Power, knowledge and the politics of public pasts

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This paper is about the power of representation and the politics of public scholarship in South Africa. It concerns the disciplines of history and archaeology in South Africa and how they have negotiated 'the public' or 'different publics' as part of their disciplinary practices of producing knowledge about the past that is 'accessible'. It presents an analysis of questions of knowledge and power, and the different ways that scholars working broadly as 'historians' or 'archaeologists' have viewed the relationship between expertise and 'community'. It is also about how relations of expertise have been negotiated within and across these fields, and particularly how those relations of expertise have been contested.

Part of this enquiry involves an understanding of the sociologies of these disciplines and their different manifestations in the university, in the field site, and in the domain of heritage, at the heritage site or in the museum. We are concerned about how the disciplines of archaeology and history in South Africa have considered the relations between these sites and knowledge domains. More particularly, we are interested in those forms of disciplinary practice in history and archaeology which have sought expressly to transcend the bounds of the academy and to seek ways of negotiating historical and archaeological knowledge in a direct relationship with communities and other publics as a means of empowerment, democratisation, access and critical engagement.

As someone who works both in the academy and in institutions of public culture, I am concerned about opening up and strengthening the possibilities for critical engagement, scholarship and knowledge formation in both domains. In the academy I have sought to understand the forms of power which were entrenched within South African social history at the same time as they made claims for the democratising capacities of 'history from below' and the efforts of popular history to address wider publics. My work, together with that of my historian colleagues at the historically black, apartheid-created University of the Western Cape, have sought to build a space for rethinking History and historical practice beyond conventional disciplinary distinctions and hierarchies between primary and secondary source, voice and writing, orality and history, and heritage and history. This thinking was based on a critique of social history and sought to reconceptualise the practices of history and the spaces of historical production under conditions in the mid-to-late 1990s, when history in South Africa was said to be in crisis.

I came to view these issues through the methodological lens of *the production of history*, in which history is understood as 'the processing of the past in societies and historical settings … and the struggles for control of voices and texts in innumerable settings which animate this processing of the past'. As a field of practice, *the production of history* encompasses, inter alia, the 'organising sociologies' of historicizing projects, commemorative events, and 'the structuring of frames of record-keeping 'as well as' the contentions and struggles which evoke and produce

texts and which also produce historical literatures'[1] This broader approach to the production of historical knowledge also seeks to understand the practices and genres of history making outside the academy, as well as how these relate to the peculiar routines and rituals of academic practice. Indeed, these are questions about the points of connection, transition and translation between different domains of historical production and historical practice.

Outside the academy among the heritage institutions I worked in is the South African Heritage Resources Agency, on whose Council I served for 6 years, and whose Archaeology, Palaeontology, Heritage Objects and Burial Sites Permit Committee I have served on for 8 years. In SAHRA I was part of the official structures of the State established by Statute to regulate archaeological excavation, conducted as part of scholarly enquiry as well as contract excavations in the service of urban development. This I had to do with an understanding of the racial and disciplinary histories of a discipline, which has in large measure found it difficult to shake off the ways it has been marked by South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid, race and power.

I have also been a trustee of the District Six Museum from shortly after its emergence in December 1994. Here I have been able to participate along with other scholars, activists and public intellectuals in the making of a complex site for the production of histories of Cape Town, which has undoubtedly been one of the most significant ongoing projects of museum development and public history internationally. I take issue with those scholars who understand the relationship between the academy and public culture bodies as hierarchical, indeed as an order of knowledge. Practices of memory work and scholarship in the public domain have demonstrated enormous capacity for original research and critical knowledge engagement. As we shall see below, the District Six Museum in Cape Town has been a location of significant engagement and innovation in the field of public history in South Africa.

In this paper, I argue that public history in South Africa has emerged as an exciting new field of practice and a network of institutions involving complex knowledge transactions. The District Six Museum in Cape Town has developed as a major critical arena where hierarchies of historical and archaeological knowledge have been challenged. In contrast, disciplinary interpretation and practice in South African public archaeology remains locked within relations of paternalism and a politics of atonement in which the concept of the public is limited to that of a passive grateful audience. I am interested in how this relates discursively to a wider politics of paternalism, patronage and atonement that characterises modernist historical and other projects of knowledge formation more generally where knowledge is produced for and in the name of 'the people'.

Here, evolutionist narratives meet ideas of social improvement in processes of knowledge formation where notions of truth recovery and empowerment mask appropriative knowledge forms and knowledge ventriloquism, where firm hierarchies of expertise and authority are reinforced. Here I argue that South African public archaeology and social history have a shared epistemological basis for approaching issues of knowledge as recovery and access. This politics of atonement is not unlike the syndrome of discovery, a knowledge posture discussed recently by Jacques Depelchin.[2] Through an examination of exhibitions and excavations that the District Six Museum has been involved with in Cape Town, this paper examines the politics

of public history and public archaeology, and argues that it is imperative that the 'politics of atonement' be transcended if history and archaeology are to have a productive future in the transforming landscape of knowledge relations in South Africa.

