

The KhoeSan & Partnership Beyond Patriarchy & Violence

by
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"When I dare to be powerful -
to use my strength in service of my vision,
then it becomes less important whether I am afraid."
Audre Lorde

Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this research assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:  _____

Date: 28 February 2008

Abstract

This thesis contributes to existing literature on violent and peaceful societies generally, and more specifically contributes to debates on gender egalitarian societies within the fields of Peace, Gender and Indigenous Studies, by focusing on the KhoeSan, and KhoeSan women especially.

This research project focused on two critically intersectional components: (1) reconstructing knowledge in general and reclaiming indigenous knowledge, from an African feminist perspective; and (2) analysing and reclaiming peaceful societies and the notion of nonviolence as a norm. Inextricably tied to these primary research questions, is the issue of gender, and gender egalitarianism, especially as it relates to women.

An interdisciplinary, intersectional approach was used, combining the analytical lenses of the fields of Political Science (Peace Studies), Anthropology and Gender Studies, with some attention to cultures and spiritualities. The participatory methods employed include focus group discussions and unstructured interviews with KhoeSan community leaders, especially women elders. Concrete skills exchange with, and support for, the participating communities was consciously facilitated.

Scholarship on, as well as practices of, the Khoesan evince normative nonviolence, as well as gender egalitarianism. These ancient norms and practices are still evident in modern KhoeSan oral history and practice.

This thesis sets the following precedents, particularly through the standpoint of a female KhoeSan scholar: (a) contributing to the research on peaceful societies by offering an analysis of the KhoeSan's nonviolence as a norm; (b) and extending scholarship on gender egalitarian societies to the KhoeSan.

Further research in these intersecting areas would be invaluable, especially of peacefulness, social egalitarianism and collective leadership, as well as gender egalitarianism, among the KhoeSan. Broadening research to encompass Southern Africa as a region would significantly aid documentation.

Opsomming

Die tesis dra by tot bestaande literatuur oor gewelddadige asook vreedsame samelewings oor die algemeen, maar dra meer spesifiek by tot bestaande debatte oor geslagsegalitarisme in samelewings binne die veld van Vrede, Geslags-, en Inheemse studies deur te fokus op die KhoeSan-vrou.

Die navorsingsprojek fokus op twee kritieke kruis-snydende komponente naamlik: (1) die herkonstruksie van kennis oor die algemeen en die terugwinning van inheemse kennis vanuit 'n Afrika feministiese perspektief; (2) die analise en terugwinning van vreedsame samelewings en die beginsel van geweldloosheid as norm.

Nou verweef met dié primêre navorsingsvrae is die kwessie van geslag, geslagsegalitarisme en spesifiek hoe dit vroue raak.

'n Inter-dissiplinêre, kruis-snydende benadering is gevolg en analitiese lense vanuit Politieke Wetenskap (Vredestudies), Antropologie en geslagstudies, met verwysings na kulture en geestelikheid is hiermee saam gebruik. Die metode was deurgaans deelnemend deur fokusgroep-besprekings en ongestruktureerde onderhoude met Khoisan gemeenskapsleiers te voer. Vroulike KhoeSan gemeenskapsleiers is veral betrek. Kennis is wedersydse en deurgaans tussen die plaaslike KhoeSan gemeenskappe in die studie en die navorser uitgeruil.

Skoling in die KhoeSan praktyke wys 'n normatiewe geweldloosheid asook geslagsegalitarisme. Dié oeroue normes en praktyke is steeds deel van die moderne Khoisan orale geskiedenis en praktyke.

Die tesis skep die volgende presedente deur veral die uitgangspunt van 'n vroulike KhoeSan navorser: (a) Dra by tot navorsing oor vreedsame samelewings deur 'n analise van die KhoeSan geweldloosheid as 'n norm; (b) en deur skoling in geslagsgelykheid in samelewings na die KhoeSan uit te brei.

Verdere navorsing in dié kruis-snydende gebiede blyk van waarde te wees vir vrede, sosiale gelykheid en kollektiewe leierskap, sowel as geslagsgelykheid onder die KhoeSan. Indien navorsing hieroor in die hele Suider-Afrika streek uitgebrei word, sal dit die dokumentasie hieroor bevorder.

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Finally to Amanitare and Buktu, Sarah Bartmann and Krotoa, young Sophie Scholl and Che Guevara, Ruth First and Steve Biko, and all the women, men and intersexed throughout history who gave their lives to advance my freedom and justice for all. Our struggles continue...

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Chapter One: Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the existing literature on violent and peaceful societies in general, and more specifically to broaden debates on gender egalitarian societies within the fields of Peace, Gender and Indigenous Studies by building on work with the KhoeSan, and KhoeSan women especially.

1.1. Background

Within Peace and Gender studies a significant body of literature exists that examines less violent or nonviolent societies. This literature has highlighted various indigenous communities and cultures including the KhoeSan as nonviolent societies, historically and anthropologically. Indigenous Studies literature focusing on gender egalitarian societies has also offered the KhoeSan as one example. There is also evident a critical intersection between nonviolence or less violence, and social egalitarianism generally, as well as gender egalitarianism specifically.

South Africa specifically, and Southern Africa more generally, has one of the highest rates of generic societal violence, and particularly gender-based violence (e.g. rape, domestic violence, femicide), in the world. Gender violence is sadly not limited to conflict and post-conflict societies, with developed countries in Europe and North America claiming that a minimum of 30% of the population experience domestic violence at one time or another:

the (extra)ordinary extent of gender-based violences (GBVs), evinced by two recent international studies (Amnesty International and the WHO), highlights that GBV is as critical to the maintenance of patriarchy, as, for example racial classification and white supremacy was to apartheid. (Muthien, 2006: 100)

Many renowned scholars in Africa and beyond have variously shown that gender violence is due to gender inequity, and that the deep gender injustices in our societies can be traced to the onset and practice of patriarchy, thousands of years ago.

Violence and inequity are inextricably tied to patriarchy, which is premised on what Marija Gimbutas, and later Riane Eisler, have termed a dominator system, based on hierarchy, inequality, oppression, injustice and violence. Cultural systems of patriarchy and domination are very prevalent at this time, but are not inevitable. A-patriarchal societies, such as the KhoeSan of Southern Africa, offer historical examples of gender egalitarian, nonviolent lifestyles, which can be used to construct alternative models to prevailing violence and inequity.

Many ancient indigenous societies, including the KhoeSan, were premised on a partnership model, characterised by horizontal linkages, egalitarianism, harmony and balance, employing constructive conflict resolution (rather than violence).

These ancient indigenous societies have the characteristics that we need to enhance in our present cultures to get at the roots of alienation, abuse, and violence, even if they are generally dismissed as being too primitive to provide useful lessons for shaping modern economies and societies. It is critical to extract the many lessons

embedded in KhoeSan culture which can be adapted to reduce current violence and improve present society. Historical records, and modern texts, reflect numerous examples of the KhoeSan's originally peaceful, non-violent and egalitarian ways of life.

I hope to contribute to bringing this knowledge into awareness, and getting it applied to improving South Africa. This thesis shows how a deeper understanding of KhoeSan culture can lead directly to models and methods for change in present Southern African society, and how going back to some of the best aspects of our roots can, in fact, lead us forward into a future that is both economically and culturally healthy.

1.2. Research Question

The field of Political Studies includes myriad areas of specialisation, including Gender Studies, Security Studies, Peace Studies, International Relations, Political Philosophy. Gender Studies and Indigenous Studies, both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary, draw upon work from scholars in diverse fields, including History, Economics, Anthropology, Literature, Linguistics, Political Science, Psychology, with many indigenous and feminist scholars collaborating closely, within and beyond continents.

My interests in this thesis embody two key intersectional, and hence interdependent, parts. My first major interest is in the reconstruction of knowledge generally, and

reclaiming indigenous knowledge specifically, from a feminist and an African (South African) perspective. This project is akin to feminist rehistoricism, during which feminists reclaimed their histories, their voices, and their power, through re-examining history and literature, and reclaiming their place and space in history and narratives, as well as in contemporary society. Similar to feminist revisioning since at least the 1960s, indigenous scholars have been reclaiming, and decolonising, our roots, our histories, our voices and our power.

“As a criticism of narrow, selective epistemic and intellectual traditions of the academy”, Sami scholar Rauna Kuokkanen argues:

That it serves little purpose to “mainstream” indigenous students to the academic culture and environment. What needs to be mainstreamed, if anything, is indigenous philosophies and worldviews. Mainstreaming in this context implies inviting indigenous philosophies and epistemes in from the fringes, so that they can be *heard* (2007: 2).

My second key interest is in examining, and reclaiming, peaceful societies. Scholarly literature since the times of Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes, especially in the modern field of Political Science, tends to focus on violence, and violent societies. This literature is premised on the assumption of aggression and violence as primordial, innately human. This assumption ignores a great many societies around the world that evince more peaceful lives, and which contradict the Hobbesian view of life in a state of nature as constantly being “nasty, brutish and short”.

A corollary to these two significant research interests, is the critical issue of gender, and women specifically. Since the onset of patriarchy there has been a cultural assumption – a patriarchal myth - about gender inequality and women's lesser status, which serves men's interests, in similar ways that a belief in violence as innate serves those who profit from wars. The growing scholarship on gender egalitarian studies that debunks this is crucial to this research project. Working with the KhoeSan especially not only reveals women to be historically powerful and equal, but also even sacred and revered.

Hence this research project offers a critique of existing scholarship focused on peaceful societies, which has largely been written by men who are mainly white, and based in the global North; as well as literature produced by feminists, who are also mainly white and based in the global North. This Eurocentric scholarship is contrasted with the literature of feminist and other scholars who are indigenous, African, and/or KhoeSan, decolonising scholarship, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) might put it.

Tied critically to this re-viewing of existing scholarship is participatory research with deep rural KhoeSan women in particular. Through these interactive interviews and conversations, as well as participatory focus groups, the KhoeSan's peaceful ways and gender egalitarianism is recorded, in their own words. It is the power of the narratives of these elderly women, most in their seventies and eighties, that inspires younger generations. A power that still shines through despite centuries of brutal colonisation and genocide, as well as decades of Apartheid. These community elders

are the bearers of their people's histories, the representatives of their past and present struggles, and their hopes for future generations.

1.3. KhoeSan: People's People - naming with respect and meaning

I employ the term KhoeSan to be inclusive of all First or Original People, that is all people who are indigenous, to Southern Africa. Previous incarnations of this term include Khoisan, but San (e.g. people in the Kalahari) felt marginalised by being appended, and with a small rather than a capital letter, to the more dominant Khoi or Khoe, and hence the more recent capitalisation of San in KhoeSan.

The words Khoe and San, like the isiXhosa *abantu*, mean "people". Hence historically, being called Khoikhoi or Khoekhoe would mean "people's people". This encapsulates the essence of the pan-African *ubuntu* or KhoeSan *Khoe!na*, that is that people's identities are rooted in their communities, in the sense of "I am because I belong", rather than the Cartesian "I think therefore I am".

The shift in spelling over a decade between the 1990s and the twenty first century from Khoi to Khoe, is indicative of the Khoe themselves claiming intellectual power, and naming themselves, and attempting to spell more aptly what was previously defined, and spelt, by descendants of Europe¹. Khoe is more akin to Khwe of Namibia. Yvette Abrahams² says her Namibian uncle chastised her for using Khoi,

¹ Here the notion of 'descent' is used in a social-political, rather than a biological, sense. I pay tribute, as does compatriot Pippa Skotnes and many others, to Wilhelm Bleek, and especially Lucy Lloyd for creating the first known European script/s of indigenous KhoeSan languages.

² Telephone interview, 24 October 2007.

and insisted she spelt the word as it is pronounced by the Damara, her ancestors, Khoe. Abrahams reminds us of linguist Neville Alexander's seminal paper³ "The Enigma of the Khowesin" (1983). Abrahams says that ultimately words and spellings matter less than remembering that the word means 'people', humanity, and when combined, as in Khoekhoe or KhoeSan, or even Alexander's Khowesin, it means "people's people". The words are nothing without meaning, and most important is to accord people, and the names of people, with appropriate respect and meaning.

Thus the term KhoeSan is used throughout this thesis. Any other related term or spelling, such as Khoisan or Khoe Khoe as used by, for example, Abrahams previously or presently, will be spelt as published originally. Additionally, where people refer to themselves as San, Khomani San, !Xun or Khwe, or any other name, I will use these terms with respect, instead of the generic KhoeSan.

1.4. Outline of the Thesis

The second chapter reviews the literature employed in this research. The starting point of the whole thesis, and the literature review in particular, is to appreciate the work that has been done and then move into constructive criticism, rather than to slash and burn, an academic convention with which we are all too familiar. In this way I hope to embody the essences of both peace and feminisms, which is to seek alternatives to the violences too prevalent today, even in the routine performance of textual analyses.

³ Alexander's paper is invoked here to highlight Abrahams' point that the words and spellings are less relevant than the essence of the concept: 'people's people' or 'people of people'.

The literature survey contains four key sections. The first section focuses on renowned male scholars based in the global North, who have each contributed to grand theories of peace. They are each, to an extent, gender blind or male-centred. These scholars also ignore critical 'minority' voices, such as those of people in the global South, and indigenous peoples in particular.

The second section concentrates on feminists in the global North who have worked on critical issues related to gender egalitarianism, issues intrinsic to many indigenous societies, and/or matriarchal studies. These global North-based feminists do some of the most admirable work in the world, yet sometimes they forget to be conscious of women in the global South, of indigenous peoples, and of issues of difference and oppression.

The third section focuses on indigenous scholarship, especially that of Barbara Mann (Iroquois) and Shanshan Du (Lahu), part of a growing genre of inter- and multi-disciplinary Indigenous Studies around the world. These international indigenous scholars contextualise and support our work on the KhoeSan powerfully.

The fourth section focuses on Africa, beginning with Ifi Amadiume, and moving to KhoeSan womanist scholar-activist Yvette Abrahams. Amadiume provides a broad continental African milieu, starting with the Ibo notion of 'talking back', while the work of especially Abrahams provides a critical local indigenous KhoeSan grounding for this thesis.

In these ways, this thesis offers a critique of existing literature, especially of scholarship based in the global North, while simultaneously examining peaceful societies and gender egalitarianism as intersectional and interdependent, in theory and practice.

The third chapter is an explication of the methodologies employed during this research. An interdisciplinary, intersectional approach was used, combining the analytical lenses of the fields of Political Science (Peace Studies), Anthropology and Gender Studies, with some attention to cultures and spiritualities. The participatory methods employed, including focus group discussions and unstructured interviews with KhoeSan community leaders, especially women elders, is discussed. The conscious facilitation of concrete skills *exchange* with and support for the participating communities is also outlined. Lastly, the chapter details meetings and interviews held with leading scholars and descendants of the KhoeSan and with other 'experts'.

The fourth chapter is an exposition of the research findings, as well as an analysis of the research project. While it is most desirable to let the women elders' voices speak for themselves, this thesis does require analysis of these stories, with analysis being the basis of mainstream academic practice. This chapter both documents these critical voices, as well as offers a review of the narratives so generously gifted to this researcher.

The last chapter and conclusion summarises the main outcomes of this research project, discusses the limitations of the current study and makes suggestions for further studies.

1.5. Standpoint: the i

It is critical for this researcher to contextualise herself, in relation to the research project, as well as in relation to the research participants. I am a direct descendant of the KhoeSan, through my mother line, with my maternal grandmother being KhoeSan. Since the KhoeSan are known to be matrilineal, this rendering and reclaiming of my ancestry is appropriate and necessary. My KhoeSan lineage also gave me preferred access to KhoeSan communities that might impede the research of, for example, global North scholars.

I am also a lifelong activist and community worker, which further assisted my access to communities. My concrete offers of community building and other transformative work in communities, in addition to supporting them with fundraising and other networking, greatly lubricated my relationships with KhoeSan communities. I was not only a part of the community, in a *Khoe!na (ubuntu)* way, but was also actively contributing towards the betterment of the community.

While I acknowledge and honour my KhoeSan lineage, I am also aware that I have other bloodlines in my veins, from India through my father, and Europe through my mother's father. Hence as much as I pay tribute to my being KhoeSan, I also pay

tribute to my being born in Africa, and South Africa particularly. Thus I locate my scholarship and my work in South Africa specifically, and the African continent more broadly. This location of myself as African implies that I am aware of my construction by self and others as Black, in the sense employed by Steve Biko through his Black Consciousness Movement.

I am also a woman, and am aware of my academic and other experiences of being gendered, by self and others. Standpoint theory was, after all, first developed by feminist scholars, notably Nancy Hartsock, Sandra Harding and Patricia Hill Collins, as will be explicated in the Methodology chapter.

Yvette Abrahams recounts her experience of “symbolic genocide” (2000: 209) at “a slightly tense tutor’s meeting” where they “discussed the teaching of a module on Khoekhoe history”, during which one of the tutors

asked the course coordinator idly... ‘so do you think there are any Khoekhoe still around, you know, people who still practice their culture...?’ The co-ordinator replied, ‘no, physically there may be some genetic mixtures still around [with a sidelong glance at (Abrahams)] but their culture is extinct... Such was my state of mind... when this white man came to extinguish my community and my culture in a sentence. And me with them, for who am I without my community and culture? (2000: 208-210).

In sharing this particular story, in characteristic indigenous broad strokes, I hope that my standpoint, my lineage, will be more evident to the reader. One of my key identities, legitimately, is KhoeSan.

To date it is mainly European scholars who have succeeded in publishing work on the KhoeSan. Although it can be argued that these works contribute to the very

limited literature available, this work is precisely limited by their outsider eurocentric status. I believe that my unique gaze, as a KhoeSan woman, and postcolonial feminist in particular, is critical to any study of our ancestors, and how cooperative societies existed in our region, as well as how we could possibly shift from the present system of domination (colonial, patriarchal, capitalist), to one of harmony and peace, gender equity and justice.

In all the works examined, and available, on peaceful and gender egalitarian societies, there is no notable African woman (beyond Ifi Amadiume's work on matriarchy in Nigeria) who has attempted to contribute to the canon.

This thesis then is the first of its kind by a KhoeSan woman, which examines the intersections between peace and gender egalitarianism among the KhoeSan. Hence this research wishes to contribute to existing scholarship and practice, partly by setting this precedent.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This thesis hopes to contribute towards redefining perceptions of South, and Southern, African society, through examination of some of our ancient ways of being, with a focus on the KhoeSan.

There are more and less appropriate ways to do this reclamation and redefinition. When done inappropriately, it may be a disservice to the larger endeavour of reconstructing our society or societies. This second issue, of ways of looking and acting while conducting research, will be an additional lens through which this particular chapter, and thesis more generally, is viewed and valued. Critically tied to ways of viewing, are ways of acting, in particular speaking and writing. Hence this thesis will endeavour to engage in constructive critique, rather than destruction of others' writings. It is what Pregs Govender³ and others have called “the politics of love”.

The first part of this four-part literature review will focus on the work of four key peace studies scholars, all of whom are based in the global North: the United States and Europe, and all of whom are white men. Their work is seminal and inspiring, which partly explains their key leadership positions within the field. However, they consistently deprive the reader of deeper analysis of the intersections of oppressions. This of course keeps certain lines (of power) intact, and prevents authentic solidarity

³ Cf Govender's 2007 book.

and even empathy or compassion, for example, between the (white male global North) scholar, and an indigenous woman in the global South.

The second part of the literature review will examine mainly women scholars who write about what some call gender egalitarian societies, which are arguably peaceful. That is, these presumably feminist authors draw linkages between peace and nonviolence, and gender egalitarianism. These scholars, however, are also based largely in the global North. They sometimes either speak on behalf of women in the global South, often resulting in mis-representing native societies, or they wilfully remain ignorant of issues more pertinent to peoples in the global South.

The third and fourth parts of the literature review will focus on the writings of indigenous scholars, and those based in Africa. These sections will be a form of indigenous and/or African women writing about ourselves, for ourselves. These writings without exception all show a profound appreciation for intersectionalities, and how this manifests and contributes to *ubuntu*.

2.2. Phallogocentric⁴: The Patriarchs on Peaceful Societies

“since wars begin in the minds of men,
it is in the minds of men
that the defences of peace
must be constructed”

UNESCO Constitution⁵

⁴ This term, originally coined by Jacques Derrida, refers to the privileging of the masculine (phallus) in meaning.

“Respect for the rights of others is peace”

Benito Juarez⁶

I begin by valuing the work of four renowned Peace Studies scholars: Douglas P Fry, Johan Galtung, Graham Kemp, and Luc Reychler. These four scholars are all men, based in the global North: Reychler in Belgium, Galtung in Scandinavia and Hawaii, Kemp in the UK, and Fry in the USA. They have all been associated with the International Peace Research Association (IPRA), of which I have been a member since 1998, and on its Executive Council 2000-2006. I am focusing on these four specific peace studies scholars because they are considered leaders in their field, and are the key ones, if not the only ones, who have written ‘grand theories’ of peace. Kemp and Fry have done the hitherto unimaginable: extensively collated data from innumerable societies and other studies, in the most thorough examination of peaceful societies done thus far.

Another aspect shared by these four scholars, as indeed by many in their field, is that they do not include a gender perspective to their seminal work, that is they pay little or no attention to the impacts of gender in their analyses. This means that they exclude at least 50% of the world’s population in their analyses, making their work gender specific: to and for men, with the male viewpoint extrapolated to represent the generic conditions of humankind, somewhat akin to the long-decomposed

⁵ http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html, on 5 July 2007.

⁶ “Benito Juarez was a Zapotec-speaker from the Mexican state of Oaxaca who served as the president of Mexico in the mid-1800s and implemented important social reforms” (Fry, 2006: 41).

progenitors of the seminal Rights of Man. What else they have in common, apart from their apparent textual gender blindness, is a good examination of the components of more peaceful (and less violent) societies, societies that exist in 2007. It is a practical exposition that is easily identifiable in some societies, and that can be quite comfortably replicated in other societies.

Graham Kemp and Douglas Fry co-edited an anthology of diverse chapters, *Keeping the Peace: Conflict Resolution and Peaceful Societies Around the World*, published in 2004. Douglas Fry authored the book *The Human Potential for Peace: An Anthropological Challenge to Assumptions about War and Violence*, published in 2006. Luc Reychler has been the the Secretary General of IPRA) since 2004. He convenes an international study group⁷ focused on examining Peacebuilding Architecture, of which Peacebuilding Leadership is a critical part. Johan Galtung is one of the founders of IPRA, author of the seminal text, *Peace by Peaceful Means* (1996), and is practically engaged in peacebuilding in, for example, the Oslo process in the Middle East / Palestine, as much as in theorising.

All four authors assert that peace is an *active* process, with Kemp calling it “dynamic”, and Fry referring to it as a “continuum”. Kemp and Fry focus on how societies “*maintain* – as an ongoing, active process” the peace, “because these societies are not peaceful simply due to the absence of conflict”:

Peaceful societies are not utopias. They consist of real people facing the same kinds of problems that confront people everywhere... Yet they have created peaceful cultures, identifying means by which humans can manage

⁷ I was part of this study group in the recent past, and contributed analyses of South Africa, as well as a comparative analysis of the first two democratically elected South African Presidents, Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki

their conflicts without resorting to violent behaviour. They have identified forms of socialization that promote peaceful interaction, developed beliefs that favor nonviolence over aggression, and fostered attitudes and perceptions about violence that prevent its establishment as a social norm (2004: xii, xiii).

What each author attempts is to elevate thinking, and discussion, beyond the duality of Hobbesian neo-realism and Rousseauan neo-idealism, the so-called nature-nurture debate: is humankind (read man) innately good or bad, and does society civilise or brutalise said primordial human natures? Kemp believes the nature-nurture debate serves only the interests of (European) imperialism:

Moving beyond nature-nurture gives us a far more complex view of how we should see other societies. It suggests that each society can be seen as a working entity, able to culturally adapt human biological propensities to meet differing social and physical environmental needs. In this we speak of *cultural technology* – the “software” of human survival. Anthropology can thus open up for consideration the richness of human ways of organizing society, a spectrum that includes peacefulness as well as the institution of war. This is not the case with the nature-nurture debate, which essentially...(sees) human societies in terms of providing proof for a European political issue (colonisation) (2004: 4, 5).

Iroquoian scholar and elder, Barbara Mann, criticising the above quote by Kemp, comments that “Anthropology is deeply hated by Native Americans as a main justifier of colonialism and forced assimilation”⁸. This should keep us reminded of the lines of reasoning, and ideological backgrounds, of even scholars of peace.

⁸ Email communication, 13 August 2007.

While each author attempts to move beyond the binaries of realist-idealist, certain critical lines remain in place, with concomitant consequences for social justice, and hence peace.

Kemp asserts conceptually that “peaceful societies need not be peaceful in the absolute” as he refers to “a *dynamics of peacefulness* rather than an unchanging state”. (2004: 6). He characterises a peaceful society as one that:

1. desires to be peaceful and seeks to orientate its culture in that direction,
2. has developed cultural means to achieve this aim,
3. and has achieved success in this aim (2004: 6).

Kemp asserts that a peaceful society does not necessarily need to be entirely free of violence. More importantly one should enquire how the culture deals with the violence: “Is it capable of minimizing its impact and its spread, and of preventing it from becoming part of the culture?” (2004: 6). He refers to the !Kung:

“anthropologists’ experience with this culture was that they were “harmless people””.

Kemp suggests that isolated incidents of violence have not been internalised in the society at large, and hence the majority of the !Kung are not violent. In the spirit of feminist re-visioning⁹, it is of considerable value to acknowledge the first use of the phrase “harmless people” as attributed to Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, whose book by that title was first published during 1959. This was the first major work on the !Kung.

⁹ With appreciation of Sheila Meintjes, who first drew my attention to this fact.

The tendency among the !Kung towards nonviolence is confirmed by Yvette Abrahams¹⁰, who speaks of her ancestors, the Khoe Khoe, who remained attached to nonviolence, despite the depredations of wholesale colonial violences, and even Khoe Khoe resistance to colonial oppressions and land expropriation.

Kemp contrasts peaceful societies that experience moments or incidents of violence, with “warlike cultures” whose members could develop “unwarlike behavior”. A topical example is Code Pink¹¹, a women-led peace network or movement based in the United States, created explicitly to oppose the United States occupation of Iraq. The idea that violence needs to be indoctrinated in humans, is illustrated by Kemp’s observation that in “engaging face-to-face, a surprisingly large number of soldiers suddenly hold back from killing... The threat of peace breaking out is something a warlike culture needs to attend to in much the same way that the outbreak of violence is something a peaceful culture needs to deal with” (2004: 7). He mentions the example of Sparta, which

In developing more effective military units, discovered that if you take adolescent boys from their families, and make their military unit their “family”, then their group loyalty makes them fight and kill for longer on the battlefield (2004: 4).

Douglas Fry, in his conclusion to this co-edited anthology, draws invaluable lessons from “peaceful societies” and, in line with Kemp and Ximena Davies-Vengoechea in the same volume, argues that “it is unproductive to view peace and war as opposite, mutually exclusive concepts”. Instead, he suggests “a continuum of variation from

¹⁰ Abrahams’ work will be examined in detail in later chapters.

¹¹ URL <http://www.codepink4peace.org/>, on 5 July 2007.

non-violence to violence”. (2004: 186). As with Yvette Abrahams’ understanding of the Khoe Khoe, Fry cites the Hopi who

Historically engaged in warfare to defend themselves from their more violent neighbors, but Hopi culture devalued violence, experienced a very low level of physical aggression, and did not glorify war (2004: 186).

Thus Kemp argues that a society can decide to alter itself socially from warlike to peaceful, with Norway a modern example of transition from its Viking past. He suggests that this shift is a “cultural adaptation to help the members of the society survive... With the advent of weapons of mass destruction, war has become a threat not just to the survival of particular societies, but to humanity as a whole” (2004: 8). He stresses the importance of developing “a *cultural technology of peace*”, where “ideas, mores, value systems, and cultural institutions (all) minimize violence and promote peace” (2004: 10).

