultural encounter. The ideology of this encounter is of course founded on the orthodox Bushman discourse discussed in the Introduction, and the Kagga Kamma Bushmen are depicted precisely in the image of the 'pristine-but-endangered-hunter-gatherer' icon. Its revision within the critical academy notwithstanding, this image is firmly implanted in popular representations and Kagga Kamma is able to draw on its popular authority and the public fascination it engenders in attracting consumers to the resort.

The representation of these Bushmen as traditional foragers can thus at least in part be located instrumentally within the motivations and relationships of the cultural marketplace. Seizing on the evident commodification of the Bushman heritage at Kagga Kamma (without



interrogating the popular image of that heritage more generally), some public commentary on the venture has questioned the owners' conservationist rhetoric, arguing that their material stake in what is above all a profit-seeking private enterprise is a far more significant motivation than any stated concern for the Bushmen's cultural survival. In these terms the Bushmen's representation as 'traditional' hunter-gatherers has been viewed in two ways. On the one hand, if they are accepted as the 'genuine article', then their exhibition is held to be distasteful and objectifying:

It would appear that [the Bushmen] will be visited by schoolchildren etc. and no doubt be gaped at and giggled over [...] It is sincerely hoped that the local authority in Ceres will not allow [...] these happy child-like people [...] to be used for "exhibition" purposes.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, it has also been argued that the display is merely a cheap imitation of a precious but irretrievable heritage, and that the Bushmen are complicit in it for reasons as instrumental as those of the owners:

There are in fact no Bushmen today who still live in the traditional way as hunter-gatherers. All that the little people at Kagga Kamma have in common with their proud ancestors is their high cheekbones and sallow skin ... Dressed in rags and on the edge of starvation, they were happy to accept the chance to act like Bushmen.<sup>7</sup>

Either way, the implication is that the exhibition of the Kagga Kamma Bushmen as 'traditional' hunter-gatherers is an economically motivated manipulation alone. Accepting this to be the case for the commercial operation of the venture, my argument here is nonetheless that such a crudely instrumentalist analysis by no means provides an answer to the original problem of this ethnography, namely the significance of this representation to the Kagga Kamma Bushmen themselves. These Bushmen's own representations of their identity reveal powerfully that this is the case.

### Chapter Three

## Rhetorics of Bushman-ness

### *People of Nature and Heirs to Tradition*

Belying sceptical charges, the Kagga Kamma Bushmen's leader Dawid Kruiper has publicly affirmed his and his followers' representation as primordial hunter-gatherers, and welcomed their exhibition to tourists as a necessary means to the survival of their culture:

I am an animal of nature. I want people to see me and know who I am. The only way our tradition and way of life can survive is to live in the memory of the people who see us.

This statement is drawn from a complex series of collective representations through which the Bushmen articulate images of themselves and assert their differences from other people. At the heart of these lies the familiar vision of an idyllic hunter-gatherer lifestyle, a uniquely Bushman way that is founded on a repertoire of foraging skills and an empathetic and intuitive knowledge of the environment. Dawid Kruiper presents this vision as follows:

A Bushman's knowledge is in the veld, to make his living out of the veld. To live like a Bushman, from veldfoods and plants – I want to live like that, from tsamma melons, from gemsbok-cucumbers, and from roots that I use to get water. And with medicines from the veld



– they work with me, because I believe in them ... A Bushman is a jackal, an animal of nature, and a Bushman has the intuition of a jackal. A jackal senses what is happening under the water, so it knows when not to step in. A Bushman is the same – just like a lion and the whole of nature.

As the last assertion suggests, Bushmen are portrayed here not simply as people who live *from* nature but, more than this, as people whose attributes make them an integrated part *of* nature. Abejol Kruiper, describing his instinctive aptitude as a Bushman for tracking game in the Kalahari desert, expresses the same principle:

If I am following a buck, it cannot see me, because I am red like the sand of the red dunes.

Bushman-ness is also associated with valued symbols of a folk tradition, regarded as the group's birthright and as its inheritance from the Bushmen of the past. These cultural forebears are held to include all southern African Bushmen, but more specifically the #Khomani-speaking Bushmen of the southern Kalahari and in particular a #Khomani Bushman called Ou Makai – Dawid Kruiper's late paternal grandfather and a common direct ancestor of most of the group. The metonym and most salient symbol of this ancestral heritage is the leather loincloth (*/ai*), which Hendrik Kruiper presents as a distinctively Bushman item of apparel:

I have come a long way with the */ai*, since I was a small child. When I first gained my understanding, my father's father [Ou Makai] was wearing it. He gave it to all of us here. These paintings around here are very old, and those Bushmen wore the */ai* too. I could never throw it away.

### *Bushman-ness and Baster-ness*

If being people of nature and heirs to the Bushman tradition is what constitutes selfhood for the Kagga Kamma Bushmen, it likewise functions for them as a means of asserting their distinctiveness from

other people. Generally it is held to mark an essential difference from all “western” people whose culture is construed as being unnatural and thus unsuited to Bushmen (although the latter may be forced to adopt these ways with significances that are discussed below and in Chapter Four). Identity-related meanings are ascribed in these terms to various categories of cultural items:

Today I have to wear deodorant, but I do not know it. I can get plants that smell nicer ... Here I have to put on clothes because there are dangerous things here, but in the Kalahari I can throw away the clothes and wear the */ai* ... My father ails here. He's not a man for pills, he's a man for herbs and medicinal roots.

The category of people most saliently held to be ‘Other’ to Bushmen, however, are Basters (lit. ‘bastard’, referring to people of mixed racial ancestry, who were officially classified ‘coloured’ under South Africa's Population Registration Act of 1950). The simplest level at which this categorical difference is articulated is physical: it is said that Bushmen are short-statured and have short hair while Basters are tall and have longer hair. It is also imbued with cultural and moral significances: Bushmen value their own tradition, symbolised by the */ai*, while Basters are rootless and anarchic. Speaking Afrikaans, and wearing “western” clothes, Basters have no culture of their own and aspire instead to being western or ‘white’:

The largest difference between a Bushman and a Baster is that a Bushman wants to keep his Bushman tradition, but not a Baster. He just wants to be a white man. I am a person of nature, who bears the knowledge: I do not want to westernise ... I have my own language, an Englishman has his own language, but where is the Baster language? He speaks Jan van Riebeeck's language.

Underscoring these phenotypical differentiators is the notion that Bushmen are pure in genetic and cultural descent while Basters have impure and mixed descent, part indigenous and part settler. This is reflected in the contention that Bushmen have an indigenous language while Basters speak Afrikaans – the “language of Jan van

Riebeeck", Governor of the first permanent colonial settlement at the Cape and to many South Africans a symbolic ancestor of the 'white' sector of the population (Rassool and Witz 1992). The differential construal of ancestry is furthermore linked to being entitled to a place in the world – Bushmen are aboriginals while Basters lack a foundational identity of their own:

The Bushman was here, and then Jan van Riebeeck came here ... Jan van Riebeeck was a white man, but then he came to a Bushman's wife and then came all the mixing. And the last was a Baster ... I believe it when they say Baster, but coloured! He's got no colour, he's a mixup. He's bastardised – he is a Baster.

Bushmen thus have an own identity, while Basters have none. The assertion of distinctiveness from Basters in this respect carries within it, however, a threatening and apocalyptic subtext of Bushmen losing their heritage and thereby becoming Basters themselves, to their profound loss and that of all humanity:

If I cannot live like a Bushman in my Bushman tradition, then the tradition will die out completely. And then everyone will become Basters. That time will be the end. Then I will disavow my own people, and go around stealing as well. The Basters do that! ... If we become Basters then I will also want to be a white man. Then people will only be able to learn about the ~~not~~ Khomani in the history books.

This sense of cultural endangerment, and especially of possible assimilation to the Baster category, is not just an element of the generalised discourse presented up to this point. It is also, as the following section demonstrates, particularly salient in the Bushmen's representations of the constitution of their group, as a specific collectivity that can claim an identity as 'traditional' hunter-gatherers but that is forced to maintain a rigid internal boundary in defence of that identity.