Social history, public history and the South African 'public'

The radical scholarship of social historians sought to uncover the submerged agency of ordinary people and give voice to the experience of marginal groups. During the 1980s in South African scholarship, history 'from below' emerged as a counter-narrative to power and domination, seeking to incorporate subaltern, ordinary voices in an approach to resistance, which was understood as founded upon ordinary experience. The recovery of "subjective popular experiences" in rural and urban settings and the recovery of largely unwritten and non-literate 'underclass' experiences formed the basis of histories of resistance. South African social historians saw themselves as overcoming the silences of written sources and challenging hegemonic interpretations of the past through oral history research. According to Tim Keegan, when the reminiscences of ordinary individuals were set "in the larger historical context", vast dimensions of human history were revealed for the first time. More than simply "embellishments of the historical record", the stories and voices revealed in oral testimony constituted an infusion of issues of agency, experience and consciousness into a deeper understanding of class formation and capital accumulation.[3]

Social histories were produced in a variety of academic settings in South Africa, which also sought to disseminate research to popular audiences. These settings included the Cape Town Oral History Project and the Natal Worker History Project, but the central academic institutions involved in the production, dissemination and popularisation of South African social history were the History Workshop and the Oral Documentation Project of the African Studies Institute (later known as the Institute for Advanced Social Research and then the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research), both at the University of the Witwatersrand. In the 1980s and 1990s, this work ranged from portraits of black lives on the Highveld, to the 'moral economies' of urban mineworkers and squatter proletarians; from the local traditions of resistance amongst rural workers to migrant organisations, criminality and working class life under urban apartheid.[4]

In spite of their commitment to the democratising power of oral history, for many South African social historians, it constituted only a "supplementary source". Its purpose was to supplement more formal, written sources "which provide the larger context of public events, of political and constitutional, economic and institutional developments". Human memory in the form of oral testimony was "given to error, misconception, elision, distortion, elaboration and downright fabrication". History, on the other hand, was the product of the "creative imagination of the historian" which played "the central role in orchestrating and interpreting the diverse, contradictory, fragmentary, momentary pieces of evidence which survive". History depended on the "accuracy" of the footnotes. For some, the value of oral evidence, in turn, depended on how carefully it was scrutinised for "inaccuracies, hearsay or speculation". Its value also depended on whether the informant had a "strong, vivid, perceptive memory" and whether his recollections revealed "larger social experiences and forces".[5]

These life stories were not seen as history. Indeed, they were regarded as prior to history. For Keegan, the passage to history required the intervention of the professional historian, trained in the literate rules and procedures of the archive. In this account, the memory of experience was analysed as oral remembrance, documented as testimony through oral research. These life histories were not evaluated as products of the workings of memory, seen as a genre through which the relationship between the past and the present was negotiated. The sociology of their production, the politics of the research process, and the multiple layers of narration involved were questions that were overlooked.[6]

Likewise, in the case of Charles van Onselen's study of Kas Maine and the social history of sharecropping on the highveld, oral testimony was a means of generating evidence about the facts of Maine's life. It was his ability to remember *in detail* and *with accuracy*, which made him 'real' and a suitable subject for biographic attention. In perpetuating a conventional approach to memory and life history, Van Onselen appeared less concerned with how these instances of orality as life history told their own story of remembrance, forgetting and narrativity. Maine's life history, drawn from oral testimony, and rendered as a life document, stood as a "body of historically verifiable facts", and a building block of collective experience. It was sifted, ordered, verified, referenced and cross-referenced, evaluated and processed by the historian to stand as consciousness, the remembrance of real collective experience.[7]

For Van Onselen, memory was not Kas Maine's medium of history. For him, the recordings and transcripts of Maine's life history constituted a data bank of experience. The narrative voice that emerged in the book through the employment of the third person singular was Van Onselen's.[8] More than this being determined by language and the nature of material,[9] the book represented Van Onselen's appropriation and translation of the imagined and represented content of Maine's life history, drawn from testimony and the orality of memory into a written academic product - as History and Biography - under his authorship and copyright. No attempt was made to engage with the *history* of his own life that Maine told.

Moreover, the ironic consequence of this 'epic' attempt at "restoring Kas Maine to the historical record"[10] was the deepening of his subordinate status through being named, categorised and naturalised as marginal and typologised as special. Kas Maine was inserted into Van Onselen's history largely as "contextual device" and, in crucial ways, continued to be silenced within the realm of the academy. He was placed at the centre of a history of rural social relations as resister - the "gritty and sturdy" sharecropper - through a narrative of survival against the odds within the predetermined 'natural' indices of subordination.[11] The 'hidden past' of Maine's submerged experience, read transparently off individual memory, was equated with resistance. Constrained within the ready-made, fixed category of his recovery - as sharecropper-resister - Maine was made to stand for the collective social and economic experience of rural society in twentieth century South Africa.

The form of Maine's 'recovery' followed the formula and the categories of representation of the main lines of South African social history. Oral discourses continued to be mined for literate facts, which were inserted into a dominant genre of historical realism. This was achieved through 'the autocratic author who hides his control over the text behind

the third person singular, the chronological unfolding of the story that creates the illusion of a natural, temporal development; the lifelike and detailed descriptions of how it really was'.[12] In spite of its claims to democratising the past, 'History from below' brought together culturalist constructions of experience, class and consciousness and nationalist teleologies of the people and the struggle, to generate a grand narrative of resistance and the nation.

While the History Workshop at Wits was perhaps the central institution in establishing social 'history from below' as hegemonic in South African historical scholarship, it also embarked on attempts to popularise social history research as part of the project of 'democratising' history. Luli Callinicos, who had been its research officer, was instrumental in attempting to make this academic knowledge 'accessible' beyond academic settings. She was responsible for producing popular histories on behalf of the History Workshop in a series entitled, 'A People's History of South Africa'. Three volumes were produced, ranging from a study of class formation and the emergence of migrant labour to studies of working people's lives and urban social history.[13] Ironically, the very notion of access and audience were based on a firm understanding of the historian's expertise, and the need for specialist research findings, albeit of underclass experience, to be translated into popular texts in a magnanimous project of popularisation that went little beyond a liberal politics of 'outreach'. In many ways, this organising sociology of popularising social history, in which the domain of the popular was seen as separate from that of scholarship, was premised on a paternalist politics of atonement that served to deepen the marginality of the very people whose history was being 'recovered'.