He summarises his book as

Not about the concept of peaceful societies, but about learning from peaceful societies. *We should not think of peaceful societies as something to be used, but as a resource to learn from...* the value of peaceful societies is in how their experience and cultural ideas might help modern societies achieve their own desire for peacefulness. It is not a question of utopia, but of enhancing the well-being of all the world’s people and future generations, even of assuring human survival (2004: 10, emphasis added).

Fry asserts “that the view that humans are fundamentally warlike stems much more from the *cultural beliefs* of the writers than from ‘phenomena observed in the physical world’ – from data, in other words” (2006: 2).

Graham Kemp refers to “cultural technology”, or “the software of survival”: what it is that we do to ensure or promote peace, and to steer away from violence and war.

Luc Reyhler and Arnim Langer also write about “peacebuilding software” (2002) and Reyhler elsewhere of “building blocks of a sustainable peace” (2006). Fry shares some ideas on realising “the human potential for peace”:

Enhancing cross-cutting ties among social groups, recognizing the new reality of global interdependence and the consequential necessity of acting cooperatively, adopting new attitudes and cultural beliefs appropriate to an interdependent world that promote nonviolent conflict resolution practices and no longer accept warfare as a legitimate activity, and creating overarching authority structures for effective governance and conflict management (2006: 10).

Reyhler and Langer refer to an “integrative climate” of peacebuilding which includes: “hope (future perspective)”, “reconciliation (about the past)”, “multiple loyalties or inclusion (multi-level political commitment)”, “subjective security (human security)”, “trust or social capital (willingness to cooperate)”, “sentimental walls (mindfulness or openmindedness)” (2002: 5). Reyhler with his student Anton Stellamans added “peacebuilding leadership” as a critical factor, in addition to a Eurocentric notion of democracy, as key to peacebuilding (2002).

Fry sums up his patterns of “nonviolent conflict management”:

- (1) *core values that promote nonviolent behavior*;
- (2) *avoidance* as a favored approach for dealing with conflict...and...the threat of violence;
- (3) responding to conflict with *self-restraint* and *self-control* rather than with aggression or threatening displays;

- (4) *third parties* readily become involved in conflict management... adopting the roles of friendly peacemakers, mediators, arbitrators, and adjudicators;
- (5) *reaching consensus and minimizing hard feelings*;
- (6) *discourage or shun the consumption of alcohol*;
- (7) *social control mechanisms* to prevent and discourage physical aggression;
- (8) *socialization* as a process through which children *internalize* core values, beliefs, and expected codes of behavior (2004: 194-198).

In her foreword Elise Boulding summarises the key elements of peace in Kemp & Fry's anthology as: mediation, avoidance, and self-restraint. She observes that:

The positive value put on peaceableness itself, on the absence of violence, and on social control reflects a strong common recognition of interdependence. The people in these societies know they need each other...

The emphasis on diversity in styles of peaceableness from society to society is very valuable in countering both the realist and the utopian views of "what humans are really like". Practices in child rearing are a key factor in the development of adult behavior patterns, and different approaches to training children in self-control are well described (2004: x).

In contrast to these more linear iterations of factors, indicators or values, Johan Galtung (1996) postulates his famous triangulation of violence (and its antithesis peace), where each axis of the triangle is easily mutable into any of the other two at any moment in time.

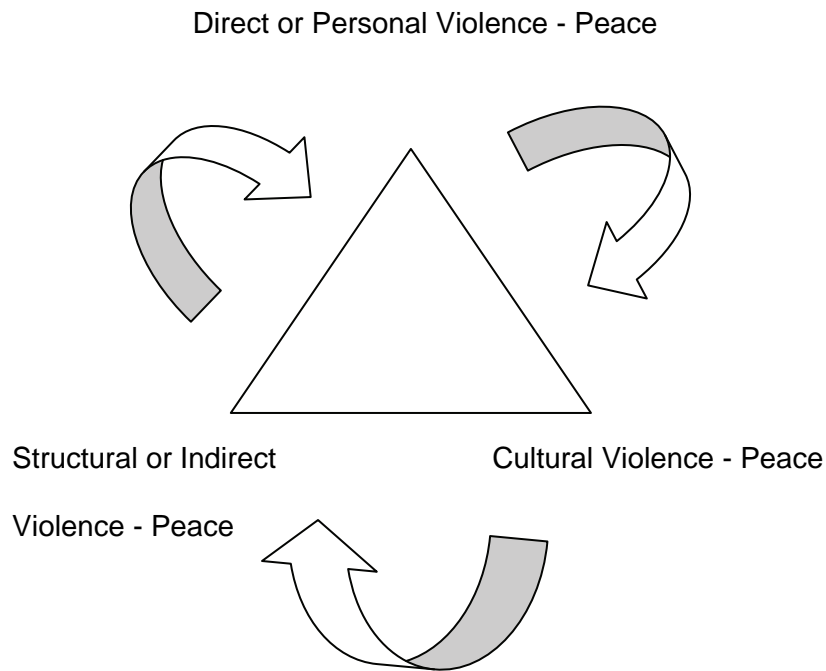


Figure 2.1. Johan Galtung's Triangle of Violence-Peace, 1996.

Direct violence means a physical attack on one's person, and direct peace is obviously the presence of physical safety (i.e. freedom from physical attack, one of the cornerstones of the notion of national security). Structural peace is freedom from structural violences such as racism, sexism and heterosexualisation. Cultural peace is the knowledge that our very cultures and mindsets are free of violence and prejudice of any kind.

In this depiction, each form of violence-peace is inextricably connected and dependent on the other two forms. For example, one cannot have cultural peace while experiencing physical violence, or have direct peace while cultural violence persists, because the prejudice may very well inform the attack. For instance, there is no colonial war being waged against farmworkers, nor are they (meant to be)

whipped as they were under formal slavery, yet the tot system persists¹², and farmworkers remain trapped in poverty and dependence due to persistently low wages and geographical isolation.

Galtung's seminal triangle of violence-peace, is complemented by Reychler's more recent "sustainable peace building pentagon".

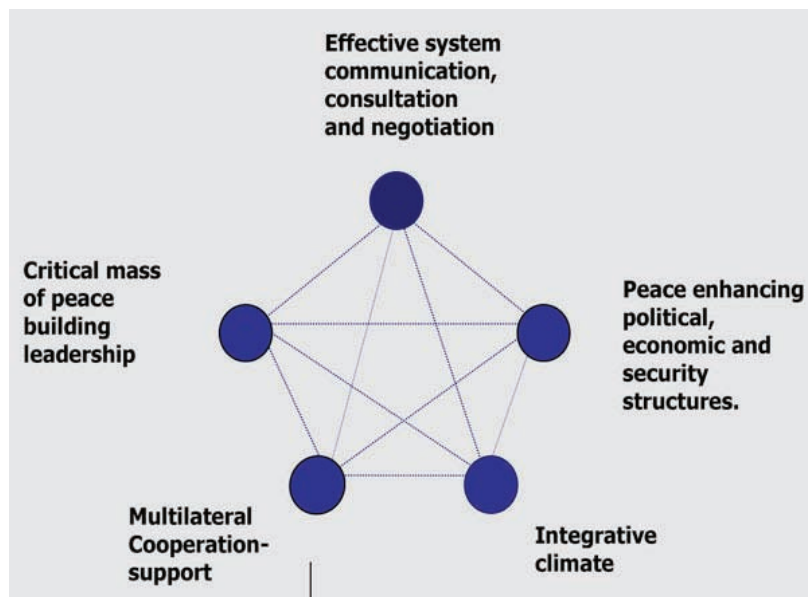


Figure 2.2. Luc Reychler's Sustainable Peace Building Pentagon. Reychler suggests that "sustainable peace" requires five conditions:

an effective system of communication, consultation and negotiation; peace-enhancing structures and institutions; an integrative political-psychological climate; a critical mass of peace building leadership, and; a supportive international environment. The underlying assumption is that these five peace building blocks are mutually reinforcing and therefore need to be present or installed simultaneously. The lagging of one of these building blocks can seriously undermine the stability or effectiveness of the entire peace building process...In addition to these five clusters there are necessary support systems (legal -, educational-; health-, humanitarian aid-, and

¹² Outlawed practice that continues on many farms still, of giving farm workers cheap wine as part remuneration, to keep them enslaved in alcoholism, and trapped in labour conditions reminiscent of serfdom or even slavery. See for example Lauren Cohen's 2007 article, "'Dop' system leaves a massive hangover".

information-systems) which play an important role in the peace building process (2006: 7, 11).

Thus from linear continuums (two points), to triangles (three corners), to pentagons with five axes, these authors provide excellent analyses, indicators, and examples of peace as active and dynamic, actual and potential. Hence these male global North white theorists are fairly adept at handling and disrupting particular lines, such as traditional dichotomies between realists and idealists.

However, there are still lines that remain invisible to them: lines inherited from the very origins of European science (Newton et al), which still infect the phallogocentric Social Sciences; and lines of Gender and the very real and potentially lethal hierarchy between men and women.

At the same time as these white male scholars are blind to some lines, they simultaneously cross other lines which should not be crossed, in the sense that they cross the line which demarcates appropriate cross-cultural education from cultural appropriation. This issue, of who speaks for whom, will be revisited throughout this chapter, and indeed throughout the thesis as a whole. Even though this issue is like a bone that is dried up and calcified from having been gnawed at for far too long, it still remains central, and certainly will continue to be central, as long as its lessons continue to go unlearned. Indeed, it is the one bone that Western colonial archaeologists (of various sorts) seem not to want to "discover."

The eleven contributors to Kemp and Fry's 2004 anthology, including the co-editors respectively, analyse nine societies in detail, and refer to many others, that they

consider as peaceful according to the authors' definitions, including the Hopi of Northern Arizona, the Rotumans of the South Pacific, the Paliyans of South India, the Zapotec of Mexico, the Mardu of Australia, the Nubians of North Africa, the Sama Dilaut of Southeast Asia, the Semai of Malaysia, and Norway.

Fry in his 2006 book makes two key points:

First, the documentation of over 80 societies that have very low levels of aggression – those near the peaceful end of the cross-cultural continuum – again demonstrates the human potential for peace. Second, the existence of numerous highly peaceful societies calls into question the veracity of Western beliefs about natural human belligerency (2006: 7).

Fry deals in depth with several ancient societies, including the Zapotec of Mexico, the people of the Upper Xingu River Basin in Brazil, the indigenous people of Australia, the Semai of Malaysia, the Ifaluk of Micronesia, the Saami of Finland, and Norway:

These cultures have belief systems that promote nonviolent behaviour, as do most internally peaceful societies... (and) debunk the idea of universal male violence. The Norwegian example additionally shows that modern nations can achieve extremely low levels of aggression in social life (2006: 7).

These authors have each asserted that violence is neither natural nor innate. Kemp argues that the nature-nurture debate serves European imperialism, with its view of the colonised as 'primitive' or 'savage', while colonisers are viewed as civilised. He cites examples that contradict this colonising colonial gaze, including "the Iroquois' Great Law of Haudenosaunee (which) underpinned the United States Constitution,

the League of Nations, and the United Nations” (2004: 3)¹³. Barbara Mann confirms that the “main people involved in (reclaiming the role of the Haudenosaunee in the formation of democracy) are Bruce Johansen (1982) and Donald Grinde (1991)”¹⁴.

Drawing on the Yanomami people, Kemp espouses his humanism, most simply in his “essential truth, that no matter where or what a human society may be or call itself, its members belong to the same species the world over. We are all neither saints nor savages, but people” (2004: 5).

Fry aptly adds that Hobbesian cultural beliefs continue to bias interpretations in favour of world views that favour war over peace (2006). In respect of this, Fry prefaces his cursory chapter of three pages called “Cultural Projections” with an extensive quote of Carl Gustav Jung:

Our ordinary life still swarms with (projections). You can find them spread out in the newspapers, in books, rumours, and ordinary social gossip. All gaps in our actual knowledge are still filled out with projections. We are still so sure we know what other people think or what their true character is... We are still swamped with projected illusions (2006: 142).

It is ironic that Fry uses this quote, and this tiniest of chapters, to apply projection to other scholars who view war as natural and primordial, in a Hobbesian way, rather than to himself, who speaks about ancient indigenous societies around the world, sometimes arrogantly and from ignorance, sometimes, as will become clear later,

¹³ Kemp adds “see, for example, Johansen 1982; Martin 1997; also see a reply to the French by a Micmac leader in 1676 on who is truly civilized in McLuhan 1973:48-49”.

¹⁴ Email communication, 29 October 2007.

having thoroughly misunderstood the essence of *ubuntu*¹⁵ throughout the world. The concept is obviously presented in different languages, in most, if not all, societies throughout the world.

A little more upfront about both his location, and his prejudice, Reychler states explicitly that a “good example” of “sustainable peace” is “the European Union ... (and one which owes a great debt to the visionary leadership of the US)” (2006: 7). Galtung too speaks with pride of Scandinavia, and Norway in particular, as the epitome of peace¹⁶, and definitely considers democracy as parliamentary¹⁷.

The idea of statehood and democracy is contextual and contentious, at best, as Nigerian Ifi Amadiume argues:

the very character of kingship was uniquely different, since it was essential that the king had to be seen to retain his vitality, which was linked to the African moral and holistic philosophical order of balance... When the king lost this vitality, he was ritually killed. By contrast, ... in Europe the system itself has a momentum of its own, especially strong in the idea of the divine king, and can therefore support fools and even mad princes; the bureaucracy rules. We can see the continuation of this in our imposed European state systems....in comparison to much of the violence in European political and social history, Africa was politically stable under the moral authority of African kings from the first- to the tenth- century Ghana empire, to the empire of Mali... (1997: 8).

And the late Senegalese scholar Cheikh Anta Diop himself asserts: “Egyptian antiquity is to African culture what Graeco-Roman antiquity is to Western culture”

¹⁵ *Ubuntu* essentially refers to an African community spirit that postulates, “I am because I belong, my humanity is inextricably connected with the humanity of others”, rather than the Cartesian notion of “I think therefore I am”.

¹⁶ E.g. his special plenary at the 2006 IPRA conference in Canada.

¹⁷ E.g. his 2004 paper “Violence, War, and their Impact: On Visible and Invisible Effects of Violence”.

(2003 : 31). Quoting the report of a special experts' symposium in Cairo during 1974, convened by UNESCO, Diop confirms:

'Professor Vercoutter remarked that, in his view, Egypt was African in its way of writing, in its culture and in its way of thinking.'

Professor Leclant, for his part, 'recognized the same African character in the Egyptian temperament and way of thinking'.

Egyptian remained a stable language for a period of at least 4,500 years... The Egyptian language could not be isolated from its African context... it was thus quite normal to expect to find related languages in Africa.

The genetic, that is, non-accidental relationship between Egyptian and the African languages was recognized (2003: 31-32).

Diop spent *nine* years submitting and resubmitting his PhD dissertation to the University of Paris, after first submitting it during 1951. This dissertation would eventually be published as a book during 1955, *before* his eventual graduation in 1960, as *Nations Negres et Culture (Negro Nations and Culture)*, in which he argued that ancient Egypt was in fact a Black African society, a position that directly contradicts views held by mainstream academia at the time.

Diop thus showed ancient African notions and practices of culture and governance, through reclaiming ancient Egypt, which historically had been coopted by European philosophers. Thus Diop critically led the way for Amadiume and others to further illustrate ancient African democracies and peace, which preceded European forms of democracy by many centuries.

Thus Reychler et al's view of democracy and peace is a Eurocentric one, which simultaneously ignores the very real absence of human security for women (one in

three women survives domestic violence in Europe and around the world¹⁸), and for (im)migrants in the global North. According to an Amnesty International summary report,

The statistics on violence against women reveal a worldwide human rights catastrophe: At least one out of every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Usually, the abuser is a member of her own family or someone known to her. The Council of Europe has stated that domestic violence is the major cause of death and disability for women aged 16 to 44 and accounts for more death and ill-health than cancer or traffic accidents (2004: 2).

Kemp and Fry do not mention Gender or Women in the Index of their anthology, nor do they discuss gender issues explicitly anywhere in their anthology. Reychler, and his two erstwhile student-collaborators, Langer and Stellamans, are also equally gender blind. Galtung, on the other hand, includes a seven page chapter in his 1996 book, titled “Women : Man = Peace : Violence?”. In this he contentiously draws a correlation “between male sexuality and male aggressiveness” and weakly suggests that this is in part at least biological (1996: 40). In this section he names “Patriarchy as Direct, Structural, and Cultural Violence”, and suggests solutions including, controversially, biochemical drugs, increasing male empathy, “prolonging the mother-son relation”¹⁹, and theoretically, “interdisciplinary new social sciences” (1996: 46). The other chapters in this book are typically thirty pages long. At least Galtung, unlike many of his peers, does allocate the seven pages to a particularly androcentric and

¹⁸ E.g. two separate multi-country studies of Amnesty International, and the World Health Organisation (WHO), published during 2004 and 2005 respectively. For the WHO’s report, http://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/en/index.html, and summary report, http://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/summary_report/summary_report_English2.pdf . For Amnesty International: <http://web.amnesty.org/actforwomen/scandal-index-eng> .

¹⁹ Barbara Mann asks pointedly, in response to Galtung’s emphasis on the son only, “What about mother-daughter? As I point out in *Iroquoian Women*, the mother-daughter bond is the basis of all relationships and of spirituality. See pps 61, 89, 241, 251–52, 254. Email communication, 13 August 2007.

paternalistic consideration of gender, which is quite respectable, for his generation. Galtung is indeed the *Father* of modern, European, Peace Studies.

Unlike the aforementioned descendants of Europe, Ho-won Jeong²⁰, former convenor of IPRA's Global Political Economy Commission, published an excellent Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies during 2000, in which he dedicates a nineteen page chapter to "Feminist Understandings of Violence", and cites gender and human security expert Betty Reardon throughout the book. Unlike many of his peers, even scholars who have published books several years later, Jeong cites several female scholars where appropriate, and his bibliography lists numerous prominent feminist scholars. Jeong recognises "both manifest and latent (forms of) violence against women" (2000: 75), and delightfully asserts that: "Violence against women is not accidental but part of modern capitalist patriarchy. Thus, peace is incompatible with a patriarchal system that sustains war and exploitation" (2000: 80). So Jeong, unlike international legislation but in line with South Africa and Namibia's respective Domestic Violence Acts, acknowledges, quite radically for his field and his gender, economic violence as a form of gender-based violence, rooted in capitalist patriarchy.

Somewhat more typically of his gender, and a full decade after Galtung published his seminal 1996 book, Fry offers a slightly more complex analysis of gender, albeit equally parsimonious, in comparison with other themes in his entire book. He cursorily compares gender in two Zapotec communities in Mexico, and notes that sexual insecurity is a key indicator for gender difference and gender violence, and women's economic status: the more sexually insecure community exacerbates

²⁰ For a more complete review of this excellent study guide, please see Muthien 2002.

gender differences (e.g. deliberately constructed and enforced separate social spaces for men and women), has higher rates of gender violence including rape, and lower or no economic status for women in the community. This has impacts on child rearing, with the more patriarchal community engendering more violence in its male children, as it does in its generic society. Even run-of-the-mill liberal feminists have said this, and much more, for at least a century before Fry's gender epiphany.

While Galtung merely mentions Patriarchy, Fry does debunk what he calls "the patrilineal-patrilocal assumption": "all over the world, societies of small community size were shown to be neither essentially virilocal nor patrilineal in any sense. Virilocal reflects a mixed pattern of residence wherein patrilocality is prevalent" (2006: 166, 167). Fry instead refers to societies that are of "ambilineal or bilateral descent", that is they

recognize descent from both male and female ancestors... Some simple hunter-gatherers are patrilineal or patrilocal, *but most are not* ... bilateral descent is most typical, which means kinship to mother's and father's relatives are on equal terms. Furthermore, rather than male relatives clustering together in patrilocal residence, a great deal of flexibility exists among nomadic hunter-gatherers regarding residence patterns (2006: 167, 167-168, emphasis added).

In this swift and simple way, without considering the *realities* of matrilocality and matrilineality (thoroughly documented elsewhere, and discussed further in this thesis), Fry dismisses, without even considering, the germinal work of Marija Gimbutas, Peggy Sanday Reeves and numerous other scholars of egalitarian societies and Matriarchal Studies. Interestingly enough, Fry does cursorily discuss the fact that "the simplest foraging societies tend to have high levels of gender

egalitarianism”²¹, and he cites various scholars and societies, including “the polar Eskimo”, “the Yahgan”, “the Montagnais” which Leacock “observed”, “the Paliyan”, and “the Ju’hoan’ of Southern Africa (2006: 180). He refers to “the female autonomy that typifies simple hunter-gatherer bands. In many nomadic forager societies, females exercise considerable choice and freedom in sexual behavior” (2006: 180).

Thus these largely European male scholars have each contributed significantly to Peace Studies, and to our understanding of war, violence, conflict, and their single antithesis: peace or nonviolence. These scholars, however, remain Eurocentric in their visions and actions, and more so, gender-blind, as well as androcentric in their rudimentary understandings of gender. This means that women’s human security needs, and that of marginalised groups such as migrants, are usually ignored, despite significant evidence of the unique impacts of warfare, for example, on women (and children)²². This gender blindness implies that these scholars fail at least half of humankind (women). It also means, ironically, that the cause of peace, which can only be achieved through social justice, is not being served, ultimately. Hence an examination of feminist scholars in the field should prove useful.

Joanna Swanger’s comments may prove fruitful in transition²³:

²¹ Barbara Mann notes in an email communication of 13 August 2007, that “this is an old observation, from the early 19th century, part of stages-of-history thinking. I thoroughly discuss the “stages of history” nonsense in the Mounds book, pps. 27–28, 63–64 plus associated footnotes. See my comments on it, also, as Marxists used it, in Iroquoian Women, 194–98”. We shall return to this issue repeatedly in this thesis.

²² E.g. Turshen and Twagiramariya’s *What Women do in Wartime* (1998), Sheldon’s *Her War Story* (1999), Vickers’ *Women and War* (1993), and UNIFEM’s *Women, War, Peace* co-edited by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2002). In fact, the theme women war and peace or engendering security is an entire field of studies at present, not to mention the fact that even IPRA has a Gender and Peace Commission.

²³ Swanger is a white woman born in the United States, and Director of Peace and Global Studies, Earlham College, Indiana. Email communication 27 July 2007.

There is a thread that needs to be stated a bit more explicitly. With these authors (white, male, global North), we're seeing two contradictory trends: on the one hand, they're mining indigenous culture (while saying they don't want to mine/exploit it). And on the other hand, they're either explicitly or implicitly holding up parliamentary democracy as the gold standard (pardon the mineral-speak). So here are the problems that I see with this (in addition to other problems): 1) they're not really interrogating their own cultures, to see what can change there and how it can change; 2) sometimes (as in the case of parliamentary democracy), they're not even bothering to ask the question about what needs to change (they're saying that the global North is a culture of violence, but not making any connection between this and the form of parliamentary democracy); 3) and all the while, they're going about mining indigenous culture. Now, what happens when they've mined elements of indigenous cultures for the global North to "learn from"? In practice, if these questions are not asked, if North cultures are not sufficiently interrogated, then what happens is the "elements" that are "mined" from indigenous cultures end up being put into the churn, the well-oiled machine of parliamentary democracy, capitalism, and all the rest of the gears of the machine. And what happens then is: TRANSLATION IS BETRAYAL. This is the point that I don't think these authors have grasped sufficiently. There can only be an attempt at translation when one knows the parts of speech of one's own language first, and global North authors who don't analyze the dominant culture well enough to learn this grammar are not prepared for what the effort actually entails.

The question of who speaks for whom, where and how, and the notion of representivity and voice, will recur throughout this Literature Review, and indeed the entire thesis. The following section focuses on the work of (white) women scholars in the global North, who insert gender into their analyses, albeit from a Eurocentric viewpoint, which either mis/represents indigenous women, or ignores us all together, a bit like Swanger's metaphor of academic mining of indigenous cultures. What many of these arguably feminist scholars do better than their male counterparts, however, is to often examine their own societies, and its histories, especially beyond Patriarchy.

2.3. The Matriarchs on Peaceful Societies

The late anthropologist Marija Gimbutas²⁴ engaged in germinal fieldwork, in the region of her ancestors, the Mediterranean. Based on her excavations and other research, she argued that the Neolithic era was matrilineal and matrifocal, as well as gender egalitarian. Gimbutas has birthed an entire field of scholars in her footsteps, including Marguerite Rigoglioso, who asserts that Gimbutas “actually refused to use the term ‘matriarchy’ in her writings, and always posited that Neolithic society was mother-centered and characterized by gender balance” (2007: 102). Rigoglioso reminds us that Gimbutas herself has written that:

Indeed, we do not find in Old Europe, nor in all of the Old World, a system of autocratic rule by women with an equal suppression of men. Rather, we find a structure in which the sexes are more or less on equal footing, a society that could be termed a *gylany* (1991: 324).

Gimbutas referred to her findings in the following euphemistic ways:

A woman in a double grave in the cemetery of Upytė in central Lithuania had six bracelets on each arm, a silver necklace, a wheel-shaped silver fibula with chains and pendants, three long chains and a bronze pin, while her dress was adorned with bronze spirals along the edge. *The man with her had no grave goods at all ...* ...A double grave (husband and wife?). The man is equipped with an iron axe and a bronze pin; the woman, with an enormous quantity of ornaments and a Roman bronze vase (plate 24). Fourth century A.D. (1963: 137, 158, 271, emphasis added).

She contrasts these with Kurgan (warrior society) graves from post-Neolithic times:

²⁴ Two of Gimbutas' key works are *Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe* (1982), and *The Language of the Goddess* (1989).

Graves also indicate the superior family status of the man, who seemed to have unrestricted property rights over his wife and children. The frequent double graves of a man and a woman indicate the custom of self-immolation by the widow. The wife must follow to death her deceased husband — a custom which continued among Hindus in India (suttee) into the present century, and in Lithuania is recorded in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries A.D.

...When the feudal chief or the king died, not only the members of his family but also his servants and favorite slaves had to follow suit (1963: 42, 188).

As an aside, and to keep returning us to the lines of thinking and gazing, Barbara Mann reminds us that “of course, indigenes heatedly rebuke grave-robbing as a method of knowledge”²⁵. And Swanger reminds us that many scholars refer to

indigenous peoples in Asia, Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific. What's telling is that as we know, there are also indigenous peoples in Europe. This is representative of the hold that this (Eurocentric) binary has in the minds of academics of the global North: 1) there's Here (the global North); and then 2) there's Somewhere Else (everywhere else, the global South). Here's how the binary goes, and I know it well because I admit it sometimes gets a hold on me too: 1) there's no hope Here; but/so 2) there must be hope Somewhere Else. And so it goes: Indigenous peoples show the way, they offer hope, and they're Somewhere Else, not Here. One of many problems with this thinking is that it reinforces the urge to look elsewhere and not to interrogate dominant culture for (yes) even signs of hope here.²⁶

I have personally taken up a ritual to remind the wall-to-wall white scholars at both local and international conferences that they must be indigenous to Europe, if I am indigenous to Africa, each time they refer to “indigenous” as some vague exotic appetiser or dessert, devoutly remote from their lived realities as hard-core (social) scientists.

²⁵ Email communication, 13 August 2007.

²⁶ Email communication, 27 July 2007.

Unlike the vast majority of her peers in Anthropology, Gimbutas admirably focused on her own origins in Europe, even as she was based in California, and reclaimed these societies from centuries of brutal Patriarchal history. One of her arch critics is quoted by Rigoglioso in a review paper (2007: 102) as affirming these Neolithic societies as gender egalitarian and not patriarchal:

In Hodder's own words: "We are not witnessing a patriarchy or a matriarchy. What we're seeing is perhaps more interesting -- a society in which, in many areas, the question of whether you were a man or a woman did not determine the life you could lead" (pp. 290-91)²⁷.

