...attractions and artillerymen, curiosities and commandos...

An Ethnographic Study of Elites and the Politics of Cultural Distinction

Submitted to the Faculty of Social Science, University of Cape Town, in fulfillment of the requirements of a Masters Degree by dissertation in Social Anthropology

August 1996

Stuart Sholto Douglas

cover picture:

"there and here [...] then and now. Things have changed...[and] some stayed the same"
(the artist, Bernardo Rumao, Schmidtsdrift, January 1996).
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In discussing the establishment of Southwest Africa/Namibia's first 'cabinet' in June 1980, Jean Fischer (To The Point, 12.9.1980) mentioned that "amongst the twelve members of the Minister's Council was the diminutive figure of the Bushman, Geelbooi Kashe wearing a sober dark suit. 'He has exchanged the wind shelter for the conference table', remarks an ethnologist. Geelbooi brings ancient Bushman wisdom to bear fruit on current issues and has provided memorable moments in the National Assembly":

If the lives and future of my people were not threatened, it would never have been necessary to carry arms, to be on guard continuously or be involved in any military training. Now, however, our lives, the guarantee of democracy for my people and the continuation of our ethnic culture, are threatened by evil forces. Because of that, our lives, democracy and culture have to be defended at all costs and with whatever means and authority can be mustered. The need for the presence of a territorial force in Bushmanland should be evident to all -- such a military presence is a guarantee of safety and stability.

The old hunters have taught us this lesson: the greater the danger, the more fierce the resistance. The meat of the gemsbuck is highly sought after...but the gemsbuck's horns can be most discouraging when the hunter approaches. In the same way the riches of my country is being sought and compels my people to guard themselves as the gemsbuck would guard himself with his sharp horns. The giraffe has his kick, the lion his teeth, the tiger his claws and the buffalo his horns to frighten off the enemy. We, the Bushmen, we have our Territory Force! The Bushman welcomes the presence of 203 Battalion in Bushmanland -- the Battalion is the Bushman's horns, teeth, claws, and kick! For as long as there are herds of game roaming the veld, one will find the predator. For as long as there are predators, there will be shepherds. More explicitly...for as long as we enjoy peace, prosperity and freedom, there will be those who wish to rob us of that -- and the presence of such thieves will always see the Bushman resisting and fighting off those thieves.

I sincerely hope that I have managed to convey to you, the reader, the need for the continued presence of a military force in Bushmanland.

Victory is ours!

(Chief Geelbooi Kashe, Paratus February 1983)
ABSTRACT

The origins of this dissertation lie in my personal disillusionment with three intertwined issues: First, academic and predominantly anthropological studies of bushmen have tended to homogenise and generalise about those who fall under this referent. Second, anthropological analyses of 'identity politics' are still very much rooted in a positivistic logocentricism that prevents the analysis of ambivalence, of ambiguous and hybrid cultural identities. And, third, studies of 'identity politics' within anthropology, most notably enquiries into 'aboriginal' identities, have tended to be too narrowly defined in the sense of being rigidly discipline specific.

Approximately four months of ethnographic research in a bushman settlement at Schmidtsdrift military base in the Northern Cape, South Africa, were revealing in that it became apparent that there was a variegated 'bushman experience', most clearly along the division of bushmen into a cabal of elites or leaders -- itself differentiated -- and those that they led. Moreover, it was clear, through discussions and interviews with twelve key informants and a number of other bushmen, that the situational specificity of political process and 'identity politics' could only be accurately comprehended through a dialogical conception of sociality. The negotiated processualism of cultural identities among the bushmen at Schmidtsdrift could only be grasped through a loosely structured and applied post-Cartesian qualitative social science. Theorising ethnicity, factionalism, and nationality in this context required the merging of ethnographic data, existent anthropological studies and literature, and arguments from 'cultural studies' and 'critical theory'. The latter offer anthropology a range of comprehensive theories and ideas about cultural identities and, conversely, anthropology offers them a wealth of substantive ethnographic data.

This thesis is written against totalising epistemological strategies, and subverts essentialist interpretations and representations of people and politics at Schmidtsdrift. My dissatisfaction with an inexorable empiricism is borne out by the
utilisation of research and writing strategies that are open-ended, multi-textured, and very specifically located in time and space. As such, the argument in the pages that follow serves as something of a caveat, firstly to anthropologists and anthropology with their tendency, historically, to seek out monolithic and absolute representations of bushmen as bushman (thus denying the importance of other important discursive positions and political identities) and, secondly, to the South African state that seems dangerously close to embracing, in toto, the rhetoric and political logic of its predecessor.

The current hegemony of liberal democratic praxis in epistemology and government, specifically in South Africa, fosters an iconography and indeed an iconoclastic reductionism that is akin to colonial and apartheid 'pasts'. I conclude that anthropologists (and 'cultural theorists') urgently need to start thinking in terms of colonialisms, of power differentials and political practices that betray the notions that 'post-colonialism' is, unequivocally, upon us; that bushmen were -- and are -- simply victims of one-sided oppressive orders; and, finally, that democracy is a novel idea about universal equity and equality, that it encompasses respect for cultural difference and not diversity. The 'death of the individual' in late modernity, the potentate that is so readily associated with absolutism, still awaits an eulogy.

Stuart Douglas
Cape Town
August 1996
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In Kimberley and at Schmidtsdrift: All of those bushmen at Schmidtsdrift base (not all of whom receive mention in this work) who agreed to impart knowledge, who gave time and information. Without them none of this would have been possible. My gratitude is extended to members of the !Xu and Khwe Trust who resided away from Schmidtsdrift -- in particular, Fiona Barbour, Jan Viljoen, Louis Vorster, and Roger Chennells. I would also like to thank those commissioned officers of the South African National Defence Force who took time out from busy schedules -- Col. André Hendrikz, Maj. Tai Theron, Ds. Wimpie Kotze, and Lt.Col. Scholtz van Wyk. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Col. (ret.) Delville Linford.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANC            African National Congress
DTA            Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
FNLA           National Front for the Liberation of Angola
IWGIA          International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs
MPLA           Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NP             National Party
SADF           South African Defence Force
SANDF          South African National Defence Force
SWAPO          South West African People's Organisation
Unita          National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
WIMSA          Working Group for Indigenous Minorities of Southern Africa
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Figure 1. Location of Schmidtsdrift relative to Kimberley.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Contemplating events and individuals that had crossed over and interfered with me, and that I in turn had interrupted due to my presence in 'the field' -- as someone conducting ethnographic research at Schmidtsdrift -- led to one resounding observation. I realised, and in fact circled back to this repeatedly, that there was something ironic about politics and political process among the people who were resident at Schmidtsdrift military base. In April 1994 the majority of people at the base who were eligible to vote in South Africa's first democratic elections did so. People participated readily and happily. They realised a distinguished right as South African nationals by proudly becoming involved in the onset of democratic national politics, both a level and form of politics from which they had been profoundly alienated in their daily experiences.

In, and throughout 1995 and early 1996, far more immediate and ultimately more significant politics was occurring not just within the Northern Cape, but within Schmidtsdrift camp. People living at the base were facing imminent removal from Schmidtsdrift to a location elsewhere in the Northern Cape, the possibility of returning to Namibialoomed as a tangible reality, army rationalisation (what military personnel termed 'transformation') was on the upturn, and they were confronted with the uncertain outcome of intensified lobbying, regionally and internationally, for recognition of their rights as bushmen, as 'First People' of southern Africa. Yet the vast majority of people at the base were excluded from discussions, debates, decisions and active participation in these political processes that would very firmly affect their daily practices and their everyday existence.

Why was it that 'local' politics was not visibly by and large inclusive, consensual, participatory -- certainly not nearly as participatory as, and without the level of engagement
that marked, action surrounding the national elections? Why were so many of those who crossed the ballot paper of national politics not able to do the same -- albeit metaphorically -- within what appeared to be the more neatly and better confined parochial political space of a military base? Why, during local government elections in the Northern Cape in late 1995, was this pattern repeated?

There are a number of possible responses, such as: 'national pride and concern' as opposed to 'local apathy and disinterest', and access to national politics and exclusion from 'local' politics. This thesis illustrates that 'local indifference' is a problematic explanation of the lack of formal participation in politics within Schmidtsdrift base. Similarly, 'national consciousness' is difficult to believe, let alone verify. Exclusion from parochial, daily political process is most probably the most accurate explanation, but in need of elaboration.

Whether or not one is versed in the existent literature about these people -- bushmen who were affiliated to the South African Defence Force (SADF), and bushmen per sé -- another, and perfectly understandable, response might be something along the lines of: so many partook in national politics because they were forced to do so by members of local political institutions (such as the military), whereas local political process (within the camp) was not met with the same degree or form of coercion. Such an explanation, however, would overlook the fact that individuals within political institutions at Schmidtsdrift approached the issue of participation in national politics with a sincerity that was equaled, if not surpassed, by their sincere commitment to make resettlement away from Schmidtsdrift agreeable and successful, to ensure that returning to Namibia was a personal and rational choice, that military cut backs were evenly felt and the negative effects reduced across the board, and that the fruits of rallying around and mobilising 'bushmaness' be about the future equality and equity of all who were at Schmidtsdrift.

After careful consideration and analysis it became apparent that the different morphologies of 'local' and
'regional/national' politics regarding the people who were at Schmidtsdrift were the outcome of a powerful and pervasive elitist politics -- the political engagement and activity of a bushman aristocracy, a well established and institutionalised cabal of leaders. It is this situation that I attempt to illustrate and explore in the pages that follow.

This thesis is about a number of things, but one issue -- the thesis itself -- stands out:

An important feature of 'post-colonial' predicaments (in the very literal sense of post-independence politico-ideological formations), is that dominant discourses of colonialisms and hegemonic articulations of imperial directives are constructed by, through, and in turn fabricate, powerful 'indigenous' or 'local' elites. Politico-ideological authority and control, in other words, is concentrated in the hands of a coterie (or coteries) of leaders.

More specifically, it is my conviction that this is particularly pronounced in those 'post-colonial' instances where the politics of "contemporary primitivism" (Thomas 1994) or "modern tribalism" (Clifford 1988) -- what I term 'worldly nativeness' -- is appealed to and invoked. In this thesis I argue that the individuals who have authority over and who author 'post-colonial' cultural identities (to some extent 'colonial' ones too), especially assertions of 'aboriginality', constitute a 'powerful subjectivity' that is sometimes diffuse, at other times unitary. Much of the politics witnessed at Schmidtsdrift hinged around the dialogue between, within, and across such 'powerful subjectivities'.

Implicit in this statement of my thesis is a second concern of mine -- 'identity politics'. Political process that I discuss in these pages was invariably about one, many, or all of the following: 'ethnicity', 'nationality', and 'factionalism'. What I emphasise here is that the politics of cultural identities (described, on some level, according to notions of cultural
similitude or distinction) was distinctly the politics of elites. (Following Marilyn Strathern 1987, the anthropologist's goal is to make sense of cultural difference. In this dissertation I adhere to the notion that our aim is to understand cultural distinction -- processes and practices of othering, alterity (difference) and Otherness (diversity). 'Distinction' is therefore a far more inclusive, and hence imprecise term than 'difference').

The third, and indirectly related area of personal interest is a crudely epistemological one -- my strong belief that anthropology, with its fine ethnographic detail ('thick description'), and 'cultural studies' or 'critical theory', with its spirited and dynamic theoretical formulations pertaining to issues of power and authority ('governmentality'), identity, and 'post-coloniality', are not only commensurable, compatible, but indeed complimentary. And I think that this is especially the case when dealing with areas within anthropology that resonate directly with a wealth of data from 'subaltern studies' and 'post-colonial critical theory' that explicitly focuses on the plight of people who at some point in the past experienced acute colonial oppression and who are currently referred to as 'First People'. There is much to be gained by combining the strengths of 'fields' and 'disciplines', and the productivity of this approach, especially where the politics of 'autochthonous' populations and 'Fourth World' movements is concerned, is hopefully conveyed below.

text

This thesis has been written as a monograph, but it is not an ethnography of 'a people'. It is not an account of 'the Schmidtsdrift bushmen/man'. Nor is its goal or objective to give a comprehensive account of the social, economic, and political life of 'a community'. Indeed, there is little here, except for some theoretical-discursive matters discussed in the closing chapters, that is generalisable at all. This work focuses very specifically on political process and cultural identity, and as such -- and for reasons cited later -- is about a select few men,
their relationships to institutions, one another, and their constructions of and through multiple narratives. *It is about no one and nothing else*. There are no delusions of "terminal wanderlust" here, the condition (remarkably applicable to anthropology) that Douglas Coupland refers to as "[a] condition common to people of transient middle-class upbringings. Unable to feel rooted in any one environment, they move continually in the hope of finding an idealized sense of community in the next location" (Coupland 1991:171).

The holistic encyclopaedism of much past anthropology blatantly contradicts the socio-political reality of recent (and contemporary) 'identity politics' at Schmidtsdrift. *Real politik* at the base was about a lack of closure, the existence of pervasive dialogue, an inveterate 'messiness', that countered notions of isolation and hermetic, bounded completeness.

This has important consequences: First, a number of the arguments in this thesis are tied to moments, timespaces, past. The ethnographic detail and much of the theoretical-exigetical bulk is specific to an event, a process, a person, a relationship or (inter)connection that existed fleetingly while I was in 'the field', but that is represented here because there seemed (to me and those directly interacting with me) to be a heightened political significance that accompanied this impermanence. In other words, what I have to say in Chapters Three to Seven pertains to late 1994, early 1995; Chapters Seven and Eight are about processes and politics that seemed important a year later, in early 1996.

Second, thematic unity existed, and exists, only in so much as one can identify and construct a grab-bag category (as, of course, all categories are) that must ultimately be seen for being precisely that -- an improvisation for the sake of analysis, an invention to provide a clarity that always may not have existed. 'Politics', 'identity politics', are two such categories that at once constrain our ways of looking and provide new openings for exposition and explanation. In other words, these categories, like many others ('ethnicity', 'nationality',
and so on) immediately and resolutely politicise us, our presence, our project.

This brings me back to one of my theoretical concerns. Much, if not all, anthropology that addresses bushmen (whether praetorianised or not) and the 'identity politics' in which they were implicated and in which they played a part, stresses an essential bushman (ethnic) identity -- a politics of 'bushmanliness' that overrides all other possible forms of 'identity politics' (usually absent from analysis, thereby implying that such process is either insignificant or non-existent). Moreover, this theme in anthropology tends to homogenise bushmen and present an image of a unitary, unified, and continuous politics. This thesis, in identifying a number of important cultural identities and different discourses of ethnic and cultural distinction that were apparent at Schmidtsdrift and that have to be understood contingently, and in pointing up the differentiated 'nature' of political leadership and authority, marks a departure from this 'trend' and cul-de-sac.

authority and con-text

The 'other' is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully within cultural discourse, when we think we speak most intimately and indigenously 'between ourselves' (Homi Bhabha 1990a:4)

This quote draws our attention to the issue of positionality, the location of myself as anthropologist. This work, like these words, is mine, and I can see no point in pretending that this is not the case. There has been (and still is) a flurry of thinking and writing, within anthropology about ethnographic authority and positionality in relation to the politics of the production and consumption of anthropological knowledge (Abu-Lughod 1991,1993; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Fox 1991a; Marcus and Fischer 1986).

However, in these by now predominantly banal and hackneyed floggings of ethnomethodology, few seem willing or able to stand firm and say 'this is my work, I am the authority, take it or leave it'. I am saying this because I believe it politicises the
work and the author very directly and specifically. I am also saying this out of disillusionment with arguments within anthropology that have developed from a legitimate and essential concern about the discipline's moment of in(ter)vention, its politics of conception -- as colonial -- to the ridiculous liberal humanist position (if it can be termed a position) of calling, epistemologically, for the disbanding of something that, if it ceases to exist, if it looses authority, and if it becomes apolitical (the 'democratisation of knowledge') will constitute 'the end of anthropology'. We, as anthropologists, are eternally colonial, colonising, interrogatory (for Edward Said 1989:211,217 the colonial-imperial setting against which and through which anthropology becomes possible, "is all pervasive and unavoidable"), and this is a politically fascinating position; our intervention "is an integral (although wholly untheorised) part of the process through which a knowable ethnographic object is constructed" (Malkki 1995:57).

In stamping my centrality as the author I am not saying that this thesis is to be understood autobiographically. It no doubt tells about 'me', but not exclusively. Even if one were to read it as an autobiography one would have to realise that 'we' are who 'we' are through 'others' and 'Others'. In other words, the 'me' in this ethnography is simultaneously ambivalent, split -- not 'me' and not not 'me' because there is, by virtue of being a social being, no isolated and autonomous 'me'. The 'me' doing fieldwork at Schmidtsdrift and, to a lesser extent during writing up, was very much about the people I met and interacted with at the base. As Said puts it: "anthropological representations bear as much on the representer's world as on who or what is represented" (Said 1989:224).

**setting the scene**

In March 1990 the now defunct SADF facilitated the relocation of approximately 4,000 bushmen from military bases in
the Caprivi Strip and Bushmanland to Schmidtsdrift army base outside Kimberley, in the Northern Cape (see figure 1.). This immigrant population was made up of roughly 500 men who had served in either (in some instances in both) 201 or 203 Battalion in the SADF during the Namibian liberation war in the 1970s and 1980s and their 3,500 dependents (Sharp and Douglas 1996; Uys 1993). (Norval 1989 and Stephen 1982 provide brief contextualisations of the 'Bushman Battalions' in Namibia).

These bushmen were immediately given South African citizenship, and were housed in a massive, sprawling, temporary tent camp. It is, and will probably remain, unclear as to why they came to be in South Africa. There are a number of equally plausible reasons. The military claimed that it was keeping its word, and relocating people of Angolan origin who, because they faced an uncertain future in a country governed by their previous enemies (the South West African People's Organisation -- hereafter referred to as SWAPO), were promised the option of resettlement in South Africa after the Namibian liberation war (see Chapter Six). The Defence Force invoked two crucial points in explaining the presence of bushmen veterans and their dependents in South Africa: first, the ambiguities surrounding the predicament of Angolans in a 'liberated', independent Namibia and, second, the need and obligation to save these people from retribution at the hands of a SWAPO-led regime (see Sharp and Douglas 1996:323). However, approximately half of the bushmen associated with the old Defence Force (SADF) remained in Namibia in 1990, and they have experienced no retribution or direct oppression because of past political allegiances.

Bushman interviewees at Schmidtsdrift explained that they came to South Africa in order to secure a brighter future than that they anticipated in Namibia. They came here to keep their jobs in the army, to continue their studies and schooling, to maintain their access to medical services and to prolong, by virtue of its material benefits, a strongly paternalistic relationship with the South African military. Some of the above has been borne out, but in early 1995 and early 1996, five to six years after their arrival in South Africa, the 'temporary' tent camp still stood, the army was radically reducing the number of
bushmen in its employ (a planned reduction from 500 to eventually 120 soldiers was underway), and military patronage and paternalism was, technically, on the wane.

The SADF was the sole agent involved in the provision of basic infrastructure and services at the base (such as the tents, ablution facilities, drinking water, and a food store. McKensie 1996; Steyn 1994; Vorster 1994a provide a broader socio-economic outline of conditions at Schmidtsdrift base), but its hegemonic position was undermined, at least cast into uncertainty, through its efforts, from late 1993 onwards, to wash its hands of the considerable liability it had procured through its role in social engineering, as sole patron, at Schmidtsdrift.

The army, however, continued to recognise the rank assigned to soldiers while they had served in the Namibian liberation war. In fact, the SADF and then the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) acknowledged and utilised not only the military standing of certain individuals at Schmidtsdrift, but also their broader social and political standing. Some institutional formations and leadership structures that had existed in Namibia were reinstated at Schmidtsdrift, such as the 'military-institutional matrix' (army rank and command structures), bushman councils (judicio-political bodies that bridged the 'civilian/military' divide), and two political-religious institutions (the Dutch Reformed Church and the Head Mountain Apostolic Church; see Chapter Four).

Thus, it can be said that the arrival and settlement of the immigrant population from Namibia was accompanied, in large measure, by a lack of change in form, but not necessarily in content, of specific institutions and institutional structures of authority. The only significant institutional disjuncture stemmed from the establishment, in late 1993, of a predominantly 'civilian' and 'independent' ('public') forum that was substituted for, and a replacement of, the role of the Defence Force. But this disjuncture was partial -- the army remained instrumental in 'bushman affairs', and this new forum (the !Xu and Khwe Trust) was in many respects as patronising as the military. Moreover, the persistence of paternalism, in whatever guise, was concomitant with the physical bracketing-off of, and
the exclusive treatment enjoyed by, the bushmen resettled at Schmidtsdrift relative to other Northern Cape residents.

The name of the Trust is revealing: there is a reference to 'the !Xu and Khwe'. These were two ethnic categories of bushmen at Schmidtsdrift, their historical derivation being the distinction that the Defence Force formulated as the ethno-linguistic differentiation of "Vasekele" (Estermann 1976:2; Gordon 1992:185) and 'Barakwena' -- a division based on the Portuguese terms 'Vasequela' and 'Baraquena' (Uys 1993:1). According to Louis Vorster, !Xu belong to the Zhu language family, while Khwe speak a Khoe dialect, and these languages are (as bushmen discussants reiterated) not mutually intelligible (Vorster 1994a:70; see also Steyn 1994). A number of !Xu and Khwe, however, spoke Afrikaans (the language in which fieldwork was conducted) and/or Portuguese, and some bushmen were proficient in creolised and generic !Xu and Khwe dialects. On this basis, it would be questionable to argue and assert that these categories constituted objectively distinct and significant cultural-linguistic groups.

!Xu, at least theoretically, are northern !Kung, and de Almeida draws our attention to their having been labelled 'Vasekele' or 'Sekele' and 'Khankala' (what Estermann 1976:xv,1 refers to as "Kwankala" -- with the Bantu designation "Ovakwankala") by Bantu-speakers in south-central Angola (de Almeida 1965:viii,1-12). Khwe are far more elusive in the literature, and may, historically, have been the "Zama" and "Kwengo," what Bantu-speakers apparently referred to as "VaZama" and "VaKwengo," (who, historically, lived in the southern Angolan Kwando-Okavango region, and in the Okavango area -- across the borders of Angola, Namibia, Zambia and Botswana) that de Almeida talks about (de Almeida 1965:13-22). It seems probable that the "Kede" or "SaMu!Kwe" of extreme southeast Angola that Estermann (1976:xv) mentions (who spoke "a Hottentot dialect" and who, we are told, were on the brink of disappearance in Angola and otherwise experiencing extreme "Bantuization") were antecedents of the Khwe (Estermann 1976:16). Franz Seiner draws our attention to the fact that, in 1910, "[i]n the Caprivi Strip
between the Okavango river and the Zambesi," one found the "swamp Bushmen" who called themselves "/tannekwe" and who were alternatively referred to as "Makwengo" (Seiner 1977:32; see also Hurwitz 1956:22).

I mention this history of differentiation and textualisation because Schmidtsdrift tent camp was divided into two residential sections, the one !Xu, the other Khwe. Anthropological research that had been conducted at the base prior to my arrival had picked up on, and indeed accentuated this categorical distinction (see Sharp and Boonzaier 1994b; Steyn 1994; Vorster 1994a, 1994b). (Of course, the fact that research had been conducted at Schmidtsdrift prior to my arrival meant that I had to dispel any fancies of what Coupland (1991:172) describes as "expatriate solipism: ...arriving in a foreign travel destination one had hoped was undiscovered, only to find many people just like oneself; the peeved refusal to talk to said people because they have ruined one's elitist travel [research] fantasy").

Sharp and Boonzaier (1994b) conducted research into possible future resettlement scenarios for the bushmen outside of Schmidtsdrift (from early 1994 onwards, the Schmidtsdrift bushmen were under increasing pressure from the original Schmidtsdrift landowners to vacate the base; see McKenzie 1996). One of their findings was that !Xu bushmen and Khwe bushmen expressed different preferences about future sites of settlement -- a distinction that still seemed to hold when I entered 'the field' in late 1994, but that was not apparent when I returned to Schmidtsdrift in early 1996. Their research also strongly suggested that leaders in the camp had been divided on their vision for the future (!Xu leaders wanted to leave Schmidtsdrift and South Africa and return to Namibia, whereas Khwe leaders wanted to leave Schmidtsdrift but stay in South Africa. Sharp and Boonzaier 1994b). But in late 1994 and early 1995, and certainly in early 1996, both Khwe and !Xu leaders expressed the desire to remain in South Africa, and both were entertaining strong middle-class aspirations. This commensurability was evident in early 1996 when !Xu and Khwe elites approached the issue of resettlement away from Schmidtsdrift with a common and shared understanding of their future.
Three-and-a-half months of fieldwork, from December 1994 to March 1995, and a week of fieldwork at the beginning of 1996 were spent trying to make sense of the institutional formations alluded to above; the various histories of people who were at Schmidtsdrift; the meaning and importance of cultural distinctions like 'ǃXu', 'Khwe', 'Angolan' or 'Namibian', and 'bushman'; and a past of physical displacement. The results of these efforts form the basis of this dissertation.

Presented with obvious, visible differentiation and a variety of socio-political distinctions and institutional formations at Schmidtsdrift base meant that a strategic choice had to be made, early on in my research, with regard to whose 'voices' would be evoked, heard, interpreted and documented, whose stories and histories would be reconstructed and recorded, and whose practice would receive attention and be inscribed.

I decided, after careful and lengthy consideration that a small coterie of !Xu and Khwe or bushman leaders would be the unit (locus) of interpretation. There were three reasons for making this selection. Firstly, these leaders were, in many respects, the easiest people to access at Schmidtsdrift. Imminently surmountable obstacles stood in the way of accessing their stories about the past, present, and the future. All of the established bushmen leaders spoke Afrikaans fluently, and although I entered 'the field' with a smattering of Afrikaans, my language skills developed considerably as research progressed. Direct communication with Afrikaans-speaking elites was therefore viable, workable, and generally technically uninhibited and free-flowing. In other words, the narratives related by leaders were linguistically within reach, intelligible.

In addition, most of the leaders at Schmidtsdrift were present at the base all of the time. Not only were they permanently posted at Schmidtsdrift, and hence easy to 'pin down' in the sense of resembling a 'captive audience', but the fact that all of them were employed by the army meant that they could be efficiently located, interviewed and observed. This raises an important point. Military structures provided an opportunity that one is seldom presented with during ethnographic fieldwork. Existing and embedded relationships of command and authority made
it possible to acquire permission to gain access to certain individuals and meetings, and also provided the opportunity to structure and schedule interviews and discussions.

Furthermore, military procedure, such as daily parades, made it possible to meet people at fixed collective gatherings and make arrangements about directly including them in the research process. Of particular utility during research was the fact that many of the leaders at Schmidtsdrift were periodically assigned the task of standing watch for night shifts. This again presented me with the option of arranging and structuring an effective schedule for discussions.

Secondly, my interest in 'identity politics' was best addressed through concentrating on leaders, on elites who were actively involved in processes and activities that entailed appealing to, constructing, and articulating cultural identities. Members of the bushman leadership clique were at the forefront of the socio-cultural rhetoric and phenomena that mattered to me, that corresponded with my research interest in the praxis surrounding cultural identities within Schmidtsdrift camp. There is, I believe, always a selfish side to research of any form (after all, careers depend on it), but this is not to say that bushmen elites were at best native informants for a first-world intellectual interested in the voice of the Other (see Spivak 1994:79). I was certainly not "the first-world intellectual masquerading as the absent nonrepresenter who lets the oppressed speak for themselves" (ibid.:87). I was constantly well aware of my presence, even if I did not entirely understand its consequences, and I was attentive to the ambiguities and dangers of the concepts 'first-world', 'Other', 'oppressed', and 'speaking for themselves'.

Moreover, and thirdly, the leadership cabal at Schmidtsdrift consisted of those individuals whose histories and voices had made, were producing, and were to create an overt and explicit difference in interactions and exchanges with 'outsiders' such as politicians, journalists, and anthropologists. Elites were the practitioners of realpolitik. 'Gatekeepers' were from among the leadership group, telling stories to, and being involved in brokering agreements with, 'outside' parties. The bushman
leaders at the base were the people at Schmidtsdrift who were, both individually and collectively, engaged and direct participants in 'local' and broader ('extra-local') political events and formations. Thus, it was certainly the case that, as Thomas Carlyle puts it: "[o]ne comfort is that Great Men, taken up in any way, are profitable company" (Carlyle 1995:2).

Ethnographic research began by furthering existing acquaintances with people at Schmidtsdrift. I had met two individuals, one of whom was a well respected member of what was then the SADF and of high standing (indeed, a deputy trustee) among the Schmidtsdrift bushmen at a conference in late 1993. Previous research conducted by two anthropologists from the University of Cape Town (mentioned earlier) had included in depth conversations with some of the leaders at Schmidtsdrift, and I was able to meet these leaders and continue discussions about issues that had been addressed during previous research (see Sharp and Boonzaier 1994b). Most of the individuals who I met through this process of picking up where anthropologists -- myself included -- had left off, were men who were leaders, being councilors, trustees (in some cases members of the executive committee of the Trust), non-commissioned officers, and frequently church leaders (in either the Prophetic Church or the Dutch Reformed Church).

Having decided that my research would become a study of bushman elites -- the findings of which, if at all broadly applicable, would be immediately generalisable to elites at Schmidtsdrift alone, and universal, in a highly abstract and qualified sense, to the global politics of 'aboriginality' -- I was not concerned with adhering to rigid processes of sample selection, or the construction of strictly random samples so as to be broadly 'representative'. To reiterate, having realised the severe difficulties in generalising and the limitations of essentialising political process and identity formation, my intention was not to research or write about 'the Schmidtsdrift bushmen'.

Prior to engaging in fieldwork, the !Xu and Khwe Trust made it abundantly clear that anthropological research at Schmidtsdrift would have to be overly pragmatic, that it directly
and practically contribute towards 'assisting' the Schmidtsdrift bushmen. There had to be a good reason (on their terms) to conduct research that transcended seeming self-interest and ostensibly self-indulgent, narcissistic and ultimately 'theoretical' enquiry. This was an immensely problematic requirement in that it unacceptably polarised 'theory' and 'practice'. Regardless, though, I had to compromise and abide in order to enter into research and gain access to the base.

A windfall in this respect was the request, by the chairman of the Trust and on the first day in 'the field', that I (together with two other anthropologists from the University of Cape Town) carry out research into the possibility that people at Schmidtsdrift might have wanted to return to Namibia. During a meeting held at Schmidtsdrift in December 1994, the Namibian government disclosed that it was prepared to accept, conditionally, immigrants from among the bushmen housed at the base. Ethnographic research therefore needed to be done in order to determine how many people wished to leave Schmidtsdrift and whether or not those who wished to do so qualified for immigration and met the conditions laid down by the Namibian government (see Waldman and Douglas 1995).

What this opportunity provided was the chance to secure enduring, trusting, and respectable relationships with a number of bushmen leaders. These relationships became increasingly trustworthy over time, as illustrated by my inclusion -- often at the request of 'local' elites -- in formal institutional debates and processes at Schmidtsdrift. I obtained consent to attend, and repeatedly acquired unqualified entrance to, meetings of formal decision-making bodies and socio-political institutions (namely, military village management meetings, church services, council meetings, and meetings of the Trust).

Attendance at formal meetings of 'local' institutions provided me with the scope for extensive and informative observation of political processes and features of bushman leadership. Of particular importance was the opportunity to observe the claims, made by leaders, to notions of cultural distinction, their mobilisation of ideological strategies in ongoing engagement and involvement in 'identity politics'.
Attempting to understand the politics of identity formation is clearly not simply a matter of asking people about their 'ethnic' allegiance or their 'cultural' affinity and identity. The very notion of situationalism or indexicality -- the fact that leaders and elites at Schmidtsdrift invoked or appealed to certain identities and perceptions of 'selves' and 'O/others' in certain contexts -- firmly refutes such an idea.

Moreover, the verbal articulations, the spoken enunciations and stated narratives of cultural distinction (and sameness, for that matter) are only one facet of 'identity politics'. Interviews and discussions supply only some of the story or 'partial partial truths'. Another facet of 'identity politics' is the acting out and performance of distinction or similitude -- 'speaking' in the figurative sense. People articulate identities across and through a variety of mediums. 'Observing' political strategies and gestures is also part of the allegory. Each of these facets is a text and textured, the meanings and significances of which cannot be captured over, and out of, time. In other words, 'identity politics', like all politics, is process, work in progress, what Bourdieu (1977) refers to as "practice." In this regard, I employed both detailed discussion and 'observation' in order to derive information pertaining to local politics at Schmidtsdrift.

Attendance of the proceedings of various institutional formations was usually accomplished with relative ease, but I was occasionally asked to leave either entire meetings or portions thereof. This variable, and often unpredictable inclusion and exclusion was certainly a point of frustration, but I think a minor obstacle during research. A definite limiting factor was a quandary that emerged from the inherently misleading and precarious, yet popular term 'participant observation'.

'Observation' was, for the most part, feasible and productive throughout my research (but it was no methodological panacea) but 'participation', on the other hand, was in fact in many respects an absurdity: I was not a Zionist, nor a Christian, not bushman, nor obviously Afrikaans (my English accent, interviewees sometimes retorted, was readily apparent), nor a member of the Trust, nor a soldier or someone in Defence Force
employ, nor a Schmidtsdrift resident. I was, resolutely, the anthropologist.

Despite these factors, however, I was left with the firm impression, after a month in 'the field', and during enquiry into issues of leadership and politics, that I was accepted by discussants as being both avaricious and compassionate, someone people sometimes agreed to speak to, and yet at other times refused to address both generally and with regard to very specific issues. Research was met with the assigning of a tacitly agreed upon role to me, in which I was to assume the position of engaged researcher -- interlocutor and pedagogue (in true didactic fashion). As such I was a locus of animosity, and atonement and generosity.

This was communicated most powerfully in the collection of life stories. The twelve key conversants (all of whom were leaders) who formed the core of my study were quick to participate in the 'collaborative' construction of their pasts and experiences (as were the many bushmen whose testimony came to constitute 'secondary' or 'auxiliary' sources). This was sometimes marked by anger and regret with the 'mutual' manufacture, and hence shared understanding, of extremely personal stories and histories. At times the insights derived were welcomed and enjoyed for the clarity and understanding they provided. Discussants easily volunteered information and often took it upon themselves to schedule meetings -- sometimes collective -- during which life stories were produced. Historical accounts of the bushman councils, of the role of the military, of the churches, of being soldiers, bushman, and of the Trust, were elicited in both group discussions and personal exchanges.

Having said this, I feel it is important to return to my discussion of 'participant observation'. My experiences in 'the field' highlighted the fact that 'participant observation' should no longer receive the doctrinal status that is readily attributed to it. 'Participant observation' is not a programme, a position. Rather, it is a powerful -- if not hegemonic -- idea about ethnographic method, a theoretical pointer proffering certain methodological guidelines. I participated, of course, by virtue
of the fact that I was part of 'the field'. In the words of Kirsten Hastrup: "[our] presence is the occasion, the pretext, and the locus of the drama that is the source of anthropological knowledge" (Hastrup 1990:46).

Given that fieldwork is diacritical, experiential (Hastrup 1990), that ethnographic data is dialogically and intersubjectively created most explicitly at the earliest stage of its production/consumption (Marcus and Fischer 1986), I did participate in social and political life at Schmidtsdrift, whether I intended to (or wanted to) or not, and certainly increasingly so in the second and third months of the initial research period. This notion of participation differs radically from the out-dated ideal of 'going native', or what Douglas Coupland terms "native aping" -- "pretending to be a native when visiting a foreign destination" (Coupland 1991:172).

Furthermore, the idea of 'participant observation' suggests and promotes, in my opinion, an uncritical use of 'observation'. Fieldwork at Schmidtsdrift was not always classically observational, but it was always interpretive. 'Observation' makes one think of visually grasping an object that is given sui generis, 'out there', of documenting a visual reality that is both reified and naturalised without realising the manipulation implicit in such reification and naturalisation. Observation occurs as the translation-documentation of reality, by transmuting, but never entirely, one reality into (the language of) an 'other' (this is not the transcending of one reality to be replaced by another -- 'observation', in this sense, is not the stuff of Otherness). Ethnographic research is about evocation, iteration, in the true hermeneutical sense. Even at the end of the three months at Schmidtsdrift the process of knowledge construction was confrontational and congenial, about ideological collision and collusion, about collaboration and resistance. I therefore think that the term 'participant interpretation' (or 'participatory evocation') is more fitting when describing my experiences during fieldwork.

Anthropological sense-making, as I trust this thesis reveals, was marked by a critical reflexivity (Clifford and
Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986). This is not to imply that I was merely critically self-conscious and eternally aware of my personal positioning and assumptions. Such a claim leads, eventually, to subjectivism or an idiosyncratic paralysis linked to severe reservations about the accuracy and value of generalised and 'other' representations in ethnography. Rather, reflexivity encompassed the broad and incisive consideration, in a truly interpretive vigour, of the conditions of the production of knowledge (cf. Bourdieu 1977). I possessed knowledge prior to arriving at Schmidtsdrift (some might say that I had already 'arrived'), I priortextualised the subject matter and the subjects of analysis, and therefore needed to think creatively about the fact that I was already positioned in a relationship with whatever and whoever it was that I decided to study (in the sense in which I participated as described above).

Ignoring the conditions that make knowledge(able) is a symptom of the same modus operandi that underpins the old idea of 'participant observation'. The problem here lies in the logocentricism of modernist-positivist anthropology in which cultural relativism, for example, was premised on diversity, the existence of absolutely and fundamentally distinct, incommensurable socio-cultural totalities (see Bhabha 1990a). 'Participant observation' became rooted at this time as a paradigm integral to the appreciation of Others through the denial of 'self'. The dialogic of 'self' and 'other' was thus ignored, an oversight that accords ill with any form of contemporary social science that attempts to make sense of discourses of difference and alterity that mark 'identity politics'.

Acknowledging and working with this permits the critical fabrication and elaboration of partial stories that defy, by way of procedure (methods used and ethnographies compiled), any sense of absolute closure. In the same way that there is no one methodology specific to anthropology, there was, and is, no single Schmidtsdrift story. The best we can hope for is an allegorical orientation that produces something asymptotic: bushmen, right; bushman, not quite.
theoretical trajectory: modus vivendi

must we always polarize in order to polemicize?
(Homi Bhabha 1994a:19)

One of the great perplexities of the moment is that so many of us seem enthusiastic about 'negotiation' -- the most obvious and salient example being a new negotiated national dispensation that we call 'the rainbow (or Gariep) nation' -- yet, epistemologically, we seem poorly equipped when it comes to operating according to the fact that, albeit that we live in multiply and complexly authored realities shot through with power differentials, these realities are negotiated. Phrased slightly differently, it is puzzling that we celebrate and applaud a negotiated national political arrangement, yet ask, ultimately, for a political essentialism, the recognition of disparate cultural architectonic assemblages (Bhabha 1996:53) -- a demand and desire that betrays the processualism of 'negotiation'.

The theoretical point of departure in this thesis, in so much as a single issue can be identified, emerges from my own discomfort with normative positivist social science that cannot embrace negotiated realities. If there is a 'position' that I subscribe to, and if this 'position' were an 'ism', one might say that it is post-structuralism. This, however, is a nebulous referent. To be specific (and consistent with my earlier reference to open-ended sociality), in the pages that follow I emphasise that cultural identities are inherently hybrid, "doubling" (Bhabha 1988,1990b,1996), and that the political and ideological significance of cultural identities has to be grasped according to Stuart Hall's (1988,1996) discursive conception of ideology and signifying practices (much of this is reiterated in later chapters). According to Homi Bhabha,

the importance of hybridity is that it bears the traces of those feelings and practices that inform it, just like a
translation, so that hybridity puts together the traces of
certain other meanings or discourse. It does not give them
the authority of being prior in the sense of being original
(Bhabha 1990a:211).

For Hall (1988), processes of identification and
representation contain necessary, fecundatory contradiction that
in turn provides for and produces ambivalent identities (without
resolution). I, like Homi Bhabha (1990b,1994a, 1996), Stuart
Hall (1988,1990,1996) and Cornel West (1993), believe that
meaning has to do with positioned interpellative practices,
moments of enunciation or "processes of articulation" (Bhabha
1990b:3) -- that meanings, realities if you will, emerge "through
a splitting in the signification of the subject of
representation, through an ambivalence at the point of
enunciation of a politics" (Bhabha 1988:10, emphasis mine).
Meaning, in other words, is never plenitudinous. Meaning lies;
it 'lies' across (not only or narrowly within) the separation
between the signifier and signified -- in a "third space" (Bhabha
1990a) which enables multiple positions to arise through slippage
of the signifier. Translating this into cultural politics, the
meaning and significance of cultural identities lies in "the
contaminated yet connective tissue between cultures -- at once
the impossibility of culture's containedness and the boundary
between" (Bhabha 1996:54). Our critical energies are thus
brought to bear on the simultaneous "articulation of baffling
alikeness and banal divergence" (ibid.).

Stuart Hall has recently employed the notion of "suture" in
an attempt to assert that identification is a process of "over-
determination not...subsumption" (Hall 1996:3), strategic and
positional not essentialist. His point, in agreement with Homi
Bhabha, is that cultural identity, as a matter of enunciative
strategy, refers to a convergence, a

meeting point, the point of suture, between [and across] on
the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to
'interpellate', speak to us or hail us into place as
subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand,
the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct
us as subjects which can be 'spoken' [or 'speak'].
Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the
subject positions which discursive practices construct for
us (ibid.:5-6).
Cultural identity, as Hall remarks, is "a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (Hall 1990:222; 1996:2-4). In his powerful argument about psychoanalysis, subject constitution, and identification, Hall (1996) argues that cultural identities are always conditional, situational, and that once secured as different, do not inevitably amount to forceful and recalcitrant antagonisms. The politics of cultural difference, dependent upon the above-mentioned messiness, an inherent and incessant processualism, means -- for anthropologists -- that we have to eschew the autonomous 'self' and espouse situational analysis all the more critically. Moreover, such a procedural approach (without the formalising, clinical tendencies of 'procedure') is strongly dialogical (remember 'negotiation'), requesting an understanding of cultural identity as "a matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being'. It belongs to the future as much to the past..." (Hall 1990:225). Cultural categories and referents (be they labels such as 'elite', 'ethnic identity', 'post-coloniality') are replete with a "cut-and-mix" (ibid.:236) emergence whose characteristics and complexities deride and exceed binary, dialectical modes of representation.

In this work I begin, repeatedly, with the assertion that elites exist by way of negotiation, that the identities 'self', 'other', '!Xu', 'Khwe', 'bushman', 'Angolan', and 'Namibian' all emerged and had significance in and through contingent, located dialogue. My approach, although not truly phenomenological, is perhaps weakened by a relative neglect of linguistic theory and, to a far greater extent, psychoanalytical theory. Some of the limitations of the latter two approaches, however, are suggested in Chapter Two.

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Chapter Two focuses on the relationship between elites and society -- on situating, discursively, elites in sociality. This chapter introduces the possibility of a dialogism in social theory that can accommodate and explain agentive structure and structured agency, and thus move beyond the polarisation of
social theory that is caught somewhere along the linear scale of moribund 'agency' versus 'structure' debates. I suggest that heterology is encouraging in formulating a way out of the abyss of structural-dialectical thought and analysis. The potential of heterology lies in its emphasis on negotiation not negation.

Chapter Three marks a break from the rigidly polemical, if not dogmatic, style of the previous chapter. This chapter is largely documentary and descriptive, pointing up some characteristics of individuals who were bushman leaders. As such, Chapter Three is designed to provide a background to leaders and leadership, and does so without the closure, outside of the finite and terminal mode, of 'life histories'. I present a number of life stories that are revealing in their differentiation and complementarity, most starkly revealed by juxtapositioning (through superimposing) the stories of two individuals towards the end of the chapter.

The outlining of the circumstances and the situation at Schmidtsdrift as it pertained to elites is continued in Chapter Four. Here, however, I focus on institutional formations (four in particular) that were integral in shaping bushman aristocrats as aristocrats, and that they in turn were crucial in moulding over time and across space. I also provide something of an institutional history -- a genealogy of structures of authority that were contingent upon the roles and influences of certain individuals (this is another area of overlap with Chapter Three). The theme of politicised institutions and institutionalised politics is carried over to Chapter Five.

In Chapter Five I explore an incident or event and some of the discourse that surrounded it in order to demonstrate the elitism of ethnic politics at Schmidtsdrift. I argue that the most effective way to come to terms with the distinction between !Xu and Khwe bushmen, and the accompanying politics, is to understand identity formation and expression as contingent, dialogical and performative. In discussing the performance of cultural distinction I draw on Victor Turner's idea of 'social drama' which, in the context of the process that I examine, seems to have considerably more explanatory power than the statement 'ethnicity is performed/performance'. 
Chapter Six deals with the discourse that accompanied a separate incident -- the official statement that bushmen at Schmidtsdrift could return to Namibia if they so wished, and if they qualified for immigration. Once again indexicality is central, and I focus on the situationalism of 'nationality', factional dispute, and traditionality. Intra-Khwe conflict, among elites, is foregrounded in an enquiry into experiences of displacement and dis- and re-embedding. On this note, I emphasise that tradition was an overwhelmingly spatial -- as opposed to temporal -- referent and reembedding mechanism.

Building on the clear centrality of elites as authors of, yet authored in, 'local' politics, and in contrast to the heterogeneous and differentiated 'identity politics' among bushman leaders that is examined in the two preceding chapters, Chapter Seven discusses a strongly coherent and homogenising form of 'identity politics' that occurred at Schmidtsdrift. This is a largely theoretical argument about elites and the politics of 'bushmanness'.

Moreover, in Chapter Seven I critically review existent anthropological literature that specifically refers to the people who were at Schmidtsdrift (and, in some cases, these bushmen's antecedents). I combine this element of review with what I regard to be essential literature from 'critical theory' and 'cultural studies' in order to reflect on the potential of heterology and dialogism. I also use this opportunity to reflect on limitations that stem from following existent writings in anthropology that deal with bushmen and that inhere in current (or recent) anthropological theory that is marked by a disconcerting (re)turn to liberal humanism. Furthermore, Chapter Seven demonstrates how outmoded and ill-equipped anthropology is when it comes to 'aboriginal identity politics', and, subliminally, how weak much of the 'cultural studies' literature is without an ethnographic aspect. I attempt to demonstrate the productivity and promise ensuing from the meshing of these two approaches or 'fields'.

Finally then, the concluding chapter, Chapter Eight, serves two functions: it grounds the discussion in the previous chapter in a specific case (mentioned in Chapter Seven, but detailed
here), the outcome of which was uncertain at the time of submission of this dissertation. Secondly, it serves to glance back over the body of work, and to draw out and summarise the main and dominant threads, patterns, and arguments. The case that I consider in Chapter Eight was the imminent resettlement of the bushmen away from Schmidtsdrift, at considerable cost to the state. The discourse surrounding this process of relocation has been steeped in 'bushmaness' and 'autochthonous' politics, and as such, was situated across pasts and futures, simultaneously forward looking and backward looking. I attempt to explicitly show how anthropologists can embrace this predicament and fashion a progressive response to state intervention, especially when and where government involvement is architectured according to the bushman credentials and identity of the people who were at Schmidtsdrift. This leaves us with food for thought about possible futures for these bushmen, leaders and led, and for a discipline that needs to rethink its position and its practices in a post-apartheid but questionably 'post-colonial' South Africa.
CHAPTER TWO
ELITES AND SOCIETY:
THE 'SUTURING' OF POLITICAL PRACTICE

the history of all societies, past and future, is the history of its ruling classes
(Meisel in Bottomore 1993:10)

the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas
(Marx and Engels 1960:39)

Gaetano Mosca states that a universal feature of societies is their division into "a class that rules and a class that is ruled" (Mosca in Bottomore 1993:3). Moreover, his encyclopaedism includes an emphasis on the fact that 'the ruling class' is a minority that is itself heterogeneous and differentiated. Whether one accepts Marx's 'class' (defined by the position of its members in the mode of production) or abides by Weber's 'class' (defined on the basis of approximations in 'life chances' or 'opportunity', in turn linked to socio-political status, prestige, and bureaucratic control), this "political class" or "governing elite" is "composed of those who occupy the posts of political command and, more vaguely, those who can directly influence political decisions" (Bottomore 1993:5).

Tom Bottomore goes on to disaggregate Mosca's 'political class', and refers to a subgroup of this 'class' that he calls "the political elite...which comprises those individuals who actually exercise political power in a society at any given time" (ibid.:7). We may choose to refer to the latter as "functional elites" (ibid.:105,123), a "creative minority" (ibid.:115).

This chapter explores the claim that all societies are, emphatically, split into 'rulers' and 'ruled', the former
being a minority and the latter a majority (see Bottomore 1993:21,25,63,87). In this theoretical discussion I stress that it is dangerous to make sweeping generalisations about political formations and elites. Their roles, positions, and functions can only be understood situationally, often where and when 'rulers' are 'ruled' -- in contexts in which "those who appear to have power in the formal system of government are in fact subject to the power of other individuals or groups outside this system" (ibid.:20) -- when and where a powerful dialogue exists that shatters dualisms and the notion of a dialectical relationship existing between 'the ruling class' and 'the subject class' (this division is, of course, the essence of the Hegelian 'Master/Slave' dialectic). Furthermore, I argue that it is the very open-endedness of dialogism that drove and underlay 'local' politics at Schmidtsdrift.

This thesis and ethnography, like Carlyle's nineteenth-century discourse, is "on Heroes, namely, and on their reception and performance" (Carlyle 1995:1). Thomas Carlyle overstates the role of the individual in "[universal] history," but I find some of his thinking readily applicable to conditions and politics at Schmidtsdrift military base. At Schmidtsdrift:

the history of what man has accomplished...is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modelers, the patte:ns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or attain (Carlyle 1995:1).

I do not argue for the same kind of determinism and inevitability that Carlyle posits when it comes to elites and a small authoritarian aristocracy at Schmidtsdrift. There was, however, the hero as poet, as priest, as king; a politics of sincere idolatry (Carlyle 1995) at Schmidtsdrift, which suggested, contra Fukuyama (1992:309) -- especially his "smallness of the individual" in late modernity -- that "any Hero-sovereign, or loyal obedience of men to a man...has not passed away for ever from the world" (Carlyle 1995:45). This point is reiterated by Bottomore in
his mention of "the revival of elitism" (Bottomore 1993:121).

Rey Chow, in her lucid discussion of Chinese politics, modernity, and the place of Chinese intellectuals in their relation to the state, also picks up on the centrality of individuals in politics (Chow 1993). Fukuyama's retort might be that China is outside the liberal-democratic fold (that anti-individual machine that commits the greatest fallacy, of mystification of all by showing up industrialist capital-intensive individualism for all that it is not). However, in the midst of the paean of colour of a nascent liberal-democratic 'new' South Africa we find, unexpectedly, the 'largeness of the individual'. Politics at Schmidtsdrift, like Chinese politics, had one chief characteristic -- "its dependence on strong leaders" (Chow 1993:81).

