

Restoring the Epistemic Integrity of the Indigenous Knowledge System by Braiding Knowledge



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Abstract

The function of the San tsî Khoen Ʇoaba Ʇans Digital Archive is to contribute to the reconstruction of indigenous knowledge from the perspective of the San and Khoi people. Curating the knowledge output generated by UCT's San & Khoi Centre required some innovation as the descriptive tools originating from the western knowledge system are not effective for this reconstruction function. The study objectives are to, firstly, braid what is known about indigenous knowledge upon the bridging strand of Islam along with the western knowledge system. Thereafter, an ontology is developed supporting the reconstruction of the indigenous knowledge system of the San and Khoi communities to be used in a digital archive. A mixed methods qualitative study was undertaken using the indigenous heart-centred research approach along with the western hermeneutic realism approach. Dadirri (deep listening), braided knowledge, discourse analysis, and retrospective autoethnography were the research methods used to achieve the study's objective.

Five knowledge domains emerged from the braiding process. These are: ways of knowing, relations within humanity, relations with the natural world, relations with the metaphysical world, and systemic integrity. These domains were then structured into a braided knowledge ecosystem providing a prototype model of a knowledge ecosystem. This construct when applied to the contents of the San tsî Khoen Ʇoaba Ʇans Digital Archive was able to present its contents with epistemic integrity. While the study was successful the emergent braided knowledge ecosystem needs further testing and the scope of the ontology it can support needs to be developed.

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List of Abbreviations

CAS	Centre for African Studies
DDC	Dewey Decimal Classification
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge System
IsKS	Islamic Knowledge System
LCSH	Library of Congress Subject Heading
SKC	San & Khoi Centre
UCT	University of Cape Town
WKS	Western Knowledge System
WUN	World Universities Network

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1. Introduction

To be told that the digital archive of indigenous knowledge one is curating is not decolonial enough during its review process is mind-blowing and throws one into unknown territory. Especially, when one has been doing what was prescribed through professional training and when one's personal orientation is towards the management of religious and indigenous knowledge systems (IKS). However, one trusts the review process reflects one's blind spots and begin integrating the feedback received.

This study is situated in the San tsî Khoen Digital Archive¹ built to showcase the academic output of the University of Cape Town's (UCT) San and Khoi Centre (SKC). The review process undertaken between December 2021 and February 2022, after its first year of development, prompted this study. The main point of contention was that the community and the voices of their knowledge holders were not sufficiently foregrounded. Once this dilemma was resolved the archive was deemed more decolonial and representative of indigenous people. Yet, I perceived that a degree of semiotic chaos had entered the archive but could not specifically identify what was causing this disquiet.

When chaos enters a structured space, it demands to be structured. It is in the process of examining and resolving semiotic chaos that the role of a digital curator becomes valuable. The DCC (Digital Curation Centre, n.d.) defines digital curation as "the management and preservation of digital information over the long term". The curatorial purpose is to add value to research data and other information through its lifecycle in a way that others can find and reuse it. This maximises the impact of the content being curated. I as the curator therefore felt a professional obligation to understand my reservations. A deeper exploration was required to understand the dissatisfaction being experienced. It was the deeper looking beyond the obvious that precipitated this study.

The first insight gained by correcting the presenting distortion was that the archive reflected a dissociation between indigenous knowledge and indigenous people. The implication of this is that following the global north's mainstream curatorial processes does not automatically restore IKS's epistemic integrity. It also does not provide people with the epistemic justice they

¹ See: <https://ibali.uct.ac.za/s/san-khoen-digital-archive/page/welcome>

seek in reality. Risam (2018: 78-82) describes this process as the assimilation of indigenous knowledge into the knowledge production of the global north. Risam (2018: 78-82) goes further to say that at best the knowledge reclamation process undertaken is tokenism and does not provide the degree of justice and social inclusion the indigenous community requires. Curating indigenous knowledge in a manner that is tokenistic or is assimilative is not sufficient for the curator who believes that justice and integrity are inseparable characteristics.

At this juncture, it was starting to become apparent that the problem manifesting in the archive was not silent people. The underlying problem was the silenced knowledge system that needed to be understood to add value when curating the scholarship of SKC. I realised that I needed to listen into the silence to effectively manage the indigenous knowledge that was misrepresented and erased from society. De Sousa (2007: 45-48) attributes the observed silence to the *abyssal thinking* of the global north that has, at least within its knowledge domain, effectively eliminated or distorted whatever realities are outside of its scope of understanding. Listening into silence requires being differently orientated to the knowledge system of the global north.

The co-presence of the anarchive alongside the archive is another possible reason for observable silences. Zaayman (2019: 107-108) defines the anarchive as containing that, which by its nature, cannot be included in the conventional notion of an archive and is by extension beyond the archive. The archive was born within a colonially influenced paradigm to perpetuate its sustaining and nation-building projects. The very act of preserving this knowledge results in the displacement, suppression and forgetting of other knowledge. Archival work is therefore axiomatic as the survival of the colonially rooted dominant knowledge system is the result of the destruction of the other. To this end many archivists have assumed the responsibility of advocating for justice by prioritising the records of marginalised people, encouraging participatory forms of archiving, and opening up assessment and descriptive standards (Huang, 2020: 265-266). Due to the inherent violence of the archive, Huang (2020: 274-275) postulates that archival theory and work be reframed to encompass questioning the very foundations and beliefs informing it. In this way the existence of the anarchive discourages the replication of metaphysical violence and becomes “a form of thought to understand the broader implications of social preservation to go beyond the practical functions of the profession”.

This dissertation is contextualised within knowledge systems outside of the global north. It explores how the archive can accommodate the “unarchive” and to what degree this is possible. This is a pertinent question for those invested in undoing the damage done to their knowledge systems by the colonial mechanisms that fuel the knowledge production of the global north. The research presented here employs a blended, heart-centred research approach along with a hermeneutic approach. Hermeneutic realism is specifically employed. According to Weinsheimer, Marshall and George (2020), it rejects the position that our interpretations have the power to determine reality, and it rejects the idea that reality is made up exclusively of mind-independent things (Weinsheimer, Marshall & George, 2020). Livingstone (2021: 68-69) describes the heart as a site of knowledge production that mediates between the material and metaphysical worlds. It is an organ of imaginal perception that is able to hold the balance between seemingly opposite poles of reality seeking to include a variety of realms and interpretations. Heart-centred research marries wisdom and knowledge production and acquisition as it seeks to bring deeper insights into life by engaging meaningfully with whatever might lie underneath outward appearances (Livingstone, 2021: 68-69).

1.1 Contextual Background

1.1.1 The San tsî Khoen Digital Archive

The San tsî Khoen Digital Archive is a construct imagined by the San and Khoi communities and supported by SKC. The Centre’s mandate is to restore and foreground this collective community’s erased and marginalised ways of knowing and languages. The inclusion of such indigenous discourse within the greater knowledge production of UCT is one of the university’s strategies to decolonise itself. The Centre was conceived out of the Centre for African Studies (CAS) Pre-Colonial Catalytic Project which included a series of conferences held between 2014 and 2020. The decolonial context created because of the project informed UCT’s transformation. Further transformative momentum came as a result of the Rhodes Must Fall Movement in 2015. Near the end of 2017, CAS was approached by the DVC of Transformation and the Chair of the Naming of Buildings Committee to lead the process of renaming the Jameson Hall later assigned the interim name of Memorial Hall, a central feature within the UCT landscape (University of Cape Town, n.d.). Sarah Baartman Hall was the proposed new name. The naming required a consultative process which included community, faith, political and cultural organisations as well as self-identified Khoi and San descendant communities which commenced in March 2018 and ended with an official mandate sanctioning the renaming in November 2018. The permission granted is conditional to curriculum and research

transformation within UCT. The A/Xarra Restorative Justice Forum was established in October 2018 as part of the process. The group is a knowledge and research partnership between a number of civic and traditional San and Khoi structures. Besides being pivotal in the renaming of the Sarah Baartman Hall, the group represents the community aspect invested in inclusive transformation (Pityana & Phakeng, 2018; “Background, Vision and Mission - San and Khoi Unit”, n.d.).

SKC was formally established in September 2020 under the directorship of Professor June Bam-Hutchison. However, the degree of research and knowledge production was negatively impacted by the COVID19 pandemic. Despite this limitation, SKC was able to lay some foundational work towards populating the archive. Within the first year of development the archive housed video footage of Dr (Ouma) Katrina² sharing aspects of her life, a database mapping indigenous place names, a database of animal names, and the beginnings of a collection of published material on the subject matter of the San and Khoi people. During the second year of operations the Centre undertook the following projects contributing archival contents: seminars and other knowledge sharing events, a second instalment of Dr (Ouma) Katrina sharing aspects of her life where the researchers employed a deep listening methodology, ad hoc language content, and a refinement of a selection of stories related to the place names. In June 2022 the Centre’s directorship transferred to Doctor Yvette Abrahams.

Developing a digital archive is one of SKC’s outcomes. The archive is to support the restoration of southern African indigenous knowledge and the preservation of the knowledge generated. It needs to reflect a precolonial heritage, prior to the social engineering impact of apartheid, and promote its contents in a socially just and inclusive knowledge presentation (“Background, Vision and Mission - San and Khoi Unit”, n.d.). I joined SKC in April 2021 as a digital curator intern. The Centre’s initial plan was to train interns from the San and Khoi community to contribute to the archive’s curation. The COVID19 pandemic with its social distancing and lockdown levels prevented this outcome. The founding team pivoted to training UCT postgraduate students in the complexities of working with indigenous knowledge in a decolonial paradigm. The curator, the researcher in this study, became part of this initiative and in December 2021 was promoted to the Centre’s Digital Archive Manager. One of the first

² The use of Ouma Katrina’s full title acknowledges the honour bestowed on her and all other people with indigenous ancestry who have overcome adversity and are working to undo the damage done to them, their people and their knowledge system.

tasks undertaken in this position was to organise a review of the archive's first year of development. The review process had two layers: an academic aspect, consisting of an internal and external reviewer, and a community aspect. It was during this process that the curatorial discrepancy between decoloniality within the dominant knowledge paradigm vs. within an indigenous knowledge paradigm became apparent. This research was precipitated by the process of crossing this divide and discovering a third space in which arose the possibility of an ahuman³ ontology to more accurately curate indigenous and religious knowledge.

1.1.2 The Digital Curator as an Agent of Change

The position as SKC's digital curator provides the unique opportunity of a curatorial function embedded in the knowledge production process. This results in a synergy between the knowledge created and its storage and dissemination. People within the knowledge system are the best people to preserve its integrity. The position of knowledge holders within knowledge development is critical as they are the ones who perform, practise, and re-create their cultural heritage by handing it over to future generations (Aikawa-Faure, 2008: 99). Outsiders have the potential to disadvantage the archival project, and this can become an inadvertent roadblock in the restoration of epistemic integrity and epistemic justice of the San and Khoi people. Risk management to reduce further harm to people of indigenous descent is crucial. Taking into consideration that the bulk of their knowledge is caught up in the knowledge production mechanism of the global north - the same system that benefited from distorting their reality.

I am not from the San and Khoi community. However, my community of origin has a history with distinct points of similarity making for points of intrinsic understanding and identification. The San and Khoi people were displaced from their land by the colonial processes. My ancestral heritage stems from slaves and political prisoners who were also displaced from their lands and brought to the Cape to further the colonial pursuit of power and wealth. In the Cape, these ancestral figures were subjected to various manifestations of the same oppression and exploitation as the San and Khoi people.

³ The use of the concept "ahuman" is intended to escape the constraints of humanism. Its application in this study denotes a privileging of the metaphysical and the non-human and the repositioning humanity within a wider worldview. As such, any associations with the concepts of "anti-humanism" and "post-humanism" are not intended. A further discussion of the use of the term "ahuman" is provided in Chapter Two.

The indigenous community and the people displaced through the slave trade and political imprisonment became a heterogeneous blend of people from various places of origin, cultures, and languages. Jeppie (2001: 83) describes this Cape colony community, between the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, where the ethnic variety of people created confusion to outsiders who wanted to compartmentalise people into its various 'groupings'. The dominant culture within the community was that of the local Muslims and all ethnic groupings integrated themselves into this community and adopted various interchangeable labels to describe themselves. The following excerpt demonstrates this confusion:

There was a great deal of confusion over how to classify the various groups in the colony. Particularly disconcerting was the way in which the whole range of people who professed Islam should be classified. Was the Khoisan convert from the countryside a Malay or a Muslim? The first census of the colony expresses this confusion.

Rhoda (2019:4) in his account of Saartjie van die Kaap offers the following description of her mother Trijn:

When Coridon died his wife Trijn inherited the property and it becomes evident that she was an astute business woman. By 1800 she was now the owner of her inherited properties, had four slaves, employed a Khoi person and provided accommodation for four male and one female slaves.

The above two accounts demonstrate the synergy that existed between the oppressed people of the Cape colony. This establishes a legacy of mutually beneficial coexistence between the San and Khoi people and the Cape Muslim community. Bam (2021: 53) discusses the fusion of indigenous local traditions and the traditions of the East. She describes Muslim healers as intercultural healers, speculating that these precolonial healers may have brought psychological healing to the many displaced indigenous people and the descendants of the formerly enslaved people at the Cape. It was these healers who played a role in holding the displaced Cape society together. Bam (2021: 57-59) also recounts the history of a "San-Khoe-Griqua-Muslim" family and how this hybridity speaks to social inclusion in practice. The sad reality is that a once united, racially, and religiously diverse community is now dispersed as a product of the social and identity engineering mechanisms associated with colonialism and apartheid (Bam, 2021: 214). It is ironic that the violence used to oppress and displace people contributed to the formation of a cosmopolitan community with the colony.

1.1.3 Crossing the divide between knowledge systems

This study demonstrates that Islam and the San and Khoi worldviews both acknowledge the metaphysical realm with mechanisms in place to engage with it and a perspective of people within the natural world. Admittedly, the metaphysical structure between the San and Khoi worldview manifests differently while the underlying mechanism is similar. However, examining these knowledge systems through the lens of the dominant global north discourse results in degrees of disconnection to the metaphysical realm and the natural world in which we reside. Deweese (2010) asserts that a problem inherent in the process of establishing the authority of a particular aspect of knowledge is a tendency for reductionistic scholarly approaches. The reductionism results in the development of a focus on textual, scriptural essentialism. Notions of what is 'authoritative' shapes scholarly trends and preconceptions have directed attention towards aspects of Muslim traditions while ignoring and foregrounding others. This approach works well to fit Islamic knowledge into existing scholastic approaches, into the western understanding of religion, and into a modernist approach to Islam. However, the cost of fitting in becomes a disconnection from internal nuance and complexity (DeWeese, 2010: 30-31). DeWeese (2010) describes the duality created by conforming to fit in vs. individuality at a collective level as compared to the personal level we are mostly familiar with. At a global level this diversity management challenge is labelled as homogeneity vs heterogeneity.

The disconnection fostered is a product of abyssal thinking (De Sousa Santos, 2007). Abyssal thinking is transferred to others and the next generation through the banking model of education (Freire, 2012:72). Therefore, the abyssal line dividing Muslims from San and Khoi community had to be crossed in order to effectively and accurately represent the commonalities in their knowledge systems. The key to understanding indigenous knowledge to the degree required to effectively curate it was discovered when the curator started looking at it from the lens of the Islamic worldview. From that perspective it became easier to unravel the misrepresentation and to understand what was present in the silences that exist when looking at indigenous knowledge through the dominant global north perspective. The idea of perspective was as a result of the insights gained into indigenous knowledge and the calibre of scholarship associated with it at a global level. Through the scholarship of Professor June Bam-Hutchison SKC became associated with the World Universities Network (WUN) project entitled !Gâ re – Rangatiratanga – Dadirri: Decolonizing the 'capture of knowledge'.

The WUN project is the first of its kind breaking through the isolation of marginalised groups by bringing together scholars from the various indigenous communities globally. The project has not yet been concluded and the scholarly collective aims to develop shared concepts that can be used to restore their indigenous knowledge (“!Gâ re – Rangatiratanga – Dadirri : Decolonizing the 'capture of knowledge' - WUN” 2021). Between September 2021 and January 2023, the curator was exposed to the work of the project. This exposure led to the realisation that there is a synergy between indigenous knowledge and Islam when one can move beyond how these knowledge systems manifest differently. The WUN project is a separate entity to this project and its work will not be discussed here. However, it is only ethically correct to attribute its influence on the conceptualisation presented here. In fact, the heart-centred research methodologies of deep listening and braided knowledge employed here were learnt from the researchers from the WUN project.

This research project does not justify the assertions of similarities between Islam and indigenous knowledge. Rather, the curator adopts the audacious position that these knowledge systems are legitimate and free to be unapologetically impactful. Such a bold stance is informed by a piece of Divine Qur’anic wisdom contained in [Q3: 18⁴](#). The verse provides insight into countering the experience of people not seeing you and overlaying a narrative about you to suit them. The verse contains a dual wisdom. Firstly, is the explicit statement that our Creator is a Higher Power to humanity and there is no rival to the Creator’s power capacity and wisdom. The second tacit statement is in the context of people refuting the existence of the Creator and of those who overstep the boundary of our humanity and seek power for themselves. This verse is dismissive of these people’s attempts to deny the Creator to any degree. In this verse the Creator’s witness stands in the face of being rendered invisible and non-existent. This assertion is followed up with the awareness that others do acknowledge the Creator’s status and role in maintaining justice within creation. The verse shows us how to not give our power away to others who seek to benefit from our disempowerment. Just because others promote ideas to knowledge with conviction does not shift the fundamentals of reality which is justice oriented. This verse provides us markers indicating the attitudinal shift required to not be rendered silent and invisible despite the attempts of those who “other” you.

⁴ The usual convention of quoting Qur’anic verses has been adapted in this work. The full Arabic text along with its English translation has been moved to the appendix. For ease of access the in-text Quranic references have been hyperlinked to digitally connect the Quranic citation to the study’s contents.

Once you can maintain epistemic integrity in the face of epistemic exclusion, a person's capacity to cross abyssal lines increases beyond token inclusionary actions. The following verses provide us with the markers to shift the divisive line between those who subscribe to the Islamic worldview and those who subscribe to the San and Khoi indigenous worldview. Verses [Q40: 78](#) and [Q16: 36](#) are Divine knowledge that contribute to an understanding that every nation of people has had access to metaphysical knowledge through guidance provided by our Creator. Q40: 78 shares with us the full scope of knowledge was not shared with humanity. The command referred to in the verse Q40: 78 is the ending of this worldly life. Once all of humanity have transitioned to the metaphysical realm the truth of those who committed and remained true to Divine guidance will be made known. Verse 16: 36 shares that the guidance each nation of people received has been to advocate for them to be Divinely guided in order to avoid false deities which is transliterated in the quote as "*taghut*". Al-'Āṣi (2021: 369) translates Q16:36 to denote that the message of those entrusted as messengers between the Creator and humanity encouraged people to comply with the Creator and to avoid, in others and ourselves, the pursuit of excessive power. This is a wider perspective than the traditional understanding of religion which means to believe in and worship a Higher Power. In this wider understanding of Islam, Islam is a way of life where people conform to the power dynamic inherent between creation/created and Creator. People subscribing to this way of life understand that they are accountable for any infringement of the order of creation, and they behave accordingly (al-'Āṣi,2008: 50).