In Gimbutas' own words, as she puts it clearly herself, during an interview²⁸:

So the system from what existed in the matristic culture before the Indo-Europeans in Europe is totally different. *I call it matristic, not matriarchal, because matriarchal always arouses ideas of dominance and is compared with the patriarchy.* But it was a balanced society, it was not that women were really so powerful that they usurped everything that was masculine... Men were in their rightful position, they were doing their own work, they had their duties and they also had their own power... .. Women were equal beings, ... and perhaps more honored because they had more influence in the religious life. The temple was run by women... It is wrong to say that this is just a woman's culture, that there was just a Goddess and there were no Gods. In art the male is less represented, that's true, but that the male Gods existed, there's no question. In all mythologies, for instance in Europe, Germanic or Celtic or Baltic, you will find the earth mother or earth Goddess and her male companion or counterpart next to her... knowing that there were cultures which existed for a long time without wars is important, because most twentieth-century people think that wars were always there... There are books suggesting ... that agriculture and war started at the same time. They say that when villages started to grow, the property had to be defended, but that is nonsense! There was property, but it was communal property. Actually, it was a sort of communism in the best sense of the word (emphasis added).

²⁷ Hodder, Ian. 2004. "Women and Men at Çatalhöyük." *Scientific American*, 2005:34-41.

www.sciam.com

²⁸ <http://www.levity.com/mavericks/gimbut.htm> , accessed on 25 July 2007.

It is variously recorded²⁹ that Gimbutas' chosen title for her book *Goddesses and Gods* was originally changed by the publishers, as a condition to publication, to *Gods and Goddesses*, and that Gimbutas' preferred title was only reinstated after the first edition sold well, and to great acclaim. Less shy than Gimbutas, Heide Goettner-Abendroth penned a germinal book in 1980 in her native German, which was published in English fifteen years later, titled *The Goddess and Her Heros*. One of the grandmothers of Radical Feminism, Mary Daly, published her foundation *Beyond God the Father* originally in 1973. Equally bold Merlin Stone birthed *When God was a Woman* in 1976, to extraordinary backlash from especially male academics.

Gimbutas' more cautious language was her reaction to the typical backlashes from Patriarchy, when we engage in reclamatory³⁰ work that challenges that hegemony, with its concomitant ideologies and privileges. Gimbutas is also protecting herself from the typically ignorant knee-jerk reaction that knows nothing but to create and perpetuate oppositions (dualities): women - men : nature – culture : matriarchy – patriarchy. With the assumption that if patriarchy is premised on domination and violence, of men by women, that matriarchy should necessarily equally entail women dominating and violating men. As I shall argue this is a fallacy, deliberately perpetrated by the phallocracy, to undermine critics of Patriarchy, who dare to show historical and even modern data suggesting alternatives to Patriarchy. As Heide Goettner-Abendroth puts it somewhat dryly: "Patriarchy itself has not been considered critically and stereotypical views of women, as well as a neurotic fear of women's alleged power, have often confused the issues" (2007b: 100). Similar

²⁹ In the interview above, Gimbutas refers to the naming of this book, and Rigoglioso and others refer to it in their reviews, as one example of Patriarchal backlash to Gimbutas', and others', work in this field.

³⁰ I prefer the act of reclamation, akin to Ifi Amadiume's "talking back" when insulted, to that of revisionism. Reclamation seems more agentic than the apparently more passive revision.

reclamatory work is done by African/ist scholars, for example, on Egypt, with somewhat similar attacks from the Greco-Roman male-stream.

However, even if Gimbutas did not use the word “matriarchy” to describe the forms of gender egalitarianism she found in her research, she was clear about how widespread veneration of feminine deities were, especially reverence for “Mother Earth”:

Earth is the Great Mother. All life comes from her: humans, plants, animals... in Lithuanian *Žemyna*, from *žemė*, “earth.”... As recently as the eighteenth century, Lithuanians offered gifts to *Žemyna* upon the birth of a child. Earth was to be kissed in the morning and in the evening. Offerings to the might of the earth — ale, bread, grains, herbs, or a sheaf of rye — were interred, laid in front of stones, attached to trees or thrown into the sea, rivers, lakes and springs. According to seventeenth century records, there were no festivals in villages during which the earth deity, *Žemyna*, was not venerated (1963: 191-192).

German philosopher Heide Goettner-Abendroth, however, has no compunction about naming, as she defines her notion of “Modern Matriarchal Studies”:

The research findings ... contradict the ideology of universal male dominance and universal patriarchy. Modern Matriarchal Studies is concerned with investigating and presenting non-patriarchal societies: those that have existed in the past and those that are, to some degree, still with us now. ... all over the world today, indigenous peoples in Asia, Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific area foster traditional cultures that show matriarchal patterns. These patterns are not just a reversal of patriarchy, with women somehow ruling over men ... rather they are, without exception, gender-egalitarian societies, and in most of the cases fully egalitarian societies. Hierarchies, classes and the domination of one gender by the other are unknown to them. They are societies that ... are stabilised by certain guidelines and codes.

With matriarchies, equality does not mean a mere levelling of differences. The natural differences between the genders and the generations are respected ... but ... don't lead to hierarchies, as is common in patriarchy. The different genders and generations each have their own value and dignity, and through a system of complementary activities they are dependent on each other (2007a: 1-2).

For Goettner-Abendroth Matriarchies are implicitly gender egalitarian, and do *not* imply domination of any sort, whether on grounds of gender or age/generation. She explicitly refers to the notion of “complementary equality” which engenders “balance” and “peacemaking” (2007a: 2). “This”, she says with the characteristic innocence of the idealistic, “is what makes them so attractive to those looking for a new philosophy to create a just society” (2007b: 99).

With courage she explains her path very clearly:

I call all non-patriarchal societies “matriarchal” despite the word’s various connotations... *reclaiming* this term means to reclaim the knowledge about cultures that have been created by women... In the case of the term “matriarchy,” we are not obliged to follow the current, male-biased interpretation of this word as signifying “domination by the mothers.” ... the Greek word *arche* has a double meaning. It means “beginning” as well as “domination.” Therefore, we can translate “matriarchy” accurately as “the mothers from the beginning,” while “patriarchy,” on the other hand, translates correctly as “domination by the fathers.”

The word “patriarchy” could also be translated as “the fathers from the beginning.” This nevertheless leads to its meaning as “domination by the fathers,” because not having any natural right to “beginning” (creation of life through birth), they have to enforce it through domination! By the same token, since the mothers clearly *are* the beginning by their capacity to bring forth life, they have no need to enforce it by domination (2007b: 100).

To quote the text on which much patriarchal faith in male domination over women rests, rather than reverence for the divine act of birth through which *all* life is created:

To the women He (God) said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." (Genesis 3:16).

Thus Goettner-Abendroth suggests, with no small irony, that patriarchal domination stems from a sort of male envy of women's wombs and women's capacities to create life through birth, a contradiction of the bizarre and controversial Freudian notion of women's alleged penis envy.

The key difference between Goettner-Abendroth and her peers, many based in the United States, is her explicit naming of and deliberate reclaiming of "matriarchies", despite strong criticism from patriarchal academy, media, and society at large. What all these scholars, including some of Gimbutas' worst critics, have in common, is a long overdue acknowledgement that Neolithic societies were gender egalitarian, and that some societies to this day practice various forms of this gender egalitarianism, including matrilocality and matriliney. The language may differ, but its essence is clear: there were, and remain, societies in which women are treated as equal to men, and societies in which childbirth and mothers are treated as sacred and with respect. Or as Barbara Mann puts it, "Well...they are societies in which men are treated as the equals of *women*"³¹. This particular point is key to my entire thesis, as will continue to be explicated throughout this publication, and especially in the Findings.

³¹ Email communication, 13 August 2007, original emphasis.

Drawing extensively on Gimbutas' work, Riane Eisler formulated two key types of society: partnership (peaceful and egalitarian) and dominator (violent and hierarchical). Eisler argues that the dominator model is based on "either patriarchy or matriarchy - the ranking of one half of humanity over the other", while the partnership model is one "in which social relations are primarily based on the principle of linking rather than ranking... In this model - beginning with the most fundamental difference in our species, between male and female - diversity is not equated with either inferiority or superiority" (1988:xvii). For Eisler the dominator model is based on domination and force and the power to take life (death, killing), rather than the power to give life (birth) as in the partnership model, where actualisation and maximisation of individuals' potentials are primordial.

As I have written previously:

Western and modern thinking and beliefs are premised on this dominator model, (which gives origins to the colonial model). It is centred on binary oppositions, on polarity, on identity construction premised on Self-Other, which has the Self only valued if the Other is devalued. The basic tenet is "I am because I am not". These societies are intrinsically unequal, hierarchical and oppressive. Here power becomes a resource to and over others. Significant examples of this dominator model, on which patriarchy is based, is the shift in ancient Aztec society from partnership to dominator models, the Nguni invasion of Southern Africa and dissemination of the indigenous people, the (KhoeSan), as well as more modern European imperialism, which (co-)constructed the present state system in Africa (2003: 13-14).

The dominator model has obviously impacted on people through centuries, and can be evinced in the work of the male scholars reviewed in the section above, when they fail to account for the entirety of humankind as critically including people in the global South and women the world over. The work of white women scholars also manifests

the dominator model when, for example, they speak on behalf of native women, as evinced in this particular section.

Peggy Reeves Sanday³² employs the term “gender egalitarian” or “complementarity” with passion. She does this, partly, to unify rather than to divide. As well as to silence³³ patriarchal supporters who are militantly opposed to anything vaguely related to matriarchies, even if its meaning is explicitly linked to equity, balance and harmony, rather than domination and violence, in the ways in which Goettner-Abendroth does. Sanday explains her position best in her own words:

The Minangkabau, Vanatinai, and Hopi cases are examples where the transcendental is *not* achieved by negating the feminine, the masculine, or processes associated with birth or death. The absence of such negation in these cases provides the occasion to question its universality and invites us to examine the grammar of gender ideologies that differ from the (binaried hierarchical) structure proposed by Levi-Strauss and Beauvoir (original emphasis).

The oppositional logic of Beauvoir’s and Levi-Strauss’ theory of the symbolic association of male/female and female in which men and women exist more in terms of their mutual negation than in terms of their *complementarity*. Using a *both-and logic*, we can say that men and women and their different activities could also exist in their mutual relation to one another – not just in spite of but because of one another... male and female are posed in a relationship of synthesis; sexual substances are not cast as representations of gender difference, and the negation of the feminine is not an issue. In their cosmological schema nature is seen not as being transformed by culture but as being in a complementary relationship with nature (1990: 12, emphasis added).

³² Sanday is known for tackling a range of challenging subjects with the most creative and rigorous scholarship possible, from human cannibalism through the ages (1986), to gang rape on university campuses (1990), and acquaintance (date) rape (1996).

³³ Or at least to reduce the patriarchal backlash to a murmur rather than its usually deafening cacophony.

Thus Sanday compellingly speaks of complementary, mutual and interdependent gender relations that are neither binaried nor hierarchical. She also convincingly employs traditional 'peace' language, or the discourse of conflict resolution, by speaking of "both-and logic", which implies win-win solutions, rather than modern day Eurocentric "winner-takes-all" options. From what I can see, there are no substantive differences between these brilliant scholars of gender egalitarian societies, with Goettner-Abendroth one of few courageous enough to insist on the reclamation of the term Modern Matriarchal Studies.

Genevieve Vaughan brings an interesting perspective to this discussion on global North women speaking about 'peaceful societies' or gender egalitarian societies. She has developed her Feminist Gift Economy paradigm in the most atypical ways possible, including practically gifting to causes, organisations and individuals the majority of her inherited wealth, apparently. She centres her paradigm on 'mothering', for example, a mother carries a growing child for nine months, gives birth under extreme conditions, then nourishes and nurtures the child throughout its life. This mothering is done without remuneration or similar reward, or indeed of expectation of such reward, as is typical of the Exchange system (capitalism), in which one usually exchanges ones labour for wages, goods and services for cash.

Vaughan conceptually draws what I depict in a simple table to juxtapose the two co-existing systems:

| Exchange System | Gift Economy |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Capitalist | Anti-capitalist |
| Patriarchal, based on domination | Feminist, women-centred, mother-centred |
| Exploitative, i.e. what is the most profit I can make for the least amount of investment | Renewing, i.e. giving selflessly, e.g. giving life through birth and maintaining life through breastfeeding. |
| Satisfying the dominant person's need/s, a bit like most patriarchal sexual relations | Satisfying the needs of others, and thus satisfying one's needs, i.e. satisfying one's needs through satisfying others' needs |
| Reciprocity, multilateral exchange, i.e. either party is compelled to exchange with the other. | Unilateral giving, i.e. giving without desiring a return. |
| Emphasis on Exchange, like trade, barter ³⁴ , deal. | Emphasis on Giving, as in gift. |
| Visible, e.g. bank balances and other physical/financial investments | Invisible, e.g. housekeeping, child rearing, supporting spouse's and children's careers, etc. A bit like women's work under capitalism. |

Table 2.1 Two Economic Systems: Exchange and Gift

Vaughan suggests that these two systems are “logically contradictory, but also complementary... What we need to do is validate the one connected with women, causing a basic shift in the values by which we direct our lives and policies” (2004: 11). With complementary one at first assumes that the two are symbiotic, which they clearly are not, since the Exchange economy feeds parasitically off the Gift economy, for example. women’s unpaid labour. Complementary implies a yin-yang relationship, with mutual, collective nourishing, yet in fact a ‘unilateral exchange’ actually takes place, with all its concomitant incongruity. The Gift Economy gives to, and vitally feeds, the Exchange Economy, and not reciprocally.

Joanna Swanger, in a review of Vaughan’s 2007 book, reflects on the question of which is the more fragile and which the more resilient system.

This critical tension is resolved in part by Paola Melchiori’s article, which recognizes the paradox and draws a distinction between the free gift economy and the forced gift

³⁴ Bartering is an intermediary phase between the ancient gift economy and modern capitalism. The ‘pure’ gift economy is unilateral, whereas bartering and reciprocity is multilateral *exchange*.

economy. Melchiori writes of the collapse of the Argentine economy in 2001: “The crisis was terrible, people were starving, but another economy was being discovered and used, awakening an enormous energy among people, developing what I would call a ‘healthy crisis’ of the social imaginary. Other ways to survive, other social fabrics, became visible and imaginable” (319). When the dominant logic is in place, the (forced) gift economy is indeed strained, often to the breaking point; but when the dominant logic of exchange suddenly fails on a massive scale, the (free) gift economy is renewed and flourishes.

The astute reader of this collection will see that it is the logic of the gift that is the more resilient because while the logic of exchange utilizes one narrow aspect of the complex human character—self-interest—and does so quite often to bad effect, the gift economy harnesses a much wider range of human capabilities that arise naturally from the parental response to children’s vulnerability and from ecological dictates.

The issue of lines, and mis-handling of lines, can be seen in the sense that some lines are wilfully ignored (e.g. the ignorance of the historical importance of certain lines, such as the notion of private property imposed by European colonisers, through which land was ironically stolen from native peoples), while yet other lines are crossed, when they should have been respected.

The paradox of Vaughan’s life’s work³⁵, developing the feminist gift economy paradigm, is that her family’s wealth is based on the expropriation and exploitation of Native American lands. So she is gifting the world, including Native Americans, with goods originally stolen, a bit like Robin Hood, in a manner of speaking? Yvette Abrahams might call this reparations in casual conversation, although Vaughan would strenuously assert that reparations also conform to the exchange paradigm, because it is exchanging repair for a misdeed. One should remind oneself, however, that Vaughan gifts us not merely with material resources, but also with the

³⁵ See also *Women and the Gift Economy: A Radically Different Worldview is Possible*, and *For-Giving: A Feminist Criticism of Exchange*.

reclamation of the feminist gift economy paradigm³⁶, as well as the wisdoms she has acquired through decades of grassroots and international feminist activisms that continue to this day.

Barbara Mann, drawing on Galtung's triangulation of violence and peace, questions if cultural peace "includes spiritual freedom, but what about economic freedom? No, I don't mean having a lot of money; I mean the gifting idea. Capitalism is economic violence"³⁷. Indeed, capitalism is economic, i.e. structural, violence. Hence freedom from capitalism is structural peace. The gift economy goes so much further than mere structures, to encompass ways of being. It speaks more of cultural peace.

A practical example of a primordial gift, for me, is the air we breathe, which remains free thus far, beyond commodification, unlike other gifts of nature such as water, rapidly being privatised around the world. As we will see in subsequent parts of this thesis, the feminist gift paradigm is present in many ancient and modern indigenous communities, including the KhoeSan. It is one of the key reasons our peoples have survived through the deprivations of patriarchies, colonialisms, and neo-liberalism.

We have in this section dealt with the works of feminist scholars, concerned with gender egalitarian societies, variously described, but in essence the same: respect for all members of society, and for the sacredness of birth and childrearing. These scholars are all of European ancestry, Caucasian or white, privileged and

³⁶ For more information on the feminist gift economy paradigm, and to download free e-books, please visit www.gift-economy.com which may change its domain name to www.gift-economy.org in the near future. There is also a loose network of scholar activists convened by Vaughan, called the International Feminists for a Gift Economy, as well as a public listserv on yahoo called "positive gift economy".

³⁷ Email communication, 13 August 2007.

disadvantaged in their unique ways, and honest all the same. While they are some of *the* most progressive women I know internationally, the lenses with which they view and engage with the world remain tinted by their particular positions and experiences. As the example below illustrates, white women can sometimes be as unconscious as white men of their power and privilege by, for example, taking up more speaking time and space at meetings than that allocated to women of colour. They also, in a particular 'euro-forming' way, 'speak each others' language', in ways that exclude Others, as Barbara Mann might put it.

The Writing African Women conference, held at the University of the Western Cape, 19-22 January 2005, was convened by the Nordic Africa Institute in Sweden³⁸, in collaboration with two local scholars, Desiree Lewis and Heike Becker. The opening keynote address was by anthropologist Dorothy Hodgson of Rutgers University, a white North American woman. Of all the women of colour at the conference, especially those who complained of having a white North American woman open an African conference in Africa, I was the only one to raise my hand at the end of Hodgson's presentation to question her and the organisers on issues of representivity and power.

At a more recent conference, on women and peace, I shared a panel with a white woman from the United States, to speak about the gift economy in Mali, where the white woman had spent *a month on holiday*. The panel was composed of two white women, who spoke first, respectively, and two women of colour, a Philippine-American spiritual leader, and I. The white women took up an hour of the panel's

³⁸ URL http://www.nai.uu.se/research/areas/sexuality_gender_and_soci/conferences/writing/, last accessed 30 October 2007.

ninety minutes³⁹, leaving the two women of colour with only fifteen minutes each. The panel convenor has been a celebrated gender activist for decades, including convening a group of women to attend the first women's conference in Nairobi in 1985, and a tireless supporter of especially indigenous women's issues over decades. One would expect greater consciousness of diversity issues at such feminist gatherings. A white colleague present during the panel, Joanna Swanger, commented on these dynamics afterwards:

White women had the floor for twice as long as women of color. To add insult to injury, one of the white women was presenting ABOUT people of color; a woman from the U.S. presenting about Africa... It matters deeply how we treat one another, and it matters deeply that we care enough to listen and do what needs to be done so that we are not replicating the very structures of injustice we're all devoted to revealing and overturning.⁴⁰

While the following quote may not be true of the white feminists discussed above, specifically, and is more generally apt in feminist contexts, bell hooks does sum up some of the challenges of the women's movement:

The ethics of care women show in the ethnic or racial groups which they identify do not extend to those with whom they do not feel empathy, identification, or solidarity. Women of privilege (most of whom are white but not all) have rapidly invested in the sustained subordination of working-class and poor women (2000: 111).

Stephen Moss praises the award-winning novelist Chimamanda Adichie, who is also frustrated by what Barbara Mann calls 'euro-forming', especially in relation to modern Africa:

³⁹ Part of this time was allocated to a short film on the gift economy in Mali.

⁴⁰ Email, 31 July 2007.

Adichie, who is only 29, says she finds CNN's coverage of Africa "exhausting" because of its refusal to let Africans do the talking. "They go to the Congo, for example, line the Congolese people up in the background, and then have a Belgian, who they say is a Congo expert, tell us about the Congo. And I think, 'Well, how about you bring the Congolese forward so we know what life is really like?' Sometimes I think, 'Wouldn't it be wonderful if I could become the voice explaining America or England to the world.' It would never happen."⁴¹

What this Literature Review in particular, and thesis in general, is doing is to allow women in the global South, and African women in particular, a fitting space to voice our ancient wisdoms. Our indigenous sisters in the global North are appropriate allies.

2.4. Sisters on Peaceful Societies

Women shall be considered the progenitors of the Nation. They shall own the land and the soil⁴².

The Constitution of the Five Nations
60-LX, TLL, in Parker (1926)

In this section I shall investigate the work of two key authors, and members of the network International Feminists for a Gift Economy: Barbara Mann, descendant of the Iroquois, and Shanshan Du, Han Chinese ethnic national writing about the Lahu in China. Both scholar-activists are based in the United States, Mann close to sixty years old at time of writing, and Du in her forties.

⁴¹ *The Guardian*, 8 June 2007

⁴² This ancient recognition of women as sacred holders of the land and its people, has become coopted by patriarchal discourses, in similar ways that other key notions and practices are often coopted. Hence the meaning of this quote, centuries old, is decidedly different to its coopted meaning in national discourses where women are touted as reproducers of motherhood and the nation, while men retain all the power.

Let me start by quoting Sanday, before letting my 'native' colleague, Barbara Mann, speak for herself: "In the nineteenth century the Iroquois were described as matriarchal, and in the twentieth century they have frequently been cited as an example of sexual equality" (1981: 25). I quote Sanday here to set the tone for this section, and to foster reconciliation in the awareness that not all white women are the same, as well as with the knowledge that Mann respects Sanday's work, which is not the case for many other white women scholars, especially in the field of anthropology.

Mann expresses one of her key vexations most eloquently:

It is very frustrating for those (of us) who do not come from a western perspective to talk to those who do, because Euroamericans impose rigid rules of discourse, from which no dispensation is allowed. First, all terms must be western terms. Second, any departure from western metanarratives is construed as a failure of comprehension on the part of the nonwestern speakers. Third, all "alien" ideas must be immediately restructured so as to fit into western preconceptions, even if it means destroying the content of the original idea. Finally, only western discourse formats are allowed...

There is a fair amount of narcissism in this code, bred, I suspect, by the casual assumption that western culture is properly measured and understood. Academia's pretense of multiculturalism aside, the fact remains that western scholars continue to make little or no effort to comprehend nonwestern thought (2003: 1).

She dispenses with superfluous punctuation like hyphens as she does with the accoutrement of politenesses: with the assertiveness bred of the struggles to survive, like most native peoples. This theme will recur throughout this thesis, and particularly in the chapter on Methodologies.

Mann speaks quite bluntly about her notion of "Euro-forming", that is to:

force-fit Native concepts into artificial conformity with western logical systems, at once inserting and disguising massive Euro-Christian interpolations, which then pass for Native content. Euro-forming rests on a cavalier monoculturalism, which often goes unchallenged in the academy because of two ensconced caveats:

1. That Indians are to be seen (preferably, in regalia) but not heard, and
2. That all Indians look alike, leaving archaeologists free to mix and match quite foreign traditions with breath-taking impunity (2003: 169).

Mann unequivocally names her native people, as in the title of one of her many books, *Iroquoian Women*. One of the more interesting things about Mann is that she responds to any sharing of the colonial, *and* modern, conditions of the KhoeSan, in the following way, “hell, that sure sounds familiar”. Which allows the similarities, in terms of structural and cultural conditions (*a la* Galtung), of indigenous peoples the world over, to vibrate to a higher frequency than perceived difference, e.g. skin colour or hair texture or geographic location. This is a central theme for many scholars of indigenous societies, both natives ourselves, and those descendant of colonising cultures.

However, given the space constraints of this thesis, a detailed analysis of Mann’s inspiring work must of necessity be delayed until a more substantive research project is embarked on in the near future.

Thus I will only touch on a precious few recurring critical issues in Mann’s germinal scholarship, namely:

1. The dualities of Western dialectics, premised on “one-thinking”. Which can be juxtaposed with indigenous (peace) societies’ hallmark of “binary thinking”. In this view Binaries (sic) are cooperative like “twins embracing each other”, while Dualities (sic) are conflictual and/or competitive “opposites yanking away from one another” (2003: 199).

2. Her swift debunking of the 19th century notion of “stages of history”, that is, an idea of history as linear and Darwinian.
3. The idea of ‘chosen trauma’ for political use in monotheistic cultures, and how these resonate into the modern patriarchal era as evinced through widespread generic violences;
4. The central focus on the mother-daughter relationship, which requires a radical beyond-patriarchal viewpoint and the assertion that this is the basis of all relationships and of spirituality. This women-centred thinking has Mann remind us of societies in which *men* are seen as *equal to women*, with *women* the benchmark, the standard, the norm.

1) Dualities of Western dialectics

Mann critiques scholars who view Native traditions as “myths” arguing:

Ignoring Natives, Euroamerican scholars seek enlightenment instead from such archly western thinkers as Joseph Campbell, Claude Levi-Strauss, Robert Hall, Mircea Eliade, Carl Jung, Ake Hultkrantz, scholars who presume to explain “primitive” behavior. Because their ruminations are based on western expectations of Savagery, however, all they manage to build are airy superstructures that, while they may feel exotic to westerners, nevertheless fail to represent anything approximating genuine Native logic. The resultant disinformation masquerades as the real low-down on Native conceptual styles (2003: 170).

Given this typical safari-type euro-scholarship, one can see how the Iroquois and KhoeSan can find such easy kinship, in collectively laughing at the pith helmets and khakis, even if accompanied with fatality such as influenza epidemics and sundry other enslavements.

Mann corrects the European assumption of time:

Among the Iroquois, sacred things are told only in the morning, but morning is *not* synonymous with daylight, as it is for westerners. “Morning” runs from midnight to

noon, and “afternoon” runs from noon to midnight. Since ceremonial “morning” and “afternoon” each have equal amounts of light and dark in them, Brown’s adjective “dark” is meaningless, failing to comprehend the complex system of interactive, halved wholes common to eastern logical systems. At the same time, it erroneously props up western oppositional thinking in its formulation of day = light/good vs. night = dark/bad. Thus, Brown’s simplistic characterization of “myths” told “after dark” did little more than Euro-form the issue. The fact is, western logic precludes comprehension of Native logic (2003: 170).

Mann continues to expound on the characteristics of European dualities:

Europeans operate on metaphors of ONE: There is *one* god, *one* way, *one* truth; people have *one* soul, *one* life, *one* true love. Two of anything necessarily indicates rivalry. In the either-or universe thus projected, the two are assumed to be at odds, with one fraudulent, for there can be only *one* legitimate version of anything. Each version must, therefore, try to destroy – or, at least, to subjugate – its rival. The Manichean dichotomy of Good vs. Evil is a perfect expression of this oppositional logic of the West, calling upon the *one* heavenly god to be perpetually at war with the *one* hellish devil... *Nothing* in this logical system could be farther from the thinking of *any* eastern tradition, as the many recorded laments of early missionaries show... It cannot, therefore, be too heavily emphasized that Christian monotheism and its baffling dualities of good and evil, god and the devil, heaven and hell, the upper world and the underworld *have no counterpart in traditional Native thought...* (2003: 173-174).

Mann explains that Native thought however sees:

... paired, interdependent complements working in synch to re/create the whole of the universe through the balanced interaction of positive and negative charges. The positive and negative manitou are *not* to be confused with Christian good and evil... In Iroquoian lore, for example, the *otkon*, or negative force, is called “wrinkled”, and the *uki*, or positive force, “smooth”. Wrinkled things are most often associated with *Earth spirits*, such as the Horned Serpent, the Turtle, or the Bear, whereas smooth things are most often associated with *Sky spirits*, such as the Great Eagle, the Thunderers, or the Sun. Either smooth or wrinkled forces can create either benefit or

harm for humans, for *there is no moral content involved*, just a likely effect...The best bet for humanity is to find out the direction of any spiritual flow and dip with it, not against it... It is important to see that Sky and Earth are in league, not in competition. Neither Sky nor Earth can permanently interfere with, deflect, or destroy the medicine of the other (2003: 173-174, 175, 179).