Nevertheless, at this time, some heritage institutions, such as the District Six Museum, began to claim an independent location as a space of *public* scholarship, where complex, theoretically informed studies of life histories in Cape Town's past began to be generated in exhibitions and publications. This was part of a fundamental shift that had begun to occur in South Africa in the mid-to-late 1990s, in which the academy had ceased to be the major site for the production of history.[14] The domain of heritage and public history, we argued, required serious examination, for it is here that attempts were being made to fashion the categories, images and stories of the post-apartheid South African nation. It was in the public domain that dominant versions of historical narrations and practice have been questioned as museums have emerged as significant arenas to exercise the authorship of history and to pose questions about the politics of location of historical expertise.

Far from South Africa having seen a retreat from history, the place of the past came to be redefined in the spaces of public history and heritage construction. Some academic historians began to rethink the conventions, hierarchies, routines and spaces of their discipline's teaching and research procedures.[15] Others long accustomed to clear hierarchies between primary and secondary source, and 'history' and 'heritage', tried in vain to hold on to the idea of a magnanimous flow of historical knowledge from the academy to the community in the form of popular history texts, and in the direction of schools through 'translation' into school textbooks. Convinced by the certainty of their expertise and their 'mission', some historians were not willing to dirty their hands in the supposedly inferior area of heritage, understood as a terrain of myth-making, omission and error.

In spite of the defence of the canon by some social historians, it was becoming clear that the domain of public history that was emerging in South Africa was an assemblage of arenas and activities of history-making that were as disputatious as the claims made about the character of academic history. What was needed, we argued, was a sociology of historical production in the academy as well as the public domain, and an enquiry into the categories, codes and conventions of history-making in each location with all its variability.

In South Africa after 1994, beyond the boundaries of the academy, histories began to erupt into the public sphere in museums and other arenas through the 'visuality of the spectacle'. These visual histories have tended to be understood merely as 'revelations of hidden heritage', previously submerged by apartheid. Professional historians, long used to a world of words - written and spoken - were being confronted with these visual histories, whose codes and conventions they were ill equipped to read. Indeed, what was occurring in South Africa was a fundamental reconstitution of the field of history, as well as what it meant to be a historian.[16]

Public History in the District Six Museum

The creation and development of the District Six Museum were influenced both by social history research on the history of Cape Town[17] and by approaches which drew attention to social history's limitations. The suspicion of universities and academics in the District Six Museum also needs to be understood partly as an effect of a racialised order of university education in South Africa. This entailed systematic forms of exclusion from most universities, with severe limits placed on black access. The 1960s had seen the creation of "deformed" and largely resourceless universities or "bush colleges" as features of academic life. In the face of decades of systematic exclusion, partial access through a permit system and resource starvation in universities designed to be inferior, alternative knowledge domains in the public sphere became the only option. These were the circumstances that saw the creation of a combative intellectual culture in the public domain since the 1930s and 1940s. At best, the South African academy came to be associated with liberal paternalism, and a cultural politics of service, which led to disempowerment, incorporation and the dilution of any sharp edge of social criticism and mobilisation.

The District Six Museum emerged partly out of this legacy as a combative and contested forum of public scholarship, which was ambivalent about academic forms of knowledge, but which was nevertheless defined and marked by its disciplinary structures and methods. Indeed, the Museum needs to be understood as a hybrid space, which combined scholarship, research, collection and museum aesthetics with community forms of governance and accountability, and land claim politics of representivity and restitution. It brought together community-connected academics, some of whom saw themselves as "activist intellectuals," but who often bore the restrictive marks of the academy, and former residents, many of whom had been activist intellectuals for decades, with their roots in District Six-based political and cultural organisations. The structures and programmes of the Museum served to mediate and broker exchanges and transactions of knowledge genre and cultural expression and to knit and weave these interactions into the rhythms of its work. The

synergies and contests of such a membership mix have been at the heart of the curatorial methods and reflexive pedagogy of the District Six Museum.

At the District Six Museum, a transaction model of understanding 'museum' and 'heritage' emerged, in which the museum was understood primarily not as collection but as 'forum', where the museum was a space for the promotion of a critical citizenship. While the core of the museum's work may focus on the history of District Six and national experiences of forced removals, its key features are methodological. Since its inception as a museum of the city of Cape Town, the District Six Museum has been an independent, secular site of engagement and a space of questioning and interrogating South Africans society and its discourses. Far from being a site of museum services, it has operated as a hybrid space of research, representation and pedagogy, which has brokered and mediated relations of knowledge and varied kinds of intellectual and cultural practice between different sites, institutions and sociological domains. Annunciation, conversation and debate formed the lifeblood of its creative and curatorial process and memory politics as former residents inscribed their biographies into the materiality of the museum on the memory cloth and the map The museum's relationship with community is not just through reference groups or through limited attempts at 'audience development'.