The verses being highlighted demonstrate the Creator's view of those who subscribe to the Creator's guidance and those who reject it. People are encouraged to explore through time and place to discover and learn the outcome for those who disrupt the power dynamics between created and Creator. These verses provide a platform from which to shift the narrower classification of others based on their religious affiliation to a wider category of those who acknowledge being a part of creation and subscribing to the relationship dynamics between Creator and created. The latter holds humanity accountable to live in harmony within the rest of creation as it is a dynamic system that can be disrupted by human interference. A wider classification of humanity results in making room for the "other" in real and meaningful ways as they are now no longer "other" and are now a unitary aspect within a larger ecosystem.

1.2 The Development of an Integrated Knowledge System

This dissertation provides an indication of the epistemic inclusion possible when one's focus is on similarities as points of synergy creation. A knowledge ecosystem will be devised using the indigenous research methodologies of deep listening and braiding knowledge. It also demonstrates how such a system will not reduce the individual who is contributing knowledge systems. The outcome of the study will provide a foundation and starting point from which to build and document the specificities that make each knowledge system unique while contributing to a global overview of knowledge for meta contextualisation.

The methodology of braiding knowledge is discussed in [Chapter Three](#). Attempting to braid seemingly different knowledge systems became possible when I started understanding the Islamic worldview and what it has to offer individuals and society beyond faith and belief. However, the abyssal thinking transferred via the banking system of education and community socialisation prevented appreciating the ways in which indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) are similar to religious knowledge systems. Being exposed to the work of the WUN project provided the perspective of universality between the various indigenous knowledge systems. These are consistent with the Islamic concept of sunnatullah, discussed in [Chapter Two](#).

SKC has an associated name, #oaba #ans which translates to 'knowing on the wind', as discussed in Chapter Two. Knowing on the wind requires a deep listening into the silence created by sites of knowing or knowledge domains being rendered invisible and marginalised by abyssal thinking (De Sousa Santos, 2007: 45-48). The divisive lines created by the epistemic violence inherent in abyssal thinking needs to be replaced with a thought process more inclusive of others. In response to this call, De Sousa Santos (2007) posits the need for the development of ecologies of knowledge. A more inclusive knowledge system requires a mechanism to hold its integrity when diverse communities of people share a common space. One of the prerequisites of this mechanism is its power balancing function to provide everyone an equal seat at the table. Delivering on this requirement becomes possible in knowledge systems, like religion and indigenous knowledge, where the powerholder is outside of humanly created systems of association and affiliation. Immediately, epistemic humility is injected into the shared space when absolute authority is removed from humanity.

A different system of epistemic work and governance is required to successfully navigate the different human dynamic that comes into effect with such a power-balancing transition. There

are various perspectives providing discursive descriptions of epistemic governance. Within the context of this research the perspective promoted by Alasuutari and Qadir (2014) is most appropriate as they view epistemic governance as a “*form of circulation of discourse*”. The discourse operates on how “*actors*” perceive their reality, their own capacities as “*actors*”, and what they believe is expected from them. This level of governance occurs when interested parties adopt global policy imperatives as their own because they are convinced of their own epistemic or moral authority (Jacobs & Hellström, 2018: 1711-1712).

The degree of inclusion possible is dependent on the degree of justice prevalent within humanity. The optimal balance is when the degree of justice balances out the impact of the degree of injustice prevalent within society. People who are partial to holding onto the power they secure from other people will resist the change in paradigm this study presents. People who need the protection of a homogenous group identity may also resist such a social paradigm shift.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- To braid together what is known about IKS and the Islamic knowledge system (IsKS) alongside the western knowledge system (WKS).
- To develop an ontology that supports the reconstruction of IKS within a digital archive.

1.4 Research Questions

The primary research question is: Does a knowledge ecosystem created by braiding IsKS, IKS, and WKS provide us with an ontology that can be used to describe and organise indigenous knowledge in the San tsî Khoen: #oaba #ans archive with a greater degree of epistemic justice?

The secondary research questions are:

- What are the knowledge domains or sites of knowing that should be included in an integrated knowledge system?
- How can the integrated knowledge system be represented to apply to the various knowledge systems that inform it?
- What set of category descriptors that restores the integrity of silenced, marginalised, and misrepresented aspects of indigenous knowledge is possible within the ambit of the integrated knowledge system?
- How can epistemic justice be represented in a digital archive?

1.5 Rationale for the Study

When curating decolonial indigenous scholarship and knowledge production, the fault lines within the dominant WKS are foregrounded. My experience of doing said task resulted in the first round of archival development being the assimilation of indigenous knowledge into the western paradigm a consequence of this was elements that do not benefit WKS are continued to be rendered invisible. Creating epistemic integrity is a critical aspect of curating indigenous knowledge necessitating a more inclusive knowledge system. According to De Sousa Santos (2017) the development of a knowledge ecosystem decreases the impact of abyssal thinking. The conceptual research substantiating the development of knowledge ecosystems provides us with the markers to determine what such a construct may contain (see de Sousa Santos, 2007). There are, however, methodological limitations to this knowledge. It does not provide a tangible epistemological framework on which to build a curatorial narrative and provide a subject analysis based on epistemic inclusion and justice. This study aims to contribute to the development of a knowledge ecosystem beyond conceptualisation that supports the degree of epistemic justice and social inclusion required to describe and organise the knowledge contained in the San tsî Khoen: †oaba †ans archive.

1.6 Research Design and Research Methods

A qualitative research design is best suited for the descriptive nature of the curatorial task being addressed. In order to address the research questions outlined above the study will be divided into two sections. The first research task is to determine what an integrated knowledge

system will look like. The second task is to develop an a-humanistic ontology that maintains the epistemic integrity of indigenous knowledge being curated. The two step research design is necessary as a wider conceptualisation of knowledge is required to support an ontology that is inclusive of the just representation of the specificities that are unique to IKS and fall outside of WKS.

WKS has contributed significantly to the mainstream conceptualisation of what is real and what is not real. The hermeneutic realism approach is thus employed as it disconnects reality from human interpretation with the insertion of a preexisting meaningful reality within which humanity resides (Ginev, 2016: 1). This approach is thus acceptable for the various knowledge systems applied in the study. Privileging different conceptualisations of the natural and metaphysical realms requires the recognition of other ways of knowing alongside rational thought. A heart centred research approach will therefore be integrated with the hermeneutic realism approach. The heart centred research methodologies of dadirri (deep listening) and braiding knowledge will be used in the study. Dadirri has the required complexity to understand the knowledge produced through a heart centred approach and it will be employed at both sections of the study. Braiding knowledge will only be applied to the first section. Braiding knowledge complements hermeneutics as it encourages and produces new interpretations based on understandings produced when juxtaposing the particular with the general and the local with the distant (Moses & Knutsen, 2012: 250). Discourse analysis will be employed throughout. Discourse analysis is the “approach for examining all kinds of dialogue (written, spoken, or any semiotic event) in an attempt to identify the rules and reasons behind them” (Moses & Knutsen, 2012: 218). The various approaches and methodologies will be discussed in [Chapter Three](#).

1.7 Limitations and Delimitations

The limitations of the study are:

- The results will not be tested outside its application in the San tsî Khoen: #oaba #ans archive.
- The scope of the ontology developed is confined to the informational scope of the archival artefacts being studied.

The scope of the research is delimited to what the researcher knows about various knowledge systems. The research scope is thus narrowed to:

- IsKS as I am a primary knowledge holder aligned to scholars within the knowledge system.
- The WKS as I am a primary knowledge holder aligned to scholars within the knowledge system.
- IKS in my capacity as secondary knowledge holder aligned to primary knowledge holders.

It is acknowledged that further testing and development of the research results will be required to possibly extend the scope and complexity of the integrated knowledge system and ontology being presented. The outcomes presented are thus exploratory and in need of further study to validate a more universal applicability.

2. Literature Review

There is a clash of worldviews that can impact on the curation of a digital archive of indigenous knowledge. IKSs like Islam, is complex and rich in nuance due to its focus on maintaining connections between all aspects of creation and between the material and metaphysical worlds. Mika (2019) explains that the clash of worldviews is due to the attempts of indigenous thought to “maintain a thoroughgoing connection between things in the world” while the western thought tacitly assumes that the world is fragmented. As a result, the English language is not able “to adequately describe the metaphysics of interconnection in plausible ways”. Within this context, complex knowledge systems are then reduced to a status similar to performances occupying a socio-anthropologically interesting space (Mika, 2019: 113-116). Low (2007: S72) provides an alternative perspective on this distortion asserting that studying indigenous knowledge through a global north’s interpretative lens, like anthropology, has dissociated it from its wider context fragmenting the knowledge system.

2.1 Sunnatullah: a bridge between worldviews

Within Islam there is a concept known as sunnatullah⁵, i.e., the Laws of the Creator, or the Divinely Established Way. In Qur’anic verses [Q48: 23](#) and [Q40: 85](#) The Creator describes this phenomenon as unchangeable over time and people who do not live in conformity with the Established Way will ultimately be the losers within humanity. I first came upon the concept of sunnatullah in June 2022 when studying Surah al-Fath (48th surah of the Qur’an)⁶. Learning about this concept was vastly exciting. On one level it brings together the specificity of the world we live in as demonstrated by science. It dissolves the abyssal line between science and religion for those who are looking to reconcile the two worldviews. On another level the concept is reassuring within the scope of human relations. It empowers humanity to be able

⁵ The decision to not italicise Islamic and indigenous concepts is based on a discussion with Gaireyah Fredericks on 13 July 2024. She is an Afrikaans poet and is one of the recipients of the Neville Alexander prestige awards in 2020 for her contribution to Afrikaans. Gaireyah holds the position that the italicisation of non-English words is a mechanism English writers use to identify foreign concepts when writing in their language. When writers speak a hybrid language, non-English concepts are not foreign to them, and italicisation does not make sense. Evidence of such a hybrid language can be found in Gaireyah’s published work, “*Een voet innie kabr*”. This study uses braiding knowledge as one of its research methods. One of the implications of this process is that concepts from various knowledge systems become connected and are no longer foreign to each other.

⁶ Based on class notes documenting key insights and new information gleaned in a transformation class based on the Maqasid of Islam offered by Mohammad Al-Rashaad Fredericks where the primary source material is the Qur’an.

to discern between people based on how they are managing to balance the duality of power positioning between Creator and created and the power positioning within creation.

Yildren (2016) supports the assertion that the conceptualisation of the pre-existence of the Established Way dissolves the abyssal line. He states that religion and science do not contradict each other, especially as the pursuit of knowledge is a divine injunction. Natural sciences and social sciences, embedded within the western scientific knowledge system, recognise the laws of nature which operate within the wider conceptualisation of sunnatullah. He describes the Established Way as a complete and integral system of cause and effect aimed at creating and maintaining the natural world and at bringing order to humanity. The system was made operational before the creation of the first people and there has been and will be no deviations in it and from it. Scientific discoveries assist with a human understanding of the mechanisms inherent in the Established Way (Yildren, 2016: 1-4).

Spinoza provides an understanding of the universe consistent with Yildren's assertions (2016). According to Waller ('Benedict de Spinoza: Metaphysics'), Spinoza argued that the entire natural world, including human beings, follows the same set of natural laws. As such, everything that happened could not have happened differently because the universe is one inherently active totality conceived by God. This argument challenged the determinist position of his predecessors and contemporaries. Klutz ('Spinoza: Free Will and Freedom', n.d.) explains that Spinoza stipulates that human beings have no absolute free will. However, we have the cognitive power to create the illusion of free will which stems from ignorance. The power that we have is also not absolute as it is "very limited and infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes". According to Spinoza, while we don't have free will, freedom is possible ('Spinoza: Free Will and Freedom'). The social order promoted by conforming to the Established Way is unity. Justice is the prerequisite to be upheld to maintain the integrity of humanity as a cohesive unit.

During the WUN Conference in September 2022⁷ the abyssal line between the Islamic and indigenous knowledge systems shifted so that the knowledges could become more inclusive of each other. Listening to the various presentations discussing indigeneity and the work done by various indigenous scholars it became clear to me that underlying the different practices,

⁷ Held in Canada between 20-23 September 2022 at the University of Alberta campus in Edmonton.

conformity to the established way was a common factor between indigeneity and the Islamic worldview. Therefore, one of the hallmarks of indigenous knowledge systems is its alignment and recognition of the natural order. The concept of *foaba fans* demonstrates an indigenous manifestation of conformity to the natural order inherent in the Established Way.

2.2 *foaba fans*: Knowing on the wind

The distortion and reduction of IKS results in a loss of the nuance that maintains a complex set of connections that facilitates systemic integrity. One such loss is visible in the global north's conceptualisation of wind which lacks an understanding of the mechanism of knowing on the wind. In repositioning the concept of wind two levels of complexity are introduced: (i) wind types and (ii) functionality.

2.2.1 Wind types

Low (2007: S73) identifies two types of wind, viz. a soft wind and a bad wind. Bam (2022) describes wind as an agent of knowing and taking. She further describes the south-easterly wind, also known as the black south-easter, as a “kwaai wind” or fierce wind. This wind is known to blow for up to seven days in early summer and vulnerable babies and children need protection from it (Bam, 2022: 103-212). This example of a bad wind has a speed between 50-70 km/h and heavy rains often accompany with it. The Laingsburg flood in January 1981 which resulted in the deaths of 104 people and the destruction of hundreds of homes was a “kwaai wind” (Simpson, 2022). In 2017 the Cape Town Cycle Tour, an international road race, was cancelled due to the wind having a speed of up to 100 km/h (‘That's blown it: high winds cause chaos at Cape Town cycling race’, 2017).

The categorisation of wind as either good or bad is supported in the Qur'an. The distinction is based on function, and it is either explicitly stated in the Divine text or inferred through interpretation. A beneficial connotation to wind is expressed in [Q10: 22](#) by the Arabic “*birḥin ṭayyibatin*” which translates to “with a good wind” and the Arabic “*l-riyāḥa bush'ran*” translating to “the winds as glad tidings” (see [Q7: 57](#); [Q25: 48](#); and [Q27: 63](#)). The verse [Q30: 46](#) uses “*l-riyāḥa mubashirātin*”, a variation of “*l-riyāḥa bush'ran*” translating to “the winds as bearers of glad tidings”. The destructive nature of wind is conveyed in phrases like “*rīḥan ṣarṣaran*” translating to “a furious wind” (see [Q41: 16](#) and [Q54: 19](#)) and its variant “*birḥin ṣarṣarin*”

translating to “by a screaming wind” ([Q69: 6](#)). The term bad wind is inferred in the translation of [Q30: 51](#) which uses the metaphor of the impact of a wind turning things yellow. The metaphor highlights that those who deny the power dynamic between Creator and created will deny the warning inherent in a bad wind.

2.2.2. The functions of wind

Low (2007) presents wind as a Divine gift in the southern African indigenous knowledge system. A blowing wind is a connecting force that moves between people and certain animals and plants. It moves between phenomena and carries scents that embed themselves in the perceiver through the sense of smell. This positions the wind as transmitter of news and information, the function of which is most observable in hunting. Wind contributes to environmental awareness. It conveys to people where any animals are and lets animals know where any people are. Smells conveyed by wind unify humans and animals in a relationship web. Tracking is a skill that is intimately connected to listening to the world via the wind. It is further posited that the interspecies relationship is founded in co-evolution which is a wider conceptualisation than being connected by wind (Low, 2007: S73-S76).

Wind influences plant growth which in turn impacts on food production and collection strategies (Low, 2007: S72). The Qur’an acknowledges the wind not only as a fertilising agent ([Q15:22](#)) but positions it more widely as having a resurrective function in the cycle of life on earth. Wind is a precursor to rain ([Q7: 57](#); [Q25: 48](#); [Q30: 48](#)). Water that is brought with wind and rain is a requirement for the growth of fruit and other vegetation ([Q7: 57](#)). After this growth period plants seem to die going into a latent stage and in this stage the wind plays a propagating role by scattering seeds and stalks ([Q18: 45](#)). The wind is an elemental force that connects plants, animals, and people in life-sustaining ways. Conversely, certain winds can also disrupt the very process that wind sustains ([Q30: 51](#)).

This information is supported by the global north’s scientific descriptions. The point of departure between indigenous and religious knowledge is that these natural phenomena are signs of the sustaining function of the Creator for those people who use a different reasoning to that perpetuated by secular global north scientific scholarship. They are indicators of the sunnatullah which occur without human agency. A wider conceptualisation of wind includes a life-giving wind which is rooted in the metaphysical. Low (2007: S77) states that the San and Khoi people believe that the heart is the principal holder of the life-giving wind, which is a gift

from the Creator, and it is the home of the human soul. Aside from documenting the research findings Low (2007: S77) does not substantiate the life-wind associated with the soul. The Qur'an, however, contains information that provides greater insights into a life-giving wind.

The Qur'an discusses three incidents where life is gifted by blowing divine essence into creations. The first is the animation of humanity. At the beginning people were created from materials of the earth like clay and mud and were brought to life after a divine spirit was blown into them ([Q15: 29](#); [Q32: 7-9](#); and [Q38: 72](#)). The verses [Q32: 7-9](#) extend the narrative of the first human being shaped from clay to human conception as experienced today. Even during the familiar pregnancy process divine spirit is blown into the foetus. This life-giving breath activates the human soul, or "ruh" in Arabic, that enables us to see, hear and feel into the metaphysical. The Islamic knowledge system holds the understanding that people have physical and metaphysical aspects to their being. However, the verse [Q17:85](#) informs us that we have been given very little information about the "ruh". Mariam's (Mary's) immaculate conception of Isa (Jesus) is described in [Q66: 12](#) where her chastity is acknowledged, and it is shared that the divine spirit was blown into her. Jesus's conception is thus a deviation from the normal process of procreation. The third mention of the gift of life is when Jesus shaped a bird from clay and divine essence was blown into it bringing it to life ([Q3: 49](#) and [Q5: 110](#)).