## *A Boundary of Kinship*

The most salient articulation of a bounded group identity takes place in the realm of kinship. As Figure 2 (p.10) reveals, twenty-seven members are Dawid Kruiper's consanguineal kin, and the remaining six are directly or indirectly related to members of this majority through affinal relationships. The former category are all descendants of Ou Makai: Dawid Kruiper's father Regopstaan Kruiper is Ou Makai's son, while Dawid, Petrus and Hendrik Kruiper, and the late Isak Kruiper's children – Rickie, Luis, Anna and Maria Kruiper – are his grand-children. The children and grandchildren of this second generation account for the remainder in turn.

It has already been mentioned that the figure of Ou Makai occupies a key symbolic position as the ancestor who passed the Bushman heritage on to present generations, and descent from him is thus held to ascribe legitimate Bushman status. This is also the most salient principle in the internal definition of group identity. Yet the maintainance of a viable and indeed reproducible collectivity necessitates that the boundary also not be too narrow, and anyone of even partial Bushman descent is regarded as a potential member.

Equally, however, the boundary cannot be too loose, as this would threaten the integrity of the group's identity in the eyes of outsiders. For a Bushman to marry an outsider, or for a non-Bushman to marry into the group, is thus regarded as an endangerment to the boundary by weakening the purity of the tradition:

If a Bushman or a Bushman woman has a child – even if it is by another nation – and that child comes here, then he is a Bushman. If the man or woman of the other nation enters, that is a way of breaking the tradition. If it breaks, then everyone will marry out and mix in.

The negotiation of these competing principles results inevitably in a complex internal politics. There are five married couples in the group, in four of which both partners are recognised as Bushmen.

Two couples consist of partners who are both descendants of Ou Makai: Doppies is married to Maria, his paternal grandfather's halfbrother's daughter. Maria's brother Rickie is similarly married to Doppies's sister Oulit. The children of these partnerships are thus descended from Ou Makai through both of their parents (Figure 5), a genealogical reinforcement which is celebrated as securing the perpetuation of the heritage.

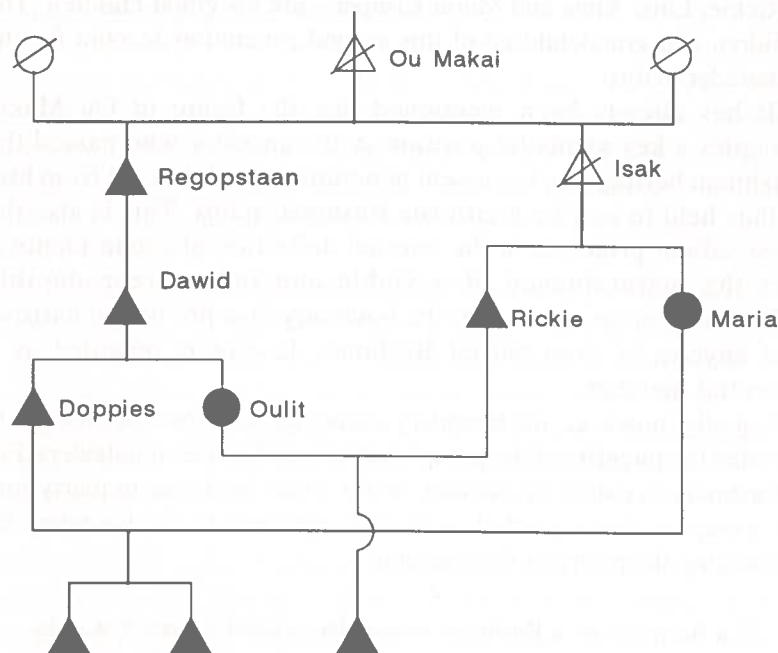


Figure 5: Marriages of Doppies and Maria Kruiper, and Ricky and Oulit Kruiper

Dawid Kruiper and his half-brother Hendrik, on the other hand, are married to Sanna Kruiper (nee Bladbeen) and Vytjie Koper respectively, women who are not descendants of Ou Makai. Both are nonetheless from Bushman families which have long been associated with the Kruipers in the southern Kalahari, and which are said to have extensive genealogical ties with the latter family in the past, although the links cannot be traced with certainty (Figure 6). They and the children of these couples are thus also of Bushman status.

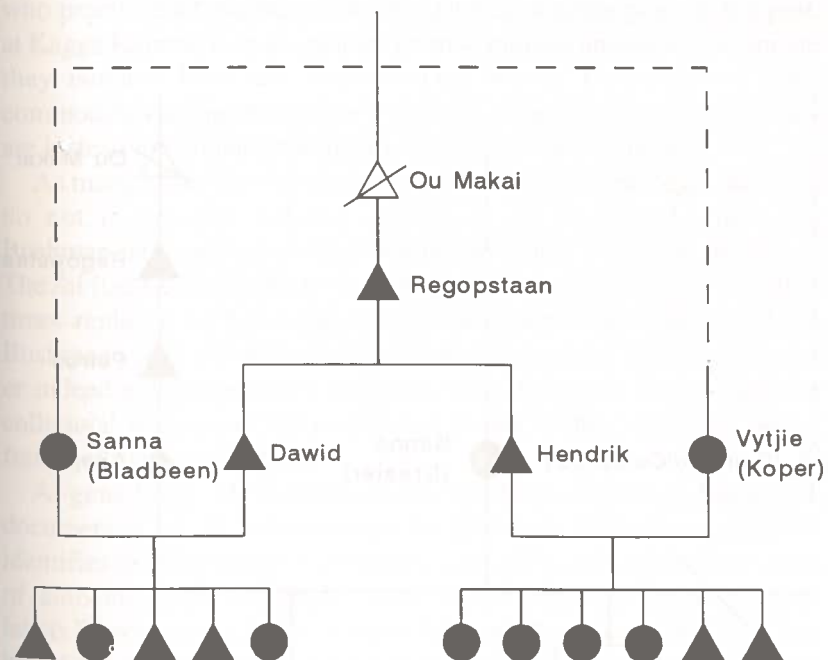


Figure 6: Marriages of Dawid and Sanna (Bladbeen), and Hendrik Kruiper and Vytjie Koper



The fifth marriage is between Abejol Kruiper and Sanna Draaier. The latter woman, identified as being of Nama ancestry by herself and the others, is not descended from Ou Makai or from any southern Kalahari Bushman family. She is thus emphatically denied Bushman status, setting in motion a chronic internecine tension discussed in Chapter Five. She and Abejol have a son who is said to be a Bushman through his father, but her other two children – from an earlier partnership with a man of Damara and ‘coloured’ origins – are, like her, denied Bushman status (Figure 7).

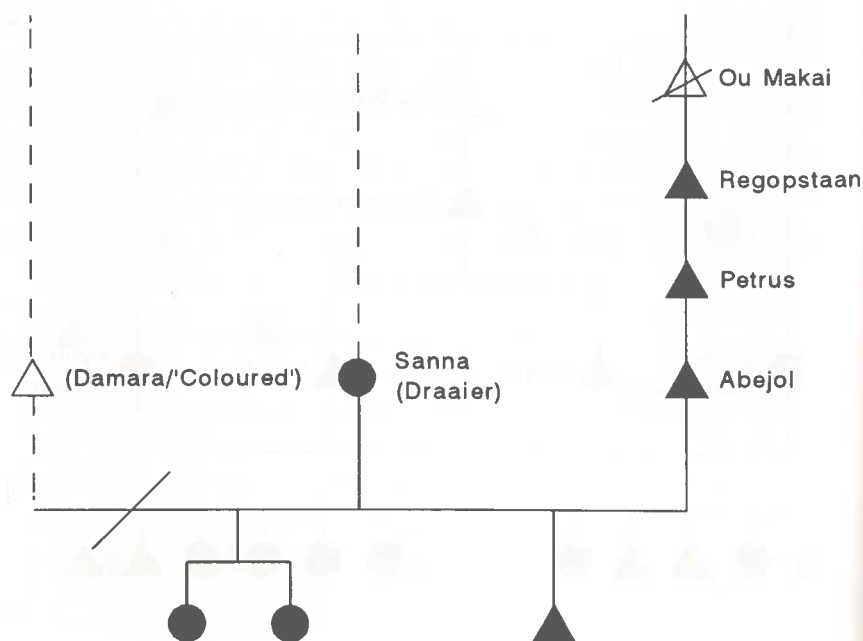


Figure 7: Marriage of Abejol Kruiper and Sanna Draaier

## Fictive Identity

By presenting themselves as pristine Bushmen, who are nonetheless at risk of assimilation to the Baster category if their heritage is lost, the Bushmen echo the conservationist rhetoric of Kaggga Kamma's owners and the global terms of the hunter-gatherer icon itself. On its own primordial terms, however, the Bushmen's discourse of cultural survival is, like its outsider parallels, questionable in many respects. While they may indeed be descended from southern Kalahari Bushmen who practised a foraging mode of existence at some point in the past, at Kaggga Kamma they are neither pristine hunters and gatherers nor are they isolated from the industrialised world. Producers of curio commodities and performers of services for tourists' consumption, they are instead integrated participants in a global cash economy.