The District Six Museum has also developed as a space of disciplinary expertise. This character as a 'disciplinary institution' was made its presence felt at every level in the choices and intellectual decisions that have been made about the acquisition of objects and collections and in the course of the museum life of these collections. While the Sound Archive engages, therefore, with technological questions of sound recording conservation, it has to reflect on its intellectual practices in relation to those of surrounding collecting and representational disciplinary fields of ethnomusicology, social history and ethnography, especially in their southern African forms. In collections work and research on carnival and music in Cape Town, it has been important to be able to draw on and engage with insights and categories from such disciplinary knowledges, while being able to assess their discourses and frames from the perspectives of the Museum's independent position. There is a tremendous energy and power that accompanies an assessment of anthropological knowledge of culture and music such as the representations of I.D. du Plessis on the "malay" culture and "tricks," or the collections and studies of indigenous music forms by Hugh Tracy from the vantage point of the District Six Museum.[18]

Perhaps more challenging have been engagements with more critical and socially engaged academic debates and discourses that have specifically sought to go beyond the boundaries of the university and broaden access to academic knowledge. Attention has already been drawn to the formative influences on the District Six Museum of South African social history research and intellectual practices, especially that which emerged in the Western Cape Oral History Project in the 1980s and early 1990s. In the late 1990s, the Museum continued to benefit from a partnership with the WCOHP in drawing on its oral history collections and placing Museum members in its internship programme to be trained in oral history interviewing techniques. These connections and skills in the WCOHP that the Museum has benefited from have been understood by UCT as part of an exercise in ensuring that the University's "expertise can be of benefit to the wider public." The work of the WCOHP is seen as part of the

service and outreach work that the University performs for society.[19] However, it is possible to understand this relationship as flowing equally if not more in the other direction. The WCOHP at UCT has indeed been a beneficiary of the District Six Museum's expertise in disciplinary questions of archiving, digitisation and, more generally, in the cultural politics of oral memory and visual representation. In 2001, the WCOHP was restyled and relaunched as the Centre for Popular Memory and its annual report for that year reveals the extent to which its programmes in archiving, training and research have since been substantially influenced by the District Six Museum's growth and development and the challenges it has faced.[20]

The District Six Museum and Public Archaeology

The District Six Museum has also had substantial engagements with the discipline of archaeology, in relation to excavations and research findings in District Six, as well as around the cultural politics of the discipline's attempts to address and engage popular audiences. Archaeological research was conducted on the District Six landscape in the 1990s by UCT archaeologists and graduate students. In addition, District Six excavations in the mid-1990s also served as sites for enabling school learners to unearth artefacts under supervision and to understand how archaeological knowledge is created.[21] These archaeological projects were designed "in close collaboration" with the District Six Museum as part of the attempt to find ways of "involving both former residents and today's wider community of Cape Town and its suburbs in what we are doing." This was part of what Martin Hall has referred to as "public archaeology," in which archaeologists are seen as mediators between contemporary people and their past. The task of archaeologists is "to show how things that we may not be able to see (because they are buried in the ground), or that we take for granted, can create and sustain a sense of history." By "offering evidence and interpretations which will allow people to see themselves as deeply grounded within the Cape's rich history," the field of public archaeology enables reclamation, assisting "communities in asserting their rights to a history and to the material traces that it has left behind."[22]

Within this perspective, the archaeological displays in the District Six Museum provided archaeologists with a platform for this "mediation," to access a wider public. The creation of a display about Horstley Street in 2000 as part of *Digging Deeper* showed both the achievements and limits of this "public archaeology" in its attempts at "mediation" and in its efforts to enable "rights to a history and to the material traces" to be asserted. In the Horstley Street display, the Museum drew on excavations and research findings to present a set of arguments about a longer history of settlement patterns and processes of social engineering in District Six. Horstley Street was not only the site of the final removals from District Six in the early 1980s, as popularised in film.[23] It was indeed also one of the sites of Cape Town's first forced removal, of African people from the city at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The Horstley Street archaeological display enabled the Museum to shift the politics of the demand to move away from an unconscious focus on coloureds.[24] Indeed the Horstley Street display enabled the Museum to shift the methodological focus from the question "where are the Africans?" to one which asked how the Museum could reflect on removals in District Six in a way that did not generate a coloured focus. By giving the experience of removals a longer history than that occasioned by the 1966

proclamation, and by drawing on the offerings of public archaeology, the Museum has indeed created a display with some power. This display formed the focus of the argument on the part of the Museum for Horstley Street to be the site of a memorial park in a reconstructed District Six. Horstley Street residents who had been removed in the 1980s and who had submitted land claims, were quite stunned to discover, in workshops conducted by the Museum about the memorial park, that African people had experienced removals from the very sites of their homes almost a century before.

The limits of public archaeology relate to the difficulties it has in transcending the paradigm of service and outreach as the basis for its mediations.[25] It is this framework of the academy's engagement with institutions and sites of public culture that the District Six Museum has been ambivalent about because of the ways in which its claims at "offering" and empowering are at the same time the very basis of disempowerment.[26] The preparation of the Horstley Street display involved quite complex negotiations over the ownership of archaeological knowledge and the "rights to the history and material traces." And it proved almost impossible to dislodge the prior claims asserted by the archaeologists to being the authors and the authorities of the Horstley Street archaeological knowledge in their mediations through the Museum.

It was clear that the archaeological research had "been designed in close collaboration" with the Museum. The memory of the archaeologists was that they had approached the Museum to work with them; one trustee of the Museum was adamant that it was at the Museum Foundation's initiative that the archaeologists were approached to conduct District Six excavations; another trustee records simply that District Six was the site of a "joint archaeological project" by the Museum and the archaeologists.[27] The limits of public archaeology's paradigm of mediation should also be understood as a product of the mystique of scientific knowledge, and of an expertise that has expressed itself through long standing heroic traditions of the discipline and to legislative restrictions placed on the right to excavate. Indeed, in the ways in which the Museum was intended to be broker of knowledge transactions, the "rights to history and to the material traces" proved to be more difficult to claim than it seemed.