Mann refers to her Native Two-by-Four logic, which sees humanity not divided into, but united as, two distinct and complementary halves (male-female and young-old), which are in turn each complemented by the Native binaries within itself (age within gender/sex, and gender/sex within age). Thus we have Two in Four. Similarly Mann analyses in great depth the Burial Mounds of her Native Ohio, and refers to the foundational logic and praxis of Circle-Square (or rectangle), which underpins much of her culture, in different mathematical formulae. Similarly the Native Earth-Sky binary is complemented by the Native Water-Fire binary. And thus each Native binary is complementary to another, and part of complex geometric patterns that are not merely reflected in nature (e.g. the lunar calendar) but in Native architecture and other symbology, all of it viewed and lived as profoundly sacred and interconnected.

So when Mann refers to *binaries*, she does *not* mean dualities as in a Eurocentric sense, but complementarities. This critical issue of complementarities and interdependencies underpins belief systems and practices of many indigenous cultures the world over, including the KhoeSan. As Mann puts it, “*Everyone* has two spirits, an Earth spirit from her mother and a Sky spirit from her father... The Earth spirit comes out of the ground – *not* an underworld – whereas the Sky spirit comes from outer space – *not* heaven” (2003: 180). This certainly resonates with many cultures, including the Hindu and Buddhist notions of yin-yang, which will be discussed shortly. Mann reminds us that “the hallmark of peace societies is their

(Native) BINARY thinking”⁴³. These Native binaries, Mann reiterates, are interaction, cooperation, collaboration, not the polar opposites of western culture... ShanShan tells me it is very much the same concept as the Lahu people have”⁴⁴.

2) linear history

Mann thoroughly discusses what she calls “the ‘stages of history’ nonsense” in her Mounds book, as well as how “marxists used it, in *Iroquoian Women*, 194–98”⁴⁵.

For the record, there is absolutely no connection between European Celts and Native North Americans. Reckless conflation of the two debases the cultures of both. The rationale behind the urge to connect Celts and Natives is the racist assumption that they existed at the same time, primitive stage of history and, therefore, mirrored one another’s development. A culture-bound idea hatched in colonialism and appealing only to people who see history as a straight line, notched at intervals with benchmarks of “progress,” stages-of-history anthropology is thoroughly discredited today (2003: 209-210).

One of the major Patriarchy scholars in the world, Max Dashu⁴⁶ affirms:

Respectfully, I think it is an error to generalize from the classic European/American histories, and their claimed antecedents in West Asia, and other early patriarchal systems, to the entire world. Meaning that in fact there is not one chronology for the appearance of patriarchy, as theorized from looking at Indo-European, west Asian or Chinese contexts, but a much more complex picture when looking from a truly international perspective that includes indigenous peoples. Otherwise, how could we even be speaking of mother-right cultures in the present? This long historical process

⁴³ Email communication, 13 August 2007.

⁴⁴ Email communication, 14 August 2007.

⁴⁵ Email communication, 13 August 2007.

⁴⁶ Max Dashu is an artist and scholar who founded the Suppressed Histories Archives in 1970, focused on global women's history and archaeology. See www.suppressedhistories.net and www.maxdashu.net.

of patriarchalization has been pressing forward since those first dominance cultures appeared before 3000 BCE⁴⁷.

Abrahams also asserts that “the colonization of time was part of the conquest of Africa”, and quotes ‘Captain Hendrik Witbooi’ critiquing colonial German law as “narrow and uncouth”: “they (Germans) order their lives with dates and hours”! (2000: 9). “To the Khoekhoe”, Abrahams confirms, “the imposition of colonialism came to mean a shift from an abundance of time to time so short, it had to be measured” (2000: 11), from plenty to scarcity, from fluid/ity to measured.

3) chosen trauma

The notion of “chosen trauma” was probably first posited by psychoanalyst Vamik Volkan⁴⁸, in collaboration with others:

Large-group (ethnic, national, religious) identity is defined as the subjective experience of thousands or millions of people who are linked by a persistent sense of sameness while also sharing numerous characteristics with others in foreign groups. The main task that members of a large group share is to maintain, protect, and repair their group identity. A ‘chosen trauma’ is one component of this identity. The term ‘chosen trauma’ refers to the shared mental representation of a massive trauma that the group’s ancestors suffered at the hand of an enemy. When a large group regresses, its chosen trauma is reactivated in order to support the group’s threatened identity. This reactivation may have dramatic and destructive consequences.⁴⁹
...when an individual’s symptomatic expressions are inflected by large-group historical experience, the psychopathology itself connects the individual to his or her

⁴⁷ Email communication to international Matriarchal Studies listserv, matriarchalstudies@yahoogleroups.com, 20 June 2006.

⁴⁸ Volkan co-founded the Center for the Study of Mind and Human Interaction (CSMHI) at the University of Virginia in the USA, which “promotes stability and security in severely stressed societies”. See <http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/csmhi/mission.cfm> and <http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/csmhi/history.cfm>, last accessed 23 August 2007.

⁴⁹ Volkan, 2001.

large group with a profound sense of belonging which, in turn, creates a resistance to relinquishing the psychopathology. To these individuals, giving up the large-group relationship, object-relations conflicts, symptoms, and/or character traits is a threat to the comforting identification that has closely bound them to the large group. If we do not understand this sense of threat, we will fail to appreciate the strength and depth of our patients' resistance.⁵⁰

In a special seminar in Australia during 2005, Volkan discusses responses to different types of tragedy. He argues that catastrophes caused by:

the deliberate actions of an enemy group in the name of large-group identity, that leads to massive humiliation and killing of another group ... are different from natural disasters. When a massive tragedy occurs, those who are affected may suffer from what is known in the literature as post-traumatic stress disorder. The focus of this seminar is on two additional responses that are primarily societal/political in nature. The first ... is the emergence of new shared preoccupations. The second ... refers to the concept, transgenerational transmission. Members of a traumatized society may not be able to perform fully or adaptively certain necessary psychological tasks, such as mourning their losses. They "transfer" such unfinished tasks to the next generation(s) as if their offspring will perform these unfinished tasks for them. This may lead to the evolution of excessive entitlement ideologies and new societal/political traumas.

Mann readily acknowledges that she extends this concept of "chosen trauma" to Patriarchy, and she suggests that "chosen trauma"

seems to be a basis of patriarchy, or, at least, of monotheism. Consider the absolutely chosen (i.e., not naturally occurring) "trauma" of the crucifixion and all the permission for violence that it has engendered for the last 2000 years, or the various trials of the Islamic prophet and its continually chosen "traumas," etc.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Volkan 2005a.

⁵¹ Email communication, 14 August 2007.

All religions with their origins in Patriarchy, and which are of necessity monotheistic, have deeply rooted “chosen trauma”, from the Christian crucifixion, to the persecutions⁵² of all major religious prophets and their allied supporters by other religious zealots (e.g. Jews against Pagans, Christian ‘Holy Wars’ against Muslims, Muslim *jihads* against *infidels* or *kaffirs*⁵³ (Arabic for non-believers), to the Holocaust perpetrated by the German Nazis against Jews and other ‘social undesirables’ during World War II, to British concentration camps for Boers during the Anglo-Boer war, to Afrikaners descendant of Boer survivors creating Apartheid, now outlawed as a crime against humanity by the International Criminal Court.

Mann is especially concerned with chosen trauma being formed for later political use. For example, Golda Meir and her political descendants use the WWII Holocaust and a lengthy history of persecution of Jews by others through centuries as the basis of dispossession of the Palestinian people, original inhabitants of the state of Israel.

In this way the notion of ‘chosen trauma’, and its neat and necessary nexus with Patriarchy, and monotheism, is akin to other foundational aspects of Patriarchy, such as duality, conflict, and gender oppression. Mann’s records of intrinsically egalitarian Iroquoian society serves as comforting antidote to the horrors of Patriarchal murder and mayhem.

⁵² See, for example, Karen Armstrong’s widely celebrated book, *A History of God*.

⁵³ The irony of Arabic *kaffir* redeployed under colonialism and later Apartheid, for Nguni speakers, is inescapable.

4) mother-daughter

In two of her books, Mann points out that the mother-daughter bond is the basis of all relationships and of spirituality:

Sky woman fell to earth through a hole in Sky World, bringing with her the Three Sisters of agriculture (corn, beans, and squash), as well as the daughter in her womb. In Iroquoian lore, it was the Daughter who bore the Sacred Twins, after mating with an Earth Spirit... Creation constructed the Iroquoian view of a well-ordered universe, one which counted its descent through the female line, all the way back to the stars (2003: 181; 2004: 251).

Mann reiterates Iroquois “symbols of bonding” where the “mother-daughter relationship (exemplifies) the primary female form of social connection among the Iroquois”, as well as “enunciating the primary male bond in Iroquois society, brotherhood... the authentic Iroquoian culture values cooperation above all else” (2004: 89).

Mann reminds us that Iroquois grandmothers governed the social sphere “exclusively” and that

Iroquoian cultures esteemed elder women as sowers of wisdom and givers of life, the guardians of the next generation. Daughters inherited these mantles upon maturity. This female focus led to social practices outrageous to Christian patriarchy: inheritance through the female line; female-headed households; pre- and extramarital sexual relations for women; female-controlled fertility; permissive child rearing; trial marriages; mother-dictated marriages; divorce on demand; maternal custody of the children in the case of divorce; polyandry; and female-appointed Hunting Wives... “Domestic life was entirely controlled by the women, and they were regarded as the heads of the household.”... Since the Mother-Daughter relationship was the basis of society... All bowed to the authority of their female leaders (2004: 241, 254).

Mann describes the Clan Mother's roles in detail:

She was...the wisest, most impartial, and most politically astute of the elder women of that lineage. The women of her lineage in that town nominated her and put her into office by acclamation. She thereafter had the responsibility of seeing to all executive duties, including family living space allotments and equitable distribution of clan goods and work; oversight of her clan's tasks in calling and putting on feasts; maintenance of calm relations among clan members; and the judicious disposition of disputes within her longhouse. She represented her lineage at the Clan Mothers' Council. In addition, she was the ultimate proprietor of her clan's weapons of war, distributing them to – or withholding them from – the young men according to the judgement of the women on the rectitude of the military action proposed (2004: 254).

Mann even contends “that the spirit of the *gantowisas* (grandmothers) breathed down upon colonial-era feminists” which might explain “why, for instance, women's rights became such a rallying cry during the Revolutionary periods of America and France” (2004: 243).

As Mann relates above, the Iroquoian notion of complementary binaries is reflected well in Shanshan Du's work with the Lahu of her native China, and the Lahu foundational concept of 'twinship'.

Shanshan Du, unlike Mann and I, remains gentle, although she too has suffered due to her perceptions of her family's political beliefs, since childhood during the Cultural Revolution in China, even if she is born of the Han ethnic majority. Like the Chinese ethnic minority Lahu who adopted her, she always speaks with compassion and generosity, even when critiquing others, and despite having moved to the United States as an adult scholar.

Du's work⁵⁴ describes the Lahu's gender egalitarianism as rooted in their faith or belief system, as well as in their lived socio-political-economic system. Du shows that Lahu gender ideology and practice is based on the couple as dyad, and this dyadic unity ranges from their Great Creator, to the heads of families as a female-male couple, to the leader of a community as a female-male couple, to the spiritual (indigenous and Buddhist) leader as a dyadic female-male unit. Child rearing and domestic chores are shared, and economic and political tasks are not gender or sex segregated. Values like generosity and gentleness are revered, while aggression is discouraged. Property is held in common by a couple, and kinship is bilateral – traced through both parents. As in Africa and elsewhere, the dyadic unit and their offspring are firmly located in a wider society also organised dyadically according to the foundational concept of gender egalitarianism.

In a conference paper of 2005 Du highlights four different models of gender equality: (1) maternal centrality (of which the Iroquois are an example); (2) gender complementarity (e.g. the Igbo of Nigeria with its male and female monarch respectively); (3) gender triviality (where “individual autonomy and collective cooperation” are highly valued); and (4) gender unity, e.g. the Lahu, where “societies minimize the symbolic and social significance of sex differences... gender equality is fostered in the unity of the two sexes, rather than being achieved by a careful distribution of equal power and prestige between males and females”.

⁵⁴ See Du's germinal 2002 book, as well as other subsequent publication.

Du asserts that her work helps:

to break through the long-enduring and deeply rooted Western emphasis on hypothetical utopian societies that has prevented us from recognizing the existence of extant gender-egalitarian societies. ... the difficulty in recognizing the existence of gender-egalitarian societies is rooted in Western utopian ideals towards gender equality, which, ironically, often turn the notion of the universality of female subordination into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Such a tendency has been exacerbated by the double standard used to measure gender equality and hierarchy – i.e., while gender equality must be perfect to exist, gender hierarchy can exist in any degree. Under the shadow of this utopianist bias, very few scholars who have encountered gender-egalitarian societies directly acknowledge those societies as such, thus further weakening the impact of their studies. Comparative studies of gender-egalitarian societies can contribute greatly to the removal of the utopian blinders that hinder our recognition of gender-egalitarian societies (2005).

Thus Shanshan Du's gently assertive voice weaves the way for Africans to speak for ourselves.

2.5. Answering Back – Our Peaceful Societies Speaking for Ourselves

This section focuses on the work of scholars that are women and rooted in Africa. The work of African feminist icon, Ifi Amadiume, will be dealt with first, in a pan-African context, locating Southern African within a much broader geographic region, moment and movement. Thereafter an analysis of Yvette Abrahams' germinal life's work with and on the KhoeSan will be examined.

Amadiume speaks of the Igbo notion of "*Nzagwalu*":

Sooner or later, we have to move beyond a critique of racist European anthropologists and their work, and this has resulted in a sizeable *Nzagwalu* literature. (*Nzagwalu* is an Igbo word meaning answering back – when you have suffered an insult, you have to answer back.) There is now a need for consolidating a dialogic literature, as this compels statements, propositions, responses, conversation, and, therefore, a dialogic library. A dialogue necessitates the existence of more than one view. A dialogue exposes the grounds on which we are standing – that is, our partiality or our position/theory on specific issues. This means that we have to make primary fieldwork a priority, in order to begin to open a dialogue which will acknowledge the voices from the wide-ranging bodies of knowledge that have developed within and between cultural groups on the continent of Africa, and in the course of Africa's various historical contacts with other nations and peoples other than Europeans (1997:4).

Amadiume understands protest as different from *Nzagwalu*. For Amadiume:

Protest implies powerlessness, while *Nzagwalu* affirms confidence and certainty...Which identity, what status should Africa assume? Who should write a people's social history? Is it a people who should first say what they are, before others can then comment on what people say they are? Or is it others who should be telling Africans what they are? I do not know one single case in which Africans wrote the social history of any other nation (1997: 4,5).

Amadiume's assertion that Africans should write for ourselves can be extended to who critiques our writing, who uses our writing, when we do manage to get down to writing at all. A reviewer, Christine Mathieu⁵⁵, of Shanshan Du's 2002 book arrogantly insisted that the global North was at root, and by law, gender equal, riding roughshod through Du's theorising, while reserving a final paragraph of praise for Du's "ethnographic material". In this review Mathieu asserts that "gender equality is guaranteed by law in much of the post-industrialised world", even as it is popularly known how fallacious, no pun intended, this retreat to 'paper rights' is in practice, for

⁵⁵ Mathieu, 2004.

example a recent research report on a persisting “gender pay gap” in Europe⁵⁶.

Mathieu thus perpetuates the myth of women of colour only being ‘good’ for and as “ethnographic material”, and ‘no-good’ for theory, especially about ourselves.

In a Khoekhoe form of Amadiume’s “*Nzagwalu*”, Yvette Abrahams constructed a “non-review” of Rachel Holmes’ 2007 book on Sarah Bartmann, in which she lambasts Holmes for citing her, Abrahams, the internationally acknowledged ‘expert’ on our ancestor, only *once*, and that in a *footnote*. In this “non-review”, Abrahams cites a *long* list of black feminist scholars, local and international, who have written about, or around conceptual issues pertaining to, Sarah Bartmann, *all of whom* Holmes ignored in her book: from Pumla Gqola to bell hooks. Abrahams concludes in this “non-review”:

Nowadays, it has become unfashionable to use the r-word. To call Holmes an unreconstructed racist who refuses to engage with Black scholarship because she is incapable of dealing with our ideas may be unjust, and who knows? may even hurt book sales. So I shall refrain from doing so.

It is all so last-century. This being the case, I must insist on asking the same questions I have asked of white scholarship on Sarah Bartmann for over a decade now:

1. If you cannot treat her descendants with respect, how can you claim to respect Sarah Bartmann?
2. How can you write history without respect?

Until those questions are answered, I must regretfully decline to review this book. It has not earned my scholarly attention.

Let me now turn my gaze to Abrahams’ substantial work about⁵⁷ Sarah Bartmann. As Abrahams puts it so powerfully during 2004, “like other children of genocide, I fear

⁵⁶ <http://www.feminist.org/news/newsbyte/uswirestory.asp?id=10441> , last accessed 28 August 2007.

death like an intimate friend stalking my footsteps. Before I was even born, my people saw enough violence to last them several lifetimes. We are still fighting the fear that it will happen again". Abrahams uses

the metaphor of "...cleaning my historiographical house..." to explain why it is necessary to subject the analyzers to such a searching examination. The metaphor pictures a house of history, fouled and littered with almost two centuries of the most obnoxious sexism, racism, and classism, in which it is impossible that an elderly African lady would feel comfortable. It was necessary to clean up, I argued, before we could properly welcome auntie Sarah Bartmann into the house of African history. However, when the cleaning is complete, renovations must begin.⁵⁸

And thus Abrahams determinedly constructs

an Africanist history of Sarah Bartmann. ... to turn a circle - as the first person of Khoekhoe descent to write a book length study of Sarah Bartmann, I feel it my duty to turn from externally generated historiographies to creating a story centering on a Khoekhoe woman, by a Khoekhoe woman, using historical and contemporary Khoekhoe ideas of history and art. In doing so, I turn my back on previous analytical treatments of her life, which, I argue, have denied her person historical autonomy in favour of perpetually reconstructing racist and sexist discourses (ibid).

Abrahams asserts that "if Diop is right, then patriarchy itself is not a practice of African origin":

⁵⁷ I am deliberately refraining from using the preposition "on", which to me implies domination, colonisation, subjugation. Instead I am choosing to use alternative words like "about", which appear less violent to me. I shall write more on violence/s in the next chapter, on Methodologies, and throughout the rest of this thesis.

⁵⁸ Abrahams, 2001.

With the Khoekhoe it is slightly different from worldwide trends. The transition to patriarchal religions quite clearly took place in the context of slavery, colonialism and genocide. The process is well recorded and can be dated rather precisely from the 1670's (Islam) and from 1760's to 1910's (Christianity). Whether the original Khoe religion was matriarchal depends on how you define it. In technical terms our Great Creator is understood to be above gender, since our Creator created the creatures that have one gender, the creatures that have two, and the creatures that have three. That I might prefer to approach our Creator as Mother, rather than Father, has to do with the limits of my human understanding and not with the nature of the Divine...many of the people who now call themselves Christians would never have allowed the living Jesus into their house. He was too scruffy. So be scruffy likewise and keep up the good work!⁵⁹

Max Dashu suggests⁶⁰ that instead of being constrained by human fallacy, Abrahams' feminine divine has rather more "to do with the limitations of the human context (she is) responding to! In which case the return to Sacred Mother is restorative and heals the wounds inflicted by domination."

Replying to Abrahams, Dashu affirms in the same missive:

In this light, the Khoekhoe are not anomalous, but in very good company. Conquest mechanics initiated patriarchalization in some places, accelerated it in others, and cultural resistance has to be recognized too, because that imposed change did not totally overcome the old reservoir of culture. In many places in Africa, the shift to male dominance and patrilineage occurred within the last thousand years, and is still going on in some places.

Abrahams' writings variously refer to recurring issues critical to this thesis, including an apparent lack of hierarchy or "chiefs" among the KhoeSan:

⁵⁹ Email to pan-African Gender and Women's Studies listserv (gwsafrica@lists.sn.apc.org), 15 June 2006. For info on list: <http://lists.sn.apc.org/mailman/listinfo/gwsafrica>, last accessed 29 August 2007.

⁶⁰ Email communication to international Matriarchal Studies listserv, matriarchalstudies@yahogroups.com, 20 June 2006. For more on Dashu's life's work see <http://www.suppressedhistories.net>.

The Khoisan displayed a considerable degree of social homogeneity. They did not seem to have chiefs, or if they did they certainly did not hold them in respect... Elphick used (the) concept (of chieftainship) with many reservations. He noted that the "...Khoikhoi failed to develop a form of hereditary chieftainship that could hold society together even during relatively short periods of hardship,..." He also argued that "...the effective power of chiefs varied as much as the trappings of their office..." In view of these reservations it is tempting to wonder whether the Khoisan could be said to have had chiefs at all... The Europeans who came to the Cape had what may be called a cultural bias towards hierarchy... The issue of who were regarded as authority figures within Khoisan society must be separated from the fact that the Europeans preferred to deal with individuals rather than collectives and would designate a particular group after that individual: 'Herry's people', 'Gonnema's people' and so forth (1994: 18, 31-32).

Thus Abrahams delineates the notion of collective leadership, which will be touched on further in the Findings of this thesis.

Abrahams also questions Eurocentric obsession with conflict and war, often attributed to resource constraints, and European projection of these notions onto us nonviolent Natives:

There was nothing intrinsic in the nature of the evidence to show that (e.g.) cattle-keeping did not spread by gift and sharing, for example, rather than by migration, conquest and clientage... ...there is a problem of a cultural bias towards conflict... The idea that a people could live without fighting each other was and is impossible for historians to accept. Yet the only evidence for this conflict came from travelogues which were biased towards seeing African people as inherently conflict-ridden. The written sources were much more informative about European perceptions of the Khoisan than about Khoisan history itself (1994: 25, 29).

Abrahams powerfully draws links between KhoeSan nonviolence-as-a-norm and decentralized leadership:

The conclusion that the Khoisan were not 'acculturated' to killing as a way of life is borne out by ... Khoisan methods of struggle. They waged what we would call nowadays guerilla warfare, which proved enormously effective against the British troops. Although the Khoisan occasionally made combined attacks, normally leadership was decentralized, with group of guerillas making decisions on their own. Most of the raids concentrated on undercutting the economic basis of the colonists by driving away their livestock. Colonists were killed, it seems, only when a specific grudge was held against them, or when they were on commando... "...murder was not the first goal of the rebellion..." ... (e.g.) a woman was spared, though her husband was killed and his gun taken... The Khoisan could be seen to steer a complicated path between the exigencies of resistance, the necessity to return to a time when 'we lived very contentedly' and the desire to retain an element of human compassion. White re-occupation was not resisted in 1804 because some Khoisan were refusing to ... become a society of warriors (1994: 58-59).

Michael Besten is a black South African scholar of note, who has chosen to specialize in the KhoeSan, and even to co-create a Centre for KhoeSan Studies, based at the University of the Free State, even as he aggressively asserts that he is *not* of KhoeSan descent (his mother is Nguni and his father European). He refers to Abrahams and her urban educated counterparts as "neo-Khoe-San", and interprets the meaning of "Khoekhoe" in Nama as "men of men" or "people" (2005: 3), rather than "people of people" or "human being", as Abrahams does (1994: 241).

Besten also adopts colonial patriarchal language, including the assertion of chiefs and hierarchies among the KhoeSan (2005: 18, 23), in direct contradiction of scholars like Abrahams, activist leaders like Jean Burgess, and the wise elder women interviewed for this study. In this sense alone Besten epitomizes the extent of

patriarchalisation of societies, and the KhoeSan in particular, as well as the contest over space, place, meaning, especially related to gender. Even as he engages in groundbreaking historiographies of the KhoeSan, and reclamation of its culture. He speaks like the patriarch he was born to be, born into two patriarchal cultures: the Nguni and the European. Emblematic of the complexities of life, of the world, Besten simultaneously acknowledges, with characteristic patriarchal assertiveness, “the fluidity of early Khoe-San group identities linked to splitting encouraged by nomadism was interrupted by the disruption of traditional survival strategies with the onset of White settlement” (2005: 49).

Wayne Dooling analyses the ‘Hottentot or Caledon Code’ of 1809, legislation enshrining the enslavement of the KhoeKhoe, and cites a ‘settler’, Dr John Philip of the London Missionary Society, as “representative of many when he wrote in his famous *Researches in South Africa* that the legislation of 1809 consigned ‘the Hottentots... to universal and hopeless slavery’” (2007: 50). Dooling also quotes the 1837 British Parliamentary Select Committee on ‘Aboriginal Tribes’, “heavily influenced by missionary testimony”, interpreting the Caledon Code as “riveting (the Khoikhoi’s) chains” (2007: 50). Dooling refers to the Code as transcending “serfdom” and as signalling

a new form of rule that was to be in line with the reality of colonial dispossession... (which) marked the final step in the transformation from independent peoples to ‘Hottentots’, that is, subjugated Khoikhoi in the permanent and servile employ of white settlers... (The Code) assumed that the relationship between white settlers and Khoikhoi was to be that of master and servant (2007: 53).

Dooling is one of several male scholars, like Michael Besten, who document and analyse the horrors of KhoeSan dispossession during colonialism and later. These male scholars rarely reflect on gender, and its impact on the enslavement of the people they research.

In sharp contrast to Besten and other scholars' phallogocentrism, Abrahams refers to her mother, almost casually, yet profoundly reverentially, as "the root of my life" (1994: 201). And as Abrahams respects and pays tribute to her mother, and her ancestors, she also acknowledges her "love of spirituality and oneness with earth and sky" (1994: 235). In KhoeSan tradition, being woman, I draw my lessons from my female line, and follow in the footsteps of my elder female kin, which Abrahams is immediately, Amadiume a neighbour, and Mann and Du more distant neighbours. All part of the global extended family... which fundamentally informs the next chapter, on Methodologies, as well as the entire thesis.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter was an explication of scholarship on nonviolent as well as gender egalitarian societies, and how these two issues, nonviolence and (gender) egalitarianism, critically intersect. Indigenous societies in general, and the KhoeSan in particular, illustrate these intersections well, in their ancient practices of nonviolence and gender egalitarianism. The rest of this thesis will explicate this more practically. It may be most opportune to share the poem that directly resulted in the return of Sarah Bartmann's remains to South Africa from France. This poem, penned

by Diana Ferrus, so moved a French Senator, Nicholas About, that he began petitioning his government to return Sarah Bartmann's remains to her birthplace.

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Diane Ferrus: A Poem for Sarah Bartmann⁶¹</p> <p>I've come to take you home – home, remember the veld? the lush green grass beneath the big oak trees the air is cool there and the sun does not burn. I have made your bed at the foot of of the hill, your blankets are covered in buchu and mint, the proteas stand in yellow and white and the water in the stream chuckle sing-songs as it hobbles along over little stones.</p> <p>I have come to wretch you away – away from the poking eyes of the man-made monster who lives in the dark with his clutches of imperialism who dissects your body bit by bit who likens your soul to that of Satan and declares himself the ultimate god!</p> | <p>I have come to soothe your heavy heart I offer my bosom to your weary soul I will cover your face with the palms of my hands I will run my lips over lines in your neck I will feast my eyes on the beauty of you and I will sing for you for I have come to bring you peace.</p> <p>I have come to take you home where the ancient mountains shout your name. I have made your bed at the foot of the hill, your blankets are covered in buchu and mint, the proteas stand in yellow and white – I have come to take you home where I will sing for you for you have brought me peace.</p> |
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⁶¹ In *Ink @ Boiling Point*, WEAVE Collective, 2000.

Chapter Three – Methodologies

“indigenous research is a humble and humbling activity”

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 5)

In this chapter I will review Methodology as an idea and practice, in relation to the ways in which this particular research project was engaged in.

Throughout this project a level of deliberate consciousness was maintained. This consciousness was about respect: for self, for the people and the literature engaged with, and for the final product – this thesis.