Chow tells us that "the strong man...[is] a man with a strong personality" (ibid.:83), educated, systemised, socio-politically inserted so as to be somehow institutionalised (see also Bottomore 1993:29,53). At Schmidtsdrift, and among the bushmen who resided there, the politics of personality had, historically, been officialised. Local politics at Schmidtsdrift, akin to political activity and activism among many of the Chinese intellectuals that Chow draws our attention to, "therefore [took] the form primarily of cliquishness: one [was] either for or against a man, in or out of a group" (Chow 1993:82).

However, there was little at Schmidtsdrift, and in the past of the bushmen resident there, that closely approximated the power of the word in the sense of a dedication to, and reverence and sanctity of, official education and a politically rooted intelligentsia (literati) that both Bottomore and Chow attribute to Chinese politics (or perhaps the lack thereof). Elites at Schmidtsdrift constituted an intelligentsia, but it was a precariously positioned one at that. The autocracy, might, and absolute
magnetism of despotism that Chow (1993) describes with reference to China did not exist at Schmidtsdrift.

This is obviously not to say that there was no semblance of a political system and hegemonic relations at the base, or, for that matter, in the history of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen. In so much as there was a political system (and 'the history'), of which elites, even intelligentsia, were a part, there was nothing teleological and finite about it. Like Rey Chow (and contra Bottomore), I wish to negate the idea that it is possible to set up a dichotomy between leaders and political systems, or rather, institutions. Such a distinction or division would be erroneous, simply fallacious. Instead, the dialogic of agency and structure, individual and collective, was "structural to the politics of personality" (Chow 1993:81).

The strength of leaders was derived from a symbiosis between seemingly disparate entities -- 'self' and 'O/other', 'military' and 'civilian', 'war' and 'peace', 'wealth' and 'poverty' (all relational and perspectival constructs). The politician and potentate was an integral 'whole', an "expressive meshing" (ibid.:84) of disjunctive experiences and conjunctive encounters, actions and events.

For Chow, the checks on despotism in China are few, if at all existent, whereas, perhaps paradoxically, at Schmidtsdrift there were a variety of institutional formations that not only cemented and bolstered the politics of personality, but also provided discrete checks and balances. Contrary to the politics explained by Chow (1993), in which persons and personalities were, she tells us, acutely taxed as despots -- yet, ironically, untouchable -- political process at Schmidtsdrift encompassed and imparted a situation and ideological 'field' in which the individual was more onerous in a discursive plurality that was not exclusively his, and in which he was, in crucial respects, very much accountable.
There has been considerable debate in anthropology as to whether political process is the cumulative outcome of individual strategies and tactics on the one hand, or the result of overarching, monolithic forces that transcend (other than by effect), and inscribe themselves unidirectionally upon individuals on the other. Arguments have taken the form, within political anthropology, of the commonplace structure/agency tension that Bourdieu (1977, 1990), for example, identifies as a central driving force of modern social theory.

One of the most illuminating anthropological debates that has touched on the problem of locating individual agency in politics is that between Fredrik Barth and Talal Asad (see Asad 1972). Barth (1959), in his ground-breaking analysis of Swat Pathan politics, argues that the energy that underlay this politics was individual interest, motivation and action. He states that

In Swat, persons find their place in the political order through a series of choices....[they make a distinction] between private and group advantage, and when faced with a choice they tend to consider the former rather than the latter (Barth 1959:2).

Moreover, local politics was marked by the existence of a specific political system, which in turn was the product of the summation of individual actions and subjective forces (most clearly demonstrated through secession). 'The system', with its attendant "structural features" or "frameworks" (ibid.:3) was the collective expression of key decision-makers, "the sum of all the choices of individuals giving their allegiance to others" (ibid.:2). Swat Pathan politics, as systemic and narrowly functional, was thus the result of contestation and competition with regard to personal status, reputation, desire, and was based on a series of dyadic relations. The very subjectivity of this
politics, its rootedness in agency -- the meaning implicit in the politics of personality -- fuelled stability and change (within a highly restricted parochial arrangement of socio-historical relationships and 'frameworks'). Moreover, Swat politics, Fredrik Barth tells us, was marked by a balanced, normative 'equilibrium' (the word is his) that was maintained through a broad social contract itself premised on individual choice and voluntary contract -- an argument that was strengthened by the existence, according to Barth (1959), of an acephalous political system.

Talal Asad, starting from the question "what is it that makes the Swat system function as a system?" (Asad 1972:80, his emphasis) maintains that the individual power-holders Barth (1959) identifies and analyses were members of an established landed elite (Pakhtun landowners). Asad questions Barth's claim that "every man is free to choose to which particular groups -- whether they be for political, economic, recreational or other purposes -- he wishes to belong" (ibid.:22). Asad criticises Barth's 'Hobbesian' vision of individuals (men) driven by the desire to control others (the need to exercise power and authority), yet acknowledges that Barth's approach, in emphasising acephality, is not classically Hobbesian at all. Perhaps Hegel's discourses on the self, desire and the relentless individual pursuit for recognition would have been more appropriate, certainly to the extent that they would affirm Barth's position within a Marxist (re-)interpretation of Swat politics (a Weberian conception of class would also narrow the already not-so-wide gap between Barth and Asad).

In other words, Asad's criticism from historical materialism does little to contradict the notion of individual desire being a determinant of local politics (this is a predicament shared with Tom Bottomore's 1993 classic neo-Marxist study Elites and Society). Hence, the tenured Swat elite "occupy the position of a ruling authority, a sovereign class, with distinctive interests, privileges and powers. It is the cumulative consequence of political decisions for these distinctive interests,
privileges and powers that constitutes the primary criterion for defining the historical presence of such a class" (Asad 1972:82). Still later, "[t]he Pakhtun maintains his position by virtue of his control of scarce land....[h]e acquires his political authority by virtue of his membership in a politically dominant class" (ibid.:85). What Asad is trying to say is that class preceded the subject and that individuals were thus the victims of class constraints.

Landowning elites, he asserts (in a strictly Marxist sense), were aristocrats who commanded and authored the mode of production: Barth's leaders were, according to Asad, the controllers of the relations and forces of production. These aristocratic Swats drew power from a long and rich history of exploitative relationships, an extensive lineage of capital extraction if you like. Their position and standing was not simply achieved, but ascribed by a material legacy. But his evocation of the ethnographic present together with a crude dialectical materialism (see Asad 1972:93) does little to convince the reader of the "diachronic dimension," the 'historic legacy', that he claims to contribute (ibid.:90).

What is particularly valuable about Asad's analysis is his inclusion of the effects of colonisation and imperialism (albeit that they must remain speculative for a lack of data). An understanding of Swat politics certainly "requires a historical perspective in which the developing political system of Swat is set within a wider imperial framework" (Asad 1972:89). Yet colonisation and British imperialism were not necessarily simply "processes by which class domination was consolidated...[that] would certainly have widened economic inequality and reinforced the political power of the rich" (ibid.:89). On equally tentative 'evidence', one might ask whether imperialism presented the not-so-rich or poor with opportunities to gain wealth and authority.

Asad, however, is to be commended on his introduction of economic factors and exploitative commercial-material relations, and on his denunciation of Barth's functionalist
angle on Swat Pathan politics for its tendency to expose "the problem of political domination and the problem of social order as being ultimately identical" (ibid.:92).

Despite these variables, however, Asad's materialism emphasises the significance of seemingly immutable class differences. Asad was mistaken in thinking that class divisions (and class conflict?) were a matter of "horizontal cleavages" (ibid.:85). The dialogical motor of politics (and of change?) was tension between or across and within members of exploiting and exploited classes, in, for, and of these collectivities (Asad, as we might have expected, has no information on Swat 'class consciousness'). Distinction was very much a matter of vertical transects, material gains and losses, haves and have-nots. The dialectic of landed and landless, profiteering baron and deluded, mystified serf, echoes much of his weak discussion of power and authority. Is power to authority not what Swat is to Pathan?

Asad, in other words, was contradicting his 'subversion' of systemics by saying that there was, after all, a closed and essentially self-regulatory political system among Swat Pathans, and it was centred on economic circumstances not, as Barth would have it, on socio-cultural factors, the politics of personality and what one might term 'institutionalised' narcissism.

The point here is that both Talal Asad's (1972) revisionist stance and Fredrik Barth's (1959) position propose the existence of a political system of sorts among the Swat Pathans. For Barth (ibid.), individuals created 'the system', and that system was open to change, and continually undergoing change, due to the whims and fancies of power holders. For Asad (1972), 'the system' provided or created not only subject positions, but subjects, individuals, agents -- some with authority, some without. Here people were powerless to change an all-encompassing and engrossing regional political economy. 'Agents' were victims, and hence not agents at all. Asad's historicism thus becomes strangely anachronistic, his politics
apolitical, with (as I have suggested) class struggle being largely absent from the picture he presents of Swat differentiation.

Both Asad and Barth remain 'system-bound', structuralist -- by analytical implication -- because of their concern to locate people, power, and authority in a vertical scheme. Whether it be class interest or individual selfishness that underlay systems of production and reproduction, both Asad and Barth posit an "anarchic, conflict-ridden, violent" (Asad 1972:92) system that is built on dualisms, on two-way class antagonisms on the one hand, and on socio-cultural dyadics on the other. Their shortcomings are the result of an epistemological approach that, in its focus on what the relationship between one thing and another thing is, places one thing before or above the other, so as to suggest that one thing causes some other thing; the focus becomes, in its realisation, how one thing actuates another. What the relationship happens to be is already known -- it is causal.

I think it is imperative to attempt to move beyond such problematic and deterministic reasoning. If we position people and authority in the horizontal it becomes possible to explore what relationships between apparently distinct things are without automatically assuming that one is the other's cause or effect. The issue of how things relate becomes a matter of presupposing a dialogic relationship (that is, the apparently disparate might not be that distinct at all), and the answering of how they relate is found through addressing the nature of the dialogue, interchange, transaction, exchange. One is thus able to explore how it is that agency is structured and structure is agentive; how it is that systems are individualised ('subjectified') and individuals systematised ('objectified').

To return to Fredrik Barth and Talal Asad, the way to achieve this epistemological one-hundred-and-eighty degree turn -- to shift the axes from people and (then) authority or power (or vice versa) in the vertical, to their
relationship in the horizontal (powered people, peopled power, in a Foucauldian sense) -- is not to combine the strengths of their respective standpoints, as one would do if adhering to a dialectical mode of inquiry. As I have suggested, their baseline assumptions were not altogether different, and to blend what one might deem the strengths of their approaches would be to maintain verticality, the inexorability of hierarchy at the presuppositional level. We would do better to assume innocence until we have proven guilt.

iii

the limits of dialectical social theory

is there a strong tradition of dialectical thought that we must surpass in the English-speaking world?
(Julian Pefanis 1991:47)

Post-structural anthropology has, for some, meant assigning priority to dialectical social theory, either in a strictly Hegelian sense, or in a Marxist ('dialectical materialism') sense, itself a derivative of the former (see Smith 1993 for an elementary overview of dialectical social theory). Dialectics has become a celebratory 'post-modern' variant. The dialectic, however, is deconstruction and the deconstructionist paradigm reified outside of, and beyond (in seeming forgetfulness), the overly methodological. In this sense, dialectical reasoning resembles somewhat of a powerful renegade logocentricism that pervades 'post-modern' theory and anthropology in critiques (purportedly) of the homogeneous and coherent (see Fukuyama 1992 for an illustration of this in post-structural theory and history).

Hegel's idea that the dynamo of history and socio-political change is conflict emanating from internal contradictions within societies is a useful one. However, the dialectic Hegel refers to is the 'progressive' replacement of the overly contradictory and conflict-ridden with the less contradictory or 'higher'. In anthropology
this has become a metaphysical doctrine and device, whereby internal ('system-bound') ambiguity and contradiction has been understood as essential, generative, be it in terms of cultures, societies, groups or categories. This insight or development is to be commended on its intended discursive break from normative, formalist anthropological analyses, especially of political process (two good examples of this trend are Comaroff 1978 and Kuper 1970).

However, and even beyond strict Hegelianism, dialectical anthropology finds itself marooned on the imputed 'progression' of socio-political practice -- and broader processes through dialectical logic -- that leads to some or other 'higher' state and condition. Thus, while acceding to the historicism implicit in dialectical theory (albeit that this begs more questions than provides answers), in the credence given to processualism, I find the linearity (and implicit continuity) of this historicism problematic. Dialectical theory is, quite simply, objectionable in its reductionist one-two(-outcome)-punch sequentialism and format: thesis, antithesis, synthesis, and so on; 'history' and sociality tout court. In opposition to this we need to identify a form of critique that does not aspire to replacement, supplanting, through what Stuart Hall calls "the production of positive knowledge" (Hall 1996:1). On this note, I agree with Jean Baudrillard's statement, here applied to the question of cultural identity, that "dialectical polarity no longer exists" (Baudrillard in Smith 1993:129-30). However, I do not find his hyperreality particularly precise in breaking away from dialectical theory -- dialogism need not be simulacra, and, as Tony Smith (1993) demonstrates, Baudrillard's hyperreality has dialectical overtones in its concomitant and coexistent 'silent majority'.

Stephen Tyler, in his turgid discussion of linguistic theory, textualisation, and anthropology, goes so far as to criticise dialectics because it creates "a taxonomy, a static and spatial image of reason which [the] syllogism merely recapitulates" (Tyler 1987:80). Tyler's criticism is
partial, for he condones dialectical social theory that complies with his 'dialectical dialogics' -- a straight schematic consisting of four sequential stages (dialogue, narrative, dialectic, logic) in the production, dissemination and consumption of discourse (ibid.). Such structuration and hermeticism is precisely what I am taking to task. Tyler does, however, caution that dialectics need not be expositional at all, and may instead be weekly allegorical and one-dimensionally evocative. He further adds that dialectics is frequently "a corruption of the notion of 'likelihood'" (ibid.:82) that motivates so much daily behaviour in that it proclaims certitude of evidence in its speculative formulising.

There is, I believe, a problem here with the propensity to use dialectical reasoning to deduce or predict future actions, events, facts. 'Synthesis' is not necessarily predictable, and in its discursive conception it is often depicted as being somehow devoid of revision in light of an allegedly 'earlier' ('prior' and anterior) 'thesis' and 'antithesis'. 'Synthesis', we are told, is not only a 'higher truth', but a 'new truth' by way of linear replacement, substitution (progression) and sublimation. But what of 'regression', of the 'new' that is 'old', certainly not 'higher'? What of emulation, the replication and repetition that inheres in translation -- the confounding of 'old' that is 'new' (for example, what Nicholas Thomas 1994 calls "modern primitivism")? Strange discursivity indeed; dialectics reveals itself to be hierarchical and rigidly deterministic due to its own systemics.

Let me explain. Dialectics is inherently structural, although not classically structuralist. As such, dialectical social theory is strongly teleological (Roemer in Smith 1993), caught in the logic of cause and effect in spite of its occasional rhetoric to the contrary. Michel Foucault, in The Order of Things is well aware of this limitation, and subverts dialectical social theory twice over, as if entering into a personal vendetta against Hegel.
and the considerable influence of his thought (Foucault 1973). In the first instance, genealogical thought surpasses dialectical reasoning for many of the reasons cited above. And, in the second, Foucault vehemently opposes dialectics when it stands alone, as a counterposition to positivism (see Foucault 1973). He emphasises that positivist and dialectical positions are not incompatible and extreme modalities, opposite poles, but instead inter-dependent and essentially reconcilable positions.

Foucault (ibid.) asserts that meaning is doubled; hermeneutics is a matter of both contents and conditions of contents. Dialectical and positivist justification therefore overlap and are in fact commensurable in their functioning and functional aspects. "Positivist justifications will operate at the level of whatever serves as empirical contents; dialectical reasoning will operate at the level of whatever functions as a condition" (Cousins and Hussain 1984:53). Positivist social science and theory then becomes dialectical, and vice versa -- 'they' need each other.

Genealogies of knowledge, however, like disciplinary practices, are strategic and ordered interventions, that provide coherence, epistemologically, in retrospect (after the fact). Yet, Foucault (1973) also tells us that discourses and practices may defy positivist constraints and the blinkers of 'rationality' or 'irrationality', 'truth' or 'falsehood'. In challenging notions of the cumulative advance of knowledge, the (Hegelian) dialectic is demolished and positivism emerges as directionless, vapid. The fulcrum then is that genealogies -- and, less convincingly, 'archaeologies of knowledge' -- are indeed anti-dialectical.

Foucault's remarks on dialectics appear tentative, exploratory, even ambiguous. I differ with the amount of time and space that Cousins and Hussain (1984) concede to Foucault in entertaining dialectical theory and thought. He is interested in its condition and the conditions of its possibility, but peripherally. I read Foucault's work as a
strong, yet largely indirect contestation of dialectics on the basis of genealogical knowledge. And, as Pefanis (1991:46) illustrates, Foucault was persistent in his frustration with the failure of modern intellectuals (including anthropologists -- whose discipline, incidentally, would cease to exist if they took him seriously) to part with Hegel and Hegelian dialectics.

Foucault's discourses on power are suggestive in that they forward what I interpret to be a dialogical conception of power (political) relations. Power, according to Foucault (1976), has to do with open-ended, multi-textured 'politico-ideological' relations, so that modalities of power are indexical, situational. Such an approach, premised on practice (the 'exercise' of power) negates the (immediate) closure that inheres in dialectical reasoning, and it does so without dismissing the idea that contradictions are formative, generative, as well as destructive.

To undermine dialectical social theory in this manner (on the level of an intertwined 'conceptualism' and 'behaviourism') is not to deny that practices may be accidental, incidental, or even irrational. I am not arguing for a narrow 'rational choice theory' (although I applaud its adherents' progressive attempts to situate social subjects; see Smith 1993:100). Nor am I throwing out Hegel's valuable contribution to the place of agency, individuals and individualism, and personal desire for recognition. Dialectics, with its origins in Hegel's systematic theory of categories, is inadequate in its efforts to "capture the full concreteness of the socio-political realm" (Smith 1993:21) by prescribing a syllogic relationship between individuality and universality in which particularity functions as the middle term (that vanishes in conclusion). Dialogism (which is infinitely 'freer') prescribes little, if anything, allowing a play of signifiers and signified, a perpetual cross-cutting messiness with regard to the 'individual', 'universal' and the 'particular'.

towards a dialogical social theory

dialogue is the source of the text
(Stephen Tyler 1987:66)

dialogue is a continuing process and
itself illustrates process and change
(Denis Tedlock 1979:289)

Some 'post-modern' approaches in anthropology have
tended to start either from the assumption, or by
illustrating, that dualisms, binary oppositions, and
dichotomous modes of representation and analysis are wholly
inadequate in their reductionism. Indeed, this was one of
the primary concerns behind the critical "crisis in
representation" turn in cultural anthropology in the mid- to
late 1980s (see Marcus and Fischer 1986). This brings me to
what I term dialogical social theory, or simply, dialogism
(see Bakhtin 1981 on discourse and the dialogic).
'Dialogue' conjures up notions of conversation, of
expressive and verbal-textual exchange. In fact, it is this
very meaning that resulted in 'dialogue', with its virtually
synonymous 'interlocutor', becoming a prevalent feature of
'post-modern' concerns within cultural anthropology about
the politics of representation, authorship, and textual-
ethnographic strategies (see Clifford and Marcus 1986;
Marcus and Fischer 1986; Tyler 1987).

With very real concerns about structuralism and its
"being too distant from the intentionality and experience of
social actors" (Marcus and Fischer 1986:29), and the
conventional presupposing of anthropologist-author as
pedagogue and hero, the Anthropology as Cultural Critique
(Marcus and Fischer 1986) and Writing Culture (Clifford and
Marcus 1986) moment stressed the importance of interpretive
methods and the mutual, interactional, dialogic-
hermeneutical functioning of anthropology as 'cultural
critique'. But 'dialogue' here was metaphoric,
the imagery for expressing the way anthropologists (and by extension, their readers) must engage in an active communication process with another culture. It [dialogue] is a two-way and two-dimensional exchange (Marcus and Fischer 1986:30).

Dialogue was thus a largely methodological referent, exhibiting nothing, except by way of misunderstanding, that approximated doctrinal status. Taking a leaf out of Tedlock (1979:388), dialogue was methodologised, in which "a dialogical anthropology would be talking across, or alternately." The primacy of a reflexive programme in anthropology rightly made anthropologists aware of the fact that what they study is a matter of how they study, and vice versa. This focus, however, in its preoccupation with ethnomethodology overplayed the analytical value of the relationship between anthropologist and subject/object of analysis to the extent of positing, in some instances, an extreme and crippling auto-reflexivity. I want to attribute to dialogue the doctrinal and paradigmatic status that I believe it deserves, and that is alluded to by Lacan (1977) in his discussion, albeit constrained, of the centrality of a "third party" in interactions and communicative exchanges (see also Pefanis 1991). But more of the foregrounding of a theoretical focus on transactions, and the making of dialogue paradigmatic later.

What is crucial about "the dialogic motif" (Marcus and Fischer 1986:68) of anthropology in the 1980s was its subversion of assumptions of coherence, stability, insularity and 'authenticity'. As James Clifford explains:

[Dialogism]...locates cultural interpretations in many sorts of reciprocal contexts, and it obliges writers to find diverse ways of rendering negotiated realities as multisubjective, power-laden, and incongruent. In this view, 'culture' is always relational, an inscription of communicative processes that exist, historically, between subjects in relations of power (Clifford 1986:15, emphasis his).

Thus, Clifford (1986,1988) acknowledges the ineluctability of dialogue when it comes to ethnomethodology, but offers something (it is not clear as to what this might be) that displaces purely methodological concerns (see Rabinow 1986 for a detailed although
disappointing discussion of Clifford's stance regarding dialogics). However, in the case of Marcus and Fischer (1986), the immediacy, partiality, and polyphony of discourse is privileged as the locus of ethnographic enquiry and understanding, but to the extent of denying the validity to talk about 'cultural others' (see Tyler 1987). Perhaps ironically, Marcus and Fischer suggest a way out of this impasse (that resonates with Clifford's ideas cited above), but disappointingly do not explore this possibility:

The trick...is to preserve the dialogue image of fieldwork while modifying the conditions of work to which it usually applies. One concrete way in which this might work is to shift the stress in the dialogue metaphor from the communication between individuals to the patterning of communication among classes, interest groups, localities, and regions (Marcus and Fischer 1986:ff186, emphasis mine).

Anthropology thus remains 'sighted' and not 'sited'. The metaphor -- or what Clifford (1986:14) calls the "fiction" -- of dialogue demands that anthropologists pay attention to specific instances and utterances of discourse. Here Tedlock would concur, but in vague terms (again lacking elaboration) that stand in stark relief to the bulk of his methodological concerns:

The dialogue is not a method but a mode, a mode of discourse within which there may be methodological moments...and within which methods number among the possible subjects under discussion (Tedlock 1979:395, my emphasis).

Tedlock, like Marcus and Fischer, seems to be suggesting that dialogism is, as Clifford intimates, a "constructivist paradigm" (Clifford 1988:84). I, like Stephen Tyler (1987) would agree. Tyler, despite a degree of scepticism about dialogics, is most useful in proffering a dialogism that transcends, at face value, introspective textual concerns:

the idea of dialogue...evokes a subject who is neither a self-constituted centre of perceptual experience nor the sole author of its experience and identity. The subject emergent in the flow of dialogue is not a fully autonomous ego, an all-knowing inductive monad, for its autonomy is fully realized in the situation of 'saying' by means of the saying to and saying of another. The
name of the self is not an 'auto-nomy'; it is the name spoken antinomously by an other. It is the emicant (ay) of the emanent other....Dialogue [then]...is the ineluctable source of the difference that makes identity (Tyler 1987:57-8, emphasis mine).

Yet Tyler seems unable to extract himself from thinking about dialogics in unison with ethnomethodology. He is recalcitrant, for "if dialogue is intended to protect the ethnographer's authority by shifting the burden of truth from the ethnographer's words to the natives' it is even more reprehensible, for no amount of invoking the 'other' can establish him as the agent of the words and deeds attributed to him in a record of dialogue" (ibid.:66).

Much, he explains, masquerades under the pretence of dialogue. As Coplan states "in practice there seems to be little difference between yesterday's 'fieldwork' and 'informant' and today's research 'dialogue' and 'collaborator'" (Coplan 1994:xiv). In fact, where Coplan finds 'dialogue' useful is in discussing socio-cultural relations and interchanges that have to do with discoursing (outside of ethnomethodology) ideology and practice (see Coplan 1994:41). Perhaps this is a virtue of 'performance anthropology', but regardless, a valuable insight is made in pointing up the facile efforts to elide authorial authority, efforts in which dialogue becomes "a means of verisimilitude" (Tyler 1987:99) (the pervasiveness of monologue in spite of political speak about dialogue is also alluded to by Abu-Lughod 1991; Clifford 1988; Fox 1991b).

Moreover, and in agreement with Escobar (1993) and Gupta and Ferguson (1992), the arguments from Clifford and Marcus (1986) and Marcus and Fischer (1986) methodologise dialogics in a way that contradicts dialogism:

The foundation of cultural critique -- a dialogic relation with an 'other' culture that yields a critical viewpoint on 'our own culture' -- assumes an already existing world of many different, distinct 'cultures', and an unproblematic distinction between 'our own society' and an 'other' society (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:13).

Such dualist conceptions of sociality bring us back, with a rude awakening, to the homogenising and synchronic oversights of structuralism and structural dialectics, an
approach whose critique, as I have mentioned, was ironically a foundational aspect of the Anthropology as Cultural Critique exercise. But this is not the time nor the place to review the merits and flaws of this moment in anthropology and its fascination with textual politics. My objective, rather, is to illustrate how dialogics has been approached, broached, and dropped at the methodological level only. Even attempts to grapple with dialogics in the Recapturing Anthropology (Fox 1991a) enterprise, with its "[moves] away from textual strategies such as dialogic and polyphonic ethnographies, away from an excessive concern with how to 'represent' the 'other'" (Escobar 1993:378), remain caught within the confines of ethnomethodology.

Where Richard Fox moves away from this provincialism, is in his own emphasis on "cultural histories" as the site of pluralisation, polyphony, and praxis (Fox 1991b). But here, "cultural histories would be grounded on a carefully balanced dialectic of culture and individual agency, of system and practice....Culture history would then oscillate between the analysis of cultured lives...and of lived culture -- the ways in which cultures are shaped by institutions" (Escobar 1993:381-82, emphasis mine). Do we thus relegate dialogics to redundancy, and import or indeed cement dialectics in a move 'away' from politico-methodological issues?

v

heterology and the post-structural

heterological. In LOGIC, a term applied to a word that is not truly predictable of itself (Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought)

Interestingly, the most exciting theoretical developments pertaining to dialogical approaches have, on the one hand, been those in the 'field' of 'literary criticism' and 'cultural studies' (as these labels are loosely applied to a genre of texts, predominantly in
English literature, on coloniality and 'post-coloniality'). Contemporary feminist anthropology, on the other hand, has also been central in forging theoretical insights that emphasise the place of dialogism.

How, then, do we work with Clifford's above-mentioned dynamics "between subjects in relations of power" together with "the patterning of communication among classes, groups, localities" that Marcus and Fischer allude to (as quoted above)? How do we make sense of Tyler's statement (cited earlier) that "dialogue is the ineluctable source of the difference [read distinction] that makes identity"? One starting point is Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) who, as I have suggested, was a precursor of dialogism. For Bakhtin, the dialectic is not reducible to the dialogic. His 'heteroglossia' captures the location of multiple images of 'self' and 'other', 'agent' and 'structure', constituted in and through dialogue, written across each other (Bakhtin 1981). Homi Bhabha is perhaps the most illustrious contemporary theoretician to acknowledge the hybridising potential of Bakhtin's dialogism. For Bakhtin,

The...hybrid is not only the double-voiced and double-accented...but is also double-languaged....[These doublings] come together and fight it out on the territory of the utterance...[in a terrain that is] pregnant with potential for new world views, with new 'internal forms' for perceiving the world in words (Bakhtin 1981:360; see Bhabha 1996:58).

Although Bakhtin was addressing language and linguistic theory, the intersubjectivity and polyphony of the social and political was implied, particularly with reference to the "immediate performative context" of meaning (Clifford 1988:41). Thus it is that Bhabha states that "Bakhtin emphasizes a space of enunciation where the negotiation of discursive doubleness by which I do not mean duality or binarism engenders a new speech act" (Bhabha 1996:58, original emphasis). What Homi Bhabha (1988,1990a,1994a) privileges as "moments of enunciation," the contingency of discursivity, is thus foregrounded by Bakhtin, and later dialogical theorists (see, for example, Orr 1994).
Importantly, Bakhtin's dialogism, in which all language is doubled, a polyglot formulation of reality, is not only applicable, in anthropology, to the relationship between ethnographer-author and other-object. Dialogism is also, and I think more pertinently, applicable to 'others' within ('selves') and among 'others', constituted referentially through exchange and communication. It is not just formal textualism and textualisation that is riddled with multiple voices and meanings; such discursive complexity is a feature of the 'unsaid', 'unwritten' sociality and politics of the everyday. Indeed, pace Bhabha (1994a), I believe that it is the precarious 'allegedness' of independence, autonomy, singularity (of 'agent' and 'structure', or 'elite' and 'society'), that fuels and defines politics. The very frailty of negotiation, the fragility of dialogue, "makes possible the emergence of an 'interstitial' agency that refuses the binary [dialectical] representation of social antagonism" (Bhabha 1996:58).

Turning more specifically to anthropology, Marilyn Strathern (1987) and Henrietta Moore (1993,1994) have been instrumental in arguing the case for dialogics. Although Strathern (1987) gives considerable attention to (ethno-)methodology in (feminist) anthropology, she and Moore (1994) illustrate that dialogue is played out on two levels, themselves dialogically related: between feminists and technologies or disciplines (of which anthropology is one), and among feminists themselves (see Rabinow 1986).

They, in their enquiries into subjectivity, are strongly critical of the idea of an originary, integral and unified identity. Moore and Strathern, like Henderson (1994) and Orr (1994), oppose the "strategies of containment" (Henderson 1994:258) intrinsic to the Eurocentric 'Western' philosophical tradition that is grossly inadequate in coming to terms with (en)gendered politics and feminist predicaments. I have no intention to discuss contemporary feminist anthropology and literary criticism, but for the most part, and sometimes coming to the fore, there is a stringent derision of dialectics. Bridget Orr
(1994), for example, insists on the recognition and inclusion of dialogue in analysis and argument. Positivism, she explains, is compromised because in adhering to a dialectical mode, the 'agent/structure' relationship, for example, becomes one in which the social agent, the positioned individual, is first constituted by structure through active-personal negation as agent before being incorporated into it (Orr 1994:153). Distinction is disavowed because the agent either becomes the 'agent-as-victim' (of structure), or, by refusing his/her position as agent, identifies with structure. According to Orr, the way out of this theoretical double-bind (with a 'self/other' inflection) is to follow Levinas, who "champions dialogism, arguing that the sociality of [linguistic] exchange allows the self to open up to the other without assimilating the other: parties in the dialogue establish a relation to each other but neither is subsumed -- the radical difference of each interlocutor can remain intact" (Orr 1994:154, my emphasis). The dialectical structures of negation and assimilation cease to dictate, and 'structure/agency' debates become misplaced, redundant.

Henrietta Moore's position, although less patently anti-dialectical, expands on aspects of Orr's stance, and is, in this regard, closely akin to Mae Gwendolyn Henderson's (1994) argument. Henderson positions herself so as to proffer a theory of interpretation based on the "simultaneity of discourse" (ibid.:258) that steers us away from reductive and deterministic paradigms of O/otherness -- that transgresses and subverts the canon. Her concern is with the dialogic of alterity: the distinction of the 'self' within the identity of the 'other', the distinction of the 'other' within the identity of the 'self'; agency within structure and structure within agency. What this translates into when dealing with elites and society, is enquiry into not only the multitude of relations to 'structure', but an internal dialogue with the plural aspects of 'self' that constitute the matrix of agency and (inter)subjectivity (see Henderson 1994:258-9). The agent, actor, or in the context
of this thesis, the bushman elite and leader, is a subject positioned by experiences of society and a socialised subject in the experiences of positionality. Bakhtin's dialogics of discourse emerges as the way to understand the "multiple and complex social, historical and cultural positionality" (ibid.:260) of elites; the potentate engages, simultaneously, in the dialogue of intersubjectivity and intrasubjectivity.

Moore (1993,1994), in her problematisation of analytical dichotomies (and particularly their valorisation and the tendency to apply them universally) seeks to devise a way to think about distinction without implying hierarchy (this is a project shared with Lila Abu-Lughod 1991,1993). Where her approach most closely approximates dialogism, as I discuss it here, is in her objection to the ignorance, frequent within anthropology, of "the political project involved in discourses which seek to locate social...distinctions in natural facts" (Moore 1993:196). The naturalisation of the dialectic between 'agency' and 'structure', 'elites' and 'society', is one such epistemological project. Dialectics is thus a feature of anthropological discourse rather than of other socio-cultural discourses or the social or symbolic systems of the societies and people under analysis (ibid.:193-4). This shortcoming is further seen in theorising the subject and subjectivity:

Anthropological theorizing is much indebted to post-Enlightenment thought, and to the notion of persons as autonomous, rational and self-determining. These ideas...underpin a notion of the knowing subject which is unitary and which authors its experiences in the world....Anthropology, while it talks of persons and selves, rarely speaks of subjects. The result of this is an inability to investigate the differences within individual subjects, those very differences which constitute them as subjects (Moore 1993:202-3).

Such a critique suggests a partiality and mutuality: the need to acknowledge not only distinction between and across agents, but also within agents (ibid.:204). In other
words, to bring the focus back to elites and society, anthropology should recognise 'agency' as effect and emergence; the agent as hybrid -- thus espousing an episteme in which agency is not a given and essential unity, but a (the) category, "the produce of specific discursive practices" (see Moore 1993:197, 1994:12). But what of 'structure' as effect and emergence -- and thus hybrid, derivative -- so that in discoursing 'agency' and 'structure' we start from neither one or the other as mutually exclusive?

In *A Passion for Difference*, Henrietta Moore identifies what she calls a "crisis of location" (Moore 1994:2), the solution to which, in her understanding, is to approach positionality as an issue of "different subject positions proffered by various discourses" (ibid.:4). Her principle difficulty, however, is to ward off the criticism that 'discourses' here tend to connote agencyless and formative forces that conflate, to some extent, with positivist and logocentric conception of structure. Who authors 'discourse(s)', and how, why, and for whom? We cannot be sure, although she does tell us that

the specific and the universal, the particular and the comparative -- how are these polarities [note that this is assumed] to be brought into conjunction with each other? I have always been a supporter of the specific and the particular over the universal and the comparative (Moore 1994:16).

In arguing for enquiry into the hyper-subjective, she produces an increasingly vague counterposition that ultimately appears agencyless, ironically lacking subjectivity. Moore's anti-structuralist constructivism is dogmatic counterpositioning, in which she contradictorily asserts a primary, ontological status (ibid.:20). I disagree with her posited reducibility of the social to the subject and multiple subjectivities, to her essentialist emphasis on the agent (although she is to be applauded for exploring an area largely neglected by anthropology, even as I write). Her dialogism leaves much to the imagination when it comes to questions of how individuals, in all their
differentiation, relate to 'discourse(s)'. What role do individuals play, what place does the subject and subjectivity occupy in the very real hierarchical organisation of discourses? How pervasive and extensive is the dialogue between projection (reflection) and introjection (reflexion) in the dialogic constitution of 'agency' and 'structure'? These factors point up a reductionism at the level of an either/or opposition and teleology that paradoxically turns us back toward dialectical social theory. Moore's dialogism, in its latent ambiguity, thus emerges as something akin to Stephen Tyler's 'dialectical-dialogism'.

Many of these remarks can be directed at Abu-Lughod's (1991, 1993) work, and her call (useful, but with qualification) for "ethnographies of the particular" (Abu-Lughod 1991:138). She, like Moore (1994), is correct in demanding that we seek to understand and explain the relationships between 'self' and 'other', 'agency' and 'structure', rather than assume that the relationship is given. And, in the same vein as Moore, Abu-Lughod embraces an extreme stance in dismissing generalisation; dialogism, according to her, is the domain of (inter)subjectivity, agentive distinction and variability, and nothing else (the predicament of the dialectically positioned, split self -- "halfie" -- illustrates precisely this; see Abu-Lughod 1993:39).

What we need to do is locate discursive variability and polyphony in a time-space, agency-structure dialogic, in which difference and diversity, are "to be explained rather than assumed" (Moore 1994:21). We can assume distinction, in a strictly existential sense, but nothing more. We therefore need to focus on the processes and practices -- in Pierre Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) sense -- of cultural distinction, whereby elites and society interplay except under very specific conditions (to come under scrutiny) where they are constructed-construed as separate and separable.
This, then, is the rhetoric of dialogism and the discourse of heterology. Michel de Certeau (1986) employs 'heterology' to refer to a philosophical counter-tradition that is deeply suspicious and critical of mainstream 'modernist' philosophy that is, in turn, rooted in rational-positivism and the "inexorable workings of the Hegelian dialectic" (Godzich in de Certeau 1986:viii). I want to extend this idea to 'modernist' epistemology in the discipline of anthropology by touching on Julian Pefanis's (1991) trenchant critique of dialectical thought. Heterology offers something that transcends and avoids dualisms, but in an unsynthetic fashion. For de Certeau (and what one might, perhaps paradoxically, describe as his atheoretical stance), heterology releases and opens up a far more complex, dialogical discursive 'field'. At the forefront of his thought, and a point of departure that resembles the position occupied by Henrietta Moore (1993,1994), is the process of social abstraction...[which] cleaves the subject and disrupts other entities....There results an internal division of the subject between the kind of self that one needs to be in certain situations...and the kind of self that one is in other settings. The individual no longer feels his or her self to be a whole, but rather a series of diverse zones, subject to differing constraints, frequently of an irreconcilable sort (Godzich in de Certeau 1986:ix).

Thus even Baudrillard's anonymous and undifferentiated individual (in hyperreality) falls by the wayside (see Moore 1994:53-8). However, de Certeau (1986) goes on to demonstrate that it is not just the self and the subject, the agent, that is partible. So too is the collective, the 'other', and structure divisible. And it is through this heterogeneity and fragmentation (not necessarily only confined to de Certeau's "transgression"; see also Lacan 1977) that the boundaries between 'agent' and 'structure' become variable and partial, that these entities become arbitrary, inseparable, categorical referents.
Leaders, in whatever context we (or they) choose to refer to, are positioned discursively, constituted and also constituting through dialogue. To paraphrase Michel de Certeau, in heterology discourse about agency is a means of constructing a discourse authorised by the agent; discourse about structure is a means of constructing a discourse authorised by structure. And, to fully implicate power and the open-endedness of dialogism, discourse about agency is a means of constructing a discourse authorised by structure, and vice versa (de Certeau 1986:68).

It is clear then that heterology is a mode of thought that refuses to abide by "the rules of the game of scientific, critical discourse" (Pefanis 1991:5). Scientific (perhaps I should say scientistic) empirical thought becomes limiting, even in its efforts to embrace what Julian Pefanis (ibid.) refers to as the "situological" 'nature' of meaning. Drawing from Georges Bataille, Pefanis hopes to install a "residual faith in a science of the heterogeneous, a science that would at one and the same time be a general theory that might explain the third term (dèpense...), while speaking the mute discourse of unreason and nonsavoir" (ibid.:16, my emphasis). This is anthropology without simply preserving the difference of Otherness, the diversity of others, and without seeking similitude through derision of alterity. It is anthropology preoccupied with the "process of the category and activity of the heterogeneous" (ibid.:43, my emphasis).

Bataille's "dèpense" (like Lacan's "third party", Bhabha's "third space" and Pefanis's "third order"), refers to a dialogical episteme in which the agent is structured and structure is agentive, where leaders and society converse (no less significantly in their frequent parting of ways). In theory, 'transgression' (in Bataille's sense) therefore transcends 'contradiction' in the dynamo of reason (ibid.:85-6). Thus, "neither the result of a dialectical synthesis, nor the reference of a semiotic practice, the third term (or third order...) has neither a Hegelian nor a structuralist origin but a Nietzschean, Sadean one -- the
'beyond' of good and evil..." (ibid.:42). The 'third order', however, is not some nihilistic state or totality ('beyond' is dangerous in its tacit Cartesianism); it consists of totality and anti-totality, deconstructionism and (re)constructionism, where analytically, the conditions of the possibility of discourse, ideology and politics are imperative (Homi Bhabha's 1990b "third space" is most useful at this point). Here the interior, exterior, anterior combine in a more productive mode and simultaneity than that presented by Abu-Lughod (1993), Moore (1994), and Strathern (1987). This is equally so for Asad (1972) and Barth (1959). Contingency and what Graham Watson (1991) calls indexicality are paramount in a focus on practice, an 'ethnography of the particular' in which the situation of saying (what some might prefer to call 'speaking'), the point of iteration (Bhabha 1988), the immediate praxis of discursivity, is foregrounded. This is the timespace in which leaders lead and are led.
CHAPTER THREE

SOME LEADERS, SOME HISTORY

these are the select men, the nobles, the only ones who are active and not merely reactive, for whom life is a perpetual striving, an incessant course of training
(Ortega Y Gasset in Bottomore 1993:114)

This chapter serves to provide a detailed, although partial, background to some elites at Schmidtsdrift. Highly subjective and idiosyncratic in its content, the argument below strongly indicates the extent to which dialogue existed between elites (agents), those who were "in a position to exact obedience" (Bottomore 1993:102), and institutional (structured and structuring) possibilities (an issue addressed with more precision and in greater detail in Chapter Four). The few stories recounted and constructed here are of a fraction, a particularly powerful minority, of what Tom Bottomore (ibid.) would perhaps call a "creative minority" that existed at Schmidtsdrift.

The main focus in this chapter is on the sorts of avenues that leaders travelled in becoming and/or cementing their positions as elites. There are also glimpses of how elites acquired and maintained their positions of authority, suggestions with regard to "the circulation of elites" (ibid.). What is important is the degree to which elitism lacked coherence, yet also, simultaneously, exhibited exactitude and definition (this was readily apparent when it came to 'identity politics'. See Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight). In other words, and as I show, leaders' respective 'paths' to leadership have differed in revealing ways, and yet have also had or exhibited remarkable similarities. Areas and aspects of similarity were most pronounced in narrative themes -- times, places, and events -- that were revealed as common-ground, as points of
complementarity among elites, between positioned subjectivities. 'Passages' to leadership emphasised subjective experience and personal practice, and are therefore best described through the ordering and arranging of narratives as they were related and recounted to me. As such, narratives of personal history compare and contrast in informative ways (ways that were central in driving political process at Schmidtsdrift).

But this is not the whole story, for there is, of course, no absolute and complete story, no total, closed ('life-') history. The politics of personality goes on (not only through its textual [re]genesis here). Leadership, by virtue of being a political matter, was -- and is -- processual. Moreover, albeit that leaders communicated and identified highlights, times and spaces of significance, that were highly personalised, not only in their rendition, but also their remembering, the allegory of objectivity (narrowly in terms of common and collective agreement or disagreement, consensus-based sanction or derision -- narrative spaces of coalescence) pervaded much of the narratives of individual pasts that I collected and interpreted, and reinterpret here.

The (re)interpretation that follows is centred on five people. Where and when there was broad consensus on issues and events, and especially when these were related in richer detail, I have selectively and disjunctively introduced and included relevant detail. What I intended to create was a pastiche, a version of a concatenation of people, places, times, stories that compliment and transgress in the closure implicit in the structure of a chapter. This, however, is not a fictional and imaginary collage as if the purpose were to supply a composite snapshot of the life of a 'typical' leader (or 'bushman', '!Xu' or 'Khwe', 'Namibian' or 'Angolan') by drawing on seemingly unrelated episodes. This chapter is about picture snippets, evocative bytes, and in so much as there is closure of any kind, it is due to the literary-temporal constraints of ethnographic method (field-research and writing) that inhere in coming to terms with
political process, displacement, ethnicity, and leadership
in full cognizance of their simultaneous irascibility and
their conjunctive discursivity.

I want to begin by providing some information on the
most powerful local leader at Schmidtsdrift base. Mario
Mahongo's unparalleled authority among the bushmen at
Schmidtsdrift was the product of a variety of intricately
interrelated and imbricated historical factors. Many of
these factors are elucidated here in an examination of his
status, legitimated by a long track record, in and across
four main institutional formations: the military-
institutional matrix, the bushman council(s), the Dutch
Reformed Church, and the !Xu and Khwe Trust (discussed at
length in Chapter Four).

Feliciano Mario Mahongo was born close to the Longa
River, about 50 km northeast of Serpa Pinto, Angola, on 12
January 1952. He was the son of a farmer, and his father
sowed mealies, potatoes and beans, and also harvested
mahongo nuts and collected honey. Mario recalled that his
mother seldom worked outside of the domestic sphere -- her
ascribed role as nurturer -- and occasionally helped gather
and pick fruit. His father worked for himself, practicing
subsistence agriculture, and he owned the land that he lived
on and farmed:

People were satisfied, content...we did not need much
to survive. There was no talk, at that time, of 'these
people are rich, those people are poor people'...we did
not need a lot of things to subsist. We only had to do
enough to pay taxes, usually by giving mealies or fruit
to the Portuguese.

It was necessary at times, however, for his father to
contract his labour power out to Portuguese settlers and
missionaries in the Serpa Pinto region. This was usually
met with payment in kind, and allowed he and his family to
acquire essential foodstuffs, or excess produce for the
payment of taxes, particularly during periods of drought.
Mario explained that during his childhood, interaction with Bantu-speakers was commonplace and frequent, so much so, he said, that there was no real emphasis placed on being "Sekele" or "black people."

We lived together...with Luchwasi, Ngangela, Mbundu, Chukwe. I learnt to speak their languages at school, and can still speak three [of these]. When I go to Pomfret, to 32 Battalion to visit my nieces, I speak those languages...both my nieces there are !Xu...their father is black, their mother !Xu...

Mario told of how his father had lived among Bantu-speakers, and how the !Xu together with his father lived under the direct control of these people:

my father and his group...he was the leader, although informal...[they] lived and worked under blacks. There was a more powerful leader who was more important than him [Mario's father] -- a black man. At that time we were all matemba, people used by the Portuguese to open up and build new roads, and also to build buildings. We all worked together, !Xus and blacks, as a team....There was a form of integration, and we did not hide from one another or avoid one another...but they [Bantu-speakers] were our leaders, and the Portuguese used them to get taxes from us...

Mario was addressing conditions in the Serpa Pinto region in the early 1960s that were in stark contrast to what he described as an earlier history of oppression at the hands of Bantu-speakers:

There was the story among the !Xu that we were heavily oppressed people, that we were an exploited group that had lived in discomfort and suffering...that we had suffered under blacks in southern Angola (in and around Cuito, Serpa Pinto, Mavinga, Longo). We were once in small dispersed groups, and we stayed in one place, always with the same group. But whenever we walked past the lands of a black man he would follow our trail and catch us, saying that we had stolen something. That was how we were enslaved....Yes, there was slavery in Angola, there was oppression by blacks...we were once slaves, the slaves of blacks. [And] it is about to start all over again [...] in Namibia...

He started school relatively late, in 1960, firstly attending a Roman Catholic mission school, and then a private Portuguese school in Serpa Pinto. Importantly, however, Mario maintained his connection with the Catholic missionary society. He attended school sporadically between
1960 and 1967, and by late 1967 he had completed the equivalent of Standard four. Thereafter he left school because his parents insisted that he earn money and assist them and his siblings. In addition, Catholic missionaries wanted to recruit him and send him out, away from Serpa Pinto. Mario's parents were opposed to this and forbid him to do missionary work. He thus went to work on a farm on the outskirts of Luanda, where, after a while, he gained employment as a chef.

I came back in May 1969, and then decided to join the army. I signed up with the Portuguese military in [August] 1969 in order to earn a wage, to earn a salary...and to help in the war. We were asked to join...and all of the people were doing it...and also to protect the country [...] that was why we were asked to fight. That is why I joined...as a young man you were really forced into the army. People created problems if you didn't go...many of my friends joined the army and that created pressure [...] there was definitely pressure.

Mario signed up, but apparently loathed fighting, and ran away from Serpa Pinto, only to return a few months later out of desperation. He was permitted to sign up again, and was deployed with "Kompani Du Diamante," a unit that by 1972 served as a home-guard for diamond mining companies in and around Serpa Pinto. He was also deployed as a guard to watch over foreigners on safari and game hunts in south-central Angola.

An entire section would accompany hunters and tourists at nature reserves...we had to protect them, Americans and foreigners who had come to hunt. That was how I got to meet people...I was section commander and learnt to communicate [interact] with strangers, whites who were not Portuguese...

His rank changed quickly, from foot soldier to corporal to lieutenant, and eventually to captain of "Kompani Du Diamante."

I was the best shot, and always won first prize...my leaders pushed me forward. I was the one who regularly served as a guide and spoke to foreign visitors when they came to the base at Serpa Pinto.

The relationships between !Xu and Bantu-speakers clearly changed from 1967 onwards, when increasing numbers
of !Xu were recruited into the Flecha units of the Portuguese army. The profundity and irreversibility of the shift in !Xu/Bantu-speaker relationships was demonstrated by Mario by way of example:

you were not paid if you did not get their [liberation fighters] weapons, and if you did not bring their ears or heads back. You would get something like 150 escudo if you brought a gun back...grenades were about 50 escudo [...] it all depended on the kinds of weapons you got. But you had to bring heads, heads or ears...you produced them on return as evidence, so that there was no suspicion or distrust....You got paid more when you brought guns and heads...say about 200 or 250 [escudo].

Mario told me this during a discussion about the nature of his service in the Portuguese military, during which, he stressed, he was commanded to regard liberation fighters as blacks (especially Ovambo and Kavango-speakers in southeast Angola) and vice versa.

The eye of the blacks was against us...the war created a negative relationship. They [Bantu-speakers] understood it as all !Xu pitted against them -- generally all of us against them -- [that] we had chosen sides against them. But it was not that way [...] the majority of us worked together with the white element, sometimes with blacks, but not all of us...

Almost all of the conflict that Mario remembered being involved in was against MPLA and FNLA liberation forces, not Unita. Here a historical contradiction emerged:

In 1974 I was second in command, commandant, of the FNLA unit at Serpa Pinto...I was with them [FNLA] for just over six months. It was strange...I was initially against the FNLA, but many people, MPLA, Unita, FNLA wanted to use us as their soldiers after the Portuguese [left]. I was a trained soldier, and that was how I earned money [...] it was what I did. I would have been killed if I had not joined a side, and FNLA were strong around Serpa Pinto [...] many !Xu joined...

Shortly before joining the FNLA, Mario became committed to Christianity. He was on active duty in Luanda in early 1974, guarding pump stations and electricity installations, when he realised that he was, as he put it, a "disciple of God." He was thus converted in 1974, despite his exposure, since childhood, to the Roman Catholic Church and missionary societies.
In July 1975 Mario led a large group of !Xu out of Angola. This group arrived at Mkurumkuru, to be followed by an even larger contingent later the same day (his recollection of movement out of Angola was vivid). With the arrival of the second group, Mario was asked to identify the group -- whether or not he knew the group and what its identity was (as 'friend or foe'). He told officers of the South African army that the group was !Xu, and that many were ex-Flechas. His onerous role in this situation earned Mario the respect of both the SADF commanders in the Caprivi and a great deal of !Xu who had never heard of or known him. These !Xu, who constituted the second and third waves of ex-Flecha soldiers and dependents exiting Angola were relocated to Rundu and later Alpha camp in western Caprivi:

the experience was not pleasant...but what could we do? It was a foreign country, a strange place, and we could only accept it. If we had stayed we would have been shot, and we knew that the South African army wanted us and would employ us...they even sent letters to Serpa Pinto, asking us to come out and join them.... I heard the word boesman ['bushman'] for the first time at Alpha, yes, in 1975 when I came out [of Angola] ...Before that we were called the Vasekele or Komseke by the Portuguese...it means something about brown skin, being coloured and people of the open veld [...] but that name was also given to us. Only here, at Schmidtsdrift did we start to use !Xu, our own name [...] in 1993.