Within the San and Khoi knowledge system, wind is also associated with health. The wind of one living entity can enter another and share its essence. Sickness can be identified by smell; the smell of plants can be healing (Low 2007: S84). Indigenous knowledge provides a much richer and more complex understanding of health and wellbeing than is presented here. However, delving deeply into this would take this study out of the common space created by epistemic inclusion and disrupt the ecosystemic integrity being created by infringing on the San and Khoi seat at the table. Similarly, the Qur'an has a wider contextualisation of wind than presented here, and discussion of this will take this study outside of the common space of epistemic inclusion and disrupt the balance required to facilitate ecosystemic integrity by emphasising the IsKS in areas outside of the IKS. Having demonstrated the complexity of wind as a concept and as a source of information, a wider classification of wind and other concepts becomes necessary in an archive dedicated to indigenous knowledge.

2.3 Theoretical implications

A knowledge ecosystem can provide the wider classification required to systematically organise the indigenous knowledge being visibilised in a manner that is beyond tokenism. Such a model is disruptive for those who employ abyssal lines that serve as protective boundaries for their identity. McLean (2008: 9-14) provides a summary of the development of objective reason from the beginning of the Common Era (CE) of human history as summarised in Figure 2.1. Spinoza was a pivotal figure in the development of enlightenment thinking. His work demonstrated that modernity was first rooted within the conceptualisation of created and Creator ('Spinoza: Free Will and Freedom'). The refinement of human intellectual capacity opened the door for the first level of abyssal thinking, i.e., human self-sufficiency and a dissociation from the metaphysical realm.

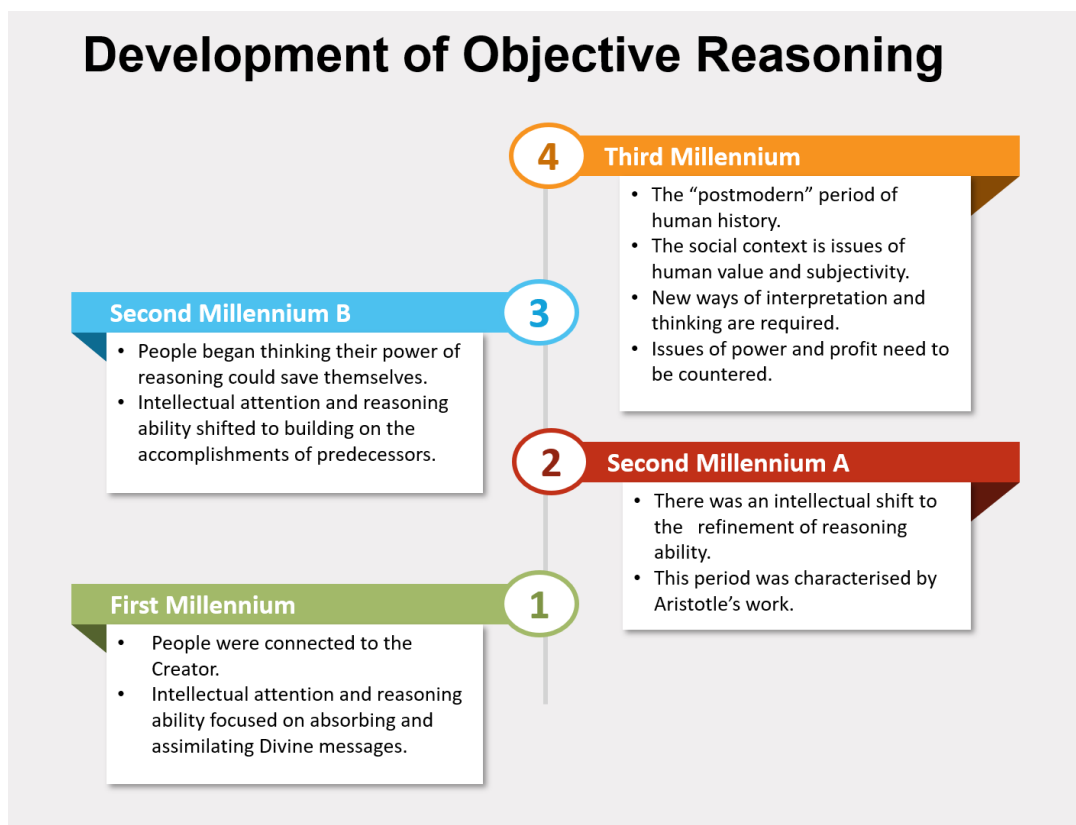


Figure 2.1 A timeline of the development of objective reason in the Common Era as outlined by McLean (2008). Adapted from a design by PresentationGo (<https://www.presentationgo.com>)

According to McLean (2008) humanity then continued along this development path resulting in, amongst others: (i) two World Wars and the destructive technology capable of extinguishing the entire human race; and (ii) a society capable of exploiting everyone to the destruction of most of the world. This hedonistic trajectory was enabled by human reasoning and intellectual

pursuit turning inwards to a subsystem of creation. Such a narrow focus reduced religious understanding to the service of people rather than the Divine. A new reductive physical reality was parasitically created where humanity was elevated to a superstructure status. In this reality elements of the metaphysical realm were reduced to superstition or irrational beliefs (McLean, 2008: 10-11). An alternative reframing is that to disconnect from the metaphysical and having a created status an abyssal line had to be drawn, and the other side misrepresented so that it could be invisibilised.

McLean's (2008) developmental timeline is informative, but it is based on a modern system of recording time that dissociates the pre-historic period of life. The San knowledge system can be traced to the late stone age ('San hunter-gatherer society in the Later Stone Age', 2019). Archaeologists believe that they are the descendants of the first people who lived in South Africa ('The Hunter-Gatherers of Southern Africa: Summary', 2017). The Khoi knowledge system emerged later at around 2300 years ago with the societal progress from hunter-gatherer to pastoralist ('The Khoisan', 2020).

The image shows a screenshot of the Perplexity AI interface. At the top, the Perplexity logo is on the left, and 'Copy', 'Share', and 'New Thread' buttons are on the right. The main heading is 'what is the difference between postmodernism and posthumanism and ahumanism?'. Below the heading, the AI response is provided, starting with 'Postmodernism, posthumanism, and ahumanism are different philosophical and cultural movements.' The response includes several footnoted references. Below the text, there are icons for thumbs up and thumbs down. Underneath, a '4 SOURCES' section lists four sources: 1. springer, 2. cambridge, 3. researchgate, and 4. scholarlypublishingcollective. At the bottom, there is a 'RELATED' section with a partial question 'what are the m...' and an 'Ask a follow up' button with a plus sign.

Figure 2.2 A concise AI-formulated response to the question: What is the difference between postmodernism and posthumanism and ahumanism?

This study aims to provide an ontology for use in a digital archive committed to the presentation of indigenous knowledge. This requires an existential reconstruction of knowledge and the repositioning of humanity to be epistemically inclusive. At this juncture the philosophical landscape offers multiple paradigms, including postmodernism, posthumanism and ahumanism, that have emerged in the late 20th and early 21st century. To differentiate between these concepts an AI (artificial intelligence) tool was used for illustrative purposes. Within seconds perplexity.ai generated a well-synthesised answer (Figures 2.2 and 2.3).

What is the difference between postmodernism and posthumanism and ahumanism?

Postmodernism, posthumanism, and ahumanism are all different philosophical movements that emerged in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Postmodernism is a form of utopian thought that is grounded in an impossibility, just like posthumanism[1]. Postmodernism is a critique of modernism and its emphasis on reason, progress, and the autonomous individual[4]. Posthumanism, on the other hand, is a philosophical movement that challenges the traditional humanist view of the world and emphasizes the interconnectedness of all things, including humans, animals, and machines[2]. Posthumanism is concerned with the blurring of boundaries between humans and non-humans and the implications of this blurring for ethics, politics, and culture[3].

Ahumanism is a more recent philosophical movement that emerged in the 21st century. Ahumanism is a rejection of humanism and the idea that humans are the center of the universe[2]. Ahumanism emphasizes the importance of non-human entities, such as animals, plants, and ecosystems, and seeks to challenge the anthropocentric view of the world[2]. Ahumanism is concerned with the ecological crisis and the need to develop new ways of thinking about the relationship between humans and the natural world[2].

In summary, postmodernism, posthumanism, and ahumanism are all different philosophical movements that emerged in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Postmodernism is a critique of modernism, while posthumanism challenges the traditional humanist view of the world. Ahumanism is a rejection of humanism and seeks to challenge the anthropocentric view of the world. All three movements are concerned with the implications of the blurring of boundaries between humans and non-humans for ethics, politics, and culture.

Figure 2.3 A detailed AI-formulated response to the question: What is the difference between postmodernism and posthumanism and ahumanism?

An AI tool is purposefully used to demonstrate a scenario identified by Frederspiel et al. (2023: 4) where AI, despite its superior information synthesis capability and power, remains under human control and is used to benefit humanity. This is unlike other scenarios where AI poses a threat to humanity (Frederspiel et al., 2023: 4). In the field of digital curation, AI tools are an exciting innovation that can be used to enhance the user experience of digital archives. In decentring the power humanity has attributed to itself and in the pursuit of new ways of thinking and interpretation, new ways of knowing such as *ooba* *ans* open the door to ways of knowing that predate the abyssal line. *Ooba* *ans* operates within a heart-centred knowledge paradigm.

Santos (2007) presents abyssal thinking as a thought process that excels in making

distinctions and then radicalising them. Those who participate in this line of reasoning fracture their social reality into two realms, the realm of “this side of the fence” and the realm of “that side of the fence”. Mutual coexistence is undermined by a radical denial of the entities and knowledges deemed to be on the other side of the fence. The nature of the division created is such that the other side of the fence is viewed as incomprehensible, moving beyond the realm of being acceptable for inclusion by the “other” and becomes invisible and rendered non-existent (Santos, 2007: 45-48). Postmodernism, posthumanism and ahumanism are various movements advocating for a more inclusive social reality.

This study is most closely aligned to ahumanism as it too rejects the humanist philosophy. However, the use of the concept ahumanism here denotes a wider repositioning than the horizontal relationship between humanity and the natural world. It extends to include the vertical relationship between creation and Creator. The attribution of the label ‘ahuman’ to an ontology is premised on a restoration of ecosystemic integrity and it indicates a return to the unified state that was interrupted by humanism. Braiding IKS and IsKS makes the repositioning of humanity as a subsystem within a greater ecosystem possible. Indigenous knowledge facilitates unity between humanity and the natural world, while Islamic knowledge facilitates unity between humanity and the metaphysical. Indigenous knowledge, too, fosters a bond between the physical and metaphysical realities and Islamic knowledge fosters a bond between humanity and the natural world we reside in. A hermeneutic approach is thus most suited to manage this level of interpretation (McLean 2008: 9).

2.3.1 Hermeneutics

2.3.1.1 *The Muslim world and Qur’anic Hermeneutics*

A hermeneutic approach to understanding the Qur’an is controversial when applied using the philosophy of humanism. Galadari (2018) studies the intertextuality of the Qur’an and the complex use of polysemy and metaphor. His attempt to understand the high degree of sophistication of Qur’anic linguistics does not discount its Divine origins but makes sense of the knowledge transfer from metaphysical to Muhammad, a physical being, through neuropsychology (Galadari, 2028: 1-16). This understanding, while well explained, is refuted in the Qur’an through verses that discuss Muhammad being labelled as “mad” (see [Q15: 6-11](#); [Q37: 36-37](#); [Q68: 51](#); and [Q81: 22](#)). This line of inquiry is further problematic as it displays the epistemic arrogance of humanism in the face of the metaphysical. Surah al-Hijr ([Q15: 6-11](#)) discusses revelation in a manner that counters a neuropsychological understanding.

Zainol, Majid and Saad (2018) analyse the work of three scholars, Mohammad Arkoun, Fazlur Rahman, and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, who employed hermeneutics to further understand the Qur'an. Their analysis drew an abyssal line fragmenting the faculty of reasoning into modern scholars who employ strategies like hermeneutics vs. traditional scholarship that employs exegesis. According to Zainol, Majid and Saad (2018) reading the Qur'an is a form of worship as it is the literal words of the Creator and a Divine text. As such, it is not in need of interpretation as no Muslim has a problem with its words. Their perspective is that modern methods of interpreting the Qur'an should be undertaken to prevent the emergence of relativistic Qur'anic interpretations.

Bhutto (2015) examines the abyssal line segmenting Islamic studies. On the side that welcomes hermeneutics are scholars including Amin al-Khuli, Harun Nasution, Fazlur Rahman, Riffat Hassan, Fatima al-Mernisi, Amina Wadood, and Ali Mirmoosavi. The side that opposes the use of hermeneutics in the study of Islam include Abdul Wahab al-Maseeri and Hasan al-Shafai. Bhutto (2015) also describes how those opposing the use of hermeneutics are further segmented into those who are moderate in their approach vs. those who are liberal. A further fragmenting complexity is that women who are educated in the west are accused of initiating the use of hermeneutics to support their feminist reinterpretation of the sources of Islamic knowledge. However, Bhutto (2015) documents that Harun Nasution and Fazlur Rahman were exposed to hermeneutics by their teacher Toshihiko Izutsu. Bhutto (2015) concludes that there is no harm in the application of hermeneutics to the Qur'an to derive a result so long as what is aimed for does not go against the fundamental principles of Islam.

Santos (2007) describes the various degrees of cognitive injustices presented by Zainol, Majid and Saad (2018) and by Abdul Wahab al-Maseeri and Hasan al-Shafai as discussed by Bhutto (2015) as being the result of messy practices informed by the messy cartography created by abyssal thinking. According to Santos (2007) the global north occupies the side of the divide characterised by the logic of appropriation/violence while the side of the line occupied by Muslims and indigenous people is characterised by the logic of regulation/emancipation. These lines have not remained fixed, "and the logic of appropriation/violence has been gaining strength to the detriment of the logic of regulation/emancipation". Perversely, the logic of regulation/emancipation has subsequently become "internally contaminated by the logic of appropriation/violence" (Santos, 2007: 54-57). We see this mechanism in the rejection of the use of hermeneutics in relation to the Qur'an.

This study employs a hermeneutic approach to derive an integrated knowledge ecosystem from the Qur'an which it considers to be a Divine text offering guidance for the wellbeing of all of humanity. The Qur'an is the selected source material as its description of the concept of "sunnatullah" provides an effective framework to help reconstruct the indigenous knowledge system of Southern Africa in the San tsî Khoen digital archive.

2.3.1.2 Qu'anic guidance and dialogical hermeneutics

It is not the intention of this study to offer new interpretations of the Qur'an. It is the aim of this study to weave Qur'anic interpretations with the output of indigenous scholarship. This strategy acknowledges the "situatedness of human knowledge" and the need to foster people's openness to dialogue with each other. Dialogical hermeneutics is important framing within the San tsî Khoen archive given its position in higher education. Hovey, Rodriguez and Jordan (2020: 467) describe the nature of teaching and learning being "to transform another person's way of knowing and understanding" which succinctly describes the function of the digital archive as a pedagogical tool. Zaidi (2006: 83) reflects on the various reformation efforts of Muslim scholars and their collective inability to produce the desired post-colonial social transformation. He suggests that a particular attitude is needed to facilitate a dialogue with transformative understanding. This dialogical attitude must be able: (i) to overcome a nativist stance; (ii) be able to overcome the resentment developed over time because of oppression and misrepresentation; (iii) must be disengaged from the obsession with power; and (iv) must be able to overcome the dual mechanism of invisibilising and misrepresentation used to ignore the other. Zaidi (2006: 83) concludes with the following:

The urgent task that confronts a world in which the clash of civilizations threatens to become a self-fulfilling prophecy is to take more seriously what Other voices have to say about themselves and about us.

While Zaidi (2006) reflects on the hegemony between "modernity" and Islam, the indigenous community are in the same position as Muslims. Dialogical hermeneutics is thus the most suitable theoretical foundation for this study.

2.3.1.3 Gadamer's dialogical hermeneutics

Gadamer (1976, 1982 as cited in Zaidi, 2007: 417) radically reinterpreted hermeneutics, shifting the process of dialogue to become an ontological event while being a universal feature of human understanding. He argues that the search for understanding is a dialogical process through an implicit conversation with parties deemed as other. Gadamer (1982: 245 as cited

in Zaidi, 2007: 417) recognises that deeply rooted effective-historical traditions impose constraining limitations that impose “horizons” on our understanding of the other. These limitations impact on our horizons of understanding which are not fixed and shift alongside our shifting understanding. The effective-historical tradition not only provides a set of constraints on our understanding; “it is through our prior biases and prejudices that we are able to make sense of new encounters. For Gadamer, productive dialogical understanding is thus an intersubjective “fusion of horizons” which is transformative for both the Self and the Other” (Zaidi, 2007: 416-417).

Zaidi (2007) posits that “Gadamer’s dialogical hermeneutics provides the most viable basis for intercultural understanding” as it can lead us to a model of understanding that is interpretative and capable of challenging ourselves and the other. However, Zaidi (2007) also acknowledges that Gadamer’s rejection of the metaphysical foundations of human knowledge and social reality is a limiting factor. According to Zaidi (2007) Gadamer is unable to appreciate the role of silence. Silence is the recognition of incompatible differences and the recognition of the failure of dialogue to move beyond this position. So, despite our best efforts to understand the other, we remain confronted by irreconcilable beliefs. Silence is thus an indicator of illegitimate dialogues and the recognition of the pursuit of power over others. In contrast, true dialogue reveals the correction of distortions and reveals a fusion of horizons (Zaidi, 2007: 427-429).

2.3.1.3.1 Dialogue within diversity

Hovey, Rodriguez, and Jordan (2020) provide an overview of how Gadamer’s dialogical hermeneutics potentially can transform medical education through the transformative potential of conversation and reflective practice. The hermeneutic conversation, or dialectical engagement, must occur in a place where mutual openness and generosity can flourish. A place

where people can open and reopen the hermeneutic space where the possibility of becoming different to ourselves is preserved, as we authentically learn from each other and about ourselves.

This space is co-created by people through trust and a shared generosity that connects them together with compassion and authentic engagement. This calibre of conversation transforms minds when it leads people beyond the intellectual comfort of settled judgements and fortified systems of thought (Zaidi, 2007: 467-468).

Listening and reflection are needed to sustain the spirit of transformation afforded. For Gadamer an incapacity for conversation is the result of someone making an excuse for not genuinely listening to the other. The various degrees of non-listening are an attempt to diminish the presence of the other. There is also the mechanism of listening to respond over listening to understand (Zaidi, 2007: 468). It is important to note that understanding the position and motivation of the other does not equate to accepting it as there has to be room for differences between people. Understanding is therefore an interpretative process that requires a person to distance themselves from their intellectual comfort zone. This is a challenging process when reflection is a process fully embedded within the contents of our individual minds. However, hermeneutics is based on the polarity between strangeness and familiarity. Transformative possibility thrives in the position of being in-between (Zaidi, 2007: 468).