In order to address such political and cultural questions of knowledge relations alongside the professional work of documentation, collection and display, the Museum created a special forum of staff, trustees and cultural activists that would serve both as a "creative engine" as well as a resource for problem solving in all ideas-generating areas of the Museum's work. Styled as a Curatorial and Research Committee, this forum had its origins in the hands-on working group that drove the process of making the *Digging Deeper* exhibition. While public education forums may have been important in ensuring a participatory museum and an ethos of debate, it was this committee that attempted to connect political questions of land restitution with the Museum's curatorial and aesthetic processes and memory work.[28]

It is in the interchanges and transactions in this Curatorial and Research Committee between staff, trustees and cultural activists that the difficult tasks of mediating different knowledge forms were undertaken. Questions about conservation, documentation and display were tested alongside pressing political issues about restitution and the restoration of dignity. The participatory and mobilising features of

the "democratic community museum" required a rigorous and enabling disciplinary museum in order to be effective, while disciplinary knowledge needed to hold on to a critical, politicised edge. In this negotiation, the Museum's commitment to enabling the "reconstruction of the landscape and community of District Six in both material and cultural terms"[29] proved to be difficult to achieve. Indeed the process of "digging deeper" required a concomitant process of "digging wider."[30]

Nevertheless, The District Six Museum has been able to marshal the growing expertise and experience of its staff as one of the key elements of its internal institutional synergies generated by activist intellectuals, artists and public scholars in an ongoing project of creating new historical knowledge in a community museum. This has occurred through complex mediations in a hybrid space of cultural and intellectual production through contests and transactions among activist intellectuals, purveyors of academic knowledge, museum professionals, cultural practitioners and former residents.

These knowledge mediations touch on one of the central challenges of building democracy after apartheid, beyond issues of the franchise. This is the challenge to reconfigure the bounds of authorship and representation of the past. By contesting the conventional hierarchies and distinctions of the canon of history and academic expertise more generally, the District Six Museum has extended the discussion of the meaning of democracy to include the politics of historical knowledge and the power of representation.

Archaeology and atonement

Over a 14-year period between 1870 and 1884, a set of research encounters took place in Mowbray, Cape Town, between the European philologist Wilhelm Bleek, his sister-in-law, Lucy Lloyd and a group of Khoisan /Xam-speakers from the Karoo region. Convicted on charges of stock theft and other crimes arising out of defensive acts against colonial encroachment, the /Xam-speakers had been incarcerated at the Breakwater Prison, where they had also been subjects of racial research and anthropometric photography.

Those late nineteenth century encounters and engagements, mediated by the efforts of Lloyd and later Bleek's daughter, Dorothea, gave rise to a material assemblage, a collection of testimonies, transcripts, translations, traces and artefacts. These took the form of letters, glass photographic plates, numerous notebooks and more than 450 printed pages of *Specimens of Bushman Folklore*.[31] These materials came to be held across three collecting institutions: the National Library of South Africa (then the South African Public Library, where Bleek and later Lloyd worked as librarians on the Sir George Grey Collection), the Iziko South African Museum and most importantly, the Manuscripts and Archives Division of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Libraries.

The /Xam testimony and folklore recorded by Bleek and Lloyd achieved importance a century later, in the 1970s and 1980s when selections thereof were marshalled in the archaeological interpretation of rock art in southern Africa. Out of these

interpretations a dominant view of the significance of these records has sought to understand rock art in southern Africa by recourse to theories of shamanism. Much of this work has centred on David Lewis-Williams and his interpretations, and there are a host of associated representations in the academy and the field of heritage that draw upon this work. This dominant perspective is to be found in books published since the 1980s in the work of a major rock art research centre as well as in a range of museums and exhibitions.[32]

Generally following this dominant perspective initiated by David Lewis-Williams, Janette Deacon has been one of the main scholars who studied the Bleek-Lloyd records to understand rock art as the physical signs of a San spirit world and religious belief. Perhaps Deacon's most significant contribution has been her efforts to identify and map the actual locations from which the /Xam speakers came and to which they refer in their stories. Her work, which was inspired by that of David Lewis-Williams saw her undertake various fieldtrips to the Northern Cape. What followed was an archaeological study of the rock engravings in the area of the 'Grass' and 'Flat' Bushmen which tried to draw connections with /Xam beliefs and customs as contained in the nineteenth century records. For Deacon, the Bleek-Lloyd collection were records of the /Xam cognitive system which also recorded valuable information for understanding 'such elements as the metaphors expressed in the rock art of southern Africa and the close bond that existed between these indigenous people and the landscape in which they lived.'[33]

David Lewis-Williams suggested that Wilhelm Bleek had been a man before his times for whom Bushman and European languages were equals. In a similar vein, Janette Deacon argued in 1996 that what had unfolded in Mowbray had been 'a remarkable relationship between two families' who were drawn together in a 'joint effort' to record the language and folklore of the /Xam, the 'descendents of the indigenous San of the northern Cape'. The Bleek-Lloyd records, she suggested had been 'the result of remarkable mutual respect and co-operation between interviewers and interviewees' (Deacon 1996: 93-113; Skotnes 1996 and 2001).[34] The Bleek family of scholars were 'committed to a cause that must have seemed esoteric in the extreme to many of their contemporaries'. Without the 'personal sacrifice' on the part of the two families, 'we would know virtually nothing of the /Xam and their cognitive system'.[35] The archive was described as the closest thing we had to 'a Bushman voice' from the nineteenth century.[36]