Within a matter of months after his arrival, Mario (like all Flecha leaders) was made a sergeant (see Uys 1993). Within a short space of time (in 1978) he obtained the rank of staff-sergeant, the highest rank ever given to a bushman soldier in the South African armed forces:

I was initially angry, I had more experience, [and] had given better service than people of higher rank [who were not bushman]. I realised that it would not help to get upset [...] but it is strange, there was something strange about them giving us rank up to a point only. As I said, they did not trust non-whites...

He established a bible-study group in 1976, and this later developed into the Dutch Reformed Church at Omega. Mario emphasised, however, that the early years in Namibia should not be romanticised:
the greatest difficulty at that time was language...we could not speak Afrikaans and could not understand it well either. We were not allowed to use the radios, nothing [equipment when on patrol]...it was difficult, it was part of the apartheid system. The whites did not trust the non-whites. We were used to working on our own, walking our own patrols...that was how the Portuguese treated us. Now it was different...but we were in some ways still alone. Only the leadership element was white. The Portuguese army was essentially better, without so much apartheid and discrimination.

Indeed, Mario emphasised that the SADF was not only more discriminatory than the Portuguese army, but that his experiences in the SADF were frequently characterised by a powerful racism that he did not find in either the FNLA or under the Portuguese. He stressed, however, that the fighting was also worse and far more prolific and dangerous in the SADF.

I realised early on that apartheid was a big thing at Omega...we were badly treated, and when Linford [Colonel Delville Linford] left it got very bad. In 1978, December 1978, there were four men who were murdered by the army. Yes, that was Jackson Road. They were all family...the incident made me extremely angry. I was prepared to shoot those white soldiers...luckily they did not come near me. [And] then we got blamed for it, the colonel blamed the !Xu, [he] said the deaths were our fault. I wanted to resign then...or join all of the people going to Mangetti [a base in Bushmanland to which a number of !Xu were transferred after 1978]. That was the only incident that I remember well, but there were individual !Xu who just vanished. On one occasion a member of my family circle went mad, insane...he took his gun and just walked away [from Omega]. They [white SADF soldiers] followed him for a week and shot him from a distance...all because they wanted his gun. The way they saw it, the gun was more important than the person....There was so much tension from '78 onwards [...] things were really serious.

Mario explained that he was unable to do much to change conditions at Omega, and that he certainly could not have left the base and gone elsewhere.

In late 1977 [August] the army started to train me to become a chaplain. They transferred me into the headquarters company, I stopped going on ops [military operations], and then began studying and helping at the school at Omega. I worked as a teacher in the morning, and studied theology in the afternoon, and also became a member of the school board. I could not have gone to
Mangetti...I was enjoying working for the people, I was working for them and would have gone where most of them had gone...

In October 1977 Mario was baptised; "we had about seventeen members of the church in '77 [...] and we had a proper church congregation within nine months." According to Mario, the first Dutch Reformed Church congregation, Alpha congregation, was formally established at Omega in 1982, and at that time Dutch Reformed Church membership was estimated at 150 (and the average congregation at 300. Uys 1993). In 1983 Mario did a one year course in theology at the University of the Western Cape. He went on to obtain Standard five, and was required to study for a Dutch Reformed Church examination that he wrote in September 1984 in order to become a minister. He was ordained as a chaplain at Omega base early in November of the same year. In spite of his army reputation as a ruthless soldier, Mario stated that

I could spend more time at home, my role as minister made me happy, relaxed. I quickly forgot about the war and started a new life...it was the beginning of a new life -- not to kill but to save, to work with people's souls.

Concurrent with his becoming embroiled in the Dutch Reformed Church was Mario's increasing involvement in 'civilian' affairs, and his growth in importance on the bushman council. Moreover, Mario mentioned his position in what might be termed public relations at Omega:

people were always coming to visit the base, and they usually came past the church....[In order] to take people on a tour of the base they had to go through or past the church, and I met them, showed them the camp, befriended them...it was my involvement in the church that made it possible, that brought me closer [to whites].

Mario mentioned that this was particularly the case during the presence of UNTAG forces in the Caprivi in 1989 and 1990 (during the implementation of the United Nations Resolution 435). In addition, Mario was the only non-white person at Omega who had access to the officer's bar, and he was frequently invited there to meet people and have a drink. This 'privileged' relationship with white officers
initially existed at Schmidtsdrift, where he was also the only bushman able to buy drink and spend time in the officer's bar.

In 1987 Mario was elected as chairman of the Omega Dutch Reformed Church senate, and from 1988 to 1990 he studied theology in Windhoek in order to complete his theology course and obtain the qualifications required of a Dutch Reformed minister. He came back to Omega to find that there was a profound change at the base as a result of the presence of UNTAG:

resolution 435 and UNTAG did not bother me, and I continued with my community work. People were wearing civies [out of uniform], and that was a huge change...it was peculiar. But I made friends with people from all over the world, and enjoyed their company [...] Germans, French, Swiss....Throughout my time as a minister I was fortunate to meet lots of people...I had more opportunity to be with whites and I enjoyed that. The ordinary soldier did not have that opportunity, and it was easier for me because I was viewed as the general community leader at that time [by the late 1980s].

The move to Schmidtsdrift was not spoken about in much detail, and Mario was in fact visibly upset and annoyed about the confusion that surrounded translocation out of Namibia in early 1990.

It was stressful, difficult to decide...the army and South African government had a course -- Komops, a propaganda and defense course about lower races. It was political, about the evil of SWAPO, how bad they were, about all the damage that blacks have done in Africa. Those negative things were stuck in people's heads....Then SWAPO came to speak to us and I thought no, they are not so bad. They said that what has happened has happened, passed...'you fought so that you had bread to eat, we forgive you, we must join hands now'. We were all confused...we heard so many different things. People said that SWAPO were lying, and we saw photographs of where we going in South Africa [Copperton], such a nice place [...] but that was not where we went anyway....It makes me angry to think about those things.

Apparently Mario initially intended to remain in Namibia, in the Caprivi, but he said that he realised that he would be needed at Schmidtsdrift:
I knew that they [his congregation and certainly !Xu as a whole] would need me, that they would need a minister [...] they even said so, and I was their leader...I had to go where my people went, I realised that I would always go where most of my people were. So I went....But I was very unhappy. My wife was sick, things of mine were stolen and got lost [...] they lost boxes of books and things from the church.

Relief from the early trials and tribulations of Schmidtsdrift came in the form of the possibility of a transfer:

they [the Dutch Reformed Church] wanted to call me up to Bushmanland in 1991...it was church business, and I was excited. I knew that there were many !Xu there, even some of my family, and [I] was looking forward to it. But they could not arrange the paper work, the right forms, and now someone else has been appointed, so the chance has gone...

Mario's earlier statement that he would go where the majority of 'his people' went, and his mention here that he would go where there were 'many !Xu', have to be understood against the fact that his position as a minister and chaplain was compromised. Given his limited training and education, he could only assume these formal religious roles among bushman congregations (be they in Bushmanland, the Caprivi, or at Schmidtsdrift).

Turning to more recent issues and events, Mario spoke with fondness of his election onto the Trust, and his two visits, as a trustee, to Geneva and the United Nations in 1994.

At first I did not want to be a member of the Trust...initially my name appeared as mayor, but I immediately erased it...they [the general !Xu populace at Schmidtsdrift] always came to me, I was always involved in politics here, among these people....I was party to all of the Trust working groups and workshops, and was [therefore] appointed as a member when it was established in November 1993. I will continue as long as I am doing my share, as long as I mean something to the community. Last year [1994] I thought that I should resign...this year it would be good to see someone else get a chance [as leader], someone else should get some experience...

There was no conflict or animosity surrounding Mario's election onto the Trust, and his position as !Xu leader and principle representative was met with no opposition when it
was decided to send him to the United Nations-affiliated International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) first in late February 1994, and then again in late July of the same year.

[The visit to] Geneva was important, but I don't know what will come of it [...] I don't know if foreign people will help us, I have not heard anything. What I remember are the long flights, and flying over my home-country...it felt strange to fly over Angola. It was good to meet people and talk about one issue ['indigenous rights'] for a few days...I felt good. Now it sometimes seems so long ago, and things get boring...but I have my work to do, I don't have a choice, I must continue...

In so much as Mario had a Khwe counterpart it was Robert Derenge. Robert was the Khwe spokesman at Schmidtsdrift, but without anything like the authority Mario commanded as 'the Schmidtsdrift representative'. As was the case with Mario, Robert's political influence and leverage was closely tied, historically, to his position in the military, on the Khwe council, in formal, institutionalised religion (the Prophetic Church), and to his senior position on the !Xu and Khwe Trust.

Robert was, he told me, born in June 1958 or thereabouts. Official records had his date of birth as 20 May 1961, but he was unsure of the accuracy of this. He told me that he was born in Angola, at "Temange," close to Andara (Mbukushu), roughly twenty kilometers north of the Namibian border. Robert did not attend school in Angola, and lived there (at his town of birth) until 1970. He accompanied his parents and a number of Khwe into Namibia, close to Bagani, in late 1970. They left Angola because of escalating conflict in the south and along the Zambian border, and relocated to the Caprivi because they had family already resident there.

My parents regularly crossed the border in order to visit friends and family. There was no border before '74...people used to move around freely. My family went to visit people all of the time....But I was too young to remember much of it. I do recall that there were no gates [border posts], no passports [...] when I left Angola, I simply walked across...
Robert remembered that in both Angola and Namibia his parents lived in one place, where they pursued a sedentary agro-pastoral way of life:

that was our tradition [...] we always lived in one place, and we moved only when we went hunting and in very dry periods...but that was temporary, and we always returned to the same place.

He claimed that his relatives with whom he lived in Namibia had owned the land that they cultivated and the cattle that grazed that land. Moreover, Robert explained that much of the land used for grazing purposes was collectively owned and controlled by Khwe.

The Khwe were originally from the area around Bagani...together with Kavangos. The Khwe were, at that time [...] before the '70s, neighbours of the Kavangos. We lived together, often visited and stayed at one another's houses, we married their women [...] we were mixed. Nicolaas [Tenda] is mixed -- his father was Kavango, his mother Khwe....We share a considerable amount of mixed blood with the Kavango. We lived among one another and knew each other well....

There was a civilian council in Caprivi, in the early '70s and during Omega's time...it was a Kavango council, established by a white magistrate from Windhoek. Kavangos had their own leaders, their own land ['homeland']...they had people with power who ruled us. We were not independent of them, we frequently came together and worked together....The Kavangos, with their headmen, continued to live on their own [...] their [landed-political] autonomy endured throughout the war. The army left them alone, but those who wanted to sign up were allowed to do so, and went to Rundu, yes, 34 Battalion...

Robert offered a wealth of information on socio-political relationships in the Caprivi prior to and concurrent with intense SADF intervention in the region. These shifting relationships were a matter of nationality, political allegiance, and ethnic identity:

we did not fight together in the war because there were already so many Kavangos at Rundu, and it [therefore] made sense to build a [purely] Kavango base there....But you must not forget that there were also Khwe in Angola...and that was really why Omega was built. Khwe were allowed to stay at Omega because some were from Angola...yes, Omega was initially the base for people who had been Flechas...and many Kavangos did not like those Khwe....
The Kavangos had a strong dislike for the Angolan Khwe because we were refugees of Kavango conflict once — Tchimbare [slave wars] — and we had fought for the Portuguese [...]. Flechas had shot and killed Kavango families for the Portuguese. They thought that all blacks were the enemy, in the same way that we thought all blacks were SWAPO.... Like the Kavangos, the Namibian Khwes disliked the Angolan Khwes. They said that we were foreigners, strangers...[that] we took their land and were the first to get jobs. Namibians should have been offered those jobs ahead of us...we were refugees, Namibians called us refugees, but we were valuable because many of us had fought in Angola and knew it well.... There was a lot of tension around this issue until the Defence Force started to recruit Namibian Khwe after '74 [...] the army put us together, Namibians and Angolans, they put us in one camp because of the Flechas.... That was [also] why we were grouped with the !Xus. I did not know any !Xu [then], I had not met them before they started to leave Angola and came to Alpha camp...

Robert joined the SADF as late as 1980. He had, however, been living at Omega since early recruitment drives in the Caprivi [when the SADF disclosed that it was seeking to employ 'Namibian' Khwe] and the establishment of a formal school at the base in 1977.

I began school in '74, at a Kavango school. I did Sub [-Standard] A and left...I hated it. Afrikaans was too difficult. Then I went back in 1976, and completed Sub B [...] that was at Majiku, along with Wentzel [Katjara]. Then I went to Omega, to live with my uncle. I started school there in 1977, with Standard one and finished in '80.... In 1980 I completed Standard four...

He left school at Omega after four years, and signed up because, he explained, he was the oldest son and it was deemed necessary that he earn money so that food could be bought for his kin, and so that the costs of schooling could be covered: "it was an employment opportunity...it was important to find work to pay for things, for school, for food, clothes..." Although he placed less emphasis on it, Robert did also mention that the SADF enquired into the position of 'able-bodied' !Xu and Khwe who were at school and of an age that made them eligible for soldiering. There was apparently tremendous pressure to join the army as soon as one was capable of serving.
Robert proved to be a highly successful and competent soldier, and was rapidly promoted to a section leader of a Khwe company. Then, in 1983, he was promoted to sergeant. He attended the adult education courses offered by the army during his military service, and managed to get Standard five under his belt. At Schmidtsdrift he was studying for a Standard eight qualification, again through the adult education course offered by the army in conjunction with the Department of Education.

I hope to get my Standard ten [...] and then apply for a new course, my staff-sergeant course. Then I will get a higher rank....I want to be 'high' [powerful], I must try to go further...

Robert joined the Head Mountain Apostolic Church towards the end of 1981, the year after the church's arrival at Omega. There were, according to Robert, no Zion churches at Omega prior to 1980. The first church was established in that year, having been introduced to the Caprivi by Kavango from Botswana and Khwe migrants on their return from the gold mines on the Witwatersrand in South Africa in the late 1970s (Robert and Nicolaas explained that Zionism was introduced into the Caprivi in 1978). Zionism grew rapidly, and, by the mid- to late 1980s, "there were eight Zion congregations at Omega, divided between three churches -- [I] St Johns, the Head Mountain Apostolic, and the Holy Galilee Church of God" (see Uys 1993:176-77). The only Zion church at Schmidtsdrift was the Head Mountain Apostolic Church.

Robert had been a member of the Catholic Church in the early 1970s and, after his arrival at Omega in the mid- to late 1970s, he had regularly attended Dutch Reformed Church services (but he said that he never subscribed, or formally registered as a member). He explained that many Khwe had followed a similar path, initially having been exposed to or involved in traditional Christian-Calvinist churches, and then changing, after 1980, to the Prophetic Church. Robert, however, had a unique association with the Prophetic Church, starting out as an ordinary member and then progressing, in the company of a number of other Khwe elites (for example,
sergeants such as José Jutembo, who was a Prophetic leader at both Omega and Schmidtsdrift), to a church leader, and then, at Schmidtsdrift, progressing to the position of Bishop. He was the only Bishop in the Prophetic Church at Schmidtsdrift.

I was an ordinary member at the outset. Then, at the end of 1981, I became the secretary of the Head Mountain [Church]...for two years -- 1982 and 1983....In 1984 they chose me to be a high priest...things did not change until South Africa. There were very few church members when we came here, and it took a long time to build the churches [up] to what they are now...[and] we are still struggling. It was here that I was [made a] Bishop, in 1994, among the Tswana, Khwe, Sotho...everyone. I had to go to a meeting in Kuruman and preach to everyone...then I was made Bishop.

He explained that his role as a church leader and as a sergeant also meant his inclusion in the proceedings of bushman council meetings at Omega, and later, his involvement in the mayoral system at Schmidtsdrift. Moreover, all of these positions overlapped in assisting Robert in his efforts to secure a position on the Trust:

They [Khwe leaders] chose me to be their representative, I was leader of the Khwe on the Trust [...] chosen and established in November 1993. People decided on me because they knew me...yes, in the church, the army, in the council. I was proud of it, but not very proud [...] I did not display my pride. The Trust is the way forward...I don't really know about the [Khwe] council anymore. I am chairman, Nicolaas is deputy chairman...but the Trust is more valuable, only the Trust can help us....

Robert identified his election onto the Trust as the highlight of his stay in South Africa, and as a significant moment in moulding his own future in the country. His reasons for coming to South Africa suggested a strong personal commitment to shaping a prosperous future in South Africa, as a South African:

I came here because there was still the opportunity to earn money...it was my own choice, and I decided to stay in the army. I wanted to continue to be paid, to have work....And the South African government accepted us [Khwe and !Xu], protected us...they looked after us and gave us work. We knew that there would be nothing,
no jobs if we stayed [...] we came because there was a future in being soldiers....
There was a lot of concern at the time of the Namibian elections...and the outcome was correct, we had to accept it and leave the country. The story of refugees (vlugtelinge) is part of our history -- first from Angola and then from Namibia. (Now) there is nowhere else to go....I was happy to come here [to South Africa] because of the promises that were made, and because I knew this would be the best country for us. The pictures of Copperton, of housing, streets, shops [...] they made me even happier [to leave Namibia]. But I was shocked when I got here, when I saw the tent village...it really surprised me, [but] I was determined to stay anyway...

Despite his desire to carve out a new and successful niche in South Africa, Robert remained in some ways connected to a past that he ambiguously presented:

There were videos and stories about the damage that SWAPO did, and would do, when we left Namibia. But I do not think that SWAPO were bad people [...] they had a good reason to fight. They were fighting for their country, their freedom, the independence of their country. We knew nothing about that until the end, we had no knowledge...and it bothers me to think that I fought against people who were fighting for the right thing, who had a right to fight -- a war in which I was not informed. The South African army made the war out to be conflict against communists, blacks...and I just fought [...] it angers me. Now we are fighting for our freedom and where are they [the South African military]?
I worked for them, protected them [...] and got nothing...all I got was to fight in a war that I did not properly understand....

Long ago the whites viewed us as stupid people, and they did not develop us...they didn't bring bushmen up to their level. We got used to that, and are used to thinking that we are inferior [...] we began to think that we were on a lower level than them. They taught us Afrikaans and nothing else [no other languages], they showed us how to fight and nothing else [taught them no other professional skills], they let us get drivers' licenses and took our cars to the shooting range [at Omega] and destroyed them...they just dropped us, kept us down. Now we are sitting with those limitations...they disadvantaged us, and if they go we will have nothing, nothing...

Yet, in spite of such seeming disdain for much of his military past and for the broader predicament in which he found himself, Robert voted for the National Party in the general elections of 1994:
I voted NP because I knew them...we were previously under their leadership, and they were [therefore] familiar...I trusted them.

This seeming contradiction, however, has to be viewed according to the perspective of a person historically presented with and situated in a series of relationships and political processes -- with positive and negative attributes -- and out of which he, as a leader, had tended to selectively access those relationships and processes that were seemingly 'lesser evils'.

Both Robert and Mario, for example, obtained rank, but to a point; they both were religious leaders, but within fairly rigid limits (most pronounced in Mario's case). Most significantly, they both actively and deliberately chose to forfeit their fighting role, and move from the domain of conventional soldiering, with military prestige intact, into that of local politics by entering the head-quarters company and more conspicuously 'civilian' roles.

Much of this was repeated, with subjective twists and turns, in the experiences and memories of Vicky, Mario's 'right hand man', or perhaps more appropriately, 'brother in arms' at Schmidtsdrift. Augustino Victorino told me that he was born in the vicinity of Cuito Cuanavale in August 1950. He recounted that his childhood in Angola was fairly uneventful:

I cannot remember it very well, but we used to hunt, collect veld food (veldkos), herd cattle. That was our tradition, but the war took it all away. When I was ten or twelve years old I became familiar with money...once we started to earn money we lost our tradition, we stopped hunting, gathering food, our clothing changed, farming stopped. We built houses, worked on the mines, worked on other people's farms as labourers, then joined the army....[The] war and the building of nature reserves put an end to our tradition twenty or twenty-five years ago.

I started school when I was eighteen, very late [...] and finished when I was twenty five years old. It was because they did not allow us to go to school at the place that I came from...the Director, the Director of Cuito -- he was like a mayor -- told the Vasekeles [!Xu] that they had to pay tax. That was why I started school so late, why I worked on farms for so long...all of us in the location had to pay taxes. The location
was just outside Cuito, on the edge of the town, and it was mostly !Xu and some blacks...we used to go out and work on farms away from the town and location.

Vicky's parents eventually sent him to a private school at Serpa Pinto in 1968, and he studied there until 1974.

I was at school for seven years, until Primary one [...] it was the equivalent of Standard six here. Then the teachers asked me to leave because I was too clever... 'you are too clever, you are wasting your time'. I wanted to study further, but the school did not go beyond Primary one. I had two ideas about my future when I was at school: firstly, to sing -- I enjoyed music -- and secondly, evangelism...to spread the word of God [...] just like Mario...

I wanted to study further, but Unita, FNLA, MPLA prevented it....After '74 they told everyone at Serpa Pinto that there was no more school, no more shops, nothing...they told us to go back to where we were born...

He went back to Cuito where he met his parents. Vicky had not seen them at all during his years at school, and met them again in September 1974, when people were fleeing war-torn parts of south-central Angola.

I met my parents who were leaving Angola...it was very strange, they were in a hurry to leave. But it was good to hear my language again [...] it sounded foreign, and I had to learn it again, from the beginning. We only spoke Portuguese, Mbundu, and Chukwe at school...and [I] only knew two other !Xu children at the school. I lived in a dormitory [at the school]...

...it was unpleasant, a bit difficult because the students were always fighting, as children always do. There was no racism, no discrimination or oppression that I personally experienced because of what I looked like...a person did not see those sorts of things in Angola, only in Namibia...

Vicky talked about returning to a deserted Cuito, to find that many friends and family had already moved south, to Mpupa.

There was just a small group of !Xu left [...] under the control of Matoka. The South African army sent a letter to us, saying that we must come....The group at Mpupa had told them that we were still at Cuito. They [the SADF] sent us a number of letters, saying 'you must all leave or you will be killed...we will kill you'. We wanted to stay -- it was our country of birth [...] but they met us during [Operation] Savannah and took us south. We were the last group out...with Matoka...
Vicky knew that many !Xu had served in the FNLA, and that most of them had left Angola and joined the SADF by the time that he came out:

there was talk of being used as soldiers...many of my people [!Xu] were already soldiers. We knew that we didn't have a choice...and started training at Mpupa, and then continued at Omega.

He did not enjoy soldiering at all, despite being promoted to corporal in 1983, and in spite of his frequent duty (from 1982 to 1985) as a transport driver as opposed to a foot soldier. In January 1985, Vicky became a medical orderly ('medic') after six months of intensive training. His service as a battalion 'medic' included being deployed to conflict situations and battle scenes, where he had tended to injured soldiers of 201 Battalion and sometimes 101 Battalion (the latter was not a 'Bushman Battalion'). Vicky readily related 'casevacs' (helicopter casualty evacuations) during conflict in 1987, his final year of active service outside of Omega and on offensive operations. From 1988 to 1990 he worked in the hospital at Omega.

My work at the hospital was rewarding...sometimes I worked away from the hospital, in the community, and in the outside clinic [...] also in the communities outside the base -- but always among the !Xus and Khwes...that was how people got to know about me -- they called me doctor...they still call me doctor, I help many of them, especially after hours [...] I have keys to the clinic, so I can help in emergencies...

Continuing our discussion of his 'civilian-community' role, Vicky turned to explaining his involvement in the Dutch Reformed Church:

I was first part of the church in 1977...at Omega, that was when I got seriously involved in the church. I sometimes went to Protestant Church services at Cuito, but changed to the Dutch Reformed Church when I got to Omega. It was a huge shift, the two were very different...but I had no option. The Dutch Reformed Church was the only church at the base....Minister Mario had a prayer group at Omega, and I was one of them, a member...then from 1979 to 1985 I was a church elder, and from 1986 to 1989 I was Deacon, for two-and-a-half years [...] I enjoyed it, and the congregation did not want me to resign...they were unhappy, dissatisfied when I resigned. Now I am a conventional member, yes, an ordinary member [...] it is good, I am
without the weight of responsibilities. They [the congregation] wanted to elect me as an elder again, but I refused...Mario agreed with me that it was a mistake, but it has been decided, finished...

The yoke of responsibility, however, was not something that Vicky had experienced through the clinic and the Dutch reformed Church only:

I was chosen to be mayor of Schmidtsdrift in 1990. That period, from 1990 to late 1992 [his term in office] was strange, really strange....I was elected by the community [...] everyone, from both sides [Khwe and !Xu] chose me. They said 'Vicky, Vicky'...they said that they only wanted Vicky. There was nobody else [...] it would have been good had there been other people who stood against me. Then people could have decided over time, and after others had shown them what sort of work they could do...then they could have decided who should be the single leader, who the best leader was. But they all chose me...only me. Commandant van Wyk [commanding officer at the time] also thought that I would be good, that I should be mayor...either Mario or I. But Mario refused, he said that he did not want to be mayor [...] so van Wyk said that I must do it. It was very strange being mayor...it was unpleasant. There were always people who accused me of things, who pointed fingers at me. But it was me alone, attending meetings, writing letters, taking minutes [...] I did it all myself. I did not enjoy it at all [...] and then there were arguments between some of the !Xu and Khwe. People thought that we should be separate, far apart [...] and I agreed, one mayor did not work...then it was over, finished...

When the first bushman council at Schmitdsrift was established after to the decision to abolish the mayoral system, Vicky had been a senior member, and in fact, apparently the chairman:

there was a council here, shortly before the Trust was established...van Wyk wanted one leadership body for village management...there was talk of building houses and a community, so that was why it was decided to have a mayor and deputees, and then a council....I was chairman of the council [...] there were ten of us, six !Xu and four Khwe, and later six !Xu and two Khwe...but then there was conflict, Khwe were angry, they did not want to be punished by !Xu, and we did not want Khwe punishing us....After that we agreed to have two councils, !Xu and Khwe...

Vicky was elected onto the Trust in 1993, as a secondary trustee and not an executive member. He explained that his status as a councilor, mayor, 'medic' and Dutch
reformed Church elder definitely helped him secure a position on the Trust.

At first they wanted me to be the !Xu spokesman on the Trust, [but] I declined to accept that...I said that my time was up, I had done my share and that it was time for someone else. They agreed.

Vicky's lower-key appointment was something with which he was satisfied, and the Trust was an institutional formation that he seemed to be glad to have been a part of:

I am pleased that we now have our own Trust, even though it appears as if nothing is happening. But you can see that something is on the go, that they are doing something... [if you] look at the minutes of meetings. It is certainly better than being under the control of the army [...] they used us and threw us aside...but my choices are few, my job is with the army. I can be unhappy, but I have to stay for work...

This double-bind of desiring autonomy yet realising the inescapability of dependence of one form or another was repeated in Vicky's vote during the general elections in South Africa in early 1994. In the general elections, in April 1994, Vicky voted National Party:

I voted NP [National Party]....I am not altogether happy about it, but I was [happy] then because we all stood together in the past. They looked after us well...they were ultimately our father. One has to think about the positive things in politics, such as the fact that the NP helped us from as early as when we left Angola. NP was our best option, even though we struggled at times...things would have been worse if they had not helped us. In the early 1970s we were without leaders and without an identity...the NP helped us with that, [they] helped us find an identity, gave us leaders....

The NP army was our mouth, they did things for us, they made the rules that we needed. Yes, they made promises that they did not keep [about relocating to an established and formal housing settlement in South Africa], but the thing is loyalty....I am angry because they lied, but they were also my caretaker, they gave me my job...I would not have been able to earn money had South Africa not provided that service....it was a privilege to be employed by them [SADF]...they made me feel like I belonged, as if I was a part of something important...

Vicky was annoyed with the past government for not keeping its word, yet grateful for its role in extracting him and some of his kin from what in all likelihood would
have been a miserable predicament and near certain death in south-central Angola. On this note, Vicky told of how

life at Omega was very enjoyable...all of my family who are here were also there. And we had houses, kimbos, that were basically adequate...we had to pay for those, and when we left [Omega] to come here we just left them [the houses] and got nothing for them, nothing in return....I am sure that there is someone very wealthy somewhere out there...that was the thing that upset me the most about coming here...and we still have no houses.

Vicky's narrative accounts of a (his) past were rife with the ambiguities and institutional overlapping and embeddedness that emerged in Mario's and Robert's stories. In particular, the military was identified and described as the site of abuse, of broken promises, transgressions, yet was also the locus of beneficence, the provider of employment, of hope (among other things).

This theme continued in and through other recollections and other elites' remembrances. Nicolaas Tenda and Wentzel Katjara most frequently related histories and allegories of the past in joint discussions with me, and occasionally in private one-on-one exchanges. Given the different contexts and ways in which they detailed aspects of their lives, usually in a three-way dialogue, I have decided to provide some kind of a composite and narrative juxtaposition of aspects of their respective stories.

Nicolaas Tenda was born in Angola "somewhere around 1960," although his date of birth was formally recorded as 24 February 1962. He was born close to Mbukushu, "the same place as Robert...he was about five kilometers away." (Nicolaas' association with Robert was much like Vicky's relationship with Mario). He grew up in Angola, and left for Namibia in the late 1960s/early 1970s (when he was nine or ten years old) in order to escape the effects of the 'civil' war and increasing Unita mobilisation and cross-border SWAPO attacks in the south.

My father and mothers were grootkoppe [potentates] in Angola. My father was king of the blacks...Kutenda,
the king of everyone in the south, close to the border. Everyone listened to him, including the Portuguese [...] all of these Khwe are his family -- Robert, Wentzel, Outjo [...] all of them, yes, even Ndumba [identified by Wentzel as a lineage of 'Namibian' Khwe leaders]...

Wentzel Katjara, on the other hand, was born at Bagani, in the western Caprivi, on the 14 June 1964. His parents were, he said, Namibian, and he still had siblings living there. His parents farmed; his mother sowed cereal crops and gathered nuts and fruit, and his father owned cattle. They did not own any land, "there was so much...no one worried about who went where, except the missionaries, makua [the whites]..."

There was no war in the Caprivi when I was really young. The first trouble was in 1971 I think...SWAPO had laid mines, and the police were called in. SWAPO was in the area, and the police got them, with their dogs, guns, helicopters, right in front of our eyes...I'd show you the grave, the place where they buried those SWAPO, if I took you there today...It's just a mound at the side of the road.

Wentzel had not started school then. He began school in 1973, at the age of nine, but apparently disliked it and gave up. He returned to school in 1977, at Omega, having gone as far as Standard two:

When I went to Omega [in late 1976] I noticed that there was a better life, that there was development that worked and a good school. All my friends were going there, people soon realised that everything happened at Omega. My father let me go, and I lived with family [...] my brother was in the Defence Force. I was glad that I didn't have to live among the people outside, the people who wanted to come in, but who were kept out. The army kicked you out of the base if your family and friends didn't accept you...and if all of your family were outside the base, then you had to stay out, you could not go in [...] you had to wait for them to come looking for more soldiers.... I lived in my brother's house, and he paid my school fees...I was lucky. I got a job during the day -- fixing uniforms, washing and ironing them. It was temporary work, but it enabled me to save money. My father never entered Omega, and I saw very little of him...my mother's family [she had passed away] moved onto the base in 1978, and that was good...

Nicolaes's father was apparently a Kavango king, but this was something that Nicolaes seldom spoke about
directly. Indeed, he avoided any degree of detail when it came to his father, and refused to disclose his name. Most telling were his remarks about subsistence and the meaning of the term 'Baraquena'/'Barakwena':

Barakwena means those who live near the kings...the people who lived around the king's palace -- the king's slaves. The Kavango gave us that name....

My father used to look after everyone, share out clothes, food, things that the government gave to him as part of development projects. People worked for the Portuguese, they did contract work...some built shops and houses and government offices. The Portuguese government invested in us, they treated us well. I can remember my father telling me that the Portuguese were good, very positive and encouraging people. They tried to help us...there was no discrimination at all...

I did not see !Xu in the south. They were mostly up around Cuito Cuanavale. I first saw them in the early 1970s when they were fleeing....We were also fleeing then [...] we had no plans, we just knew that we could not stay...

Wentzel also did not meet any !Xu prior to their exodus from Angola in the early 1970s. He too spoke about past relationships between Kavango-speakers and Khwe, but with considerable vehemence. And, like Robert, Wentzel drew attention to past 'indigenous' slavery and the refugee status, historically, of many Khwe:

There was conflict ages ago -- between Khwe and Kavango....They called us tjysa, refugees...we were the refugees of the Tchimbare. There was slavery in my grandparents' grandparents' time. Even before then, at an earlier time. People called it Tchimbare-Kweri...it means war, warfare over people, slaves. We [Khwe] were slaves to blacks, to Ovambos and Kavangos...Tchimbare....We sold our own people, and some were captured; they were the labourers of blacks who moved into Angola and Namibia. They had to hunt for them, herd their animals, supply them with food. We did not fight in Kavango units [in the SADF] because of this. It is why we can never work with Kavangos....The Kavangos were always ahead of us [...] the government and army developed them more than us...they were the majority in the Caprivi, with their own radio station, most of the teachers outside Omega were Kavango, they had their [own] people in government....We [Khwe] called them gwaba...people who are different [Other]...it means sap that oozes from trees. They chased us away, enslaved us...

Nicolaas's ambiguous credentials as, at least technically, both Khwe and Kavango did not seem to inhibit
or burden him. He was, to the best of my knowledge, never
directly discriminated against or harassed because he was "gwaba." In fact, what he had to say suggested that
relationships between 'Kavango' and 'Khwe' in the Caprivi
were, certainly in the 1970s and 1980s, viewed in a
compassionate and friendly light (perhaps precisely because
of the frequent equivocality surrounding 'Kavangoness' and
'Kweness'):

I went straight over from Mbukushu, when my father was
leaving [he is still there, in Namibia]. I brought his
cattle out (there are now hundreds of them -- I was
there on leave in 1986)...but my parents had separated,
and I went to live with my mother's family [...] at
Samvura/Samboro, close to Dirico. But after four years
we needed food and grazing, and we moved south. The
Namibian people were friendly, they helped us, gave us
food, let us stay....My father prospered, and lived
like us, without difficulty until the war and the
drought...

Having 'settled' in the Caprivi, both Nicolaas and
Wentzel attended school there. Wentzel attended pre-school
at Omega, and did very well in tests, and was accepted into
primary school with relative ease. He told of how Standard
one went by quickly, then how he skipped Standard two and
moved hastily through Standard three:

Standard four was also easy, I did well, and got
involved in organising sport...I was on the sport
committee. That was in 1982, the same year that I was
a prefect [...] then in 1984 I completed Standard six,
and was again a prefect and deputy headboy...I was top
of my class....I finished school in 1985, I had then
had enough of Standard seven...and I had a financial
problem. My brother borrowed money from me -- he used
the money he owed me....[thus] I did not finish
Standard seven...

Nicolaas's experiences of schooling were somewhat
different:

I started school at Samvura in '70, and battled to pay
fees. My uncle had to sell cattle when I was in
Standard seven, so that I could finish the year. I got
Standard seven, and stopped because the school went no
further....I was sad to stop, I loved school. I had to
find work, and went to Omega in June '78. They [the
SADF] told me that they would need more soldiers in
'80. I went back to Omega in October '78, once school
was finished, and lived there for a year -- with
family....
I started basics [basic training] in March 1980...Robert and I went through training together. We were friends, and were always together. We were in the same platoon, but different sections [...] that was the only difference, he was in section two, I was in section one...

Having worked as a labourer for LTA construction (during their building of Omega base), Wentzel entered the formal military fold relatively late:

I applied to the army in 1984, but they could only take me in 1986, 19 May 1986...then a year of hard training and walking patrols north of Omega....I went to the border for the first time in 1987...and completed Standard seven through the adult education course. I also did a medic's [medical orderly] course.... [Then] I went to Windhoek, to get my Standard eight at a high school there. I wrote my [Standard eight] examinations and came back to Omega, and they made me a company medic in 1988 [...] just at the beginning of 435, Resolution 435....Then I worked as a translator for four months during the Resolution, for UNTAG. I grew up speaking a number of languages, and learnt some of them at school...Xu, Khwe, Ngangela, Luchwasi, Afrikaans, English...Kavango...

Wentzel was not very clear in explaining why he had decided to join the SADF, but he did say that he needed money urgently, and that he had also needed to remain at Omega. He told me that "I signed up because I didn't want to leave [the base], and it was what you did if you were able to...but the old people warned me: 'there is a difficult life ahead if you are a man'....Now I realise that their prediction was right." For Nicolaas:

I joined the army to protect and secure my country [Angola], not to fight [...] not because I liked to fight. It was also about bad circumstances, a shortage of money. We had very little after we left Angola, we were poor when we came across....I had to look after myself, and the military was the only opportunity to find work in the Caprivi...

I did not know about the war at first, it was just my job. Then I realised, no, I am fighting for my country [Angola], and so that my brothers, sisters and children are safe...so that they will not have to miss school, be without work...

Nicolaas was particularly apt at describing and recollecting skirmishes and firefights with SWAPO insurgents. He painstakingly outlined one incident after
another, emphasising the extent of his involvement in military campaigns and on patrols from 1981 to 1988.

Omega was a wonderful place...I enjoyed that time [period], and the base was good, better than here. The only bad thing was my injury in '83...that landmine that caused my back injury [and that blinded him in one eye]. I have still not received a thing, no compensation from them [the Defence Force]. I would have got something by now had I been a white man...we were used, we got nothing from them if we were disabled...

Wentzel was markedly less jubilant about Omega base, and stressed his unease with local politics. As to the nature of the Namibian liberation war, Wentzel felt that the involvement of the bushmen had been problematic, but that there had been beneficial aspects:

SWAPO taught us a good thing [...] they taught this community that was broken by apartheid [the division of the bushmen into !Xu and Khwe groups] a valuable thing [...] they showed us liberation, politics, that we were both right and wrong in that war. They taught us that we didn't have to be apart, that we were apart for the wrong reasons...apartheid wasn't really what we wanted....
That story of 'he is !Xu, you are Khwe' was nonsense [...] it caused so much tension and fighting. There's still that fighting...It's the same with Namibian and Angolan Khwe -- accusations, racism...apartheid. The war was unpleasant [...] I never got used to fighting, especially after my injury [shrapnel penetrated his ankle, and he had a pronounced limp at Schmidtsdrift. He was about to have surgery]...it was crazy, crazy...

One truly enjoyable aspect of Omega, according to Nicolaas, was the Prophetic Church. He was a member of the Catholic Church in 1973, and regularly attended services throughout his schooling. At Omega, however, he changed his beliefs, and accompanied Robert in joining the Zion church in 1981.

Namibian Khwes started the Prophetic Church...Wentzel was a member then, Nelson too, in 1981...but they got disillusioned I think, and later joined the Dutch Reformed Church....I am now an elder, and leader of one of the congregations -- the same as Sergeant José...

For Wentzel, on the other hand, inclusion and participation in religious institutions had been largely ambivalent. He was involved in the Catholic Church as a
school-goer (before he went to Omega), but not as a formal
member. When he moved to Omega, however, he became actively
involved in the Prophetic Church. Wentzel told me that his
inclusion in the Prophetic Church came to an abrupt end in
the early 1980s thanks to the exponential growth of a
largely 'Angolan' Khwe membership. Apparently uncomfortable
with a majority 'Angolan' membership, Wentzel (among others)
resigned from the Prophetic Church and joined the Dutch
Reformed Church. He was still a member of the Dutch
Reformed Church at Schmidtsdrift but, as he described it,
'an occasional member.'

To return to Nicolaas. The down-side of Omega,
however, was not just the mine explosion mentioned earlier,
but was what he more broadly understood to be a non­
committal and exploitative SADF:

I am dissatisfied with the military because of my
injuries, and their lack of assistance, but also
because they never respected us. If I borrow your dog,
and agree to look after it for you, and it gets bitten
by a poisonous snake and dies two or three days later,
and I don't tell you, you will be upset. You will be
even more angry if I tell you after three weeks, after
you have been looking for it, asking about it, getting
more and more worried about your dog. Our involvement
in the war was like that -- we were the owners of the
dog that got bitten by the snake...we gave loyal
service, and only years later were we told what had
happened, what it was really about....
They just kept us behind, and never told us directly
what to expect, what might happen [...] they were not
honest like the Portuguese who said 'we are leaving,
you are on your own, but South Africa will help
you'...here they never told us what we could expect,
and it is worse with the blacks [in power]...

These negative sentiments, echoing much of what Robert,
Mario, Vicky, Wentzel and a number of other interviewees had
said, were contradicted by Nicolaas's comments about the
hope he attached to white South Africans in helping the
bushmen at Schmidtsdrift:

When it comes to whites I know what they are, what they
are like...their position is always clear [...] they
are the world's safe-keepers. The Lord gave them a
command to look after the world, to clean up after the
blacks. They are always honest, cleverer than
you...unlike blacks. They do not treat us the way that
blacks treat us...they treat us as people. Baasheid
[literally boss-ness] is never over with blacks...they take both boss and king, autocracy and democracy, old and new...

Paradoxically, Nicolaas explained his decision to come to South Africa along the lines of 'baasheid', but on the part of the SADF and South African government:

I chose to live in South Africa because South Africa was the head of Namibia...the president. South Africa's president was Namibia's president, and ministers and the whole ministerial apparatus too. South Africa ran Namibia, and protected it...we fought for them, and they paid us, gave us food and shelter...

Wentzel, on the other hand, gave a number of reasons for his decision to emigrate from Namibia in 1990:

we suddenly heard that South Africa was going to withdraw...just after Resolution 435. We saw videos about conditions in Uganda, Zambia, all over Africa...yes, Komops...countries that had gone bankrupt, where politicians bought votes...hongersnood, bankrot, alles geskiet, die hele lot [famine, bankruptcy, everything shot, the whole lot], autocracies and no democracies....That's why I came here [to South Africa].

Wentzel, like most discussants, was angry with the Defence Force for not having kept its word and for reneging on housing provision for the Schmidtsdrift bushmen:

the army had no respect for us....It was like this: what does a little boy do when his father tells him, when he's young, that he has opened a bank account for him? He's happy, but when the boy is old, grown up, and he asks his father about the money, and his father replies 'what, what bank account?', what then? What can the boy do when his father asks 'when did I say that [I had invested money for you]'...what happens if the father just denies it, or says 'oh, sorry'? That was what happened with the army.

Regardless, he (like most of the leaders I interviewed) voted for the National Party in the 1994 general elections, a decision that he explained as follows:

It's the National Party that worked with our elders and leaders in Namibia...they saw [to] us, looked after us. The National Party built schools, developed us.... We also knew nothing about politics, political parties...we knew nothing about votes or about elections [...] it was outside of us, beyond our experience. I didn't want to vote at first because I didn't have a good knowledge of the politics here...I thought that it didn't matter, that it made no
difference. Actually I believe that I was right. It did not make a difference whether I voted NP or ANC [...] neither would [necessarily] help us. I did not know why I should vote, why parties might help, which ones might help. I voted National Party because I knew them....

It would be a mistake to confuse the NP with the army. The army made us promises about houses and things...the army was not the same thing as the NP. I didn't think about the National Party as the core, the nucleus, of the Defence Force. If the army was NP, as you say, then we did not know about it. We weren't stupid, we just weren't told...

Nicolaas, on the other hand, did not vote in the general elections in South Africa in 1994:

I did not vote...I wasn't here. I was on duty at 3 SAI, Kimberley....Yes, I had the opportunity to vote, but I am not a person who feels that he has to participate in an election. I am a soldier, and that means that my job is to protect the country, not to be a member or a supporter of a certain [political] party...

The most common ground shared by Wentzel and Nicolaas related to their positions as unranked members of the headquarters company, and as members of the Khwe council and the !Xu and Khwe Trust at Schmidtsdrift. Nicolaas, as already mentioned, was the deputy chairman of the Khwe council, and occupied the 'church' portfolio on this council. Wentzel was not a formal member of the council, but regularly attended council proceedings.

Nicolaas commanded far more respect from the commanding officer (within the military-institutional matrix) at Schmidtsdrift than Wentzel. Both Wentzel and Nicolaas had worked in the clinic and had left it on suspicious grounds (having either been dismissed or, more subtly, having been made to feel unwelcome). Both had secured positions as politicians in the headquarters company. Nicolaas, however, was fairly disciplinarian, and earned respect from the major and sergeant-major because of his military-like ordering, discipline, precision and control.

In terms of the Trust, Nicolaas and Wentzel occupied positions that were, theoretically, of equal status and power. Both of them were 'secondary trustees', and certainly not formal members of the Trust executive. But
the make up of 'the executive' was highly ambiguous when it
came to bushmen or Schmidtsdrift representatives.  
Sometimes, for example, Robert and Wentzel would constitute
the Khwe spokesmen and proportion of the executive, at other
times Robert and Nicolaas would fulfil this role.  Wentzel
had acquired somewhat of a reputation, at least among
commanding officers and some white trustees, as a moaning
and whining 'moral' prospector who hoped to capitalise on
people's immediate and extreme pity. Nicolaas, to the
contrary, was generally more popular, a stern, 'well-
rounded', 'level-headed', 'down-to-business-without-the-
sentiment' politician.

Wentzel, in fact, spent much time in private
conversation telling me of his frustration with Nicolaas'
recognition and preferential treatment (politically). Nicolaas,
according to Wentzel, was not as well educated
(neither was Robert for that matter), had none of his
language skills, and, a crushing blow, was not "proper
[pure] Khwe" (I develop some of these strands in later
chapters).

The detail provided above furnishes much about the
particularity of elites and their (his-)stories, yet also
suggests moments, times and places (spaces) of
complementarily. The particular (and arguably hyper-
subjective) need not have been, nor was it necessarily,
disjunctive, anomalous. Rather, individual political
histories and trajectories were replete with ambivalence.
Experiences of one individual were imbricated in informative
respects with those of another (and others further afield),
'!Xu' with 'Khwe', 'Angolan' with 'Namibian', 'military'
with 'civilian', and this overlap was debated most heatedly
in, across, and with reference to the four primary
institutional formations that I discuss in the next chapter.

Some of these equivocalities are dealt with in more
depth in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, in which the issues
of ethnicity and nationality (in the sense of national origin) are analysed. One clear equivocality that emerges from the data presented above is that surrounding the question of agency. Interviewees described an intensification in discrimination under the SADF (first in Namibia, then in South Africa). The term 'apartheid' was loosely used to describe political distinction and concurrent denigration. 'Apartheid', however, was incited in multiple ways: to describe relations between white SADF officers and/or troops and bushmen (and other non-whites), to portray relations between !Xu and Khwe, and to refer to relations within Khwe, between those who were 'Namibian' and those who were 'Angolan'. In fact, 'bushman' was used in much the same way as 'apartheid': with obscurity (alluding to a variety of cross-cutting distinctions that, by virtue of their imbrication, blurred referents) and also, synchronously, with clarity (referring to a total experience and condition, not necessarily of oppression, but as an alter, an other) (see Chapter Seven).

In other words, and as the above stories show, 'obscurity' in meaning revealed much about agency: leaders at Schmidtsdrift may have experienced apartheid, but not in the same way. Similarly, leaders at Schmidtsdrift may have been bushmen, but not in the same way. Elites were formally educated, but with frequently divergent experiences in this regard. They constituted an intelligentsia, a literati, most noticeable in their education and religious affiliations and practices, yet exhibited variety within this. Crucially, the five individuals referred to above were leaders, but clearly not on identical terms, not in the same capacity as if they had travelled equivalent personal trajectories.

Thus, to appeal to 'the leadership experience', 'the apartheid experience', 'the bushman experience', or even 'the military experience' would be ludicrous. It would elide agency, deny multiple-subjectivity that was, for example, explicitly exercised when it was decided to have two bushman councils (to abolish the mayoral system at
Schmidtsdrift) and to separate the Schmidtsdrift camp into two residential zones. Moreover, a degree of agency was exercised, although not uniformly, in joining the Portuguese army, then the SADF, and then in deciding to immigrate to South Africa in 1990.

However, it would be (and was) at once imminently sensible to evoke a commensurate, generalised 'elite experience', 'apartheid experience' or 'bushman experience' in order to demonstrate alterity, distinction and identity; in order to concede to the restraints on agency, to acknowledge structural conditions. Elites may collectively have been annoyed with the SADF and the erstwhile National Party government about some issues (such as broken promises with regard to relocating to South Africa), yet felt a degree of commitment to, and trusted, both the Defence Force and National Party. Elites at Schmidtsdrift were victims, but they were also agents -- agentive victims, victimised agents (see Sharp and Douglas 1996) -- something that, as it stands here, does little, if anything, to distinguish them from you and I.

Interestingly, the political alliance and comradery between Robert and Nicolaas, and the (sometimes) counterposed partnership between Vicky and Mario, were most strongly cemented by virtue of these duos' roles and positions in churches (and to a lesser extent in the Trust), and had little (if anything) to do with rank and the military-institutional matrix or the councils (which were generally on the wane). It seems that charismatic leadership was linked to seniority in a church, in much the same way that Max Weber describes charismatic authority as having to do with magico-religious technologies. Church leaders were, in their capacity as such, overtly charismatic, and this spilled into other realms and institutional formations. I will examine this issue in the next chapter, but it should suffice to say that religious institutions were, in crucial ways, overt sites of political distinction, 'licentious' agency, at least more obviously so than the Trust and the head-quarters company. One way in
which this was expressed was through the rhetoric of tradition and traditionality.

The 'paths' to high standing and seniority of bushman elites at Schmitdsdrift foreground the fact that "power holders included the leadership and the social formations from which leaders typically came..." (Lasswell in Bottomore 1993:6), and in which they had an active role. Although some suggestive information has been given above, I will now turn to exploring the place of various socio-political and institutional formations in shaping, and that were in turn shaped by, elites and leaders (both established and aspirant) at Schmidtsdrift base.
CHAPTER FOUR

AN INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT
AT SCHMIDTSDRIFT: FRAMEWORKS FOR ORGANISATION

political institutions

This chapter provides a brief overview of the institutional parameters of political process and leadership at Schmidtsdrift. The objective here is to show that (elite) discourse was embedded in specific, yet imbricated, socio-political institutions and technologies. I therefore run the risk of providing an abridged, laconic institutional context, but one which is, I believe, nonetheless precise. I identify and discuss four institutional formations that were central to authority and the dynamics of control at the base. These are: the military-institutional matrix; the respective councils, of which one was !Xu and the other Khwe; the 'independent' !Xu and Khwe Trust (sometimes referred to as simply 'the Trust'), and; the churches or politico-religious bodies, one of which was Dutch Reformed, and the remainder having been four subsidiary Prophetic Churches. These various bodies and forums provided at times separate institutional spaces for formal political activity, and at other times, a consolidated, composite and amalgamated local political domain.