The consciousness also pertains to reclaiming a history for the descendants of the ancestral knowledge engaged with, so that it can be used to help rebuild our self-respect, our communities, and our society at large. It has been a task replete with unimaginable psychic pain, the pain of the ancestors, both perpetrators and victims-survivors, and the pain of the descendants desperately trying to make meaning of a harsh life and world, with interior-exterior inexplicably co-dependent. Yvette Abrahams puts it very clearly:

The children of the Khoisan have suffered enough. I fail to see why they should be confronted with an unusable past even in their history books. They should in school, as they do at home, learn to be proud of themselves, who they are and where they have come from (1994: 80).

It may be useful to note here that terminology is conceptualised in detail in the Introduction (first chapter) of this thesis, especially the use of the term “KhoeSan” and the term that preceded it among progressive and educated descendants, “Khoisan”. Abrahams’ use of “Khoisan” above during 1994 has subsequently given way, a decade later, to her use of “Khoe Khoe” to describe her people, based in Namibia. Throughout this thesis, and as explicated in the Introductory chapter, I employ the more inclusive term “KhoeSan”, in line with several other scholars and activists, including Priscilla de Wet at the University of the Free State and community leader from the Eastern Cape, Jean Burgess. The “KhoeSan” I employ refers to the first inhabitants of Southern Africa.

Indigenous researchers working with indigenous peoples have highlighted the need for decolonising methodologies to research and to develop approaches that are more respectful, ethical, sympathetic and useful.

Barbara Mann, renowned Iroquoian scholar-activist, maintains that the past has until now been ‘unusable’ because it has been written in a particular “euro-forming” way. She argues that:

...the massive corruption inserted into the record by western writers has yet to be excised from the sources. Before interpretations can be justly ventured, the dollop method of ethnographic inquiry must cease, after which considerable spade work remains to be done by knowledgeable Natives, not only to identify, test, and eradicate western interpolations in the record, but also to elucidate the results in a *Native* way (2003: 172).

Mann argues that:

1. Native logic must be understood on its own terms, as presented by Natives who are respected by their peers as culture-bearers.
2. Customs and traditions must be clearly identified by their nation of origin, cleared of western interpolations, and brought to bear in cultural context.
3. Extrapolations from group to group must be made only when the groups are culturally related and/or when similar customs or philosophies are shown to have been shared on more than a superficial level (2003: 173).

Linda Tuhiwai Smith, a leading theorist on decolonization of the Maori in New Zealand, in a powerful critique of dominant research methodologies, argues that:

The word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary... it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful... scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism... It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity (1999: 1).

This is one of the key reasons why I, as Native, African, black, indigenous, First Nations, KhoeSan, embodied a particular consciousness and respect, as well as humility, when engaging in this research with my Native people, and when writing about our people. My task is made somewhat easier as I position myself as an indigenous woman tracing my First People's roots through my mother line. At the same time my task is also made harder, because I cannot distance myself from the lives of my ancestors and my contemporaries, from colonial genocide, from the depredations of Apartheid, from the invisibility and poverty of communities deliberately ignored by a government I spent my childhood devoted to bringing to power.

Rauna Kuokkanen, of the Sami people of Scandinavia, and citizen of Finland, refers to a “critical intimacy”, which she contrasts with “the scholarly distance that is so highly valued”. Kuokkanen recognises the “deconstructive principle of inevitable participation” as a “necessary first step in elaborating viable alternatives” (2007: xiv). Kuokkanen conceptualises “indigenous scholarship, with its multiple discourses”, as well as “indigenous epistemologies”, and asserts the

power of individual and collective experiences to inform and construct theory and analysis... Personal narratives and testimonies can give voice to painful personal and collective histories, and the power of this must not be underestimated. Many indigenous authors, among other marginalized groups in society, cite personal experience as one of the main reasons why they write. When they share their experiences... on the written page, many readers can better understand their own often unexpressed feelings and realize that they are not alone (2007: xvi-xvii).

The emotional horror of engaging in this research was always present. To name but one example, as I opened Pippa Skotnes’ book, *Miscast*, to page 19, two severed heads stared back at me: apparently the heads of young KhoeSan men, used as trophies. After several days I attempted to open it again, with a similar reaction. I tried once more, third time also unsuccessful. I have been unable to open this book since. The trauma of, for example, reading of KhoeSan women’s breasts turned into colonists’ tobacco pouches⁶⁰ cannot be ignored in research of this nature.

This thesis was born of questioning, my own innate curiosity, and my desire for knowledge and information, about my people, my culture, ways of living, thinking, belief. This project was also birthed through deep intuition, a knowing that is vaster than intellectual knowledge, connecting heart with mind, emotion with intellect. As I

⁶⁰ Skotnes, 1999:15-16, 23.

set off to ask questions of wise people, to seek answers in books and papers, I often felt afraid. It was a fear rooted in my person, in my body, in my past and in my present, deep in my psyche.

Feminist standpoint theory emerged from scholars including Dorothy Smith⁶¹, Sandra Harding⁶², Nancy Hartsock⁶³, and Patricia Hill Collins⁶⁴. The standpoint 'view' can be contrasted with male-stream 'point-of-viewlessness', in that these feminists acknowledge their bias and openly include it from the start and so create greater objectivity (or honesty at the very least.) 'Point-of-viewlessness' is generally considered 'objectivity' because it presents its bias as fact.

Sandra Harding (1987a and b) problematizes the notion of a single unified feminism, and acknowledges a multiplicity of feminisms, feminist theories and feminist methodologies. If traditional empiricist objectivity is deemed obsolete to and for feminists due to their personal and political commitment(s) to their research, and they question the 'truth' of androcentric positivist inquiry, what guarantees do they have of their own 'truths', especially if it originates from and is propagated by white, educated, bourgeois women (who control the discourse in similar ways to that of white men?) Harding suggests that epistemology answers questions including who can know, how to legitimate knowledge (through what kind of tests) and what (kinds of things) can be known (1987a: 3). This relates to the 'context of discovery' (for example the questions posed and hypotheses set) and 'context of justification' (the

⁶¹ Canadian feminist sociologist born in England in 1926. Noting people's birth years is an ancient acknowledgement of their age and wisdom, still practiced in many indigenous societies today. It also contextualizes these scholars in relation to various moments in history and movements.

⁶² Born 1935, Harding is a US feminist scholar renowned for her critical work on feminist epistemology.

⁶³ Feminist philosopher and political scientist at the University of Washington in Seattle, born 1943, known for her seminal essay "The Feminist Standpoint".

⁶⁴ Born 1948, Collins is widely respected for her book *Black Feminist Thought* (1990).

way to test hypotheses.) Feminist empiricists start at 'discovery', reject 'justification' and replace it with an alternative that includes 'subjectivity' (as against the negation of responsibility in 'objectivity').

Patricia Hill Collins argues that knowledge and ideas are inescapably connected to power, and she concerns herself with the emancipatory potential of especially social theory, keenly engaged in social, political, economic justice (1998). Collins' theory is born of struggle. bell hooks (1984) mentions the fact that some white feminist scholars who control the discourse use their male counterparts as a standard and she posits that it may be more useful to consider the position of oppressed (working class, black, lesbian) women as their yardstick.

In a more recent book, *Feminism is for Everybody*, hooks defines "visionary feminism" as rooting "our imagination in our concrete reality while simultaneously imagining possibilities beyond that reality" (2000: 110). hooks defines her standpoint: "Feminist politics aims to end domination to free us to be who we are – to live lives where we love justice, where we can live in peace. Feminism is for everybody" (2000: 118). Harding's standpoint view, Collins' activist scholarship, hooks' accessible 'visionary feminism', wedded with indigenous feminist epistemologies are methodologies this thesis is constructed on, is built around. Harding (1998) argues powerfully for "cognitive diversity":

The human intellectual repertoire consists of many styles and many ways of organizing the production of knowledge. There exists no justifiable scientific or philosophic reason to restrict them to the small numbers that have been favored at particular times and places. "The" scientific method can be enhanced by our

appreciation of the wealth of intellectual resources to be gained by valuing and promoting cognitive diversity.

It has taken me *years* to conceptualise this project, with widespread consultation, during times when my intuitions of fluidities were considered not merely radical but *abhorrent*. Yet, I persisted. If other ancient indigenous societies, from the Lahu in Asia to the Sami in Scandinavia to the Iroquois in North America, were-are fluid, gender egalitarian, and nonviolent, then the KhoeSan could be too.

It is because I am Native, because I am woman, that I wish to honour my ancestors in particular ways; that I pay tribute to the women who constructed, rather than contributed to, this project, in central ways; that I write, as best I can, in compassionate and constructive ways, rather than in the ways I was taught at university: by critique, with intent to demolish. Harding (2002) argues for a more open relationship that is engaged rather than detached, between researcher and participant, because “strong objectivity” is best achieved through not merely acknowledging, but also being reflexive of one’s standpoint.

This project began with me through questions and intuitions. It is simultaneously beyond me, because I was learning from, with, and deeply located within, various communities, including knowledge communities. For example, Barbara Mann whose support heartened me through the darkest days of engaging in this research, put it perfectly when she said to me:

Field work was pretty easy for me, since I AM the field. I have the built-in “in” of being a member of the community. I think you have something of this same “in” yourself, don’t you? The farther away from my family’s geographical locale I was, the more

tenuous people were, simply because they did not personally know me. I simply followed our traditional rules of introduction. Ideally, one known and trusted elder sends you to another, but, because genocide has been so danged (sic) thorough in the U.S., this was not always possible. In those instances, I brought proper wampum, and introduced myself in a very traditional way, with lineage histories, a statement of who sent me, why, and what the message was I brought. I'm sure that there is a similar tradition among the Khoisan women for breaking the ice. The most important thing for me was actually having the lineage recital, especially since I am descended through the female line, which is all the Iroquois care about. I suspect there is much the same thing in your situation, so I would know the lineages cold.⁶⁵

With similar casualness, albeit more as an outsider in relation to her research community, Shanshan Du describes the collation of data for her PhD, and subsequent book, *Chopsticks Only Work in Pairs*:

The methods I used are described in the introduction chapter of my book. The main strategy I used to get information is to make friends with them [the Lahu]. Collecting life histories and social memories relating to your subject are often a good start. The challenges are often to generate more questions and to become more focused when lives are going on in all directions in the field.⁶⁶

This research project was a combination of literature survey and 'fieldwork'. The literature is reviewed in the preceding chapter. The 'fieldwork' is rooted in participatory methodologies, on which my life's work is founded. I deliberately write 'fieldwork' in this way to distinguish my work from traditional social scientific inquiry, often of an outsider, imbued with 'appropriate' systemic power and privilege. My work was less a tour or a trip, and more a journey, a journey to my roots, a re-affirmation of my centre.

⁶⁵ Email communication, 21 February 2007.

⁶⁶ Email communication, 27 February 2007.

This journey consisted of various critical and intersectional components:

- Conversations with KhoeSan ‘experts’ such as Yvette Abrahams and Priscilla de Wet;
- Interviews with community leaders such as ‘chief’ Jean Burgess from the Eastern Cape, one of only two female KhoeSan ‘chiefs’ in the country;
- Interviews with community organisers such as Grace Humphreys and Lizze Afrikaner, who work for the South African San Institute (SASI), and with whom I travelled on part of my journey;
- Interviews with women in communities, especially elder women, whom I name below;
- Conversations with allies such as Nanette Fleming and Lizelle Kleinhans, white South African women, who worked for SASI in Askham in the Kalahari at time of writing, and with local allies like Mikki van Zyl and Sharon Stanton, white women veterans of the local gender violence movement;
- Deep conversations at international meetings with indigenous sisters, such as Barbara Mann, Shanshan Du and Letecia Layson, and with allies such as Joanna Swanger, Genevieve Vaughan, Peggy Reeves Sanday, and Heide Goettner-Abendroth. Among other things, these scholar-activists belong to a network called International Feminists for a Gift Economy, founded and convened by Vaughan.

The interviews were conducted in person, where possible, as well as via email, telephone and fax. The selection of interviewees is focused on descendants of the KhoeSan of Southern Africa⁶⁷, in particular contemporary KhoeSan community leaders, especially women elders. Focus group discussions were arranged with existing KhoeSan communities, especially spiritual leaders, and elder women.

⁶⁷ The Khomani San in the trans-frontier Kgalagadi park, bordering South Africa and Botswana, as well as others outside the park in the Kalahari, in the communities of Welkom, Andriesvale, and Askham, are key communities still very in touch with their ancient roots. So are the !Xun and Khwe in Platfontein, outside Kimberley, relocated from Namibia and Angola respectively. The San community actively engaged in teaching their children to speak, read and write the Khomani language in Upington, is another critical constituency. These are some of the few remaining KhoeSan and their descendants who are still fluent in their original languages, and still practice at least some of their ancient ways.

Spending several days per visit in each community, over the period of a year, was essential.

The work of leading scholars, of European descent, on the KhoeSan were also examined. The interviews also generated additional lists of 'experts' who were interviewed. While key open-ended questions were prepared, the interviews were unstructured so as to garner as much information as possible, and to not 'lead' interviewees.

Some of the texts, such as the anthology of stories from Riemvasmaak, as well as oral statements, interviews and focus groups, were originally in Afrikaans. Some focus groups had participants speak in their home languages of !Xun, Khwe or Khomani, which was then almost simultaneously translated into Afrikaans by one of the bi- or multilingual participants. All these Afrikaans narratives were translated into English by this researcher, who is well versed in both languages. Hence language never provided significant barriers or obstructed the research project in any way.

The research of necessity consisted of focus groups in and with communities, especially with elder KhoeSan women. Critically tied to these focus groups were genders and sexualities trainings, focused on consciousness transformation, that I engaged in with these communities.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith refers to this as "sharing knowledge" rather than "sharing information", because she affirms that "the old colonial adage that knowledge is power is taken seriously in indigenous communities":

The responsibility of researchers and academics is not simply to share surface information (pamphlet knowledge) but to share the theories and analyses which inform the way knowledge and information are constructed and presented. By taking this approach seriously it is possible to introduce communities and people who may have had little formal schooling to a wider world, a world which includes people who think just like them, who share in their struggles and dreams and who voice their concerns in similar sorts of ways... The challenge always is to demystify, to decolonize (1999: 16).

Smith asserts that “sharing knowledge” and “reporting back” to communities “assume a principle of reciprocity and feedback” (1999: 15). Living an indigenous gift economy, as Barbara Mann and Genevieve Vaughan might suggest respectively⁶⁸.

In addition to “sharing knowledge”, I also engaged in concrete resource sharing, such as securing funding for two forms of community projects: one a community garden, the other a community kitchen, both to feed the unemployed hungry people in the ancient Kalahari desert. I worked compassionately in other ways. For example, I argued in favour of formalising the lifelong voluntary work of a female community activist, Anetta Bok, of the Bok clan, who is also the gender representative on the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC), by having SASI provide even a modest honorarium for Bok to coordinate a women’s group in the Kalahari, the first of its kind ever, as far as I could determine. These are examples of some of the concrete effects of this research project in the Kalahari.

⁶⁸ www.gift-economy.com



Fig. 3.1. Anetta Bok, gender representative of the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC), and local women's rights organiser

Amadiume speaks of the Igbo notion of “*nzagwalu*” or “answering back”:

Sooner or later, we have to move beyond a critique of racist European anthropologists and their work, and this has resulted in a sizeable *Nzagwalu* literature. (*Nzagwalu* is an Igbo word meaning answering back – when you have suffered an insult, you have to answer back.) There is now a need for consolidating a dialogic literature, as this compels statements, propositions, responses, conversation, and, therefore, a dialogic library. A dialogue necessitates the existence of more than one view. A dialogue exposes the grounds on which we are standing – that is, our partiality or our position/theory on specific issues. This means that we have to make primary fieldwork a priority, in order to begin to open a dialogue which will acknowledge the voices from the wide-ranging bodies of knowledge that have developed within and between cultural groups on the continent of Africa, and in the course of Africa's various historical contacts with other nations and peoples other than Europeans..... I understand protest as different from *Nzagwalu*. Protest implies powerlessness, while *Nzagwalu* affirms confidence and certainty....Which identity, what status should Africa assume? Who should write a people's social history? Is it a people who should first say what they are, before others can then comment on what people say they are? Or is it others who should be telling Africans what they are? I do not know one single case in which Africans wrote the social history of any other nation (1997: 4, 5).

I have thus tried to engage with this dialogue, this multilogue, this polylogue, to acknowledge the wisdoms of others, and especially to acknowledge the wisdoms of the elder women in our communities, the last ones remaining who can still speak our indigenous languages, the last ones who still remember times when women were respected, when women were listened to, when women's roles in society were considered *sacred*. It is my desire for these elder women to 'answer back', to speak their truth. So that generations of young KhoeSan women can have concrete examples of women's strength and power in our communities throughout time, and KhoeSan men can learn respect anew, self-respect and the necessary respect for women, women who birth life by virtue of our very biology. I do this as a descendant of the KhoeSan, through my sacred and ancient mother line.

My methodologies are rooted in an Africa as old as time, and a people whose wisdoms, history, culture, and livelihoods are shared within and between generations, through word of mouth. Oral history is, then, a major source of my information, and the collection of this oral history, stories of women's strength and courage, is the participatory research method employed here. Through speaking *with* KhoeSan women, and reciprocally sharing wisdoms, I reaffirm my being part of these KhoeSan communities. I reaffirm my human-ness. As Shulamit Reinharz says, "Once the project begins, a circular process ensues: the woman doing the study learns about herself as well as about the woman she is studying" (1992: 127).

The most important aspect of recording oral history is to reflect the wisdoms of people whose voices may never have been heard otherwise. These voices are usually of the most marginalised, mostly women, often indigenous women. It is also

important because most of the elder KhoeSan women whom I interviewed have limited formal schooling and do not write or read⁶⁹. Hence I am taking it upon myself, younger KhoeSan woman that I am, to write the stories of KhoeSan women elders, with and for them, with and for our ancestors, with and for the younger generations, with and for society at large, with and for my late mother and with and for myself.

Reinharz affirms:

Some histories *must* be transmitted orally because the individual is incapable of writing. Oral testimony is invaluable for historians who seek information unlikely to be contained in written records. To the extent that men's lives are more likely to produce written documentation, men are more likely to be the subject of analysis by historians who use archival data. Thus oral history, in contrast to written history, is useful for getting information about *people* less likely to be engaged in creating written records and for creating historical accounts of *phenomena* less likely to have produced archival material. Relatively powerless groups are therefore especially good candidates for oral history research... First person accounts are required to understand the subjectivity of a social group that is "muted," excised from history, "invisible" in the official records of their culture (1992: 131, 133, original emphasis).

Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues that, unlike methodologies that consider

the values and beliefs, practices and customs of communities as 'barriers' to research or as exotic customs with which researchers need to be familiar in order to carry out their work without causing offence (that) indigenous methodologies... approach cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology. They are 'factors' to be built in to research explicitly, to be thought about reflexively, to be declared openly as part of the research design, to be discussed as part of the final results of a study and to be disseminated back to the people in culturally appropriate ways and in a language that can be understood (1999:15).

⁶⁹ Mikki van Zyl suggests we employ a new term, "orality", to describe oral wisdoms, rather than Eurocentric notions of knowledge rooted in literacy. Email communication, 31 August 2007.

The indigenous methodologies I engaged in relate to a “long-term commitment”, as Smith puts it clearly, to the communities into which I was born. A lifetime commitment, from a childhood of contributing to end Apartheid, to an adulthood of working towards more generic social justices for our most marginalised communities. This commitment is my life.

Like Smith, my methodologies also acknowledge “research as a significant site of struggle between the interests and ways of knowing of the West and the interests and ways of resisting of” indigenous peoples (1999: 2). I support Smith’s view that:

benefiting mankind (sic) is indeed a primary outcome of scientific research (which) is as much a reflection of ideology as it is of academic training... research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions (1999: 2, 7).

The conditions under which I engage in my research rests also on the feminist political principle of the inextricable connections between the local and the international. As Smith puts it:

The world’s indigenous populations belong to a network of peoples. They share experiences as peoples who have been subjected to the colonization of their lands and cultures, and the denial of their sovereignty, by a colonizing society that has come to dominate and determine the shape and quality of their lives, even after it has pulled out. As Wilmer puts it, ‘indigenous peoples represent the unfinished business of decolonization’ (1999: 7).

Thus when Smith speaks of Australian “Aborigine women (who) talk about a history of being hunted, raped and then killed like animals”, I know *precisely* what she means, both as a social scientist familiar with my own history and that of too many

other colonised peoples, as well as deep within the cells of my body which to indigenous peoples is known as *cellular history*⁷⁰. It then makes perfect sense when I describe to my Iroquoian colleague, Barbara Mann, the still-prevailing colonial tot system and its consequence of foetal alcohol syndrome, and she immediately replies with “Hell yes: that’s so familiar to us over here”.

Much of what I say in this chapter, which is descriptive of how I went about my research, is reflected in the preceding chapter, which describes the literature underpinning this research. This centres on lines⁷¹ and whether or not these are and could/should be crossed, and possibly how to cross lines or how they are often crossed. Conventional academia lives off lines. And the most fundamental line of all is the one that separates the speaker from the subject matter, by means of a line called "objectivity." The other line that the academy imposes is that knowledge, when it is used for any overtly political purpose (e.g. recovering indigenous histories), is immediately suspect.

Since the women I worked with are neither objects nor subjects, but active participants in this study, imbued with at least equal, if not more, power than the researcher, I wish to name them individually.

Throughout 2006 I travelled to rural and deep rural areas, to learn with local people, and women in particular, places including Calvinia, Nieuwoudtville, Kapteinskloof Mountains near Aurora, Robertson-Montagu-McGregor. I worked with local

⁷⁰ For scientific references on cellular memory, see, for example, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cellular_memory, and Kate Linton, 2003.

⁷¹ Lines here refer to boundaries, for example, “crossing a line from which there is no return” or “walk a straight line”. It is also a reference to Cartesian linearity, and phallogocentric knowledge systems and discourse.

community organisers, like Elize Petoors who was working with the Calvinia community at the time, and Lynn-Ann du Preez in Montagu.

In addition to these relatively shorter journeys, I engaged in three key longer journeys to the Northern Cape, one during the height of summer in December 2006; the second during April 2007; and the third during May 2007 with the onset of winter. The first journey was through three provinces: the Western Cape, the Eastern Cape, and the Northern Cape. The second journey was entirely through the Northern Cape. And the third and final journey, for the purposes of this thesis, was to particular ancient places in the Northern Cape, around three key sites: Platfontein near Kimberley; Upington; and Askham-Andriesvale in the Kalahari.

During December 2006 I journeyed through the Baviaanskloof, where Sarah Bartmann was finally laid to rest during 2003, mountains with the most beautiful ancient rock art⁷², to Prince Albert⁷³ where male workers on a private nature reserve⁷⁴ begged me for information on KhoeSan history, to Nieuwoudtville with its ancient glacier floor and sacred engravings.

⁷² One of the places with the most beautiful rock art is the Cedar Farm, owned by the former director of the Contact Trust NGO in Cape Town, Linden Booth. For samples of rock art from here, URL: <http://www.baviaan.co.za/asp/FA.asp?PageMode=second&ID=1> , last accessed 4 September 2007.

⁷³ The Francie Pienaar Museum in Prince Albert had a special exhibition on the KhoeSan at the time of my one visit, during January 2007.

⁷⁴ Bushman Valley, in the Swartberg Private Nature Reserve, URL <http://www.uys.com/bushmanvalley/> , last accessed 4 September 2007.



Fig. 3.2. Stone Age rock art in Baviaanskloof cave.

During April 2007 I journeyed through the following places: Nieuwoudtville and Calvinia, Au-grabies National Park, Upington, Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, Welkom, Askham and Andriesvale in the Kalahari. In each of these places I met with different people and groups. In Au-grabies I met Angela Isaks, the South African National Parks' People and Conservation Officer for that region. Isaks introduced me to a group of local women who lived either in the Park or in the town Au-grabies immediately outside the Park. Isaks explained her portfolio, as well as conditions in the region. She introduced me to Christine du Plessis, her counterpart in the Kgalagadi Park, with whom I also met.



Fig. 3.3. Nieuwoudtville glacier floor on which symbols are engraved: fish and triangles are most prominent.

In Upington I met with the Regional Director of the Northern Cape of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), Ms Nomalizo Kgwasi, and their legal officer, Peter Toto. The SAHRC produced a report on human rights violations among the Khomani San during 2005, which prompted me to meet with them. In Upington I also met with the coordinator of the South African San Institute (SASI) in the Kalahari, Grace Humphreys who introduced me to their HIV/AIDS officer, Lizze Afrikaner, who undertook to work closely with me on parts of this research.

In Askham I met with three SASI officers, Nanette Fleming, Lizelle Kleynhans, and Sanna Bok, younger sister of Anetta Bok. As well as with Magdalena Steenkamp, who is starting a community kitchen.



Fig. 3.4. Two women who have modernised the ancient art of making jewellery from ostrich shells in the Kalahari.

In Welkom, near the southernmost gate of the Kgalagadi Park, I met with Belinda Kruiper, recently bereaved widow of Vetkat (Regopstaan) Kruiper, brother of 'chief' Dawid Kruiper, elected community leader in the Kalahari. Vetkat's sister, a repeat survivor of domestic violence, joined our early morning conversation. Belinda Kruiper

spoke of Vetkat's lifetime's work as an artist and community leader especially with the youth. Vetkat taught them of feminine strength and sacredness, as well as nonviolence, which he asserted was the foundations of KhoeSan culture and beliefs.

In May 2007 I flew to Kimberley and met with the head of SASI, Meryl-Joy Wildschut, along with other SASI staff in their Kimberley and Platfontein offices. In Platfontein, near Kimberley, I engaged in interviews and conversations with several women elders, as well as with a focus group of twelve women at the Wildebeeskuil community centre. The focus group included Tania Ngongo (Love Life), Sofia Katjorro, Sosoria Mushamba, Matumbo Sheringu, Magdalena (Yitcho) Juharra (SASI Platfontein), Anna Ndao (SABC X-KFM Platfontein), Gurusbe Dikuwa, Amanda Kadhimo, Kasongo Duku, Matumbo Mohambo, and Lizze Afrikaner. This focus group was challenging because women were either !Kung or Khwe, and could not speak each other's language respectively. But with the help of volunteer translators of both San languages, my Cape Flats Afrikaans was not too daunting for the group, and at times had them laughing at my use of Afrikaans. This greatly aided the levelling of power and other differentials between I, the researcher, and the community with whom I was communicating.



Fig. 3.5. Ma Mutango, Khwe elder, working with dried vegetables for storage during winter.

The SASI officer in Platfontein, Magdalena (Yitcho) Juharra, introduced me to Ma Mutango Kamuti, and voluntarily translated our conversations. Juharra and Ma Mutango are Khwe, originally from Angola, and now settled in Platfontein via Namibia. Love Life officer, Tania Ngongo, introduced me to a group of elder women, and voluntarily translated our conversations. Ngongo is !Kung and originally from Namibia, and now settled alongside the Khwe in Platfontein. Donna Kaku and Sofiana Kopangela were the two women elders of the !Kung – the third elder did not disclose her name. Kopangela is a community healer and visionary (shaman), who said⁷⁵ it was the prehistoric (pre-Christian) god who gave her the gift to heal; and that this god is a feminine god. The !Kung and Khwe languages are so different that either people could not understand each other's languages respectively. It was also clear that the younger women, Juharra, Ngongo and Afrikaner, knew little or nothing of their heritage, and were sometimes as interested in conversations with our elders as I.

At Wildebeeskuil, an ancient site liberally seasoned with rocks on which our ancestors had beautifully etched their realities and visions, none of the women in the focus group had actually seen the sight, partly because Platfontein, where they lived, was a distance from the site, as well as the fact that the centre charged an entrance fee and was geared to tourists and education institutions like schools. I requested that the Wildebeeskuil staff educate their women, and hence we viewed an introductory film on the KhoeSan and the ancient art. Thereafter we walked through the site, studying the engravings, with a San man trained as a guide.

⁷⁵ Interview, 29 May 2007, Platfontein, Northern Cape.