As many of the assertions reproduced above acknowledge, they also do not in practice use the cultural items associated with ideal Bushman-ness, but rather those deemed to reflect a Western influence. The /ai itself is generally worn only in front of tourists, and is at other times replaced with dresses, trousers and shirts. Nor can any of the Bushmen speak the #Khomani language they claim as their heritage, or indeed any distinctively Bushman dialect. Instead they all speak a colloquial mixture of Afrikaans and Nama – the 'coloured' lingua franca of the northern Cape.

A genealogy of seventy-seven southern Kalahari Bushmen, documented by an anthropological expedition to the area in 1937, identifies such Bushmen as /Namasa, a category distinct from speakers of autochthonous languages (Dart 1937:159-174). Steyn similarly labels Regopstaan and Isak Kruiper N/amani Bushmen (1984:117) and kin of the /Namasa identified by Dart (Prof H.P. Steyn, pers. comm.). Almost all of the Kaggga Kamma group are descendants of two sons of Ou Makai by his first and second wife respectively. In terms of these typologies their primordial connections with the #Khomani Bushmen are thus tenuous at best.

Dart (1937:171) and Steyn (1984:117) both acknowledge that these sorts of typologies are of dubious analytical utility, as a result of

intensive social and genetic interaction between the small population of people speaking #Khomani, Nama and a variety of other languages in the southern Kalahari area. Both the ascriptions and the social fluidity nonetheless point to a far more complex stream of origins, continuities, and discontinuities than is allowed for in the Bushmen's representations. Most significantly, in terms of salient cultural markers such as language and habitual dress, their difference from 'coloureds' is by no means self-evident. The heritage which they articulate in their discourse and exhibit in their performances thus falls within the category of what Hobsbawm (1983:1-2) terms "invented traditions", defined as:

practices, [...] governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values or norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. However, insofar so there is reference to an historic past, the peculiarity of invented traditions is that the continuity with it is largely factitious.

Representations of a bounded group identity, articulated through the construal of internal relations of filiation and marriage, are likewise selective definitions and rules. The assumption of a generically 'pure' Bushman category, absolutely distinct from other sectors of the indigenous population, is in itself a distortion of the historical facts (Elphick and Malherbe 1989:4-5), and available evidence suggests that extensive inter-marriage occurred in the pre-colonial far northern Cape between Bushmen and Tswana-speaking herders to the north (Herbst 1908:5). It also seems that there were later inter-marriages between Bushmen and Basters in the far northern Cape during the late nineteenth century (Surplus People Project 1990:7).

Within the Kagga Kamma group at present, the marriage of Abejol Kruiper and Sanna Draaier is an existing relationship (albeit a discursively contested one), which makes it as possible for their son to bear a Nama and an outsider ascription as he does a Bushman and an insider one. The emphasis placed on certain orders of relationship, and the masking of others, imply that the Kagga Kamma group as the Bushmen represent it is more an "imagined community" (Anderson 1983) than an objective reality.

None of this should be construed to suggest that these Bushmen have no rightful claim to the heritage and relationships around which they construct their representations of their chosen identity. What it does reveal is that their image of themselves should be understood not as a primordial essence, but as a fiction, an artifice – meaning here not so much a falsehood as something that, like all culture, is made by human beings and not naturally given (cf. Geertz 1973:15). If their discourse is not unproblematically a reflection of objective attributes and differences, then it is an act of subjective *differentiation* (Wallman 1978:202) – a selective re-creation of identity which requires examination in itself.

## Chapter Four

# The Context of Bushman-ness

In his seminal paper on ethnicity, Barth (1969) contends that affirmations of cultural identity and difference have less to do with primordial divisions between culture groups than with processes of creating, maintaining and transforming social boundaries, processes in which cultural markers are selectively invoked and assigned meanings that they do not inherently possess.

Alongside his contention that cultural identities are invoked in the creation of social boundaries, Barth argues that such boundaries are not the products of social distance but vice versa. His view is that they are forged precisely within interactive social realms in which the assertion of difference has a functional rather than a descriptive role.

The Kagga Kamma Bushmen's rhetoric of identity saliently incorporates assertions of difference from Basters, in a boundary which is held to be simultaneously absolute and yet vulnerable to degradation in that the loss of their heritage would result in their becoming identity-less Basters themselves. In locating their construction of this boundary analytically, this section of the case study turns away from Kagga Kamma and the ethnographic present to a variety of the group's historical experiences in the southern Kalahari. The first of these experiences is the loss of access to land.

## *Utopia and Dispossession*

The Kagga Kamma Bushmen originate from the southern Kalahari region of the far northern Cape, an area which borders Namibia to the northwest and Botswana to the northeast. Historical evidence suggests that their Bushman forebears were the aboriginal occupants of this area (cf. Herbst 1908:5-7), although it was also inhabited by Tswana-speaking herders (ibid), and was probably utilised intermittently by Nama-speaking pastoralists. The latter migrated across extensive tracts of land to both the north and south of the southern Kalahari in the pre-colonial era (Elphick and Malherbe 1989:9), and their cultural influence is evident in the regional use of the Nama language.

In 1865 a group of Baster immigrants from the Cape Colony, led by one Dirk Vilander, established an independent pastoral settlement called Rietfontein in the southern Kalahari and named the surrounding area Mier (SPP 1990:6-7). The early history of Mier is complex and much of it has yet to be researched, so there is little clarity about the relationships between Basters and Bushmen in the region at this time. In the first decades of the twentieth century, however, there were relatively few of the Vilander Basters left in Mier, as most had lost their land to absentee speculators in the interim (Herbst 1908:9-10). In these latter years there were accordingly large areas of effectively unoccupied land for autonomous Bushman use.

Dawid Kruiper's father Regopstaan was born in 1905. His accounts of the early years of the century, and those of his oldest surviving child Petrus Kruiper (born c.1925), dwell on the availability of expansive land for nomadic foraging activity, and present this as a time when the hunter-gatherer lifestyle was lived according to the letter of the current nostalgic image:

Everything was perfect. We walked freely. The world was empty and we saw no-one else ... In the old days we acted wisely. One day, one direction; another day, another direction. That way the game was not depleted.



Bushmen's independent access to land was fundamentally undermined, however, in the aftermath of two state proclamations. In 1930 most of the region was proclaimed the Mier Coloured Settlement Area – one of a number of communal reserves set aside in the Cape for exclusive 'coloured' occupation (SPP 1990:9-10) – and in 1931 the Kalahari Gemsbok Park was founded on land to the immediate east.

The Mier proclamation precipitated the immigration of large numbers of 'coloured' stockholders to the reserve over the next two decades, and the progressive demarcation of the territory into fenced grazing camps (SPP:10-12). Bushmen were prohibited from exploiting natural resources on this land, and Regopstaan and others found themselves having to serve prison sentences for 'poaching'.

Particular emphasis is placed in the Bushmen's accounts of this time on the introduction to the region of fences which demarcated as private property land that had previously been open. As Hofmeyer (1990) points out in her discussion of African resistance to 'the wire' in the Potgietersrust District of the north-western Transvaal, fences are not simply borders around a piece of land. They also mark social boundaries and identities, and as such they are open to ideological contestation.

This is reflected in Regopstaan's account of the fencing of the Kalahari and its impact:

There were no fences in Mier, just Bushman tracks. Then the camp-dwellers began to arrive, and now it is Mier Coloured Area. It kills my soul. I walked all over there, but now if a Baster sees a Bushman's tracks he calls the police. Everything is closed now: I have no land, no water, no meat.