Alongside David Lewis-Williams, Janette Deacon's scholarship has been central to ensuring that shamanist and neuro-psychological interpretations of rock art have been combined with understandings of rock art's main interpretive archive - the Bleek-Lloyd records - that have stressed remarkable equality and cultural salvage. This paradigm has come to dominate the field of rock art conservation in South Africa and beyond through the influence of the work of the Rock Art Research Institute in Johannesburg.[37]

Here I want to suggest that these notions of cultural salvage and remarkable equality have served to create a kind of cult out of Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd whose archive has been understood in a very limited way as a system of linguistic and

cultural documentation and which has been mined for a lost, extinct authenticity. These dominant meanings and idealised notions of significance were incorporated into world heritage when the Bleek-Lloyd Collection (UCT and South African Library) was inscribed on the register of UNESCO's 'Memory of the World' Programme in 1997. According to the nomination form, Bleek and Lloyd's notebooks 'served as a "Rosetta Stone" which has enabled scholars to decipher the meaning of southern African rock art'.

As the main researcher and thinker behind Iziko South African Museum's rock art exhibition, '!Qe: The Power of Rock Art', that opened in December 2003, Janette Deacon took her perspectives into the field of museum display for the purposes of public access. The production of this exhibition saw the dominant shamanist and neuropsychological paradigm, and the Bleek-Lloyd cult of salvation and remarkable equality being combined with a politics of consultation that sought authority in authenticity. The main voices of authentic indigeneity were N/u-speaking elders from Upington and Witdraai, with whom the linguist Nigel Crawhall had been working on behalf of the South African San Institute (SASI) on projects documenting N/u language, mapping personal and community histories and place names, and compiling a 'biodiversity resource history'.[38] While Crawhall's language research showed enormous potential for transcending ethnic paradigms, his participation on the exhibition's academic committee saw him become the deliverer of indigenous participation and authentication. The assembled indigenous in turn would be able to reflect with a sense of gratitude upon the implied chain of salvation and benefaction, beginning with Bleek and Lloyd's documentation and culminating in the museum exhibition itself.

The problem with all of this work is that in spite of its mushrooming in the post-apartheid era and its deep concern with indigenous heritage, it is remarkable that almost nowhere do you find an engagement with the blood and brutality of the Khoisan experience. In addition, despite a growing corpus of scholarship on collections, mediation and the production of knowledge, including serious postcolonial scholarship on archives in South Africa,[39] the approach to the Bleek-Lloyd records in Deacon's work, and the Bleek-Lloyd canon more generally, remained couched in the language of recovery and authenticity.[40] Nowhere in the Bleek-Lloyd canon is the archive engaged with from the point of view of its mediations, except for the idea of salvage.

Deacon's book, *My Heart Stands in the Hill*, produced with the photographer Craig Foster, is the one of the most recent renditions of the Bleek-Lloyd canon beyond the academy that reproduces all of its discursive characteristics. Foster had previously made the acclaimed film, *The Great Dance* that reproduced the idea of the Bushman as hunter-gatherer. This book, referred to as the product of a 'pilgrimage of a modern archaeologist and film maker' is at the same time hauntingly beautiful and deeply troubling. It draws on Deacon's knowledge of the landscape based upon the references in the Bleek-Lloyd archive. The book is an attempt to 'reunite' photographic images of the /Xam and the /Xam 'voices' of the texts with the landscape they left behind, including the rock art. For Foster, the book was a means 'to celebrate the rock art and the people who made it'.[41]

In the book, another version of Deacon's interpretations of the Bleek-Lloyd archive and her accumulated knowledge of the /Xam landscape have been combined with Foster's enlarged photographs of the region and its rock art in all its detail and beauty and archival images of the /Xam that have been 'reunited' with that landscape. All the elements of the Bleek-Lloyd canon are restated and re-explored, including detailed discussions on shamanism and trance, and there are explanations of the neuropsychological approaches of David Lewis-Williams. The photographic images that have been 'reunited' with the landscape are the well-known Breakwater and studio photographs of the /Xam.

Foster, in using a generator, slide projector, stands, lighting and three cameras, was able to project images of photographed /Xam faces on a 35 mm slide film 'back into the landscape that they had lived in 150 years previously'. Images of 'old shamans and hunters' were superimposed on to trees, waterfalls, grass and hillsides, each with their peculiar textures and visual effects. Importantly, images were also projected onto rock surfaces containing engravings. For Deacon, what has been achieved is a layering of 'history, memory, spiritual experiences and landscape'. For both, this project was an act of symbolic return. The photographs were no longer '"scientific" photographs of representations of a lost linguistic group', but had been given 'individuality, colour, texture and a place of their own'.[42] Once again, Deacon drew upon Nigel Crawhall and the South African San Institute to engage with N/u speakers and to get their approval.