The nuances for a successful dialogical conversation can be found in over 40 Qur'anic verses related to the concept of speech. The concept of "those with understanding" is described in approximately 16 Qur'anic verses. The Divine directive to "ponder" and "reflect" is stated in 4 verses. [Chapter 3](#) will discuss how the process of reflecting and reaching understanding at the level required to fuse horizons of understanding is situated in heart-centred knowing.

2.3.1.3.2 Fusion of horizons

According to Nimamong (2008: 195-196) Gadamer's concept of "horizon means to not be limited to what is near but being able to see beyond it. A person who has a horizon knows the relative significance of everything within their horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small". The conceptualisation of the term fusion of horizon results from the following three steps: understanding or interpretation, explanation, and application. The fusion of horizons can lead to the development of an ecology of knowledge systems as is presented in this study. Santos, Nunes and Meneses (2007: xx-xxv) describe how dialogical conversations aid in bypassing positions of struggle where the integrity of a contributing knowledge system is threatened. Equal opportunities are then created where advocates of the individual systems can develop an understanding of each other that maximises respective contributions in developing a socially inclusive and just society. The fusion of horizons contributing to this process is based on the recognition of differences and the right to be different while simultaneously coexisting and constructing a common way of life that extends beyond the differences.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Research Design

According to Moses and Knutsen (2012: 186), the silent reality of western science is that its knowledge production method is wider than the collection of vast amounts of facts. They say, “It also involves the creative organisation, interpretation, and assessments of those facts”. Our receptivity to these facts is framed by ideas that are readily available in the realm of common knowledge. The process of scientific discovery then rests on foreknowledge countering the methodology of inductive reasoning. In a process where foreknowledge, or pre-existing knowledge, is recentred into the scientific process, this source of knowledge needs to be differentiated from personal bias.

The research presented here employs a hermeneutic approach. The hermeneutic orientation of realism is specifically employed. According to Weinsheimer, Marshall and George (2020), it rejects the position that our interpretations have the power to determine reality, and it rejects the idea that reality is made up exclusively of mind-independent things. Hermeneutics, the study of interpretation, plays a pivotal role in the study of the archival contents being analysed to extrapolate the framework for an integrated knowledge system that supports and incorporates indigenous knowledge.

Hermeneutic realism maintains that humanity exists in a meaningful reality. The meaningfulness of reality pre-exists and conditions the formation of any kind of epistemic subject. “The intrinsic meaningfulness of reality does not need an epistemic subject who intentionally produces meanings embodied in her beliefs, actions, and activities.” Reality is therefore not constructed by science and the meaning inherent within reality is transpersonal (Ginev, 2016: 1). Koch (as cited in Weinsheimer, Marshall & George, 2020) explains that it is the subject that makes things interpretable and his perspective is that while real things are independent of individual interpretation, these exact things are not independent of being interpretable in general. Aligning our intellectual pursuits and the outcome thereof with this meaningful reality is not biased. It could be argued that fragmentation from a meaningful reality is the result of personal and academic bias.

The notion of the western scientific method being biased is supported by the ibn Arabi’s concept of truth in things. Humanity is a microcosm that exists within a reality of truth. To

manifest the reality of truth within human reality people need to change their ontological state and become greater than their current state. This is possible due to the duality within human nature. Humanity has a temporal manifestation but within each person Divine essence, or fitrah, which links them to the reality of truth (Smirnov, 1993). Our fitrah can act as a temporal dislocator, disrupting our subjective experience of reality to align more cohesively to the reality of truth. The research process therefore provides two levels of data, one being determined by the research objectives and questions and the other level being the human positionality within the reality of truth. This way of thinking helps us to reveal the truth in things.

Ginev (2016: 17-18) discusses that within hermeneutic realism reality manifests itself to humanity through the empirical unity of producing factuality within facticity, i.e. the construction of facts within the complex, often intangible conditions of existence. Further, “the ontological difference between facticity and factuality is non-dichotomous and always relative to the unity of the empirical as a production of factuality within facticity”. The implication of this positionality is that there is no framework, no matter how strongly conceptually codified and rigidly formalised, that is immune to re-contextualisation. This principle has allowed for the re-contextualisation of knowledge required in order to accurately curate knowledge artefacts in a manner that contributes to the restoration of the southern African indigenous knowledge systems. This restoration allows for the additional contextualisation of wind as described in [Chapter Two](#).

Ginev (2016: 22-23) further explains that hermeneutic realism provides a unique perspective to the idealistic divide between the objective world of science and the intuitive practices of everyday life. It posits that all patterns of action occur within the interrelatedness of practices. Our patterned actions are the ingredients of human practices, but they only become these ingredients within the interrelatedness of practices. Scientific inquiry provides perspectives of reality that are informed by the changing configurations of scientific practice, and it then projects the totality of scientific interrelatedness upon its possibilities for doing research. Indigenous knowledge systems are thus separated and freed from the interpretations of western scientific methods through time. The perspective generated by the western scientific method are projections of its interrelated practices. While indigenous practices were the ingredients of the scientific output, these ingredients exist within a different pattern of interrelated practices. In this study yet another different pattern of interrelated practices, i.e. Islam, will be used to firstly project an epistemology more consistent with indigenous knowledge and to secondly extract an ontology that reflects the ethos of indigenous knowledge

systems. It is understood that the factuality produced through the deductive reasoning of this study does not disrupt the facticity of either indigenous knowledge or Islamic knowledge. The research design is therefore of a decolonial nature as it contributes to the formation of an equally rigorous body of knowledge alongside the dominant western system.

The research design is also indigenous in nature as the knowledge body being studied falls within the indigenous knowledge paradigm. Cram, Chilisa and Mertens (2013: 16) describe the indigenous research paradigm as incorporating relational ontologies, relational epistemologies and relational accountabilities. The emphasis on relational constructs stems from a value system that recognises the connections between people, the past, the present, the future, and all living and non-living things. Wilson (2008) provides greater insight into the relationality within IKS. An indigenous understanding is that we are not in relationships with other people or things, rather, we are the relationships that we hold and are part of. Wilson (2008) continues to describe two levels of relationality. The first is the elements we are in relation with: relations with people, relations with the environment/land, relations with the cosmos, and relations with ideas. The second is a higher level of relational accountability where an indigenous methodology “needs to be based in a community context (relational), has to demonstrate respect, reciprocity and responsibility (be accountable as it is put into action)” (Wilson, 2008: 80-99).

The value system required is best explained through the African philosophy of Ubuntu which encapsulates interconnectedness and co-agency, i.e. that everything in nature, including people, is interconnected and mutually reliant. Wright (2023) describes the key principles required by humanity to uphold Ubuntu are: empathy and compassion, interconnectedness, coexistence and peace, and shared resources. Ubuntu, like indigenous knowledge and Islam, resides outside of the western system and therefore is wider than can be conceptualised in its knowledge production system.

Islam literally translates to ‘peace’ in English. It too has foundational principles like Ubuntu presented in the concept of tawḥīd. A reductionist understanding of this concept is the unity of God which is extended to the conceptualisation of monotheism. Ansari (1999: 48) presents a wider conceptualisation of tawḥīd, “Allah (swt) is One (Aḥad), therefore all mankind is one family. Two groups are possible in this one family but both are concentric, that is, rallying around the same centre of humanity itself”. Although his explanation is limited to maintaining

unity within humanity, his presentation of various groups forming part of a concentric system is sound. Therefore, it will be preserved in the study and can be observed in the braided knowledge ecosystem presented in Figure 4.3. Within the Islamic knowledge system, achieving the degree of unity and peace required for systemic integrity is based on the knowledge production mechanism of the heart which is also an indigenous research methodology.

Indigenous research methodology has a different approach to achieving rigour based on:

- The voices and feedback of indigenous people.
- Testing results within indigenous communities.
- Multiple cross-checks with indigenous scholars and researchers.
- The compulsory disclosure of where a researcher comes from and what interest they have in the research.

The appropriate fit between research and researcher is not objectivity but rather the person who has walked along the path being examined is the best person to undertake the research (Smith, 2013: 95). The rigour of this research is based on the artefacts being examined which originate within the indigenous community and the disclosure of my positionality in relation to the indigenous communities in South Africa; see [Chapter One](#).

3.1.1 Heart-centred Research Approach

The heart is an acknowledged site of knowing that influences knowledge production in Islam and indigenous knowledge systems. According to Livingstone (2021) a heart-centred approach to research is not for everyone. The approach is a good fit for researchers who are willing to experience an enhanced worldview underpinned on a value for direct, lived experience in relationship with the world, their own hearts, and the topic of inquiry. If this willingness is absent, then what is being sought through the research process will elude them. A heart-centred research approach is best suited to topics that resonate within researchers' hearts and that honours their life experiences within the wider world and the demands that these experiences make on the researchers. Researchers, therefore, must be open to the transformative learning potential of their subject as understood through the wisdom of their hearts in relation to life (Livingstone, 2021: 68-72).

Heart-centred research marries wisdom and knowledge production and acquisition as it seeks to bring deeper insights into life by engaging meaningfully with whatever might lie underneath outward appearances. The heart is recognised as a site of knowledge production that mediates between the material and metaphysical worlds. It is an organ of imaginal perception that is able to hold the balance between seemingly opposite poles of reality seeking to include a variety of realms and interpretations (Livingstone, 2021: 68-69).

The Qur'an discusses the importance of the heart as a critical component to understanding. Of these verses, [Q7: 179](#) and [Q22: 46](#) directly link heart understanding to reasoning ability. Q7: 179 and Q22: 46 can be used as evidence indicating that the heart is an organ of understanding and reasoning linked to our perception. Spielman et al. (2014) describes perception as the outcome of the way our sensory information is organised, interpreted and consciously experienced. We have two perceptual paths. Bottom-up processing refers to the fact that perceptions are built from sensory input. Top-down processing is the impact of pre-existing knowledge, the knowledge we have at our disposal, our experiences and our thoughts on our sensory interpretation. Clark (2001), influenced by the work of ibn 'Arabi, describes the heart as a supra-rational faculty and not an anti-rational one as it has the inter-related processing potential of intuition, imagination, reason and sensory perception. The heart therefore has the capacity to channel knowledge from the metaphysical into the physical. According to ibn 'Arabi, there is no clear distinction between the knowledge of the intellect and the knowledge of the heart. Rather, to produce unifying knowledge we need our mind and heart to work in synergy.

3.2 Research Methods

The study presented attempts to blend the objectivity required by the western scientific methodology and the intuitive nature of knowledge production in other worldviews. The western research methods of autoethnography and discourse analysis will therefore be employed alongside the indigenous research methods of dadirri (deep listening) and braiding knowledge.

3.2.1 Dadirri (Deep Listening)

Dadirri is a research method situated within IKS. Dadirri is a spiritual concept from the Ngan'gikurunggurr and Ngen'giwumirri languages of the Aboriginal peoples of the Daly River region in the Northern Territory of Australia. It is a contemplative deep listening that enables one to access the deep spring we all have within us. The deep spring within all of us is a Divine spirit (Ungunmerr, n.d.). This deep spring equates to the concept of fitrah in the Islamic knowledge system. Ungunmerr (n.d.) states that the indigenous way is to be still and allow ourselves to follow the natural course of events and not rush things. It requires one to be aware of the natural order inherent in the world and creation and to trust it. Dadirri therefore informs the learning process of watching and listening, waiting and then acting. The equivalent of this natural order within Islam is the sunnatullah. Dadirri is thus a methodology to assess the human capacity to understand beyond the world as defined by people.

The differentiator between the deep listening presented by dadirri and the deep listening presented in WKS is its scope and complexity. According to Stillman (n.d.), dadirri is a meta-level, multidimensional listening involving an interconnected listening to oneself, one's people, and one's land. Stillman's contextualisation of dadirri as a multidimensional listening is accurate, but the description of its scope is narrowed to what is possible in the mainstream understanding of the world. It does not include the metaphysical dimension which is wider than what we are able to comprehend. "Dadirri is the search for understanding and meaning, a cyclical process of listening, observing the feelings and actions, and reflecting and learning". What is learnt from the listening process provides a purposeful plan for action informed by wisdom. Dadirri embraces the responsibility that comes with knowledge. The strength of dadirri in the context of this study as outlined by Ungunmerr-Baumann et al. (2022) is that it provides a mechanism to stop in the moment and surrender to something else. It allows for a loss of control necessary for the truth in reality to reveal itself through our observation of the reality in things. Dadirri is the catalyst for the transformation required to showcase indigenous knowledge with integrity by being a performative methodology that synergises knowing place and knowing our place, a geo-physicality of visceral and in-situ becoming (Ungunmerr-Baumann et al., 2022: 99).

3.2.2 Braiding Knowledge

Snively and Williams (2018: 4) describe braiding knowledge as a metaphor used to establish a reciprocal relationship between knowledge systems and ways of knowing. The act of braiding links various knowledge systems by making them into strands holding them together

in a such way that kindness and love can flow between the strands. Each strand remains a separate entity with each strand contributing to the formation of the whole. The very act of braiding acknowledges the various knowledge systems as legitimate. According to Atalay (2019: 82) the process creates an opportunity to understand how various knowledge systems complement each other and can be integrated. Multiple forms of braiding can be done to bring together intellect, embodied practice, emotional understanding, and spiritual understanding. An outcome of the braiding process is a holistic approach to understanding the world we live in. Braiding knowledge, therefore, contributes to the decolonisation of knowledge production and the research process.

Braiding knowledge is compatible with a hermeneutic approach as Moses and Knutsen (2012) states it encourages and produces new interpretations based on understandings produced when juxtaposing the particular with the general and the local with the distant. The comparisons can often be implicit; however, contrasting particular events and general norms helps us to understand what is being examined with greater context (Moses & Knutsen, 2012: 250). In this case IsKS is the researcher's general norm and indigenous knowledge is the system needing to be understood with greater clarity.

Central to the braiding knowledge metaphor is the integrity of the individual knowledge systems. The process facilitates a common ground to address issues of mutual interest allowing the individual knowledge systems to bring their unique perspectives together (Weaving Ways of Knowing for the Environment, n.d.). Systemic integrity is achieved by weaving a necessary strand of respect and understanding into braided knowledge. This additional strand holds the other individual strands together and without it the braid will fall apart (Weaving Ways of Knowing for the Environment, n.d.). In the content of this study this strand is the spirit of Ubuntu or *tawḥīd* deemed necessary for social integrity.

3.2.3 Discourse Analysis

The study undertakes secondary research as it is positioned within the archive and is informed by the work of SKC. The research aim is to understand the discourse produced by the Centre's knowledge artefacts in order to inform the restoration of IKS. The discursive framework used affects the scientific process as it informs the questions raised, the way the questions are pursued, and the way that the research results are formulated. By extension, the framework used also rules out certain other questions, methods and concluding formulations. The system

of meaning produced by a discourse framework is known as a discourse. Discourse analysis is the means used to uncover the meaningful claims presented and re-presented by the discourse. Discourse refers to regularities in a linguistic system and it is these regularities that can tell us something about speakers and their contexts. "Discourse analysis is a widely-employed approach for examining all kinds of dialogue (written, spoken, or any semiotic event) in an attempt to identify the rules and reasons behind them" (Moses & Knutsen, 2012: 218). This study will use three discourse analysis mechanisms: (i) metaphorical analysis, (ii) subject positioning, and (iii) presupposition.

"Metaphors are a textual mechanism used for the transference of meaning, connecting the unfamiliar with the familiar". Metaphorical analysis is a mechanism of critical reading that will be used to determine how the artefacts resonate against Islamic representations and to juxtapose and layer the artefacts in a way that the researcher can use to examine indigenous discourse. Methodologically, the researcher's task will be to "identify a series of phenomena referring to each other" within the various artefacts being curated (Dunn & Neumann 2016, 114-115).

Subject positioning is the process of "interpreting the ways in which [the artefacts] work to create a knowable reality by linking subjects and objects to one another in particular ways". Subjects can be defined by the relative relationships that the researcher constructs between it and other subjects. These relationships are based on opposition or similarity. It is important to recognise that what artefacts represent is not neutral or innocuous. Rather, discursive practices can contribute to a "truth effect" narrative by the organisation and coherent representational practices of the analyst (Dunn & Neumann 2016, 112-113).

The mechanism of presupposition will be used to determine the silenced and hidden background knowledge embedded with the artefacts during the braiding process. As Dunn and Neumann (2016: 110) discuss:

Discourses, through the use of language, construct understandings about the existence of subjects, objects, and the relationships between them. Discourses are potentially at their strongest when those understandings are accepted as given truths, forming a naturalized background knowledge. Statements often presume access to commonly shared structures of

knowledge about objects, but their seeming stability should never be assumed.

Using discourse analysis, the researcher will examine the artefacts through the Islamic knowledge paradigm to identify truths that exist outside the understanding of western knowledge. This will expose the “given truths” or “natural facts” being presented without calling them into question to prove their existential validity. Through supposition the researcher will make visible the function of discourse in knowledge production while opening up space for alternative construction of knowledge like the integrated knowledge system being striven for (Dunn & Neumann, 2016: 111). It is this mechanism that enabled the understanding of knowing on the wind, see [Chapter Two](#).

3.2.4 Autoethnography

The inclusion of the autoethnographic method allows for a process of inductive reasoning of theoretical insight that relies on the expression of words, feelings, emotions and lived experiences. The method accounts for the use of autobiographical data and experiences situated in a sociocultural context to gain an understanding of society through the lens of the self. The understanding it can generate includes a cultural interpretation of the connection between the self and others (Fourie 2021, 3-5). This study attempts to connect an understanding of indigenous knowledge systems through the lens of the Islamic worldview. The researcher’s autobiographical data and experiences are blended with insights gained from words, feelings, emotions and lived experiences conveyed in the archival artefacts being studied. The researcher’s role as digital curator embedded in the research team for over two years has allowed for a differently positioned autoethnographic contribution based on what Blackburn (2021) terms “autoethnographic sensibilities”. According to Blackburn (2021) this is “the capacity to see what others are doing – as well as the development of cultural competence – an understanding of what they are doing as culturally expressed”. This enables the researcher to recognise the co-existence of parallel experiences and perspectives in a single instance (Blackburn, 2021: 141-142). Observing the work of SKC’s teams of knowledge producers and observing some of the work undertaken by the WUN researchers affords greater insight into the artefacts being created and the knowledge system it intends to restore the integrity of. The researcher’s position at the intersection of three knowledge systems creates the conditions to support and enhance the temporal dislocation made possible with heart-centred research.