The grievances of the Kagga Kamma group concerning the alienation of what they assert to be their land are not directed at the ultimately responsible state, however, but at the 'coloured' stockholders who benefitted from the proclamation of Mier, and whose demarcation of private property was immediately responsible for Bushmen's suffering.

Anger is articulated through constructions of a boundary between aboriginal Bushmen and immigrant Basters, a boundary which is superimposed on the symbolically laden fences and the socio-economic divisions that the fences both effected and represented:

Bushman and Baster don't live together, because the Bushman came first and the Baster was last. I am a person of nature but I was chased out like a dog, and now we who were first are last ... A fence is a dangerous line.

They [the Basters] don't want us to live on the same land and I also don't want that. I don't want to live where there are camps.

The antagonistic assertion of a Bushman-Baster boundary is thus founded on experiences of dispossession that are regarded as ending an idyllic age of Bushman independence and prosperity. The difference that is marked is one between aboriginals who are rightful occupants and immigrants whose presence is illegitimate. In this context, the assertion of a hunter-gatherer identity in the present is an expression of historical grievance and a claim to entitlement.

### *Patronage and Wage Labour*

Like the state, 'white' settlers are notably absent in the assignment of blame for the developments outlined above. This is partially due to the absence of any effective 'white' settlement in the Kalahari. It is also very importantly the product of the Bushmen's alternating experiences of two very different means of accommodating to landlessness – 'white' patronage on the one hand and wage labour for 'coloured' stockholders in Mier on the other.

Over the six decades since 1930, many of the Bushmen in the southern Kalahari – including members of the Kagga Kamma group and their forebears – have been clients of an intermittent stream of 'white' patrons. These include academics, state officials, nature conservationists, journalists, film-makers, and commercial entrepreneurs.

The first of these was a professional hunter called Donald Bain who launched an inventive campaign to secure land for the Bushmen in the wake of the Mier and Kalahari Gemsbok Park proclamations. In his attempts to mobilise public attention and sympathy, he organised an anthropological expedition from the University of the Witwatersrand in 1936, to establish the Bushmen's scientifically valuable status, and led a Bushman delegation in a march on parliament in Cape Town in 1937 after taking them to the Empire Exhibition in Johannesburg.<sup>8</sup>

Several Bushman families were subsequently granted residence and limited hunting rights in the Kalahari Gemsbok Park from 1937 onwards, despite the reservations of park officials that they would undermine the latter's nature conservation efforts (Gordon 1992b:9-14). Regopstaan moved to the park a few years after this, accompanied by his parents, his wife and his sons Petrus and Dawid (born 1936). Almost all of the remaining adult members of the present Kagga Kamma group were subsequently born there.

Regopstaan worked as the shepherd of the chief park official's private stock, while most of the other men were given jobs as game wardens – a secure form of employment which they regard as appropriate to their Bushman heritage by virtue of their extensive knowledge of the local flora and fauna. They also assisted students engaged in botanical research and soldiers being trained in bush survival techniques.

As clients of the park administration they were provided throughout this period with basic commodities such as clothing as well as a small cash income and limited game. Entailing access to land and natural resources, albeit limited, they regard their lives in the park as representing at least to some extent a reprieve for the idyllic hunter-gatherer way. In the early 1970s, however, a new park administration revoked their rights and evicted them. Ou Makai passed away soon afterwards, apparently stating on his deathbed that the old Bushman existence had finally been taken from him and that he no longer had the will to live. His death, co-inciding with the last blows of dispossession, is regarded as a fundamental break with the past.

Bereft of patronage, the Bushmen migrated to Mier where they dispersed to different parts of the reserve and entered into wage labour relationships as unskilled domestics and herders for 'coloured'

stockholders. They subsequently remained in Mier for most of the 1970s and 1980s, moving around in search of casual employment. A few of them also worked intermittently in Namibia over this period. Dawid Kruiper's account exemplifies these first harsh experiences of enforced rural proletarianisation, entailing insecure employment and hard physical labour for scant reward:

Then I began to work under the Basters – herding sheep and doing piece-work for very little money ... We suffered there in [Mier]. But what could I do? I had no land any more. I still had to feed the children.

Relations with Baster employers are also recounted as being fraudulent and degrading, fuelling the antagonistic content of boundaries already forged around dispossession. Abejol Kruiper recounts the circumstances of his uncle Isak Kruiper's death in 1983:

He worked as a herder for a Baster. He did good work, but when he fell ill he was worth less than a dog. Like the ash that one throws to the wind. Now he lies buried and they still owe him money.

Between 1987 and 1989, however, most of the current group regained 'white' patronage again whilst working in a series of commercial promotions with a Kuruman tour operator called Lokkie Henning (cf. Gordon 1992b:14; Munnik 1992:3). These promotions included tourist exhibitions, much like the current displays at Kagga Kamma, which they performed at the Kuruman Showgrounds and took on tour to various major centres; a series of feature and documentary films; and product advertisements, T-shirts and postcard designs.

According to the Bushmen, Lokkie Henning appropriated the proceeds from these enterprises, while taking care of their short-term material needs and promising to place the Bushmen's share of the profits in a trust fund to buy them a farm. He reneged on this, however, when he left them squatting on rented land outside Kuruman with only R800 for their collective efforts. The group subsequently fragmented again, with some returning to wage labour in Mier while Dawid Kruiper and others remained in Kuruman. They reconstituted once more in 1991 to resettle at Kagga Kamma under yet another patronage arrangement.



The Bushmen construe the pursuits in which they have engaged during these intermittent periods of patronage – in the Kalahari Gemsbok Park, in Kuruman and now at Kagga Kamma – as “Bushman work”, to which they argue they are suited by virtue of their innate identity as people of nature and as heirs to the hunter-gather tradition. “Bushman work” entails offering services that are founded in putative attributes of Bushman-ness, such as physical and cultural characteristics, and especially bushlore. The benefits they have received as clients consist most importantly of the opportunity to survive without having to resort to wage labour, and to maintain social bonds through collective participation in these initiatives.

Even though the Bushmen’s position in patronage relations has been one of dependency and insecurity – and in the case of Lokkie Henning, rank exploitation – these relationships are nonetheless highly valued because they stand in sharp contrast to those of wage labour, which in the Bushmen’s experience have entailed poverty, prejudice and diaspora. Dawid Kruiper thus states that Lokkie Henning:

... wasn’t that bad. Because when he began with us it was just Regopstaan and I. But when we arrived at Kuruman, from that time onwards more and more of the family came together.

Like Kagga Kamma’s owners, these previous patrons have been motivated in their relationships with the Bushmen by a stated interest – scientific, conservationist and/or entrepreneurial – in attributes putatively associated with Bushmen as pristine hunter-gatherers. Regopstaan Kruiper recalls the chief park administrator for whom he worked stating that Bushmen were rightfully protected in the Gemsbok Park as they were people of nature:

[He] said that place is our place. The gemsbok, the lion, the leopard, the wolf, the Bushman. He said we’re all family and that place is our place.

Yet, in consequence of this motivation, patronage has also uniformly been premised on the patron’s recognition that the Bushmen were ‘authentic’ in this image. When support has been withdrawn, this act

has been justified in both cases through the declaration by ex-patrons that their clients were no longer pristine but had become assimilated to the ‘coloured’ population. The same charge was later publicly repeated by both Lokkie Henning and the park administration on the SABC documentaries that publicised the Bushmen’s plight in 1990.

Within the alternating experience of patronage and its loss, the Bushmen’s representation of themselves as pristine hunter-gatherers – and their assertion that they are thus distinct from Basters – marks a strategic attempt on their part to position themselves as authenticated subjects of the global Bushman image that has generated patronage and its benefits.

At the same time these are also defensive affirmations against an evident vulnerability to being labelled ‘coloured’ themselves by outsiders – an interrogation of identity that has invariably led to the loss of patronage and the alternative experience of wage labour. Baster-ness, construed in the Bushmen’s discourse as the lack of identity, is therefore not simply an ‘Other’ object of antagonism and grievance, but also represents the very material threat to self of losing one’s own identity:

The tourists don’t know people who wear skins, and it’s a miracle for them. The day we put clothes on they will stop coming ... If I arrive in Mier I have to put on clothes to work and I get little money. There’s a great difference between a Bushman and a Baster, but for others the difference isn’t so great: if you wear clothes you become a Baster. It’s terrible that one can have been a Bushman but now has to be a Baster.