It must be emphasised that elites at Schmidtsdrift did not continually and necessarily constitute a ruling class (in Tom Bottomore's 1993 neo-Marxist sense). Leaders were by and large materially and economically undifferentiated themselves, and were similarly indistinguishable from other soldiers of equal rank. What most strongly unified and distinguished elites across time and space was the fact that Schmidtsdrift was a context in which "there was no ruling class, but a political elite which founded its power upon
the control of administration [and] upon military force" (Bottomore 1993:31). 'Military force' is too strong, and it would be more accurate to substitute 'authority' or 'control' for 'force'. Bottomore's reference to military officers and personnel as an important leadership group is directly applicable to Schmidtsdrift where "the army provided an opportunity for an [...] elite to form" (ibid.:82,102). The military standing of the Schmidtsdrift aristocracy presented the opportunity for an "administrative monopoly" (ibid.:65) and a powerful "managerialist ideology" (ibid.:60) within which elites had limited autonomy.

If you are curious about whether or not the institutional formations at Schmidtsdrift worked in accordance with their official description you need read no further. I am not interested here in the effectiveness and proficiency of these institutional formations in attempting to achieve their stated functions and goals. The issues of whether the military-institutional matrix boosted morale or provided efficient 'village management', whether the councils were effective in disciplining and in applying punitive sanction, whether the Trust 'developed capacity' or 'fostered upliftment', and whether the churches 'converted the masses' are all incidental to my line of argument. (The overall answer is simple and uninformative anyway: they did and they did not). What fascinates me are the unsaid functions and purposes of these various formations, tasks that were, in the final analysis, no less formal, certainly no less important, than those that I was told they perform.

My concern, then, is with a 'second level' of functioning: how the four institutional formations worked for, and were worked by, elites. In relation to the former, these formations provided the scope for "making acquaintances in the higher circles of politics [the only 'circle' of politics at Schmidtsdrift] by taking a prominent part in the activities of pressure groups and advisory bodies" (ibid.:96). Much of the latter -- how elites manipulated institutional formations ('advisory bodies' and 'pressure groups') -- was addressed in the previous chapter,
and is apparent in later chapters. In Chapter Three I deliberately made an analytical distinction between individuals (as positioned, historically situated subjects). I do the same for a number of institutional formations, each with a distinctive internal regime and technology or economy of order. On this note, there was a manner of functioning in which each institutional formation was underscored by what Michel Foucault (1979) terms "dividing practices," whereby subjects were objectified by internal division (intra-subjective) and division from, and with reference to others (inter-subjective). The personal identity of leaders was incumbent upon the dialogic of 'dividing practices'.

However, in the previous chapter I disaggregated subjects despite the fact that their 'subjectivities' were often difficult to distinguish. Here I do the same for various institutional formations -- I am curious about the subjectivities of institutions as well as institutionalised subjects; structured agency and agentive structure. To return to Foucault (1979), 'individualisation techniques' ('dividing practices') converged on, and were indeed concurrent with 'totalisation procedures'.

It is, therefore, in some respects extremely problematic to regard the four institutional formations mentioned above as having been necessarily distinct, isolated, and unitary political forums. When and where they were this, it was by design (to be explained and not assumed), the socio-political particularities of certain situations leading to the focussing on one forum to the exclusion of others (this point is foregrounded in Chapters Five and Six).

Moreover, not all institutional formations had equivalent authority and political leverage or importance. The overarching constraints on the genesis and morphology of political process were delineated by the army, and more recently, by the Trust, in their dialogic relationship with the leadership cabal and one another. The military-institutional matrix and the Trust were integral political domains.
The critical role played by the military-institutional matrix, and to a lesser extent, the councils and churches at Schmidtsdrift, pointed up the saturation of military intervention and authority at the base. The influence of the military upon political process has been profound throughout the bushmen's twenty year association with the South African Army (see Gordon 1992). But two points need to be said in qualification. First, the position of the military, although generally hegemonic, was not one of over-determinancy and control in all aspects and instances of individual's (and, for that matter groups') lives. Secondly, overbearing military power did not necessarily imply that all political process and political formations had remained unchanged, unidimensional and monolithic. The interrelationships between the army, bushman leaders, and lately the Trust, were complex and polymorphous, 'sullied' by the veritable messiness of negotiation and exchange. Transformations in the national Defence Force meant a variety of concomitant transformations in politics and politicking at the base. In fact, and as I suggest below, the military's involvement with bushmen has been anything but in terms of "the classic characteristics of a total institution" (Gordon 1992:186).

In a similar vein to distinguishing between four institutional formations for analytical purposes, I wish to distinguish between two valencies of elites. This arbitrary bifurcation is generational -- a distinction between 'elders' and 'novitiates'. There had been a general decline in the political importance of the former, with incremental power gains in the case of the latter, but this was not uniformly felt. The incipient demise of elders, however, was connected to the relatively insignificant part they played in daily 'local' or camp politics, and it is for this reason that I exclude them, for the most part, from discussion and analysis here (although this is not the case in Chapter Six). The emphasis here, as throughout the dissertation, is on the politicians who made a difference. These elites were, for the most part, novitiates.
The four institutional formations discussed below offered a range of sometimes different, sometimes complimentary, and at times even contradictory subject positions for bushman leaders. The questioning of a leader's authority in one body was usually accompanied by his unrelenting and continued authority in another. In this sense the four institutional formations that are visited below were central to politics because of their commutative propensities. Only occasionally would disgrace in one forum lead to sequestration in and across others. Furthermore, the legitimacy conferred upon a leader in one space often led to his unquestioned legitimacy in a different (but not entirely separate) space and forum.

In addition, there was, differentially, a degree of influence that leaders and elites could exert on institutional formations; they had helped, in varying degrees, to shape these formations into what they were. This is a crucial point, tied to the idiosyncrasies of the military and some military personnel who either had been or were associated with the Schmidtsdrift bushmen.

It would be erroneous to argue not only that the military was a unitary entity that set out to extract, at the lowest possible cost to itself, the compliance of bushmen, but that the commanding officers that had accompanied the bushmen were themselves pawns, insensitive and inconsiderate individuals who simply toed 'the (National) party line' without concern for the people in their command. Again (multiple-)subjectivities factor into local politics: the military had, on a number of occasions, consulted and respected bushmen elites, and there can be little doubt that commanding officers have paid attention to the requests and demands of these elites. At risk of over-simplification, the Defence Force was itself divided: there were, and have been, those officers who 'othered' bushmen (constructed them as different but largely arbitrarily so),
those who 'Othered' bushmen (constructed them as diverse and fundamentally distinct), and those, usually fairly close to the bushmen due to daily interaction, who tended to both 'other' and 'Other' on a situational basis.

A few examples should suffice, each of which illustrates that the army and military officers were prepared to listen to and assist (some) bushmen on their own terms, but to a point -- within the limits of a constraining paternalism. The pressure, in the mid-1970s, placed on top-ranking army officers to promise Angolan bushmen recruited into (and directly affiliated to) the SADF the option of relocating to South Africa if and when the SADF withdrew from Namibia was one such case (Delville Linford, personal communication, April 1995). In addition, there is much to suggest that the division of the bushmen into two camps, first at Omega base, and then at Schmidtsdrift, was done with an ear to leaders' requests (Scholtz van Wyk, personal communication, April 1995; see Marshall and Ritchie 1984 for information that suggests that something similar happened in Bushmanland in relation to the separation of !Xu and Ju-/wasi). Similarly, the implementation of the bushman council (and later councils and a mayoral system), was completed with a degree of consultation and participation. In fact, the very idea of councils would seem to suggest a felt need not to simply impose order and discipline upon bushmen. Historically, the SADF was, by and large (certainly on the 'microlevel'), sincere and committed in its efforts to establish effective 'development' projects in the Caprivi and Bushmanland. Many commanding officers set about implementing these projects without the intention to 'mystify', in a broader process of ideological alienation that bushmen in the army are alleged to have undergone (see Gordon 1992; Lee and Hurlich 1982). The inception of churches at Omega, the granting of permission that Zionism not only be practiced and tolerated, but endorsed and supported, are issues that indicate that elites had considerable say.
The nub of the issue, however, is that leaders influenced and moulded institutional formations within certain bounds of possibility. The SADF was anything but a democratic institution and it possessed something of a Zeitgeist that delineated a genealogy of power relations broadly characteristic of European colonial and imperial processes. There was, in agreement with Gordon (1986, 1992), an element of 'mystification' and ideological persuasion that inhered in army beneficence and concern for bushmen. But it becomes difficult to explain the existence of a supposed edifice of myths, a totalising labyrinth of mystification that implies that praetorianised bushmen were absolutely passive, indifferent, and powerless in the face of the SADF. Why would an all-powerful military need to construct delusional myths if it had complete military, political, and social control?

To this extent, institutional formations provided anything but a laissez-faire potentiality for leaders. Elites understood the councils, for example, as furnishing political opportunity 'locally' and the chance for 'upward mobility', but so too did they realise that the councils were far from autonomous and innocent of Defence Force imperatives. I indicate below how leaders had played up and capitalised on the intrusion of the military into most socio-political domains. The four institutional formations discussed here did undoubtedly offer the powerful and ambitious specific clear-cut socio-political positions, but so too were the powerful, at specific times and in certain places, able to impress upon institutions and shape normative, prescriptive environments.

The military-institutional matrix

The array of army structures and military hierarchies among the bushmen was complex and convoluted, and I will provide a rendition of details in this regard, emphasising the role of various military and service companies and, most important, the part played by rank in structuring social
relationships (especially relationships among leaders) at Schmidtsdrift. There were approximately five hundred bushmen employed as soldiers at Schmidtsdrift, out of which one hundred were members of the service or head-quarters company (Trust survey, March 1994).

There were, historically, numerous and recurrent transitions in military structures from the bushmen's inclusion in the SADF in 1974 onwards. Companies changed in number, initially due to the arrival of increasing numbers of bushmen at Omega base in the Caprivi and because of the establishment of a second 'Bushman Battalion' in Bushmanland in 1978; companies changed in content as a result of the 'turnover' of personnel; and they changed in form with the formation of various operational and non-operational units (in the case of the former, the reconnaissance wing at Omega, and in the case of the latter, with the burgeoning service company -- the head-quarters company). These changes also impacted on command structures and military functions.

Throughout these shifts, and corresponding transitions in the dialogue between agents (individual bushmen) and structures, however, the Defence Force recognised and awarded rank to bushman soldiers, but only to the level of staff-sergeant (of which there has only been one -- Mario, referred to in the previous chapter and at various other points in the dissertation). The number of bushmen with the rank of sergeant was consistently small and stable from the 1980s to the mid-1990s. The vast majority of bushmen soldiers with rank at Schmidtsdrift were corporals and lance-corporals.

In other words, historically, bushmen leaders in the military have had limited power over other bushmen. There was an effective 'top-end' to their military authority, and in fact very few promotions had occurred since their arrival in South Africa. Where people had obtained higher rank, or rank per sé, was in the three operational companies (deployed away from Schmidtsdrift), and the head-quarters company at Schmidtsdrift had become something of a
backwater, where no one had received formal promotion within this unit while in South Africa. Bushmen soldiers had not only limited authority 'at home' (at Schmidtsdrift base), but essentially no authority over non-bushmen in the military in this context. Thus, they had ultimately systematically abided by white commanding officers who had been of considerably higher rank.

Herein lies a crucial point. Military hierarchy and official chains of command had circumscribed, to a large extent, patterns of action and interaction among bushman soldiers and leaders, and leaders and followers. Some individuals have had legitimate recourse to certain types of activity and the expression of authority without having been questioned or explicitly challenged by other bushman soldiers. Sergeants, and especially the solitary staff-sergeant, have possessed the exclusive right among the bushmen to influence the decision making and conduct of all bushman soldiers when they were on duty. They could not, however, act at leisure, as they too were open to receiving orders from higher ranking (but not bushman) army personnel.

Below sergeants there were a number of corporals and lance-corporals, and then soldiers without rank. However, the etiquette prescribed by this hierarchy was itself inconsistently and unequally experienced at Schmidtsdrift. The head-quarters company -- concerned first and foremost with the efficient running and maintenance of the base (see figure 2.) -- provided a vastly different array of possibilities and relationships than the three operational companies that were posted, on a rotational basis, to 3 SAI. Similarly, the military clinic at Schmidtsdrift was, in important respects, different from both operational companies and the head-quarters company.

The clinic at the base was significant in that bushman corporals occupied positions of considerable power relative to all other bushmen working in, or seeking assistance from, the clinic. Much of this power was drawn from the collapse -- embodied in the clinic as a site for the provision of essential public services -- of the dualist (if not binary)
classification of institutions as either military or civilian. This collapse also meant that medical orderlies without rank commanded a degree of authority on the basis of the services they provided. The dislodging of the 'civilian/military' divide was most visibly delineated at the interface not just between political institutions, but also between members of the constituencies which were served by these institutions. Thus, senior medical orderlies, such as Vicky (see previous chapter), were respected not only because of their invaluable medical assistance and expertise, but also because of their rank (usually as corporals), and due to the fact that they were often clergy and/or members of political bodies like the Trust and the camp councils.

Figure 2. Schmidtsdrift military village management structure and organisation.
The head-quarters company at Schmidtsdrift, despite its hierarchical nature, was relatively lax, and there was a distinct lack of 'military politiking' among its members. There was no visible competition and contestation within the company and the clinic surrounding the issue of rank. Most of the time people serving in this company readily exchanged opinions, communicated ideas, and freely interacted, regardless of rank. Rank appeared to be little other than a pretense that was only 'claimed' at the morning village-management meetings, the morning parades and roll-call, and during meetings convened and attended by the commanding officer and/or his second in command (who, like the commanding officer, was not bushman).

This, I think, was largely the outcome of decreased official military involvement and concern in relation to Schmidtsdrift, and the accompanying relegation of soldiers posted and serving there (in the headquarters company and clinic) to the position of redundancy; they were, in the military's eyes, 'soldiers' not soldiers (Tai Theron, personal communication, March 1995). Schmidtsdrift, although a military base, was essentially a residential locale for bushmen, and very few 'typical' military activities took place there; there was no training of soldiers, there were no army maneuvers, and firearms were absent. Indeed, uniforms, military vehicles, and army procedures and protocol seemed largely out of place. The role of the Defence Force at the base was largely one of mentor, and military structures therefore tended to be relatively informal and 'loose'.

Soldiers from Schmidtsdrift who were trained at and deployed from 3 SAI, on the other hand, experienced a considerably 'tighter' and more rigid army apparatus. Discussions with members of the operational companies revealed highly constrained and intense sets of military relationships among bushmen of different status within these companies. Due largely to their recurrent and frequently protracted absence from Schmidtsdrift, and their more instrumental function in the military, the effect and level
of involvement of the members of the operational companies (including those with rank) upon 'local' (camp) politics was minimal, if not non-existent, including their having had little or no impact on military command structures at Schmidtsdrift.

What I have illustrated is that the military-institutional matrix was, and had been prior to 1990, both disjunctive (or rather discontinuous) and conjunctive in terms of the experiences of bushman elites involved with the Defence Force. At the risk of repetition, it would be incorrect to represent the Defence Force and military institutions as having been monolithic entities, single and unequivocal 'political systems' with predeterminable outcomes or consequences. For example, someone with rank and in the head-quarters company was not automatically or necessarily a leader. But there were no elites outside the headquarters company and clinic.

In addition, the army had not viewed all bushmen associated with it in the same light. Here the peculiarities of the Schmidtsdrift head-quarters company and the clinic were most informative. Elites (and aspirant leaders) at Schmidtsdrift had very little to gain by committing themselves to active service in operational companies, as had been the case historically. The head-quarters company was the only company that had been functionally consistent since its inception in the early 1970s. Unlike the service company, the operational companies were never a locus of internal politics, and had experienced what interviewees described as a disconcerting and damaging shift when their function changed from that of fighting a war to "looking for cattle and illegal immigrants on the Botswana border."

The head-quarters company was the local political forum that drew considerable power from its military sanction (with the clinic as an adjunct in this respect); to be a politician meant being a member of the head-quarters company or employed in the clinic. Both the head-quarters company and the clinic were, among the upper-echelons at
Schmidtsdrift, pregnant with political possibility and potential -- that could sometimes be forecast and that was, at other times, completely unpredictable. In these instances, there was a small coterie of men who controlled a large number of bushman soldiers, military personnel, and 'civilians'; because of their association with the clinic and/or the head-quarters company, leaders were answerable to the 'military' and beholden to the 'civilian' -- they occupied positions of 'military' authority and, at the same time, 'civil' authority (both with an extremely parochial inflection). They were military-civilian heroes, role-models, hedonists, haranguers.

But, as suggested, this aristocratic cabal was also strongly differentiated, it consisted, after all, of distinct subjects and subjectivities, and its members were limited in the initiative that they could exercise within and without the military (see Chapter Three). This brings me on to the second institutional formation that existed at Schmidtsdrift.

the bushman councils

There were two bushman councils at Schmidtsdrift base: a Khwe council and a !Xu council (some finer details pertaining to these ethnic referents are discussed in the next chapter). At risk of over-simplification, I emphasise points of similarity and aspects of complementarity evinced by the bushman councils. Both councils had a dejure membership of between five and eight individuals, with defacto membership and attendance at council proceedings varying widely.

Like the Lekgota of the Kalahari that Kuper (1970, 1971) describes, these bodies were conciliatory politico-judicial entities that fulfilled predominantly a policing role. The Schmidtsdrift councils usually concentrated their efforts, sometimes separately, sometimes collectively, on 'civil' conflict resolution. As such, the bushman councils were a sort of 'people's court' that functioned to adjudicate
conflict and enforce law and order outside of the aegis of
the Military Police and the South African Police.

But, as was the case with the clinic and the head­
quartermiers company, the political processes surrounding the
councils illustrated that the distinction between 'military'
and 'civilian' was especially vague and nebulous (as was the
case historically). The inter-connectedness of 'civilian'
and 'military' was strongly dialogical, differing, for
example, from Kuper's fairly rigid structural and
dialectical differentiation of 'internal' and 'external'
political forces that occasionally coalesce around mutual
'inputs' and 'outputs' in Kgalagari politics (Kuper
process is evident at the beginning and/or at the end of a
politics, thus ruling out broader process present before,
throughout, and after a particular political issue is
addressed within political praxis.

There had been one bushman council at Omega base in the
early 1970s (see Uys 1993:23). This council was deemed
necessary in order to allow praetorianised bushmen to
express their grievances and discuss the maintenance of
order within the camp in an 'informal' setting (outside of
the logocentric canalisation of office and rank. Delville
Linford, personal communication, April 1995).

Similar to Schmidtsdrift, Omega base had a small
contingent of soldiers and a vastly disproportionate number
of 'civilian' dependents. The military, or perhaps more
accurately, the commanding officer, decided to "sensitively
and democratically" regulate and "normalise" this "civilian
element" (Delville Linford, personal communication, April
1995). The approach that seemed most likely to succeed was
'self-policing', permitting the army the (illusionary)
comfort of distanciation in much the same way that Foucault
(1979) describes the role and functioning of the panopticon
and surveillance in the rise (and fall) of modern
institutions of incarceration. The army reserved the right,
both at Omega and at Schmidtsdrift, to veto and modify
council decisions, and intervened by tacitly influencing
councilors' decisions, and not by overtly circumventing or directly confronting them during council meetings (there is a resonance here, of course, with the creation of traditional leaders and the imposition of local political mechanisms -- some, but not all -- in 'homelands' under apartheid).

The council at Omega had authority, albeit indirectly, over a number of bushmen outside of, but attached to the base. As Gordon (1992:186) points out, "Omega housed half the estimated population of the western Caprivi...and most of the rest lived in a squatter camp immediately outside the army camp." This is a half-truth; large contingents of bushmen were housed fairly far from Omega, at 'Fort Doppies', Bagani, Babwata and Matjiko in the Caprivi. These residential locales were essentially military-civilian outposts, places where agricultural and farming projects were conducted, and where those who were either never recruited or retired from active service (together with kin) were sent to live (see Uys 1993). There was, I believe an element of 'indirect rule' implicit in this policy. The military extended its web of control and surveillance by posting veteran soldiers and councilors to concentrations of bushmen outside of Omega.

Because the entire Caprivi region was a military zone, much of the policing was a military issue, as was especially the case among bushmen from or directly associated with Omega. Unlike Kavangoland (with its Kavango inhabitants and its own 'ethnic' unit -- 34 Battalion), a 'homeland' with local structures of authority and control (nonetheless under the yoke of the army), bushmen in Caprivi had no 'homeland', and were thus an ethnic anomaly in the face of military-apartheid policies and practices. Caprivi bushmen were without 'homeland' infrastructure, but had extensive networks of military policing and protocol to contend and interact with -- retired bushmen soldiers remained in Defence Force employ, and were assigned the task of keeping an eye open for cross-border incursions by SWAPO cadres.
Bushmanland, on the other hand, was marked by a totally different form of local policing and authority. Given that there was a multitude of scattered bases, all within a 'homeland', no bushmen councils were established. 'Homeland' government was used as a locus of 'civilian' power, and conventional policing (occasionally with direct military assistance and intervention) (see Stephen 1982). Leadership structures, institutional formations, opportunities and practices were therefore very different to those at Omega. Despite the fact that there were no bushman authoritative arrangements that resembled those at Omega, and that the 'homeland' system served as a mechanism by which 'civilian' leadership was negotiated, contested and formulated, the military-institutional matrix was far-reaching in effect (again the echo with apartheid 'homelands' and forms of 'indirect rule' is important to observe. See Marshall and Ritchie 1984; Stephen 1982).

The technique of attempted military detachment evidenced at both Omega and in Bushmanland (by way of fostering 'civilian rule') proved resilient, even when, shortly after the resettlement of bushmen to South Africa in 1990, the bushman council was momentarily replaced by a mayoral system. Within a few months of the erection of the tent camp at Schmidtsdrift, the commanding officer at that time decided to form a local 'community government' that consisted of a mayor and a small group of deputies (most of whom were drawn from the past council). This was a political body that, at least theoretically, collectively represented the entire camp (the inspiration for this form of local government was derived from the experiences of the commanding officer who had previously served in Bushmanland, and who was familiar with the systems of 'civilian', 'homeland' government practiced there). But, by late 1992 the mayoral system had been scrapped amidst accusations of corruption, funds having been squandered, and when conflict arose about the body's very representivity (Scholtz van Wyk, personal communication, April 1995; see the previous chapter).
Thus the army reverted, with councilors intact, to the idea of a bushman council. This time, however, two councils were established: one !Xu and the other Khwe (some reasons for this division are suggested in Chapter Five). The Defence Force regarded the councils at Schmidtsdrift to be 'civilian' disciplinary bodies but, as was the case at Omega, the military was not only crucial in initiating the idea of councils, but also had a hand in the selection of members and reserved the right to intervene in, change, and overturn council decisions. As had been the case historically, the commanding officer at Schmidtsdrift had final say in council decisions -- dismissing, compromising, amending, or endorsing them. Therefore, although vaunted as 'civilian bodies' -- what Waldman (1995:12ff) refers to as "community organizations" -- the councils were far from autonomous and independent institutions (it is vital to note that Waldman 1995 also mentions that the vast majority of council members were soldiers, and that each council had a woman member, whose presence, it is rightly suggested, was merely a token gesture).

The election and appointment of councilors was largely (and formally) a military matter, but given the clouded 'military/civilian' divide, appointments were usually met with a high degree of popular support. I would add, though, that the status of councilors, much like that of the headmen Kuper (1970) refers to and the Tshidi chiefs that Comaroff (1978) discusses, was "neither strictly ascribed or achieved, but rather reflected individual manipulation of conventionally limited possibilities" (Kuper 1970:15-16).

Where the Schmidtsdrift councils and politico-institutional arrangements strongly diverged from these studies of local politics, however, was in the centralised (military) positing and imposing of certain leadership conventions (this is a problematic, and not simply a point of differentiation; Kuper 1970,1971, to a lesser extent, and Comaroff 1978, more obviously, essentially ignore colonialisms and imperial interventions). It was primarily because of the prolonged and prestigious military history
that councilors were deemed appropriate by commanding officers and the general populace (most councilors were men with rank, hardened veterans, trustees, and senior members of churches).

It is important to mention that the councils were internally differentiated in a number of respects. In the introduction to this chapter I mentioned that I was first and foremost interested in novitiates, relatively youthful elites. These leaders were the key decision-makers on the councils, but the Khwe council in particular had a regular and powerful elder in attendance. He was deemed to be the traditional Khwe leader at the base, and he shared the 'tradition' portfolio on the Khwe council. The idiom of traditionality was invoked by Khwe elites in specific factional exchanges about national origins and experiences of displacement (see Chapter Six). Indeed, the 'tradition' and 'culture' portfolio was shared between two 'Angolan' Khwe elites -- one a novitiate, the other an elder. 'Namibian' Khwe situationally expressed their dissatisfaction with this state of affairs. There was, in other words, an instrumental reason for maintaining the Khwe council.

Importantly, there was no comparable factional tension among members of the !Xu council. There was no politics of tradition among !Xu elites. There was, in fact, a widespread air of indifference and apathy. The !Xu council was a disorganised body that was staffed by novitiates alone. I think that this can be explained, in part, through the ascribed and achieved autocratic status of Mario (and, to a lesser extent, his cohort Vicky). The Khwe council (like the exclusively Khwe Prophetic Church at Schmidtsdrift) was, by comparison, without an overriding strong individual personality, and was a highly organised and efficient body that, I was told, differed from the !Xu council in that it sought negotiated settlements to transgressions within the base. But this factor, together with the ordered structure of the council into a number of portfolios, the invoking of tradition, and the important
role still played by elders, pointed to a body that was very much political, contested, competitive. The Khwe council was, situationally, about 'ascribed' (inherited) continuity. The !Xu council, however, appeared to be anything but political, with elders marginalised, no formal structure, no clarity of purpose and function, no place for tradition. It was generally about what people described as achieved or acquired continuity, not the contiguity of tradition. The !Xu council was, to put it bluntly, anti-political. Thus it was that the bushman councils in particular highlighted, quite significantly, the heterologous dialogue between leaders and institutional formations.

Generally speaking, then, the authority of elders who were members of the councils had been, and was consistently being undermined by young aspirant leaders (such as Mario and Robert), and their weight was recurrently challenged by a variety of political coalitions. Yet, as Kuper (1970:60) puts it: "the captains and the kings [read sergeants] had not departed." In fact, I would go so far as to say that the councils, most notably the !Xu council, were in decline at Schmidtsdrift in late 1994, and that the general demise of elders reflected this. This was largely because local politico-judiciary functions were becoming redundant in a context of a down-scaling and 'rationalising' military. Due process was the prerogative of the police force stationed at the nearby town of Douglas. In addition, the Trust assumed a highly significant political role that absorbed much of the energy and attention of novitiate elites (who were not only invariably councilors, but who constituted the numerical majority on the councils). The Defence Force no longer required the ideals of cooperation and control that it previously sought to enforce when it came to bushmen associated with it -- 'indirect rule' in a post-war, 'new South Africa' context was something of a misnomer.

Why then were the councils maintained, and why was the Khwe council approached sternly and with a degree of commitment? I think that their existence (certainly that of the Khwe council) was socially and politically essential (in
terms of 'internal' or 'microlevel' politics): elites bolstered their power and were more obviously representative as councilors; as already mentioned, politico-historical continuity and the idiom of traditionality, powerfully invoked in the Khwe council (with its 'tradition' portfolio) were spokes in the wheel of local politics (see Chapter Six).

The Trust was, in a sense, a political distraction and certainly a more powerful political forum, but predominantly on the level of 'external' political engagement. The Trust was not overly concerned with local judicio-political issues, and for this reason, councils continued to be viable as far as the army and some bushmen were concerned. However, 'external' and 'internal' matters overlapped in the Trust (and to some extent in the military) where it simply benefited the Trust (and to a lesser, decreasing degree, the Defence Force) to have the option of appealing to 'local authority', the political expediency of supposed 'bushman self-rule', in order to claim 'representivity' and participatory process. Councilors were, after all, expected to keep the majority of bushmen happy. It was especially they who provided a degree of political continuity and consistency, who "symbolised the unity of the community" (Kuper 1970:77,179). Their frequent interaction, fairly extensively in the head-quarters company and as trustees, embodied 'an all-encompassing Schmidtsdrift community'. This brings me on to the !Xu and Khwe Trust.

the !Xu and Khwe Trust

The !Xu and Khwe Trust that was established in November 1993 at the request of the Defence Force. The Trust was the domain of novitiate leaders and politicians. Initially thirty bushman members were elected to serve as trustees, out of which ten were chosen as formal Trust members who served alongside ten 'outsiders' or non-bushman members. Thus, twenty trustees signed the Trust's charter, and constituted, sporadically, the Trust executive committee.
The Trust's mission statement was "to promote the interests of the !Xu and Khwe towards a more meaningful future."
Apart from those explicit in the mission, the aims and objectives of the Trust were, loosely:

* to lead the !Xu Khwe to independent decision making on among others: the preservation of their identity [and] their residence in the Republic of South Africa or elsewhere, and accordingly their citizenship;
* to increase the quality of life of the !Xu and Khwe by means of balanced social, spiritual and economic welfare;
* to ensure the financial independence of the !Xu and Khwe, and;
* to guide the !Xu and Khwe in their response to social change (!Xu and Khwe Trust, Chairman's Report, November 1994; McKensie 1996:31).

Increasing army 'rationalisation' and cut backs during the interregnum in South Africa resulted in the Defence Force attempting to radically curtail its role as sole patron of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen. The Trust was thus formed as an army initiative with the express purpose of assuming the responsibilities previously carried out by the military. The twenty official trustees consisted of a large 'civilian' component (predominantly white middle-class) together with elites from among the bushmen (usually with military rank), and a high ranking Defence Force element from Northern Cape Command, Kimberley (representatives who were commissioned officers).

Not all of bushman elites were trustees, however, but the bushman members of the Trust's executive committee were generally councilors, non-commissioned officers, and church leaders (two of the bushman members of the Trust were women -- one Khwe, the other !Xu -- who were also the token appointments to the councils that I mentioned earlier. Their appointment onto the Trust was yet again a perfunctory gesture).

The process whereby people had been elected onto the Trust was frequently problematised by Khwe leaders (some of whom were trustees). Khwe elites explained how, when the Trust was formed and when decisions were taken as to who would attend Trust functions and meetings (such as the two excursions to the United Nations affiliated IWGIA in 1994),
politicking took the form of rallying around the distinction between 'Angolan' and 'Namibian' Khwe (see Chapter Six). There was no politic akin to this surrounding the election of !Xu representatives, trustees, and Trust executive members. In fact, many !Xu (including elites) were indifferent when asked about the functioning and effectiveness of the Trust. They were pleased that they had representation in the shape of Mario and Vicky, but were not sure about, nor particularly interested in, the outcome of Trust activities. As was the case with the anti-politics of the !Xu council and the non-issue of !Xu traditional leadership, !Xu trustees appeared to have been chosen with nominal opposition and contention. The Trust (like the !Xu council) was, in this case, not only non-political but, I believe, anti-political.

The autonomy of the ('independent') Trust was a hotly contested and disputed matter. Despite the emphasis on exclusivity ("them," "their," "independence") in the mission statement and stated objectives of the Trust, the imprecise boundary between military and Trust domains was the site of heated exchanges in numerous village management meetings and Trust executive meetings during which the 'ownership' and control of resources came under the spotlight (such as tents and 'military' property and land). Furthermore, the very fact that the army pushed for the inception of the Trust, together with a powerful military presence in Trust membership, highlighted the arbitrariness of the 'military/non-military' distinction when applied to this forum. Simply put, and similar to the councils, the Trust was anything but independent. But unlike the councils, the Trust proclaimed absolute autonomy.

The blurring of the distinction between Trust work and military work allowed a high degree of political maneuvering by bushman politicians. To be a trustee meant to be automatically respected by Northern Cape Command top-brass, by the commanding officer at Schmidtsdrift, by councilors in the Khwe and !Xu councils, and by members of church bodies and congregations of which trustees at Schmidtsdrift were a
part. Although people were elected onto the Trust, it was clear that people who were already established leaders, already occupying consolidated positions of authority, constituted the vast majority of those voted in.

It is also beyond doubt that the principle source of legitimacy for trustees was, quite ironically, the army, with its structural hierarchy (military-institution matrix) and with its 'conceived' (and also endorsed) councils. Given the extent of dependence of bushmen (military-civilian) upon the military (and the Trust too, for that matter), largely 'other-initiated' political institutions and formations were not without popular support. To speak of there having been democratic process at Schmidtsdrift (representative or direct), or in terms of the existence of critical mass and broad participation in politics, would be to overstate the case, and in fact, to miss the point. The position of elites in and across the various institutional formations discussed in this chapter generally meant guaranteed representivity (Khwe factionalism, when and where it rarely emerged, was the only exception to this during my stay in 'the field'; see Chapter Six).

Living in the conditions that bushmen at Schmidtsdrift were enduring meant that any efforts on the part of elites to secure resources were bound to be met with a degree of widespread support. Democracy works best where people can choose, and the people who could choose at Schmidtsdrift were elites and not the bulk of the bushmen resident there. Democratic process existed, in one sense, among leaders only, within the confines of political process confined to the aristocracy.

**politico-religious formations**

The political proximity of the councils to the military, and the length of time that the councils were in existence, were matched by the history of officially sanctioned (by this I mean recognised by the Defence Force)
religious formations among the Schmidtsdrift bushmen (the most pronounced being the Dutch Reformed Church). The churches at Schmidtsdrift therefore supplemented political process in crucial respects; they indirectly extended and strengthened civilian-military control and authority, and they did so most directly within and across the coterie of novitiate elites.

The Head Mountain Apostolic Church had a membership of one hundred and seventy people, unevenly distributed among four subsidiary churches at the time of fieldwork. The Dutch Reformed Church at Schmidtsdrift had a membership of close to eight hundred people (Chaplain Kotze, SANDF report, January 1995).

The Dutch Reformed Church was officially present at Omega from 1977 onwards. Many of the bushmen from Angola, and some from Namibia, were Christians prior to entering the SADF. A number of !Xu from the Serpa Pinto region had been in direct contact with Catholic missionary societies in Angola, where some had even attended mission schools (see Chapter Three). The SADF decided, in 1977, to accommodate Christian bushmen, and incorporated those who were willing into the Dutch Reformed Church that was established at Omega base. By the late 1970s, however, Zionism commanded a strong Kavango and Khwe following in and around south-eastern Angola, north-eastern Namibia (the Caprivi Strip), north-western Botswana, and south-western Zambia. Migrant labourers returning to the Caprivi region after completing contracts on the gold mines on the reef (in South Africa), brought Zionism, among other things, with them.

The Head Mountain Apostolic Church was present at Omega from early on, and existed, for most of the Namibian liberation war, alongside the Dutch Reformed Church at the base. But this was a skewed political relationship. The Prophetic Church was powerful and popular outside of Omega, and the army decided not to invest in, or be concerned with, the religious persuasions of bushmen in the Caprivi beyond the confines of the base. Nor was the army overly
interested in the Prophetic Church within Omega. Zionism was permitted inside the base, but received nothing resembling the extensive support (predominantly logistical) that the military provided for the Dutch Reformed Church.

It is tempting here to take up Bourdieu's (1977) call for an extensive analysis of the "evangelical imagination," but it would be incorrect to suggest that the SADF exhibited a single-mindedness about Christianisation. The military did not have a definitive proselytising mission, and the SADF, perhaps surprisingly, displayed considerable tolerance when it came to religious beliefs. The Defence Force assistance of the Dutch Reformed Church, both at Omega and in Bushmanland, had persisted through to Schmidtsdrift, and it was the Dutch Reformed Church that received the bulk of support -- in terms of 'expertise' and instruction, financial support, and technical assistance.

Moreover, military congregations, army religiosity, and school assemblies at Schmidtsdrift were all informed by Dutch Reformed ideology. In fact, morning parades were accompanied with a prayer by the local Dutch Reformed minister (Mario), who also opened and closed Trust meetings with a prayer. The Zion church was formally recognised, and received some assistance from the Defence Force (such as canvas to build and demarcate church areas -- what people referred to as "kraals" -- and marriage counselling for its members. Interestingly, this counselling took place at the Dutch Reformed Church office and under the auspices of the white Dutch Reformed minister from 3 SAI, Kimberley). Yet the Zion church remained exterior to the official ambit of religious practices and procedures.

The oblique and incongruous positions of the churches was depicted in the rhetoric surrounding marriage. Marriage among members of the Head Mountain Apostolic Church was described as traditional, whereas marriage among Dutch Reformed church-goers was seen to be not only modern, but also Christian. As was the case with the Khwe council, the Prophetic Church, with its exclusively Khwe membership, was
the site of the mobilisation of tradition, the enunciative space of appeals to traditionality. The Dutch Reformed Church, on the other hand, was the site of anti-tradition, of "the modern" and "Christian," not (as discussants emphasised), of "the traditional" and "pagan." The reasons for this state of affairs were difficult to ascertain, but discourse around tradition was tied to the politics of cultural distinction: ethnicity, factionalism and nationality (see Chapters Five and Six).

What is most important though is that it was the leaders and senior members of these churches, the people with religiously sanctioned ('sacred') authority who were also soldiers with rank, members of the councils, and trustees (often senior or executive members of the Trust) -- those with 'secular' authority. Political process thus frequently incorporated the collapse of the distinction of authority and power into 'secular' and 'sacred' domains.

Thus, religious institutions, the various churches that existed at Schmidtsdrift (and historically), pointed up past heterogeneity and differentiation along a number of axes. This plurality provided opportunities for political expression and engagement; leaders incorporated, assimilated, accepted, appropriated, and manipulated the occasions that religious institutions furnished for reasons of political expediency. Elites were guaranteed a degree of popular consent in political practice through the support of their congregations. Military authority and Trust imperatives were also communicated, and usually commended through dissemination into congregations. Religious institutions were therefore fecundary, a site of latent and active promise as far as local politics was concerned (Nicholas Thomas 1994 provides a similar argument about colonial missionisation as a space not just offering 'collaboration' and 'resistance' -- something of a moribund dualism -- but proffering agency, an elaborate multiplicity of subject positions for leaders or 'local' aristocrats; see also Landau 1995).
politics of institutions

The four institutional formations, environments and technologies outlined above not only provided for a manifold and 'disheveled' politics at Schmidtsdrift, but also facilitated a field of political strategies and tactics, and a range of political positioning for, and on behalf of elites. Generally, however, leaders at Schmidtsdrift led, at least ideally, by having been able to assert authority and exercise power in and across a number of contexts -- contexts in which they, or their political predecessors, had had a part in fashioning and manipulating. Yet these elites were also led in each of these formations. It should thus be clear that the Defence Force was not an agent of interment, and that it would therefore be incorrect to conclude (following Foucault 1979) that the military constituted a "complete" and "austere" institution with absolute techniques of control and domination.

I want to return to the issue of representivity, of the extent to which elites, with their institutional backing, acted consensually. The distinction that I made at the beginning of this chapter regarding the function of institutional formations is crucial. These formations had, at the simplest level, a said function and an unstated purpose. The latter function was the empowering and also the furthering of the existent power of a small aristocracy. I mentioned earlier that the notion of choice was important, that the majority of bushmen at Schmidtsdrift were not able to make choices because there were no (certainly very few) possibilities for choosing, very few choices to make, very little to choose from. Tom Bottomore (1993) argues that it is in these sorts of conditions, of low economic investment, low political priority ('locally' or nationally -- in terms of the state) and social marginality, that aristocracies akin to oligarchies emerge.
The impression that I was left with, however, was that the bulk of the populace at Schmidtsdrift supported the various institutional formations spoken about here because they were supportive of the need for institutions that functioned in the first sense -- formations and technologies that served as effective bodies for 'development', 'discipline', 'religious instruction', and so on. By endorsing them on this level, they were also ratifying these institutional formations' functioning on the second level, thus making it difficult to clearly tease apart 'said' and 'unsaid' objectives (the separation into two 'levels' of analysis thus becomes hard to sustain).

Mario, for example, could receive popular sanction from his church congregation in order to pursue some course of action -- in the context of being the Dutch Reformed Church minister -- but could utilise this sanction to further his own ends in other forums or in the context of political infighting and conflict surrounding local resources (see Chapter Five). Dialogue was most pronounced and productive between elites and formations, not between elites and 'followers' or these 'followers' and institutional formations.

Thus, politics, the discourse mobilised by elites, was only indirectly and peripherally about appeasing subjects. What John Comaroff describes as "consultation and participatory politics" (Comaroff 1978:6) -- incumbency dependent upon leaders and subjects being "constantly engaged in a transactional process" (ibid.), a pervasive and ongoing dialogue -- was largely absent from the institutional politics dealt with here. The profound dependency of the bushmen on the military (-institutional matrix) and the Trust in particular, the two principle and hegemonic bodies at Schmidtsdrift, fostered a local politics in which the significant dialogue was that between elites and these forums. The appeasing of these leaders' subjects was a secondary, almost incidental issue. However, I would not go so far as to say that the vast majority of the people
at Schmidtsdrift were subjects of subjects, what Edward Said has termed victims of victims.

Phrased slightly differently, the plight of 'the commoners' at Schmidtsdrift was invariably one of apparent compliance and support (quite frankly they could do very little else). The greater part of the bushman populace condoned leaders, leadership, and existent structures. Paradoxically 'unpopular' politics (it may, in extreme cases, be termed anti-popular politics) was popular. In other words, the majority of bushmen were implicated in politics, but politics was not implicated in them.

The small aristocracy at Schmidtsdrift occupied what Gluckman (1963:149) refers to as an "intercalary" position, but with modification. Its members found themselves bifurcated (differentially) -- positioned between subject as subjects, and overrule as overrulers. However, Gluckman's (1963) jaundiced view is inappropriate here. It is inaccurate to refer to the position occupied by leaders at Schmidtsdrift as "being, inescapably, the focus of conflicting and [...] irreconcilable pressures" (Kuper 1970:75). The intercalary position of elites was full of potential -- potential to fail and potential to succeed (thanks to the institutional web that they had helped spin, and that had helped spin them).

To appropriate Weber's terms, "populist politics" was unintentionally intertwined with the "bureaucratic politics" of what Bottomore (1993:30) calls a "managerialist elite." The institutional spaces that I have alluded to permitted leaders the option of appealing to their authority in one context when it was strongly challenged in another. For most elites, for example, overt military derision could be compensated for and addressed through political standing in a church, and high standing in a church made military derision a difficult option for commanding officers; criticism on the Trust could be alleviated by appealing to prestige and clout in the military-institutional matrix or on one of the councils, and so on.
These structural-agentive conditions meant that elites were an important group, and aware of their position as such. This reflexivity favoured creative, entrepreneurial leadership that was marked by elites as 'dilettantes' as opposed to 'experts' when it came to trans- or extra-'local' politics (see Bottomore 1993:64, especially his chapter on "elites in the developing countries." See also Chapters Six and Seven of this work).

To sum up, the point is that there were four primary institutional formations, networks of organisation, that existed at Schmidtsdrift, and these were not -- individually -- closed, hermetically sealed systems. Nor did they cumulatively and collectively constitute an isolated, unitary and causative (or, for that matter, effectual) political system. Their political functioning and purpose was complex, political practice was untidy. The Schmidtsdrift bushman politicians and local political process have to be understood against the backdrop of the collapse and obliteration of the binary logic that often predominate debate framed in terms of 'military' and 'civilian', 'rulers' and 'ruled'. It is the ambiguity inherent in the imbrication of these concepts, the equivocality specific to the overlapping of institutional formations, and the fact that politics is always 'work in progress', that made them both constraining and enabling. The relationships between elites and unfixed signifiers, in a world of hard and fast objectives and political tasks is what I discuss in more rigidly situological detail and specificity in the remainder of this thesis.
CHAPTER FIVE

LEADERSHIP AND ETHNICITY:
THE STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL STAGING OF DISTINCTION

heterology and ethnicity

Thomas Eriksen correctly asserts that "ethnic identities are neither ascribed nor achieved: they are both. They are wedged between situational selection and imperatives imposed from without" (Eriksen 1993:57). Giddens' theory of structuration restates this, in a more inclusive social sense, in positing the simultaneous existence, in socio-political practice, of structure and agency, freedom and constraint (Giddens 1979). Eriksen suggests, quite ironically (given the limitations implicit in his broad brush-stroke style), that this dialogism is lacking, certainly undeveloped, in much contemporary anthropology, and calls (plaintively) for recognition and analysis of the convergence, in timespace, of "cognitive aspects (choice and strategy)" and "structural aspects (constraints imposed upon actors)" of ethnicity (Eriksen 1993:56).

This brings us back to Fredrik Barth with a specific focus on identity politics and agency (see Chapter Two). Barth's seminal study of ethnicity challenges the persistence of the simplistic view that social isolation has been (and is) the critical factor in sustaining cultural distinction (Barth 1969:9). As he puts it: "ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of social interaction and acceptance, but are quite to the contrary often the very foundations on which embracing social systems are built....[C]ultural differences can persist despite inter-ethnic contact and inter-dependence" (ibid.:10). For Barth, ethnic groups are "categories of ascription and
identification by the actors themselves" (ibid.), whereby the process(es) of boundary construction (according to the backward-looking idea of shared cultural attributes) ought to be the essence of relativistic and contingent anthropological analysis. Boundary processes are, accordingly, the kernel of ethnicity and, we are told, "ethnic groups are culture-bearing units" (ibid.:11) but only after the fact, in retrospect. The notion of a shared or common culture is an implication or result of ethnicity, not a stimulating or causative factor. To the same extent, "cultural variation may indeed be an effect and not a cause of boundaries" (Eriksen 1993:39). Barthian processualism is thus strongly anti-primordial in its avoidance of trading in cultural essentialism, in its dismissal of the teleological significance of what he calls "cultural stuff" (Barth 1969:15). The valuable aspect of Barth's contribution is his insistence that ethnicity has to do with the politics of organisation and social structure, not cultural continuity.

Barth, however, errs on the issue of reification. His unreflexive stance assumes continuity of 'an(-)other' -- 'the ethnic'. He delimits ethnicity to politics pertaining to individuals that are categorised with an obvious permanence in time and space, and a cultural identity based on an 'exotic' repertoire (see Eriksen 1993:34). Ethnic identity 'hounds' the individual so pervasively that she is irredeemably 'identitied' or, rather, 'ethnicised' and implicated in ('other') cultural politics. In Eriksen's words, "[Barth] seems to say that despite the contact across boundaries and change in cultural content of the groups, the ethnic categories as such are constants which may be called upon when the need arises, as in a competitive situation" (Eriksen 1993:55, emphasis mine).

There is, thus -- and as Abner Cohen (1974) rightly points out -- an ahistoricism and anachronistic slant to Barth's theory that does suggest, despite his intentions to the contrary, that his work has a strongly primordialist element. Much of this is a product of Barth's (1969) adherence to a strongly functionalist transactionalism in
which individuals play at identity politics in order to further their own ends one way or another within a broader, static 'system'. Cohen (1974) is deeply suspicious of attempts to assign ethnic identity an imperative status, "as a more or less immutable aspect of the social person" (Eriksen 1993:55). He is critical of the statement that not only are "ethnic categories [ascriptive] organizational vessels that may be given varying amounts and forms of content in different socio-cultural systems" (Barth 1969:14), but that ethnic boundaries "canalize social life" (ibid.:15) to the extent of assuming a "superordinate status [...] that constrains the incumbent in all his activities" (ibid.:17).

Moreover, Cohen (1974) takes Barth to task on his subjectivism, on the centrality Barth assigns to the acting/active agent. Yet he too identifies certain individuals as instrumental, and talks about group leaders utilising cultural symbols (in particular the rhetoric of primordialism) in political strategising. In addition, Cohen (1974) is rigidly functionalist in his assumption, in one respect no different to that entertained by Barth (1969), that ethnicity is an organisational form. For Cohen, ethnicity is about the cultural politics of meaning, in an existential sense and utility, in the sense of fulfilling a 'non-symbolic' function for social groups. As Eriksen describes, Cohen depicts ethnic identity as an instrument for competition over scarce resources, which is nevertheless circumscribed by ideologies of shared culture and collective sociality, by social consensus (Eriksen 1993:45). Eriksen argues that the distinction between Barth and Cohen is that "Barth sees cultural differentiation as a long-term effect of ethnic differentiation and Cohen would regard the cultural aspect of ethnicity as subordinate to its social functioning" (ibid.:49-50). Cohen, in other words, understands culture to be a resource that is appropriated, manipulated and exploited as part and parcel of ethnogenesis. For him, culture is "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1977) and therefore neither simply a cause, nor an
effect when it comes to ethnicity -- it is both. For Barth, on the other hand, ethnic identity is the resource as effect at the individual's (political) disposal.

Whether subjects be structured by culture or ethnic association, the point is that they remain irrevocably structured. Whether ethnicity be primordial or instrumental there is something inescapably seductive about its appeal -- to the extent of inevitability. The argument below examines these assertions, and illustrates that ethnicity is discursive and performative, that it is a created and creative political process. Ethnicity is a mode of dialogism, immediately and synchronously structured and agentive (structuring), primordial and instrumental, cause and effect, and ethnic identity is at once achieved and ascribed.

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the bar debate

What do you think of the idea of establishing a community bar at the base, a place where beer is sold cheaply, close to cost price, and where people can only buy liquor provided that they also purchase something to eat?

The commanding officer at Schmidtsdrift asked me this question towards the end of the first month of fieldwork. He was 'testing the water', wanting to see what I thought of his idea. I pressed him, asking him to explain why he thought it should be mandatory for people at Schmidtsdrift who buy liquor to also buy food.

People here need to learn to drink in a civilised manner...they need to learn to eat while they drink. An incentive can be provided to ensure that people get into the habit of eating while they drink. For example, a boerewors [sausage] roll free of charge for every two beers purchased...

I interjected: but there is already an off-sales on the base, and people are constantly purchasing liquor elsewhere and bringing it back here to sell. Some people are brewing their own beer. Is there the need [let alone the demand] for a bar?
Yes...we need to do something about alcoholism. This could be one way to make people realise that you do not have to drink until you are drunk. We can create a different drinking culture. The off-sales is expensive and liquor at the bar will be cheaper...and smuggling liquor into the base is illegal. People are paying high prices for what they buy from smugglers. Once the bar is built we will clamp down heavily on smuggling. At least the people will then have money left over for food. The bar will also create employment opportunities for some of the people...barmen, cleaners, people who make and sell food.

It was clear that the major had put considerable thought into the idea of a bar at Schmidtsdrift, and I remember thinking that his idea sounded perfectly reasonable. It seemed to me that the major's approach was a progressive and sensible attempt to work within the reality of extensive alcoholism and liquor consumption -- and the variety of concomitant social problems -- at Schmidtsdrift. I was also left with the impression that the proposal for a bar would be realised within a short space of time and that it would be met with minimal, if any, opposition. The major was, after all, a direct and business-like individual who was serious about his ideas and intentions, and who usually wasted little time realising these. There was no indication whatsoever that an apparently mundane proposal would become the focus of a heated political dispute, the locus of a pointed enunciation of identities by and among leaders.