The autoethnographic stance adopted in this study is a retrospective analytical one (Koot, 2016) as it relies on the characteristics of memory, unawareness and power. The fracturing of knowledge sustained in the past impacts in the present. Memory allows us to structure the past in relation to the present. This restructuring is further made possible through the acknowledgement that the past is socially constructed that can inevitably be formed and transformed by means of re-experience and interpretation. Our current perspectives can influence our memory. Retrospective autoethnography can therefore be judged as clouded when it attempts to address situational complexities (Koot, 2016: 11).

Koot (2016) describes the epistemological value in the knowledge generated by the complex experiences of everyday life which is different to the knowledge gained from a specific research perspective. In an autoethnographic study the researcher is usually a member of the group being studied. However, identifying as a researcher sets one apart from the group. The point of departure with retrospective autoethnography is that community participation itself forms the core of the knowledge created and the memories generated can prove more meaningful than fieldnotes. The knowledge acquired via this autoethnographic route may be perceived as broader and more “fluid in time” than when following the more traditional route. The reposition of the researcher in undertaking a retrospective route to autoethnography changes the power dynamics experienced in the research process. The researcher position carries inherent power. However, when the immersive work is undertaken before the research position is adopted different insights arise about the power dynamics from an emic vantage point which is rare (Koot, 2016: 12).

3.3 Population and Sampling

The population being studied is the collection of knowledge artefacts generated by SKC between 2020-2022. A purposive sampling method is employed with the sample comprising the items identified as showcase material in the archive. The sample presented in Table 3.1 includes:

- Published literature related to the southern African indigenous communities
- Information sharing events hosted by SKC
- Datasets of knowledge extracted from existing resources, i.e. place names and animal names projects

- Oral interviews of knowledge holders
- Images (excluding profile images)

Format	Number of items	Type of information
Video	95	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events • Interviews
Sound	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews
Text	135	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publications • Transcripts • Print resource records
Images	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event posters • Book covers
Datasets	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place names with 4990 records • Animal names with 130 records (50 of these records have associated audiovisual files attached to them)

Table 3.1 Sample overview

The datasets were the first artefacts to be added in 2021 by the UCT DLIS team affiliated with the project, headed by Sanjin Muftic. The animal names were presented in a tabular format. Except for 6 transcripts, the publications and print resources were then added to form a digital library within the archive. In 2022 about 50 video recordings were added to the item records in the animal names datasets that had a corresponding Nama or Khoekhoegowab name. Development of the archive continued in 2023.

Activity Level	Description	Number
Project	The endeavours planned and undertaken to restore the social integrity of southern African indigenous communities	19
Event	The knowledge production activities undertaken to restore the integrity of indigenous knowledge and languages	31

Table 3. 2 Sample Organisational hierarchy

The remaining artefacts were added and organised by project and event; see Table 3.2. This is a hierarchical clustering with the projects at the top level and the events informing the projects. Sorting the archival contents this way helped clarify the contribution of the artefacts and align the archive with the spirit of restoring the integrity of indigenous knowledge systems. Once sorted, the artefacts were described using the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH).

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The research presented in this study must comply with the San Code of Ethics. Its guiding principles are (“Ethical Considerations”, 2022):

- Respect to the environment and respect to the San leaders, individuals and cultural value.
- Honesty, integrity and honour between all partners.
- Cultural and spiritual values must be fully honoured and respected in all research and media products.
- The right formal process, application and approval should be followed to protect communities during the research process.
- A prioritisation of processes should be identified and followed.
- Informed consent is central to research.
- Researchers should not enter a community without being guided and led by the members of the community itself.
- Mutual benefits should be ensured where possible. Both the researcher and the community should benefit from the interaction.

The ethical values of respect, honesty, care, and justice and fairness need to be upheld (“Ethical Considerations”, 2022).

Being guided by the indigenous research community into the world of indigenous knowledge prior to undertaking this study a fundamental contributing factor to its existence. Respecting and honouring the feedback that the initial presentation of the San tsî Khoen Ꞥaoba Ꞥans Digital Archive was not decolonial and indigenous enough precipitated the epistemic crisis this study aims to address. Woven through the various stages of the study is the researcher’s commitment to justice and fairness. The damage done to people, like the San and the Khoi,

by the hand of others, cannot be undone. However, the destructive legacy can be reduced and not perpetuated in the San tsî Khoen Ꞥaoba Ꞥans Digital Archive. The addition of IsKS as strand in the braiding knowledge process allows the researcher to incorporate spiritual values and a relationship with the metaphysical world not recognised in the western paradigm. It is hoped that the indigenous community benefits from the outcome of this study which aims to restore the epistemic integrity of their knowledge system.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

Two distinct data collection instruments will be used. The function of the first instrument is to identify the knowledge domains rendered silent, marginalised and misunderstood within WKS. The data will be collected from existing literature on the subjects of IKS and IsKS. The instrument will be based on domains within Islamic knowledge. It will be used to identify parallels in indigenous knowledge. The following data will be collected:

Section A: Determining the domains		
Islamic knowledge aspects	Does IKS have a similar theme?	Evidence of the theme within IKS
Relations with the metaphysical realm		
Relations with the natural world		
Relations within humanity		
Knowledge		
Section B: Organising the domains		
1. How can the domains be accurately represented to support the needs of diverse knowledge systems?		
2. How can the presence of abyssal thinking be overcome in representation?		

Table 3.3 Data Collection Instrument 1B

The purpose of the second data collection instrument is to define the ontology that emerges from the integrated knowledge system and through this process to test and refine the version of the ontology used in the organising and describing artefacts in the San tsî Khoen #oaba #ans.

Section C: Populating instances					
Ibali item number	Relations with the metaphysical realm	Relations with the natural world	Relations within humanity	Knowledge	Other
Section D: Defining the domains					
How do the instances aggregated within domains contribute to the domain's definition?					

Table 3.4 Data Collection Instrument 2

3.6 Summary

This chapter demonstrates another level of the braiding knowledge process. It demonstrates the compatibility of research methods situated in WKS and IKS. The complex research strategy, two approaches with four methods, is needed to substantiate the knowledge domains rendered invisible within WKS so that these can be incorporated into a knowledge ecosystem. The research design extends beyond presenting a model of an integrated knowledge ecosystem to demonstrating an ontology that presents IKS with greater epistemic integrity.

4. Data Analysis and Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. Shifting the conceptualisation of knowledge as taught within WKS is a critical step in restoring IKS's epistemic integrity. Section A describes the process of deriving a foundational integrated knowledge ecosystem. As IKS is wider than WKS, the boundaries defining knowledge need to shift beyond the latter paradigm to be more inclusive of the former. IsKS will be used as a foundation on which to anchor this extension. A bridge needs to be built between a system that marginalises the metaphysical and gives primacy to humanity and a system that celebrates the metaphysical and views humanity as interdependent with the rest of creation. The data collected in this section will inform which knowledge domains and ways of knowing need to be incorporated into IKS curation to accurately sort and categorise them in a manner that is consistent with IKS.

Section B analyses the knowledge contribution of the UCT's SKC to the restoration of indigenous knowledge as evidenced by the contents of the San tsî Khoen #oaba #ans Digital Archive. This analysis explores the knowledge domains and ways of knowing identified in indigenous scholarship. The archival information at the project and event levels will be sorted using the knowledge ecosystem that emerges from Section A. The data collected in this section will inform category descriptors and present a prototype of an IKS ontology that can be used in the digital archive.

4.2 Section A: Data collection instrument 1

4.2.1 Instrument 1A Design

The first data collection instrument is based on a discourse analysis of the second chapter of Quṭb's translated work entitled *Social Justice in Islam* (2000: 37-49). This chapter was selected as it positions justice within humanity as an aspect of the unification theory inherent in the concept of tawḥīd. It discusses a universal, integrated theory that connects the subjects of the universe, life in general and humanity specifically. It was also selected as it provides an outline of the main headings forming a general scheme of the unification theory in order to facilitate a greater understanding of achieving social justice (Quṭb, 2000, 37-38). This is relevant to the study as it aims to contribute to the provision of IKS's epistemic justice and it

is felt that Quṭb’s (2000) unification theory can support this requirement. The chapter thus provides a cohesive and rigorous foundation for the IsKS strand to be braided in the study.

A digital copy of the chapter was secured. The contents were then extracted into a Google Sheets workbook for analysis; table headings are provided in Table 4.1. Key text was extracted from the first couple of pages. Thereafter, the text became more informationally dense, resulting in entire paragraphs being extracted. The content was systematically analysed to distil the foundational concepts informing Quṭb’s (2000) unification theory. The theory’s relational aspects are labelled as system requirements. The label of system components represents the emerging concepts being sought. Once identified, these concepts were then broadly described in order to delink the IsKS specificity inherent in the text.

Extract	Page No.	Interpretation of Text	Extracted Elements - system requirements	Extracted Elements - system components	Component Themes	Thematic Elements	Knowledge Domains
...

Table 4.1 Schema used as a structure for extracting IsKS domains from Quṭb (2000)

4.2.2 Findings of Data Collection Instrument 1A

The data analysis of Quṭb’s (2000) chapter provided rich information about the unification theory inherent within IsKS. However, the purpose of this analysis is to identify the IKS domains rendered silent and not to delve specifically into IsKS for its development and promotion. To fully honour IKS’s reconstruction it is important to prevent the imposition and epistemologically hegemonic embedding of IsKS within it. Epistemic inclusion in this instance means that IsKS needs to step out of the way and provide the foundation for the restoration of IKS’s integrity. The rich data collected in the ‘Thematic elements’ column of Table 4.2 was backgrounded in the subsequent analysis and was used to derive a set of broad classification headings. The data presented in Table 4.2 is the last three columns of the dataset collected using the instrument presented in Table 4.1. These headings will form the linking bridge between IsKS an IKS.

Component Themes	Thematic elements	Knowledge Domains
Relationship between Creator and created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanity is a subsystem within creation • A benevolent world supportive of life • A benevolent life experience 	Metaphysical world
Humanity's relationship with the rest of creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance of economic activities and other life activities with the laws of creation • Heaven and earth are parts of one world • Humanity is interdependent with the world • Human conduct • Value system: mercy, love, help, mutual responsibility 	Natural world
An individual's management of their material and spiritual aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An individual's relationship with their soul • Integration of spiritual and worldly aspects into one being • Balance between worldly desires and spiritual aspirations 	Humanity
Relationship between the individual and society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human conduct • Value system: mercy, love, help, mutual responsibility 	Humanity
Relationship between different societies and humanity as a whole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value system: mercy, love, help, mutual responsibility 	Humanity
Intergenerational relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value system: mercy, love, help, mutual responsibility 	Humanity
Reflection (ways of knowing)		Ways of knowing
Relationship between the metaphysical and physical realms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuum of life between the physical and metaphysical realms • Unification of the spiritual and material • All of creation (incl. humanity) is contextualised in the metaphysical 	Metaphysical world

Component Themes	Thematic elements	Knowledge Domains
Systemic integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-regulation within humanity • Compliance of economic activities and other life activities with the laws of creation • Comprehensive justice • Self-regulation to maintain systemic integrity of the whole unit being strived for/created 	Systemic integrity
Heart (ways of knowing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conscience • Value system: mercy, love, help, mutual responsibility 	Ways of knowing
Perception (ways of knowing)		Ways of knowing

Table 4.2 Thematic analysis of the chapter to derive foundational knowledge domains

Wilson's Categories	Emergent Knowledge Domain	Reframed Knowledge Domain
Relations with ideas	Ways of knowing	Ways of knowing (no change)
Relations with people	Humanity	Relations within humanity
Relations with the environment/land	Natural world	Relations with the natural world
Relations with the cosmos	Metaphysical world	Relations with the metaphysical world
Relational accountability	Systemic integrity	Systemic integrity (no change)

Table 4.3 Accommodating IKS's relational nature when presenting the knowledge domains

The following five domains emerged: (i) the Metaphysical world, (ii) the Natural world, (iii) Humanity, (iv) Ways of knowing, and (v) systemic integrity. These serve as main class headings in the ontology being created and provide a general basis on which to juxtapose the IKS contained within the digital library collection of the San tsî Khoen Ꞥoaba Ꞥans Digital Archive; see Table 4.3. The five emergent domains have been reframed to accommodate the IKS's relational epistemologies, relational ontologies and relational accountabilities. They also need to accommodate the connectivity between living and all non-living things as outlined by Cram, Chilisa and Martens (2013: 16). The findings lay the foundation for the intricate web of relationships which Wilson (2008: 81-125) describes as "including relations with people, relations with the environment/land, relations with the cosmos, relations with ideas" and relational accountability.

4.2.3 Instrument 1B Design

A total of 126 publications [N=126] were entered into the archive between 2021 - 2022. This sample was analysed, and the most appropriate knowledge domain was assigned to it based on the reframed knowledge domains presented in Figure 4.3. This analysis determines whether the emergent broad relational ontology is sufficiently comprehensive to represent the sample of publications. Each item within the sample will be identified by the item number assigned to it. The placement of each item into the schema is based on a subject analysis of the available abstract and title of each item as captured in the Ibalí repository metadata. In some cases, further research will be undertaken to determine the domain to which an item is assigned. An item will be allocated to only one of the following domains: Relations within humanity, Relations with the natural world and Relations with the metaphysical world. As explained in [Chapter 4.2.4](#), no items were found that fit the category of Ways of knowing. However, items assigned to these domains can also be allocated to the Systemic integrity domain. In the analysis, an additional domain emerged: Reclaimed knowledge, which is described in [Chapter 4.2.4](#).

The sample [N=126] results in a total of 208 category descriptor allocations [cd=208], with 82 items having both a primary domain and an allocation of Systemic integrity or Reclaimed knowledge. Once sorted, a count of items per domain will be determined to identify the distribution of knowledge presented by the sample when viewed from the perspective of an integrated knowledge system. The complete sample [N=126] is accounted for in the count undertaken.

4.2.4 Findings of Instrument 1B

The assessment results of Instrument 1B indicate that the extracted IsKS knowledge domains provide a comprehensive foundation on which to build an IKS ontology. After allocating each item to the broadest subject area it represents it was found that the majority - 101 publications, a total of 80.2% of the sample - explored and addressed matters related to human relations. **Systemic integrity** had forty-nine (49) items assigned to it, 23.6% of the sample, making it the second largest subject area. This was followed by **Relations with the natural world** with seventeen (17) publications, 8.2% of the sample, assigned to it. Thereafter, **Relations with the metaphysical world** had six (6) publications assigned to it, 4.8% of the sample; see Table 4.4 and Figure 4.1. The sample provided no evidence of items related to **Ways of knowing**. This lack of evidence does not invalidate the existence of the **Ways of knowing** domain: it reflects an information gap in the publications found in archive's digital library. Evidence of this domain is found elsewhere, e.g. Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr's work on **dadirri** (Ungunmerr, n.d.; Ungunmerr-Baumann, Groom, Atkinson, Atkinson, Wallace & Morris, 2022) and June Bam-Hutchison and Eugene Skeef's work on **lalela** (Bam-Hutchison, 2026: 22-29; Araújo Gomes, 2021: 329-331); also see [Chapter 2.2](#), [Chapter 3.1.1](#) and [Chapter 3.2.1](#). Two (2) items could not be assigned to a knowledge domain as they had too little descriptive information available in their item records and an internet search of various databases provided no specific indicators on which to base their allocation.

IsKS Domains	Does IKS a have similar theme	Evidence of the knowledge domain within IKS (Ibali Item No.)	Number of supporting IKS items
Relations with the metaphysical world	Yes	17880 17831 17830 17829 17523 17522	6
Relations with the natural world	Yes	19427 19426 19425 17893 17892 17874 17872 17859 17836 17828 17825 17824 17821 17606 17588 17543 17535	17
Relations within humanity	Yes	38213 33378 33377 33376 33375 17891 17890 17889 17888 17887 17886 17885 17884 17883 17882 17881 17879 17878 17877 17876 17875 17873 17871 17870 17869 17868 17867 17866 17865 17864 17863 17862 17861 17860 17858 17857 17856 17855 17854 17853 17852 17851 17850 17849 17848 17847 17846 17845 17844 17843 17842 17841 17840 17839 17838 17837 17835 17834 17833 17832 17831 17822 17610 17609 17608 17607 17605 17604 17603 17602 17601 17600 17599 17598 17597 17596 17595 17594 17593 17592 17591 17590 17589 17545 17541 17539 17537 17533 17531 17529 17527 17525 17520 17518 17517 17515 17513 17511 17510 17508 17506	101
Knowledge (ways of knowing)	Yes		0
Systemic integrity	Yes	33378 33377 33376 33375 17891 17890 17889 17888 17887 17885 17884 17883 17882 17879 17878 17875 17871 17868 17866 17864 17863 17862 17861 17856 17854 17853 17852 17851 17848 17839 17608 17605 17601 17600 17596 17593 17591 17590 17545 17541 17537 17525 17511 17510 17508 17588 17543 17893 17892	49
Unassigned		17827 17826	2

Other (Reclaimed knowledge)	Yes	19427 19426 19425 17887 17849 17835 17834 17833 17832 17831 17830 17829 17828 17825 17824 17822 17821 17533 17531 17529 17527 17525 17523 17522 17520 17518 17517 17515 17513 17511 17510 17508 17506	33
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Table 4.4 Assessment tool to determine if the IsKS ontology accurately represents IKS, N=126

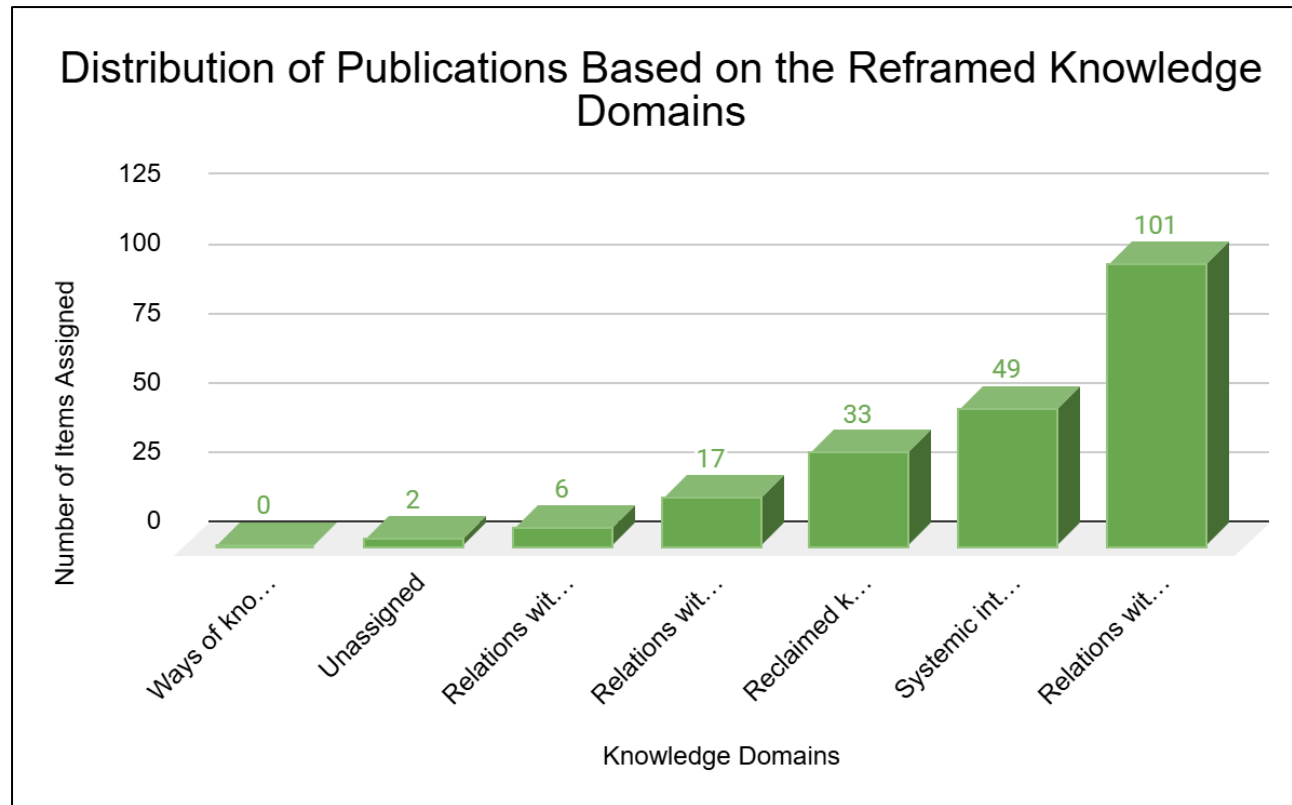


Figure 4.1 Results of Data Collection Instrument 1B

Due to a mistake made by the researcher, supporting data for the systemic integrity category descriptor was done after the other domains were already analysed within the IKS dataset. This error provided a more nuanced understanding of systemic integrity than may have been possible if establishing evidence for its existence was done alongside the other four domains. As a result, the analysis demonstrated that the forty-nine (49) publications assigned this descriptor were embedded in the other domains. Of the forty-nine items, forty-five (45) were positioned within the relations within humanity domain and four (4) were located within relations with the natural world; see Figure 4.2.