Although only listed in the bibliography, the inspiration for this book was no doubt the work of Finnish photographer, Jorma Puranen, *Imaginary Homecomings*, in which he embarked upon a 'metaphorical return' of Sami images to the land of the Sami. These images were from the 1884 Roland Bonapart expedition that were in the collection of the Musée de L'Homme in Paris. This was achieved in Puranen's work not by projection, but by reinstallation and reinsertion. Here, anthropological photographs had been rephotographed in positive and negative forms, enlarged on large plexiglass panels, then reinserted into the landscape, or reproduced on polyester sheets which were then hung in bushes or wrapped around trees. In a powerful accompanying essay to the catalogue, the scholar of photography, Elizabeth Edwards, argues that the rephotographing of these installations created an "imaginary, metaphorical homecoming."[43]

Puranen's photographs, Edwards argues, move from the archive, the 'symbolic space of appropriation' into the land, 'the symbolic space of belonging'. The living and the dead are brought together in the 'stylistic re-enactment of historic ways of photographing'. When plexiglass panels are held by living hands, the 'boundaries between the past and the present' are 'intentionally blurred'. Puranen 'reuses and juxtaposes' historical representations of the Sami.

More broadly, he enables positivist realist notions of photography to engage with expressive photography as part of 'reflexive visual exploration in the late twentieth century'. Puranen's images 'form dense networks' which allude to 'the networks of memory and its mapping on to the land'. They destabilise the categories and genres of art, landscape and documentary as they attempt to reposition the ethnographic image.

The project works, Edwards argues, because they 'confront the cultural stage on which the performance of photography was played out'. Far from romantic, 'cultural atonement', in *Imaginary Homecomings*, the photographs 'confront the viewer with their own history' and the nature of photographic appropriation becomes an 'act of translation'.[44]

In contrast, in spite of being inspired by Puranen's work, Deacon and Foster's project in South Africa fails to examine the complex visual histories of ethnography and archive that are related to the /Xam photographs. Instead, Deacon's project with Foster seems extremely undertheorised, and is located within a profoundly different paradigm of liberal paternalism, authenticity and cultural atonement, and ultimately reproduces the syndrome of discovery. Any project of rehumanisation of ethnographic images must proceed from a detailed understanding of the history of photography's violence and the evolutionist frames through which they were made.

Concluding remarks

This presentation has discussed the power as it is exercised through knowledge production and knowledge relations, both as 'science' and as 'outreach' and popular presentation.. This is a form of discursive power, which in many ways is more durable and difficult to discern than when power is exercised through coercion or ideology. Building a democratic society is about enabling new forms of citizenship go beyond the mere right to vote. We need to think of citizenship as related to the power of representation. Here I want to suggest that in the field of memory in post-apartheid South Africa, citizenship can only begin to be forged when the politics of atonement and the syndrome of discovery are challenged.

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[1] David William Cohen, *The Combing of History* (Chicago, 1994) 244-245; see also David William Cohen, 'Further Thoughts on the Production of History', in Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith eds., *Between History and Histories: The Making of Silences and Commemorations* (Toronto, 1997).

[2] Jacques Depelchin, *Silences in African History: Between the syndromes of discovery and abolition* (Dar Es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2005).

[3] Paul la Hausse, 'Oral History and South African Historians', in *Radical History Review*, No 46/7, Winter 1990, p 348. Tim Keegan, 'Mike Morris and the Social Historians: A Response and a Critique', *Africa Perspective*, Volume 1, Nos 7 & 8, 1989, p 6. See also Tim Keegan, *Facing the Storm: Portraits of Black Lives in Rural South Africa*, Cape Town: David Philip, 1988.

[4] See the discussion by Gary Minkley and Ciraj Rassool, 'Orality, Memory and Social History in South Africa'.

[5] Tim Keegan, *Facing the Storm*, pp 160-163.

[6] See the discussion of these issues in Gary Minkley and Ciraj Rassool, 'Orality, Memory and Social History in South Africa'.

[7] Charles van Onselen, *The Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper, 1894-1985*, Cape Town: David Philip, 1996.

[8] Charles van Onselen, 'The Reconstruction of a Rural Life', pp 510-513.

[9] See, for example, the distinction drawn between Nate Shaw and Kas Maine, and *All God's Dangers* and *The Seed is Mine* by Colin Bundy in the review article, 'Comparatively

Speaking: Kas Maine and South African Agrarian History', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 23, No 2, June 1997, pp 367-8.

[10]Charles van Onselen, *The Seed is Mine*, back cover.

[11]Nicolene Rousseau, 'Popular History in South Africa in the 1980s: The Politics of Production', M.A. Mini-thesis, University of the Western Cape, April 1994, pp 41-2.

[12]Patrick Harries, 'Histories New and Old', in *South African Historical Journal*, 30 (May 1994), p 130.

[13]See Luli Callinicos, *Gold and Workers, 1886-1924*, Johannesburg: Ravan, 1981; *Working Life, 1886-1940: Factories, Townships and Popular Culture on the Rand*, Johannesburg: Ravan, 1987, and *A Place in the City: The Rand on the Eve of Apartheid*, Johannesburg: Ravan, 1993.

[14] This argument is developed in Ciraj Rassool, 'The Rise of Heritage and the Reconstitution of History in South Africa', *Kronos*, No 26, August 2000; see also Carolyn Hamilton, Nsizwe Dlamini, Leslie Witz and Ciraj Rassool, 'Production of History post-1994', *The Cambridge History of South Africa* Contributors' Meeting, UCT, 10-11 December 2002.

[15] See Tim Nuttall and John Wright, 'Exploring beyond History with a Capital "H"', South African and Contemporary History Seminar, University of the Western Cape, 8 October 1998. See also Gary Minkley, Ciraj Rassool and Leslie Witz, `Thresholds, Gateways and Spectacles: Journeying through South African hidden pasts and histories in the last decade of the twentieth century'; Leslie Witz, Gary Minkley and Ciraj Rassool, 'Who Speaks for South African Pasts?' paper presented at the Biennial Conference of the South African Historical Society: "Not Telling: Secrecy, Lies and History", UWC, 11-14 July 1999; Ciraj Rassool, 'The Rise of Heritage and the Reconstitution of History in South Africa', *Kronos*, No 26, August 2000 and Carolyn Hamilton, Nsizwe Dlamini, Leslie Witz and Ciraj Rassool, 'Production of History post-1994', *Cambridge History of South Africa* Contributors' Meeting, University of Cape Town, 10-11 December 2002.