* 

_drama is rooted in social reality, not imposed upon it_ (Victor Turner 1986:92)

In the discussion below I identify and isolate a performative -- and hence expressive and generative -- moment in broader social process. This moment was a discursive pronouncement that is a unit of what Victor Turner (1986:74) refers to as "aharmonic or disharmonic social process" in a conflict situation. The exploration of what I term the bar debate starts from Turner's contention that "the major genres of cultural performance...and
narration... not only originate in the social drama but also continue to draw meaning and force from the social drama" (ibid.: 94, emphasis mine). Building on the idea that ethnic identity is performance (Boonzaier 1993; Sharp and Boonzaier 1993, 1994a), a notion that is debated and reviewed in the conclusion to this chapter, I employ the concept of 'social drama' as a marker that informs and that imparts form to ethnicity.

Social dramas incorporate continuity through consideration of repetition and rehearsal, and disjuncture or discontinuity through inherent reflection (showing participating selves to themselves) and reflexion (reflexivity, arousing consciousness of selves through showing selves showing participating selves to themselves). As such, social dramas are fundamentally discursive. Moreover, the argument here is not teleological, in fact, it is anti-teleological. I am interested in the playing-out, as opposed to the origin (or even the abating and receding), of ethnic identity. It is a mistake to bracket-off ethnicity and say that conflict causes it, or conversely, that it simply causes conflict. Conflict and ethnicity mutually form, inform and transform one another in a dialogic that is, at least in this case, best understood through 'social drama'.

bar-gaining with identity

Dramas, in their simplest, are 'literary compositions that tell a story, usually of human conflict, by means of dialogue and action, and are performed by actors' and presented to an audience....They tend to be assigned to individual authors....[And] a drama is never complete, as its etymology suggests, until it is performed (Turner 1986: 27, emphasis mine).

The idea of establishing a bar at Schmidtsdrift lay dormant for a number of weeks, to be redeemed in late January 1995 when a meeting was convened to discuss the thoughts and opinions of people resident at Schmidtsdrift.
These people constituted some of the would-be patrons of the bar. What follows is an account of the meeting, structured according to Victor Turner's (1982a, 1982b, 1986) notion of 'social drama' and built around my narrative juxtapositioning and superimpositioning of the commanding officer's narrative and various conversants' narrative accounts of the proceedings of the meeting. I have chosen to introduce myself in an attempt to underline the dialogue during fieldwork, and hence, to better contextualise the moment of articulation and intonation.

Let me first introduce Victor Turner's notion of 'social drama'. For Turner,

[a] social drama is initiated when the peaceful tenor of regular, norm-governed social life is interrupted by the breach of a rule controlling one of its salient relationships. This leads swiftly or slowly to a state of crisis, which, if not soon sealed off, may split the community into contending factions and coalitions. To prevent this, redressive means are taken by those who consider themselves or are considered the most legitimate or authoritative representatives of the relevant community. Redress usually involves ritualized action, whether legal...religious...or military. If the situation does not regress to crisis...the next phase of social drama comes into play which involves alternative solutions to the problem. The first is reconciliation of the conflicting parties following judicial, ritual, or military processes; the second, consensual recognition of irremediable breach, usually followed by the spatial separation of the parties (Turner 1982b:86-7, original emphasis).

This, however, requires some elaboration. Turner emphasises that social dramas are an objectively isolable sequence of practices, a disjunctive moment in social process, in which conflictual and contradictory social interactions not only manifest, but are unequivocally highlighted (see Turner 1982a). As such, social dramas can only be understood through situational analysis.

Contrary to the lengthy quotation earlier, in The Anthropology of Performance, Turner states that social dramas are usually "processually structured" into three successive phases, and rarely four (Turner 1986). "A social drama first manifests itself as the breach of a norm, the
infraction of a rule of morality, law, custom or etiquette" (Turner 1982a:70). This is followed by crisis,
a momentous juncture or turning point in the relations between the components of a social field -- at which seeming peace becomes overt conflict and covert antagonisms become visible. Sides are taken, factions are formed, and unless the conflict can be sealed off quickly within a limited area of social interaction, there is a tendency for the breach to widen and spread until it coincides with some dominant cleavage in the widest set of relevant social relations to which the parties in conflict belong (ibid.).

Crisis, moreover, exhibit 'liminal' characteristics, "since each is a threshold (limen) between more or less stable or harmonic phases of the social process, but it is not usually a sacred or ritualized limen" (Turner 1986:34). In attempting to mediate crisis, redressive or remedial action is inaugurated. Redressive procedures or "adjustive mechanisms" (Turner 1982a:70) are designed to arbitrate disputes, to serve the function of conflict resolution, ideally by means of overt negotiation.

A crucial aspect of Turner's formulation is that the third phase of social drama, redress, "is perhaps the most reflexive" (Turner 1986:34,1982a:75-6), incorporating critical self-review, self-scrutiny, an auto-critique of sorts of and by the parties and individuals involved. Because of this introspective element, redressive procedures are the primary point, during social drama, of the enunciation of social and political meaning. Redress is the most revealing moment -- the locus of iteration.

If the redressive phase of social drama is successful in avoiding regress or 'reversion' to crisis, the fourth stage follows. The foregrounding of efforts to create and implement solutions to conflict mark the fourth and final phase of social drama. This phase consists either of "the reintegration of the disturbed social group, or of the recognition and legitimation of irreparable schism between the contending parties" (Turner 1986:35, emphasis his). If reconciliation and reintegration cannot occur, if an "irremediable breach" is acknowledged, spatial separation of the parties may result (Turner 1982a).
Having outlined the concept of social drama, I want to turn to describing the proceedings of the bar debate. The commanding officer at Schmidtsdrift had the following to say about the meeting that he convened in order to talk about the possibility of building a bar at Schmidtsdrift:

The two !Xu representatives were strongly opposed to one bar where everybody would drink together. Riviere said that either the !Xu have their own bar, and that the Khwe therefore also have one of their own, or there will be no bar at all.... I asked Nicolaas what he thought about the idea of a bar for everyone [...] would the Khwe use it? He remarked that the Khwe were quite prepared to share amenities and to drink at the same bar as the !Xu. He added that the Khwe were against apartheid. Wentzel also pointed out that !Xu cross into the Khwe lyne [tent camp] all the time.... There is, though, an important historical event that relates to this. When Victorino was mayor he bought three water tanks that were put outside his tent. You can still see them behind the !Xu lyne. They were bought with community funds. The Khwe were angry about this because many of them had contributed towards these community funds. So the !Xu have done things that have created problems...[and] so have the Khwe in the past.

Once the two !Xu delegates had expressed their views and stated their desire for a separate bar, they went on to point out the likelihood of conflict between !Xu and Khwe, a high probability, that in their understanding would have been accentuated by the possibility of drunken behaviour at the bar. The commanding officer emphasised that he was not to be deterred by this possibility:

According to [Colonel Hendrikz at] 3 SAI, and in accordance with [directives from] Pretoria, all SANDF units will be integrated by the end of the year. You can't carry on wanting and expecting two of everything.... I can provide one bar, where you will drink together... you have to start working together, as one...

The major's disclosure that there would be one bar, that Khwe and !Xu should combine or coalesce in certain situations, was a breach, a transgression of the recognised ethnic distinction at Schmidtsdrift of !Xu and Khwe. As already mentioned, Schmidtsdrift base was divided into Khwe and !Xu residential areas, the Trust was officially called the !Xu and Khwe Trust, and the military continued to uphold
the existence of one Khwe company and two !Xu companies (see Chapter Four). Khwe and !Xu were, in many respects, formally distinguished and distinct. The major told me, however, that he had not expected that he would have been called on to make the point that this split was not pervasive and neither was it necessarily permanent. Asked why he seemed to think that his ideal of a single communal bar would go uncontested the major remarked that:

These men are together in the head-quarters company, they are dealt with collectively on many occasions by the military. . . . So I told them that they must understand that in many ways they are one, that they must realise this and begin to get used to being combined in the New South Africa. Everything must otherwise be separate . . . toilets, bars, all facilities at Schmidtsdrift, shops at the base . . . two of everything. If this is really what the !Xu want they will not stand a chance in the New South Africa.

Immediately after the major's explication of this during the meeting, Riviere, a member of the !Xu delegation, interrupted and told those present that the idea would not work, and that there should be no bar at all. This retort marked, I think, the beginning of crisis. The !Xu delegation posited fundamental distinction, absolute incommensurability, and thus overtly presented conflict and antagonism. The major responded by emphasising that if the people at Schmidtsdrift did not start to work together and iron-out distinctions, he would do absolutely nothing to assist them. He mentioned that he was aware of the fact that !Xu had been harassed and victimised by Khwe in the past at Schmidtsdrift and at Omega military base in Namibia. But he told them that they should put such historical inequalities and problems behind them and embrace the future devoid of emotive sentiments of, and appeals to, fundamental and ineluctable distinction (cultural diversity). In occupying an uncompromising stance, the major effectively widened the breach, and intensified the crisis.

This crisis pointed up a deep paradox. Importantly, and ironically, in its dealings with the people at
Schmidtsdrift the Defence Force usually attempted to elicit a 'representative' response to proposals for amendments or alterations to camp conditions. As a result, meetings were convened and !Xu and Khwe 'representatives' were summoned; representivity was approached, by the military, along the lines of 'ethnic consensus'. This did not necessarily cause conflict, but, as the bar debate reveals, it frequently served to accentuate notions of distinction and further entrenched the division of the camp into Khwe and !Xu groups.

During the bar debate, the commanding officer indicated that on a pragmatic level there were simply not enough resources to sustain separate amenities. In fact, he told those present that only if he was fortunate would he be able to raise sufficient funds for one bar. He did eventually realise, however, that avoidance of irreparable breach would require broader consultation. So too did the !Xu delegates see the need for additional negotiation. The members of the !Xu delegation said that they would have to consider what had been said, and delayed their decision about whether or not there should be a bar. Redressive action took the form of a brief consultation with Mario, firstly by the major and then by the !Xu delegation. Mario recognised, 'accepted' and momentarily 'respected' the major's initial transgression of the 'bifurcated sociality' at Schmidtsdrift (I think that this was because of his lower rank in what was overbearingly a military forum).

Reintegration followed. Redressive procedures resulted in the !Xu delegation deciding to endorse the idea of a single, shared bar. Significantly, though, it was only with regard to building a bar that irresolvable differentiation and schism was neither recognised or legitimated. An additional point that warrants inclusion here, is that much of this happened with little direct intervention on the part of the Khwe delegation.

One might ask why it was that the !Xu leaders initially obstinately insisted on an exclusively !Xu bar or no bar at all. In an attempt to arrive at an answer to this question,
I decided to discuss the bar debate with the leaders who were directly involved in it. As will become clear, there is no simple answer, but a number of reasons are suggested in the information presented below.

You see the !Xu wanted their own bar or nothing because the Khwe are always against us, they constantly mock and ridicule us. So we initially said that two bars would be a good idea. The major stated that it would not be possible to have two bars...the Defence Force would not be able to afford it. He told us that he did not want us to live like we did in the past. The major said that the bar would be controlled by the Trust, and that we would have to accept it, that we must accept one bar. We will now try one bar and see how it works. From our side they always want us together, but our work does not always suit that...they always want to be higher, they want things first.

There was an incident in the past [...] when we were put into a mixed company at Omega. It was called Alpha and Omega Group...within a few months a !Xu soldier shot one of the Khwes. We told the Defence Force that we could not work together, that it would not work [...] and it did not work. We were on patrol and we stopped to get water. This Khwe stood there and pissed into the water. A !Xu man said 'do not carry on like that...why do you piss in our water?' He answered 'do not talk back, you are not important, you can drink piss...'. He started to mock us [...] but we are all human. The !Xu soldier was angry and shot him but did not kill him. After that we always worked apart except in the head-quarters company...

I interjected: did you know beforehand that the major was only prepared to provide one bar?
I did not know this...we did not really know what he wanted to do. All Minister Mario knew was that he was intending to make it possible to buy liquor outside the bottle store. We thought that there might be trouble if we asked for a separate bar...

Given the apparent vehemence between Khwe and !Xu soldiers, and the posited authority of Khwe over !Xu, I thought that I would ask: what if all of the people working at the bar are Khwe?

We will be disappointed if all of the people who work there are Khwe....They probably will be because that is how they are [...] but it will cause problems and give rise to tension. My feeling is that it will be difficult, but if they don't create difficulties, if they behave themselves and the bar works well, I will be happy. But I must first see how it works. I am now satisfied with the idea of one bar.

These were the words of Automover Kakenge, a !Xu corporal who was one of the !Xu spokesmen at the meeting held to discuss the idea of building a bar. I asked
Automover why it was that the Khwe delegation did not make a
demand similar to the call made by the two !Xu
representatives for a bar that would be exclusively theirs.

On their side there are no problems [...] they do not
see the difficulties that they create for us. We
understand the conflict better [...] it is always
directed at us. But we must bury our differences or
else we will continue to fight. I think that people
must stop speaking against one another.

This remark had a resounding air of finality, and I
therefore elected to try a different tack. I enquired: how
did you prepare for the meeting, did the !Xu leaders decide
what your position would be?

We [...] the !Xu leaders [council members]...we met and
talked about things before the meeting...they decided
that we should have our own bar or no bar at all. But
they will accept the bar provided that the Trust
manages it because then we will know that the money
will be put towards our future. The Trust is trying to
hold two groups together [...] that is why we chose to
support one bar. If one bar is built and the army
controls it, as was the case in the past, we will not
accept it...

The striking feature of Automover's remarks is the
seeming disdain with which Khwe are viewed. Khwe were
emphatically depicted as oppressors, as the perpetrators of
actions detrimental to !Xu. Automover was not alone in this
regard, and I felt that it was necessary to attempt to
clarify some of the issues that he referred to by speaking
to Sergeant Riviere Ngonga, the second member of the !Xu
delegation:

We fought. The !Xu said that they wanted a bar for
themselves and that the Khwe could also have their own
bar. We fought over the idea of one bar for the !Xu
and Khwe. There was a bar for non-commissioned
officers at Omega...it existed and people fought.
There was a lot of bitterness and fighting [...] the
!Xu and Khwe attacked one another. At the meeting we
said that we did not want a repeat of previous
problems...that is why we wanted our own bar and stated
that they could have theirs somewhere else. The major
said that there was not enough money and that he did
not want apartheid here. So we agreed that there
should be one bar....I am satisfied, we will go ahead
and see what happens. !Xu are already going to the
Khwe lyne to visit and buy beer, so we don't need our
own bar [...] that would be apartheid. If it was like
that, them on their own, us on our own, it would be
apartheid.
Many of the sentiments evoked by Automover, and much of the fear and trepidation that he expressed, were repeated by Riviere. There are, ostensibly, strong inconsistencies with what both Riviere and Automover had to say, particularly with regard to Riviere's acknowledgement and problematisation of apartheid-like initiatives. I thought that further probing what the !Xu leaders had decided in preparation for the meeting would be useful in clarifying issues and in locating the !Xu delegation's argument against an evoked ideological background. Riviere had this to say about the predetermined !Xu position:

We (!Xu elites) spoke a lot before the meeting and thought about what would work, what we wanted. It was Auto' and I and most of the !Xu raad [council]: Minister Mario, Matoka, Fingers, Makai, Vicky...we realised that to talk about our own bar was necessary because of things that had happened in the past...combined things like this were never successful [...] it did not work before when there was a bar at Omega. We knew that we would run the risk of being accused of supporting apartheid and causing trouble. Then later we spoke to the minister and decided that no, we must have a single bar. Circumstances are different now and we must be together, relax together, get to know one another better...

Riviere consistently and strongly appealed to past conflict and antagonism between people labelled !Xu and Khwe. Automover also referred to historical difficulties and tensions with regard to the relationship between people who were categorised Khwe and !Xu. It is in light of these factors, as part of social experience during a long association with the army, that the major's initiative to establish a bar needs to be understood as a breach, and that the value of a bar as a social resource -- offering employment, liquor and leisure (and potential social tension due to competition for jobs, sexual innuendo and drunken behaviour) -- needs to be recognised, as underlined through the contestation that ensued and that delineated crisis.

The value of the bar, the power of the idea of a bar, as a social resource (for both the Defence Force and the bushmen themselves) needs to be emphasised. There are a number of activities and situations at Schmidtsdrift that
one might anticipate leading to or causing a breach -- in the sense that I employed the term earlier -- that do not lead to crisis (such as the combined Khwe and !Xu headquarters company and the combined Dutch Reformed Church). This, I believe, is because these two contexts were extremes: the head-quarters company was the site of the strongest and most direct army intervention at Schmidtsdrift, whereas the Dutch Reformed Church was a site of weak intervention and considerable 'military-less' agency. The bar debate was one of two exchanges and interactions, during the initial three months of ethnographic research, that displayed a formal socio-political challenge to what Turner (1986:34) refers to as "the representatives of order" (the second exchange being that addressed in the next chapter).

The strongest and most aggressive comment in relation to alleged Khwe condescension, and assertion of past inequities due to Khwe actions, was made by Mario. The mention, by Riviere, of the intervention of the minister in the meeting was important, particularly in consideration of Turner's suggestion that meaning is constructed and invoked most powerfully during the redressive phase of social drama. It was during this phase that Mario, a leader of particularly high standing -- to reiterate, his status as a staff-sergeant (the highest ranking soldier among the !Xu and Khwe), his position as the only Dutch Reformed minister from among the bushmen, and his role as the senior !Xu 'representative' on the Trust all attest to this (see Chapter Three) -- explicitly intervened in the proceedings. Mario had some interesting things to say with regard to his involvement in the exchanges surrounding the meeting:

I am not the right person to talk to about that meeting. Automover and Riviere were involved, they represented the !Xu....But it is the same story that I have mentioned before...this conflict has a long history. It has been hidden, quiet for a long time, but now it has emerged again. This is because if someone wants to be with us they always want to be first...they devour everything and leave nothing for us to eat. Out of this emerges mockery [...] you are this, you are that, you are small people, we are
They belittle us...they say that they are bigger-built, stronger, and that some of them are better educated. We have always run into difficulties when involved with black people...

This last remark caught me by surprise: but do you really regard Khwe to be black people?

Yes, they are black. They are not the same as us...they are more bastardised than us.

The use of the idiom of 'blackness' and the invoking of racial distinction as a metaphor for radical disparity was a powerful assertion of dissension. In this context, the significance of !Xu lay in the posited inherent contradistinction to Khwe. The salience of this socially and contingently constructed distinction is reiterated below.

In order to gain clarity in relation to what seemed to be fast becoming an emergent pattern, I asked Mario: why are Khwe leaders prepared to share amenities, and !Xu leaders opposed to the combined use of resources?

They are no doubt prepared to share a bar and drink together with us. But we do not want to drink with them...they will go on calling us names, ridiculing and fighting. Perhaps our thoughts are about independence...we attribute more importance to purity. We were always on our own and would like to keep it that way. These things are not as important for the Khwe [...] they are more dependent upon other people, they marry with others, mix with others. They accept us in their lyne, but they cannot easily enter our side or marry !Xu. We can easily move around on their side and visit people there, but we cannot stay there.

This entire story is about things from the past, about how they continually bothered us...it is because we struggled as a result of oppression from their side. They did not see us as human, and that caused many incidents of conflict and fighting. That is why we wanted our own bar, away from the conflict and tension that the Khwe cause.

In Mario's statements proclaiming to be !Xu is not only a remark about racial separateness, but also a moral claim to purity and expurgation through independence. !Xu elites, like the Pathans Barth (1959,1969) discusses, were engaged in the politics of autonomy and resolute exclusion.

According to Mario, Khwe were like black and of dubious, mixed descent. The mobilising of the rhetoric of racial distinction took representations of '!Xuness' into an increasingly generalised level of counter positioning
(discussed in Chapter Seven). !Xu, Mario told me, were not only non-Khwe, but importantly, non-black.

My conversation with Mario continued: what was the nature of your involvement in the meeting?
I was only called in later, at the end of the meeting.
I understood the situation and told Riviere and Automover that we must first try and then see what happens. I didn't think that there would necessarily be a problem. ... I came in late and gave advice because they could not reach agreement. In consideration of the options identified by the major, we decided that we would accept the bar ... not permanently, but the idea of a single bar [...] as long as it is well managed and orderly, without problems, and provided that the money is given back to the community (emphasis mine).

In light of alleged !Xu/Khwe animosity, and bearing in mind the fact that 'Namibian' Khwe especially were generally better educated than most other Khwe and !Xu at Schmidtsdrift, I enquired: what will happen if the only people to get jobs at the bar are Khwe?
That should not be a problem ... they have an advantage, a head start. They are the people that we must now use. I think that people will accept it if all of the people working there are Khwe, but only if they manage the bar efficiently and they do their work for the community, not for the Khwe, not for their profit. It will maybe work if there is no speaking against us, if they respect us and don't mock us. If the !Xu become more developed in the future then they too can work at the bar [...] that will happen later. It does not have to happen now. So I am positive, we can only try and then look at how things are working out...

All of the !Xu men directly involved in the bar debate started from a position which denied the possibility to combat or altogether stop antagonism. Each of the three representatives mentioned above began by stressing the inevitability of conflict by subverting the notion of there being such an entity as 'the Schmidtsdrift community'. However, each of them eventually espoused 'community' and acknowledged the necessity to pool and share resources. They acknowledged this in discussion, after the fact, and implicitly acknowledged this during the meeting through redressive action.

The !Xu leaders who participated in the bar debate were aware, prior to the meeting, that their ideal of a separate bar might be contested. Mario in particular, who orchestrated the approach to redressive action and integration, believed that the !Xu leaders' case was strong
enough to militate against any arguments for integration and the sharing of a bar. The reflexivity inherent in redressive procedures did not amount to a revelation of the fact that it could be argued that !Xu were not entirely distinct, separate from, and unlike Khwe in every respect (including linguistically, since many bushmen spoke Afrikaans and Portuguese, hence contradicting the emphasis !Xu elites placed on cultural uniqueness defined primarily by a distinct language). Rather, redressive practice exposed the precarious nature, the full-bodied ambivalence, of !Xu ethnic identity.

This is where the liminality of the redressive phase lay: Mario's intervention highlighted the ambiguity and contingency of '!Xuness' by creating an articulation of the past that conceded to both tension and conflict and cooperation and congruity, tipping the political scale in favour of the latter because of broader political (personal) expediency. To expound '!Xuness' was to be critically reflexive. In conversation, Mario, in a short space of time and words shifted from vehemently commenting on the dehumanising actions of Khwe to an acceptance, and in fact ratification, of the possibility that at the outset only Khwe should be employed at the bar; a product of reflexivity similar to that exercised as integral to redressive action during the bar debate. The question that then arises is how to make sense of this turnabout; how to assess the shift, among !Xu elites (especially Mario), from the politics of diversity, to the politics of difference.

I believe that the !Xu leaders conceded to a single bar because of extreme political pressure to do so. The reintegration of the !Xu delegation was a political tactic that only makes sense contextually, situationally. Mario could afford to gamble with low political stakes when lent on by the major (he was likely, at worst, to upset a few !Xu elites who had little or no recourse anyway), and seeing that he was integral in formulating the !Xu delegation's position prior to the meeting, and in authoring redressive procedures and reintegration, he was also unlikely to run a
high political risk in leaning on Automover and Riviere. What this means is that reintegration is contradictory in the final analysis because, as has been suggested, certain !Xu leaders were employing a strategy of fundamental incommensurability that was not damaged by discourse surrounding a mere potentiality, that was unscathed by the rhetoric of supposition and uncertainty. Compromise was easy to entertain and contradiction with a strategic politics of diversity was unproblematic because building a bar was a vague possibility (indeed, no bar existed at the time of writing this thesis). This will become clearer by examining how the accounts of the meeting, and the issues that !Xu informants raised in relation to it compare and contrast with the reflections of Khwe men directly involved in the bar debate.

The meeting was like this [...] the problem that existed in the past was discussed and we reached a decision about it. The major told the !Xu that if they did not shift from their position they would not be involved in the bar in any way. He said that he did not want the bar to create any problems. Then they told him: 'we do not want it, and we will not use it'. So we said 'no, the !Xu side does not want a combined bar, but we Khwe do want a bar'. We pointed out that there are !Xu who will come if they have money...there are some of them who will use the bar anyway. Then the Khwe will have to say 'no, your leaders stated that they did not want to be a part of this'. If we take that kind of action there will be conflict and fighting. They did not accept this at first, they did not think about this....Then they chose the right line. Kakenge [Automover] and them saw that we were right, that there will be !Xu people who will want to use the bar regardless of politics [...] people who will be prepared to buy drink there. We eventually won them over...they saw the problem and stopped arguing their point.

Herein lies the crucial point that underpinned the capitulation by the !Xu leaders during the meeting. Wentzel Katjara's exposure of a flaw in their argument had a damning effect that need not have been actualised were the !Xu delegation not forced to interrogate and reconsider their own position. Wentzel adopted a tactic that was an indirect challenge to the legitimacy of the !Xu leadership, and he did so with full sanction from the major. The role and
position of the major, a 'third party', was crucial: the two Khwe delegates were as much in the dark as the !Xu delegates with regard to the major's intentions on entering the bar meeting. Only once the major's standpoint had been made clear did Wentzel comment on the degree of daily interaction and movement across the lyne, as did Nicolaas mention that the !Xu leaders' strategy resembled apartheid.

In addition, in pointing out the degree of movement between the two camps at Schmidtsdrift, Wentzel implicitly undermined the representivity of the !Xu delegation. In my post hoc discussions with Riviere, he mentioned that !Xu were freely moving between the two camps at Schmidtsdrift, and that the !Xu leaders were well aware of the risk of being accused of attempting to implement apartheid-like initiatives. He was conceding to both the major's and Wentzel's -- and in fact, the Khwe delegation's -- argument. This point was repeated in the remainder of my conversation with Wentzel, and emerges again in the words of the second Khwe 'representative' at the meeting.

...it is a big thing...the minister and them say that they must not come into our lyne. He makes decisions that they do not all agree with. But there is something else. We, for example, gave all of our community funds to Vicky when he was mayor, and now the large water tanks are standing in the !Xu lyne. We see nothing of them, and have no idea as to who uses them or what is in them. If those tanks were in our lyne the !Xu would bother us all of the time, they would complain and fuss. Look, we are not happy, but we do not fuss about those tanks...what is done is done, finished. You see, at the meeting they were determined to get their own bar...!Xu on their own, Khwe on their own. The major said that there was not enough money for two bars, and that there would be one bar for everyone or it would be given to the Khwe. He told the !Xu that if they wanted their own bar they would have to collect over R 3,000 in order to build it. They then said fine, there will be no bar. Their efforts to stop the bar were strongly supported by the minister. Then they accepted the reasons for not having two bars even though they knew that the reasons that they gave for separate bars would lead to conflict...that it would not help the community. They made an issue about nothing because of things from the past. If they continue like this how will the community stand together in the future?
Wentzel's statement suggests that there were fundamentally different discursive foundations that underlay what the !Xu delegates said and what Wentzel articulated. The !Xu leaders, in so much as they acted collectively, did not seem to act in terms of 'the community' in the same way that Wentzel did. In fact the !Xu elites, when it was infrequently mentioned, were paying minimal attention to the notion of 'the Schmidtsdrift community' until they were forced to shift their position in order to avoid a deepening crisis. Khwe leaders in fact paid attention to 'community' only after it was apparent that this was the notion on the side of authority. In this instance, and I think more broadly -- and unlike !Xu politics -- Khwe politics was the opportunistic politics of tactics, not strategy (see de Certeau 1984 for an elaboration on this distinction).

Wentzel and I pressed on, turning to a discussion that hinged around what I had been told about Khwe being assertive, aggressive, and broadly speaking, better educated than !Xu: do you think that the people who find employment at the bar will be predominantly Khwe? If so, will this create difficulties?

Perhaps the Khwe will be the only people to work there at first...and if this causes problems we must talk about it, see what kind of work it is, how people understand it, look at the relationship between people and see if they are suited to working there. The !Xu will probably create difficulties because of it....But the Khwe know that the money will be made available to the community if the Trust manages the bar. The Trust is neutral...they will manage it well and make the profit available to all of us. It will be a good chance for people in the community to find work, and the Khwe are better educated, better prepared for employment. We are better qualified to work there, but they do not understand that. Khwe will get jobs there not because they do not want !Xu people doing the work, but because they are ready for that type of work. The thing that they really do not understand is that the bar is for the community and not just for the Khwe. They will not see this....And also, the Trust urgently needs to do something that is visible, we must see that the Trust is actually doing something...

Some of the above points that Wentzel made are echoed in what the other Khwe delegate, Nicolaas Tenda, had to say with regard to the meeting:

I spoke out [...] I spoke out strongly. The !Xu would not accept one bar because of fighting...they were
scared of the kind of conflict that occurred before. I said that if they speak like that they are talking about apartheid. We said one bar [...] and then they easily slotted in. We eventually agreed on one bar. I spoke directly, and Corporal Kakenge and Sergeant Riviere understood, as did the major.

I cannot speak for an entire group, but I can speak about individuals that say bad things. I can speak about him alone...I would never say that those people are such and such, but I will talk to a person who misbehaves. Corporal Automover mentioned the idea of a single bar. But look...for example, if one !Xu comes and says 'no, you must stand like this, you must act like this' there will be a problem [...] people will be beaten and there will be fighting. Things will only get worse. People will start to say that Khwe actions against !Xu are not right, that we are unfair. So we must look at individuals, not the group or the nation [...] not the general !Xu or Khwe. We can only act against the individual. We must leave the general level alone, otherwise a division will emerge and apartheid will follow. Now everyone is happy about the bar, it will definitely work smoothly.

Nicolaas located the source and cause of conflict in the individual, the subject(ive). For him the social agent was the locus of power. But, like Wentzel, Nicolaas also endorsed 'the Schmidtsdrift community' sui generis, as a largely cohesive, functioning whole. This is further illustrated below.

I asked Nicolaas: what if there are problems because only Khwe, for example, get work at the bar?

People will get jobs there because they are suited to working there as individuals, not because they are !Xu or Khwe. That will not matter. It will not be a problem if all of the people there happen to be Khwe...then the person who makes it into a problem must be spoken to and told to stop looking for trouble.

What is interesting about the Khwe delegation's testimony and action is their refusal to be passive and apathetic. Rather than simply accept and shrug-off !Xu elite assertions of diversity (through bad-mouthing Khwe in general), they were prepared to argue that the distinction between Khwe and !Xu, on whatever level, was arbitrary. The Khwe spokesmen were arguing that !Xu were different, alterior (largely because their leaders saw themselves as such), but not Other. This was, I think, because Khwe elites, for the most part, were set on integrating into South African society on even terms. In this sense,
Nicolaas and Robert in particular described the ethnic politics of !Xu leaders as a frustration and distraction from larger, more pressing concerns. Yet they were unable to ignore local !Xu/Khwe 'identity politics' under the military and, to a lesser extent (by virtue of its incipience) under and within the Trust.

One common thread that runs through what all but one informant said during, and in relation to, the bar debate was the conditional acceptance of a single bar, the proviso being the reimbursement of 'the community' with money taken from profits. The mitigating role of the Trust, as a 'neutral' body was, almost without exception, central to this argument. Perhaps more important, and relating more closely to identity formation, was the across-the-board excavation of, and appeal to past conflict between people who were categorised as Khwe and !Xu. In relation to this, it was only the !Xu leaders who consistently entertained a generalised politics of blame. All of the !Xu participants in the bar debate referred to 'the Khwe' as a generalised, aggressive Other. These !Xu leaders systematically presented themselves as victims, always being Othered.

The bar debate foregrounded the power of organisational frameworks at Schmidtsdrift. The !Xu delegation's argument and point of departure was premised on a consistent military recognition and reification of the categories Khwe and !Xu. The major was right in stating that Khwe and !Xu were grouped together in the head-quarters company, but when they left the head-quarters building and worked in the residential areas on the base they were divided -- !Xu worked in the !Xu lyne, Khwe in the Khwe lyne. Importantly, however, when the Trust was brought into the equation during the redressive phase of the bar debate (discursively -- as a controlling and mediating body that, like the major's presence in the debate, constituted a third locus and moment of intervention), !Xu leaders under Mario's guidance were prepared to ignore and in fact elide thoughts of absolute distinction; the Trust was a relatively new institutional formation, and it was yet to establish a reputation of
officially and profoundly either condoning or condemning the Khwe/!Xu political distinction (despite its title as the !Xu and Khwe Trust).

Two months later people seemed to be no closer to acquiring a bar. I spoke to the commanding officer about this in an effort to elicit enlightening and insightful commentary. The major told me:

I am waiting for the Trust to reach a decision about the bar. I heard that they are thinking about forming a committee to look into it...maybe the committee is already established, I don't know. I can only wait. And you must remember that the sort of conflict that arose in that meeting is often about smaller interpersonal things. It occurs frequently between...leaders and soldiers with rank. They are quick to say this is !Xu or this is Khwe....The politics that you saw in that meeting is limited to a small group in the community. Ordinary soldiers are not interested in it, the normal soldiers and people do not care about it. The power struggle is between Robert and Vicky, Vicky and Robert, for example. It has to do with military seniority and leadership positions within the camp...

I have little hesitation in agreeing. I am confident that the major was correct in suggesting that conflict between !Xu and Khwe, or rather, conflict that was presented as a clash in the name of !Xu and Khwe, was an elite phenomenon. People with whom I discussed camp politics, and who were not leaders, who did not have military rank, who were not members of either the !Xu or the Khwe councils, and who were also not members of the Trust, did not care much, if at all, about the supposed incommensurability of Khwe and !Xu. They did not seem to think that tension between !Xu and Khwe due to people identifying themselves as, or being categorised and stigmatised !Xu or Khwe, should warrant much attention. Numerous leaders, some of them cited in this chapter, mentioned the high level of movement between !Xu and Khwe camps, the proliferation of Afrikaans as a common medium, and spoke of various cases of conjugal relationships and other social relationships that cut across Khwe/!Xu boundaries (see Chapters Seven and Eight). Moreover, as stressed by Wentzel's comments above, and evident during the proceedings of a liaison committee meeting that I attended,
the representivity of leaders (certainly !Xu) was questionable. At one point in a liaison committee meeting, when Mario was asked why it was that !Xu people were not paying attention to his requests, he exclaimed that:

Our people (!Xu) are very strange people...very cunning people. The people are angry with community leaders and Trust members...they don't listen, they do as they wish...

This is strongly suggestive about political strategy adhered to by !Xu elites and challenges generalised representations of !Xu and Khwe conflict as something that occurred over and above the political exchanges that characterised camp leadership. To further complicate matters, this leadership was not undifferentiated and homogeneous.

Mario, together with Vicky, were key politicians who constituted a powerful !Xu oligarchy. They were the principle decision makers and strategists in arguing for !Xu separation. Automover and Riviere (like most other !Xu elites who commanded authority across the four primary institutional formations discussed in the previous chapter) tended to toe the line, but with seemingly little conviction. It was these two !Xu elites who, in the exchanges considered above started with a quavering assertion of diversity, of fundamental incompatibility and ended, relatively comfortably, with a modest acceptance of difference and the need for integration into South Africa at large. Mario, however, gave the impression of remaining committed to a particularist or sectionalist dogma; his strategy of diversity remained solid.

Before concluding this section, there are some final points worthy of consideration. The politics in which the elites that I have referred to and who were directly involved in the bar debate were engaged showed up strong leadership among !Xu leaders, and the existence of a coherent strategy. This was, I think, a factor of uncontested and 'antipolitical' leadership. Khwe leadership, on the other hand, appeared to be weak, incoherent, and was marked by the absence of a strategy in
the context of the bar debate. Khwe 'representatives' involved in the bar debate were taken from a cabal of leaders who did not constitute an effective oligarchy, but who were part of a highly contested and 'politically charged' coterie of leaders (see Chapter Six).

iii

**ethnic identity as performance?**

*Poesis, rather than mimesis: making not faking*  
(Victor Turner 1982b:88)

*Cultural knowledge is mediated by 'acting'*  
(Johannes Fabian 1990:7)

A recent turn in attempts to grapple with the complexity and ambiguity of ethnic identities -- the 'new ethnogenesis' (Roosens 1989; Sharp and Boonzaier 1993) -- has been characterised by the argument that ethnic identity is performance (Boonzaier 1993; Sharp and Boonzaier 1993,1994a). Discussing the signing ceremony at the establishment of the Richtersveld National Park in Namaqualand, Sharp and Boonzaier (1994a:405) argue that the concomitant "statement of Nama ethnic identity is a carefully controlled performance. It is role-play, a highly self-conscious statement of 'who we are' that is being formulated collectively through dialogue, and modified according to context." Sharp and Boonzaier (1993,1994a), however, strongly suggest that all ethnic identities are staged, in a general and universal sense, and they use events in Namaqualand as a specific illustration of this.

Their argument is based on the notion that in light of the inherent ambiguity of history -- an allegory dependent upon the messiness of the moment, the intricacies of the present -- ethnic identity formation and mobilisation incorporate processes of selective communication: certain
historical nuances are buried, 'forgotten', others are foregrounded, 're-membered'. It is this situational formation and appropriation of facets of 'janus-faced' identities that, Sharp and Boonzaier (1993,1994a) correctly emphasise, makes ethnicity staged. Phrased differently, because of the relational, indexical and dialogical social constructedness of ethnic identities, they are, Sharp and Boonzaier claim, performed.

Sharp and Boonzaier are thus to be commended on their efforts to deal with the dilemmas that anthropologists encounter and produce when grappling with the 'modernity' (the term is Benedict Anderson's) and novelty of ethnicity together with its antiquity on the part of the actors and politicians involved in the process; the universality of ethnicity as a politico-cultural process, and the "irremediable particularity of its concrete manifestations" (Anderson 1983:14); the political coherence and power of ethnicity, yet also its epistemological and philosophical incoherence and poverty (I am paraphrasing an incisive part of Benedict Anderson's 1983 analysis of 'nationality').

Sharp and Boonzaier (1993,1994a), however, tell us that ethnic identity is something that is socially constructed through the mobilisation of distinct symbols that do not constitute, or that stand apart from what they call "lived culture" (Sharp and Boonzaier 1993:11). We are assured that, at least functionally, the symbols with which people laying claim to and creating an ethnic identity conjure do not reflect their style of life. These symbols "are tokens of identity that are highly valued in certain contexts...but they are not seen to form part of day-to-day, lived culture" (Sharp and Boonzaier 1994a:409).

In other words, the icons and tokens of ethnic identities, and those identities themselves, fall outside of quotidian cultural practice, experience and meaning. This may, or may not, be the case. The danger here is the possible reading that there is 'lived (conjunctive) culture' and 'non-lived (disjunctive) culture', that there is continuous and pervasive real identity (that is, by way of
temporality -- its veritable pervasiveness -- unperformed) and a contingent less real, illusionary, faked, or hyper-real (dare I say virtual) performed ethnic identity.

It seems to me that a number of warnings need to be sounded when one talks about ethnic identity as performance. These point, I believe, to the need to do some urgent stock-taking and theoretical revision. First, it would be a mistake, in the second half of the 1990s, to think that the idea that ethnic identity is performance is a novelty. Fredrik Barth used this notion, admittedly with little effect, in 1959, and then with considerably more insight in 1969 in the edited volume *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Barth 1969). Indeed, there are numerous references to the position of individual "actors" in the "showing of identity" and the "performance" of ethnic distinction (ibid.:10,14). Barth argues that "ethnic identity implies a series of constraints on the kinds of roles an individual is allowed to play" (ibid.:17), and the "social effectiveness" of ethnicity as a mode of social organisation suggests that ethnicity is a 'script-bound' or 'scripted' process. Like all plays that are scripted, ethnicity is structured and structuring, but so as to permit and in fact encourage improvisation according to the subjectivities of actors and audiences (see also Barth 1969:28).

In sociology, Erving Goffman (1959) wrote a lengthy and compelling argument about self identity as performance (this is also applicable to group identity by extrapolation from his structural-functionalist base). He repeatedly appeals to the roles and actions of 'actors' and a vast array of 'stage'-related idioms, thus adhering, metaphorically and most provocatively to the rhetoric of theatrical performance. Henrietta Moore (1994:38-47) regularly refers to "social enactment" and "performance" in relation to the expression of social identities (although I disagree with her efforts to comfortably tease apart 'performance' and 'discursivity'). Similarly, Stuart Hall (1996:13-14) refers repeatedly to the "performativity" of socio-cultural identities.
Second, if by 'performance' is meant social constructedness -- which is, as I have indicated, a central part of Sharp and Boonzaier's (1993, 1994a) formulation -- then one is forced to ask what practice, which socio-political processes, are not performance and performed? If 'performance' is taken to denote the enactment of non-essential attributes, what then marks ethnicity as a particular kind of performance? Or is ethnicity any old performance? Thus, to employ 'performance' in a sense synonymous with 'social constructedness' is to deny the particularity of constructions and assertions of ethnic identity. From Sharp and Boonzaier's perspective, and to adhere to their verbiage, is 'lived culture' not as much of a construct, and as constructed, as 'non-lived culture' (Sharp and Boonzaier 1993, 1994a)? Is the 'illusionary' less real (effective) than whatever it is that one identifies as 'non-illusionary'? Surely, with the fin de siècle firmly in our sights, we can begin to acknowledge the major oversight of Jean Baudrillard and Umberto Eco, to name but two protagonists, in that the 'hyperreal' is now ever so 'real' (and hence its infestation). In other words, the indexical or situational specificity of ethnic identity formation is absent and denied. This is quite ironic, given Sharp and Boonzaier's outward emphasis on contingent factors and historicity. Thus, on the one hand, and in their usage, 'ethnicity as performance' marks little other than a torpid, mundane observation, a placid description of sorts, and lacks analytical precision and utility.

On the other hand, Sharp and Boonzaier talk about 'performance' as a particular kind of practice. They attempt to avoid the above-mentioned criticism by showing that their claim that ethnic identities are performance is to restate that ethnic identities are not only socially constructed, fictive, but also extra-ordinary.

If one invokes 'performance' as a particular type of enactment -- 'acting' in the common-place theatrical, 'dramatic' sense -- then one risks employing "seemingly innocent classifications that amount to intellectual
verdicts that establish cultural distance and hegemony" (Fabian 1990:14). This begs the question: is ethnicity the 'grand opera' of identity politics (more 'dramatic' or 'better drama' than gendering, for example)? Many of the criticisms levelled at Allan Hanson for asserting that Maori identity is "made", that Maori culture is "invented" (see Hanson 1989) then become applicable. There is, in other words, an affinity between stating that ethnicity is performed and performative and stating that community is imagined. The caution that Benedict Anderson recommends regarding the later, in which the trick is not to assimilate "'invention' to 'fabrication' and 'falsity', rather than to 'imagining' and 'creation'" (Anderson 1983:15), is equally applicable in the case of the former. This is not to say that I agree with Levine's (1990) recommendation, in response to Hanson, that one not confuse 'invention' (appearance) with 'political ideology' (substance).

Ideology is, of course, invented and performed; appearance can be substantive. Rather, as Jocelyn Linnekin puts it, "the ethically problematic aspect...is the way the thesis of cultural invention [and I would add performance of ethnic identity] is portrayed and understood outside anthropology" (Linnekin 1991:446). My concern is that the notion that ethnic identity is performance has a tendency to circle back to, but not assist, debates about 'authenticity'; the question remains: can one talk about the performance of ethnic identity (like the invention of tradition) without the subjects of analysis being offended? Does 'performance' invariably conjure up notions of trickery, dissimulation, 'putting up an act' (Fabian 1990:20)?

Or, to give Sharp and Boonzaier (1993,1994a) the benefit of the doubt, ought the question perhaps to be: is the specific case of identity politics that they discuss the 'grand opera' of ethnicity? There is much in their argument to suggest that this is the case, to imply that ethnicity as 'controlled identity politics', with a strongly reflexive element that indicates "a degree of self-awareness and restraint not normally associated with ethnicity" (Boonzaier
1993:15) is an anomaly. It strikes me as immensely problematic to assume that ethnic politics is somewhere, anywhere, unreflexive, unrestrained and uncontrolled on all levels, among all politicians and political actors. I believe that conscious manipulation, 'scripting' (to continue the metaphor), is always a feature of ethnicity. We have to ask who the 'script-writer' is.

In this regard, Emile Boonzaier says that "we need to ask why, in the Richtersveld, [this] self-consciousness was so obviously apparent?" (ibid. :16). Why ethnicity was, in that case, so distinctly reflexive becomes a matter of individual 'casting' and 'scripting'. What particularised the articulation of 'Nama-ness' that Boonzaier (ibid.) and Sharp and Boonzaier (1993, 1994a) discuss -- and I must add, within that part of South Africa and at that point in time (a similar case, I believe, being that tentatively documented by Hylton White 1995) -- was not the outcome of a highly reflexive 'extended-case study' methodology, nor an enacted and revelatory understanding of the processual dialogic between 'etic' and 'emic' (Boonzaier 1993).

Rather, it was the fact that 'aboriginal' politics, the primordial politics of 'First People', is the politics of and by elites. 'Autochthonous' and 'Fourth World' politics is so obviously reflexive because the politicians involved are not entertaining 'the masses', yet also not deliberately striving to ostracise them. Their politics, be it ethnic or otherwise, is not about, nor need it be about, critical mass. In fact, I would go so far as to say that, as a matter of definition, 'aboriginals' or 'indigenes' performing 'aboriginality' must be and are reflexive. If this were not the case they would be doing something else, of a very different political flavour (if at all political).

Not only do I object to the fact that Sharp and Boonzaier do not acknowledge the centrality of elites in articulations of 'Nama' ethnicity. An additional, and perhaps more worrisome problem with Sharp and Boonzaier's (1993, 1994a) argument is that it operates by inscribing an implicit dichotomy, an epistemological split into a
performed political feature, and a non-performed, socio-cultural characteristic or aspect. The performance of ethnic identity is not necessarily some societal alter-ego. There is no societal ego that is not performed, and an adjunctive, extra-ordinary alter-ego that is. There are always performances of 'ego', performed assertions of ethnic distinction, and each performance of 'ego' or ethnic identity is distinct(ive). Sometimes 'ego' is foregrounded, overcommunicated -- to use Goffman's (1959) well versed notion -- and at other times underplayed, backgrounded, and the discursive nature of performance is a matter of interaction with an audience (or multiple audiences) and associated improvisation or "spontaneous invention" (Turner 1986:26).

In some respects, therefore, the performance of ethnic identity is as much 'lived culture' as any other political and socio-cultural practice, pronouncement or enunciation of meaning. If there is one important lesson from hermeneutics it is that meaning is symbolically constructed in the present, that identities have to do with contemporary concerns and purposes, with the exigencies of now. Hence the importance of reflexive situational analysis, of contingently examining contingency. A good performance of an ethnic identity -- even if a single staging, a one-off event of considerable power and conviction -- is lauded and commended, a success, because one of multiple cultural identities is effectively (re)fashioned and mobilised, and other identities are effectively sequestered, concealed, or simply non-existent, for the duration of that particular performance. All socio-cultural identities are performed, and perfectly real as such; what is performed is not fictional, imaginary. In fact, and as I have already mentioned, the very salience of the 'hyper-real', the 'virtual', indicates precisely how real these are. What is situationally performed and overcommunicated (Goffman 1959) is as real, effectively, as what is simultaneously and indexically undercommunicated.
Finally, and importantly, Sharp and Boonzaier's (1993, 1994a) suggestion that ethnic identity is 'performance' is plagued by a total neglect of the genre of 'performance anthropology' that, as I hope to have illustrated, can contribute significantly to conceptualising and interpreting processes of ethnic identity formation. I am reluctant to summarily dismiss the idea that there is an element of staging in the enunciation of ethnic identities. Indeed, I am opposed to such a move. But so too am I reluctant to embrace, for analytical purposes, the idea that ethnic identity is performance. 'Performance' strikes me as stranded between a generalising tendency to argue that everything is performance, and an essentialising tendency to assert that only some things of socio-political significance and epistemological interest are performed.

I find Turner's notion of 'social drama' more useful than 'performance', largely because it cannot be applied in broad brush-stroke fashion. 'Social drama' militates against universalism. I have hinted in the discussion above, that ethnic identities need to be understood processually, that social drama is both an aspect of a process, and yet process itself. To adopt Fabian (1990:9, emphasis his), social drama "is the text in its moment of actualization," it is a moment in a process, a discursive niche (itself structured and structuring) surrounded by open-endedness. Social drama, 'identity politics' as practice, is dialogic, action, "but not merely enactment of a pre-existing script; it is making, fashioning, creating" (ibid.:13). In methodologising social drama selectively one is able to address the question: what then of acts of exceptional political intensity, of heightened political and social significance (to the subjects under scrutiny and central to one's study)?

Thus, in an effort to introduce power and process, and embrace the contingency of ethnic identity formation by singling out performative units of observation, I find Victor Turner's 'social drama' imminently appropriate. All social drama is performance, but all performance is not
social drama. The notion of social drama allows the accessing of the 'stuff' of clusters of meaning created and evoked during ethnogenesis. Given that ethnicity is a matter of conflict, socio-political contestation, 'social drama' provides a way of accessing and analysing the "eruption" (Turner 1986:90) of particular process as, and into, social life. By approaching the bar debate as social drama one is able to tease apart the multitude of political positions, arguments, antagonisms, and the shifts in these that were a feature of the bar debate and accompanying overt assertions of '!'Xuness' and the subliminal positing of 'Khweness'.

CHAPTER SIX

FACTIONALISM AND NATIONALITY: LEADERSHIP
AND THE POLITICS OF (DIS)PLACEMENT

post-modernism, late modernity, and the
phantasmagorics of timespace

Displacement often appears as the equally defining
feature of the two main periods into which the cultural
history of our century is typically divided: modernism
and postmodernism (Bammer 1994:xii).

The world is increasingly connected, though not
unified, economically and culturally. Local
particularism offers no escape from these involvements.
Indeed, modern ethnographic histories are perhaps
condemned to oscillate between [across] two
metanarratives: one of homogenization, the other of
emergence; one of loss, the other of invention. In
most specific conjunctures both narratives are
relevant, each undermining the other's claim to tell
'the whole story', each denying the other a privileged,
Hegelian [dialectical] vision. Everywhere in the world
distinctions are being destroyed and created...
(Clifford 1988:17, emphasis his).

Taking my lead from James Clifford, this chapter is
built around the questions:

What does it mean at the end of the twentieth century,
to speak... of a 'native land'? What processes rather
than essences are involved in [present] experiences of
cultural identity? (ibid.:275, original emphasis).

Are cultural identities always, essentially becoming
increasingly deterritorialised, or is there a dialogue, in
practice, between deterritorialisation and
terms the "politics of nostalgia," the politics of
displacement, invariably, if not inevitably, about the
politics of replacement?

In The Consequences of Modernity, Anthony Giddens
dwells at length on the dynamic 'juggernaut' -- the term is
his (Giddens 1990:151-173) -- of late modernity, on the
rapid pace of change (strongly akin, in application, to Rey Chow's 1993:165-180 enthralling discussion of "speed culture"), the immense scope of change, and the multi-dimensionality of socio-political institutions -- embedded in "the separation of time and space and their recombination in forms which permit the precise time-space 'zoning' of social life; the disembedding of social systems...; and the reflexive ordering and reordering of social relations in the light of continual inputs of knowledge affecting the actions of individuals and groups" (Giddens 1990:16-17, emphasis his; see also Giddens 1991). Of particular importance here, is his statement that

[in conditions of modernity, place becomes increasingly phantasmagoric: that is to say, locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them. What structures the locale [local?] is not simply that which is present on the scene; the 'visible form' of the locale conceals the distanciated relations which determine its nature (Giddens 1990:18-19).