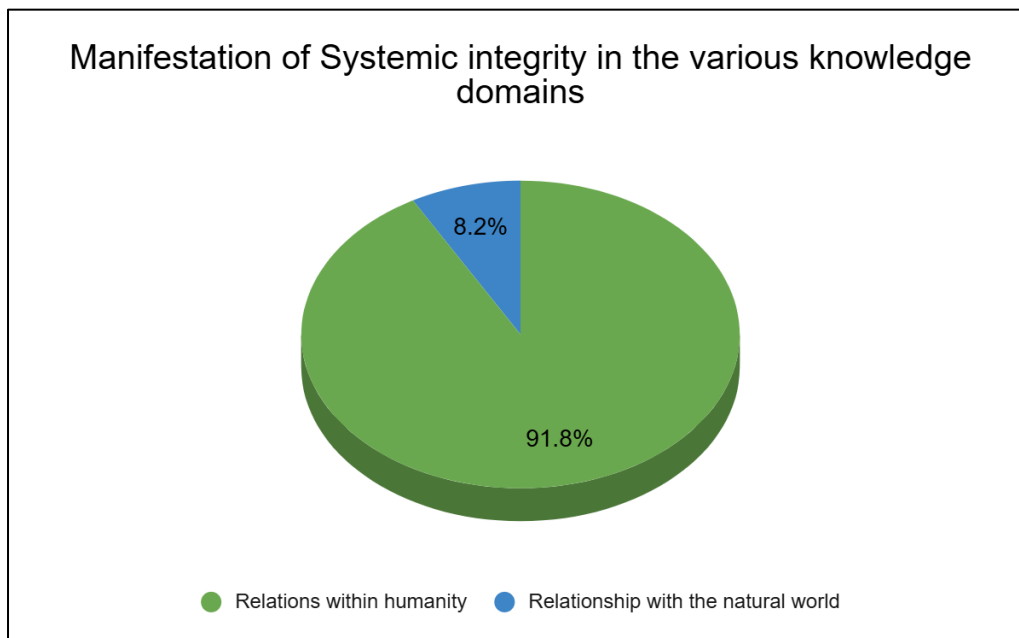


Figure 4.2 The distribution of Systemic integrity located within the other knowledge domains [n=49]

A subset of information emerged during the investigation. While the majority of publications could be assigned a subject domain, some items did not comply with the objective of restoring epistemic integrity to IKS. The sample contained publications that contributed to the misrepresentation of IKS and indigenous people. The domains extracted from Instrument 1A did not accommodate such a subset of information. A new category called **Reclaimed knowledge** was thus created to work adjacent to the domains. The name is based on the concept of repatriation. The act of repatriation is a form of restitution, and it is the restoration of something unjustly taken to its rightful owner (Thompson, 2003). Similarly, Indigenous knowledge has been displaced from its systems of origin to WKS and needs to be restored by its system of origin. However, the decision was made to call this category **Reclaimed knowledge**. The concept of reclaimed knowledge positions the power and agency of

ownership within the ambit of the indigenous community. The concept of repatriation maintains the restorative power with its agency situated outside of the community. All information items assigned this category descriptor need to be extracted from their unjust and inaccurate presentation and used to restore the integrity of the IKS and the way of life and languages of indigenous people (Bam-Hutchison, Abrahams & Adams, 2023: 6-7). Thirty-three (33) items (26%) were assigned to this category.

4.3 Section B: Representation of the reframed knowledge domains

Section A provides a shift in the horizon of understanding (Zaidi, 2007: 416-417) that had been created in the interests of WKS. The identified domains can expand the boundaries of knowledge to be more inclusive of systems like IKS and IsKS, within the scope of this research. This study's positionality outside of WKS means that its constraint on understanding is not a limiting factor. Within IKS, relationality is a requirement for systemic integrity and IsKS has unity as a requirement for its integrity. Section B goes beyond identifying the silenced and misrepresented knowledge domains and attempts to put these fragments together to showcase the system as a whole.

4.3.1 Piecing the system components together

Hermeneutic realism positions humanity in a pre-existing reality (Moses & Knutsen, 2018: 186). Ginev (2016: 1) describes this as a meaningful reality that does not require humanity to attribute meaning and value to it. Smirnov (1993), based on the work of ibn 'Arabi, declares humanity as a microcosm and that humanity needs to change its ontological state to become greater than the state it currently occupies. Ansari (1999: 171-175) discusses the unification of creation by describing the universe as a united entity and humanity as a united entity. Ansari (1999: 171-175) goes on to declare that it is injustice that disrupts this unification.

The Table 4.2 column entitled 'Thematic elements' provides further indicators or propositions to assist with piecing the fragments of the knowledge system together. Those selected for this purpose are as follows:

- Humanity is a subset of creation,
- Humanity is interdependent with the world we live in,

- The heavens, or cosmos, and earth are parts of a unit,
- The physical and metaphysical worlds exist on a continuum,
- All of creation is contextualised in the metaphysical.

These elements were selected as this complies with intricate web of relationships outlined by Wilson (2008: 81-125), as earlier mentioned.

When the indicators are applied, the knowledge domains become fused in the integrated ecosystem depicted in Figure 4.3. Three of the domains are nested as concentric layers of a single unit. Humanity, as a subset of creation, is placed in the core of the system with the rest of the natural world as the layer surrounding it. Since the physical world is contextualised within the metaphysical, the metaphysical world is the outer layer of the unit.

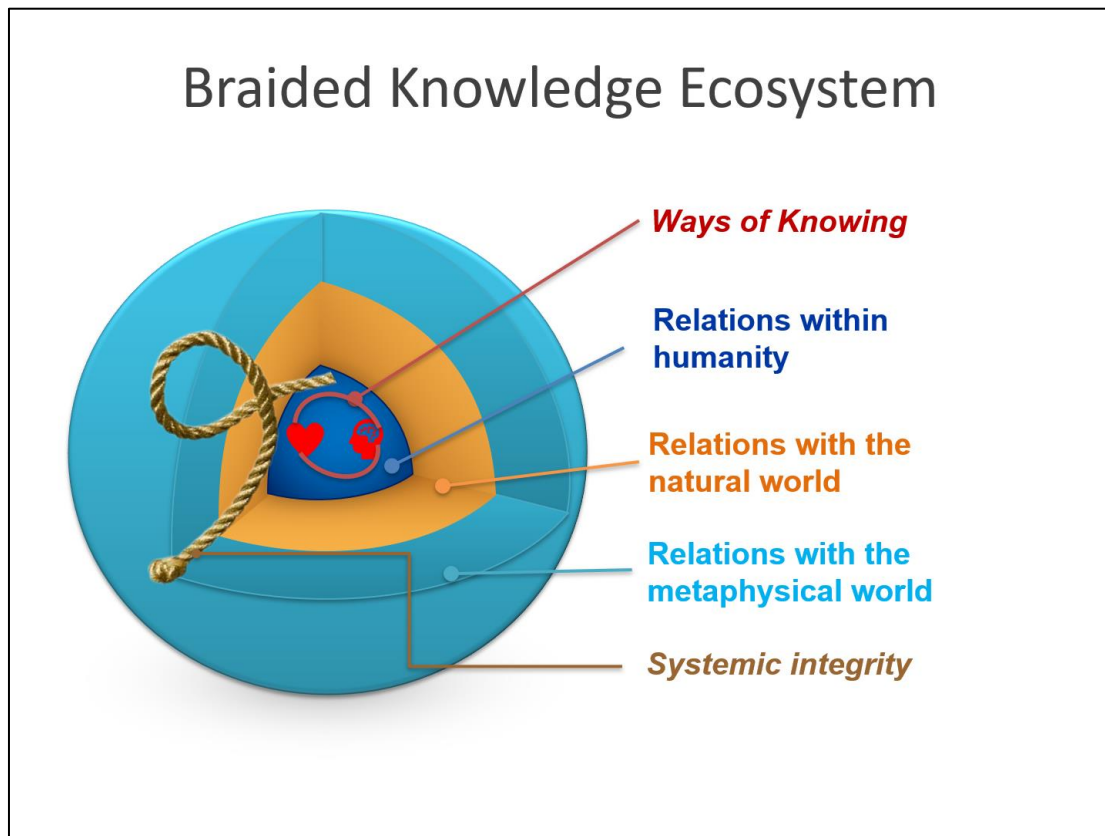


Figure 4.3 The braided knowledge ecosystem supporting an indigenous ontology. Adapted from a design by PresentationGo (<https://www.presentationgo.com>)

The Ways of Knowing domain does not work as a concentric layer in the ecosystemic model being braided. Humanity cannot be separated from its ways of knowing as it is infused within humanity. After some deliberation it was decided to represent the twin elements of heart

knowing and rational knowing as a closed circuit embedded within the human contextualisation layer. The results of instrument 1B demonstrate that systemic integrity is embedded within the other domains and does not work as a concentric layer. Its conceptualisation resides within the methodology of braiding knowledge. Here systemic integrity is an additional strand woven into the knowledge model holding it together (Weaving ways of Knowing for the Environment, n.d.). This domain is thus depicted as a strand of rope woven through the other domains.

4.4 Section C: Data collection instrument 2

Section A demonstrates that the relational ontology derived from IsKS provides a solid foundation for the restoration of IKS. Section B demonstrates the epistemological shift made possible by the extension of knowledge domains required for a more inclusive knowledge system. Section C examines the knowledge outputs of the SKC as presented in the archive. Instrument 2 is designed to test and further refine the emergent ontology within a second sample of archival contents.

4.4.1 Instrument 2 Design

Instrument 2 uses the reframed knowledge domains to catalogue SKC contribution to indigenous scholarship. It's sorting function is similar to that of Instrument 1B. Instrument 2 extends to exploring what topics exist within each domain. The topics are identified through the selection of the most relevant LCSH assigned to each item and a broad, generalised, indigenous knowledge category descriptor. The latter descriptor is purposefully vague due to the researcher's stance as a secondary knowledge holder of IKS. In this position, the researcher is qualified enough to identify trends but does not have the inherent insight and internal positioning required to make decisions for the San and Khoi community.

4.4.2 Findings of Instrument 2

Table 4.5 shows the distribution of SKC projects and events (see Table 3.2 for definitions)

Organisational Level	Relations with the metaphysical realm	Relations with the natural world	Relations within humanity	Ways of Knowing	Repatriated Knowledge	Total Items
Project	0	3	10	7	2	20
Event	0	1	15	11	0	27
Total Items	0	4	25	18	2	47

Table 4.5 Distribution of SKC projects and events [N=47]

between the years 2020 and 2022. The findings confirm that the reframed knowledge domains have a degree of accurate representation. Within the two-year period being studied SKC did not undertake any project work related to the domain of **Relations with the metaphysical realm**. As a result, no further analysis of this domain is possible in this study. Two of the projects undertaken fall under the category of **Reclaimed knowledge** as they were projects aimed at reclaiming information found in two publications. These projects built on what each publication presented by including the internal perspective. The reclaiming knowledge strategy is not to invalidate what came before or what exists. Rather, it is to identify what is valid and extend it to be more representative of the desired positionality. This preserves the relational integrity between the various perspectives.

Table 4.6 lists the LCSH assigned by me to the twenty-five items in the **Relations within humanity** knowledge domain. Table 4.7 showcases the subject heading or the SKC topic assigned to each item. The classification system depicted in Table 4.7 is broad and lacking in specificity, but it does provide nuance that could possibly be lost with the specificity of the assigned LCSH. The findings presented in Table 4.4 indicate that 53% (25 items) of SKC's work focused on the **Relations within humanity** domain. The distribution of topics explored reflect that 26 IKS topics were assigned to the 25 items. This is due to one item being assigned two IKS topics, namely, (i) 'Language' and (ii) 'Ancestry and legacy stories'.

LCSH assigned within the "Relations within humanity" domain	
LCSH	No. of Items
Genocide-South Africa	1
Human rights advocacy	6
Khoikhoi language	1
Khoisan (African people)-History	1
Language and languages-Dictionary	1
Language and languages-Orthography and spelling	1
Language Revitalisation	3
Midwifery-South Africa	2
Nama Language	1
Oral history	4
San (African people)-History	1
Social justice	2
South Africa-History	1
University of Cape Town History	1

Table 4.6 Subject matter in the "Relations within humanity" knowledge domain as determined by LCSH

IKS category descriptors within the "Relations within humanity" domain	
SKC Topic	No. of Items
Human health and wellbeing	2
Ancestry and legacy stories	7
Language	7
Social integrity	10

Table 4.7 Subject matter in the "Relations within humanity" knowledge domain as described by SKC

The findings displayed in Table 4.7 indicate that 40% (10 items) of SKC's work on Relations within humanity aimed at restoring the social integrity of indigenous people; 24% (6 items)

contributed to the restoration and preservation of the languages of the San and Khoi people; 24% (6 items) contributed to documenting and preserving the ancestral and legacy stories contained in the oral history of the San & Khoi people; 8% (2 items) contributed to an indigenous understanding of human health and wellbeing; and 4% (1 item) recorded ancestral and legacy stories in an indigenous language.

The incidence of items assigned to the category of Ancestry and legacy stories is indicative of the important role of the intergenerational transfer of knowledge through oral history and learning from the legacy of others. The two items assigned to Human health and wellbeing relate to a midwifery knowledge project. The presence of these two items indicates the existence of the category but does not provide enough evidence to demonstrate its scope.

Tables 4.8 and 4.9 depict the subject matter distribution within the Relations with the natural world domain. The main SKC category is that of land as an archive, a concept the researcher first heard while working with Professor June Bam-Hutchison in 2021 and expanded upon

LCSH assigned within the "Relations with the natural world" domain	
LCSH	No. of Items
Names, Geographical-Khoikhoi	2
Animals-Nomenclature	1
Nama language	1

Table 4.8 Subject matter in the "Relations with the natural world" knowledge domain as determined by LCSH

IKS category descriptors within the "Relations with the natural world" domain	
SKC Topic	No. of Items
Land as an archive	3
Relationship between land and people	1

Table 4.9 Subject matter in the "Relations with the natural world" knowledge domain as described by SKC

developing the digital archive being examined. The LCSHs associated with this category are animal and place names. The existence of the category of Land as an archive relates to the hermeneutic realism understanding of pre-existing knowledge. An archival item within the Relations with the natural world domain was assigned the 'Language' category as it showcased animal names within the Nama language. The item thus had a dual subject categorisation.

The results in Table 4.4 depict that the Ways of knowing domain constitutes 38% (18 items) of SKC's work. Tables 4.10 and 4.11 exhibit the subject matter distribution within this domain. Five (5) items in this domain are identified as contributing to the developing Epistemic integrity. Epistemic integrity is the manifestation of Systemic integrity in this domain. This domain has been shown to encompass the twin elements of Rational knowing and Heart knowing. There are five (5) items related to Rational knowing while there are three (3) items addressing Heart knowing. The greater emphasis on Rational knowing can be attributed to supporting the development of the San tsî Khoen #oaba #ans Digital Archive. Within WKS these items have the LCSHs of "Digital curation-Evaluation", "Digital preservation", "Digital libraries", and "Archives-Collection management".

LCSH assigned within the "Ways of knowing" domain	
LCSH	No. of Items
Oral history	4
Decolonisation	3
Digital curation-Evaluation	2
None assigned	3
Digital preservation	2
Digital libraries	1
African women-Education	1
Archives-Collection management	1
Special events	1

Table 4.10 Subject matter in the "Ways of knowing" domain as determined by LCSH

The epistemic disruption of IKS has resulted in IKS not benefiting from a legacy of generational scholarship expanding and refining it and the languages associated with it. This is evidenced by IKS not having a descriptor for 'Digital libraries'. Therefore, the item with this LCSH is the one without a SKC descriptor assigned to it. It could be assigned to 'Knowledge sharing' but then it would get lost in the general nature of the category descriptor's current state which lacks specificity.