[16] Minkley, Rassool and Witz, Thresholds, Gateways and Spectacles'; Witz, Minkley and Rassool, 'Who Speaks for South African Pasts?'

[17] See for example S Jeppie, "Popular Culture and Carnival in Cape Town" and Bill Nasson, "Oral History and the Reconstruction of District Six." See also V Bickford-Smith, S Field and C Glaser, 'The Western Cape Oral History Project' and S Field (ed), *Lost Communities, Living Memories*.

[18] Valmont Layne, "Public Knowledge and Music History in Cape Town."

[19] University of Cape Town, *Impact: A Report on Research and Outreach*, 21.

[20] Centre for Popular Memory, *Annual Report*.

[21] See http://www.archafrica.uct.ac.za/schools'%20projects/introd.htm for information about work done by the Research Unit on the Archaeology of Cape Town (RESUNACT) with schools at an excavation site in Tennant Street, District Six as well as about work done with schools more generally.

[22] Hall, "District Six March." Elsewhere, of course, Hall has argued for the intellectual terrain and cultural practice of "social archaeology." See Hall, "Social Archaeology and the Theatres of Memory."

[23] There is haunting footage of the removal of the Abrahams family in Lindy Wilson's film, *Last Supper in Horstley Street*.

[24] Strong criticism of the Museum had been presented that in spite of its non-racial intentions, the effect of the *Streets* exhibition was to privilege the experience of coloureds in the history of removals. This was among the issues debated in the *Digging Deeper* workshops conducted in 2001-2. See Houston, "Consultative Workshops Report"; see the critical discussion of "Nomvuyo's Room" by District Six collections co-ordinator, Haajirah Esau ("Nomvuyo's Room: Please Enter."). "Nomvuyo's Room," of course, was based on descriptions of life in District Six in Ngcelwane (1998).

[25] The simultaneous possibilities and limits of public archaeology's modes of empowerment are also apparent in other archaeological projects in the Western Cape. See for example Parkington, "Clanwilliam Living Landscape Project"; see also University of Cape Town, *Impact: A Report on Research and Outreach*, 25.

[26] Members of the District Six Museum have, for instance, taken exception to the implication that the District Six Museum was really little more than a creation by academics, who had "played a major role" in setting it up, having "partly organised" the conference in 1988 out of which "the Museum grew," and who had made these contributions out of a spirit of university service and outreach. See University of Cape Town, *Impact: A Report on Research and Outreach*, 25).

[27] Delport 2001, "Signposts for Retrieval," 44.

[28] District Six Museum, "District Six Museum Curatorial and Research Committee: Terms of Reference."

[29] District Six Museum, "Mission Statement."

[30] Houston, "Consultative Workshops Report."

[31] (Bleek and Lloyd 1911, see also Deacon 1996, Hall 1996)

[32] J David Lewis-Williams, *Believing and Seeing: symbolic Meanings in Southern San Rock Paintings* (London: Academic Press, 1981); J David Lewis Williams and Thomas Dowson, *Images of power: understanding Bushman rock art* (Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1989).There are Bleek-Lloyd exhibitions at the Iziko South African Museum (in the form of an exhibition on rock art, '!Qe: The Power of Rock Art', which opened in December 2003) and at the new Museum van de Caab at the Solms-Delta estate in Franschhoek, as well as at the new Origins Centre in Johannesburg, whose first and founding section is the South African Museum of Rock Art (SAMORA). This last was formed partly out of the work of the Rock Art Research Institute (formerly 'Unit') at the University of the Witwatersrand, which was headed by David Lewis-Williams until his retirement a few years ago. One of the most recent temporary exhibitions focused on the drawings made by the /Xam at the Bleek/Lloyd household was 'The moon as shoe – drawings of the San' curated by Miklos Szalay of the Zurich Ethnological Museum and held at the Iziko South African National Gallery in 2003. An accompanying book by the same name was published in Zurich by Scheidegger & Spies in 2002.

[33] Deacon 1996:113, see also Deacon and Dowson 1996. Deacon was one of the organisers of the landmark international conference on the Bleek-Lloyd collection held at UCT in 1991 from which *Voices from the Past* was produced.

[34] Pippa Skotnes (1996) presented a similar understanding of the 'series of relationships' between the European scholars and the /Xam individuals who had a 'common aim' to 'preserve the memories of cultures and traditions which were fatally threatened' (23). Elsewhere (Skotnes, 2001) she referred to the 'folklore that was created through a unique collaboration between settler and native'. In the exhibition, *Miscast*, this relationship was counterposed with colonialism's savage violence.

[35] Deacon 1996: 93, 113.

[36] Skotnes 1996: 18.

[37] Lewis Williams and Dowson 1989 and 1994.

[38] Crawhall 1998.

[39] Hamilton et al 2002; various books and articles by Verne Harris and Sello Hatang.

[40] See Weintroub 2006 for an important recent exception.

[41] Deacon and Foster 2005, dustcover, 36.

[42] Deacon and Foster 2005, 143-144.

[43] Puranen 1999; Edwards in Puranen 1999, 43.

[44] Edwards in Puranen 1999, 43-76.