For Giddens, the prime condition of the process of disembedding, a cornerstone of post-modern sociality, is time-space separation or distanciation; social activity and practice becomes removed and disconnected from specific, unitary contexts of presence or the immediacies of context:

By disembedding I mean the 'lifting out' of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructured across indefinite spans of time-space (ibid.:21).

Disembedding, in its reorganisation of social relations across large (even what Giddens 1991 refers to as "indefinite") timespace distances, disrupts time-space imbrication. But it does so orderly, and "serves to open up manifold possibilities of change by breaking free from the restraints of local habits and practices" (Giddens 1990:20). Time and space are thus continually de-combined and re-combined through practice, in sociality. Therefore, "the image evoked by disembedding is...able to capture the shifting alignments of time and space which are of elementary importance for social change in general and for the nature of modernity in particular" (ibid.:22).
Crucially, 'disembedding mechanisms' do not militate against specificity of meaning and praxis, a contextual and contingent hermeneutics. They do exactly the obverse, and in fact highlight indexicality by providing means of precise spatial and temporal zoning (ibid.:53).

Here I take a leaf from Homi Bhabha's discussion of 'frontlines/borderposts':

What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the necessity of thinking beyond initial categories and initiatory subjects and focusing on those interstitial moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of 'differences' [critical cultural distinctions]. These spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood and communal representations that generate new signs of cultural difference and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation (Bhabha 1994b:269).

Thus, concentrating (anti-teleologically) on disembedding, on the conceptual framework of time-space distanciation, but with reference to "the act of articulating" (ibid.:272) or the moment of enunciation (Bhabha 1994a:36; see Thomas 1994), "directs our attention to the complex relations between local involvements (circumstances of co-presence) and interaction across distance (the connections of presence and absence)" (Giddens 1990:64, emphasis his). Disembedding is therefore the process whereby 'local' practices are linked to extra- or trans-'local' practices and relations. Importantly, disembedding is usually met with 'reembedding' -- "the reappropriation or recasting of disembedded social relations so as to pin them down...to local conditions of time and place" (ibid.:79-80). The cohabitation of disembedding and reembedding is alluded to in Modernity and Self-Identity, in which Giddens argues that "[t]he organisations and organisation so characteristic of modernity are inconceivable without the reintegration of separated time and space" (Giddens 1991:17, emphasis mine).

I view this relationship between disembedding and reembedding as strongly dialogical, and I therefore draw from Giddens (1990,1991) with caution (Appadurai 1994:327 elaborates on this dialogic as the "negotiation between
sites of agency...and globally defined fields of possibility". Giddens' ideas have analytical and explanatory value only in so far as they can be applied without falling foul of his rigid dialectical theory (see Chapter Two for an overview of some limitations of dialectical social theory) and his extremely problematic, and indeed facile contrast of 'modernity' and 'tradition'. There is, of course, no necessary contradiction between modernity (be it 'late', 'high', or neither) and tradition. Giddens' 'tradition' is analogous to Eric Hobsbawm's equally esoteric "custom" (Hobsbawm 1983:2). 'Tradition', following Hobsbawm (1983) is very much part and parcel of modernity, as illustrated by factitious continuity and invariance -- aspects of sociality that restate the disjuncture implicit in time-space distanciation (see Appadurai 1990,1994; Gupta and Ferguson 1992).

In the argument below I focus on the politics of displacement and the idiom of tradition (its alienation from and (re)insertion in a timespace). I argue that for one displaced elite faction at Schmidtsdrift tradition and traditionality functioned as a 'reembedding mechanism', and that any understanding of tradition -- more specifically, traditional leadership -- requires a thorough analysis of ideological peripatetics. The emphasis is therefore on the geographical and spatial imagination (Soja 1993), on how social life (or what I call sociality) is ordered across time and/in space (Giddens 1990,1991; Gupta and Ferguson 1992).

Anthropological analyses of tradition have tended to comply with a problematic and narrow conceptual framework that is rigidly temporal (see, for example Hobsbawm 1983. Friedman 1990 offers a partial exception to this norm). 'Age', 'authenticity', 'primordia' all become matters of time. Time, in such studies, is the nub of complex narrative and discursive conceptions of socio-cultural distinction. Here I agree with Simon During's comments on Edward Soja's work:
[Soja] argues that modern academic study has, in the modern era, privileged time and history over space and geography. This has meant that modernity has been interpreted too quickly and simply as destroying and replacing traditions -- whereas, Soja argues, it is more sensitively to be interpreted as a complex reorganization of temporal and spatial relations (During 1993:135).

This 'reorganisation' may well include appeals to tradition or the explicit mobilisation of the discourse of traditionality. What I present here is an argument that stresses the importance of conceptualising tradition as both temporal and spatial. I start from an epistemological position that posits the spatialisation of time and the temporalisation of space in social practice. To borrow from Edward Soja, "rather than being mutually exclusive, they are 'in' one another in ways that make their intertwining as important as their differentiation" (Soja 1993:113). Thus, space and time are integral to the making and (pro)claiming of cultural identities, be they national or otherwise, in which people are "both here and there and neither here nor there at one and the same time" (Bammer 1994:xiii, emphasis hers). In foregrounding 'the making of geographies', I am asserting spatiality in an implicit critique of a persistent ontological and theoretical historicism that has tended to subsume the spatial in its dominance [in] critical discourse. My intention is not to replace historicism with an equally subsumptive spatialism, but to achieve a more appropriate trialectical [read dialogical] balance in which neither spatiality, historicity, nor sociality is interpretively privileged a priori (Soja 1993:115).

real people are hyphenated people
(Rey Chow 1993:123)

important tensions may arise when places that have been imagined at a distance must become lived spaces
(Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson 1992:11)

To return to Schmidtsdrift. A large number of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen aristocrats had experienced a two-fold
displacement in national terms, others had experienced a single dislocation of nationality (in this chapter I use this term to refer to country of residence, and by 'politics of nationality' I mean contestation surrounding country of birth or origin. In other words, there is a play on the ambiguity of 'nationality'). The former were those of Angolan origin (having gone from Angola to Namibia, and then to South Africa), whereas the latter were born in Namibia (having made the move from Namibia to South Africa). However, people from both of these categories, as I have stated elsewhere, were not refugees -- they were South African nationals. Nor were they, strictly speaking, migrants -- "the involuntary passengers-in-transit between cultures, for whom homelessness is the only home 'state'" (Chow 1993:179). As I hope to illustrate below, 'Namibian' Khwe, most certainly leaders from within this category, described their situatedness, their socio-political location, as resembling 'migranthood' (the concept is Stuart Hall's), or more accurately, exile. 'Namibian' Khwe elites explained that they left 'Namibia' so as to maintain, if not better, their predicament by leaving behind conditions that they speculated would be worse than those they had enjoyed and were likely to continue to enjoy in South Africa. They 'exiled' themselves because of reservations about and unhappiness with a nascent political, social, and economic order in Namibia, but were reluctant to dismiss the possibility of returning to Namibia in the future.

'Namibian' Khwe leaders thus had a strategy embedded in displacement, a strategy that differed from that of their 'Angolan' counterparts who were determined to create a permanent existence in South Africa. For both, political strategies in the midst of disembeddedness provided for the transforming of history into "readable spaces" (de Certeau 1984:36) and the transforming of spaces into readable (tellable) time. Both 'Namibian' and 'Angolan' Khwe elites approached the experience and process of displacement as proffering a discourse that was "sustained and determined by
the power to provide oneself with one's own place" (de Certeau 1984:36).

Apart from 'the moral imperative', there is a prospective bent to transmigration and 'exile'. I have said that many 'Namibian' elites expressed the desire to return to family and friends in Namibia in the future -- probably, they ventured, on retirement or if things turned sour in South Africa. In this sense, they were deliberately seeking 'the best of both worlds', positioning themselves strategically so as to optimise their chances of being located or sited where 'the grass was always greener'. They were the resolutely transnational, arguably cosmopolitan. This was overcommunicated at a specific moment during fieldwork, in an instant that foregrounded their "[de)territorialized mode [as] a form of interference" (Chow 1993:142, emphasis hers).

Arjun Appadurai describes how "deterritorialization creates new markets for [those] who thrive on the need of the deterritorialized population for contact with its homeland. Naturally, these invented homelands...can often become sufficiently fantastic and one-sided that they provide the material for new ideoscapes in which [ethnic] conflicts can begin to erupt" (Appadurai 1990:302). At Schmidtsdrift a market was created around telecommunications and the remittance of wages -- "technoscapes" and "financescapes" (ibid.:297-8) that served the need for 'Namibian' Khwe to maintain contact with, and forward money and goods to, kith and kin in Namibia. But more importantly, Namibia, as an 'imagined world', or 'invented homeland', did become 'sufficiently fantastic' not to enable ethnic conflict, but to facilitate factional, 'intra-ethnic' conflict.

nothing is said about witchcraft which is not closely governed by the situation of utterance
(Favret-Saada 1980:14)
A delegation from the Namibian High Commission visited Schmidtsdrift in December 1994. This delegation consisted of the Namibian ambassador and his assistant, who went to Schmidtsdrift in order to present the bushmen with the conditions of their possible return to Namibia. The bushmen were told that going back to Namibia was a very real and tangible option for those who wished to leave South Africa, and that they would have to leave under the conditions that applied to all immigrants. The fact that immigration to Namibia was formalised, that the possibility of bushmen returning to Namibia was not mere rhetoric, was met with a very specific response among Khwe leaders.

The political distinction between 'Namibian' Khwe ("Hlokwe") and 'Angolan' Khwe ("Mbumakwe") emerged as a locus of dissension when it was disclosed that Namibia would conditionally permit the return of people from Schmidtsdrift. In this chapter I discuss the politics of national identity (in this instance manifesting in a form of factionalism among elites) and tradition as they pertained to Khwe aristocracy, all of whom were adults (Khwe elites were, without exception, over the age of twenty years and were therefore born outside of Namibia). The terms 'Namibian' and 'Angolan' appear in inverted commas because, when talking about Khwe adults, particularly those over the age of twenty (born prior to joining the SADF), their experiences prior to the mid-1970s tended to show that the national border between Namibia and Angola, or being of Angolan or Namibian nationality, was of little (if any) significance. A high degree of mobility across this border and between these two countries (also encompassing movement across the borders of Zambia and Botswana) meant, early on, that national identity was a socially and politically ambiguous issue of little or no consequence whatsoever (see Chapter Three).

National identity, however, emerged as an important ideological marker in the years following the inclusion of bushmen into the SADF and the onset of intense patrolling and policing of the national boundary between Angola and
Namibia. Appeals to national identity were also a function of demographics and authority: 'Angolan' Khwe adults (from which leaders were drawn) were in the majority at Schmidtsdrift; 'Namibian' Khwe adults constituted approximately one-fifth of the total number of Khwe adults at the base (Archer 1995; !Xu and Khwe Trust Survey, March 1994). Moreover, and unlike their 'Angolan' counterparts, although relatively well educated and informally respected within the military-institutional matrix, none of the 'Namibian' Khwe elite carried rank.

The importance attributed to the 'Angolan'/'Namibian' distinction was attested to by a number of witchcraft accusations and counter-accusations, and by 'local' conflict over political authority, legitimacy and representivity. This conflict was factional because it incorporated a kind of collective narcissism among members of an aristocratic cabal within an 'ethnic group' (in so much as Khwe could be described as constituting an ethnic group through counter-positioning relative to !Xu. In this respect, the conflict articulated along the lines of nationality was indeed 'anti-ethnic', in that it denied the validity of homogenising as is implied by ethnic identification). Central to this moment of dispute was the contestation of tradition and the negotiation of traditionality. In the days following the Namibian High Commission representatives' visit to Schmidtsdrift, 'Namibian' Khwe leaders claimed that Kuamwamwa Makua -- the traditional Khwe leader and patriarch at the base -- was bewitching them because they did not want to leave South Africa and return to kin in the Caprivi in northern Namibia. They repeatedly explained that Kuamwamwa (and 'Angolan' Khwe in general) was threatening them because of their reluctance to depart in the face of diminishing resources for the people at Schmidtsdrift. 'Angolan' Khwe leaders, including Kuamwamwa, denied this and claimed, dismissively, that 'Namibian' Khwe were creating unnecessary tension, and that senior 'Namibian' Khwe were bewitching them as a result of their supposed entrenched animosity (since time immemorial) towards 'Angolans'.

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When asked about the apparently pugnacious character and severity of these accusations, Robert Derenge (see Chapter Three) told me that there are stories that the Namibian Khwe are telephoning their parents and complaining about their treatment here...they are saying that we ['Angolan' Khwe] are treating them badly. But they are looking for trouble, they are bringing it [antagonism] upon themselves [....] Their stories are incorrect...Kuamwamwa cannot bewitch people, he is no witch...

Similarly, according to Nicolaas Tenda:

...they ['Namibian' Khwe] say that the Angolan people said that the South-Westers ['Namibians'] must return. But this story [...] is a result of having heard incorrectly, it is a misunderstanding. Things were not meant that way, they ['Angolan' Khwe leaders] were really not saying that all South-Westers must go away. They said...like the ambassador who was here [this is a reference to the Namibian ambassador and his assistant]...they asked: 'if you wish to go back, how do you go about organising and arranging it?'. The South-Westers thought that we wanted to know so that we could send them back. That was where the problem arose....Kuamwamwa himself was standing at the shop, talking. He said that only those who are Namibian people, who were born in Namibia, can go back [...] it is only they who will be allowed to return. He said that the Namibian government will not accept you if you were born in Angola. Kuamwamwa asked: 'how will people go back, what will they get?'. He spoke about these things outside the shop...he was curious, and it upset the South-Westers...they didn't understand him. They said that Kuamwamwa and Angolans were forcing them to say that they will leave and return to their parents [...] they said that Angolan people were trying to force Namibians to return. But no one said that they must leave, no one actually said that.

As I earlier suggested, Kuamwamwa confirmed this, together with not being a witch. He claimed that he had spoken about the meeting convened at the request of the Namibian ambassador, and that he had asked other people about the content of the meeting. He was, he said, especially curious about the conditions that were spelt out for prospective returnees. He stressed that he was not suggesting that 'Namibian' Khwe must go back to the Caprivi. 'Namibian' Khwe leaders, however, were adamant:
Robert and Sergeant Kuamwamwa were saying 'it is your time', that 'it is our time' -- for those of us who were born in Namibia, people who were initially from Namibia. They said 'you must go because you say that you are struggling here, that you are unhappy, that this place is unpleasant [...] you may never get another chance like this'.

What Jason Marenda (a soldier without rank but who was held in high regard by the major, a member of the headquarters company, and a trustee) had to say about the rhetoric surrounding the possibility of returning to Namibia was endorsed by Wentzel Katjara:

They ['Angolan' Khwe elite] have now decided that all of the Namibians must go back [...] all of us must return to our parents, brothers and sisters. That is what Sergeant Kuamwamwa said. I don't know why he said it, I don't know what's wrong [...] but I heard that Kuamwamwa is a witch, that he can inflict harm. We ['Namibian' Khwe leaders] didn't know about this until recently...it surfaced around this Namibia issue. I told Kuamwamwa that it is not just us ['Namibian' Khwe elites] who say that he is a witch, but his people too, people who came out of Angola with him. They are saying that he is a witch. He feels very bad about it...yes, it angers him, and he denies the accusations. But a witch never admits it, never acknowledges that he is one. You have to catch him in the act. At the shop Johan told Kuamwamwa: 'it is not us who call you a witch, it is your people. How could we know about your history in Angola? Your people know you, not us...'

Wentzel's reference to Johan Beregho is important. Johan was a 'Namibian' Khwe without rank but of high status because of his function (predominantly military) as the official Khwe translator. This brought Johan respect among most fellow soldiers and commanding officers. Furthermore, Johan was a member of the Trust, the Khwe council, and a senior member of the Dutch Reformed Church (it was only Mario and Johan who regularly preached and conducted sermons in this church. When Mario was away, Johan assumed his position as the local head of the Dutch Reformed Church). I was recurrently told that Johan had been singled out and bewitched by 'Angolan' Khwe leaders, primarily because he did not want to remain at Schmidtsdrift and was intent on leaving the base (he had in fact approached the commanding officer at Schmidtsdrift and spoken to a colonel at 3 SAI about the possibility of he and his family acquiring
accommodation in Kimberley). Robert, for example, spoke of how

on Johan's side [among 'Namibian' Khwe], people came out [moved to South Africa] as children, they were very young and without their parents....Traditionally it is the elders, the parents, who are leaders, who are listened to and respected. Now this is not possible among them [ 'Namibian' Khwe]...they have to listen to other people who they don't honor [...] they have no leaders of their own...

Likewise, Nicolaas explained that

[their parents explained that the] parents told them not to leave. But people chose not to pay attention, they ignored the wisdom of their parents. That is a sin...some soldiers just came, they decided by themselves: 'I am a man, I will go with everyone else'. They are trouble-makers [...] there are trouble-makers among the young soldiers. They must not forget what we [who are older] have been through, the lessons that we have learnt, our tradition and culture. They must not forget what their parents said to them: 'go [...] but you will not be able to live like you can if you stay here'. Now they ['Namibian' Khwe elite] are saying: 'we don't have parents, not with us, and those people ['Angolan' Khwe] are treating us like this, this, this...we want this, this, this. We don't want to hear that. Their parents told them: 'you must not go there'...but they came anyway.

There is an irony here in that neither Robert or Nicolaas were elders, and yet both were powerful leaders (certainly the most authoritative of Khwe elites). The fact that political processes and leadership structures among the Khwe incorporated, albeit marginally, an elder allowed the construction of disjunctive traditionality and appeals to a highly ambiguous political tradition. It was the political and ideological versatility, inherent in the dialogic constitution of tradition -- in form and content -- invented and reinvented to (re)construct the past in, for, and from the present (see Spiegel 1994:196) that made traditionality a central aspect of Khwe aristocracy and politics.

This brings me back to Johan who, if anyone, had acutely experienced some implications of the distinction between 'Namibian' Khwe and 'Angolan' Khwe. Johan's personal reflections on the politiking surrounding this
distinction point up the discursive ambiguity that inheres in 'tradition':

Yes, some of us left our parents in Namibia [...] but my parents, my family agreed that I should go, that I should keep my job. They knew that I would be able to visit them and send them money, and that I may return when I am finished in the army. But also, I can make decisions on my own, by myself...I am married and have children, I have my own family to look after. I do not have to ask permission, make sure that it is right every time I want to do something.

And look at them [...] do Robert, Nicolaas, Wentzel, all of them [other Khwe leaders] always listen to the old people? Do they listen to their parents, to Kuamwamwa? It is about other things...the Angolans are bewitching the Namibians. The last time we met with Kuamwamwa he said that we will die if he chooses to bewitch us. It was the first time we heard it [...] we knew nothing about it at Omega, we knew nothing about Kuamwamwa's witchcraft, that he made people ill and killed people. Only here, recently, did we hear that he can actually do people harm, injure them...and now he is inflicting it upon us, not just because we are Namibian, but because he says that we are fabricating stories about him, that we are lying. But that is not true. He is deceiving himself...even his own children say that he has the equipment witches use (toergoedis) and that he can hurt us [...] There was recently a motor accident in which a man died. Kuamwamwa predicted that it would happen...before the accident he told that man: 'you will see your death, you will die soon [...] you will see death...'

They ['Angolan' Khwe leaders] call me Hlokwe...dry Khwe, from the dry parts of Namibia, Caprivi. But there is no such thing...not anymore. Such a thing does not exist these days....But there has been a problem from the beginning until now. It is a result of Kuamwamwa bewitching me that things are bad, that I had problems with my car, that my wife was ill and now me. That is why I don't want to live with them ['Angolan' Khwe]...my health will deteriorate if I remain here. But that's just me [...] Look, the difference between Namibian Khwe and Angolan Khwe has to do with the fact that some Namibian people did not bring their parents with them. The Angolans are saying those without parents must return....There has been a lot of politics around this...we eventually had to speak to the major. It was agreed that a solution must be found, that the leaders must demand that people stop talking about these stories...[they must tell people] 'it will not happen, one side cannot tell the other it [they] must go away'. I applied to move, to go to 3 SAI in order to get away from this politics, but they [commanding officers] said that I would have to stay here...it will be fine if everyone agrees that we cannot be forced to do things we do not want to do.
Johan's position demonstrates the ideological importance and 'fatal attraction' of tradition among Khwe aristocrats, regardless of whether it is conceived as a contemporary construction or primordial attribute. Johan subverted tradition that was, in his understanding, transparent, recent and flawed invention (fictional as opposed to fictive). However, he did not contest a tradition of animosity between 'Namibian' and 'Angolan' Khwe. Factionalism defined along the lines of nationality was traditional. Tradition, therefore, was both a good and bad idea, immediately and resolutely beneficial and damaging.

Johan could not provide a reason for having been singled out and bewitched by Kuamwamwa, but he did suggest that it was possibly because he was a 'Namibian' Khwe of particular political prominence (given his standing in the Dutch Reformed Church and his role as Khwe translator). Furthermore, Johan was ambitious, upwardly mobile and well educated (at the risk of repetition, and generally speaking, 'Namibian' Khwe leaders were better educated than 'Angolan' Khwe elites because of a history of more extensive, sustained and effective European colonial intervention in northern Namibia than in southern Angola). And, most significantly, since the vast majority of the members of the Dutch Reformed Church were !Xu, Johan's involvement in this institutional formation meant that he was highly respected and supported as a leader by a large number of !Xu. Thus, much of his popularity and political legitimacy and clout was derived from outside the Khwe camp, and beyond Kuamwamwa's immediate (even if relatively weak) sphere of influence.

In other words, Kuamwamwa was probably being labelled a witch because Johan (like Wentzel, Jason and other 'Namibian' Khwe leaders) understood his position to be precarious, and it thus made perfect sense to depict Kuamwamwa as attempting to scare and intimidate people, especially novitiate elites who were perceived to be a threat, in an effort to sustain his own senior standing as
an elder. But this does not explain, as far as Kuamwamwa was concerned, why young 'Angolan' Khwe leaders were not similarly perceived as a threat.

'Angolan' Khwe elites were, for the most part, ambivalent when it came to commenting on Kuamwamwa's position. They did, however, and almost without exception, comment on the importance of traditional leadership, and some, like Nicolaas and José Jutembo, emphasised that Kuamwamwa was the rightful incumbent of traditional authority. Others, such as Robert and Gatera Kojovo, were more reluctant to endorse Kuamwamwa's position, yet also hesitant to deny it. Robert, for example, was not convinced of the importance of traditional Khwe leaders (as one might have expected, Robert had no claim to being a traditional leader). The cabal of 'Namibian' Khwe leaders, on the other hand, recognised traditional leadership, but not in the form of Kuamwamwa (I discuss this in greater length below). They simply refused to obey and respect Kuamwamwa as their traditional authority.

I think that Kuamwamwa was appealing to witchcraft, and was labelled a witch, as a show of strength, as part of an exercise of and in authority in an attempt to secure and maintain his position as a Khwe leader and the traditional Khwe leader at Schmidtsdrift. This was a spatio-political strategy for the legitimation of a certain existence and structure of authority in displacement. As such, he was engaging in what René Girard (1977) refers to as "generative scapegoating" in which individually instigated violent unanimity was directed at someone with few -- if any -- means of reprisal, and with the net result of maintaining and/or bolstering his individual legitimacy.

I want to turn to the foregrounding of nationality, as a spatio-temporal referent, in exchanges and rhetoric that
surrounded the Namibian ambassador's visit to Schmidtsdrift, but with a focus on the position of traditional leadership, the place of traditionality, and the centrality of Kuamwamwa in specific Khwe political process. It is interesting that witchcraft was, discursively, aligned with tradition. In the section below, I move away from explicitly discussing the issue of witchcraft among Khwe elite. As mentioned in Chapter Four, in contrast with the !Xu council, the Khwe council had an elder whose presence (most of the time undecommunicated) illustrated and provided continuity in membership and structures of authority. Kuamwamwa was a veteran sergeant in his sixties, who was still in Defence Force employ. His legitimacy as an elder and 'civil' leader was derived, historically, from his experiences as a 'military' leader (his authority derived from rank and heroism) and as the leader of the Khwe council at Omega military base (for roughly a decade from the late 1970s to the late 1980s).

His authority was unquestioned by a large number of !Xu, Khwe, and army officers. Indeed, numerous people related how much they respected Kuamwamwa as a headman, a position he occupied by virtue of both ascription and achievement (see Comaroff 1978 for a similar, although strongly structural-dialectical argument). This combination of factors meant that his status was highly ambiguous, challenged by those who argued that he was an illegitimate headman (in terms of secession) and/or those who simply refused to honor him because he was 'Angolan' (as discussed above). On the other hand, Kuamwamwa's position was supported by those who understood him to embody a semblance of socio-political constancy and consistency.

Kuamwamwa's authority was limited, certainly extremely parochial and, as I have already suggested, frequently contested. Although the military was instrumental in the creation and sanctioning of his authority, his judicio-political competence had been eroded over time by the army and younger leaders, and more recently, the presence of the Trust. Kuamwamwa's legitimacy was challenged on a number of
fronts. He was, according to some conversants, an ancillary and redundant soldier -- no longer an engrossing hero but an old and babbling veteran. In addition, Kuamwamwa brewed beer ("tomp") and school children during term and soldiers on duty were often found drunk at his tent. Furthermore, he was frequently drunk himself, and regularly arrived at the head-quarters inebriated. This together with popular knowledge of his sons' anger towards him (due to his poor treatment of them), and the accusations of witchcraft (mentioned earlier) and of neglecting his many wives, resulted in growing feelings of disrespect among Khwe soldiers and the commanding officer, all of whom were questioning his position as a leader, as someone who should 'lead by example'.

But I think most significantly, there was a challenge, articulated by some of the younger Khwe leaders (novitiates) to Kuamwamwa's right to claim traditional leadership. I was told that the correct and legitimate 'headman' had been Tjerungu, sergeant José Jutembo's recently deceased father (Tjerungu passed away at Schmidtsdrift on 24.8.1993, at the age of seventy-eight years). Khwe 'civil' leadership was determined, in part, by rules of secession that were, technically, separable from the thralls of the military: firstly the 'nephew' of the deceased leader was to inherit the title of traditional leader; secondly, the oldest 'nephew' was to receive this position; thirdly, if the second condition could not be met, the "most appropriate" 'nephew' or next closest "suitable" and "competent" male by descent was to take the place of the deceased leader, and; fourthly, the heir to traditional Khwe leadership had to be identified by the previous leader and then officially sworn in and formally consecrated in the wake of this leader's death (José Jutembo and Nicolaas Tenda, personal communication, February 1996). An additional 'rule' was implicit: given the fact that many Khwe had remained in Namibia, the most fitting individual might have been absent from Schmidtsdrift, and therefore, whoever was 'chosen' to assume the role of traditional leader, was to do so bearing
this possibility in mind. In other words, were the 'correct' leader to translocate to Schmidtsdrift, the previously appointed leader would have had to stand down. Whatever the case, the room for ambiguity in these rules, as they stand, should be readily apparent. This situation strongly paralleled the prescriptive rules of Tshidi chiefship that are described by John Comaroff: rules that "provide a systematic basis for ongoing political competition and a means for imposing order upon it" (Comaroff 1978:4,14), a politics in which "legitimacy is a negotiable value" (ibid.:6).

Unlike Comaroff's argument, that "these rules, then, constitute the formal elements of a conceptual repertoire which underlies political process [per sé]" (ibid.), Khwe politics was 'tainted' by the partiality of these rules and their place in a far more encompassing and embedded politics that lacked the seeming isolation and insularity that Comaroff attributes to Tshidi political praxis. Thus, it would be incorrect to say that Khwe headmanship resembled Tshidi politics in which:

Tshidi chiefship is not reducible to an ascriptive status or a simple institutional arrangement. Rather, it embodies the ideational and organizational framework within which the process of competition for power occurs. In this sense, it is the fulcrum of a dynamic political system (ibid.:12).

I am in absolute agreement with the opening line of this quotation, but traditional Khwe leadership, the rules surrounding it, and the idiom of tradition were an aspect or facet of Khwe political practice, not the fundamental or overarching point of political purchase. The crucial point, though, is that John Comaroff's argument alludes to the ambiguity of (re)presentations of kinship and descent (by virtue of their relentless social constructedness) among the Tshidi.

It is important to mention that among 'Angolan' Khwe leaders at Schmidtsdrift, tradition was spatialised vis-à-vis displacement, and was manifest, in turn, in the spatio-temporal idiom of descent. In fact, kinship was overtly spatial, and constructions and (re)presentations of
genealogies tended to reflect little temporal/generational information (I have tried to reflect this in the annotation of genealogies in the kinship diagrams below; see figures 3. and 4.). Epistemologically, the anthropological inscription of descent has, traditionally, been a predominantly spatial schematic, with linearity (Cartesian -- top to bottom or left to right) denoting time. What was apparent among 'Angolan' Khwe elites at Schmidtsdrift was that the process of displacement was, in enunciation and reflexion, accompanied by the utilisation of kinship, as a metaphorical spaciating or distancing device, in the concomitant politics of traditional leadership. Moreover, descent, the process of tracing and constructing kinship and affinity was not linear; it was of time, not in time. Yet it was of and in space. Kinship, like tradition among 'Angolan' Khwe elites, was strongly spatial.

I have found David Schneider's (1968) work on kinship, in which the dominant theme is a powerful critique of the ethnocentric assumptions that have surrounded (and that currently surround) references to and analyses of kinship particularly useful here. I am at odds with his mechanistic structuralism, but endorse his chiding of anthropology for its tendency to naturalise, universalise, and automatically prioritise the place of kinship in ethnography (thus committing a form of what might be termed 'cultural imperialism'). His argument about the essential "symbolic quality" of affinity not only stresses the importance of realising the relational and culturally constructed 'nature' of kinship -- that it is idiomatic -- but also the centrality of proxemics, of people cross-referentially and relativistically situated in space (Schneider 1968:116). (It is with this in mind that the kinship diagrams below have to be understood; see figures 3. and 4.).

I want to return to the rules of incumbency among the Khwe at Schmidtsdrift. A feature of these rules was the equivocality (not simply derived from a limitation of or shortfall in translation into Afrikaans) of the term 'nephew' (neef). First, there was a temporal ambiguity
surrounding 'nephew': a leader's nephew could have been his 'brother's' or his 'sister's' son (temporally and generationally proximal; see figure 3.1). Alternatively, and to defer meaning by a generation, a leader's nephew could have been his 'cousin' - his father's 'sister's' son or his mother's 'brother's' son (see figure 3.2). Seeing that temporality was not a central aspect of the politics of tradition, descent, and incumbency, these ambiguities hardly mattered.

Second, and more important, the ambiguity inherent in the terms 'brother' and 'sister' provided a spatial displacement of meaning and authority (see figure 3.3 and figure 4.). Men who were fairly distant kin [whether of the same generation or not] could legitimately lay claim to traditional leadership. The 'distance' of these kin, in a genealogical sense, frequently translated into a geophysical span, whereby kin were nationally displaced and 'threatening' to arrive, to become (re)embedded at Schmidtsdrift.

In the case of Kuamwamwa, to say that secession of traditional leadership was a matter of descent from a leader to his 'nephew', meant that he was the correct leader because his mother was the previous leader's 'sister'. The point of contention was the manner in which his mother was Tjerungu's 'sister'. Kuamwamwa asserted that his mother was the sister of Tjerungu by the same conjugal pair or mother and father. Elites contesting Kuamwamwa's position argued that he was too distantly related to Tjerungu -- both in time and space (he was certainly further removed than Tjerungu's son José, who despite not being a neef, was deemed by many as an appropriate or suitable traditional leader. José mentioned that he thought he stood a good chance of being elected Khwe leader if Kuamwamwa were to pass away) -- because Tjerungu was his mother's father's 'brother's' son (and again descent could have been différed through the equivocality of 'brother'). Furthermore, one particularly militant and disgruntled 'Namibian' Khwe elite challenged Kuamwamwa's leadership on the basis that he was
Tjerungu's father's sister's son, and therefore a 'cousin' (neef) as opposed to a 'nephew' (neef). See figures 3. and 4.

Figure 3. Khwe traditional leadership: Kuamwamwa as Tjerungu's 'nephew' -- three possibilities.

Figure 4. Khwe elites: descent and secession.
The strongest argument against Kuamwamwa's position was from some established 'Namibian' Khwe. They emphasised that Kuamwamwa was illegitimate, and that the politics of displacement was about the complexities surrounding access to resources, particularly ideological (although historically this was not simply the case). It will suffice to say that 'Namibian' Khwe leaders felt that their traditional leader was Kipi George who, like Kuamwamwa, had inherited his position from his 'uncle' (Martin Ndumba). Kipi, however, lived at Bagani in the Caprivi Strip, where he was the recognised 'headman' and 'chief' of the Khwe resident there and also at 'Fort Doppies' in the same region. Kipi, unlike Kuamwamwa, had formal and powerful acknowledgement of his position: he held a position in regional government, was recognised by the Namibian state as a traditional bushman leader, and was regarded as such by the Working Group for Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA) (see Thoma and Le Roux 1995).

But despite the fact that many 'Namibian' Khwe at Schmidtsdrift held the view that Kipi was their rightful leader (and not Kuamwamwa), Kipi's status as a traditional leader was open to dispute. 'Angolan' Khwe discussants repeatedly explained that Kipi was the rightful leader in the Caprivi because he had been singled out by his predecessor, Martin Ndumba, and because he had been sworn in as the 'Namibian' Khwe leader. But so too was I told that Martin's son-in-law, Stefanis Ndumba, ought to have been leader (at least Martin had apparently intimated so much while he was an active leader), but was refused access to this position because of his lack of popularity (see figure 4.). Kuamwanwa himself opposed Kipi, largely because he interpreted the formal (state) recognition of Kipi's position as traditional Khwe leader in Namibia as constituting a threat. For Kuamwanwa, Kipi's powerful position was seen as something that might have weakened his constituency and support base at Schmidtsdrift. Why, Kuamwanwa asked, did government and state recognise Kipi and not him? (This foregrounds questions pertaining to
displacement and nationality in the sense that, as far as Kuamwamwa -- and a number of leaders at Schmidtsdrift -- was concerned, the distinction between Namibian state activity and South African state practice -- or the lack thereof -- when it came to bushmen, was not very clear).

I suggested earlier that it was not only 'Namibian' Khwe aristocracy who opposed Kuamwamwa. An aspirant 'Angolan' Khwe leader, along with a number of 'Namibian' leaders, claimed that Kuamwamwa was not the oldest 'nephew' of Tjerungu. He was, in fact, the second oldest. I was also told that Kuamwamwa was not identified by Tjerungu as the leader to follow in his place, and nor was Kuamwamwa formally consecrated as traditional Khwe leader at Schmidtsdrift. The strongest criticism of Kuamwamwa's position was based on the argument that, in so much as genealogies were the principle determinant of traditional and 'civilian' leadership, all descent traced from Tjerungu (regardless of inherent ambiguities) was defective because the Portuguese colonists had made Tjerungu leader without consultation or consent from the bushmen he was told to lead. The argument then went on to emphasise that the SADF had simply picked up where the Portuguese had left off (which is, in some respects only, perfectly correct). As expected, Kuamwamwa challenged and subverted all of this by appealing to a long, continuous history -- by speaking in powerful, emotive and measured tones about tradition and traditional [Khwe] culture. Indeed, and as fleetingly mentioned in Chapter Four, the Khwe council had a 'tradition' and 'culture' portfolio that was filled, and theoretically equally shared, by Kuamwamwa and José (both of whom were 'Angolan' Khwe).

It is thus readily apparent that the politics of traditionality among the Khwe elite was not only centered around an individual, but was also the politics of factional aristocratic interests, the politics of and about nationality (national origins) and hence timespace. I therefore want to turn to a more general spatial history of Khwe associated with the South African military.
When bushmen were first recruited into the SADF, in late 1974, a small group of local or 'Namibian' Khwe signed up as labourers. Their task was to assist with the construction and maintenance of the bushman base (then Alpha Camp) in the Caprivi. The first 'Angolan' Khwe to arrive at this base crossed into Namibia in November 1974 under the leadership of Kuamwamwa. They, together with !Xu who had accompanied them out of Angola, were hastily fashioned into the first operational SADF bushmen unit. Importantly, most of the 'Angolan' Khwe had fighting experience, having served as Flechas in the Portuguese colonial army. 'Namibian' Khwe, on the other hand, were inexperienced and did not present the Defence Force with the logistical advantages that their 'Angolan' counterparts offered.

I think that 'Angolan' Khwe were, certainly as of late 1978, the most profoundly displaced -- in the sense of out-of-placed -- of the bushmen in the army. 'Namibian' Khwe had firm and established roots in the Caprivi, and !Xu effectively had a 'homeland' in Namibia from the time when a large number of them were incorporated into Bushmanland in 1978. 'Angolan' Khwe were without such unequivocal landed places of belonging, spaces of attachment.

In South Africa, on the other hand, 'Namibian' Khwe elite were, discursively, 'betwixt and between'. It should be clearer, then, as to how this state of affairs led to and resulted from conflict. In conversation, many 'Namibian' Khwe elites explained how they and their kin had opposed the presence of 'Angolans' in the Caprivi (prior to, and at the time of, a large exodus from Angola), and that the Defence Force's initial employment of 'Angolans' in 'Project Alpha' (the establishment of the Caprivi 'Bushman Battalion') intensified feelings of resentment. This is reflected in some of what Gatera Kojovo related to me. Gatera, a self-proclaimed 'Angolan' Khwe (who was a prominent member of the Trust -- having accompanied Mario to, and given a presentation at the United Nations Commission for Indigenous Rights in Geneva in 1994) commented at length on past
inequities between Khwe of 'Angolan' and 'Namibian' extraction:

The Caprivi ['Namibian'] Khwe always keep together, they're always together, living close to one another....We ['Angolan' Khwe] talk more than them [...] they keep their ideas and opinions secret, they hide their thoughts. But this conflict is also hidden most of the time...always inside, like the cold war. The tension originates from Kuamwamwa's time, when he brought people to Omega. Then people said that we were refugees, strangers. We told them: 'we ['Angolan' Khwe] developed you...we brought the jobs, we created the employment opportunities in the army'. There was competition for jobs, so people got angry...they ['Namibian' Khwe] wanted the jobs ahead of us. But they didn't understand that the army used bushmen because they already had been soldiers, because we knew how to fight and we knew Angola.

That competition is here...people are saying the same things: 'we brought you ['Namibian' Khwe] here...you came with us because Angolans had to leave'. The way I see it, Angolan Khwe are claiming that South Africa is their country now. They say things like: 'at Omega you ['Namibian' Khwe'] told us that you would one day send us back to Angola. Now we have the right to be here, a legitimate right...and we can do anything, anything, even send you back'.

But I disagree, I do not want to be autocratic like the rest of them. This issue does not interest me at all...it's just the leaders. I think the conflict really has to do with leadership [...] all of the senior leaders, the powerful ones, are Angolan. There are no very powerful Namibians. That has angered some of them ['Namibian' Khwe] -- like Jason and Wentzel...

Much of this was reiterated by Nicolaas:

they ['Namibian' Khwe] said: 'your place is in Angola...if DTA wins [the 1990 election] all of the Angolans will have to leave. Only Namibian citizens can stay here'. We spoke about it and told them: 'alright, we are soldiers who came to Namibia from Angola [...] but there was no one here when we arrived, no one. There was veld, just veld [...] so how can it be your land? There was no one, it was open, free...we ['Angolan' Khwe] cleaned up the place, we helped build a village that everyone was proud of...'

In early 1975, competition surrounding military employment came to a head, and 'Namibian' Khwe originally associated with Project Alpha demanded to be recruited as soldiers. The core group of labourers was taken on, and the army began a series of extensive recruitment drives in the Caprivi, signing up all able-bodied Khwe who volunteered to
serve. Conversants, both bushmen and officers who had served with them or been affiliated to their unit in the Caprivi, described the fading of factional ('Angolan'/'Namibian') Khwe conflict in the years subsequent to 1975.

The Defence Force, however, recognised 'Angolanness' and 'Namibianness' as a point of distinction within and among Khwe, and leadership structures outside of Omega military base consciously incorporated representatives who were 'Angolan' and others who were 'Namibian'. Kuamwamwa, for example, told of how he was forced to leave Omega in 1986 when he was retired from active service. He resettled, with kin, at Bagani, under the immediate authority of Martin Ndumba, the 'civilian-traditional' 'Namibian' Khwe leader at that time. Kuamwamwa thus lost authority (as a councilor, sergeant and experienced soldier), and had to abide by Martin Ndumba who functioned in unison with Tjerungu, the traditional 'Angolan' Khwe leader who lived elsewhere in the Caprivi. Kuamwamwa was thus accountable to a military-facilitated mutual and cooperative system of 'civilian-traditional' leadership. Much of his unease about a coterie of 'Namibian' leaders at Schmidtsdrift can be explained according to the annoyance he expressed with this past state of affairs.

The military preoccupation with the 'Namibian'/'Angolan' distinction was strongly present at Schmidtsdrift. In February 1995, when Defence Force 'potential tests' were to be administered to bushman soldiers (to decide on who should be retrenched during 'rationalisation') there was momentary panic while the commanding officer searched for the requisite two Khwe translators. This disarray stemmed from the purported need to have both a 'Namibian' and an 'Angolan' Khwe translator in an effort to defuse the potential for conflict when the test results were disclosed. The army's concern for 'representivity', in order to alleviate supposedly prescient tension, obviously provided for the production (as opposed to mere 'management') of conflict among Khwe.
But despite the centrality of 'Angolanness' and 'Namibianness' in the army's scheme of things, and in spite of the historical ambiguity of the nationality of Khwe in general (and hence the partiality of factional conflict among leaders), Khwe elites had constructed elaborate narratives of distinction. On a number of occasions, my attention was drawn to the fact that the Head Mountain Apostolic Church at Schmidtsdrift not only had an exclusively Khwe membership, but that the extreme majority were 'Angolan' Khwe. I was told, by a number of 'Namibian' Khwe elites, that the founding members of this church among the Khwe had been 'Namibian', and that these 'Namibians' had grown increasingly disillusioned and frustrated with the church and had in fact resigned. It was certainly true that very few of the 'Angolan' Khwe -- certainly none of the elites among them -- were members of the Dutch Reformed Church (see Chapter Four for more detail -- including historical -- on the religious-political formations at Schmidtsdrift).

The point of this narrative is that 'Namibian' Khwe apparently became increasingly disgruntled with incoming and colonising 'Angolan' Khwe in the Caprivi. 'Namibian' Khwe allegedly eventually grew so disillusioned that they disassociated themselves from 'Angolan' Khwe in and across a number of forums, such as politico-religious institutional formations (they gave up Zionism -- referring to it as "pagan" -- and entered the Dutch Reformed Church) and those concerned with 'civilian' (traditional) leadership (see Chapter Four).

'Namibian' Khwe elites told of how, when the South African Department of Internal Affairs came to Schmidtsdrift to issue the immigrants from Namibia with South African identity documents in early 1990, they were dealt with in a manner different to 'Angolan' Khwe. It was mentioned that 'Angolan' Khwe had to swear that they would accept South African nationality and sever all links with Angola. It was also explained that they had received some form of certificate that accompanied their identity books. I was
told that 'Namibian' Khwe, on the other hand, went through a far easier and smoother process in acquiring citizenship, and were not issued with any form of separate certification. 'Angolan' Khwe leaders, when questioned, denied that there were different paths to South African nationality, and said that everyone at Schmidtsdrift experienced the same treatment and went through a uniform process.

A story that was corroborated by both 'Angolan' and 'Namibian' Khwe elites was that when the Trust was formed, 'Angolan' leaders decided that they would elect Khwe members or representatives from among themselves. Apparently the 'Angolan' leaders met secretly (without communicating the meeting to 'Namibian' leaders) and decided on a list of spokespeople or potential trustees -- later presented to the Trust -- that excluded 'Namibians' from the Trust and the upper-echelons of 'local' politics. 'Namibian' leaders were incensed, and some were chosen as trustees (in fact, executive members) after they had strongly protested the initial election of Khwe trustees. Wentzel recounted this in great depth and clarity, and also told of how, when a Khwe trustee had to be chosen to go to Geneva in order to represent the Khwe at the United Nations (see the above reference to Gatera), 'Angolan' leaders demanded that an 'Angolan' Khwe be sent.

What interests me is not whether these narratives were true or false, but that they existed at all. Local Khwe politics was marked by a factional dispute that involved rich and energetic allegorical and rhetorical elements that hinged, ultimately, around the fact that official word regarding relocation to South Africa in 1990 emphasised that 'Angolans' were to be given the option of leaving Namibia -- of repatriation, of being re-placed. In 1976, General Jannie Geldenhys "promised the Angolan Bushmen that in the event of South West Africa [Namibia] falling under a government which was not well-disposed towards them, a place would be found in South Africa" (Uys 1993:215, emphasis mine).
In 1990, a very real concern, among SADF officers, about the plight of 'Angolan' bushmen in a post-independence Namibia, together with the above pledge, meant that

[the South African Defence Force acting on behalf of the South African government had a moral obligation to fulfill and as such the resettlement of a unique nation took place. The South African Defence acted on pure humanitarian grounds, proving its commitment to the well-being of all people in the Republic of South Africa (SADF, 31 Battalion promotional document, 1991). The Defence Force, and high-ranking personnel did not read the 1976 promise as a covenant, as an unequivocal ultimatum. As a result, both 'Namibians' and 'Angolans' were resettled in South Africa in 1990 -- something that gave both of them considerable, but different, ideological ammunition.

Thus, in the space of a single discussion, some interviewees not only lucidly and vividly described events in which this political schism was deemed important, but also acknowledged that the antecedents of many 'Angolan' and 'Namibian' Khwe were kith and kin, and that the terms 'Namibian' and 'Angolan' have a short and recent history. Indeed, Khwe elites, both 'Angolan' and 'Namibian' explained that prior to the intensified SADF presence in Caprivi in the mid-1970s, Khwe frequently crossed the Angolan/Namibian border in order to visit family and friends, send children to school, and purchase items and foodstuff. A large number of Khwe crossed into the Caprivi in Namibia in the early 1970s in order to escape the war in Angola. One such example was Robert (see Chapter Three). A number of 'Namibian' Khwe leaders contested Robert's status as 'Angolan'. Wentzel, for example, explained that Robert's Angolan credentials were dubious because although he was born there, he entered Namibia at a very young age (nine or ten years old), and grew up, received an education, and was fully incorporated into social networks and formations in Namibia. As far as Robert was concerned, however, he was born in Angola and was therefore essentially Angolan.

Genealogically, 'Namibian' Khwe, such as Wentzel and Johan, had 'Angolan' kin and 'Angolan' Khwe, like Robert,
Jose and Gatera, had 'Namibian' kin. It was precisely this ambiguity in defining 'Namibian' and 'Angolan', the equivocalities of national identity, that fuelled intra-Khwe factionalism around the possibility of people returning to Namibia. In this situation, to be traditional was to be maximally displaced, 'Angolan', legitimately in South Africa and South African. From the perspective of 'Angolan' elites, to be 'Namibian' was to be a-traditional (at best, anti-traditional at worst), erroneously displaced — in fact, misplaced — and illegitimately at Schmidtsdrift, spuriously South African.

iv

at play in the fields of the lords

The irony of these times...is that as actual places become ever more blurred and indeterminate, ideas of culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps even more salient (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:10).

To return to Anthony Giddens (1990), the factional dispute that arose among Khwe leaders around the possibility of people returning to Namibia occurred under a bridging or connecting socio-cultural experience that, as a shared predicament, made it difficult to discriminate between 'Namibians' and 'Angolans'. This common experience, however, was differentiated in effect, reception, response, and this in turn made it easy to emphasise the above distinction. Simply put, both factions had been displaced, but differently. In fact, for both, the 'disembedding mechanism' (the 'device' that had lifted social processes and relations out of the immediately and intensely local, and inserted these in the extra- or trans-local) in social practice and experience was displacement facilitated by the South African military (to continue with Giddens' verbiage, the SADF was a socio-political institution of far-reaching proportions, and as such had served as something of a
'disembedding mechanism'. But so too was the SADF an 'abstract system' in which bushman elites, and those they led, invested considerable trust).

'Angolan' Khwe elites had been radically disembedded in the past and were vociferously and actively opposed to any possibility of further disembedding through displacement. Indeed, they were striving to become firmly embedded in the specificities of the Northern Cape political economy. For 'Angolan' Khwe aristocrats, (re)embedding took the form, at that moment when bushmen were considering whether or not they should return to Namibia, of appealing to and mobilising tradition. For 'Angolan' Khwe elites, the past was another place, "usually another country" (Appadurai 1994:327). This posited a discursive and rhetorical split along a factional-national fault-line.

Their 'Namibian' counterparts had also been disembedded in the past, although perhaps not to the same extent, nor as profoundly. They were not opposed to further displacement, as indicated by their mention of the prospect of returning to Namibia in the distant future. Given the fact that their social relations and practices were located in long-term timespace specificities outside of their national location in South Africa and as South African, they occupied a contemporary space of pervasive disembeddedness; they were looking back to a world they had never lost (ibid.:326). The 'Namibian' Khwe leaders with whom I spoke were intent on having a highly productive, comfortable and prosperous stay while in South Africa, but this was a short-term perspective, overshadowed by the very real possibility of going back to Namibia.

'Angolan' Khwe elites, especially and most strongly in the case of Kuamwamwa, depicted the 'Namibian' leaders as disembedded -- at best, wrongly (re)embedded -- in the Northern Cape, and thus interpreted their presence as constituting a threat to the effective and optimum distribution of scarce resources. On this note, the relationship between 'Angolan' Khwe elites and 'Namibian' leaders in the period shortly after the Namibian High
Commission's visit to Schmidtsdrift was much like that between the Tswana-speaking Thlaping spokespeople and the bushmen from late 1990 onwards. 'Namibians' were to 'Angolans' what bushmen ('Angolan' and 'Namibian') were to Thlaping spokespeople: nothing but "refugees" (Diamond Fields Advertiser 20.2.91), and "illegal immigrants" (DFA 26.8.93). Kuamwamwa's sentiments regarding the co-presence of 'Namibian' Khwe were remarkably akin to the Thlaping primary spokesman's opinion of the bushmen at Schmidtsdrift:

We regard the San people ['Namibians'] as nothing but invaders. They must return to Namibia, the country of their birth, because their presence here is causing a lot of resentment. This is our land (George Mokgoro, Sunday Times 3.7.94).

One could make the argument that 'Namibian' Khwe were placed in an extremely difficult position when asked whether or not they wanted to relocate to South Africa in 1990. It would be dangerous, however, to translate this into an assertion that 'Namibians' perhaps made a far greater pledge, if you like, to achieve success in South Africa. Their 'Angolan' counterparts did not necessarily have an easier decision to make in spite of their having to consider the fact that the new SWAPO-led government had no clear standpoint or stated policy on how it would treat people of Angolan origin. It is clear that 'Namibians' were under no equivalent political or ideological threat. They were without an unequivocal political fear as to what they would be confronted with, and what their predicament may have been in a independent Namibia. But they, unlike 'Angolans', firmly believed that they could return to their country of birth.