IKS category descriptors within the "Ways of knowing" domain		
SKC Topic	No. of Items	Second Level Description
Heart knowing	3	Dadirri (Deep listening) Lalela (Deep listening) Epistemic integrity
Epistemic integrity	5	
Rational knowing	5	Digital representation of knowledge
None assigned	1	
Knowledge sharing	4	Ancestry and legacy stories Dadirri (Deep listening) / Lalela (Deep listening) Dialogical archives Social integrity

Table 4.11 Subject matter in the "Ways of knowing" domain as described by SKC

The three (3) items assigned to Heart knowing contribute to the development of Dadirri (Deep listening) and the restoration of epistemic integrity. Lalela (Deep listening) is the southern African equivalent of dadirri which is being developed by June Bam-Hutchison and Eugene Skeef (Bam-Hutchison, 2016: 24-29). The inclusion of lalela signifies that the emerging ontology has room for existing and reclaimed indigenous knowledge. Dadirri and lalela are strategies of heart knowing as well as knowledge sharing strategies. A third aspect of knowledge sharing emerging from the data is Ancestry and legacy stories.

4.5 Section D: Defining the domains

Braiding the LCSHs with the IKS category descriptors assigned to the items investigated allows the informational patterns associated with each domain to crystallise. The IKS descriptors being the more general will be considered the foundational strand. The LCSHs will

Relations with the metaphysical world

Relations with the natural world

- Land as an archive
- Animal names
- Place names
- Relationship between land and people
- RT: Animal names
- RT: Geographic names
- Nama language

Relations within humanity

- Ancestry and legacy stories
- History
 - Oral history
- Human health and wellbeing
 - Midwifery
- Language
 - Khoikhoi language
 - Language construction
 - Language revitalisation
 - Language tools
 - RT: Digital representation of knowledge
- Nama Language
- Social integrity
 - BT: Systemic integrity
 - Genocide
 - Human rights advocacy

Systemic integrity

- Epistemic integrity
 - Reclaimed knowledge
- Social integrity

Ways of knowing

- Epistemic integrity
 - Decolonisation
- Heart knowing
 - RT: Epistemic integrity
 - Dadirri (Deep listening)
 - Lalela (Deep listening)
- Knowledge sharing
 - RT: Dadirri (Deep listening)
 - RT: Lalela (Deep listening)
 - RT: Ancestry and legacy stories
 - RT: Social integrity
- Dialogical archives
- Education
- Knowledge sharing events
- Rational knowing
 - Digital representation of knowledge
 - Digital curation
 - Digital libraries
 - Digital preservation

Table 4.12 A braided classification system providing baseline definition of the emerging knowledge domains

be adapted and woven alongside the IKS descriptors. The adaptation is to generalise the LCSHs so that there is room for the customisation needed to be owned by IKS. Two types of amendments will be made. The first is semantic, for example: 'Names-Geographic-Khoikhoi' becomes 'Place names' and 'Animal-Nomenclature' becomes 'Animal names'. The second amendment is to decrease a heading's degree of specificity, for example: 'Khoisan (African people)-History', 'San (African people)-History', 'South Africa-History', and 'University of Cape Town-History' is generalised to a 'History' category descriptor; 'Language and languages-Dictionary' is generalised to 'Language tools'; and 'Language and languages-Orthography and spelling' is generalised to 'Language construction'. Geographic specificity is also removed from LCSHs like 'Genocide-South Africa' and 'Midwifery-South Africa'. Table 4.12 demonstrates the results of this braiding process. Table 4.12 is discussed on greater detail in [Chapter Five](#).

4.6 Summary

Braiding IsKS, IKS and WKS has contributed to generating an alternative knowledge model that is more epistemically just. The data collected from Instrument 1A provides us with five knowledge domains. These are: Ways of knowing, the human context, humanity's relations with the natural world, humanity's relations with the metaphysical context, and systemic integrity. Through Instrument 1A, IsKS has provided a template on which to reclassify IKS. The results of Instrument 1B confirms the effectiveness of this template when applied to the archival content generated by SKC. Through the analysis process an adjacent information pattern emerged indicating the need for a knowledge reclamation process from WKS to IKS. The aim of this reclamation process is to further promote the epistemic integrity of IKS. Instrument 2 showcases a set of category descriptors assigned by the SKC. These descriptors provide a baseline ontological definition of the domains from the perspective of SKC's indigenous scholarship.

5. Discussion

Developing the San tsî Khoen #oaba #ans Digital Archive provided an opportunity to present IKS with a more inclusive and socially just representation. Curation of the archival contents was seen as a means to contribute to IKS's epistemic integrity. Accepting Huang's (2020: 274-275) call to reframe the foundations and beliefs of archival theory and practice was a logical choice. The pursuit of reframing the archival practice required by the San tsî Khoen #oaba #ans Digital Archive took the researcher beyond the factuality of knowledge production in the WKS. As the researcher, I had to figure out how to achieve a degree of empirical unity by delving into the factuality of other knowledge systems and accessing a facticity that more accurately reflected an insider perspective of IKS. More simply stated, as established as WKS is, it is still a human interpretation of observable reality and is subject to recontextualisation (Ginev, 2016: 22-23).

This research project aimed to develop an ontology that supports the reconstruction of IKS within the San tsî Khoen #oaba #ans Digital Archive. Its strategy was to use IsKS as a bridge on which to reconstruct IKS by braiding knowledge systems. The demonstrated reconstruction, when accepted, provides an epistemic and ontological shift that can open the door for humanity to become greater than we are as recommended by Smirnov (1993). The repositioning brings about a comprehensive change in power dynamics.

5.1 IsKS as a bridge to reconstruct IKS

The first part of the study found that IsKS provides a bridging strand upon which IKS can be reconstructed. Prior to working at SKC, weaving the three knowledge systems seemed impossible as they presented so differently. However, with greater exposure to IKS scholarship, points of similarity emerged. Leaning into the IsKS concept of sunnatullah provided the unifying perspective capable of bringing the three knowledge systems together. Conforming to sunnatullah results in the degree of justice required to create a systemic order capable of bringing about unity within creation. Changing the reflective lens to knowledge gifted to us by The Creator enables us to transcend the limitations of our human interpretation of reality. It also provides a touchstone that helps us to navigate diversity (Yildren, 2016: 1-4). Integrating this perspective into this study allowed for a transformative space where the fusion

of horizons (Ninamong, 2008: 195-196; Santos, Nunes & Meneses, 2007: xx-xxv; Zaidi, 2007: 427-429) of the three knowledge systems became possible.

5.1.1 Braiding an integrated knowledge system

Systemic integrity is a necessary additional strand to be woven into the ecosystem being created. The unification theory presented in Qutb's work (2000: 37-49) on social justice in Islam was able to rationally visibilise themes rendered silent or misrepresented in WKS and its archival practices. Greater systemic integrity becomes possible when these thematic areas are included in the common conceptualisation of knowledge. Incorporating these themes into the San tsî Khoen Ꞗoaba Ꞗans Digital Archive means that it becomes a site where the epistemic violence perpetuated by WKS archival practices is reduced. The reconnection achieved dissolves the divisive lines created by abyssal thinking and begins to lay the foundation of an ahuman ontology connecting those that chose it to the original space that humanity occupies within creation. The braiding process undertaken knits the horizons of the three knowledge systems. Therefore, the results of this study do not disrupt the integrity of them. They expand the horizon of understanding of each of them and create harmony rather than dissonance between the knowledge systems.

To achieve this study's objectives, I had to reorient myself professionally from the position of my worldview, IsKS, and not the worldview of my education and societal conditioning, WKS. Beyond this, I needed to be secure in my positionality in order to step to the fringes of my worldview and to firstly see how it connected with WKS and then with IsKS. This entails a degree of maturity to see each knowledge system as they are and give each one the recognition due to it. Schuitema (2002: 94-95) calls the attainment of this ability as "*transactional correctness*". Further, stating that it is a stage of justice where one can give others what is due to them "*...with no presumption of the other based on the past. Every situation is responded to on the basis of what it requires, not on the basis of what the self wants*" (Schuitema, 2002: 94-95).

5.1.2 The Emergent Knowledge Domains and Sites of Knowing

The epistemological shift achieved in order to produce an ahuman ontology requires the presence of components greater than humanity, but the knowledge ecosystem produced still has humanity positioned as the core of the model. There is another motivation to support humanity's position besides being a subset of creation: the central position acknowledges the

role of our capacity to make sense of the world we live in. It is through our reasoning and intellectual ability that our scientific endeavours are able to provide us with some knowledge about the established way of creation. Since the model is a reflection of human understanding, humanity is centralised. The ontological shift is thus a decentralisation of the power people have attributed to humanity, through placing humanity in a broader and interrelational context. The model's visibilisation of the metaphysical world and humanity's status as creation is epistemically humbling. It is worth mentioning that the knowledge domains and sites of knowing are not new knowledge emerging from this study. Rather, they constitute pre-existing knowledge within IKS and IsKS that is being visibilised in the discourses of WKS using WKS's research methodology. The visibilisation presented here is made possible with the incorporation of heart knowing, a second site of knowing.

Ansari's (1999: 48) concentric system is incorporated as the foundational design concept for the braided knowledge ecosystem. It best symbolises IKS's relational ontology, relational epistemologies and relational accountabilities (Cram, Chilisa & Mertens, 2013: 16) and the interconnected co-agency encapsulated in Ubuntu (Wright, 2023). The three concentric layers represent three of the five knowledge domains presented in this study. These three domains form a dynamic system where groups and duality can co-exist in peace and unity (Ansari, 1999: 48).

Sites of knowing, the fourth domain, was initially depicted as a fourth concentric layer. However, this would have separated humanity from one of its mechanisms and countered the unification ideal of the project. It was then decided to present the two ways of knowing as icons connected in a closed circuit. Such a presentation demonstrates that our ways of knowing infuse humanity and sets the precedent for an alternative presentation of domains. It demonstrates that elements need not be forced to fit into the design pattern. The design of the ecosystem can accommodate expansion as new facets of the integrated knowledge system emerge. The successful disruptive innovation involved in integrating the sites of knowing domain into the braided system was also applied to represent systemic integrity, the fifth domain to emerge. The image of a rope was selected to infuse the system created. The imagery of a rope was inspired by the [Qur'anic verse 3: 103](#) advising people to hold onto the "rope of Allah".

A rope is also the product of the braiding process where three or more strands intertwine in overlapping patterns. Akbari et al. (2016) discuss how braided structures have high tensile strength and mechanical flexibility making them ideal candidates for engineering of medical textiles including sutures, stents, nerve regeneration conduits, braided composite bone plates, scaffolds for ligament tendons and artificial cartilage. The inclusion of the rope image is self-inclusive and self-referential, which is allegorical of the metaphysical unity of the model and the scalar isotopy (fractality) of the braid. This transcends the positivist linearity of the WKS.

The resultant braided knowledge system opens up new avenues of knowledge to explore and the possible recontextualisation of current knowledge. For example, IKS is acknowledged as having solutions to the environmental problems we are experiencing. A Google Scholar search using the search query “IKS and environment” delivers about 35 600 results in 0.07 seconds. The braided ecosystem visibilises that environmental justice depends on an epistemic shift in humanity’s relationship with the natural world. A shift that acknowledges that the natural world is independent of humanity and can exist without us. Humanity, on the other hand, is a subset of creation and dependent on the natural world. Due to the current power imbalance, the dominant worldview needs to reflect humanity’s double set of dependencies so that we can behave with greater transactional correctness. Restorative environmental justice requires further examination from this perspective if we truly want to benefit from IKS and its inherent wisdom.

5.2 The Emerging IKS Ontology

With the confirmation that the epistemological framework extracted from Quṭb’s work matched IKS, it became possible to overlay the result of SKC’s scholarship. Similar to assembling a puzzle, the more items that are connected to each other, the more IKS details emerge informing an IKS ontology. Broad category descriptors were selected to prevent the perpetuation of misrepresentation and imposition of ideas. This decision was fuelled by tension between ordering the semiotic chaos within the archive and the need to make space for an indigenous perspective of IKS. As the curator, and ally to the indigenous community, it is my responsibility to bring order to the San tsî Khoen Ꞥoaba Ꞥans Digital Archive. As an outsider to the central perspective of IKS, I have to be humble enough to know I do not have the authority to impose any meaning onto IKS that does not come from its scholarship and activism cohort.

The objective of this study is to develop an ontology capable of supporting the IKS's reconstruction in a digital archive. The exploratory nature of this study yielded foundational data which is not enough to support the development of a comprehensive ontology for IKS. However, it does provide a tangible baseline on which an epistemically just IKS ontology can be constructed. The five emergent knowledge domains are the reframed thematic areas derived from Quṭb's (2000) work. WKS has well-defined and refined classification systems that provide the necessary framework on which to construct an IKS ontology. The results depicted in Table 4.12 employ a hybridisation of LCSH and the Dewey Decimal Classification System (DDC). The DDC is chosen as it is a general knowledge organisational tool that can be revised to keep up a growing knowledge system (Chan & Mitchell, n.d:xxix). The five knowledge domains that emerged in the study equate to DDC's main classes of knowledge which together cover the world of WKS knowledge. Within DDC's hierarchical structure there are three summaries or descriptive levels. Each main class is divided into divisions and each division is then further subdivided into sections (Chan & Mitchell, n.d:xxx). However, the outcome of this study does not yield a volume of descriptive data that is comparable to the DDC.

The LCSH assigned by the researcher in her capacity as the curator of the archive is used to supplement the emergent IKS descriptive data. The LCSH is a controlled vocabulary of subject headings, i.e., it is a list of words and phrases. These subject headings are assigned to information resources in the classification process. It brings the element of organisational consistency by arranging items or artefacts into a logical arrangement per categorising topic (*Process for Adding and Revising Library of Congress Subject Headings*, n.d.; *Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)*, 2020). The LCSH characteristic utilised here is its cross-referencing capability (*Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)*, 2020). The hybridisation of DDC with the LCSH becomes most evident at the level of the third summary. This study does not provide a definitive controlled vocabulary when compared to the LCSH and LCSH's full potential could not be employed. However, the cross-referencing function reveals another level of relationality as expected from a relational ontology. This cross-referencing is visible in Table 4.12 with the use of concepts like 'Related Term' (RT) and 'Broad Term' (BT).

The results of the first part of the study show the independencies, interdependencies and dependencies required of a relational ontology at the level of a first summary. The decision to distil the contents of Quṭb's (2000) work resulted in this comprehensive first summary. The

decision to remove the IsKS descriptive matter was transactionally correct. IsKS serves as a bridging strand in the braiding process. With its job done it steps out of the way so that IKS can surface. The challenge is that the San and Khoi people's legacy of oppression disrupted their IKS. As a result, it has not benefited from generational academic growth as WKS and IsKS have. The impact of this disruption on IKS becomes evident in the second part of the research process.

The second part of the research process yielded limited results at the second and third summary levels of an IKS classification system. The research process was able to sort the semiotic chaos initially present within the San tsî Khoen †oaba †ans Digital Archive. The archival artefacts were sorted into their respective knowledge domains and then further aggregated into second descriptive summaries or categories within the domain. Where possible third level summaries emerged. The archive is now organised more representatively of its contribution to the restoration of IKS. Information seekers can explore the knowledge domains and gain greater insight into the nuance of complexity of indigenous scholarship. The limitations of the study become visible when the compiled classification system is extracted from the archive.

The limitations to the classification system can be attributed to the research population being limited to SKC scholarship and the sample being further reduced to two years' worth of its academic output. This cannot measure up to the degree of WKS scholarship informing the DDCs development. The decision to limit the research scope was informed by the exploratory nature of this study. I suspected that IsKS could be an effective bridging strand on which to construct an IKS ontology. The research design aimed to test the validity of this intuitive knowing. When the results confirmed my heart-knowing, it became possible to see how the study could have been designed to determine more descriptive data than it did.

5.2.1 Systemic Integrity

As integral as Systemic integrity is to the braided knowledge ecosystem, only two of its second-level divisions emerge from the study, i.e. **Epistemic integrity** and **Social integrity**. A relational ontology would also require divisions for the integrity between humanity and the rest of creation, integrity between humanity and the metaphysical world, integrity within the natural world, and integrity between the natural world and the metaphysical world. Within the nature of the braided knowledge ecosystem these divisions make sense. However, SKCs scholarship

during the research period does not extend to these divisions. Greater information on **Social integrity** is surfaced under the **Relations with humanity** domain where third summary descriptions emerge. While the assignment of these category descriptors fits in the context of the San tsǎ Khoen #oaba #ans Digital Archive, its contribution to an IKS classification system is not sufficient.

The category descriptor of **Reclaimed knowledge** becomes a section under **Epistemic integrity**. Reclaiming indigenous knowledge captured within WKS is a clever strategy in the efforts to restore IKS's epistemic integrity. The WKS has already done the rational knowing aspect of tangible knowledge production. As SKC demonstrates, it now behoves IKS scholars to weave in its perspective to recentre this knowledge within IKS.

5.2.2 Ways of Knowing

Two more divisions for the **Ways of knowing** knowledge domain emerged during the second part of the study, viz. **Epistemic integrity** and **Knowledge sharing**. SKC had a decolonial agenda aimed at restoring IKS's epistemic integrity and so this approach is nested under **Epistemic integrity**. The DDC and LCSH hybridisation can be seen in action when structuring this section of the IKS ontology. The abbreviation RT is used to indicate related concepts that can be found nested elsewhere. For example, in Table 4.11, **Heart knowing** is related to **Epistemic integrity**; **Dadirri (Deep listening)** and **Lalela (Deep listening)** are elements nested under **Heart knowing** and these are also related to **Knowledge sharing**; and finally **Ancestral and legacy stories**, a division of **Relations within humanity**, is cross referenced under **Knowledge sharing**.

The SKC sample does not provide further insight into the supra-rational function (Clark, 2001) of **Heart knowing** beyond the IKS manifestation of deep listening. The research process presented here acknowledges the knowledge unification made possible when the **Heart knowing** mechanisms of intuition, sensory perception and imagination are woven with **Rational knowing** (Clark, 2001). The intuitive knowing motivating this study is not a type of magical thinking. Rather, it was based on a hypothesis of sameness informed by an understanding of sunnatullah. Three aspects of sunnatullah fuelled this hypothesis, Firstly, it denotes the integral system of cause and effect aimed at creating and maintaining the natural world and aimed at bringing order within humanity. Secondly, this system predates human creation; and thirdly, there has been and never will be any deviation in the system of creation

(Yildren, 2016). Through exposure to IKS, at the local and international levels, I learnt that two of the hallmarks of the knowledge system are the recognition of the natural order of life and a desire to conform with it. This knowledge coupled with the additional knowledge that every nation within humanity has received Divine knowledge ([Q10: 47](#); [Q16: 36](#); and [Q40:78](#)) resulted in intuitive knowing and the hypothesis of sameness. In the case of this study, the supra-rational function of Heart knowing was to perceive what is below the surface of our reality and to open the pathway to examining what these phenomena are (Livingstone, 2021: 68-69). So, while the results do not yield a functional IKS ontology outside of the San tsǃ Khoen ǀoaba ǀans Digital Archive they do demonstrate a pathway to the restoration of IKS's epistemic integrity, the processes and principles of which may be applied in other archives.