Bearing an identity as pristine hunter-gatherers thus has a range of profound significances for the Kagga Kamma Bushmen, causing it to be an emotively and instrumentally powerful element of their own representations of themselves. Their ideological constructions of an internal group identity and boundary, discussed above, are responses in particular to their collective experiences of a socially and economically significant vulnerability to the external interrogation of their identity, and are thus one pole in a dialectical boundary process. The pivotal link in this dialectic is Dawid Kruiper’s position as the group’s leader.



### *Dawid Kruiper's Leadership*

Dawid Kruiper's status is one that is recognised both by the Bushmen and by outsiders. It is through his office that the latter conduct transactions with the group such as the organisation of performances and the donation of money and commodities, and the Bushmen refer to his authority in representing both their identity and the imperative of maintaining their heritage.

The ideological legitimisation of his authority is articulated formally through the discourse of Bushman identity. He and the other Bushmen state that he was given his leadership by Ou Makai at the latter's deathbed, when he was told to secure the future welfare not only of Ou Makai's descendants but of all the southern Kalahari Bushmen. He is also held to be the ultimate guardian of their heritage and identity, and it is he who most consistently wears the */ai* while others abandon it outside of performance contexts.

The substance of his leadership rests more, however, in his position as intermediary between the group and outside patrons, and not vice versa. During the 1970s and most of the 1980s, when the members of the group were dispersed wage labourers in Mier, he had no such status. He effectively became their leader in 1987 through his role in negotiating between the Lokkie Henning and several of his kin and other associates from the Kalahari Gemsbok Park era. He lost his office after that venture collapsed, when most participants returned to Mier while only a few remained with him in Kuruman, and regained his position again in January 1991 when he mobilised approximately the same constituency to resettle at Kagga Kamma.

The security of his position is consequently tied to the strength of the group boundary. On the one hand it is crucial to him that the integrity of the group identity is unassailable, so that the Bushmen can be seen to be legitimate subjects of the patronage which confers his status. He is accordingly at the forefront of the collective hostility directed at Sanna Draaier, the Nama woman in the group. On the other hand he is also dependent on the functional maintenance of his own constituency, which he attempts to secure by negotiating on their behalf for access to

the benefits of patronage. His role is thus one of constant social and symbolic negotiation. The Kagga Kamma Bushmen's will to cultural survival as 'traditional' hunter-gatherers, and their assertion of salient difference from Basters, have a multiplicity of meanings in a complex boundary process. On the one hand, the antagonistic content of the Bushman-Baster boundary is based on experiences of dispossession and diaspora in the southern Kalahari. Their rhetoric of identity also has an important strategic and defensive content, which is founded in experiences of alternating patronage and wage labour.

Within these latter experiences, Bushman-ness is perhaps best understood as a form of "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1977), which is efficacious in contexts of patronage but which has no practical value in contexts of wage labour, except perhaps as a reactive ideological resource with which commentary on historical and contemporary injustices can be articulated. Like all forms of capital, Bushman-ness is thus implicated in relations of power and ownership, and in the following chapters, focus is accordingly returned to Kagga Kamma, to examine the venture in these terms.

## Chapter Five

# Kagga Kamma: A Situation of Identity

If the Kagga Kamma Bushmen's representation of themselves as pristine hunter-gatherers is a selectively created identity that has to do with processes of strategic and defensive boundary formation, then their current participation in the Kagga Kamma venture cannot be approached in the primordial terms proffered by the owners.

As suggested in Chapter Two, it could be thus argued with public sceptics that the heritage on display is a fake that is generated by purely material interests.

In this view, one need look no further than the economic transactions that occur between the owners, the Bushmen and the tourists to understand the portrayal.

It should be clear from the discussion above, however, that the Bushmen's own "invention" of their heritage is rooted in experiences and relationships that go well beyond the spatial and temporal delimitations of their tourist performances at Kagga Kamma.

It thus serves the purposes of this discussion better to treat Kagga Kamma as the site at which longer-term processes of identity construction and boundary formation currently operate.

## *Frameworks of Incapsulation*

The Bushmen's enthusiastic participation in the Kagga Kamma enterprise can indeed be accounted for in terms of these processes. Firstly, Kagga Kamma is the latest in a series of "Bushman work" ventures in which patronage has enabled them to survive materially without having to resort to rural wage labour for 'coloured' stockholders in Mier. Their economic stake in the venture, discussed below, is hardly of the same order as that of the owners, but the available alternatives are sufficiently unattractive to have kept a sizable proportion of the group at the reserve since January 1991.

Living and working together at Kagga Kamma also secures the maintenance of solidary relations between the members of the group, in contrast with the dispersion that would result if they left. In their closed camp on the far-flung reserve they are also both physically and socially isolated from other people. Their collective participation in the venture is consequently an effective means of ensuring the relative strength of the social boundary around the group. It thus provides a necessary foundation as well for the leadership of Dawid Kruiper, who has travelled to the Kalahari twice since January 1991 to mobilise additional members for the settlement, and who actively discourages the Bushmen from leaving Kagga Kamma if talk of doing so arises.

The promotional media and press coverage of the resort have also consistently portrayed the Bushmen as pristine hunter-gatherers, and the tourist performances themselves likewise reconstruct public images of traditionality around them. Their presence at Kagga Kamma has thus conferred public advertisement and authorisation on their identity, with implications that stretch beyond the limits of the tourist enterprise itself. A number of film crews, for instance, have visited Kagga Kamma to shoot footage of the Bushmen in the hunter-gatherer mould for documentaries, advertisements and feature films. Thus Dawid Kruiper says:

People are hearing now that there are still Bushmen living. And they come here and they see my Bushmen.



On all of these levels the patronage of Kagga Kamma's owners functions to provide the material, social and ideological supports enabling the formation of a boundary of identity – a boundary which is itself artificial to the extent that it would be weakened if not destroyed should these scaffolds be removed. The Bushmen's participation in the venture is driven not by material gain alone, but by this entire complex of incapsulatory mechanisms, in return for which they provide the performances that attract tourists to the resort and generate profit for the owners.

This intersection of the Bushmen's and the owners' interests should not be interpreted, however, as implying that the patron-client relationship between them is one of equal and mutual benefit. On the contrary, the Bushmen's position within the enterprise is particularly disadvantaged. In the sections that follow I look first at their material circumstances at Kagga Kamma, and then at their responses.

### *Conditions of "Bushman Work"*

Despite their obviously crucial role in attracting and entertaining consumers, the Bushmen receive no cash income or share of profits from the enterprise in exchange for their performances. The rationale offered by the owners and managers for this state of affairs is that the Bushmen are provided with both free accommodation and limited rights to exploit the local flora and fauna for their subsistence.

When the Bushmen first arrived at Kagga Kamma, they were accommodated in a camp over a rise from the display area, in which they constructed grass huts like those exhibited to tourists. At the onset of winter a few months later these huts became uninhabitable and they were moved a few hundred metres away to a new camp where they are presently housed in six shacks. These consist of either one or two small rooms that are constructed out of wooden poles and insulated with either thatch or plastic and canvas sheeting.

They afford little protection against either the rain and snow or the extreme temperature variations that occur daily at the reserve. The only furnishings in this accommodation are thin mattresses spread on the sand floor which are used as beds by up to four people. Only four of the

shacks were occupied in February 1992, by households with an average of seven people, while three more people were also living in a shelter under a rock overhang.

The camp is invisible from the "Bushman visit" area and the owners have explicitly instructed that visitors are not to be allowed access to it. The official reason is that this secures a private domain for the Bushmen, but the condition of the settlement, in striking contrast to both the tourist accommodation and the orderly display area, casts doubt on this motivation. The only services provided are an open latrine and two water taps linked to a borehole in another part of the reserve. The plastic pipes carrying the water are exposed to the sun and crack frequently so that the supply is regularly disrupted. Food is cooked on open woodfires on the ground, while refuse is dumped in sand pits that are covered over when full.

Many of the Bushmen have chronic respiratory ailments as a result of the cold and the unhygienic conditions in which they live, and at least one suffers from tuberculosis. Their access to medical care is limited as the regional mobile clinic visits the reserve irregularly, and during my fieldwork period they were dependent on the capricious mood of the overstretched management staff to transport them to doctors in Ceres. (This latter situation appears to have improved since then.) There are also no educational or recreational facilities, and the Bushmen spend much of the day listening to radios which they value as their single source of information and entertainment.