I want to turn from this discussion to the application of some of Liisa Malkki's findings among Hutu refugees in Tanzania to conditions at Schmidtsdrift. Similar to the Hutu refugees that were confined to refugee camps in Tanzania, the 'Angolan' Khwe elite at Schmidtsdrift embraced the base as a rigorously organised and isolated camp. They were accordingly "engaged in an impassioned construction and reconstruction of their ['Angolan' Khwe] history as 'a
people" (Malkki 1992:35). Traditional leadership and the idiom of tradition were metonymic in this regard. Indeed, and to reiterate, tradition appeared to serve as what Giddens (1990) terms a 'reembedding mechanism'. However, Malkki's Hutu refugees who resided in camps were backward looking (strictly spatially) in their emphasis on national identity and origins (in terms of their being the 'rightful natives' of Burundi), and forward looking in their desire and intention to return to Burundi, their 'homeland' (Malkki 1992,1995). They, unlike the 'Angolan' Khwe aristocracy, were fundamentally disembedded, exiled (see Malkki 1995:16).

The 'Angolan' Khwe leaders at Schmidtsdrift, in other words, were backward looking (as a predominantly spatial referent) in asserting their nationality and political tradition, and forward looking in placing importance on remaining in South Africa which they described as their new found 'homeland'. There is more to this point than the simple and obvious distinction between refugees or people in exile, and immigrants assigned citizenship; 'Angolan' elite at Schmidtsdrift recounted the trials and tribulations of displacement so as to empower them in making South Africa work and in making being South African successful. Displaced status was valued as a sign of the permanence of their settlement in South Africa: "displacement had become a form of categorical purity" (Malkki 1992:35,1995:221-31). In this respect, the purity of 'Angolans', as (doubly) displaced, became a way of becoming purer and more powerful as Khwe bushmen. Here tradition served as an idiom of purity, of being 'properly' and 'exclusively' South African Khwe. Thus it was that tradition was very much about, but not exclusively, another space.

When the possibility of returning to Namibia was disclosed, 'Angolan' Khwe aristocrats made their 'Namibian' counterparts out to be traditionless or anti-traditional, and described their 'homeland' as Namibia. 'Angolan' Khwe elites devalued the displaced status and essential disembeddedness of 'Namibian' Khwe, a status that they understood and interpreted as an indication of the
temporariness and transience of 'Namibians' in South Africa. 'Namibian' Khwe elites resembled Malkki's Hutu refugees who lived in towns in the sense that they "had not constructed such a categorically distinct, collective identity" (Malkki 1992:36). Of course, unlike Malkki's spatial division of Hutu refugees into town and camp populations, Khwe were split within the same camp, within a 'common' space. However, I find the comparison useful because it is interesting that Hutu camp refugees, who were disembedded in their geophysical exodus and in their incarceration thereafter, and who were entertaining a powerful nationalist sentiment, were eager to go back to Burundi. 'Namibian' Khwe elites, however, were similarly disembedded (intent on returning if, and when they felt it appropriate -- but with very different motives), yet were without nationalist or ethnic fervor, without appeals and references to cultural capital that particularised them and Khwe in a general sense. They were without the desire to return to Namibia immediately or in the short-term, they presented themselves (and were presented) as being without the ideological repertoire of tradition, and they were without the severity of commitment that 'Angolan' aristocrats exhibited as South African nationals.

Malkki's town refugees, on the other hand, were embedded, integrated, without any metanarrative of cultural identity or affiliation. They "had not constructed...a categorically distinct, collective identity. Rather...they tended to seek ways of assimilating and manipulating multiple identities" (ibid.). 'Namibian' Khwe elites, in the period immediately after the Namibian ambassador's visit to Schmidtsdrift, did not exhibit an essential 'collective consciousness' as 'Namibians' until they felt that they were forced to do so in response to the rhetoric and practices of their 'Angolan' counterparts. Generally speaking, the imagined community, or indeed, what Arjun Appadurai calls "imagined world" (Appadurai 1990:297) of 'Namibian' Khwe elites, was ambivalent, betwixt and between. Wentzel, for example, and most noticeably, felt at ease and frequently
spent considerable time among 'Angolan' Khwe and also !Xu friends and associates -- for him, most of the time, cultural categories were entirely arbitrary and relatively meaningless. Jason Marenda had a girlfriend who was from the nearby town of Campbell and, although this was frowned upon by a number of senior 'Angolan' Khwe, he was determined that he and his non-Khwe lover remain at Schmidtsdrift, and that he continue to interact amiably with 'Angolan' Khwe leaders.

'Angolan' Khwe leaders, in contrast to their 'Namibian' cohorts, were embedded, certainly set on integrating into some South African fold, and yet they generally engaged in and mobilised a forceful and aggressive discourse of nationality and cultural specificity that had a reference point that was ostensibly elsewhere -- tradition (there and not simply then) having been the salient idiom. This discourse, and the positing of 'Angolanness', had a moral and essential bent that closely resembled that of Hutu refugees residing in camps (Malkki 1992,1995).

'Angolan' Khwe came to South Africa with every intention of moulding a permanent future in the country -- in the national space. Here a lengthy quotation from Rey Chow seems readily applicable:

Central to the question of borders is the question of propriety and property. Conceivably, one possible practice of borders is to anticipate and prepare for new proprietorship by destroying, replacing, and expanding existing ones. For this notion of borders -- as margins waiting to be incorporated as new properties -- to work, the accompanying spatial notion of a field is essential. The notion of a 'field' is analogous to the notion of 'hegemony', in the sense that its formation involves the rise to dominance of a group [faction] that is able to diffuse its culture to all levels of society (Chow 1993:15).

This is to overstate the case among Khwe aristocrats at Schmidtsdrift, but there can be little doubt that 'Angolan' Khwe were pursuing an exclusive, factional proprietorship and 'propertiship' that was, discursively, hegemonic. For 'Namibian' Khwe elites, borders were what Chow calls "parasites," discursive-ideological locales from which fields were contested, eroded, cemented (ibid.:16). In their
responses to the vehemence of 'Angolan' aristocrats, 'Namibians' "dismantled the national metaphysic by refusing a [single] mapping and spurning origins altogether [at least pointing up the arbitrariness thereof]. They mounted instead a robust challenge to cultural and national essentialisms...they trivialized the necessity of living by radical nationalisms" (Malkki 1992:36). There was an identification with Namibia, but partially; there was an identification with South Africa, but not entirely. Namibia was not necessarily where tradition resided. Perhaps it would be accurate to say that 'Namibian' Khwe elites were opportunists, whereas 'Angolan' Khwe leaders were idealists; for both factions there was scope, something creative about displacement.

Finally, then, in his short paper entitled *Frontlines/Borderposts*, Homi Bhabha stresses the importance of being interested in signifying concerns and "not so much the teleologies of tradition as much as its powers of iteration, its forms of displacement and relocation, its ability to signify symbolic and social relations..." (Bhabha 1994b:270, original emphasis; see also Bhabha 1990a:1-7). Consistent with this focus on the act of articulating, Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson draw our attention to the fascination, in much contemporary social science, with the "images of break, rupture, and disjunction" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:6). They point out the centrality of these ideas and images in spatialising cultural distinction -- in distinguishing between cultures or inter-culturally. Indeed, this is the essence of Anthony Giddens' (1990,1991) preoccupation with the notion of 'disembedding'. The temptation, then, in anthropology -- especially the study of 'identity politics' as it pertains to ethnicity and political process that foregrounds the notion of cultural singularity and uniqueness -- is to examine ethnic identities constituted in and through spatial fragmentation or the couplet of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. Such an approach has its merits, as the work of Arjun Appadurai (1990,1994) and Liisa Malkii (1992,1995) demonstrates.
However, what I have sought to show in this chapter is that the cultural politics of displacement, disembedding and reembedding, can be very much about things other than ethnicity, and in fact, perhaps even 'anti-ethnicity'. Spatial disjuncture can be the locus of intra-cultural distinction, of assertions of distinction within a locality, within an identity (see Gupta and Ferguson 1992:7).
CHAPTER SEVEN

ARISTOCRATS AND 'BUSHMANNNESS'

My intention, in this chapter, is to examine, theoretically and abstractly, some of the complexities and manifold implications of applying the label 'bushman' to the people who were at Schmidtsdrift. Much of the involved and multifarious form of this politics of representation is reflected in the various agents of labelling, from anthropologists (myself included), to government officials, popular media, and (most interestingly) to some bushmen themselves. The conjectural and arduous nature of the discussion below, stems from extreme limitations that exist in anthropology in its dealings with 'autochthons' and, more specifically, in anthropological literature that deals with praetorianised bushmen. Chapter Eight, the concluding chapter to this thesis, serves as an elaboration on and application of the argument below, and therefore stands not in isolation, but as a necessary and requisite adjunct to the discussion here.

Two central points in this discussion, obvious by now, are not all praetorianised bushmen are the same, and within or under this, not all of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen have occupied a position characterised by genuflection to hegemonic representations, myths and myth-makers, or overarching (neo-)colonial processes of political and economic marginalisation. I want to develop aspects of this argument by revisiting the issue of (neo-)colonialism and the widely disseminated rhetoric of 'post-coloniality' as it pertains to people who were, in early 1996, earmarked as 'aboriginals' or 'natives' -- by themselves and others -- and who were, claiming a cultural identity as 'autochthons' or 'indigenes' in the 'new South Africa'.

The politics of cultural identity, in this case ethnicity, is the politics of representation and textualisation. So much is obvious, but how do we, as anthropologists and critical theorists construct images of praetorianised bushmen, and to what extent do we do so dialogically and in cognizance of how those who proclaim to be bushmen represent themselves? In this section I focus in detail on the 'anthropological' literature that deals with bushmen either in or associated with the South African armed forces. I wish to do this in order to disconcert an ideological space, a 'field' and a discipline, by pointing up that, although by no means prolific, the relevant anthropological literature is buttressed by a disquieting essentialism that betrays the authors' stated variable, even contested, 'positions'. There is an uncanny conjuncture in the moral-political discourse that they adhere to, a complementarity and epistemological similitude that is critically addressed through important work in 'cultural/subaltern studies'. This leaves us with the need to open up and proffer new sites/sights of othering and otherness.

Richard Lee has a long history of association, discursively, with the people who were at Schmidtsdrift. He organised a petition protesting SADF recruitment of Namibian (and Botswana) bushmen at the Second International Conference on Hunter Gatherers in 1980. Kolata (1981) provides a succinct overview of the initial debate between Lee, who argued against army employment of bushmen on the basis of their 'cultural vulnerability', and a number of people who were opposed to Lee's petition because of the patronising assumptions that underlay it. Edwin Wilmsen, for example, agreed with Lee's position on purely moral grounds, and expressed his dismay with the recruitment of non-whites (of whom bushmen were only a part) into the
apartheid army and into a racist struggle (see Kolata 1981; Edwin Wilmsen, personal communication, June 1996). Wilmsen, however, also explained that it was crucial that anthropologists understand the attraction that non-white local populations (especially those living in abject poverty) felt towards the SADF (Kolata 1981:562. It is important not to lose sight of the fact that Wilmsen was to emerge as Lee's nemesis in the mid-1980s).

Lee was appalled by the SADF recruitment of bushmen because such employment would, he claimed, exploit the political naivety, and at the same time destroy the independence, distinct identity, and egalitarian way of life, of bushmen (Kolata 1981:563). Lee's standpoint, based on liberal romanticism about the need to protect and conserve supposedly pristine small-scale societies from the thralls of 'European civilization', was repeatedly emphasised in the 1980s (Lee 1984; Lee and Hurlich 1982). In 1984 Lee wrote that "the most dramatic change [in the lives of Namibian bushmen] has been the wholesale recruitment of !Kung into the South African army...[which] has led to a marked deterioration in the quality of life" (Lee 1984:147-8). Lee and Hurlich (1982) expressed moral outrage, on two levels, in response to the SADF utilisation of bushmen. On the one hand they were shocked by what they understood to be the imminent demise of primitive, innocent hunter-gatherers, who, they claimed, were being exploited in a similar vein to the way in which the Montagnards of Vietnam had been abused and manipulated by the American military during the Vietnam war (ibid.:339; David Stephen 1982:14 compares bushmen in Defence Force employ to the Gurkhas in the British army). On the other hand, they were strongly opposed to the racism exhibited by the apartheid regime and its army. Indeed, Lee was emphatic about the illegality of (neo-)colonial South African rule in Namibia (Lee 1984:147).

This, if we agree with Lee's 'position' we are likely to be repulsed by the army recruitment (past and present) of people at Schmidtsdrift, and would present them as victims
of an absolutist 'Eurocentric' or 'Western' (whatever these mean in the global space of discursivity) politics of dispossession and annihilation. We would, I think, emphasise that South African colonisation of Namibia, heightened during the Namibian liberation war, was characterised in one crucial respect, by the coercive military encapsulation of bushmen. Thus, we would conclude that praetorianisation amounted to nothing short of 'cultural genocide'.

To work from Lee's arguments would be to align oneself, politically and unproblematically, with those bushmen at Schmidtsdrift who proclaimed to be "harmless people" (Marshall-Thomas 1959), the archetypal other of a hyper-competitive, violent, crime-ridden, and viciously hierarchical 'West'. Such political positioning would mean that we have very little work to do as anthropologists -- there would be no room for critical input and reflection, no time and space for reflexion, no need for critical understanding, because bushmen at Schmidtsdrift would be prefigured by Lee's work. (Is this not a curiously repressive form of neo-colonialism and indeed imperialism?).

Robert Gordon has made the most recent and critical contribution to anthropology and the study of what he calls praetorianised bushmen (see Gordon 1992:185-192). His book The Bushman Myth (Gordon 1992) has served as something of a deconstructionist watershed that has incisively shaped the contribution from anthropology to discussions about the predicament of bushmen in Namibia, and more specifically, bushmen incorporated into the South African army (see Sharp and Douglas 1996). His argument is, at the face of it, closely aligned with Wilmsen's (1989) revisionist position in the tedious 'great bushman debate'. Like Wilmsen, Gordon argues that by virtue of their construction according to the 'Western' canon, bushmen are, whether they like it or not, included, integrated into 'Western' society, and this has been so for quite some time. In The Bushman Myth, Gordon (1992) argues that bushmen are a 'colonial' fiction, the arbitrary and essentialist product of an indulgent and
exploitative 'Western' imagination. He asserts that 'bushman' was used by 'Westerners' as a category applied to the rural underclass or 'lumpenproletariat' of southern Africa - the most marginal, dispossessed and displaced inhabitants of the subcontinent. It is in this respect that Gordon and Wilmsen's arguments are most alike, and in opposition to those entertained by Lee.

Importantly Gordon (1986,1992), however, tended to differ from Wilmsen (1989) most significantly in his espousal of what I call dismissive deconstructionism. Contrary to Wilmsen, Gordon occupied the moral high ground in connoting that cultural or ethnic identities were to be opposed because of their imputed inherent tendency to lead to, or be articulated in terms of, discrimination. In addition, according to Gordon's perspective, ethnic identities could only be ascribed, attributed, damagingly inflicted, upon people.

Gordon was not alone, in a broad epistemological sense, in adhering to what I term the liberal rhetoric of essential similitude (what Hall 1996:56 draws our attention to as "the presumption of equal respect" for cultural diversity, problematic because of the hegemony of 'equality' that leads to the eradication, discursively, of difference). Gordon was pursuing a rather parochial, if not regional, 'trend' in anthropology. The vast majority of English-speaking South African anthropologists writing in the 1980s toed the same line as Gordon in their zeal and enthusiasm to adhere to the political appeal of exposé anthropology. The edited volume South African Keywords: The Uses and Abuses of Political Concepts (Sharp and Boonzaier 1988), is the most solid and comprehensive example of this, containing a number of papers that suggest that ultimately appeals to cultural distinction are a misnomer, a red herring, and that such appeals ought to be condemned.

For Gordon (1986,1992), bushmen are not only an imagined community in Benedict Anderson's (1983) sense of the term, but an imaginary community. 'Bushman tradition'
such as the legendary tracking abilities of bushman soldiers that he refers to (Gordon 1992:187) -- is, and was, likewise not only invented, fictive, following Hobsbawm (1983), but also fictional. Bushmen in the armed forces were, according to Gordon (1992:188), "prisoners of their reputation," victims of an ascribed and hegemonic identity; SADF-affiliated bushmen constituted, Gordon (1986:181) remarks, "the Bushmen tamed," their "peripherality enshrined" (ibid.:185).

If we endorse Gordon's 'position', we would thus criticise any reference to the people who were at Schmidtsdrift as bushmen because to call them this would be to make them victims of a heavily-laden 'Western' category. We would enter into an existential panic as we frantically searched for 'politically correct' referents and terms. In fact, we would probably argue that any generalised representation of the people who were at Schmidtsdrift would have to be in tune with political economy -- they were, and are, a liminal, historically oppressed, regional 'lumpenproletariat' (Gordon 1992). Any naming over-and-above this would be in accordance with 'what they call themselves', because to impose a representation, any representation, would be to regretfully revert to a condition of 'neo-apartheid'.

Working from Gordon, we would ultimately assert that due to the fact that ethnic identities are coercive constructions, usually imposed and ascribed with deleterious consequences, there is nothing culturally particular about bushmen at all (other than arbitrarily). Thus, as was the case with Lee's work, we would have a difficult and frankly boring time conducting any kind of anthropological enquiry. We would stand passively as 'the field' opened up before our eyes for economists, political analysts, lawyers, development specialists, the state, and so on (all implicated in cultural politics, but all able to deny it through an anti-political edifice and facade. Here I am extrapolating from James Ferguson's 1991 "anti-politics machine"). At one extreme, if there were no meaningful
cultural distinctions at all there would be no processes of othering (or Othering), no 'ethnic' differentiation. If, on the other hand, cultural distinction was essentially arbitrary, and fundamentally 'our' (that is 'the West's') doing, we would have to reveal the extent of 'our' ridiculous positing of powerful and important cultural politics through a rather rarified take on reflexivity. In short, the study of bushmen in anthropology would become the stuff of the autobiographies of those anthropologists interested in bushmen.

II

the 'great bushman debate'

I wish to conduct a somewhat deeper analysis of Richard Lee and Robert Gordon's 'respective positions' in relation to bushmen affiliated to the South African army. Their 'positions' are, loosely and at the face of it, akin to the counter-positions adhered to by participants in the 'great Kalahari debate'. This was an intellectual scrimmage that had to do with representations and discourses of Otherness (not simply alterity) applied to bushmen. The debacle hinged around whether one chose to see bushmen as the "products or survivors of history" (Gordon and Spiegel 1993:89). Solway and Lee (1990), for example, argued that some bushmen were the 'survivors' of history, thus positing an indexical synchronism in representing bushmen. Wilmsen and Denbow (1990), on the other hand, stressed that all bushmen were the product of history, and that the label 'bushman' and the corresponding notion of 'bushmaness' was a very recent European colonial invention (see, for example, Wilmsen 1989).

The contested images central to the exchanges between revisionists forwarding 'hunter-gatherers spurious', and primordialists proposing 'hunter-gatherers genuine' have, at a very superficial level, been directed at the population that was at Schmidtsdrift. Crucially though, these
seemingly contradictory or conflictual arguments are, in the works of Lee and Gordon that address praetorianised bushmen, immensely problematic on their own and in their overlapping and shared essentialism. Lee was factually incorrect in conflating a variety of people, in many respects disparate, under the rubric of 'bushman'. He based his version of what I consider liberal humanism on sweeping generalisations, a brash encyclopaedism, about bushmen as if all bushmen serving in the SADF were Namibian !Kung. I have indicated elsewhere in this thesis that many of these bushmen were of Angolan origin, and many were not !Kung. Lee's debased romanticism would suggest that the Schmidtsdrift bushmen were, and at least ought to be, actual hunter-gatherers, something that the vast majority of them had never been and had no desire to be. Saying that one is a 'harmless person', 'in harmony with nature', that one's way of life is 'egalitarian' (the stereotypes applicable to bushmen, like 'aboriginals' the world over, are multiple; see Friedman 1990; Griffiths 1994; Lee 1984; Roosens 1989), is not to say that one wishes to live in a loin cloth, hunt and gather, share, exist on an everyday, all day basis in a symbiotic relationship with the natural environment and one's cohorts. To say otherwise is to completely misunderstand the politics of 'bushmanliness' by way of depoliticisation. In addition, Lee was incorrect in stating that praetorianisation of bushmen resulted in a deterioration in their quality of life. Many bushmen secured salaries and job security, housing, food, an education, and so on through military encapsulation.

Gordon was wrong in thinking that bushmen at Schmidtsdrift were captives of an imposed representation, in the fabrication of which they have had no active part. To argue that the Schmidtsdrift bushmen should not be bushmen at all (because such action would ensnare them within the narrow confines of a misconstrued representation) is problematic. Proclaiming to be bushman can bring reward, as the predicament of the Kagga Kamma bushmen demonstrates especially clearly in relation to the land claim that they
have lodged for the 'return' of land in the southern Kalahari (Sunday Times 17.12.95; The New York Times 18.1.96; see also White 1995). Recent politiking by bushmen elites at Schmidtsdrift -- rallying around the ideological flag of 'bushmanness' -- has also borne fruit (see Chapter Eight).

However, I do not wish to present a utopian image, as essentialist and romantic as that most conspicuously forwarded by Lee. Playing the 'aboriginal' or 'First People' identity card is a high stakes game -- it can be highly rewarding, and it can be devastating and crippling.

To return to existent anthropological literature pertaining to the Schmidtsdrift bushmen, and in fact most disconcerting, is that on deeper reflection and taken together, Lee's and Gordon's arguments are uncannily similar. Caught up in the discursive moralism of liberal humanism, both depict the Schmidtsdrift bushmen in the negative. Bushmen associated with the South African military, they tell us, are defined by lack, a lack of agency. For Lee and Gordon, bushmen in the military are victims, in the case of the former, of abusive colonial actions and practices, and in the case of the later, of polemic, of aggressive and harassing, colonial discourses. What is telling, is that the distinction between bushmen being held hostage by the differentiating discourses of colonialisms ('beatings by words') or by the ignoble intentions of colonial conducts and practices ('beatings by actions'), is not very clear. As Sharp and Douglas put it (in addressing Gordon's work in particular): "if those who had power had all of the power that there was, and could therefore visit the full consequences of their myths on those who were the objects of the myth-making, then it mattered little if the society in question was a primordial one [following Lee] or a discursive construction [after Gordon]" (Sharp and Douglas 1996:329). The point is simply that Gordon and Lee traverse remarkably similar ideological terrain and are adamant: bushmen affiliated to the army were -- and are -- agencyless, regardless of ontogeny.
There are telling moments in Lee's and Gordon's works that point to this basic convergence. At the Second International Conference on Hunter-Gatherers (mentioned above), Lee saw Namibian bushmen recruited into the SADF as "virtual prisoners of the army, dependent on them for their water, weekly rations, and other supplies" (Kolata 1981:563). This resonates, perhaps disconcertingly with Gordon's picture of bushman soldiers and their kin as inert, absolute victims (Wilmsen 1992 makes a similar point). Both Lee and Gordon see praetorianisation as normative, uniform, instrumentalist, with military bases having served as nothing short of "total institutions" (Gordon 1992:186; Lee and Hurlich 1982:338). Whether praetorianised bushmen were "prisoners of their reputation" (Gordon 1992:188) by virtue of 'Western' colonial imaginations or 'Western' expansionist practices makes no difference. The implication, from what are ostensibly counter positions, is that they remain ensnared, trapped, the passive and indifferent audience for what I call 'the cult of the victim' (for a more recent example of this, and in a far broader sense, see the exhibition Miscast: Negotiating Khoisan History and Material Culture; see Douglas and Law 1996).

In other words, in sharing too much and arguing about too little (this resonates with practitioners of expose anthropology in South Africa) both Lee and Gordon ennoble, to a ridiculous extent, the defiled image of 'the native' (Chow 1993). Gordon, like Lee, lends himself to 'subjectivising' bushmen with envy (the 'stuff' of the cult of the victim). Nowhere is this sentimentalist twist more apparent than in his paper entitled Bushman Banditry in Twentieth-Century Namibia, in which he discusses bushman resistance -- a form of subversive counter politics, perpetrated by bandits living in "primitive affluence" -- to what he portrays as unequivocally despotic regimes (Gordon 1986:187). For Gordon (ibid.), military-encapsulated bushmen become the refracted image of himself -- renegades. We have the iconoclastic other as an allegory of the maverick late-apartheid deconstructionist anthropologist.
Lee is especially inclined to revere praetorianised bushmen as silent objects. Roosens' remark that 'autochthons' "are considered to be like minor children who need protection" and whose predicament is dependent upon the fact that "others (sic) must decide" (Roosens 1989:25) is thus candidly appropriate to Lee's 'position', and also resonates, but without as much gravity, with that occupied by Gordon. Both Lee and Gordon are therefore strongly conservative, and their implications for the politics of 'bushmaness' are simply that such politics must ultimately be about 'us', the 'West'.

Rey Chow (1993,1994) discusses how the valorisation and interpolation of the culturally distinct through centering 'us' and claiming 'our' (other-culturally distinct) all powerfulness "produces a way of talking in which notions of lack, subalternity, victimization...are drawn upon indiscriminately" (Chow 1993:13). All that anthropology (as one among many disciplines) can then do is investigate the 'subjectivity' of the "other-as-oppressed-victim" (ibid.:29). But what sort of 'subjectivity' is this, especially if it can be understood, politically, in advance? All that is required of us in order to understand the 'subject' is to deconstruct (de-scribe) colonial-imperial discourses, and hence effectively write all subjects other than ourselves (that is, if we are politically correct and thus reflexive) out of the equation. Such an anti-anthropological approach that latches, for example, quickly and easily onto 'resistance' bluntly repeats (and without the irony of mimesis), the very discursivity that marked and marks colonialisms: the colonial subject is constructed as the object (that is somehow lacking). Is it really the case that "one man's imagined community...is another man's political prison" (Appadurai 1990:295)?

Gayatri Spivak rehearses much of this in her paper Can the Subaltern Speak? in which she argues that the colonised were and are left without the ground from which they could utter confrontational words (Parry in Thomas 1994:55-6). For Spivak, 'the native' ('subaltern') is a particular
silent object because of the absolute power of imperialist discourses. Indeed, we are so interested in 'the native', as Chow explains, precisely because 'the native's' silence becomes the occasion for 'cur' speech (Chow 1993:34). 'The native', in other words, cannot 'speak'. Lee and Gordon insist that "the subaltern cannot speak" (Spivak 1994), that 'pariahs' -- in this case praetorianised bushmen -- are politically 'voiceless', without effective recourse.

There are, however, two immediate difficulties in attempting to apply Spivak's work to Schmidtsdrift. The first is that bushmen at Schmidtsdrift were not all 'subalterns' or 'pariahs' (indeed, they were not all anything). There was no unitary 'subaltern' population at Schmidtsdrift, in much the same way that there was no undifferentiated praetorianised bushman experience or group at the base (nor could there ever be such a thing).

In so much as 'subaltern' status is partially implicated in material means, as Spivak (1994) seems to propose, the people at Schmidtsdrift were strongly differentiated, their 'subaltern' credentials open to contestation. A survey conducted in order to devise a 'development' and resettlement plan for the people at Schmidtsdrift, indicated that over half of the 'employable' people there (defined as individuals of a post-school going age and pre-retirement age) were earning a wage, by no means nominal, in January 1996. In fact, this plan was built around the assumption that wage-earning was, and shall in the future remain, the basis of subsistence (!Xu and Khwe Trust Survey and Draft Resettlement Plan, January 1996).

Epistemologically, Spivak's argument (like Lee's and Gordon's) assumes a highly problematic essential autonomy of 'the native' (albeit that she distinguishes the female 'subaltern') that in turn suggests both the possibility and the need for 'authentic native' speech. The problem lies in conceptualising and homogenising 'the native'. It is not, as Spivak implies, that 'the subaltern' and 'the native' cannot 'speak' because "'speaking' itself belongs to an already well-defined structure and history of domination"
(Chow 1993:35-6). Rather, 'the native' cannot 'speak' because there is no independent, insular and uniform entity called 'the subaltern' or 'the native' at all. Spivakian essentialism is thus not very different to that adhered to by Robert Gordon (and, similarly, Richard Lee) in his positing of the 'West' as subject and locus of 'speech'. Ironically, "a postrepresentationalist vocabulary hides an essentialist agenda" (Spivak 1994:80). Phrased slightly differently, in the works of Gordon and Lee we find that "having opened up the chasm of cultural 'difference'...a mediator or metaphor of 'otherness' must be found to contain that 'difference'" (Bhabha 1988:16).

The homogenising bent of much of Spivak's work has been the site of powerful criticism. Nicholas Thomas, for example, criticises Spivak's tendency to identify certain 'subjects' as canonical 'subalterns' to the detriment of a variety of alternative enunciations and positions that might be heard or recorded (Thomas 1994:209). He charges Spivak with dismissing dialogical encounters across power divides and categories (ibid.). He is correct, but I agree with Spivak's argument that liberal humanism (and its incumbent relativism) creates the 'native subject' as the object of "the terrorism of the categorical imperative" (Spivak in Chow 1993:11-12). Her caution about the imperialism that usually surreptitiously inheres in knowledge production -- "epistemic violence" (Spivak 1994:76,82) -- is crucial (of which anthropologists hopefully need no reminder). However, the counterposition in which she seeks the 'unspeaking' truth of 'the native' is as dangerous as such complicity.

If the sovereignty of 'the native', or in this case praetorianised bushmen, is fundamentally untranslatable (différé in Lyotard's sense) as Spivak (1994) insists, then our project of interpretation, re-presentation and hermeneutics must be self-aggrandising (in a fashion that resembles one extreme of the reflexive 'crisis in representation' moment that Marcus and Fischer 1986 discuss). Ethnography emerges as a concern with the irreducibly idiosyncratic, the pathologies and machinations
of the self-as-author(ity). We are left with "a critique of the subject as individual agent...[and] even of the subjectivity of a collective agency" (Spivak 1994:72) to the extent that the "subjective essentialism" that Spivak rightly berates becomes exclusively 'ours' (ibid.:74). In representing bushmen we must approach the notions of 'native' sovereignty and our own position and complicity with caution. To restate a point made elsewhere in this thesis, we need to move beyond approaches that unproblematically assume and then essentialise 'us' and 'them', be they premised on critical reflexivity or uncritical naivety.

iii

bushman agency and agents

Thus, having problematised Gordon, Lee and Spivak, we need to identify and create a way of representing and making sense of those praetorianised bushmen who (pro)claim 'bushmanness'. That some bushmen at Schmidtsdrift have been able to 'speak' is clear from arguments in earlier chapters, but 'speaking' as bushmen, in the name of 'bushmanness', has thus far eluded discussion.

Some bushmen at Schmidtsdrift have certainly 'spoken' in and through various strategies of political intervention before, during, and after their relocation to South Africa in 1990. However, here (and in Chapter Eight) I am particularly concerned with more recent 'local' statements and utterances of 'bushmanness'. There is conclusive evidence that specific bushmen at Schmidtsdrift were actively and directly engaged and highly influential in shaping political action and discourse, acting with political intent, and overtly exhibiting agency as far as their bushman identity was concerned from early 1994 onwards.
Individuals who have rallied around 'bushmanness' have done so against a backdrop of incessant military intervention in the lives of the people at Schmidtsdrift. Army intervention has consistently acknowledged and, for the most part rewarded, bushmen. (Both Gordon and Lee are accurate in emphasising that this was certainly the case during their participation in the Namibian liberation war. They simply overplay the extent of military authority and control). More recently, the SANDF had picked up where its Nationalist-controlled predecessor left off, and continued to maintain distinct bushman military companies because bushmen allegedly "have difficulty assimilating" (Andre Hendrikz and Tai Theron, personal communication, March 1995). Certain bushmen have been central politicians involved in a variety of dialogic relationships throughout the history of special consideration for bushmen, as bushmen in army employ -- it is not as if non-bushman elements of the military simply dictated the conditions of 'bushmanness' (or any other form of 'identity politics' for that matter; see Chapters Three, Four and Five).

More obviously overt displays of bushman political agency included the appeal, headed by Mario and Robert, for centralised recognition of their 'customary language' and 'traditional leadership' on national television last year (TV1 Agenda, 31.7.95). A coalition forged between a number of Northern Cape 'indigenous' groups was alluded to in this same programme. These groups -- 'San/bushmen', 'Nama', and 'Griqua' -- believed that they were united in their rights as 'First People', and took the initiative themselves to lobby central government for recognition and 'effective' representation (Mario Mahongo, personal communication, July 1995).

Further media coverage that foregrounded the dire predicament of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen -- that is to say unless practically supernatural intervention in their lives as South African citizens occurred -- as bushmen and presented by bushmen, has been extensive. Television coverage has consisted of national insertions,
documentaries, and news briefs (TV1 GMSA 14.3.95; CCV Two Way 30.7.95; TV1 News 22.11.95). Newspaper coverage has included articles in the Sunday Times (24.7.94), The Weekly Mail and Guardian (17-23 February 1995), and the The Sunday Independent (5.5.96). Magazine features on the needs and rights of 'aboriginal' southern Africans that have had substantial sections dealing with Schmidtsdrift have included On Track (May/June 1995:16-8) and Flying Springbok (July 1995:83-93), South African Airway's complimentary on-board magazine. Almost all of this media reportage has contained the 'voices' or 'speech' of a select few bushman spokesmen from Schmidtsdrift.

In tune with the global dissemination of Flying Springbok, is the global discourse of 'indigenous rights'. In early 1994 Mario participated in a fact-finding visit to Geneva during which he attended the proceedings of the United Nations affiliated IWGIA (see Chapters Three and Four). This visit was integral in providing an opportunity for establishing contacts and exploring the mechanics of 'autochthonous discourse', and hence bolstered Mario's prestige on a trans- or inter-national level as an 'indigenous', bushman leader.

Again, in mid-1994, a delegation from Schmidtsdrift attended the proceedings of an IWGIA conference in Geneva. Mario, who had visited IWGIA six months prior, and Gatera Kojovo (see Chapter Six) not only sat in on discussions about the need to protect 'indigenous peoples' the world over, but also delivered two speeches. The two brief arguments that they presented outlined the plight of the people at Schmidtsdrift and appealed for international recognition of, and help with the conservation of, their 'aboriginality' (see the article entitled Lost tribe dreaming..., Sunday Times 24.7.94; see also the closing pages of this thesis).

The increasing 'voicing' of 'bushmanness' by a select few bushmen was highlighted when, shortly after the second IWGIA delegation returned from Geneva, the people at Schmidtsdrift were included as members of the then incipient
WIMSA, a regional coalition that was striving to facilitate and ensure the preservation of distinct rights for bushmen (Thoma and le Roux 1995).

The point I am getting at is that certainly in the wake of the first democratic general elections in South Africa a number of bushmen at Schmidtsdrift have been actively encompassed within both global and regional (subcontinental) 'aboriginal' working groups -- coalitions that address 'indigenous rights' issues in tune with global 'First People', 'Fourth World', discourse. And these bushmen have, certainly to some extent, been incorporated into these movements or groups on their own terms.

\[iv\]

'aboriginality', reflexivity and elites

An important point in the preceding section was the fact that the most active bushman agents at Schmidtsdrift (those who have been -- and are -- 'speaking' in Gayatri Spivak's verbiage) were a select few well informed, and politically well versed and experienced individuals (a point that runs throughout this thesis). I want to turn to one of these individuals, and (re)present snippets selected from various testimonies he made during a number of presentations, conversations and interviews.

\[W\]

Our people, known to Westerners as the 'Bushmen' or 'San', once inhabited the whole of Southern Africa, and are often also referred to as the 'first people'....Our people do not have a naturally assertive culture, nor any experience of political organization in a modern society....We need to be separate from other people. We can work peacefully with all races and peoples, but the !Xu and Khwe have a strong desire to own our own land, and to determine our own laws, customs and lives.
Mario Mahongo, presentation on behalf of the people who were at Schmidtsdrift to the United Nations IWGIA, July 1994. These words were spoken by Mario, but were written by a human rights lawyer).

Witness the irony: Mario had a reputation as a ferocious fighter, yet says that he and 'his people' were (and are) 'not naturally assertive'. Also, it is deeply ironic to hear someone who had spent twenty years in military service, living in a military camp, earning a salary, and who has voted in national elections in Namibia and South Africa, claim that 'modern political organisation' is entirely new.

X

...the Portuguese were in a hurry to bring all of the bushmen together and asked them to help find and kill foreign blacks. They said that they would pay us....You must understand that the bushmen had had problems with black people because if the bushmen caught an eland or buffalo while hunting, the blacks would take the meat from them because they did not want to butcher their own cattle [...] and this happened a number of times...

(Mario, during an interview, but elaborating on the meaning of categories and referents and the political significance of certain identificatory terms; February 1995). He continued:

'bushman' has negative connotations...it means bad things. It also comes from outside, it has been imposed on us. It is derived from 'men of the bush', but we are not bush people...not anymore. Are we primitive, non-Western? It was given to us by someone else. We heard it for the first time at Omega...it came from the army's side. Before that, in Angola, we had other names -- Vasekele and Barakwena. But those were also given to us...by the Portuguese. !Xu and Khwe are our correct names, our own names.

Note the emergence of a tripartite distinction: bushman, black, Portuguese (white). 'Bushman' is taboo, yet the Portuguese grouped bushmen together. Bushmen are now 'modern' whereas before the United nations they were not.
There is discrimination against us...by blacks. They talk about us as trouble-makers [...] they refer to the Angolan bushmen as people who look for trouble. Blacks are now independent, and we sit fast....George Mokgoro [spokesman for the Thlaping] views us as refugees, the killers of blacks...

You don’t mind being called bushman?
I use that word because it is used all over the place [...] people know that word, you know what I mean, who I am talking about...

And what about the word San?
At first we had no knowledge of that word at all. It is better than bushman...maybe better, but we are still not happy about the name. We call ourselves !Xu and Khwe, those are the proper names...

(Mario during an interview with a journalist from The Weekly Mail and Guardian; February 1995. See also The Weekly Mail and Guardian, 17-23 February 1995).

Note that 'Angolan] bushmen' are stereotyped by blacks, now Tswana-speaking Thlaping, and that 'bushman', like 'San', is offensive yet acceptable. And, in conflict with his testimony in Chapter Three, Mario is now highly reserved when it comes to relations between bushmen and blacks.

We are essentially speaking about Western things...the Defence Force is involved in Western culture. We were informed of Westerners through our training under them....For example, in the use of money, buying things at shops [...] and medical equipment, medicines...

(Mario during the proceedings of a meeting convened by the major and attended by bushmen leaders, military psychologists and welfare workers, as well as myself and two other anthropologists. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss socio-psychological problems that were understood to manifest at Schmidtsdrift, and to suggest possible and efficient ways to address and resolve them; January 1995). The meeting went on:

I want to discuss the desire to identify, as Mario indicated, with their own land, their people...they are not yet completely accepted in South Africa. We need to think about the urgent need to provide them with a place which will be theirs, where they will belong... (Major Tai Theron).

Yes, their ethnic names are beginning to vanish. They don't want a name that we give them...such as 'bushman'. We
need to make an honest assessment of what needs to be
developed, and how -- a realisation of their own identity.
We are talking about the rise of bushmen together with other
oppressed minorities in South Africa... (Minister Wimpie
Kotze).

People who struggled under apartheid, who are now free,
for whom apartheid has finished...they are now
oppressing us, under apartheid, in order to keep us
away, at a distance...(Mario).

What about changes as a result of military culture?
What has its impact or influence been? What will happen if
we just bring things in and impose them? Are they still
very traditional? (Military psychologist).

Hunting [...] we have a desire to hunt, but there are
rules that restrain us....My people still have the
needs that they had in the past. Our tradition is
alive [...] the desire to eat [fresh/hunted] meat is
still strong...

But there are changes. Now, today, we must use money.
Things are now about money only...we have begun to get
used to money... (Mario).

This is part of the problem. Their culture cannot
survive in the current situation... (Minister Wimpie Kotze).

That's right...you [military officers] tell me that I
must live a better life [...] that was what we were
told at Omega. We said: give us what we need so that
we can live like you. But they gave us nothing...they
called us bushmen...so we remain distinct. The
traditional way of life is no longer compatible with
the Western situation...(Mario).

Observe that bushmen are 'Western' and, simultaneously,
'non-Western' (conflated with being traditional). A double-
bind: separate but attached, almost 'Western'; lip service
to and in fact anger at distinction on the part of the
military. Catch twenty two.

*  

There are two crucial issues that emerge from the above
data. Firstly, and easy to overlook, public and 'formal'
pronouncements and manipulations of 'bushmaness' were
conducted by elites at Schmidtsdrift. Thomas Hylland
Eriksen explains that "[f]or just as it can be shown that
individuals who fall between acknowledged categories are
defined by 'the system' [hegemonic discursive processes] as
anomalies, one may regard them as entrepreneurs or culture
brokers who turn the classificatory ambiguities to their own
advantage" (Eriksen 1993:65). He unfortunately has little
to say about the relationship between elites and ethnicity. In his terse discussion of ethnic minorities and the state, Eriksen mentions that "indigenous people rely to a great extent on international support. The transnational networks of indigenous peoples have been -- and are -- extremely important....So is the role of culture brokers and entrepreneurs: those individuals and agencies which mediate between the indigenous group, the state and international society" (ibid.:127, my emphasis; see also Chapter Two).

Eugene Roosens' (1989) perspective is far more enlightening, although relatively constrained. He points out that 'ethnogenesis' (the word is his) among 'autochthons' (specifically the Hurons of Quebec) may be very much about career politicians in search of power (ibid.; see Eriksen 1993:128). Indeed, comparing and contrasting his discussion of the leader-author Grand Chief Max Gros-Louis and his analysis of the testimony of Hurons who constituted the "silent majority" (Roosens 1989:96) and who "displayed no conscious cleverness or embellishments" (ibid.:89) is suggestive in this regard (see Roosens 1989:61-9,85-102).

In his discussion of Gros-Louis's autobiography, Roosens considers how the "concrete political ideology of an Indian leader is structured" (ibid.:61) and reflexively processed through ideological juxtapositioning and counterpositioning relative to the 'non-Indian' Canadian way of life that "has more bad to offer than good" (ibid.:68). Gros-Louis, as a writer and scribe of essential 'aboriginal' victimhood, was astute at assessing and moulding his audience through the ambiguity of his position: he proclaimed to be culturally different, but could only imbue this claim with significance by paying attention to the axiom "[o]ne becomes them [his immediate audience], at least in part" (ibid.:72, original emphasis).

In Chapter Four I argued that all 'identity politics' at Schmidtshdrt was effectively the politics of elites, and I showed how bushman leaders acquired and maintained authority across and within a number of institutional
formations. When it came to the politics of 'aboriginality' the general response to a select few individuals rallying around their bushman identity ('within' Schmidtsdrift base) was akin to Roosens' experience in which "members of the [Huron] community were outwardly passive" (Roosens 1989:91). The crucial point here is that elite rhetoric, the finery and cosmetics, did not resonate with the majority of praetorianised bushmen (or Hurons for that matter), but the discourse of cultural distinction did in that it implicated them in a certain politics. At Schmidtsdrift, "[t]here [was] a great gap between the rhetoric of most of the political leaders and the everyday reality" (ibid.:73) for the majority of bushmen. To this extent there was, ideologically, little -- if any -- alienation that might otherwise have been attributed to the fact that "ethnic claims and slogans are mainly formulated by people who seem to have markedly moved away from their own culture of origin" (ibid.:151,156). The discourse of cultural and ethnic distinction (in the sense of distinguishing by differentiating, and distinguishing according to the socio-cultural specificities of habitus in Pierre Bourdieu's 1977 sense) that accompanies assertions of 'aboriginality' is more sophisticated than Roosens' essentialism suggests because its directors and producers know full well that they cannot, ultimately, be pinned down to an unequivocal 'culture of origin'. (Indeed, I illustrate below how, when it comes to the question of origins, ambiguity is an integral part of discourses of 'aboriginality'. Some of this ground was covered in Chapter Five).

An informative text that briefly looks at elites and ethnicity is Leroy Vail's introduction to The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa (Vail 1989). Although I disagree with his preoccupation with matters teleological, it is true to say that the bushman leaders at Schmidtsdrift "were able to do comparatively well from the educational and employment opportunities that colonial capitalism presented unevenly" (ibid.:5). The cabal of leaders certainly constituted, and had constituted, an aspirant petty
bourgeois group (in strictly Marxist terms) that became, and will continue to become (and this is where I differ from Vail) established through colonialisms (and not simply after -- whenever that may be).

The elite at Schmidtsdrift involved in rallying around and appealing to 'bushmaness' (in relation to the possibility of resettlement away from Schmidtsdrift camp -- see Chapter Eight) demonstrated "the pivotal roles of influential petty bourgeois intellectuals functioning as culture brokers and on smart politicians craftily manipulating popular opinion" (ibid.). But the lengthy structural-ideological existence of this state of affairs and for reasons outlined in Chapter Four, it would be incorrect to say that this understanding of 'aboriginal' politics is one in which "ethnicity tends to be seen instrumentally, as little more than an ideological mask employed by ambitious members of upwardly-aspiring groups...so as to secure their own narrow interests through demagoguery and mystification" (ibid.).

Two points need to be made here. First, and as I have argued elsewhere, the elites at Schmidtsdrift were not necessarily nor inevitably benevolent, but their structural positioning meant that they were highly unlikely (and could also not afford) to ostracise large chunks of their 'local' support base. Second, it was not the case that 'bushmaness', when "ordinary people" embraced it, was the very epitome of "'false consciousness'" (ibid.) because 'ordinary people' did not embrace 'bushmaness'. This form of identity politics engaged them but they did not engage it -- 'aboriginality' was, and in fact is, fundamentally, about and of elites.

This is not to say that 'ordinary people' at Schmidtsdrift were therefore credulous or duped. What it means is that it was not the masses who were labelled 'bushman' -- the supposed 'silent majority' -- who blindly accepted an imposed identity from 'two sides' (elites 'within' and elites 'without'). It was instead those who believed that we can accurately and usefully talk about 'the
[Schmidtsdrift] bushmen' -- of whom anthropologists constitute a powerful constituency -- that were, have been, and are 'self'-conned.

Disappointingly, neither Eriksen (1993) nor Roosens (1989) seriously explore the implications of the possibility that 'aboriginal' politics, 'Fourth World' or 'First People' movements, may be discoursed by elites, and even elitist. This is also a limitation of White's study of Kagga Kamma, in which the decisive role of elites is clear (evoked) yet remains largely unanalysed (White 1995). Sharp and Boonzaier's (1993,1994a) alluring meditations on the enunciation of 'Namaness' also falter on precisely this point; the script-writers and directors of the 'role-play' (the term is theirs) are conspicuous by their absence (see Chapter Five).

Roosens, despite overt consideration of elites, is in fact ambiguous on the issue of the nature and significance of the relationship between leadership and ethnicity linked to 'aboriginality'. He addresses "Huron counterculture" (Roosens 1989:45-7, emphasis his) as a generalised and generalisable phenomenon as if to imply that it was something 'democratically' and unanimously authored (lending to his generous use of 'the Hurons'), yet he also mentions that "the grand chief of the Hurons...played a leading role and regularly spoke, in hard and demanding terms, about the rights of Indians on radio and television broadcasts" (ibid.:46).

Early on in Creating Ethnicity, Eugene Roosens mentions that leaders create and manipulate stereotypes and referents through a mode of professional organisation that may assign "religious exaltedness" to ethnic identity (ibid.:18,19). He emphasises that "[t]he mobilization of ethnic groups is only possible because political leaders are able to rely on profound affective factors related to origin" (ibid.:15). However, cultural origin(s), like history, may be highly ambiguous.

This brings me on to the second issue that is apparent in the data centred around Mario and cited earlier -- the
extraordinary ambivalence that inheres in his utterances. Roosens (1989) is at pains to demonstrate that the history of 'Euro-Indian' and 'inter-Amerindian' relations is far from linear and uniform. This is reflected in changes, over time, in Canadian "assimilation policy" (ibid.:26) and shifts, even contradictions, in "policies of emancipation" (ibid.:29) and "equalization" (ibid.:36) (these ambiguities resonate with the defunct South African Population Registration Act that was equally arbitrary, confused and ambivalent in its production, but devastating in its consumption).

Moreover, we are told that Hurons variably presented 'their' history as one of "pan-Indianness" (see Roosens 1989:62) and as conflict between themselves and other Indians (ibid.:48,57-8). The ambivalences are multiple. One of Roosen's interviewees who was a practicing Catholic maintained that "the subjugation of his people occurred through the agency of the Catholic Church" (ibid.:95). Also, as Roosens states, "[p]aradoxically, being traditional can be helpful in acquiring more modern goods -- with the accompanying lifestyle that demolishes tradition" (ibid.:104), and still later in his book he describes how 'autochthons' "manipulate and even re-create or invent the old in order to attain the new" (Ibid.:156; see also Sharp and Boonzaier 1993,1994a).

The exchanges involving Mario that were recounted earlier ('W','X','Y' and 'Z') all revealed ambiguities pertaining to 'bushmaness' and praetorianised bushmen. To lay claim to 'bushmaness' at Schmidtsdrift was to be, concurrently, a soldier and a pacifist, 'modern' and 'pre-modern', to love and hate the military at one and the same time. (These ambiguities were not particular to Mario. I use him because he was the principle spokesman at Schmidtsdrift and because he was especially articulate).

Of these exchanges, the excerpt from the meeting described in 'Z' above most clearly illuminates the indeterminacy of 'bushmaness', and is reminiscent of the words of Earl Mills in his attempts to prove cultural
distinction in his testimony during the Mashpee Wampanoag trial documented by James Clifford (1988). Clifford, quoting from his personal trial records, cites Earl Mills: "We were different. We knew we were different. We were told we were different" *(ibid.:281)*. Mario, like Earl Mills, was saying: we were told we were different, we knew we were distinct, but we were expected to be the same. Mario, like other bushman elites at Schmidtsdrift had an astute understanding of this double-bind of 'aboriginality'. He, and other leaders, knew that there was always the possibility of cultural identity being construed or interpreted in absolute terms, and of culture being understood, uncompromisingly, as either 'traditional' or 'modern' -- fundamental distinction or essential similitude (Gareth Griffiths 1994:74 makes a similar point about Australian 'aboriginal' politics and representation in the works of the 'native' activist-author Mudrooroo).

Building on Spivak's somewhat incoherent insistence that "the colonized [subaltern] subject is irretrievably heterogeneous" *(Spivak 1994:79)*, Homi Bhabha stresses a Commitment to Theory that operates within the dialogic of (re-)presentation and representation *(Bhabha 1988,1990a,1994a; see Spivak 1994:70 on this distinction)*. He is interested in the irreducibly *syncretic*, the hybridity of colonialisms and colonialisms's subjects.