5.2.3 Relations within humanity

SKC's scholarship in this domain focused on the divisions of **Ancestry and legacy stories**, **Language**, **Social integrity** and to a lesser extent on **Human health and wellbeing**. These subject areas are informed by the Centre's mandate. SKC had the task of presenting the southern African indigenous people's precolonial heritage in a way that unravels it from the impact of its social engineering ("Background, Vision and Mission - San and Khoi Unit", n.d.). Advocating for the human rights of the southern African indigenous people was the most expedient strategy employed by SKC to undo the impact of the social engineering mechanisms imposed on this community. The oppression of our indigenous people led to the erasure of their mother tongue languages; the restoration and preservation of the San and Khoi family of languages thus became another priority. WKS scholars are similarly involved in the preservation of indigenous languages. Another advantage of SKC's involvement in indigenous language preservation is that it can be seen as another level of knowledge reclamation. This is important to the epistemic integrity of IKS as people within the knowledge system are the best ones to preserve their knowledge, language and culture (Aikawa-Faure, 2008: 99).

Most of IKS's historical knowledge manifests as oral history. Important lessons are embedded in the **ancestral and legacy stories** that have been handed over from one generation to the next. For this reason, discourse analysis is an appropriate research method as it provides the framework to uncover this embedded knowledge (Moses & Knutsen, 2012: 218; Dunn & Neumann, 2016: 112-115). Further development within the **Ways of knowing** knowledge domain may unlock hidden, deeper wisdoms embedded in the documented oral history of indigenous elders.

5.2.4 Relations with the natural world

The disrupted nature of IKS is indicative of the people's oppression and erasure from the social landscape of southern Africa. SKC's focus on the **Relations within humanity** knowledge domain during its two-year sample being studied makes sense within this context. As a result, the **Relations with the natural world** knowledge domain is not well developed. What emerges from SKC's scholarship are the possibilities when reclaiming IKS knowledge. A different relationship between humanity and the world we inhabit begins to emerge as evidenced by the place names and animal names given by indigenous people. The extracted orthography has similar divisions for the **Land as an archive** and the **Relationship between land and people** sections. The animal names and place names given by indigenous people provide clues to the relationship they have with the world around them as promoted by their knowledge system. Möller's (2017) work describes this relationship discussing how animal names were given and how these animal names further informed how indigenous people made sense of the land they found themselves in.

The braided knowledge system that emerged from the first part of this study has an ahumanist perspective. Fusing the horizons of understanding between the three knowledge systems shifts power dynamics, challenging the anthropocentric view of the world which places humanity as the central power in the universe. Conversely, humanity becomes the most vulnerable aspect of creation. The ecological crisis experienced is brought on by humanity's past and current relationship with the natural world. The gateway orthography emerging from SKC scholarship provides foundational markers for those who want to contribute to systemic integrity by living within creation with integrity. For example, Chapter Two presents an interpretation of #oaba #ans, knowing on the wind as it relates to tracking and hunting. IKS promotes showing gratitude and respect for the lives of animals hunted as food. In addition to learning from IKS about how to benefit more sustainably from the natural world, we can also learn how to live with greater gratitude in the world we depend on for food, shelter, as a source of greater knowledge and wealth.

5.2.5 Relations with the metaphysical world

The sample did not contain any knowledge artefacts on which to build the **Relations with the metaphysical world** knowledge domain. This oversight could be as a result of the immediacy of the need to improve the lived reality of indigenous people as an objective of the SKC. It is

also easier to restore IKS on pathways already acknowledged by WKS and what is of interest to people who subscribe to it. **Relations with the metaphysical world** poses an interesting epistemic challenge. How to effectively navigate a power balancing dynamic within humanity? The redirection from the metaphysical to humanity makes sense in the perspective that the metaphysical is independent of us. Its existence is impervious to human endeavour, yet it impacts on our reality. Thus, the power dynamic places humanity as a beneficiary of the largesse of the metaphysical world. The natural world and the universe we reside in is an aspect of the generosity of the Creator.

Within IKS resides the knowledge that our human nature is infused with metaphysical essence (Low, 2007: S77) tethering us to this world even when we cannot tangibly see it. IKS's relational ontology promotes unification. The greater the degree of harmony humanity can attain within itself and with our relationship with the natural world we live in, the stronger our relationship with the metaphysical world will become. With this relationality in mind, SKC's strategy to focus on the restoration of indigenous ways of knowing and the restoration of the social integrity of indigenous people, rather than on relations with the metaphysical world, may not be an oversight, but rather the assumption of the metaphysical as an underlying ethos or principle.

5.3 The Ontological Reflection of Epistemic Integrity

Being embedded within the research team meant that I had the strategic advantage of having access to the insider perspective informing scholastic output. Having such insight means that I understood that each item in the archive is like a puzzle piece used to construct a bigger picture of IKS and the lived reality of people with indigenous ancestry. Knowing this, the unique contribution of my role is that the picture constructed is one that has hopefully gone some way to restoring IKS's epistemic integrity. As a curator, it was my task to sort and organise SKC's scholastic output to make it easier for information seekers to find. Repairing the harm done to the knowledge system in this way is a form of restorative justice. The braided knowledge ecosystem emerging from this study arguably paves the way for a more inclusive knowledge system. Such an epistemological shift demonstrates what becomes possible when the horizons of understanding created by the abyssal thinking between religion, indigenous knowledge and the scientific method become fused.

The epistemic integrity achieved through this study is made possible by the synergistic information processing of Rational knowing and Heart knowing. Uniting the dual aspects of our human capacity to make sense of the world around us forged the foundation for a more unifying knowledge system. Humbly attempting unification meant that as the researcher, I needed to shift my viewpoint from seeking specificity to one seeking generality within a specific presentation. Using IsKS as the bridging strand for the reconstruction of IKS's epistemic integrity required a broad view of the data emerging from Quṭb's (2000) work. The rich, nuanced data that was seducing me to home in on it and promote my worldview had to be stripped to its bones. Yet it was this essentialisation that created the foundational framework capable of demonstrating how indigenous knowledge outputs can be pieced together to show the worldview within them.

A consequence of restoring IKS's epistemic integrity is that the reduction of the knowledge system becomes visible. The classification system produced was effective in presenting SKC's knowledge outputs in a way that demonstrated the Centre's efforts to restore and preserve IKS. However, when the classification system is extracted from the archive it acts as a mirror for the underdeveloped representation of IKS. The impact of this study is unable to completely undo the centuries' worth of damage IKS sustained because of the harm done to its people. There is a particular strength needed to be transactionally correct in the face of an imbalance of power. The primary objective of this study is to restore epistemic integrity, and the development of an IKS ontology the second. Understanding this nuance is critical. Restoring epistemic integrity meant that I needed to rein in my desire to promote my point of view above others in order to achieve the unification objective of this study. There is a maxim that best describes the strength mechanism required, "*empowered people empower people.*" A degree of internal control is required to counter the epistemic violence inherent in the "us vs. them" mentality. This presents in me as being as firmly connected to the metaphysical world as I can be. Such a metaphysical anchoring provides the safety, security, and courage needed to begin to be transactionally correct. IKS similarly advocates a metaphysical world grounding.

5.4 Implications

The implementation of the ontology has resulted in the San tsî Khoen #oaba #ans Digital Archive becoming a site of reconstruction alongside it being a site of preservation. This nuance

has significant implications for community involvement. The emergent nature of the ontology presents a tangible framework the community can collaboratively develop. Further, it presents as an alternative framework for epistemic self-representation to those that has been imposed by WKS. Instead of defending the differentiation and validity of their indigenous epistemology the San tsî Khoen #oaba #ans Digital Archive becomes a site where the community can contribute to restoring the integrity of their knowledge systems beyond justification. This would require the archive's mandate to extend beyond SKC's knowledge production. The widened mandate would transform the current construct to one that includes becoming an aggregator of the outputs of the San and Khoi knowledge production in South Africa. The additional knowledge artefacts can contribute to redressing the continued impact of historical erasure and misrepresentation of IKS. The widened mandate would also address Strathman (2019: 3632) concern that

...researchers benefit from the ability to reference the collaboration (and any theories or methodologies developed therewith) in academic publications but the Indigenous community is effectively left with a piece of (in some cases, proprietary) software that, without sustained involvement from Native and non-Native stewards, becomes unusable to the community.

The emergent ontology can be perceived as a *"fluid ontology"* (Srinivasan, R as cited in Strathman, 2019: 3731) and become *"an adaptive database designed after a series of consultations with community members who arrive at a consensus regarding the classifications, tags, and labels that best represent their local knowledge traditions"* (Strathman, 2019: 3732). A benefit of the ontology being grounded in the braided knowledge ecosystem is that various communities can adapt it to their specific representative needs as the broad category descriptors provided by the knowledge ecosystem unifies this diversity. Another implication of the ontology being adopted in indigenous archival practice is such development can contribute to a wider discourse of knowledge management within African Digital Humanities.

5.5 Recommendations

The first recommendation is the further development of the braided knowledge ecosystem. What is presented is the product of a one-dimensional investigation. Its rigour and a more comprehensive understanding need development in relation to diverse religious and indigenous knowledge systems. The second recommendation is to build on the IKS

classification system attempted. SKC is only one player contributing to the restoration and preservation of IKS. The classification system can be developed by undertaking a subject analysis of indigenous scholarship at the local and international levels. Study parameters can possibly be widened to investigate how the outcomes of WKS scholarship contributing to an IKS classification system can be incorporated into the proposed emergent framework. For example, the Controlled Vocabulary of Local Terms produced by UCT Libraries: Special Collection in August 2020 to ensure that the African Studies work they classify can be easily discoverable by South African users, but also become a tool for validating and visibilising the terms and ontologies of IKS in a globalised world that is increasingly in need of more comprehensive and healing ways of knowing.

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Appendix A: The Qur'anic Verses Referenced

The Qur'anic verses referenced in this dissertation are listed here in numerical order. The Arabic text and Quranic translations are sourced either from al-'Āṣī (2021) or from the site <https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp>.

Q3: 18

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ

Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge - [that He is] maintaining [creation] in justice. There is no deity except Him, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

Q3: 49

وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدْخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ

And [make him] a messenger to the Children of Israel, [who will say], 'Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allah. And I cure the blind and the leper, and I give life to the dead - by permission of Allah. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses. Indeed in that is a sign for you, if you are believers.'

Q3: 103

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً
فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ
مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may be guided.

Q5: 110

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَٰعِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَتِكَ إِذْ أَيَّدتُّكَ بِرُوحِ
الْقُدُسِ تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَإِذْ تَخَلَّيْنَا مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ
طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي وَتُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ
كَفَفْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنكَ إِذْ جِئْتَهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ إِن
هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

[The Day] when Allah will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, remember My favor upon you and upon your mother when I supported you with the Pure Spirit and you spoke to the people in the cradle and in maturity; and [remember] when I taught you writing and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and when you designed from clay [what was] like the form of a bird with My permission, then you breathed into it, and it became a bird with My permission; and you healed the blind and the leper with My permission; and when you brought forth the dead with My permission; and when I restrained the Children of Israel from [killing] you when you came to them with clear proofs and those who disbelieved among them said, "This is not but obvious magic."

Q7: 57

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَقْلَتِ سَحَابَاتِنَا لَا
سُقْنَاهُ لِبَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَأَنْزَلْنَا بِهِ الْمَاءَ فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ۖ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

And it is He who sends the winds as good tidings before His mercy until, when they have carried heavy rainclouds, We drive them to a dead land and We send down rain therein and bring forth thereby [some] of all the fruits. Thus will We bring forth the dead; perhaps you may be reminded.

Q7: 179

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ ۗ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا
يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْإِنعَامِ ۗ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْغَافِلُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾

And We have certainly created for Hell many of the jinn and mankind. They have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear. Those are like livestock; rather, they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless.

Q10: 22

هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَجَرَّتِ بِكُمْ بَرِيحٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَفَرِحْتُمْ
بِهَا جَاءَتْهَا رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ بِهِمْ ۖ دَعَوُا
اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ۗ لَئِن لَّمْ يَنْجِئْنَا مِنْ هَٰذِهِ ۖ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

It is He who enables you to travel on land and sea until, when you are in ships and they sail with them by a good wind and they rejoice therein, there comes a storm wind and the waves come upon them from everywhere and they assume that they are surrounded, supplicating

Allah , sincere to Him in religion, "If You should save us from this, we will surely be among the thankful."

Q10: 47

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ رَسُولُهُمْ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

And for every nation is a messenger. So when their messenger comes, it will be judged between them in justice, and they will not be wronged.

Q15: 6-11

وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِي نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٦﴾

And they say, "O you upon whom the message has been sent down, indeed you are mad.

لَوْ مَا تَأْتِينَا بِالْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٧﴾

Why do you not bring us the angels, if you should be among the truthful?"

مَا نُنزِّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا كَانُوا إِذَا مُنظَرِينَ ﴿٨﴾

We do not send down the angels except with truth; and the disbelievers would not then be reprieved.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُزِّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾

Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي شِيَعِ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

And We had certainly sent [messengers] before you, [O Muhammad], among the sects of the former peoples.

وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١١﴾

And no messenger would come to them except that they ridiculed him.

Q15:22

وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيحَ لَوَاحِحَ فَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَاسْقَيْنَاكُمُوهُ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ لَهُ بِخَازِنِينَ

﴿٢٢﴾

And We have sent the fertilizing winds and sent down water from the sky and given you drink from it. And you are not its retainers.

Q15: 29

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ، وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul, then fall down to him in prostration."

Q16:36

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ
مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ فسيروا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ
كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], "Worship Allah and avoid Taghut." And among them were those whom Allah guided, and among them were those upon whom error was [deservedly] decreed. So proceed through the earth and observe how was the end of the deniers.

Q17: 85

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٨٥﴾

And they ask you [O Muhammad] about the rūḥ. Say [to them], “The rūḥ is an issue peculiar to my Sustainer and [you do not have the capacity to comprehend the answer, since] the amount of knowledge [science] you [humans] have is finite.” (as cited in al-‘Āṣī 2021: 399)

Q18: 45

وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيْحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقَدِّرًا ﴿٤٥﴾

And present to them the example of the life of this world, [its being] like rain which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it and [then] it becomes dry remnants, scattered by the winds. And Allah is ever, over all things, Perfect in Ability.

Q22: 46

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٦﴾

So have they not traveled through the earth and have hearts by which to reason and ears by which to hear? For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts.

Q25: 48

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيْحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا ﴿٤٨﴾

And it is He who sends the winds as good tidings before His mercy, and We send down from the sky pure water.

Q27: 63

أَمَّنْ يَهْدِيكُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَنْ يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ ۗ
أَإِلَهٌ مَّعَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

Is He [not best] who guides you through the darkneses of the land and sea and who sends the winds as good tidings before His mercy? Is there a deity with Allah? High is Allah above whatever they associate with Him.

Q30: 46

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ الرِّيحَ مُبَشِّرَاتٍ وَلِيُذِيقَكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ ۗ وَلِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلُكُ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا
مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

And of His signs is that He sends the winds as bringers of good tidings and to let you taste His mercy and so the ships may sail at His command and so you may seek of His bounty, and perhaps you will be grateful.

Q30: 48

اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كِسْفًا
فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ ۗ فَإِذَا أَصَابَ بِهِ ۗ مِنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ
﴿٤٨﴾

It is Allah who sends the winds, and they stir the clouds and spread them in the sky however He wills, and He makes them fragments so you see the rain emerge from within them. And when He causes it to fall upon whom He wills of His servants, immediately they rejoice.

Q30: 51

وَلَيْنَ أَرْسَلْنَا رِيحًا فَرَأَوْهُ مُصْفَرًّا لَظَلُّوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

But if We should send a [bad] wind and they saw [their crops] turned yellow, they would remain thereafter disbelievers.

Q32: 7-9

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ ﴿٧﴾

Who perfected everything which He created and began the creation of man from clay.

ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ ﴿٨﴾

Then He made his posterity out of the extract of a liquid disdained.

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُّوحِهِ ۖ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

Then He proportioned him and breathed into him from His [created] soul and made for you hearing and vision and hearts; little are you grateful.

Q37: 36-37

وَيَقُولُونَ آيْنَا لَتَارِكُوآءِ آلِهَتِنَا لِشَاعِرٍ مَّجْنُونٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

And were saying, "Are we to leave our gods for a mad poet?"

بَلْ جَاءَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَدَّقَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

Rather, the Prophet has come with the truth and confirmed the [previous] messengers.

Q38: 72

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ، وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ، سَاجِدِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾

So when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul, then fall down to him in prostration."

Q40: 78

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَّن قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ
عَلَيْكَ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فُضِيَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

And We have already sent messengers before you. Among them are those [whose stories] We have related to you, and among them are those [whose stories] We have not related to you. And it was not for any messenger to bring a sign [or verse] except by permission of Allah. So when the command of Allah comes, it will be concluded in truth, and the falsifiers will thereupon lose [all].

Q40: 85

فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ إِيمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا سُنَّتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ، وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ
الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

But never did their faith benefit them once they saw Our punishment. [It is] the established way of Allah which has preceded among His servants. And the disbelievers thereupon lost [all].

Q41: 16

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي أَيَّامٍ نَحْسَاتٍ لِنُذِيقَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَلِعَذَابِ الْآخِرَةِ أَخْزَىٰ وَهُمْ لَا يُنصَرُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

So We sent upon them a screaming wind during days of misfortune to make them taste the punishment of disgrace in the worldly life; but the punishment of the Hereafter is more disgracing, and they will not be helped.

Q48: 23

سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا ﴿٢٣﴾

[This is] the established way of Allah which has occurred before. And never will you find in the way of Allah any change.

Q54: 19

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي يَوْمٍ نَحْسٍ مُّسْتَمِرٍّ ﴿١٩﴾

Indeed, We sent upon them a screaming wind on a day of continuous misfortune,

Q66: 12

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَقَتْ
بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهِ ۗ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقَانِنِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

And [the example of] Mary, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity, so We blew into [her garment] through Our angel, and she believed in the words of her Lord and His scriptures and was of the devoutly obedient.

Q68: 51

وَإِنْ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُزْلِقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَرِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٥١﴾

And indeed, those who disbelieve would almost make you slip with their eyes when they hear the message, and they say, "Indeed, he is mad."

Q69: 6

وَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَأُهْلِكُوا بِرِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ ﴿٦﴾

And as for 'Aad, they were destroyed by a screaming, violent wind

Q81: 22

وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

And your companion is not [at all] mad.