Despite the owners' offer, effectively no foraging activity is engaged in, for which the Bushmen offer a variety of reasons discussed below. A small herd of donkeys has instead been provided for the Bushmen's consumption, one of which is communally slaughtered every few weeks. Several individuals have also planted vegetable gardens, and a few own poultry which provide an intermittent supply of eggs and meat. Most food and all other commodities, however, are purchased from the local farmstore, to which most of the Bushmen are in debt to the tune of several hundred rands.

A small income can be obtained on an individual basis through the manufacture of curio items which are sold to the enterprise for resale to tourists at double the price offered the Bushmen. The sums received for these articles range from R5 to R15 for beadwork bracelets, necklaces and leather bags, and from R30 to R60 for bow and arrow



sets. Raw materials such as gut, ostrich shell and sheepskin leather are mostly provided by the owners at no cost, while wooden beads are crafted from locally gathered plants.

Since the curios are retailed through the resort's own shop alone, the market is restricted and the turnover slow, so that on at least one occasion the Bushmen have been ordered to stop producing them. Payment is almost exclusively in the form of credit against their store accounts. Cash is generally withheld even where there is no debt, which the management justify by arguing that the Bushmen are incapable of controlling their own finances. The managers also contend that if the Bushmen truly wish to live according to their traditional way they should have no desire for either cash or consumer goods.

The income obtained in this manner is supplemented with a state pension drawn by Dawid Kruiper's father Regopstaan, and with small donations from tourists. As a consequence of their limited income, most are unable to make ends meet and are indebted to the enterprise, although they are never denied basic goods such as food. Few are precisely aware of their financial standing as the management oversees their accounts with effectively no consultation.

According to the owners and managers an unspecified portion of the resort's profits is channelled into a trust fund for the Bushmen's future security. Part of the fund is supposed to be used for future developments such as a school for the children, but the Bushmen have seen no evidence of these developments thus far and there is no sign that they will in the immediate future. If any of them leave Kagga Kamma, they also lose access to this fund no matter how substantial or enduring their contribution to the enterprise has been. Underscoring this material insecurity, there is no written contract between the Bushmen and the enterprise in which their rights and obligations are legally specified, leaving the Bushmen dependent on the will of the owners.

## *Resistance and Conflict*

The Bushmen's objective position in the venture is thus one of gross vulnerability and exploitation. One of their responses to these circumstances is regular non-cooperation with the management in the

operation of the venture. If the latter have been tardy in addressing a particular grievance then the Bushmen do not appear on time for "Bushman visits" and then put on a weak performance to the management's embarrassment, until such time as the immediate situation has been rectified. Discontent with their condition has also caused sixteen Bushmen to abandon the venture. Five departed just a few months subsequent to the initial resettlement, and nine more in January 1992. Due to fear of retaliation, however, these acts of essentially passive resistance seldom entail the explicit articulation of underlying grievance. Partially in consequence of the implicit character of such confrontations, the problems effectively remain unresolved.

Open expressions of grievance are more generally directed at Dawid Kruiper – whom the Bushmen charge, as their leader, with ensuring their well-being and security – in conflicts that take place within the limits of the group. According to the remaining Bushmen, the above-mentioned departures were immediately precipitated by conflicts in which those who left explicitly or even violently challenged Dawid's adequacy to his office. As well as entailing this open challenge, the act of departure constitutes a structural threat to Dawid Kruiper's position in itself in so far as it is a public and definitive form of boundary rupture.

Notably, among those who left were all the members of the group who were not Dawid Kruiper's consanguineal or affinal kin. One fracture that is clearly evident is the hostility between Abejol Kruiper's Nama wife Sanna Draaier and the rest of the group, led by Dawid Kruiper in this as in other matters.

This couple and their children joined the settlement in June 1991 in the hope of accumulating a capital base to establish themselves in Namibia, and Sanna Draaier accordingly adopts a Bushman identity in public in order to gain access to income.

The opportunities for saving at the reserve are meagre, however, and she wishes to abandon the venture and return to the Kalahari. Her husband has meanwhile become committed to his kin and refuses to leave with her. This results in enduring hostility between the two, in which the others consistently take Abejol Kruiper's side. She and her two older children are thus isolated on the margins of the group, and she fears falling victim to violence:

I wear the skins with the others when tourists come, but it's not really my way. They're all Bushmen – they're one family but they marry each other – and now I'm alone among them. When they're drunk they say I alone am Nama here. It's the leader – he always says so. They must take me back home, then I'll know I'm with my own people. If I stay here they'll kill me.

The rest of the Bushmen are generally consistent in their allegiance to Dawid Kruiper, but nonetheless exert increasing pressure on him to take positive action. This presents him with an insoluble dilemma, as he relies upon the support of his constituency but is unable to confront the patrons on whom he is equally if not in fact more dependent for his office. He thus actively quells his followers' impulses towards resistance, to their evident dissatisfaction, trying instead to pacify them by arguing that he will rectify matters in the long term if they afford him the opportunity and persist in their loyalty. He is nonetheless aware of the potential consequences to his status of his accommodative strategy:

I said to the whole world on television: I am coming here and I am not coming to visit – if we come here we must not leave even till the twentieth generation. But now they're already going back. In the end I will sit here alone – a bogus leader – and then what shall I do?

### *Place of the Bushmen?*

Ideologically, the Bushmen express their grievances at their position in the enterprise by contesting the promotional assertion that Kagga Kamma is the "Place of the Bushmen". They especially articulate a variety of contrasts between the ecology of the reserve and that of the southern Kalahari, in which the latter is held up as the "Bushman's world" and the former found wanting.

It is asserted for instance that the full range of plants found in the Kalahari is absent at Kagga Kamma. The rocky character of the terrain is similarly contrasted with the smooth desert sand of the Kalahari, and is held to present an insurmountable obstacle to hunting in that it hinders both tracking and the chase.

They offer these considerations, for instance, as pragmatic reasons for their not acting on the owners' offer of even limited permission to exploit the flora and fauna of the reserve for their subsistence, and consequently for their unwilling reliance on purchased foodstuffs that are construed as contrary to a hunter-gatherer identity:

Flour, rice, peas and beans in tins and packets, corned meat, meatballs  
... These are not veldfoods, we do not really want to eat them.

Whether this is in fact the case or not is difficult to assess, as the game is both prolific and tame so that it could seemingly be hunted with ease.

Yet such assertions are also invested with more than pragmatic significances, in which Kagga Kamma is held to be a milieu that is inimical to leading a hunter-gatherer existence, and thus by no means a restoration of the 'traditional' Bushman way:

This is a white man's world, it's not a Bushman world. I have been here for five months but I haven't eaten even rockrabbit meat. I know nothing about this world, there's nothing here that a Bushman can find ... This is not my time. In the old days one could catch a gemsbok in front of the house with a spear, but this is not that time. Now we just get the skin, and it's a sheep's skin.

The reserve's unsuitability to the hunter-gatherer way is moreover explicitly associated with the fact that it and its resources remain the property of the owners, who are thus empowered while the Bushmen are weak:

The owners write in the brochure that this is the "Place of the Bushmen", but it's not our place. We hear we can hunt, but they say hunt to a point and then stop. That can easily be said, because we aren't the owners. If this was our place, then if we left we could take those wildebees on the brochure with us ... Abejol can hunt, but now he can't. There is something in front of his eyes. One presumes it's that this isn't his own place.



Unable or unwilling to forage, and largely dependent on the small and insecure income derived from curio production, most of the Bushmen have accumulated substantial debts at the reserve for their food and other purchases from the farmstore. Three times since their resettlement they have been offered piecework employment gathering thatch for the roofing of tourist accommodation and other buildings on the reserve. This is strenuous manual labour for meagre pay – 20c per bundle, about fifty of which can be gathered in a day according to the Bushmen, generating a wage of R10. It is work that they take reluctantly to lessen their debts.