Bhabha challenges the assertion that "[t]here is no space from which the...[colonised] subject can speak" *(Spivak 1994:102)*. He vehemently disagrees with Spivak's statement that "[t]he subaltern...cannot be heard or read" *(ibid.:104)* and maintains that the colonial text's hybridity means that 'the native' (whether 'subaltern' or not) has 'spoken' *(Chow 1993:35)*. 'Hybridity' is invoked to subvert reductionist preconceptions and apriori textualisations of cultural pluralism and diversity by "acknowledging that all cultural specificity is belated, different unto
itself.... Cultures come to be represented by virtue of the processes of iteration and translation through which their meanings are vicariously addressed to — through — an Other" (Bhabha 1994a:58, his emphasis). Bhabha argues, most clearly in The Commitment to Theory (1988, 1994a) and The Location of Culture (1994a), that meaning (in the sense of cultural significances) is about the ambivalence of the process of emergence or enactment — about the coincident (not to say innocent) representational 'splitting' and 'doubling' at the level of heuristic production and consumption that occurs at "the point of enunciation" (Bhabha 1988:10, see also Bhabha 1986). For him,

the enunciative process introduces a split in the performative present, of cultural identification; a split between the traditional culturalist demand for a model, a tradition, a community, a stable system of reference — and the necessary negation of the certitude in the articulations of new cultural demands, meanings, strategies in the political present (Bhabha 1988:19).

Indeed, the recognition of the ambivalence and dialogic construction of cultural identities opens up a space of critique and analysis, a space of 'translation' and political praxis, that is also "a place of hybridity, figuratively speaking, where the construction of a political object that is neither one nor the Other, properly alienates our expectations" (Bhabha 1988:10-11, original emphasis). This is what he elsewhere calls 'the third space', "that productive space of the construction of culture as difference [différance], in the spirit of alterity or otherness" (Bhabha 1990b:209). Alterity or otherness has to be understood in relation to cultural hybridity as entertaining difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy (Bhabha 1994a:4). Hence the need to critique the creation of cultural diversity and the containment of cultural difference (Bhabha 1990b:208-9, 1994b).

To this extent he illustrates how it is that subjects (they could be bushmen affiliated to the military) are variably positioned, the meaning of positionality being an entirely contingent and indexical affair that is constructed
through and in "negotiation rather than negation" (Bhabha 1988:11). A cornerstone of Homi Bhabha's work is a strong opposition to modes of critique that assume essential dialectical unity in a 'new' synthesis of cultural meaning and politics (this brings me back to the discussion and argument in Chapter Two). He introduces and foregrounds a "zone of occult instability" (ibid.:20) in which cultural distinction is 'agonistic', 'voiced' in angst, always in suspense in the enactive and enacted present. I operate within his criticism that the dialectic is always between two oppositional poles, symmetrical, unitary, teleological, and his statement that the dialogic stands between, but "sows confusion between [seemingly given, sui generis] opposites" (Bhabha 1994a:128) by placing them in eternal mutual tension that subverts and blurs any possibilities of autonomy through sublimation.

But it is his enquiry into the ambivalence of identity that interests me the most. He emphasises "a doubleness [an ambivalence, like the double-bind that I referred to a few paragraphs ago -- same but distinct] in colonial enunciation that arises from conflicting demands for stable identity and historical reform" (Thomas 1994:40). For Homi Bhabha, and I quote at length:

"The civilizing mission is problematized and partly undone by an excess or slippage inherent in replication: 'almost the same, but not quite....Almost the same but not white'....Colonial authority thus produces ironic, split identifications; these threatening expressions of hybridity disrupt and subvert colonial hegemony, in the sense that they exclude the possibility of total epistemic mastery, and because they constitute 'a variously positioned native who by (mis)appropriating the terms of the dominant ideology' is able to resist colonial typification (ibid., original emphasis).

However, as Thomas goes on to argue, power (including that implicit in colonial practices) is frequently proactive, productive, often even positive in its operation. Thus, "the allowance made for subversion on the part of the colonized is distinctly gestural...this [Bhabha's] style of theorizing reifies a general structure of colonial dominance in a manner that is curiously at odds with its pluralizing
and disarticulating intentions" (ibid.). Crucially, though, only in so much as he might (erroneously) be understood to be championing 'resistance' over-and-above all else, Bhabha's strategically functional 'colonial' discourses and counter-discourses emulate classic functionalist anthropology in which parts stand for wholes in the removal or elimination of socio-cultural structural hindrances (see Bhabha 1986, 1988). However, Bhabha argues that hybridity is not a problem (although it may be a problematic), but rather "the sign of the productivity of colonial power" (Bhabha 1994a:112).

On this point I also find myself in disagreement with Rey Chow. According to her, "Bhabha's word 'hybridity' revives...an old functionalist notion of what a dominant culture permits in the interest of maintaining its own equilibrium" (Chow 1993:35). He is, we are told, stuck in the radical Fanonism -- exemplified by Robert Gordon (1992) and to a lesser extent Richard Lee (1984) -- that posits an 'agency'/ 'structure' and 'oppressor'/'oppressed', 'collusion'/ 'resistance' dialectic. But this is to misunderstand two things: the concepts of 'hybridity' and 'ambivalence', and Bhabha's arguments per sé. Without getting into his discussion of subversive memesis, emulation, and the politics of repetition, Bhabha (1990a, 1990b, 1994a) states that hybridity allows the strategic reversal of domination and authority through disavowal and the denial of diversity; hybridity breaks down the duality and symmetry of 'self'/ 'other', 'inside'/ 'outside' (Bhabha 1994a:116).

Homi Bhabha is thus correct, I believe, in expressing a deep suspicion for the search, politically and epistemologically, for cultural commensurability, and in pointing out that 'the native' is constructed within and across multiple social positions and relationships and inscribed across multiple sites/sights. But these need to be followed by an open-ended argument about the enunciative split of discursivity, in which "the colonist's text already contains a native voice -- ambivalently" (Chow 1993:34-5).
In this respect, Chow is incorrect in searching for the analytical termination that ultimately betrays her argument against essentialism:

what kind of argument is it to say that the [native's] 'voice' can be found in the ambivalence of the imperialist's speech? It is an argument which ultimately makes it unnecessary to come to terms with the [native] since she has already 'spoken', as it were, in the system's gaps. All we would need to do would be to continue to study -- to deconstruct -- the rich and ambivalent language of the imperialist! (ibid. : 35).

Chow is only correct if, pace Spivak, we are seeking some sort of closure embodied in the 'sovereign native' or, in this case, the 'authentic voice' of praetorianised bushmen. Locating the subject(ivity) is not about ignoring the object-image upon which Chow so eloquently dwells at length. The two are one: mutually implicated, eternally in correspondence, simply hybrid. This is the thrust of Bhabha's argument. This underpins the dialogical constitution of bushmen and 'bushmanness'.

v

crisis in representing 'the native'

Things have become rather complicated and we still find ourselves asking: how should we grapple with the identity 'bushman', the identification, by some praetorianised bushmen with 'bushmanness'? Now, however, we need to ask: how do we deal with the hybridised bushman subject in an institutional(ised) modernity (see Giddens 1990, 1991) that operates according to ridiculous radical reductionism on the level of image construction and constitution? This question is easy to address if we conform with the 'ridiculous radical reductionism' and 'institutionalised modernity' that I mention here. It is therefore more important to ask: how do we, as anthropologists, represent people who were at Schmidtsdrift bearing in mind that under hybridity "the difference of cultures can no longer be identified or
evaluated as objects of epistemological or moral contemplation: cultural differences are not simply there to be seen or appropriated" (Bhabha 1994a:114)? What does it therefore mean to say that 'bushmanness' is about "neither the One nor the Other...but something else besides" (Bhabha 1988:13,18)? We start by asking: neither One nor the Other what?

Rey Chow addresses this dilemma in her enticing paper entitled Where Have All the Natives Gone?, and poses the question:

Is there a way of 'finding' the native without simply ignoring the image, or substituting a 'correct' image of the ethnic specimen for an 'incorrect' one, or giving the native a 'true' voice 'behind' her 'false' image? How could we deal with the native in an age when there is no possibility of avoiding the reduction/abstraction of the native as image? How can we write about the native by not ignoring the defiled, degraded image that is an inerasable part of her status -- that is, by not resorting to the idealist belief that everything would be all right if the inner truth would lead to the 'correct' image? I want to highlight the native -- nowadays often a synonym for the oppressed, the marginalized, the wronged -- because I think that the space occupied by the native in postcolonial discourses is also the space of error, illusion, deception, and filth. How would we write this space in such a way so as to refuse the facile turn of sanctifying the defiled image with pieties and thus enriching ourselves precisely with what can be called the surplus value of the oppressed, a surplus value that results from exchanging the defiled image for something more noble? (Chow 1994:127, original emphasis).

It is not mere coincidence that we find James Clifford writing, over half a decade earlier, that "[t]he filth that an expansive West...has thrown in the face of the world's societies appears as raw material, compost for new orders of difference. It is also filth. [Modern] cultural contacts need not be romanticized, erasing the violence of empire and continuing forms of neocolonial domination" (Clifford 1988:15, my emphasis). For both Clifford and Chow, and I think that Homi Bhabha would concur, the crisis in representing 'the native' is underscored by an "ongoing search for nonessentialist forms of cultural politics" (ibid.:11).
The emphasis, in Clifford and Chow, is on the danger of romanticising 'the native', on pursuing the "symmetry of redemption" (ibid.), parodied by a patronising concern for "endangered authenticities" (ibid.:5) that is, I believe, premised on guilt on the part of colonisers. Such guilt, rooted in a burgeoning humanism leads to lamentation and the ennobling or exaltation of 'natives', and in this case, praetorianised bushmen (my opposition to liberal humanism is strongly influenced by Homi Bhabha 1990b,1994a). On the other hand, however, there is the risk of denigrating and deriding 'the native' through various strategies of portrayal and inscription that are at odds with the above. After all, we have to guard against trivialising the negative experiences of praetorianised bushmen and the rapacious, deleterious aspects of colonialisms. But, as Edward Said warns, we do not want to "reinforce the dreadful secondariness of people" (Said 1989:207). Here lies the predicament, mystified and indeed heightened by the discursive construction of those who (re)present an affiliation with the idyllic and edenic image of bushmen affiliated with the military as 'liberal' (or, at best, 'progressive'). These are the people who, in their efforts to come to terms with European colonialisms (presented not in the plural and as a contested process, but as a unitary, singular phenomenon) and the place of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen are caught, eternally, "between a critical desire to subjectivize them [these bushmen] with envy and a 'humble' gesture to revere them as silent objects" (Chow 1993:33). This is the nub of the convergence of Lee's and Gordon's arguments.

Those who differ (defér), and depict the Schmidtsdrift bushmen with anything other than reverence, those who refuse to or hesitate in sanctifying these bushmen, are quickly labelled irresponsible, reckless, 'confused'. In this instance, one is caught because, as Eugene Roosens explains, "[we] can hardly say no to an ethnic group [least of all one that is popularly painted as 'hyper-oppressed'] without running the risk of being branded as racists" (Roosens
1989:14). Importantly, we need not even go so far as to assert the opposite of romantic and sentimentalist identification (or any form of emotive reductionist design) in order to receive relegation to the anti-humanist scrap heap of rejected and dejected saboteurs of liberal democracy.

The position marked by the reluctance to sanctify the defiled image of 'the native' has been largely neglected by anthropologists, literary critics and writers in 'cultural studies' (for good ideological motives, although weak professional reasons, in South African exposé anthropology). Because of this neglect, we are unable, on the basis of existing literature that addresses bushmen (and anthropology more generally -- something which I, like Nicholas Thomas 1994:172-3, find deeply disturbing; see Chapter Eight of my thesis), to examine 'bushmanness' as a politics of identity that would possibly provide for a socio-politically and intellectually exciting array of what Clifford calls "cultural futures" (Clifford 1988:15) or "possible futures" (ibid.:7). We have to be prepared and willing to question the essential victimhood readily attributed to praetorianised bushmen, to contest the position occupied by Gordon and Lee. We have to realise that the 'native-as-victim' facet of Rey Chow's crisis in representing 'the native' ignores the fact that "'authenticity' is an act of liberal discursive violence, parallel in many ways to the inscription of the 'native' ('indigene') under the sign of the savage" (Griffiths 1994:71). Thus, such a revised and reconsidered approach also means that we have to examine, indeed critically question, widely held 'humanist' assumptions.

**re:centring culture**

What this could be taken to mean is that we need to revisit the concept of culture (itself a site of relentless revisiting -- probably the most cosmopolitan of concepts in the social sciences and humanities). One possible
consequence of this, then, is to posit the relativism of 'the cultural' to the extent of infinite regress (something along the lines of: cultural distinction is, everywhere, always and only intersubjective distinction, and hence nowhere, certainly nowhere objectifiable. This would certainly keep cognitive anthropologists and liberal humanists happy -- that is until they realise their complicity in an influential industry that is characterised, in part, by supporters and followers of cultural plurality). Another possibility, and that embraced by Gupta and Ferguson (1992), is to argue that 'culture', with its ontology linked to an epistemology of spatial boundedness and fixity, is no longer a useful referent because it transgresses space(s). 'Culture', they tell us, has become phantasmagoric, unbounded, messy, 'spaced-out', and we are therefore expected to move "beyond 'culture'" (ibid.). (I attempted to show, in the previous chapter, that this is only partially the case; useful, but to a point). The "isomorphism of space, place, and culture" (ibid.:7) does occur, in some of the most violent and tumultuous statements of diversity. But it also occurs in more moderate statements of difference. It does not occur, simultaneously, in the highlighting of similitude (such as that evidenced by Jonathan Friedman's Les sapeur cosmopolitans who subscribe, situationally, to the global citizenship of 'the non-aligned world'; see Friedman 1990; Gupta 1992).

Gupta and Ferguson's call for an intellectual project that transcends 'culture', although not very clear, is in some respects closely akin to Lila Abu-Lughod's "writing against culture" (Abu-Lughod 1991,1993). Although their political programme and moral endeavor does not directly overlap with hers, the point of commonalty is the collective pronouncement that 'culture' inevitably encompasses homogenisation, generalisation, coherence, and that unitary 'cultures' are arranged in an intrinsically hierarchical fashion (which, for Gupta and Ferguson is spatialised). 'Culture' is thus attacked because it is inherently
political, because 'cultures' are invariably politicised. Their criticism of the power of the culture concept rests on the argument that the relationship between 'culture' and 'cultures' is frequently and usually presented as straightforward and unproblematic. These two concepts are not merely often imbricated, but collapsed, conflated in practice -- something that Abu-Lughod and Gupta and Ferguson quite ironically seem predisposed to doing. 'Culture', it is implied, is appropriated in the positing of 'cultural distinction', the inventing of 'distinct cultures', assertions of 'a culture' (or a variety thereof), and we are told to oppose 'culture' because of this complexity and ambiguity that suspends its location inside place and within a politics.

What is disconcerting is the implication (from both Abu-Lughod and Gupta and Ferguson) that we should eschew a concept (and discourses along with it) because it is contested, eternally disputed, political. The bench-mark then seems to be the end of politics maybe, ideology certainly. It is precisely the messiness that inheres in 'culture' that facilitates the multifarious, heteroglot, polymorphous 'nature' of cultural distinction and very real, tangible cultural identities. Because 'culture' is dialogically always becoming and has become, a product and work-in-progress, it fuels differentiated sociality and anthropological analysis.

Thus, when 'culture' is dismissed because of its supposedly inimical attributes -- be it in the name of a universalising, colonising moral project, or a globalising (equally colonising?) late modernity -- cultural politics becomes evanescent, anthropology looses its substance, and one generalising and totalising discourse is substituted for another that is no less problematic ('liberal humanism'). The raison de être of anthropology is subverted as both 'Othering' and 'othering' cease to exist (on a reflexive note, who are we, as anthropologists to deny the significance of 'culture' and 'cultures' -- whether we like these ideas or not? We do not control all cultural capital,
and there is no closure here regardless of whether we helped invent these concepts or not. We might have helped 'write culture', but we are certainly not the exclusive producers, disseminators and consumers of it).

The problem here, shared with Gordon and Lee, and underpinning Chow's 'crisis in representing the native', is a narrow and monocular conception of 'cultural' politics. We need to operate within the tension and exchange across cultural difference and cultural diversity -- in the dialogic of cultural distinction. Recentering 'culture' need not be the literal opposing of the decentering of 'culture' -- to imbue 'culture' with epistemological merit is not to say that 'culture' must cease to be deconstructed, threatened with 'erasure'. As intellectuals, we need to move beyond a legacy of colonial and anti-colonial discourses (which, as I have shown, can be dangerously similar) and exploit 'post-coloniality' as a proactive and productive moment in which 'cultures' are to be embraced if different, ridiculed if diverse.

Anthropology in particular does not -- to date -- help us move away from 'the native' as lack, as casualty. Abu-Lughod (1991,1993) and Gupta and Ferguson (1992) are therefore surely meaning to write not against 'culture' per sé but diverse 'cultures'. To 'write culture' in full cognizance of the fecundatory disposition of cultural difference is to welcome and embrace the validity of examining relentless mediations, on-going dialogism, processes of meaning construction and compilation that associate and disassociate, very particularly and peculiarly 'culture' with 'cultures' within a variety of sometimes contested and sometimes unchallenged ideological positions that may overspill into violent and aggressive assertions of absolute distinction. May is the operative term; they also may not.
CHAPTER EIGHT

NATIVE STATE, BUSHMAN OTHER

In the previous chapter I presented a strongly theoretical argument about the politics of 'bushmanness'. Such a discussion is meaningless unless it is grounded in an enacted and enactive moment that bears it out. What I want to do here is discuss a process that was underway when I returned to Schmidtsdrift base for a short period in early 1996, and that locates the theoretical discussion of the preceding chapter very specifically in an event and moment. The politics that marked this moment was characterised by a degree of local coherence and homogenisation -- among elites at Schmidtsdrift -- that stood in stark contrast to the kinds of political differentiation that I alluded to in Chapters Five and Six.

I identify and discuss a moment in a longer and drawn out socio-political process -- a moment in which !Xu, Khwe, 'Namibian' and 'Angolan' elites were unanimous in their collective support for, and mutual agreement on their prospective resettlement on a farm away from Schmidtsdrift base. Moreover, I have illustrated (in earlier chapters) the extent to which the dialogue between aristocratic agents and institutional formations was marked by overall structural-agentive disjuncture and conjuncture, the complexities of which could only be understood situationally. The rhetoric around resettlement exhibited much of this indexical messiness. The length, and perhaps exhausting nature of the connected discussions in Chapter Seven and below -- taken together -- stems from profuse epistemological constraints that characterise enquiries into 'bushmanness', and anthropology's dealings with 'autochthonous' politics (see Chapter Seven). The final section of this chapter serves as a conclusion to the thesis.
the subject and the native state

In a paper entitled *What is to Be Done? Feted by the State: Reflections on State Intervention and the Schmidtsdrift Bushmen*, I consider the South African state's recent agreement to furnish the people who were living at Schmidtsdrift with a massive financial grant (rumoured to have amounted to R 61 million. Jan Viljoen and Louis Vorster, personal communication, January 1996). In that paper I set out to answer the question: how should anthropologists contextualise and respond to the state's generosity (see Douglas 1996)? I want to pose the identical question here, and set about answering it in light of what I argued in the previous chapter.

The state's agreement, in early 1996, to extensively commit to and 'assist' the Schmidtsdrift bushmen was the outcome of government intervention at Schmidtsdrift since early- to mid-1995. The bushmen, however, (and as I have mentioned elsewhere) had been residing there since March 1990, and for most of their stay in South Africa, certainly for five years subsequent to their debarkation, the South African government was non-committal about where it stood in relation to them. Why was the state non-committal and uninvolved for a considerable period in the past? We can only speculate, but there are a number of plausible reasons.

There is one particularly powerful and compelling explanation of this lack of commitment. The absence of the previous state's involvement in the plight of the people at Schmidtsdrift was, I think, closely related to the general atmosphere of political flux that prevailed in South Africa at the time when they arrived. The interregnum meant that the previous (National Party) government that had so exhaustively patronised them in the past found itself in a position in which it was unable to pay much attention to the bushmen at Schmidtsdrift and further patronise them in any tangible sense (albeit indirectly -- through the Defence
Force). National political changes stemming from De Klerk's February 1990 speech and the Kempton Park negotiations marked the withdrawal of direct state intervention from Schmidtsdrift.

Moreover, systematic demands from 1990 onwards, made by the people who had resided at the base prior to being forcibly evicted by the apartheid regime in 1968, that their 'ancestral land' be returned to them, no doubt presented the National Party government with a dilemma. Contestation over the ownership of Schmidtsdrift came to a head when leaders of these people took their case before the Advisory Commission on Land Allocation in early 1992 (I briefly referred to the Thlaping in Chapter Six). The signs were there that, in all likelihood, the state would be presented with very real pressure to get involved.

One may well have speculated, at the time, that the decline in the predicament of the people at Schmidtsdrift experienced under the National Party regime during national political transition would have been met and raised when an African National Congress (ANC)-led government came to power. There are a number of factors that would have strongly suggested that the demise of National Party rule would have worsened the situation for bushmen at Schmidtsdrift.

Firstly, the Schmidtsdrift bushmen have a long history, now well over two decades, of dubious political and ideological alliances. Many of the people living at the base fought for the SADF, the apartheid army, during the Namibian liberation war. A number of the men at Schmidtsdrift served in the SADF's 'Bushmen Battalions'. These men fought in an anti-liberation and neo-colonial struggle, sometimes directly against ANC cadres in Angola and Zambia.

Secondly, the Schmidtsdrift bushmen have a short history as South African nationals. This, one could have anticipated, would have weighed heavily against them in competing for resources in a national climate of redress and reparation. It would have been logical to conclude that the
Thlaping's insistence on exclusive rights to Schmidtsdrift would have been addressed by the state because they, not the immigrant Schmidtsdrift population, had experienced direct oppression (in the form of material dispossession) under apartheid.

Thirdly, the period of political transition in South Africa was characterised by a reluctance, on the part of government and those parties involved in negotiations about a new national political dispensation, to engage in the discourse of 'ethnic politics' for fear of being accused of condoning segregationism and what Homi Bhabha terms the "politics of diversity" (Bhabha 1990b:208-209). I think that on this basis it would have been perfectly reasonable to doubt that the people at Schmidtsdrift would have received any form of special treatment that may have been interpreted as bushman (and hence ethnic) favouritism under an ANC-led government.

When the Government of National Unity (now defunct) took the reigns of central power it initially gave every impression that such speculation was accurate. There was a continued absence of state intervention at Schmidtsdrift until mid-1995, over a year after the new government's election to office. Thlaping success in winning their land claim to Schmidtsdrift in mid-1994 was met with a muted response from government, with the state taking up their concerns and cause to (re)occupy Schmidtsdrift only in early 1995.

How then, given these factors -- individually and collectively cogent pretexts for the state distancing itself from the plight of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen -- do we, as anthropologists, make sense of direct, resolute and committed beneficent arbitration, even if only on principle, by the state in early 1996? How do we answer to the issue of a sizeable grant that was to serve as finance towards a comprehensive resettlement and 'development' scheme, contingent upon the people at Schmidtsdrift acquiring land on which infrastructure would be built, and in which the grant would be invested (\!Xu and Khwe Trust Survey and Draft
Resettlement Plan, January 1996; Jan Viljoen and Louis Vorster, personal communication, February 1996)? How do we explain the allocation of a large sum of money to the people at the base as a statement of intent, indicating probable (even if eventually to be unrealised) extensive state commitment?

We cannot be certain of the state's motives, and it must remain unclear as to why the state pledged a capacious grant to a 'relief' project for the Schmidtsdrift bushmen. One possibility is that pressure exerted by the Thlaping had led to indirect state involvement -- immersion by default -- in the plight of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen. Thlaping leaders had recurrently communicated their reluctance to share Schmidtsdrift with any population, including the bushmen. They made it clear, in the wake of their successful land claim, that the bushmen would have to move and be settled, or settle on their own accord, elsewhere. This state of affairs no doubt put pressure on the government in the sense that not only was the state obliged to help the Thlaping (re)occupy Schmidtsdrift, but it had to help them do so exclusively.

Furthermore, the national climate of reconciliation and redress that currently pervades South African state political speak may well have been a strong motivating factor. I am confident that the powerful rhetoric of restitution, repair, and reconciliation that went had in hand with the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and that, more recently, marks the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, influenced the state in its relationship with the Schmidtsdrift bushmen. Related to this, it might be the case that the government intervened on behalf of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen because it was blinkered by the liberal democratic discourse of nation-statism (I elaborate on this below).

This possible reason for state intervention is connected to another motivating factor (and I think the most important) underlying the state's commitment to overtly assisting the bushmen. The government appears to have
recognised and venerated of the bushman identity of the people at Schmidtsdrift. There is much to suggest that this was the case. State mobilisation around the 'bushmaness' of these people was foregrounded, in one sense, in 1995 when the Department of Land Affairs commissioned a report that argued for the essential protection and conservation of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen (see Archer 1995). Moreover, prior to commissioning this report, and during initial negotiations with the Thlaping, the Department of Land Affairs employed the popular author and naturalist Louis Liebenberg as its advisor in its dealings with the Schmidtsdrift bushmen. Liebenberg has written extensively about bushmen as innately adept trackers, in harmony with 'nature' or their 'natural environment' (Liebenberg 1990; see Douglas 1995).

Much of the Trust's lobbying also foregrounded the need for the government to get its hands dirty, so to speak, without disregarding the bushman credentials of the people who were at Schmidtsdrift. The Trust has served as a well organised and formidable forum, as a committed front with the function, ostensibly, of securing a positive future for the Schmidtsdrift bushmen (see Chapter Four). Thanks largely to the efforts of two white trustees (one of whom has published an academic article about the typical 'bushmaness' of the people who were at Schmidtsdrift; see Vorster 1994a,1994b), the Trust was eventually highly 'successful' in its correspondence with the Departments of Land Affairs, Defence, and Welfare. This 'success' lay in part in the essential 'San' (bushman) rhetoric that underlay much of the communication between the state and the Trust (as evidenced in the !Xu and Khwe Trust's Survey and Draft Resettlement Plan, January 1996).

It is hard to believe that the sure immensity of the grant and 'development' plan endorsed by the state was simply in response to Thlaping insistence that the people at Schmidtsdrift move elsewhere combined with a general discursive-ideological context of redress that had increasingly incorporated the idea of a 'multi-cultural' (read 'multi-ethnic') 'rainbow nation'. Sizeable state
assistance and intervention seems to have been about a lot more than mere political pragmatics.

Conjecture or not, the question that then arises is how do we address the apparent contemporary salience of 'bushmaness' with regard to exchanges and dialogue that occurred between the state and the Schmidtsdrift bushmen (or their respective 'representatives')? Should the bushman identity of the people at Schmidtsdrift have been an issue at all, should it have permitted the state the liberty of affording them preferential treatment while neglecting, relatively speaking, masses of impoverished South Africans more eligible for centralised aid (including, of course, Northern Cape residents with whom the bushmen will no doubt increasingly come to rub shoulders)? Did the government simply confuse its priorities and make an indefensible pledge, or did it do what was necessary, sufficient, and indeed essential for the Schmidtsdrift bushmen and the 'evident' particularities of their way of life? How do we respond to a post-apartheid state not only conceding to, but revering, centrally formalising, a culturally particular or 'ethnic' group?

post-apartheid: post-colonialisms?

It should be clear from the previous chapter, and with the above questions in mind, that existent work in anthropology does not help us at all when it comes to attempting to derive a progressive response to government intervention at Schmidtsdrift. In critically enquiring into the salience and appropriateness of existent 'approaches' to understanding the past and the plight of praetorianised bushmen we are both the recipients and creators of the crisis in representation that Rey Chow (1993) brings to our attention, and that I discussed in Chapter Seven. Much of anthropology and 'cultural studies' (with Nicholas Thomas and Homi Bhabha being two notable exceptions) only helps us
if we are prepared to ignore Mamood Mamdani's wise caution with reference to Ruwandan politics, but I believe more broadly applicable to 'post-colonial' Africa, that "where majority and minority [these could be plural] turn into permanent artefacts, neither minority nor majority rule necessarily lead to viable regimes....The construction of permanent divisions between the majority and the minority in a multi-cultural context is the outcome of a nation-state paradigm, of the state as the expression of the right to self-determination" (Mamdani 1996a:34). As long we essentialise bushmen associated with the military, and see them as an essential anything (be it as victims or otherwise) that translates into representing them as constituting a 'permanent minority', we run the risk of entrenching, certainly fostering, the collapse of a politics of dialogue and difference -- a politics of "horizontal equality" (Roosens 1989:67-8).

Mamdani goes on to review a number of problems that derive from this paradigm, paying particular attention to the tendency to think and politik as if political reality is about 'uni-culturalism', about nations creating states and states formalising cultural distinctions or state power creating "a central and legitimizing cultural difference [read diversity]" (Mamdani 1996a:34), and not a critical multiculturalism. Thus, he says, "[t]he existence of permanent minorities and permanent majorities are not compatible with the democratic process....For a political process to be democratic, minorities and majorities must be constructed in the course of that process, rather than being a foregone conclusion" (ibid.).

The South African government should dispel the "jargon of the minorities" (Bhabha 1994b:269) and do the same for the discourse of majorities. In his book Citizen and Subject, Mamdani continues with this trajectory, claiming, quite correctly I think, that "a key institutional legacy of the colonial period is the bifurcated state" (1996b:217). 'Post-colonial' democratic process should transcend this bifurcation and structural dialectic and be, simultaneously,
about 'minorities' and 'majorities' as permeable entities-in-process in a manner that compliments their dialogical constitution and mutual implicatedness; in a way that concedes to their processual constitution through, in, and across practice and sociality, and that challenges any assertions of exclusive and oppositional interests (ibid.:285-301).

'Minorities' and 'majorities' are not 'objects' of cultural-political distinction. They are processes, modes, of political expression and engagement. The politics that marks what Homi Bhabha terms "those interstitial moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of 'differences'" (Bhabha 1994b:269, emphasis his) is anything but the political business of the state. This is not to say that such politics lacks significance, but that centralised sanction of it -- or, for that matter, opposition to it -- is likely to produce a political reality of such significance that we would rather not know or experience it. We are, hopefully, and without amnesia or nostalgia, beyond apartheid.

But we are not beyond politics. The South African government needs to be aware not only of the possibility that the centralised endorsement and formalisation of 'group rights' pertaining to the people who were at Schmidtsdrift would quite probably lead to the politics of pluralism and diversity, but also that this intervention would definitely, unequivocally and exclusively help a select few bushmen.

This brings me back to romantic imaging and images of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen (which, subsequent to the previous chapter, include the image creation and generation of Lee and Gordon), and the strength of Homi Bhabha's dialogism. In articulating an image that has a special, often tangibly material resonance in the 'West', and in helping propagate such a representation, bushman elites at Schmidtsdrift were relying on an appreciative audience that existed through and in dialogue with them. These bushmen aristocrats were, however, to a large extent reliant upon and open to the whims and fancies of sometimes beneficent, sometimes
exploitative, but usually devout patrons. However, so too were they dependent upon forces 'closer to home' -- 'Western' audiences did not (and do not) have absolute authority over the rhetoric, or even the discoursing, of 'bushmanness'. Nor would the state ever have such a monopoly. If the state and 'Western' others did have such control that in turn logically led to mystification, the outcome of which would be to constrain, obliviously, those who played the bushman card, then 'bushmanness' would surely be a mercenary lie. But the elites that I have looked at in this dissertation exhibited a degree and level of political sophistication, implicit in their reflexive management of ambivalence in the pronouncement of cultural identities, that belies such a one-sided approach.

On this note, 'celebrating' 'bushmanness' (or 'aboriginality', 'nativeness') is about the agents in that process, whoever they may be, being duped and non-duped. Paradoxically, at the end of a turgid, difficult, and at times even contradictory argument, Rey Chow compliments Homi Bhabha with her statement that "[t]he native [read praetorianised bushman] is not the defiled image and not not the defiled image" (Chow 1993:54). This is the ambivalence of the "modern tribalism" that James Clifford (1988) discusses. Nicholas Thomas, pace Clifford, writes that "contemporary primitivisms possess a good deal in common with earlier reifications and fetishizations of notionally simple ways of life, but have a distinctive character that derives from the politics of identity in the present" (Thomas 1994:171). "Contemporary primitivisms" are diffused through a variety of cross-cutting interests and concerns that negate the idea that we are witnessing the recapitulation of appropriations of an oppressive-romantic history. The exoticisms of late modernity have more to do with "difference and strangeness than an antithetical relation to modernity" (Thomas 1994:173; see Clifford 1988).

Our commitment, when it comes to expressions and assertions of 'bushmanness' and the place of the state is to intervene from a position that privileges cultural
difference, that foregrounds, as the point of departure, an 'identity politics' akin to what Terence Turner has recently called "critical multiculturalism" (Turner 1993). To militate against the embracing of "difference [or encyclopaedic] multi-culturalism" (ibid.), in this case, we have to recognise and convey the ambivalence and hybridity of 'bushmanness' as against representations that would, in all probability, lead to the creation and inauguration of what Mamdani terms a "permanent minority" (Mamdani 1996a). We would, thus, be giving praetorianised bushman -- certainly their leaders -- the benefit of the doubt at the outset.

This is to call for Mamdani's "autonomy of politics from culture" (1996a:35), that when reified through 'identity politics', the 'culture industry' and 'the cultural' remain beyond the thralls of the state. Arguments that begin from an extreme position, that assume an either/or stance premised on the essentialist and reductionist imaging and imagining of 'a cultural group' (the existence of which one either condones or condemns, is for or against) would be misfounded and fruitless -- like Lee's and Gordon's 'perspectives' explored in the previous chapter. In addition, such arguments would, I believe, contribute to an already long-standing suppression of cultural difference (see Griffiths 1994:75).

Moreover, it has to be said that "representations, subsumed...under a mythologized and fetishized sign of the 'authentic', can... be used to create a privileged hierarchy of...Aboriginal voice" (ibid.:71). Two points need to be made here: First, in arguing against the state intervening in the lives of bushmen because of their bushman identity, I am not seeking or furthering the notion that there is, or ought to be, a visible authentic national/state subject (see Hall 1996). Second, I have emphasised that bushmen leaders at Schmidtsdrift have actively appropriated, contributed to, and manipulated the discourse of 'bushmanness', of primordial distinction. To think and argue otherwise is to overlook, for example, the theoretical tenets of much of the
criticism directed at Edward Said's *Orientalism*. The idea that some orientals cannot be 'orientalist', is not far removed from the notion that some bushmen cannot claim, mobilise, or manipulate 'bushmanness' to their own end (see Clifford 1988). But those who were (and are) at the forefront of claiming and accepting 'bushmanness' were (and are) the people most likely to benefit from rewards for bushmen. We therefore have to know, and let the state know if and when it intervenes, that when it comes to questions of 'aboriginality', 'group rights' are about individuals, most probably those who are already relatively well established.

Thus, as anthropologists we should insist that the state intervene in the predicament of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen (if for no reason other than to be consistent in addressing the plight of citizens who have not experienced, and who are presently not enjoying, the ideals of equity and equality that underlie the national rhetoric of nation-building. Such an insistence would be more pointed with regard to Schmidtsdrift because of Thlaping demands to have exclusive access to the base). The state can help praetorianised bushmen, but this intervention must not be on behalf of, or for, bushmen. Moreover, the bushmen at Schmidtsdrift were, as I have perhaps all too frequently mentioned, not homogeneous, and state involvement could therefore be endorsed, but partially, within certain negotiable limits, and in accordance with the rights, whatever they may be, of South African nationals. There would certainly be competition and conflict around access to centralised aid. Such contestation should be managed and resolved according to individual rights and liberties and not 'group rights'.

Not only would it be erroneous to respond to intended government intervention at Schmidtsdrift on the basis of a single, unequivocal representation of the people who were living there. It would also be a mistake to stress that the state should not get its hands dirty -- or, to refer back to my paper mentioned at the outset, to assert that nothing
ought to be done (Douglas 1996). Such an action or statement would condone integration as assimilation as Gordon's 'standpoint' would, at the face of it, suggest. It would also be a grave error to address probable state intervention and the question of the place of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen according to the cultural protectionism and its concomitant crude relativism that Lee's 'position' proposes (see Gordon 1986, 1992; Lee 1984; Lee and Hurlich 1982; see also Chapter Seven). It would be highly detrimental to address the plight of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen in tune with the reductionist and paralysing overlap of these 'respective positions'.

Edward Said mentions that in anthropology, "[t]he histories, traditions, societies, texts of 'others' are seen either as responses to Western initiatives -- and therefore passive, dependent -- or as domains of culture that belong mainly to 'native' elites" (Said 1989:212). The former is certainly true in Gordon's (1992) analysis of praetorianised bushmen, and the passivity and dependence that he pins on 'Western initiatives' is not that different to Lee's (1984) and Lee and Hurlich's (1982) image of praetorianised bushmen as victims of 'Western' machinations.

In moving away from this I have emphasised, in this thesis, the texts of 'others' as "belonging to 'native' elites," but done so in a way that problematises 'the native' and 'nativeness', and in a manner that posits elites as dialogically constituted in reality and constituting of reality. The 'native elite' was not always and necessarily an autonomous, unitary entity.

Thus, to return to the state 'kindly' intervening in the lives of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen, a correct assessment would appear to be that the state's pledged goodwill and charity, on the basis of 'group rights' or 'bushmanness' would probably result in anything but the location of some bushmen, somewhere between and across the limits of liberalism and the tyranny or absolutist demands of fundamentalism (Bhabha 1990b:207). I think centralised aid in the name of 'bushmanness' would lead to polarisation.
In arguing that 'aboriginal' politics was (and is) about elites, that 'bushmaness' was ultimately an aristocratic politics, that 'worldly nativeness' was something that leaders powerfully engaged in and authored, I am not Othering (praetorianised) bushmen through a depiction of them as having been somehow out of kilter with hegemonic liberal-democratic process (nation-statism). The 'representative democracy' that we call the 'new South Africa' is itself about Great Men (to invoke Carlyle 1995). This in turn introduces something disconcerting about 'political transition' in South Africa (and it is something that I do not think appropriate to discuss in depth at this point).

I mentioned above that we might have expected an ANC-led government to avoid the rhetoric of 'permanent minorities' and 'permanent majorities', of ethnic particularism. It would have been perfectly reasonable to anticipate avoidance, by the state, of foregrounding and formalising affinity to and membership of a nation, any nation. Unfortunately, however, the ANC government shares this tendency (although with a purportedly different moral inflection) with its predecessor and, like the National Party government before it, the ANC-led regime seems no closer to attributing meaning and significance to nationality, to citizenship of the South African state. It is cause for concern that in late 1996 we find ourselves asking just how 'new' the 'new South Africa' really is.

There is an additional and important lesson here about the role of the state. Given that the government had expressed or indicated a preparedness to invest millions of rand from the RDP in the predicament of the Schmidtsdrift bushmen, it would disturbingly appear as if the management and utilisation of national funds and programmes aimed at redressing the imbalances of the past, even 'outside' of Schmidtsdrift, is contingent upon a crude convenience. If the Schmidtsdrift case is anything to go by, it would appear that assistance from the RDP, for example, was literally up for grabs, open to appropriation by the 'noisiest' and best
organised prospective beneficiaries, irrespective of nuanced histories and identities. On this score, criticising and condemning some bushmen for cleverly accessing state aid would be to miss the point. If anything, the very programme or system that these bushmen astutely exploit was, and is, at fault.

The salient rhetoric of redress, restitution, and reconciliation that echoes resoundingly throughout contemporary national political speak needs checks and balances. It most importantly needs these, together with a considerable amount of introspection, in embracing 'cultural/ethnic groups' and 'group rights'. In fact, I think that the state should not be overtly and formally condoning or condemning cultural groups in any form whatsoever. In addition, and linked to this point, there needs to be transparency, critical mass, the disclosure of state plans and intentions when considerable investment is considered. But the possibility sadly exists that states, including 'post-colonial states', are blinkered by the seductiveness of representations of nationalism, nationalism, statism, and ethnic identities and boundaries as unequivocal, fixed artifacts, and that the calls for transparency (like calls for a critical awareness of the elitism of much contemporary politics) in cases like Schmidtsdrift are as idealistic as the position adhered to by Gordon and Lee. Eugene Roosens tells us that "[t]he 'right to one's own culture' and 'the right to preserve one's own ethnic identity' are usually presented as inalienable and as pertaining to the sphere of 'human rights'" (Roosens 1989:18,127). This is definitely the case if one is talking about operating within the nation-state paradigm, and it is this paradigm, as Mamdani (1996a,1996b) rightly points out, upon which we, as intellectuals need to concentrate our critical and 'transgressive' energies. We therefore have our work cut out. We need to look more closely at the nation-state as the defining feature of our 'colonial' legacy and 'post-colonial' future-present. for, "[i]f we had transcended colonial images and narratives more
comprehensively, perhaps we would not need to discuss them at all -- but there is no emptiness at present [and none foreseeable] in which such a confident silence can be heard" (Thomas 1994:195).

I would like to believe that the eventual outcome of the state's pledge of a massive grant for the people at Schmidtsdrift would amount to some people finding themselves inevitably 'restricted' by 'bushmaness', and some deliberately, intentionally, choosing to be so positioned. Others would not find themselves similarly constrained, either as the result of consciously revolting against an ascribed bushman identity, by refusing to claim and manipulate such an identity, or by situating themselves so as to make their labelling according to an ascribed identity overly problematic. But I have strong reservations, premised on the ratification of ethnic politics and preference, on the questionably 'post-colonial' orientation, of the 'post-apartheid' South African state. It seems unable to consider that there was, and is, no one-size-fits-all Schmidtsdrift bushman disposition, and there would be no unitary, undifferentiated experience of government generosity when, and if, it comes to fruition. In the interim, however, the terms of centralised intervention should be open to negotiation and directed at citizens in cognizance of their rights specifically as nationals.

CONCLUSION

In his recent paper, *Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography*, George Marcus reviews the demise of single-sited, unitarily located ethnography and the emergence of "multiple sites of observation and participation that cross-cut dichotomies such as the 'local' and the 'global', the 'lifeworld' and the 'system'. Resulting ethnographies are therefore both in and out of the world system" (Marcus 1995:95). One could
add 'structure' and 'agency', 'leaders' and 'led', 'elite' and 'subaltern' to the ruin of binary modes of orientation. The 'cross-cutting of dichotomies' is very much what this thesis is about (whether or not it is truly 'multi-sited' is debatable). The dialogical constitution, simultaneously, 'in and out' of (and thus across) categories, identities, politics is a theoretical cornerstone of my argument.

In foregrounding the place of elites at Schmidtsdrift, I have demonstrated that the politics of cultural identities, perhaps most significantly 'bushmanness', was the politics of elites. But these elites were not sovereign subjects, subjectivities or individuals -- they were structured agents, and the political-authoritarian institutional formations of which they were a part were in turn agentive structures. Thus it is that "the distinction between lifeworlds of subjects and the system does not hold, and the point of ethnography within the purview of its always local, close-up perspective is to discover new paths of connection and association by which traditional ethnographic concerns with agency, symbols, and everyday practices can continue to be expressed on a differently configured spatial canvas" (ibid.:98).

It is in the context of this ambivalence, that pervades the world over across 'rich/poor', 'proletariat/bourgeois', 'oppressor/oppressed', that we experience the 'post-colonial' and the accompanying, eternally emergent politics of 'worldly nativeness'. This is the politics of 'powerful subjectivities', of aristocrats -- be they aspirant and/or established elites. This is the textual-academic politics of anthropology in unison with 'cultural studies' and 'critical theory'.

One implication of this is the blurring, confounding, perhaps even the loss of 'the subaltern' in anthropology. According to Marcus,

Although multi-sited ethnography may not necessarily forsake the perspective of the subaltern, it is bound to shift the focus of attention to other domains of cultural production and ultimately to challenge this frequently privileged positioning of ethnographic perspective (ibid.:101).
I have attempted to do this in suggesting that the attributing and assigning of subaltern status is something to be done fastidiously, particularly because of the tendency to react to the 'colonial' from a certain moral vantage of the 'post-colonial' by fabricating and developing a romantic trajectory from the '(pre-)colonial'. This trajectory, whether it reveres and sanctifies 'the subaltern', or derides and dismisses 'the subaltern', tells us much, but not all, about the present, the 'post-colonial' political-intellectual industry. However, it tells us very little indeed about 'natives'. Marcus, citing Donna Haraway mentions that:

[a] commitment to mobile positioning and to passionate detachment is dependent upon the impossibility of innocent 'identity' politics and epistemologies as strategies for seeing from the standpoints of the subjugated in order to see well. One cannot 'be' either a cell or molecule -- or a woman, colonized person, labourer, and so on -- if one intends to see and see from these positions critically (Haraway in Marcus 1995:101).

In the case of the people who were at Schmidtsdrift, and something that should be clear by now, those who not only intended to, but indeed had to 'see critically' included anthropologists, the state, and a select few bushmen who were the managers and authors of 'bushmanness' and who were far from simply subjugated. This brings us to a complex and currently undertheorised politics of representation within anthropology, contingent upon a wide range of practically mediated, negotiated relations and an ambiguous moment of in(ter)vention called 'colonialism' (that has not yet departed from us -- and it probably will never do so):

colonialism has always...been a cultural process; its discoveries and trespasses are imagined and energized through signs, metaphors and narratives; even what would seem its purest moments of profit and violence have been mediated and enframed by structures of meaning. Colonial cultures are not simply ideologies that mask, mystify or rationalize forms of oppression that are external to them; they are also expressive and constitutive of colonial relationships in themselves (Thomas 1994:2).
For Nicholas Thomas, the key to a 'post-colonial' critical theory in anthropology is to adopt "a more genealogical inquiry, concerned with the displacements of discursive and practical modes rather than the attributes of a total and generalized mode, [which] can only proceed if there are colonial discourses in a plural sense that...did not exist at one time, and are emergent, hegemonic or highly contested at others" (ibid.:50, my emphasis). When it comes to understanding the position of elites and aristocrats in relation to '(aboriginal) identity politics' we must realise that "[c]olonialism is not a unitary project but a fractured one, riddled with contradictions, and exhausted as much by its own internal debates as by resistance of the colonized" (ibid.:51). Thus, in the past, and certainly in the more recent past, praetorianised bushmen were anything but undifferentiated. 'Bushmaness' was -- and is -- one crucial locus of heterogeneity, a process written and performed across resistance and complicity, passivity and violence, victims and perpetrators, leaders and led. To return to George Marcus' impressive review:

[i]n yielding the ethnographic centering on the subaltern point of view, one is also decentering the resistance and accommodation framework that has organized a considerable body of valuable research for the sake of a reconfigured space of multiple sites of cultural production in which questions of resistance, although not forgotten, are often subordinated to different sorts of questions about the shape of systemic processes themselves and complicities with these processes among variously positioned subjects.

So, it is a mistake to understand multi-sited ethnography...as merely adding perspectives peripherally to the usual subaltern focus -- e.g. adding perspectives on elites and institutions...for mere completeness (Marcus 1995:101, emphasis mine).

It is a mistake to view the 'crisis in representing the native' as simply the dilemma of the 'unspeaking native' or 'subaltern'. The very 'native' and 'subaltern' is the crisis, whether or not she 'speaks' is a secondary issue. Sure, the subaltern cannot 'speak', as Gayatri Spivak (1994) convincingly argues, but who is 'subaltern', who are 'the subaltern'? Who, at Schmidtsdrift, was '(the) native'? The politics of 'subalternity', usually met with a dose of
liberal democratic guilt-tripping and sentimentalism, like the politics of 'nativeness' and 'aboriginality', is the politics of elites. How can elites be 'subaltern(s)'? This is the irony: "[t]he banality of leftist intellectuals' lists of self-knowing, politically canny subalterns stands revealed; representing them, the intellectuals represent themselves as transparent" (Spivak 1994:70). This is one of the afflictions of misconstrued reflexivity that is premised upon, and that desires, an essentialist utopian politics.

It is with such utopianism in mind that we have to read Ranajit Guha's words:

[the historiography of [colonial-Indian] nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism -- colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism...shar[ing] the prejudice that the making of the [colonial] nation and the development of the consciousness -- nationalism -- which confirmed this process were exclusively or predominantly elite achievements. In the colonialist and neo-colonialist historiographies these achievements are credited to [European] colonial rulers, administrators, policies, institutions and culture; in the nationalist and neo-nationalist writings -- to [colonial-Indian] elite personalities, institutions, activities and ideas (Guha in Spivak 1994:79).

Not only is this the substance of formalised, institutionalised 'historiography'. It is also the stuff of the state as nation, as nation-state. 'Subalterns' do not write history, do not play ['identity'] politics, do not concern themselves with nationalism -- not within the nation-state or the nation-state paradigm. I hope to have demonstrated this, indirectly and implicitly, in relation to the vast majority of the Schmidtsdrift population, where 'collective consciousness', like 'ethnic identity' and 'nationality', had to do with specific, authoritarian individuals or cabals and coteries thereof.


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Miscellaneous


In reflecting on the visit of three trustees to the United Nations Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) in July 1994, Louis Voster (UNISA News, September-December 1994) outlined the insertion of the people at Schmidtsdrift into a global 'First People' movement and discourse. Mario Mahongo and Gatera Kajovo attended a workshop "where two important issues were discussed. The First was a discussion to clarify the concept of the rights of indigenous peoples....The second issue was the possible transformation of the Working Group into a permanent forum of the United Nations":

Our people, Known to Westerners as the 'Bushmen' or 'San', once inhabited the whole of Southern Africa, and are also referred to as the 'first people'. However, unlike the many other peoples of Africa we do not like to assert ourselves or to fight. The !Xu word for strangers is 'zhu dole' which means 'dangerous persons', and for ourselves is 'Zhu twa si', or the 'harmless people'. The heroes of our legends are cunning animals such as the jackal, who trick, lie and narrowly escape, rather than bolder animals such as lions. Over centuries our people have been persecuted, hunted, and dominated by other more aggressive cultures, and now the !Xu together with the Khwe and other peoples known as the San are struggling to survive...

We are without the power to allow our voice to be heard because we are the smallest cultural community in a foreign country. We are politically unpopular and suspect because many of us fought for the South African Defence Force, against SWAPO and later, the ANC...

In November 1993 for the first time in our history we took a step towards deciding our own future, and not remaining helpless as in the past. With the help of certain anthropologists, human rights lawyers and other individuals concerned about our future in a Black South Africa, a Trust was formed which will assist and guide the difficult decisions that we will make in the next few years...

The !Xu and Khwe Trust was formed so that our demands would receive attention and in order to empower us. Our first goal is to secure land where we can settle and develop in a manner that satisfies our cultural needs. We are essentially non-people without our own land, and we are unable to develop our own identity...

Our people do not have a naturally assertive culture, nor any experience of political organization in a modern society...and [the Trust] will assist us with the major problems that face us: our insecurity, lack of identity, and lack of respect for tradition; the lack of work and economic skills in our community; alcoholism and delinquency amongst the youth; the need for a strategy to rebuild our people, and pride in our culture, and the need for a clear vision for a meaningful existence for our people, in a modern world...
We need to be separate from other people. We can work peacefully with all races and peoples, but the !Xu and Khwe have a strong desire to own our own land, and to determine our own laws, customs and lives. We are desperate for money to assist us to buy land, to build schools and to help develop our community. Any financial assistance would be gratefully received, and should be sent to the South African !Xu and Khwe Trust...