Fig. 3.6. Ma Donna Kaku (!Kung) in Platfontein, with the old army tent in the background.

I then travelled with SASI's Lizze Afrikaner to Upington, where I met with 74 year old Katrina Esau or Ouma Geelmeid as she is better known. Esau is engaged in a project to teach children to speak the Khomani San language, in collaboration with fifteen year old Claudia du Plessis, who simultaneously teaches the children how to write and read the language. I also engaged in a focus group of women elders in Upington including Katrina van Wyk, Hanna Koper, Lena du Plessis, Sofie Lukas, and Anna Kassie.



Fig. 3.7. Claudia du Plessis, 15 year old tutor of the Khomani San language (reading and writing).

I then travelled to the Kalahari with Lizze Afrikaner and her SASI colleague, Frederik (Fonnie) Brou, where I met with women elders and engaged in a focus group at the Askham Women Empowerment Centre. The women I spoke with included from Andriesvale - Griet Seekoei, /Una (Katrina) Rooi, Sussie Aries, Namas Visser, Dia Vaalbooi, Sanna Bok, Magrietha Rooi, Anetta Bok; and from Askham – Claudia Reid and Elizabeth Draaier; as well as Magdalena Steenkamp, from nearby Ern.

In the Kalahari I also met community leader, oom Dawid Kruiper, as well as natural healer, oom Jan van der Westhuizen, and his assistant, Juanita Kaffers, who has a baby with Fonnie Brou. The traditional health clinic is a large tent, and baby Brou napping in his pram seemed as naturally located as the herbal remedies on the sparse shelves. In the Kalahari all the people are connected in one way or another.



Fig. 3.8. Juanita Kaffers, assistant of oom Jan van der Westhuizen in the traditional health clinic, an old converted army tent.

All the interviews and conversations, individual and group, were audio recorded. Photographs of the women and their environments were also taken.

It is these women who taught me the meaning of time, who came to speak with me individually as I was setting up the room in which the focus group was to take place, who sat with me through meals and shared freely of their lives, who laughed at and with me and each other.

Mann referred me to the work of Native poet-scholar Paula Gunn Allen, whose every word acknowledges the sacredness of all things for indigenous peoples:

The tribes seek – through song, ceremony, legend, sacred stories (myths), and tales – to embody, articulate, and share reality, to bring the isolated, private self into harmony and balance with this reality, to verbalize the sense of the majesty and reverent mystery of all things, and to actualize in language, those truths that give to humanity its greatest significance and dignity (1999: 55).

Allen draws a critical distinction:

The American Indian (views) space as spherical and time as cyclical, whereas the non-Indian tends to view space as linear and time as sequential. The circular concept requires all “points” that make up the sphere of being to have a significant identity and function, while the linear model assumes that some “points” are more significant than others. In the one, significance is a necessary factor of being in itself, whereas in the other, significance is a function of placement on an absolute scale that is fixed in time and space... the Indian universe moves and breathes continuously, and the Western universe is fixed and static (1992: 59).

One very elder woman, /Una Rooi, who lives deep in the Kalahari, gazed into my eyes and spoke in a barely audible whisper of the network of energy extending between our bodies, between our persons, energy that is rooted in sacredness. Then she giggled, like a little girl, seated next to her best friend and housemate, Griet

Seekoei, the sister of Ouma Geelmeid. These women are all connected, like I to them. I was left speechless by their power, their courage, their strength.



Fig. 3.9. /Una Rooi en Griet Seekoei, lifelong friends who live together, in Askham.

It is through these elder women that I am able to hear the voices of our ancestors so clearly, that I am able, with these elder women, to map our ancient ways of being, we of the KhoeSan, we of the First people of (Southern) Africa, and arguably the world.

Chapter Four – People’s People

| VREDE DEUR ⁷⁶ | PEACE DOOR / PEACE THROUGH |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Leef jy in vrede Of is jy vol haat Leef jy in ‘n droom Waar jy alleen bestaan Is jy een van vele en wat meer vra en hiers my hand My vriend neem my hand deel die lewe deel die son deel die lig deel die vrede wat elk een van ons dra | Do you live in peace Or are you filled with hatred Do you live in a dream Where you exist alone Are you one of many and ask for more and here’s my hand My friend take my hand share the life share the sun share the light share the peace that we each carry |

The following three sections examine and contextualise responses to this particular research project among the KhoeSan communities involved. The research findings are in three parts. The first focuses on peaceful societies generically and the KhoeSan specifically. The second looks at gender egalitarian societies in relation to the KhoeSan, while the third engages issues of consciousness and spirit.

4.1. People of People

What emerges from the literature review and methodologies chapters is the idea that societies are not static, and a suggestion that societies can be located on a continuum with nonviolence on one end and violence on the other. As the literature review showed, there are various indicators of more peaceful societies, including:

⁷⁶ Poem by Phillip Rodney, Riemvasmaak, 2005: 59. My translation from the original Afrikaans into English.

- Low(er) levels of societal violence;
- Less hierarchical and more egalitarian in general, there may even be forms of collective and/or decentralised leadership;
- Employ nonviolent conflict resolution methodologies, with cultural bias towards nonviolence;
- Greater degrees of sharing and gift giving, as well as a sense of connectedness;
- Greater respect for all members of society, including elders, women and beyond-heteronormativities.

In the focus groups and interviews participants strongly supported an understanding of KhoeSan communities as peaceful by articulating the following central indicators of more peaceful societies: low or absent levels of gender-based violence; a deep respect for women; and a view that holds birth and creation as an integral part of society.

Additionally, many respondents in the Kalahari were related to each other, in some way or the other, often as siblings or cousins. As Sofie Lukas⁷⁷ put it, “We are all *kleinniggies* (cousins⁷⁸)”. This sense of interconnectedness, of extended family and kinship, of community, is what defines *Khoe!na* or *ubuntu* – people’s existence is critically tied to a profound sense of belonging.

Firstly, peaceful societies employ nonviolent conflict resolution methodologies, with a cultural bias towards non-violence. The female elders interviewed all recalled how conflicts were resolved using community mediation rather than violence and referred

⁷⁷ Personal interview, and focus group, 30 May 2007, Upington, Northern Cape

⁷⁸ *Kleinniggies* as used by the grandmothers may mean nieces, first, second or more removed cousins, or even distantly related female relatives, in the *Khoe!na* or *ubuntu* sense of extended family and extended kinship.

to community conflict resolution methods that effectively ensured an absence of family and community violence.

In Platfontein Ma Mutango⁷⁹, who says she is so old she does not know her age, shared her experiences of community mediation when she said:

In the past they had conflict resolution methods to deal with arguments and disagreements. Traditional leaders would bring the dissenting parties together and they'd resolve the conflict there, rather than fighting and performing.

Ouma Hanna Koper⁸⁰, who is 83 years old, mused:

I don't understand modernity, where a man will hit a woman right there, in front of you! In the olden days this violence happened very seldom. Olden times they sat together and spoke and resolved their issues. Nowadays they go outside and it's violence.

The participants also emphasised the important role of elders in resolving conflict.

For example, Ouma Geelmeid⁸¹, who is 74 years old, asserted

People I grew up with didn't fight with each other. Not that I saw. When I was young I did not see people fight with each other. I only saw this when I was *jongmeisie* (a young woman). As a child I saw, to be honest, really, no violence. Not my father, not my uncles. I don't remember anything like a king (*koning*). I only remember adults (elders). People, when they had problems or issues, went to elders.

⁷⁹ Interview 29 May 2007, Platfontein, Northern Cape.

⁸⁰ Focus group and personal interview 30 May 2007, Upington, Northern Cape.

⁸¹ Interview 29 May 2007, Upington, Northern Cape.

Secondly, more peaceful societies have low(er) levels of societal violence. Many of the elder women said that violence was not part of KhoeSan communities when they were young.

Ma Griet Seekoei, who was born in 1933 and is 74 years old⁸², acknowledged the tot system prevalent on farms throughout the Apartheid era, and even during colonialism, where cheap wine served as farmworker's paltry payment, entirely to keep labour subservient, enslaved. She commented that:

My parents drank when I was growing up, but they never fought with each other. I don't know about violence among our people. They do argue, but they never resort to violence. My husband and I also argued, but never fought physically. So I don't know this thing about violence.

Some of the consequences of this tot system is foetal alcohol syndrome⁸³ (FAS), evident in indigenous communities the world over, from North America to Australia, and definitely widespread among the KhoeSan and their descendants on farms across the Western and Northern Cape provinces. FAS ensures generations of intellectually and physically enslaved labourers, so that the harshness and now decidedly illegal metal chains and balls are replaced with cheap alcohol.

Despite alcoholism and harsh conditions for farmworkers under colonialism, the participants suggested that violence among the KhoeSan was negligible. In other words, intra-community violence was largely absent.

⁸² Interview 31 May 2007, Askham, Northern Cape.

⁸³ See for example the Foundation for Alcohol Related Research: <http://www.farr.org.za/> and http://www.farr.org.za/PDF/Fact_file.pdf.

Ma /Una Rooi⁸⁴, born in 1931, bemusedly reflected:

I don't know if it's the alcohol or what, that causes all this violence nowadays. I sit and think deeply. Why is it like this?! It hurts me, because I don't know this violence. Look at how this violence looks nowadays... Our people never fought with each other, not as I see it happen nowadays.

According to this project's research participants Apartheid increased violence within KhoeSan communities in South Africa significantly. This is very much in line with the scholarship of, for example, Yvette Abrahams and Heike Becker. Becker in particular speaks of the "large-scale militarisation of the San" under Apartheid, and argues that this militarisation, in addition to "land and cultural dispossession", as well as poverty are key factors provoking and exacerbating violence among the San in Southern Africa (2003: 5).

The two oumas, /Una and Griet, spoke of the second World War:

There was fighting, the Germans, when we were growing up. We grew up on Tweerivier⁸⁵. We live together. Our people never fought with each other, not as I see it happen nowadays.

Here these women elders are emphasising their norms of nonviolence, even in the midst of the last world war, with German and Nazi control of then South West Africa and much of the Kalahari in which they were raised. Conditions at the time were intensely harsh, especially since the Germans (and later Apartheid regime) closed and controlled almost all water sources.

⁸⁴ Interview 31 May 2007, Askham, Northern Cape.

⁸⁵ nearby farm, returned to San community post-Apartheid.

A cursory search through any decent library, especially a university library, will evince shelves of books on the KhoeSan, some even titled, for example, *The Harmless People*⁸⁶, yet others with entire chapters on “conflict and violence”⁸⁷, while others deal with “sharing, talking and giving”⁸⁸. Pippa Skotnes, who has made a livelihood and name from publication on the KhoeSan, even produced a beautiful little volume, titled *Heaven’s Things* (1999), referring to the KhoeSan, in a reference to Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd’s original data gathered from the KhoeSan, which we will return to in the section dealing with spirituality. So too Marjorie Shostak, who thrived off two books written in the pseudonym, *Nisa*, of a San woman in the Botswana Kalahari.

In all these books the authors, all descendant of Europe, refer to advanced conflict resolution methodologies in KhoeSan communities. These include, for example, indirect inference which does not address the ‘perpetrator’ directly⁸⁹, but which is overheard by the community and then spread through the community, while the ‘perpetrator’ may remain anonymous. This results in a lack of shaming or humiliation, and affords the ‘perpetrator’ maximum opportunity to reconcile with the offended party.

A further example of conflict resolution methods used is mediation, when a third party hears the ‘complaint’ of one party, and speaks with the ‘perpetrator’ on behalf of the ‘victim’, and thus mediates the dispute⁹⁰.

⁸⁶ Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, 1959.

⁸⁷ Lee, 1979.

⁸⁸ Lee and DeVore, 1976.

⁸⁹ E.g. Shostak, 2000: 112.

⁹⁰ E.g. Shostak, 2000: 213-215.

The female elders interviewed all referred to community conflict resolution methods that effectively ensured an absence of family and community violence.

Communication was key in conflict resolution: people spoke with each other, whether as community members, or as a married couple, especially as recounted by Oumas Geelmeid and Hanna Koper. This is in line with, for example, Luc Reychler's postulation that "an effective system of communication, consultation and negotiation", is one of five key conditions for "sustainable peace" (2006: 7).

Thirdly, peaceful societies have low or absent levels of gender-based violence. It was striking that not a single female elder remembered an instance of rape of a woman or a child, and said that domestic violence was unheard of.

Ouma Geelmeid "I never heard of rape or child rape when I was growing up or even young, never."

Ouma /Una attested powerfully to her visceral experiences of nonviolence as a norm and to absence of gender-based violence:

When I was growing up, men never fought with women. I never saw this violence, and I was small, so I can't lie or judge. From my mother to my father, and the man I married, as I sit here, I have never experienced violence at the hands of a man. From my youth, I had two or three boyfriends. One has to talk thoroughly and be very honest. Even through arguments, there should never be violence.

Sofiana Kapangela⁹¹, traditional healer, also asserted that "men and women did not fight in the olden days".

⁹¹ Focus group and personal interview, 29 May 2007, Platfontein.

Fourthly, more peaceful societies show greater respect for all members of society, including elders, women and beyond-heteronormativities.

What emerged in this research is a sense of KhoeSan societies as egalitarian, where consciousness of socio-economic classes were largely absent. Differences, such as they were, between people centred on age and gender. This concurs with Barbara Alice Mann's own work with her Iroquoian people, which she refers to as Complementary Native Binaries, as extensively discussed in the literature review.

All the Northern Cape participants expressed a deep respect for the wisdom and experience of elders. Elders played central roles in mediation, arbitration and other nonviolent conflict resolution methodologies. Elders were also permitted to discipline any community children, not necessarily only their own progeny. In all the stories recounted, children respected elders generically, and submitted to the authority of all elders in the community.

The women in conversation reflected on the lack of respect for elders in the community. This is evinced from Ma Mutango recounting her former son-in-law's assault on her which left her with only one seeing eye.

As Ma Mutango asserted:

In the old days one's parents spoke with one and told one what to do, and one would listen to them. Young people of today don't listen to elders.

Ouma Geelmeid also protested:

It's downright rude that children swear at, or beat up, their mother. I don't understand it myself; I don't like it personally. My children were not brought up like this, even though their father drank. I showed my children respect. I don't feel happy when children are rude. We didn't grow up like this.... In the olden days people were taught respect. When I grew up we respected our elders. If I made a mistake, an uncle can send me, if I am not fast enough, for example, to let me be disciplined.... The auntie ... or the grandmother will reprimand me. I couldn't go tell my mother that these people punished me, because my mother would castigate me again. My mom would ask what I had done to deserve the punishment in the first place. If I said I did nothing, my mom would say they would not punish me in vain. In growing up, we grew up under all the adults/elders.

Sometimes the discipline referred to by the research participants involved corporal punishment in the form of, for example, a 'light' slap on the behind. Their testimonies, though, speak more of nonviolent forms of discipline, rather than corporal punishment. Examples of nonviolent discipline include: verbal reprimands (such as "naughty child"), embarrassing transgressors ('how could you shame your family with such bad behaviour'), denial of privileges (e.g. a child not being allowed to join women from gathering *veldkos*), being allocated extra tasks (such as cleaning, cooking or other chores), forms of discipline not too far removed from modern nonviolent practices the world over. As the grandmothers' narratives reflect, these nonviolent forms of discipline are sufficient 'punishment' to keep children in line with community norms or respect and *Khoe!na*. An adult may be disciplined by the community, for transgressions (such as drunkenness or not freely sharing resources with the community), in similar ways to that of a child. This shows the indigenous notions of balance between genders and ages, as posited in Barbara Mann's idea of complementary (rather than dualised) binaries (2004, 2003). Hence this form of

nonviolent community discipline is in line with the general principles of nonviolence, as well as egalitarianism, in indigenous societies.

Fifth, more peaceful societies are less hierarchical and more egalitarian in general, and there may even be forms of collective and/or decentralised leadership. This research suggested that leadership amongst the KhoeSan was also collective, rather than individuated and hierarchical.

In the stories encountered, conflict was referred to “elders” rather than individuals, as evinced from Ma Mutango’s narrative above. Yvette Abrahams also delineates the notion of collective leadership among the KhoeSan, and their apparent lack of hierarchy: “the Khoisan displayed a considerable degree of social homogeneity. They did not seem to have chiefs” (1994: 18).

Bertha Steenkamp, who was born in 1944 in Riemvasmaak, remembers representatives of the Apartheid regime removing her entire community forcibly:

Your chief (*opperhoof*) is looking for you, and I asked *who is my chief*, they answered Dawid Goraseb, and said each black person has a chief just like Matanzima whose people follow when he calls” (*Riemvasmaak*, 2005: 23, emphasis added).

Steenkamp also referred to a group of five community men who went to negotiate with the Apartheid magistrate about the pending forced removals, and commented that they returned to the community *without reporting back* hence suggesting that consultation is a critical part of community.

This history of collective leadership is evinced in the Kalahari, where all the ancient families (like the Boks, Kruipers, et al) come together and constitute an elective council, which then elects one leader among them to represent the community in hierarchical spaces where only one spokesperson is invited. This single representative is only the spokesperson for the collective, and represents the collective, and is compelled, by tradition and community constitution, to extensively consult with the community and never speak out of tune with the community.

Frederik Brou⁹², who drove me around the Kalahari, and introduced me to various male leaders in the Kalahari, stressed that the single community representative, for example, outgoing leader oom Dawid Kruiper, can be any gender (positions are not reserved for men exclusively or primarily, and are gender neutral). Brou in fact confided that they were hoping to elect a woman leader, but that she has too many existing commitments at present, to do full justice to this important position. In Brou's recount, all benefits accrue to the entire community, not only to the leader. For example, in the Kalahari community around Askham, European-descendant farmers pay fees to use community land to graze their cattle on. These grazing fees should accrue to the community, not to the leader, who only receives the payment on behalf of the community, as Brou emphatically emphasised.

Brou's recounting of decentralised and democratic community governance, directly supports Abrahams' scholarly assertions. As discussed in my literature review, Abrahams refers to the cultural bias of the European colonisers, which included an emphasis on individuated leadership, as well as stress on conflict and war. This

⁹² Interview 31 May 2007. Brou is originally from the Kalahari, and financial officer for SASI in Upington. He supports various SASI projects, incl. its Kalahari microlending projects.

Eurocentric cultural bias towards conflict, Abrahams asserts, was alien to the KhoeSan who were biased in favour of nonviolence and cooperation (1994: 25, 29).

Abrahams draws connections between KhoeSan decentralised leadership and nonviolence-as-a-norm (1994: 58 – 19).

Bertha Steenkamp notes that she asked to join discussions about the pending forced removal of the deep rural community of Riemvasmaak under Apartheid, but was told by a group of dominant community men that women were not allowed to participate:

when I asked my husband and his brother if I could join the meeting they answered that the women could not speak in Riemvasmaak meetings and that this was Jordan's law (*Riemvasmaak*, 2005: 22).

From other testimony in the same book, it seems Jordan or Jordaan was the local magistrate who represented the Apartheid regime, as Lucy Rhyn says:

While the rain poured down like tears Jordaan magistrate said even if the Lord put his foot over the mountain the community will still move (*ibid*, 2005: 31).

Sarie Adams also remembers Jordan, the magistrate of Kakamas at the time of the forced removals. As Adams puts it herself:

Riemvasmaak became a place of shotgun fire. The days of laughter and living together harmoniously were gone (*Riemvasmaak*, 2005: 75).

For Steenkamp her exclusion from community consultation seems to have come as a surprise, which suggests that the Riemvasmaak men who usurped leadership on the eve of the traumatic forced removal of the community were opportunistic, as also suggested from Steenkamp's other comments above. It also suggests that women's

exclusion from leadership and consultation, as evinced elsewhere in this thesis, is not intrinsic to the KhoeSan, but something forcibly adopted, like Christianity, during colonialism, and definitely under Apartheid.

Johannes Moolgas, a contemporary of Steenkamp and Rhyn, remembers that the men had to try to prevent the women from verbally attacking the Apartheid representatives since it may have repercussions on the entire community later, and he also recalls how upset the women were at the indignity of the forced removal, and how they shouted at the men so that the men could not even find opportunity to answer (*Riemvasmaak*, 2005: 66-67). Cecilia Mapanka also remembers this, and the fact that it was the women who protested, while the men attempted to keep the peace, to prevent retaliation from the Apartheid regime (*Riemvasmaak*, 2005: 112). Here Moolgas seems to acknowledge the strength and power of the women in the community, despite the influence of the Apartheid Jordaan who was teaching the KhoeSan men to exclude women from collective decision making.

Johannes Moolgas, above, also attests that the forced removal of his community during the 1970s caused new strife between people and in families: “in 25 years we had never experienced our parents speaking to each other like this (in argument). The removal damaged marriages... people suffered great losses” (*Riemvasmaak*, 2005: 68).

Sixth, peaceful societies show greater degrees of sharing and gift giving, as well as a sense of connectedness.

It is in the rites of passage ceremonies especially, as children pass into youth and adulthood, that community spirit and ethos are truly reflected, even among homeless people descendant of the KhoeSan who live on the streets of Cape Town, as Siv Oevernes has documented. Oevernes even speaks of kinship ties among women and families living rough on the streets of Cape Town: one of Oevernes' key 'informants', 'Scilla, went off alcohol while her friends Yvonne and Rachel cared for her, even doing her laundry and intervening in fights on her behalf (2004: 81-82). The 'fights' or conflict between homeless women are usually verbal, although it may be violently expressed sometimes. This is merely a reflection of the violence of living on the street in general, and efforts to survive. Despite the often Hobbesian conditions under which these homeless people live, they still employ ancient practices, such as *!nau*, and manage to care for each other, creating forms of community that are contrasted by systemic violences – dysjunctures, as Abrahams would say (2001).

Oevernes also documents her experiences of the *!nau* coming of age ceremonies on the streets, six that she attended during her time in Cape Town (2004: 143-147). A *!nau* is held whenever someone passes from one life stage to another, and is celebrated with the sharing of food, even among extremely impoverished people like homeless people living on the streets of Cape Town. As Oevernes recounts her experiences with 'Scilla, "by accepting the food, each and everyone threw a blessing on the one or ones being celebrated" (2004: 145). Hence even people who are starving, tend to share. This is precisely my own experiences growing up under apartheid, where we shared what very little we had among a great many mouths, as per usual.

Jean Burgess, a community leader from the Eastern Cape, also recounted⁹³ the extensive consultations and preparations for one particular *Inau* in Grahamstown, during which all the communities from the entire region came together, for a mammoth feast. It also concords with Priscilla de Wet's reminiscences of her own middle class upbringing:

In our house, we always made space for visitors, offering refreshments. I remember my mom always putting extra meat or vegetables in her stew, and when asked why she was making so much, she simply answered, "For the visitor" even though we were not expecting anyone. It was for that unexpected guest. Nothing went to waste, though, we would just have the leftovers the next day (2007: 6-7).

De Wet refers to this as *Khoe!na*, "which simply means the act of being human" (2007:1). One woman, "K Adams", born in 1936 in Riemvasmaak, remembers funerals, and the fact that each household contributed to the bereaved household, and thus each one supported the deceased's family (*Riemvasmaak*, 2005: 14). Lucy Rhyne, who was born during 1933 in Riemvasmaak, remembers a time of prosperity, when she was a young girl, before the Apartheid regime forcibly removed their community. She longs for this festive time when people had great value for each other, times when they cared about each other, had discipline, and visited each other routinely (*Riemvasmaak*, 2005: 300).

Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Winner, who always honours his spouse of decades, Leah Tutu, calls *Khoe!na* by a more well known name: *ubuntu*. The concept of ubuntu can best be illustrated by the Nguni phrase "*umntu ngumuntu ngabantu*",

⁹³ Interview 14 May 2007, Observatory, Cape Town. KhoeSan women's circle, 20 May 2007, Lansdowne, Cape Town, including Jean Burgess, Priscilla de Wet, Dawn Bosman, Vanessa Ludwig.

meaning a person is a person through other persons, or Khoe San, that is people of people, people's people. It is called *unhu* in Tsitsi Dangarembga's native Shona⁹⁴: "I am well if you are all right too" (2006: 65). It literally means that one person's or group's happiness or suffering is inextricably linked to another's, and that one entity can never be truly satisfied or happy or enlightened without each member of that group being equally content.

In the words of Ouma Geelmeid:

My father was a *snorkdokter*⁹⁵. This form of healing always worked, even on us. One day Pa was sick, I was looking after sheep, my sister and I, a strange black man came walking by. I was scared. He said, "don't worry, I am thirsty, I'm looking for a little water". When we girls gave him water, he asked where our Pa was. We said Pa is sick. He healed Pa.

Thus as recent as sixty years ago a stranger is not refused, and humbly gifts the host's generosity with his own healing powers. When recounted, this incident was reminiscent of the mysticism around many sacred texts, from the Bible to the Vedas.

By its very nature and in its very essence *Khoe!na* or *ubuntu* or *unhu* is extrapolated to all inhabitants of the planet, of the cosmos. We shall return to this discussion further in this chapter, in the discussion on consciousness and spirituality.

Another central indicator of peaceful societies is a deep respect for women and the role of birth and creation as an integral part of society which will now be discussed.

⁹⁴ The Book of Not, 2006.

⁹⁵ A *snorkdokter* is a healer, shaman, spiritual leader, usually one of many. Among the Khomani San in the Kalahari, this role is often male, though never exclusively so. Among the San generically, including Botswana, this role is beyond gender. Cf e.g. Marjorie Shostak's two books named after the pseudonymous *Nisa*, who herself was such a healer and became a respected elder.

4.2. “the root of my life”: gender egalitarianism

As seen above, *Khoe!na* or *ubuntu* implies by its very nature respect for, and appreciation of, all inhabitants of any society, and the cosmos at large. This of necessity includes women, implying not merely women’s equality to men, and a normative distance from, and distaste of, violence (especially gender-based violence). *Khoe!na* implies a profound respect for women specifically, as life givers and life nurturers, as we shall see in this particular discussion.

In her mention of “gift and sharing” (1994: 25) as a norm among the KhoeSan, Abrahams echoes the assertions of other indigenous scholars that the gift economy is intrinsic to their native societies. Barbara Mann (2004) documents how her people, the Seneca, shared their newfound technology of maize cultivation with neighbouring peoples as a gift. Shanshan Du also narrates the Lahu gift economy (2005, 2002). Sami scholar Rauna Kuokkanen’s recently published book is titled *Reshaping the University: Responsibility, Indigenous Epistememes, and the Logic of the Gift*, in which she documents the “gift paradigm as an alternative to exchange” (2007: 31-32, 88-89). Marjorie Shostak (2000, 1990) narrates throughout two of her books on “Nisa” that the KhoeSan share the food collectively gathered during the day as a norm.

Ouma Sofie remembered her mother gifting their community with her healing skills:

When you go to a (modern) doctor you have to pay lots of money. My Ma did this work, all this. She knew all the medicines. You won't get your medicines in a pot. The herbs were dried and *afgetrek*⁹⁶. It was given to you in an earthen/clay container.

Not only did Sofie's mother heal without charging her clients money, she did so in very thoughtful ways, from carefully and painstakingly preparing the traditional medicines, to presenting it in a special earthen container. These narratives affirm the indigenous values of sharing and gifting among the KhoeSan in particular.

During a focus group⁹⁷ in Platfontein, near Kimberley, women were adamant about gender relations and women's leadership:

In the old days, 300 or more years ago, women were chiefs. People in the community, the children, the women – there was respect... In the households women and men are equal... it's equal (*dis gelykop*⁹⁸)... A woman can be a chief. We want to change things so that Mutango can also be Queen/Chief, because she is the daughter of a Chief/King.

A recurring theme for many of the female elders interviewed was the centrality of respect, and especially respect between women and men, equally. Each woman emphasised this notion of mutual respect between women and men in conversation, the fact that it existed in the past, and its absence in modernity. These women also reflected that domestic violence is the result of a lack of this mutual respect. As well as the result of a lack of conflict resolution methods, such as conversation or dialogue, in addition to mediation and arbitration by elders.

⁹⁶ Herbs were dried, leaves and flowers removed from stalks, and brewed with water, to create a form of herbal tea, or liquid medicine.