Their resentment at doing this work is again expressed not simply in pragmatic terms, however, but also in terms of a threat to their Bushman status that they perceive in having to perform wage labour, a form of work which for them is associated with Baster-ness and hardship:

I shall do it, because in the end I can't say no – I need the cents. But we came to Kagga Kamma to do Bushman work. Now they want us to do farmwork. That's not in the Bushman tradition. If I work as a Baster I shall suffer. I don't know what I shall become if I lose the /ai.

In contesting Kagga Kamma's declared status as the "Place of the Bushmen", the Bushmen are expressing their grievances over their position within the venture. On this level, Kagga Kamma is explicitly held to be irreconcilable with their Bushman identity because the structure of the enterprise is such that they are denied the security and prosperity that is supposed to accompany "Bushman work".

The security of the group boundary, and thus of Dawid Kruiper's authority, are threatened in various ways as well by the character of the existing patron-client relationship. Yet it is precisely through this relationship that they are enabled to incapsulate themselves as Bushmen, and were it to be removed they would in all likelihood be thrown back onto wage labour and Baster-ness. This fundamental contradiction is articulated in turn through a series of complex but pointed interpretations of the local rock art and other evidence of the aboriginal heritage of Kagga Kamma.

## *Struggling with Heritage*

Given the historical depth and legitimacy it confers on their identity, the Bushmen have eagerly adopted the owners' promotional construction of continuities between them and the aboriginal hunter-gatherer population of Kagga Kamma. As Dawid Kruiper exuberantly announced to the press soon after the initial resettlement, "Our ancestors were here, and now so are we".<sup>9</sup> They also subvert this construction, however, by ascribing further meanings to the rock paintings which constitute that heritage, through which they comment on aspects of their circumstances and relationships in the present context of the venture. The rock art is thus invoked as a cultural resource in a form of local politics.

Through some of their readings the Bushmen claim the art as their inheritance – "letters from our forefathers" – and argue that it is their right and duty to restore the paintings to their former glory. This has been forbidden by the owners, who are supported in the matter by provisions in the National Monuments Act (28 of 1969) which claim rock art as a national heritage and expressly prohibit any form of interference with it. They have also instructed that any artefacts found at the midden sites on the reserve should be handed over for public exhibition to tourists.

The Bushmen have nonetheless been allowed to paint their own rock art at sites around their camp, and Doppies Kruiper has been assigned this work by his father Dawid. One of his paintings depicts a Bushman surrounded by a herd of Eland, which he elucidates as follows:

These were my forefathers' animals that they could hunt. I painted how my forefathers lived, because I also want to live like that, and I want to show my own descendants how we must live – in the tradition of our forefathers. It must remain, from the last #Khomani family, because if the #Khomani family is no longer in the world, what can remain ... That's also our leader who brought us here, and who must lead us to regain our ancestral heritage.



The ancestral heritage is figuratively represented here as a form of cargo, which will bring fortune to its rightful heirs at some millenarian point in the future when all the problems of the Bushmen will be over (cf. Thrupp 1962 on millennial cargo cults in Melanesia). Dawid Kruiper thus also asserts that in a dream he saw a treasure chest buried at the reserve by the aboriginal hunter-gatherers, which only a Bushman who is true to the 'pure tradition' will be able to find and open:

What Doppies is doing is just like what our forefathers did, without anyone teaching him. It's in him. If we stay here, perhaps we will find the treasure chest. One day I shall still find the thing that they buried here. The chest is shut, but if we find it we can convert it to cash. The treasure is great luck.

Yet under the present situation, Dawid holds, the Bushmen's ability to benefit from their cargo is undermined:

We are very lucky – our children walk around here and they find the stones that are lucky, but they always disappear. I put it in my pocket and tomorrow it's gone ... [The owners] told us if we find anything here that we don't understand, we must hand it in to be shown to the tourists in the museum. They always want to take it away from us.

The interpretations exemplified in these statements have at least three levels of reference. At one level the aboriginal heritage is incorporated into the boundary process as a charter for group identity. As the foundation of "Bushman work", this identity is also potentially linked to material fortune, but the realisation of that fortune is frustrated by the owners' illegitimate control over that heritage. This second level of reference is a thinly veiled comment on the owners' appropriation of the profits made from the Bushmen's performances at Kagga Kamma. The recovery of the cargo thus represents the rightful fortune that will fall to the Bushmen should they gain control over their "Bushman work".

On yet another level, however, these interpretations also refer to tensions within the Bushman group over their continuing participation in the enterprise. Primordial continuities with the aboriginal occupants

provide a moral imperative for remaining at Kagga Kamma, and for this reason they are particularly favoured by Dawid Kruiper and his closest supporters. In a ritual enactment of this sentiment, when Dawid is under pressure from other members of the group, he frequently camps out for a few days at one of the rock art galleries near the settlement, so as to derive ancestral inspiration and authority:

When I sit there, I see I can stay here. I see the soot from the woodsmoke, and the old paintings.

An alternative set of interpretations also regards the rock paintings as a link with the aboriginal Kagga Kamma Bushmen, but ascribes very different meanings to this link by invoking the art as signs from those forebears that Kagga Kamma is now unsafe for Bushman occupation. Those who argue for this view assert that many of the paintings faded under the snow during the first winter after the resettlement, despite having survived hundreds of winters in the past. This is held to be an ancestral warning that living at Kagga Kamma will bring misfortune. They also point out that the animals in the paintings are all running northwards and that the only figure pointing south is the image of Dawid Kruiper in Doppies Kruiper's painting, leading his people in the wrong direction and indeed contrary to ancestral imperatives.

These latter interpretations of the rock art reconstruct an allegorical local history of colonial encroachment, based itself on Bushmen's experiences of dispossession in the Kalahari. Hendrik Kruiper, whose relationship with his brother Dawid is strained at the best of times, narrates this history and its significance for the present:

There were Bushmen here, but where are they now? Jan van Riebeeck came here and met the Bushmen. Then he made his plans and brought sheep. The Bushmen had to work for them, and they became hungry and stole the sheep, and the white man chased them out ... All the paintings point north. They went north, but Dawid has brought us here ... I went hunting today and I brought back a can of pickled fish. This is the white man's world now. There's no more place for Bushmen. Those things are going to happen again here, but we must go back before that.

The aboriginal heritage can thus also be turned against ongoing residence at Kagga Kamma – which may once have been Bushman territory but is no longer supportive of a Bushman identity – and specifically against Dawid Kruiper's commitment to remaining within the enterprise.

Kagga Kamma is therefore above all a site of contradictions and ambiguities for the Bushmen and their traditional forager identity. On the one hand the venture operates – materially, socially and ideologically – to secure a framework for boundary formation and maintenance. Ironically it is thus indeed a cultural survival initiative, as the owners claim, though certainly not in the primordial sense of their depictions. At the same time the Bushmen occupy a vulnerable and exploited position within the venture, so that it is also a site which is hostile to Bushman-ness (again conceived in the non-primordial sense).

## Chapter Six

# Conclusion

Neither a primordial essence nor simply an economically motivated fraud, the 'traditional' hunter-gatherer self-representation of the Kagga Kamma Bushmen is a socially significant identity forged in strategic response to a variety of past experiences. It is also a vulnerable identity in so far as the Bushmen's own position in relation to the Bushman-Baster boundary that they construct is in practice far more ambiguous than they assert in their ideal depictions. This vulnerability has been practically manifest over the last six decades in their shifting back and forth across the correlated socio-economic boundary between clientship and wage labour, as a result of the vicissitudes of outsider ascription. Even in situations of clientship, as at Kagga Kamma at present, the conditions that they ideally associate with Bushman-ness are not fully realised.

Ultimately underwriting this strategy of identity creation is their historical loss of autonomous access to land in the southern Kalahari. This has forced them periodically into wage labour, and in the short term their strategic aim is to position themselves as legitimate subjects of patronage, and thereby gaining access to a range of socio-economic benefits without having to compete in a wage market in which they have consistently occupied a peripheral and insecure position. Their long-term goal, however, is the restoration of secure access to land itself.

Having access to land is ideologically associated by the Bushmen with a lifeway that is in accordance with their 'traditional'

hunter-gatherer identity and with their cultural survival. Doppies Kruiper portrays finally gaining a "place" as a millenarian event:

If we could just get a place and stay there, then everyone would say it's a piece of Bushman land. The place of the Bushmen, not just so-called – a place where we can survive. Just like in the time of Ou Makai. Then I could shed my Western clothes and like Ou Makai live just with my */ai*, in my tradition ... a place where we can survive.