⁹⁷ Monday 28 May 2007.

⁹⁸ Yitcho, the SASI officer in Platfontein, interjecting as she translates some of the group comments into Afrikaans.

In Ma Mutango's⁹⁹ words:

In the old days women were the heads of the household and respected men... It was my mother and grandmother who taught me to respect men... Because women of the past had respect for [the] men, men in turn respected women. And men did not do what they wished with women then, men also respected women, and women respected women, unlike now in modern times... In the community all respected each other, everyone lived in peace. There was no hatred, there was nothing [negative]... In the old days men never did wrong by women. In modern times men beat women. Then it was never allowed, for men to beat women. The leadership of the past did not allow it. And men did not beat women... If young people of today could listen, Ma Mutango would say that men and women are subservient (*onderdanig*) to each other, and that they should respect each other, equally, and themselves, individually or personally.

Ouma Geelmeid's experiences further support this idea of collective nonviolence among the KhoeSan. She reflects that her first husband, whom she married when she was quite young, "was not Khomani San", that his mother was "*Baster*" and his father Damara-Nama-*Baster* ('mixed race'). Ouma Geelmeid here reflects on what she considers internal San cultural practices, such as nonviolence as a norm, and suggests that outsiders of mixed race from other areas (especially those hybridised with Europeans), were not necessarily schooled in nonviolence as they were in the Kalahari. On the other hand, Ouma Geelmeid's eldest sister, Hanna, who lives in the deep rural Kalahari, reflects fondly on her late husband, whom she called "*hotnotsou*" or KhoeKhoe fellow, who was originally from Namaqualand. Ouma Hanna says he treated her well and, with a smile, that she "was happily fat". So it seems the San and the Khoe respected women, while other settler cultures apparently did not.

⁹⁹ Interview, 29 May 2007, Platfontein.

Ouma Geelmeid emphasised:

Men and women were almost equal then (some fifty years before). Each had to respect the other. Men had to respect women. This is how we grew up. Our father and mother taught us this. We respect the boyfriend. You shouldn't swear at your boyfriend, and he same with you. *Man also has to respect the woman* (spoken with emphasis).

Ma Griet said, without blinking, in order to avoid any confusion: "Men and women were totally equal". As Ouma /Una articulates her experiences of gender egalitarianism, "I was not above my husband, and he was not above me. We were equal. We travelled together, worked together, very beautiful. We loved each other very much."

These testimonies of gender egalitarianism among the KhoeSan are echoed in the literature of indigenous scholars, including Shanshan Du's Lahu, where the social ideal is that of a married couple which, as a unit, is considered a "twin" (2005, 2002). Barbara Mann (2004, 2003) also documents her Iroquois social foundations which posit the two genders as equal and opposite, in similar ways that generations, young and old, are considered equal and opposite.

A deep respect for all women, especially older women, was a critical subtext for all the research participants, and hence of this entire research project. Ouma Hanna attested to respect for elders in the community generally:

When a girl is chastised by an older woman, she can't say that the woman is not her mother; she has to submit to the discipline of the older woman.

Ouma Geelmeid concurred that “in growing up, we grew up under all the adults (elders).

/Una also added her concerns about men not performing their appropriate traditional roles: “Old men are having children, are behaving like children, nowadays”. This is her reflection of older men succumbing to patriarchal privilege, men who have much younger lovers, who do not earn the respect and wisdom their age would traditionally afford them. Mikki van Zyl¹⁰⁰ made a critical distinction between *older*, as in chronologically older, and *elder*, as in wise elder. So we have an ancient profound respect for women, especially elder women, and simultaneously a modern erosion of traditions, with men as beneficiaries under contested patriarchy.

In conversation with Belinda Kruiper, in a hut outside her home in the community of Welkom, just south of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, she asserted the beliefs of her recently late spouse, Vetkat Regopstaan Kruiper, who is the younger brother of Kalahari community leader, oom Dawid Kruiper. Belinda said that her beloved Vetkat had spent his entire life teaching his community, especially young men, the values that his own mother taught them: respect for the mother, respect for women, since women create life and women nurture life. Yvette Abrahams also refers to her mother as “the root of my life”. Ouma Geelmeid too affirmed, “I grew up with the knowledge of my special role, as a woman, in society.”

Jean Burgess speaks of the same values that are deeply respectful of women. Burgess, who has done extensive research on her origins and the KhoeSan

¹⁰⁰ Email communication, 3 October 2007.

generically, emphasises the fact that the KhoeSan collectively are *matrilineal*. She asserts that her entire extended family, both maternal and paternal, from and in the Eastern Cape, are matrilineal, as are most other families descendant of the KhoeSan that she is aware of in the Eastern Cape. Burgess is recognised as a ‘Chief’ in the post-Apartheid democracy, even as she and others acknowledge that this idea of ‘chieftaincy’ is alien to the KhoeSan, and more relevant to the Nguni. Burgess is one of only two female ‘Chiefs’ among the KhoeSan, both rooted in the Eastern Cape. The other ‘chief’ is Margaret Coetzee-Williams, and “she is based in Port Elizabeth. Her hometown is somewhere in the Langkloof”¹⁰¹.

During Apartheid, many people classified ‘Coloured’, especially more prosperous families, had mothers who were responsible for financial management of the family. Burgess recognises this in her extended family. And even “K Adams” from Riemvasmaak acknowledges that she passed her earnings directly and immediately to her mother: “*Dan moet die geldjies net so vir my ma gaan gee.*” (Riemvasmaak, 2005: 11)

Knowledge, especially on healing, was handed from mother to daughter, through generations, as the !Kung elders attested:

Women were healers in the olden days, like the ouma Sofiana. In the olden days there was a lot more respect than today’s children show. Ouma Kapangela got her knowledge of healing from her grandmother and grandfather. (Translator, Tania Ngongo)

The other women elders, Khwe and Khomani San, concurred:

¹⁰¹ Jean Burgess, email communication, 4 October 2007.

I learnt from the (my) *ouma* (grandmother) to heal with herbs (Anna).

I learnt about healing mainly from my mother... I learnt my knowledge of herbs from my mother. The knowledge was transferred from woman to woman, mother to daughter. I wish my own daughters would come ask to learn with me. But they don't seem interested. (said with sadness, regret, poignancy) (Geelmeid).

The *Ma* (Mother) taught the girl child the knowledge of being a *smeervrou* (powerful woman healer¹⁰²). If you can't have children anymore, the *smeervrou* can help you. (Hanna).

I help at the clinic, with my knowledge of healing and herbs. I know all about plants, and how to use plants for healing. I also act as midwife. My mother taught me from *those days* all of what I know. (/Una).

Ouma Sofie, who is 77 years old, also asserted that she is not “*sieklik* (with ill health), because I listen to my mother. I know the medicines and how to stay healthy”. While all the other female elders chorused that they “don't get sick because I know the herbs and how to heal myself and to stay healthy”.

Even during Apartheid, with KhoeSan prohibited from speaking their languages in the presence of Afrikaners specifically, and European-descendants in general, KhoeSan traced their lineage through a female descendant, as Ouma Sofie attested:

My Pa's mother was a small *boesmantjie* (little diminutive San). My mother is Griqua. My father is genuine San. We grew up like this. I was born in the Kalahari.

¹⁰² A *smeervrou* is a powerful woman healer, a shaman, a spiritual and community leader, whose roles and ancient knowledge include generic healing as well as midwifery, and who heals individuals and groups, regardless of gender. Healing is through plant medicine, as well as through energy (including during trance ceremonies, often referred to as trance *dances* by the spiritually ignorant-arrogant).

Here Sofie speaks of her father's mother, rather than her own mother, and still her San heritage is traced through a female ancestor, even if the mother of her father, it is a mother all the same.

Oumas Geelmeid and Hanna, respectively, had their respective husbands move to their families. While Sofie said:

In the olden days when a man and a woman get married, they move away from both parents and set up home on their own, with another community, or create a new community [referring to her parents]. The husband's mother sends him (the husband) away after marriage.

This clarifies that the husband moves away from his own family, either to co-create a new community with his new spouse, or to join a new community, or indeed that he moves to the community of his spouse, which is one of the clearest forms of matrilineality.

4.3. Heaven & Earth: spirituality and consciousness

The grandmother of Native American Studies, Paula Gunn Allen attests to her Native peoples being conscious of, and integrating, their individual selves into a greater cosmic whole: "the hoop dancer dances within what encircles him, demonstrating how the people live in motion within the circling spirals of time and space. They are no more limited than water and sky" (1999: 150). The ancient adage, "as above, so below", is embodied in the modern quantum physics concept of fractals, which

display 'self-similarity', on all scales¹⁰³. In each object is reflected all other objects; the cosmos is reflected in the tiniest molecule, and each molecule is a direct reflection of the greater cosmos. This scientific notion is evident in most existing indigenous societies in the world, and the KhoeSan in particular.

Many of this research project's participants rooted their spirituality in nature and did not speak of god as male or gendered. Ouma /Una said:

I never went to church before, and nor did the traditional healers. They [traditional healers] had the spirit, they received god. *Nature is the bushman's church*. The spirit is a living spirit. It works now between us, as we sit here. It is a very beautiful thing to get together, it's true. We are now on the spirit of god, and the nature, god is now with us. The holy spirit (emphasis added).

Anna, who is in her eighties, in profound groundedness described her authenticity as a root, deeply connected to the earth:

I am a *Boesman* straight out of the *grond* [ground/earth], a genuine San.

Some women suggested that god was not mediated by, for example, a Christian priest, but that each person communicated directly with the divine, and simultaneously that each person is divine too, as in praying to themselves. For example, through volunteer translator, Tania Ngongo, traditional healer Sofiana Kapangela, and elder Donna Kaku, of the !Kung, asserted that:

They did not practice modern Christianity in the olden days, but their own spirituality and prayed to their own god (not the Christian god). In the old days they only prayed

¹⁰³ See for example, Muthien, 2005. Broccoli, cauliflower, ash and snowflakes are practical examples of fractals.

for themselves. There was not a god as Ma Mutango describes. They prayed to themselves. When they gathered they would dance. Then their god was present. In the olden days they did not have the Bible. They have the same god the world over. A god is a god...

This evinces not merely community practice, but spirituality too, as profoundly egalitarian, and more so easily accessible.

Not unlike the elders above, Ouma Hanna recalled a spiritual atmosphere that is active, festive, celebratory, abundant:

As a child at trance dances we ate delicious food, clapped our hands, and were festive. It was lovely. They used the dances to heal people. I was a child. I stayed on another farm, had to look after goats.

Ouma Geelmeid concurred:

I grew up on a farm, owned by a *boer*. I saw adults practice ritual. Adults always gathered and danced. The Bushman lived Christian lives, but didn't attend church; they lived spiritually. They (elders) always spoke to us to live spiritual lives.

Here too, like others above, Ouma Geelmeid also speaks of spirituality, rather than religion, and that similarities in spiritual beliefs (as in spiritual lifestyles) outweighed religious dogma in, for example, Christianity. This I assume is one way these KhoeSan elders reconciled themselves with the encroachment of Christianity on their lives, especially those who lived on farms, owned by colonial settlers, as members of farm labour families.

Another way is similar to many colonised peoples the world over, where Mary, mother of Jesus, is revered, reminiscent of the origins of spirituality in respect for women, rather than in an angry vengeful patriarch. As “M Silver”, born during 1940 in Riemvasmaak, writes about the trauma of their forced removal under Apartheid:

We asked Maria for help. The last night’s hymn was O Maria At Your Feet. We saw later that we had to move anyway, because we were a black spot on the white sheet” (Riemvasmaak, 2005: 38).

Silver also praises a feminine deity:

“Our Dear Lady (Woman – *Vrou*) of the Molopo¹⁰⁴ for answering our prayers... God is with us... if you believe in Him and build confidence and hope all will be well” (2005: 40).

//Kabbo, during 1873, shared the following prayer to the star Canopus and the star Sirius¹⁰⁵:

The Bushmen perceive Canopus, they say to a child, “Give me yonder piece of wood, that I may put the end of it in the fire, that I may point it burning towards grand-mother, for grand-mother carries Bushman rice. Grandmother shall make a little warmth for us... Bring me the small piece of wood yonder, that I may put the end of it in the fire, that I may burn it towards grandmother; that grandmother may ascend the sky like the other one, Canopus.” ... He points [the stick] burning towards Sirius; he says that Sirius should twinkle like Canopus. He sings; he sings about Canopus, he sings about Sirius; he points to them with fire that they may twinkle like each other...

Here, according to //Kabbo, Sirius is personified as Grand-mother, a wise female elder. The stars in the sky are the same as the humans on earth: “Therefore we are

¹⁰⁴ The Molopo or Malopo River runs through the area, which also hosts natural Molopo hot springs.

¹⁰⁵ As told to Lucy Lloyd in Mowbray, Cape Town. Reprinted in Skotnes, 1999: 36-37.

stars – we must walk the sky, for we are heaven's things"¹⁰⁶. At the same time "Mother is earth's thing, she walks the earth sleeping in the ground, we are which must not sleep, for we walk around while we sleep not"¹⁰⁷. //Kabbo narrates another story, explaining the origins of the First People: "The children of the !kwe Tna ssho lke, ordered by their mothers, to throw the sleeping Sun into the sky"¹⁰⁸. These narratives reflect a deep reverence of the feminine, of the earth and the sky, as well as the fact that humans are reflections of the earth and sky, created in the image of the cosmos.

"K Adams" of Riemvasmaak places her trust in a divinity that is both plural and beyond-gender, a divine that is seen as a collective of caring elders, before she references the Christian male god as "Lord". She says of her community's destiny, and their horrific genocidal forced removal under Apartheid during the 1970s:

Maar die Ou grootjies en die Here het so bestuur" ("But the Elders and the Lord directed thus". Alternatively, "Ou grootjies" could also mean Ancestors and/or Grandmothers) (Riemvasmaak, 2005: 13).

It is no small irony that the Riemvasmaak people's narratives of their forced removal under Apartheid has been turned into a major docu-drama series, screened on national public television since early 2008.

All the research participants asserted the existence of powerful female healers in the past. Ouma Sofie said:

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Skotnes, 1999: 13,51.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Skotnes, 1999: 14-15.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Skotnes, 2007: 367.

When you go to a (modern) doctor you have to pay lots of money. My Ma did this work, all this. She knew all the medicines. You won't get your medicines in a pot. The herbs were dried and *afgetrek*¹⁰⁹. It was given to you in an earthen/clay container. You could get sick from drinking this medicine today, but when you get up again, you feel better.

While Ma Mutango recalled "In the past there were women healers."

The female healers, like Sofiana Kapangela, paid tribute to their mothers and grandmothers, indeed their female ancestors, as well as either a divinity that is beyond gender, or a feminine divinity. As Ma Mutango put it:

There are two gods in San spirituality (cosmology), a male god and a female god. The female god is for humans, and sees to (cares for) people. The male god is for the wild (animals). These gods are not equal. The female god is superior, somewhat, to the male god. The female god is precisely kinder than the male god.

Sofiana Kapangela also asserted almost casually her belief in a feminine divine:

It is the "*oerjare se god*" (god of ancient and precolonial times) that gives her her knowledge of healing. It is a female god.

This belief in a sacred feminine is echoed in indigenous spiritualities the world over, including the Sami "deity" Mattarahkka, the "Ancestral Mother", with her "three daughters" (2007: 34). So too for Native Americans, as Paula Gunn Allen says, "in the beginning was thought, and her name was Woman. The Mother, the Grandmother, recognized from earliest times into the present.... celebrated in social structures, architecture, law, custom, and the oral tradition" (1992: 11).

¹⁰⁹ Herbs were dried, leaves and flowers removed from stalks, and brewed with water, to create a form of herbal tea, or liquid medicine.

The bonds between mother and daughter, both cosmic as in divine mother and earth daughter/s, as well as earth mothers and their offspring daughter/s, are sacred and sustain life itself, according to indigenous scholars and community elders like Allen and Mann respectively. Colonialism and patriarchy, as inextricably tied, attempted to destroy these ancient bonds and deprive especially indigenous women of agency and power, individually, as well as collectively in the eyes of their communities.

These dysjunctures are explored further, below.

What each narration, each testimony, speaks of is a profound sense of loss, as well as a desire to re-claim what was destroyed, from sacred relationships and respect, to the gathering and ingesting of food, also an everyday sacred act.

All the female elders spoke with relish of their pre-Apartheid diet of *veldkos* or foods gathered in the wild or bush, and the fact that the food was not merely delicious, but also nutritionally balanced. Moreover, food contains healing properties, which the KhoeSan took for granted as much as they might consider breathing as primordial and natural. Ouma Sofie recalled:

I was born in the Kalahari... It's a dune world. We ate *veldkos* only. My father hunted, for example, springbok. We also ate *n'abba*¹¹⁰, a sort of truffle that is delicious and found in the bush in the ground. It tastes like meat or seafood.

That this *n'abba* is decidedly rare and highly prized is evident from Ouma Sofie's equating it with seafood. So too Ouma Geelmeid said:

¹¹⁰ This *n'abba*, or 'Kalahari truffle' as it is known by *cognoscenti*, is now almost extinct but Northern Cape restaurants, owned by European-descendants, offer this delicacy, with concomitant exorbitant price to international tourists.

This n'abba aartappel (truffle) has healing properties. White people use it as a medicine. We ate it like food (emphasis added).

Thus these grandmothers attest to the ordinariness of food, which is nutrition and medicine, and simultaneously its sacredness: the sacredness of the ordinary; the ordinariness of the sacred. All threatened by the encroachments of modernity, if not already extinct due to colonialisms.

Ma Griet, who is based in the deep rural Kalahari, similarly lamented how she struggles to find plants, vital to her health and wellbeing, plants that were as common as air to them a mere fifty years ago:

I learnt how to use herbs for healing, but where does one find the herbs around here nowadays?!

KhoeSan struggles to access their indigenous foodstuffs and medicines offer some reflection of modern challenges they confront regarding practicing lifestyles that modernity is making extinct. As Ma Mutango put it:

there are people who go to church, but Ma Mutango does not practice those rituals. The place is not suited to practice rituals.

Ma Mutango's complaint that her tiny RDP home on a small barren plot is not suitable for her to practice her ancient spirituality, echoes that of many others, in urban and rural areas. Belinda Kruiper, who lives in a deep rural community immediately outside the southernmost gate of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, also

said that she finds it difficult to practice her ancient spiritual traditions. This despite the fact that her brick home is larger than others in the same community.

Given these challenges of KhoeSan people in even deep rural areas, it is not surprising that urban KhoeSan leaders like Jean Burgess find it inordinately impractical to lead spiritual gatherings or to practice their spirituality in comfortable and significant ways. Not to mention the need to educate others, especially youth, of these ancient ways. Ma Mutango says wearily, “I’m really too old to do that. Perhaps there are younger people who can do that. But I am now too old...”

Not only is the ability to practice spirituality or find *veldkos* severely compromised by modernity, people’s social lives are also relentlessly inhibited. The Uppington focus group, in particular, remarked on this, when they said that “we are not able to get together anymore, and miss this form of socialising, previously so vital to our existence and lives.” Traditional ceremonies, such as observance of natural cycles, e.g. full moons, equinoxes or solstices, as well as other life’s transitions embodied by the *!nau* ceremonies, are not really practiced as much anymore. These ceremonies were both spiritual celebrations, as well as social gatherings, akin to having a party in a church: sacred socialising, social sacredness.

“K Adams” speaks of the celebration of the first menstruation of a young woman, during which the community has a huge feast (“*groot fees*”) for two weeks (*Riemvasmaak*, 2005: 14). “M Silver” also speaks of this celebration, at the end of which a young man dances with the young woman, to signify her adulthood (*Riemvasmaak*, 2005: 43). She mourns the loss of these ancient traditions, as much

as she constantly reiterates the need to re-claim traditions from postcolonial deprivations.

In an attempt to still practice some form of *Khoe!na*, M Silver and a group of nine other women in Riemvasmaak co-created a savings club – they each contribute R50 per month, and then equally divide their savings during December (*Riemvasmaak*, 2005: 43).

The significance of the loss of sacred-social observances to the KhoeSan, including their increased Christianisation under Apartheid especially, is reflected in several intersectional issues: high levels of community violence, high levels of gender-based violence, deep social cleavages and profound gender hierarchies, as well as unusual homophobia. What emerges among modern-day adults and youth especially, the children and grandchildren of the female elders who participated in this research project, is not merely a loss of respect for others, but a loss of respect for *self*.

Deep in the Kalahari I offered a gender consciousness workshop¹¹¹ to the surrounding communities, as a form of contribution, a gift, especially since the communities were so free to share their ancient wisdoms with me. As an introduction to the workshop I employed a guided visualisation that allows the participants to relax, to find their own power, so that they are able to more fully participate as both individuals, and as a group. The exercise asks participants to imagine themselves in a special, private garden, that is as beautiful as their imaginations allow them to be, where they are perfectly alone and safe, and through which they are guided by the

¹¹¹ Please see <http://www.engender.org.za/projects.html#Violencestops> for more information on these consciousness transformation workshops.

facilitator, in order to reclaim their own beauty and power. As participants emerge from the deep visualisation, they are invited to share their reflections of their experiences with the group. I was completely surprised by the post-visualisation reflections of a young fashionably slim, fair-skinned San woman with long braids who is a skilled community worker. This is how she describes herself during the visualisation: “In my (virtual) garden I was a white woman. I had long, straight, blonde hair, I was thin. I had a lovely body (*lekker lyfie*)”. She threw her head back and flicked her long beautiful braids, and said that this gesture is precisely how she had imagined flicking her “beautiful blonde hair” in her virtual garden.

This young woman is sadly not the only KhoeSan woman longing for European features, nor indeed the only woman of colour the world over desiring the prevailing international norm of beauty. A girl at the *!Khwa ttu* (San) centre, some 70km from Cape Town, drew a picture of what she most wanted from life: (to be) “a blonde long-haired princess”¹¹².

Both these young women speak powerfully of a loss of self respect and identity in the community in general, and among indigenous women especially. This entire research project is concerned, in large part, with the reclamation of indigenous knowledge, and affording voice to the previously silenced and marginalised KhoeSan. These young women’s desires then serve as powerful examples of the necessity, and value, of our efforts to reclaim our previously pejorative identities, to take pride in our previously oppressed communities. In the context of postcolonial dysjunctures, as posited by

¹¹² “Empowering the San”, article by Genevieve Howard, 2006.

Abrahams, we can perhaps engage these beautiful young KhoeSan women with compassion.

4.4. Neither here nor there: dys/juncture/s

Yvette Abrahams conceptualises “dysfunction” as “the lack of function, the inability to form part of an organic whole, to be unable to relate lovingly to the other parts and people of your world” (2001). This “dysfunction”, Abrahams says, “exacerbates rather than addresses the problem which caused it”, and she cites substance abuse as “a good example” (ibid). Being addicted to a substance means the addict is obsessed with the satisfaction of the addiction and ingesting the drug, rather than with the root cause of the addiction, such as poverty or oppression. “Self-hatred” is what displaces “the pain of the problem”, according to Abrahams (ibid).

The two young KhoeSan women, above, each desiring white femininities, exhibit this self-hatred powerfully, and poignantly.

Abrahams posits that dysfunction “is caused by dysjunctures”, with colonialism defined “as a series of dysjunctures” – “imagine a loss so complete that it can never be undone!” (ibid). During colonialism the KhoeSan, like most other indigenous peoples, lost their reality, knowing and knowledge, language and culture, strength and power, wealth and generosity. In the context of this complete loss of group and individual identities, one cannot but be compassionate about KhoeSan women wanting to be white women, about the KhoeSan hating their KhoeSan selves. The

trauma of young men's heads used as colonial trophies, and young women's breasts as colonists' tobacco pouches¹¹³, is inescapable, and are brutal examples of the violence of dysjunctures as posited by Abrahams, and as defined by Volkan's "chosen trauma". Abrahams suggests that "post-colonial stress disorder has three causes":

1: the original violence of the dysjuncture; 2: the memory-triggered trauma of that violence; 3: Without healing tools, we develop dysfunctional responses to dysjunctures. Although they add to our problems, dysfunctional responses work. We did, we do, survive. It is not enough for a revolution. Colonialism happened. Dysjunctures remain... There are times when survival itself becomes resistance. In the face of loss so complete, and so total, life itself becomes an act of resistance (2001).

The violence happened, sometimes centuries before, yet, in the sense of Volkan's "chosen trauma", this trauma is reiterated continuously by the traumatised group, which thus re-traumatises itself *ad infinitum*.

Sometimes traumas continue to happen to the violated group, due to their continued systemic subjugation. So the discourse of "chosen trauma" is both a reflection of historic violences experienced by the group, as well as contemporary experiences of oppression by the society at large. This is the case for indigenous peoples the world over, whether the Sami in Europe, Native Americans, or indeed the KhoeSan in Southern Africa, and post-Apartheid South Africa specifically.

I would like to share two of my experiences with dysjunctures on my visits in the Northern Cape: The first with the South African Human Rights Commission's

¹¹³ Skotnes, 1999: 15-16.

Northern Cape office, and the second with one of only two police stations in the Kalahari¹¹⁴, Witdraai. These two examples clearly illustrate the dysjunctures in the relation of institutions of power towards the KhoeSan, as well as the breakdown of ancient values, such as peacefulness, in these indigenous communities, as they are continuously attacked, either by neglect, ignorance or prejudice, as the first example illustrates, or direct violence as the second visit shows.

I initiated contact with the South African Human Rights Commission in early March 2007, in search of a hard copy of their *Report on Inquiry into Human Rights Violations in the Khomani San Community* [2004], cited in one of their media releases during 2005. This report is listed on their website, but when the link is activated, the document fails to load, which I reported to them on 8 March 2007¹¹⁵. Despite sending me a copy of the report via e-mail, seven months later, on 5 October 2007, the fault with the link has still not been corrected. Not having this vital report of abuses against the KhoeSan readily available to the public on the SAHRC website is a critical omission, and unless the error is corrected, one can only speculate about the political significance of the omission.

I requested a meeting with Nomalizo Kgwasi, the Provincial Manager and representative of the SAHRC in the Northern Cape, where the majority of the South African KhoeSan, who live closely to their ancestral ways, still reside. At our meeting, Kgwasi had invited her legal officer, Peter Toto. I had advised her that I wanted to ask the SAHRC general questions about gender violence among the KhoeSan and why the report above had not covered it and that I respect the Commission

¹¹⁴ The other police station is in Rietfontein, some 90km away

¹¹⁵ http://www.sahrc.org.za/sahrc/cms/publish/cat_index_41.shtml and http://www.sahrc.org.za/KHOMANI_SAN_ENGLISH_FINAL.pdf

immensely. Both Kgwasi and Toto are Nguni, and grew up in the Northern Cape. They were friendly, generous, kind. I noticed a few KhoeSan men in the SAHRC offices, obviously accessing services, especially legal support. Kgwasi appeared irritated by at least one of the Khomani men, whom she said always demanded immediate attention, which had me readily empathise with her, a very busy woman in a very busy office.

Kgwasi and Toto said that the Khomani San, the majority of the KhoeSan they deal with, rarely report gender-based violence, and instead employed traditional conflict resolution methods. They did acknowledge a series of incidents at the JG Adam School in Askham, where child abuse is alleged to have occurred at the school's hostels (residences), apparently perpetrated by older boys against younger boys. They suggested that the abuse was ethnic in origin, redolent of conflict between 'Coloureds', who are mixed race, and Khomani San. This particular issue will be returned to shortly, in the discussion of my visit to the Witdraai police station.

Regarding the abuse at the school, the SAHRC representatives said that after an inquiry was held, an apparently very efficient social worker, Mrs Jooste, was appointed in Askham, and the issue was resolved. Kgwasi referred me to the Department of Social Services' Regional Office in Upington, and their other office in Rietfontein (where the second of two police stations in the entire Kalahari is situated).