On a pragmatic level which reveals the strategic content of this vision of cultural survival, gaining land is seen as a means of gaining control over the profitable exhibition of the 'traditional' hunter-gatherer heritage. Rather than pushing incapsulation to its ideological limits – and literally practising a foraging subsistence mode in complete social isolation – the practical goal is to establish an independent tourist venture in which the Bushmen themselves will reap the economic benefits of cultural commodification:

The gate will always be open, and everyone will be able to come there. Tourists, students – everyone. There are lots of them who have never seen a Bushman, who have just heard about it or seen it on the TV. They can come to us. But there they will have to ask Dawid Kruiper, and not [Kagga Kamma's owners].

The project of invoking continuities of identity with the aboriginal past, as a means of resisting dispossession and gaining access to socio-economic resources, is of course not particular to the Kagga Kamma Bushmen. It is a global strategy for political mobilisation that over the last two decades has increasingly come to be shared by descendants of indigenous people across the world, including those of Australia, New Zealand, Latin American countries, and Canada and the United States. In South Africa it has recently been used by the residents of a number of 'coloured' reserves in Namaqualand, in their struggles to retain or increase the amount of land set aside for them (Sharp 1992a; Boonzaier 1992). There are a number of similarities between these cases, which they share with the case presented here.

Firstly, the people who are now asserting native identities and solidarities are not simply reflecting continuities that have been passed down through the generations from the aboriginal past. On the contrary, the colonial and post-colonial eras that separate them from that past have entailed definitive incorporation into settler societies, even though the assimilated position has most frequently been one of marginality. What is happening instead is the creation of new identities in what Roosens (1989) terms a process of "ethnogenesis". An example of this which is strikingly similar to that of the Kagga Kamma group is that of the Ainu, who exhibit a recreated indigenous heritage for the tourist market in resisting their disadvantaged position in mainstream Japanese society (Friedman 1990).

Secondly, the rhetorics of identity that have been adopted within these strategies have almost uniformly emphasised aboriginal people's closeness to nature, and the correlated difference of their lifeways from those of Western modernity (Sharp 1992b; Roosens 1989:62-64). As Keesing (1989) points out in discussing the politics of "kastom" (custom) in the Pacific islands, these rhetorics of native identity are usually derived from elements of 'Western' colonial ideologies. That this is the case is partially because of the continuing discursive hegemony of the colonial ideologies, and partially because of the oppositions construed within these ideologies between images of indigenous and settler culture – oppositions which can be subverted in discursive criticism of colonial projects.

There are obvious similarities between these global patterns and the case of the Kagga Kamma Bushmen. There are nonetheless several crucial factors which significantly distinguish the latter. Firstly, aboriginal strategies in other parts of the world have, on the whole, incorporated forms of overtly political mobilisation, with potential or actual constituencies of thousands of people and a skilled leadership drawn from the petty bourgeoisie. The Kagga Kamma group number only thirty or so at present (with no likelihood of gathering even a hundred should all of the South African Bushmen pool their efforts), and lack an elite that is versed in political activity. They thus have little capacity for organising in the political arena.

Secondly, the relatively successful aboriginal movements in other countries have acted within macro-political settings that have shown



sympathy or at least tolerance towards land and other socio-economic claims made on the basis of ethnic particularisms (Sharp 1992b). While Donald Bain could appeal on the Bushmen's behalf to the paternalist state of the 1930s, it is highly unlikely that any South African government in the foreseeable future is going to be amenable to setting precedents for ethnic concessions.

To date the Kagga Kamma Bushmen have been forced to rely instead on forms of outsider patronage. In the recent cases of Lokkie Henning and the owners of Kagga Kamma, this has been in the form of free market enterprises in which the patrons' prime interest in the Bushmen has been commercial. Dependency on entrepreneurs has left the Bushmen vulnerable to exploitation and the mercenary vicissitudes of outsiders' ascriptions. Dawid Kruiper articulates this vulnerability:

Lokkie Henning said on TV that we are Baster-ised, because we don't speak the Bushman language anymore. Yet I know that if he takes me now – who speaks just Nama and Afrikaans – then I am a Bushman. If I just work, like in films or anything that he needs, then I am a Bushman. But if he doesn't need us, then we are Basters.

To some extent their vulnerability is ameliorated by the very same factors. It is their small numbers which make them both valuable as rarities and manageable as clients, and ironically they are therefore more likely to attract beneficial outside interest than if they were a group of several hundreds or thousands. The emphasis in commercial patronage on the production of popular images is also a means of making them subjects of public interest which can in turn generate further rounds of patronage, as was the case with the SABC documentaries that bridged the gap between Lokkie Henning and Kagga Kamma.

Notwithstanding these qualifications, their vulnerability is not simply the result of having unscrupulous as opposed to benevolent patrons. It is also the product of the discursive premisses on which entrepreneurial patronage – and even autonomous "Bushman work" – is founded. If their identity strategy is based on the market value of the heritage they claim as their own, then this has three related implications.

Firstly, the market value of this heritage and thus of the Bushmen themselves is derived from the popular authority of the global Bushman discourse described in Chapter Two. They have no means of controlling that discourse and are thus bound to its representations. Secondly, and in consequence of this parameter, they are unable to introduce political or economic considerations into the public realm since these are dissonant with the Bushman icon. Hence the Kagga Kamma management's assertion that if they wish to live like Bushmen they should have no need of cash or consumer goods. Thirdly, and also as a result of the same discursive limitation, they find it extremely difficult to generate the appearance of seamless authenticity in what is an essentially impossible mould. The construction of their "imagined community" – with its xenophobic boundaries and often implausible ideological assertions – takes on a desperate ring in this light.

The Kagga Kamma Bushmen's 'traditional' hunter-gatherer identity is thus structured by profound limitations and ambiguities. Framed as a path to utopian restoration, it is in fact the product of a condition of dependency with deep historical roots. At the same time, however, given the structural limitations which this small collectivity faces in attempting to survive on the edges of a post-colonial political economy, their self-representation as primordial foragers also marks an inventive manipulation of the global cultural economy. Revisionist critics have argued that the primordialist discourse represents the distortion and consumption of Bushman culture by the Western metropole. Yet, if the icon of the original forager is at least partially a Western construct, as has been argued so forcefully, then ironically it would appear as if it is the Bushmen who are doing the consuming here, in appropriating a Western trope as the organising principle of the their own rhetoric of identity.

It is precisely these subtleties of local cultural politics which have been overlooked in the grand theoretical context of the Great Bushman Debate. The latter has been conducted as an academic conflict over the definition of what people are, but, as this case study has hopefully shown, identity is more fruitfully treated as a product of what people do in the complex and often contradictory social contexts in which they are implicated – the analysis of which has always been the life blood of socio-cultural anthropology.

## Endnotes

- 1 This report is based on fieldwork conducted at Kagga Kamma in December 1991, February 1992, and September 1992.
- 2 The following excerpt from the diary of Anders Sparrman, a botanist who toured the Cape interior in 1775–76, exemplifies contemporary representations of Bushmen: "Boshies-men [...] render themselves odious to the rest of mankind and are pursued and exterminated like the wild beasts, whose manners they have assumed. Like the wild beasts, bushes and drifts in rocks serve them instead of houses; and [...] worse than beasts, their soil has been found close by their habitations [...] As ignorant of agriculture as apes, like them they are obliged to wander about over hills and dales after [...] wild roots, berries and plants (1975:194-197).
- 3 *The Argus* 23/09/1992
- 4 Kagga Kamma information leaflet
- 5 In an ironic twist that exemplifies the blurring of fiction and reality in these spectacles, Shakaland is recycled from the props of a popular television series that fictionalised the life of the warrior-king Shaka, founder of the Zulu Empire in the early nineteenth century. At the time the Shaka Zulu series was subject to widespread criticism for its ideologically conservative appropriation of the Shaka icon, but now its successor embodies Zulu realities for countless tourists.
- 6 Letter to *The Argus* 12/07/1991
- 7 *The Argus* 26/01/1991
- 8 *Rand Daily Mail* 08,14,15,16 and 21/06/1936; *Cape Times* 01/02/1937, 10/05/1937
- 9 *Sunday Times* 31/03/1991

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