It was in discussing the leadership in the Kalahari, and its rotation, that I was caught off guard. Toto, like many others before and after this particular meeting, complained about problems with current leadership in the Kalahari. He explained that the

Khomani San elect their leader/s, which he said was very different to his own Nguni traditions, where it is hereditary, from father to son, in perpetuity. I felt he spoke scathingly of Dawid Kruiper, descendant of an ancient San family-clan, and elected leader of the Khomani in the Kalahari, as well as of oom Dawid's son. According to Toto, *oom* Dawid was grooming his son to take over from him, hoping that the Kalahari communities would elect the younger Kruiper. I was so surprised by this apparent bias, in light of the SAHRC's own report of abuses against the Khomani San, that I was left speechless, merely smiling politely. The Introduction to this report is written by its widely respected Chairperson, Jody Kollapen. The report also features two different photographs of Dawid Kruiper, as well as one of Kollapen, on its cover.

Kgwasi further confided in me, as Toto nodded affirmatively, that she had taken her husband and child with her, on a recent visit to the Kalahari¹¹⁶. There she went to meet with Dawid Kruiper, whom everyone affectionately calls *oom* Dawid.

Judgementally she described her family's horror that Kruiper chooses to live in a hut in the *veld*, and that he prefers traditional skins as clothing, in a modern civilised world. For me Kgwasi in this example chooses *European* modernity, with its relative comforts and even luxuries, as well as Christianity, over traditional Nguni culture – she is, after all, not living in a hut herself, hence indicating how 'civilised' she is, in relation to oom Dawid Kruiper, who *chooses* to live a traditional lifestyle. Kgwasi's dysjunctures are representative of the African continent, and the need for our postcolonial African renaissance: to reclaim, rather than mock our ancient traditions; to embrace what is useful in modernity, such as technology, while eschewing mindless conspicuous consumption and greed.

¹¹⁶ The distance between Upington and Andriesvale is approximately 190km.

Additionally, Kgwasi's apparent prejudice, as a member of a dominant group (Nguni), against the minority KhoeSan, is also emblematic of the dysjunctures of the Nguni colonisation of Southern Africa and what were originally lands inhabited freely by the KhoeSan. It is also emblematic of the dysjunctures of a country that professes to be a rainbow nation, yet in which its First Nations people can be treated with disparagement by its constitutionally enshrined institutions.

I was surprised that the SAHRC seemingly employed largely Nguni people in senior positions in the Northern Cape, despite the demographic prevalence of descendants of the KhoeSan in this province. I was also surprised that two of the SAHRC's most senior representatives in Upington could display such apparent racism against the KhoeSan, even in the presence of a complete stranger. I felt these dysjunctures deep in my solar plexus, especially given my own assumptions about solidarity among and between people of colour that all suffer oppression under white supremacy (and Apartheid before), as evinced by Black Consciousness.

In my meeting with Grace Humphreys, the Head of the South African San Institute (SASI) in Upington, immediately after meeting with the SAHRC, she remarked that for her the biggest challenge was that the KhoeSan did not believe in themselves. This did not surprise me, a lack of self-worth among deeply oppressed people. People oppressed even by other black people in their own shared country.

During a subsequent trip, SASI's Frederik Brou drove me around the Kalahari, introducing me to various male community leaders, including *oom* Dawid Kruiper,

and oom Jan van der Westhuizen, traditional healer and convenor of SASI's Health Project. Brou also took me to the police station in Witdraai. This is the same police station from where a few of its officers, claiming 'Coloured' identity, allegedly hunted down and shot a Khomani tracker, Optel Rooi, for alleged burglary, on 4 January 2004. This horrific incident was featured in at least two documentaries¹¹⁷, as well as in the SAHRC report, mentioned above. The (SAHRC) Inquiry secured the prosecution of the two policemen involved in the fatal shooting of Optel Rooi.

The Khomani San community is subject to victimisation, harassment and abuse by members of the South African Police Services. The police in the area have historically farmed particularly on Witdraai, a farm transferred to the Khomani San in their land claim, and continue to undertake commercial ventures on Khomani San land. This has contributed to a distorted relationship between the community and the police. In addition, the community does not understand policing and prosecution processes, and access to courts is hampered in that the nearest court is situated in Upington, some 200 kilometres away (SAHRC, 2004: 6). Further complaints against the Witdraai police are enumerated in the SAHRC report, in a special section on policing, as well as a section dealing with the murder of Rooi (2004: 21-23). What is clear from the SAHRC's report and other sources is that the KhoeSan communities do not trust the Witdraai police, and that the police are *entirely* responsible for this perception:

During the Inquiry, several members of the Khomani San community indicated that they were involved in unreported incidents of assault by members of the SAPS operating in the Witdraai area. Although of great concern, in order to protect both

¹¹⁷ The 2004 documentary, *Death of a Bushman*, directed by Richard Wicksteed and Stef Snel, was broadcast on *Special Assignment* on SABC TV on Tuesday 25 May 2004. See also the 2006 film *Bushman's Secret* by Rehad Desai: <http://www.3continentsfestival.co.za/>

members of the Khomani San community and members of SAPS, the details of these incidents will not be elaborated on (SAHRC report, 2004: 23).

So by the time I visited the Witdraai police station, on 31 May 2007, towards the very end of my 'fieldwork', few things should have surprised me. In the charge office I met Constable Hlahani, a female officer, whose first language is Sesotho, and who deals with all domestic violence and rape cases, if any ever get reported. She was fairly new to the police station, and I assumed that she was one of the replacements of the two officers prosecuted for the Rooi murder.

During each visit to the Northern Cape, each community would enumerate its cases of gender-based violence, especially domestic violence, one more horrific than the next. For example, when I arrived in Andriesvale for the first time, on the afternoon of Wednesday 2 May, one of the SASI officers, Lizelle Kleinhans, was speaking with a KhoeSan man looking for an ambulance for a severely injured woman. Apparently the victim's male partner had gone into the bush, then repeatedly returned to attack her with various lethal weapons, including an axe. They were struggling to get an ambulance to take her to hospital, a great distance away, and feared for her life¹¹⁸. Few private individuals have transport of any kind in the Kalahari. Apparently this particular case was not unusual for the Kalahari communities.

I was therefore surprised that Hlahani reported only two domestic violence cases during the entire month of May, and showed me her register to prove it. She suggested that:

¹¹⁸ I was on my way to the Kgalagadi National Park for a meeting with the Park's Christine du Plessis and never discovered the fate of the severely wounded woman in Andriesvale as I still had to travel some two hours to reach the Park to meet the 6pm gate shutdown time .

They don't report cases so much cause they're scared of their husbands, they're scared. They don't report because they find the husband supports the family. And they're scared. What if I expose this man?

Hlahani also shared that "We don't hear so much about child abuse". She added, "with the case of (name deleted to protect confidentiality), we open a case, but she doesn't want to lay a charge – this case happened last week". Fonnie Brou, present with me in the charge office, acknowledged that he knew the complainant mentioned. I felt that the processes followed with me, from showing me the complaints register to disclosing the name of a complainant, was not appropriate, however generously intended. At this point the station commander, Captain de Wee, who said he identifies as 'Coloured', arrived to intervene in my conversation with the three officers¹¹⁹ in the charge office, and escorted me outside, where he shared the following:

Why people don't report their violence is *cause* of the family, *cause* the man is the breadwinner. It happens Thursday until Sunday, our peak period... *We have a problem with that thing, domestic violence, in the area, but also not really* (sic). It's a big problem for us, *cos* we can't refuse to take the case. Last month we had a murder, and the previous month we had one too. In Welkom two brothers fought... We do community policing, but not sector policing. Last month we had an *imbizo* in Welkom. CGE and Eskom were also here, to work with the youth. We speak nicely here; it's after all our people, innit? You're welcome to pop in anytime. *Sorry man, I couldn't be more helpful* (emphasis added).

¹¹⁹ Apart from Hlahani, there were two other male officers in the charge office at the time of my visit. None of them appeared particularly busy at the time.

One is left wondering if the lack of reporting is due to the community's living in terror of the Witdraai police, or due to traditional under-reporting of gender-based violence, widely documented elsewhere. Or if indeed the police were not keeping statistics of violence, and gender violence in particular, in line with an alleged police 'policy' to reduce crime statistics. It was interesting how quickly De Wee arrived to lead me away from his subordinate staff, especially in view of the murder of Optel Rooi.

The most pertinent issues for a range of people in a range of KhoeSan communities, insiders and outsiders, included violence against women and children, i.e. gender-based violence. Christine du Plessis of SAN PARKS asked me to introduce her to children's rights and support organisations in Cape Town¹²⁰. She was working hard at "victim empowerment" of women in the Park. Belinda Kruiper, from Welkom just outside the Park, spoke eloquently of domestic violence, including of her sister-in-law's¹²¹ life of violence, repeatedly having her late husband imprisoned for the violence, then returning to him on his return from prison. Belinda Kruiper invited her sister-in-law to our crack of dawn meeting.

The differences between the two women were stark: Belinda, dignified community leader, originally from Cape Town, was deep in mourning of the passing of Vetkat Regopstaan. His sister was sitting in a ragged dress, painfully thin, with the scars of years of abuse evident. Dysjunctures proliferate, even within the Khomani San community in the Kalahari: the two Kruiper brothers are respected community elders, while their sister appears neglected by the community, and formerly abused by her late husband. To me, sister Kruiper represents the dysjunctures for women in

¹²⁰ Soon after my return from this particular trip, I sent an email to Molo Songololo and RAPCAN, asking them to contact and support du Plessis.

¹²¹ Name withheld.

indigenous communities, and among the KhoeSan specifically. It also highlights the need for transformation, especially of consciousness or mindset, for indigenous women, as Belinda Kruijer also asserted during this first meeting. It is up to indigenous women ourselves to re-claim our strength and power, against enormous odds, in order to change our lives for the better, to be free of patriarchal violences, and to reclaim our historic and just place in society.

While acknowledging gender egalitarianism among the KhoeSan, and perhaps even the absence of the construct gender entirely, Heike Becker (2003), *inter alia*, refers to various factors that affected a shift from egalitarianism to greater hierarchies, including gender hierarchy and male domination. In her paper¹²², Becker centrally examines “changing socio-economic and political conditions” which she says fundamentally impacted on “San gender relations and identities”, “including a range of related issues”, such as “the gendered division of labour, differential access to income and property, gender differentials in education, and the history of the militarisation of a substantial fraction of the San in the 1970s and 1980s” (2003: 7).

A range of renowned scholars, from Marjorie Shostak to Heike Becker to Yvette Abrahams, all assert one of the key issues contributing to KhoeSan women's loss of power as the loss of women's central role as major contributor of food (and herbal medicines) to households and communities, which stemmed from various factors, most noticeably loss of access to land on which they have *always* foraged. The loss of land means women cannot forage for food and herbal medicines, on which communities depended. This means women have no social and other forms of

¹²² For this 2003 paper Becker drew substantively on a research report she co-published with Silke Felton during 2001.

power, with concomitant deterioration of the community's diet and health. It has also meant, with increased patriarchal encroachments and Apartheid militarisation, that men express greater violence against women, and that women express more self-hatred, than previously recorded in either oral history, or colonial records.

Some scholars have proposed that there is a proliferation of gender violence in indigenous communities. For example, Linda Tuhiwai Smith mentions that "in Australia, Aborigine women talk about a history of being hunted, raped and then killed like animals" (1999: 9). Scholars have also contentiously suggested that gender violence cases are more prevalent and horrific among indigenous peoples than in society in general. Heike Becker has powerfully engaged with questions of gender violence among the KhoeSan specifically, and writes in her conclusion:

Increasing gender-based violence is an indication of the *erosion* of the formerly relatively high degree of gender egalitarianism in many San communities. Gender relations and gender identities among the San communities in southern Africa have been grossly affected by socio-economic, political and cultural changes. While San men generally remain marginalised within their national societies and economies, they have gained social, economic and cultural power at the expense of women in their communities. To varying degrees, San women have lost influence and autonomy everywhere due to a range of socio-economic, political and cultural developments. These include, notably, sedentarisation due to the wide-scale loss of land, the shift to pastoralism, the turn to wage labour, the influence of male-dominant neighbouring communities and, most dramatically, the militarization of San life in the 1970s and 1980s (2003: 22, emphasis added).

Scholars such as Becker, Shostak and Abrahams, as discussed earlier, have suggested that high gender violence statistics among the KhoeSan is due to the extent of disempowerment of KhoeSan women and men, compounded by militarization of KhoeSan men since at least the 1970s. This is exacerbated by women's unique loss of power due to loss of land. These suggestions have been

echoed by scholars writing about other indigenous communities, including Smith above. Ifi Amadiume writes that since “the time of (patriarchal) invasions..., state power in Africa has been based on violence, domination and exploitation of the communities”. Amadiume contrasts “women’s organizational autonomy under the indigenous matriarchal system with their gradual fragmentation and loss of autonomy and solidarity under the leadership of a European-produced elite” (1997: 140).

There are elements of these arguments that may be more self-evident than others. For example, racism against indigenous minorities by a more powerful majority society, may exacerbate the abuse of indigenous women, as reported by Amnesty International¹²³, among others.

KhoeSan communities, like other indigenous peoples elsewhere, often experience greater marginalization and disempowerment in society in general, resulting in women’s loss of power, and men’s violence against women attempts in part to reclaim men’s loss of power in the patriarchal society in which male power is not only revered, but compulsory¹²⁴.

However, the absence of concrete statistics from, for example police stations, in KhoeSan communities such as the Witdraai area (which includes comparatively large ‘settlements’ such as Askham and Andriesvale), questions historic assumptions about gender violence in KhoeSan communities specifically, and indigenous communities in general. This quite aside from known under-reporting in gender violence cases.

¹²³ URL <http://www.amnestyusa.org/women/maze/report.pdf>. Also see Smith, on “the intersections between race and gender” (1999: 45-47).

¹²⁴ The limited scope of this Masters thesis does not afford a more detailed explication of masculinities in this context, so masculinities is recommended as one of the areas for further research.

I would suggest that we need more sophisticated analyses, supported by further documentation, to reach firmer conclusions on the issue of gender violence among the KhoeSan. Some of the questions that resonate in this research are, for example, to what extent does the proliferation of femicide in the wider society¹²⁵ impact on historically peaceful indigenous communities such as the KhoeSan. In other words, how does wider systemic violence impact on smaller KhoeSan communities specifically?

A further question, posed with the utmost respect, is whether ancient norms of nonviolence among the KhoeSan could contribute towards such communities experiencing gender violence more severely than the way it is experienced by others in the wider national society. Gender violence proliferates throughout the world, as shown by, for example, multi-country studies of the World Health Organisation and Amnesty International respectively¹²⁶. When examining violence among KhoeSan communities, it is important to remember that gender violence among all societies is extremely high. The particular cases of violence encountered during this research project may indeed be less exceptional when compared with cases of violence among the broader national society. Synnov Skorge asserts about gender violence that “*women* are at the receiving end and *women* are dying... *women*... are going to the slaughter”¹²⁷. I have also elsewhere written of a generic patriarchal “war against women” (2003a).

¹²⁵ The Medical Research Council shows one woman is murdered by her male partner *every six hours* in South Africa, Matthews et al, 2004.

¹²⁶ Amnesty International 2004, WHO 2005.

¹²⁷ Muthien, 2003b: 42, original verbal emphasis. Skorge is co-founder and manager of the Sarah Baartman Centre for Women & Children, which was founded around a shelter for battered women during 1999.

These critically challenging questions raised here, are further compounded by horrific cases of gender violence perpetrated in diverse communities across South Africa, from ‘witch’ burnings¹²⁸, to stonings of HIV positive and other women, to men assaulting women for choosing modern trousers over traditional garments. As Skorge and others attest in the above study (Muthien 2003b), South African shelters are increasingly experiencing space and other resource challenges, precisely due to the general systemic pervasiveness of gender violence across the country.

While I had previously followed leading scholarship in the analyses of gender violence in indigenous societies generally, and the KhoeSan especially, I can no longer so easily concur about the extent (incidence and severity) of this gender violence, in relation to the national society. This central question, and associated issues as discussed above, begs further examination, analysis, and documentation, which the limited scope of this Masters thesis does not afford, but which is critically needed for further theorising and strategic interventions.

The narratives of elders born as late as the 1940s will necessarily and largely reflect an absence of generic violence, as well as the absence of gender violence, especially in areas where they were still able to practice their ancient ways of being, including rituals. All participants in this research project asserted that they had “never heard of rape or child rape when I was growing up or even young, never”, as Ouma Geelmeid put it:

¹²⁸ For example, the Commission on Gender Equality annual report of 2003, and additional report at URLs www.cge.org.za/userfiles/documents/CGE%20annual%20report%202003.pdf and www.cge.org.za/userfiles/documents/sexual_orientation_equality.pdf.

In the olden days we had *!nau*, a rite of passage for young people. Nowadays children chat, and when I ask them if they don't have work to do, they'd get up to make coffee. That would never have happened with us and our parents and my ouma. My ouma and Pa spoke *Boesmantaal* to each other, and this is how I learnt to speak the language.

The post-Apartheid South Africa's coat of arms carries the motto, "*!ke e /xarra / /ke*", meaning 'people who are different come together'¹²⁹, a notion of unity in diversity, diversity in unity, a veritable 'rainbow nation'. It is ironic that this Rainbow Nation of ours, with its First People's coat of arms motto, deeply neglects or even oppresses these very Original People. Apart from the added irony of a postcolonial state employing a colonial 'coat of arms', employing symbology that was used to keep its people subjugated and genocided for over three centuries. It is equally ironic that South Africa is celebrated as a country with eleven official languages, yet none of these languages are of the First People. *Our eleven official languages are all settler languages*, and it is these settler descendants who are creating new realities, realities which continue to exclude, neglect, and even oppress the First People of this country, this region, this continent. It is additionally ironic that postcolonial Zimbabwe teaches their schoolchildren of the KhoeSan, as part of their official curriculum.

Pippa Skotnes, offers this critique in her latest edited volume, beautifully illustrated:

the Bushmen and their descendants are still viewed as an underclass, while land claims and calls by their Afrikaans-speaking descendants for recognition as an indigenous grouping are seen as deeply problematic. The President's choice, though appropriate and resonant in many ways, is also a choice that allows for the recognition of the aboriginal status of the Bushmen while at the same time rendering them extinct by identifying them as the /xam. In so doing he does not endanger the

¹²⁹ <http://www.info.gov.za/aboutgovt/symbols/coa/index.htm>

project of land restitution to those whose African ancestors were amongst the first settlers in South Africa (Skotnes, 2007: 73).

Skotnes argues that to refer to the KhoeSan as 'Stone Age' is to fail to recognise the richness of the archaeological record and their achievements:

We know from excavations that these same hunter-gatherers were painters, engravers, shamans, musicians, storytellers, and workers in bone, ivory, leather and other materials. Paintings and engravings have been shown to date back at least 10 000 years and the use of ochre for making paint to as much as 80 000 years or more. Ostrich eggshell beads, carved bone and stone, and decorative pigments such as ochre and specularite illustrate an ability to extract and manipulate materials beyond mere stone, almost certain in complex but hard-to-discern ritual and social contexts (2007: 77).

Parkington, in the same volume, also asserts that "such hunter-gatherers have been known to amass quantities of ivory or ostrich feathers for trade, to mine copper, herd stock either for themselves or others, and to act as ritual specialists, rainmakers or shamans for farmers" (2007: 84).

South Africa is not unique in its treatment of the KhoeSan. Onalenna Selolwane, Head of Sociology at the University of Botswana, advocates on behalf of the Basarwa San¹³⁰:

no group of San descent has a recognized and protected 'homeland' of their own?... The whole of Botswana is their homeland, but they are not claiming it all to themselves... over several centuries they have been forced out of their various homelands.... when the state (recognizes) that natural resources are a source of wealth and can be used as a basis for economic development, they should not be forced to quit using natural resources as a basis of their own economic

¹³⁰ Gender and Women's Studies listserv, 10 June 2005, gwsafrica@lists.sn.apc.org

advancement... just because government designs development programs for them does not necessarily mean they in fact benefit.... In other game parks communities have been allowed to enjoy the benefits of so called modern development without removing them from such reserves... while government has an obligation to help uplift the living standards of its people, this obligation must... be carried out with the... consent of the people.

It is in these contexts that the KhoeSan of Southern Africa generally, and South Africa specifically, are experiencing severe pressures, in which their ancient ways of being are steadily being eroded. These ancient principles include egalitarianism, gender fluidity and profound respect for women and elders, as well as nonviolence as a norm. Selolwane speaks truth to power when she states that Botswana's "Bantu" customary laws differ very fundamentally from the principles and procedures of San customary laws (2004: 71). These she argues are founded on egalitarian rather than hierarchical values:

Marriage according to the dominant Bantu ethnic groups involved processes whereby marriage was validated by an exchange of animals and the children's affiliation transferred from the mother's family to the father's family. The egalitarian Khoesan (sic) traditions in contrast, recognized the rights of children to have equal affiliation to both sides of the family and therefore to have freedom to choose domicile and change it as they willed. This apparently simple difference meant that since only the Bantu traditions are recognized by the numerically superior Bantu ethnic groups, ethnic San suffered enormously from non recognition of the validity of their unions as well as the affiliation of their children (2004: 71-72).

Similarly Selolwane argues that:

the customary legal definitions of land use rights and territorial boundaries were heavily stacked in favour of the customary laws and land use practices of the Bantu ethnic majorities.... Government's policy of even-handed development programming means that the San's development programmes entail removal from the few

remaining ancestral lands to areas where they could be availed with what is defined as proper development, but which ... invariably leave them even poorer. At a recent International Conference ... on Khoesan (sic) Development San delegates accused government of trying to make them cattle owners at a time when the cattle herding ethnic groups are being encouraged to venture into natural resource based commercial enterprises and tourism. They argued that their historical economic strategies are based on natural resources which they are now being pushed out of (2004: 72-73).

In 21st century spaces where Nguni patriarchal values dominate, as so powerfully illustrated by Selolwane above, colonial-era dysjunctures of the KhoeSan are reiterated and amplified. Throughout Southern Africa the KhoeSan are fighting for access to traditional lands they have used throughout time. The KhoeSan struggle with gender egalitarianism and fluidity in their past, as well as with patriarchal pressures still causing gender and generic violences in the present, without adequate access to resources to articulate a more authentic and just future.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter was an explication and contextualisation of the KhoeSan and other participants of the research project. It examined KhoeSan values and practices of nonviolence, gender egalitarianism, as well as consciousness and spirituality. Dysjunctures and concomitant dysfunctions (such as substance abuse and self-hatred) are still very evident in KhoeSan communities, and directed against the KhoeSan by others including Nguni people in positions of power. Yet communities and individuals are working hard at healing and transformation of their own consciousnesses, individually and collectively. With a key part of these transformative

struggles encompassing a reclamation of values hitherto suppressed and severely challenged by colonialism and capitalism, values such as the sacredness of the feminine. A more detailed conclusion of the entire research project is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This thesis set out to contribute to existing literature on violent and peaceful societies generally, and on gender egalitarian societies more specifically, by engaging in work with KhoeSan women particularly.

This research project focused on two intersectional components. First, the reconstruction of generic knowledge, and especially the reclamation of indigenous knowledge, from an African feminist perspective. Second, the explication and reclamation of peaceful societies, as well as the notion of nonviolence as a norm. Critically tied to these two primary research questions, is the issue of gender, especially as it relates to women.

Grounded in a thorough review of scholarship across various disciplines, this thesis offered a critique of phallogocentrism and what Barbara Mann calls euro-forming, by analysing male authors of 'grand peace theories', who are all based in the global North. I also offered a critique of euro-forming that occurs in feminisms practiced in the global North, even as these feminist scholar-activists engage in admirable work that advance gender justice internationally. Finally, I examined indigenous and African scholars, and especially KhoeSan scholars, to explicate theories and practices that show alternatives to patriarchal violences: evidence of peaceful societies, and gender egalitarian societies, as well as the critical intersections between these two elements.

The research findings speak for themselves, and offer appropriate support of the literature reviewed. Evidence of nonviolence as a norm, as well as gender egalitarianism, exists in scholarship on, as well as practices of, the KhoeSan. Echoes of these ancient norms and practices are still evident in modern oral history and practice, especially in the deep rural Kalahari, as well as being reclaimed by KhoeSan descendants in urban contexts.

Despite colonial pressures over centuries, and five decades of Apartheid, evidence of the thesis' original indicators of peace remains. Testimonies by the participants included the following pointers of peace: lower levels of societal violence and even nonviolence as a norm; the use of nonviolent conflict resolution methods; social egalitarianism and collective leadership; gift giving and profound interconnectedness; as well as intense respect for all community members, including elders and women. Additional values characteristic of peaceful societies, especially in relation to gender and women, were also evident throughout this research project, including: lower levels of gender violence, as well as deep respect for women and femininity as sacred.

This thesis also provides strong evidence of the practice of *Khoe!na* or *ubuntu*, that is a sense of interconnectedness, of extended family and kinship, of community in which people's existence is critically tied to a profound sense of belonging. This deep respect for and appreciation of all people and the cosmos at large is of necessity inclusive of women. Testimonies also support and provide accounts of the norm of gift and sharing among the KhoeSan which has been documented by Abrahams and other indigenous scholars.

The idea that societies are not static, and that they can be located on a continuum with nonviolence on one end, and violence on the other, is derived from the research reviewed, as well as from the rest of this thesis. These societal locations on the nonviolence-violence scale are dependent on issues such as colonialisms and patriarchy, and when these endemically violent systems first engaged with various historically peaceful societies, since violent colonisations of one (violent) society by another (usually less violent society) have occurred for at least the past 3,000 years. The colonisers' internalisation of the colonial violence is also dependent on the resilience of normative nonviolence, as well as other norms such as social and gender egalitarianism, among indigenous people, such as the KhoeSan.

Yvette Abrahams has written of dysjunctures, and their concomitant dysfunctions amongst the KhoeSan. This thesis found the following key dysjunctures: (a) a minority normatively nonviolent society such as the KhoeSan living in the midst of a majority violent patriarchal society, with continuous reiteration of violence; (b) a normatively nonviolent society internalising patriarchal violences and hence expressing more gender violence internally; (c) KhoeSan themselves, and KhoeSan women especially, internalising negative stereotypes and aspiring to emulate dominant social images, for example, desiring blonde hair; (d) urban descendants of the KhoeSan, whom Michael Besten (2005) calls "neo-Khoekhoe", seen to dominate KhoeSan discourse and Studies, in ways similarly colonising to Barbara Mann's 'euro-forming'; (e) urban street people, as documented by Siv Oevernes (2004), practicing the ancient ways of the KhoeSan, despite arguably being even worse off than rural KhoeSan, partly due to the challenges of performing and maintaining

community, as well as profound systemic bias against them; (f) KhoeSan men adopting patriarchal power and control over women, evident in some power structures¹³¹; continued Khoe dominance of those who consider themselves San¹³². These are some articulations of dysjunctures prevalent in most indigenous societies, and among the KhoeSan in particular.

Despite these dysjunctures the KhoeSan as a collective First Nations people have continued to survive, a people whose ancient norms still pervade entire communities, norms from which we continue to seek and find inspiration and hope. Neither patriarchal violence - colonialism or Apartheid - managed to completely eradicate the first people of Southern Africa. So too KhoeSan women's power and strength is still evident in communities, and oral traditions, despite the depredations of patriarchies.

Scholarship across disciplines, and particularly literature focused on the KhoeSan, support the evidence in contemporary elder women's narratives of an even recent past that was comparatively nonviolent, and where normative nonviolence remains pervasive to the present day.

This shows that scholarship that assumes violence and aggression as primordial can be counter-balanced by bringing to light evidence, heretofore ignored or suppressed, of ancient societies that still exist today, societies which all practice nonviolence as a norm. This thesis contributes to the research on peaceful societies by offering an

¹³¹ For example, the only paper on gender at the National Khoisan (sic) Consultative Conference was by Jean Burgess (Besten, 2005: 324).

¹³² Northern Cape community leader, Mario Mahongo, originally from Namibia, was "the only San" to present a paper at the above conference (ibid).

analysis of the KhoeSan's nonviolence as a norm, from a KhoeSan woman's perspective, for the first time ever.

This research project, supported by inter- and multi-disciplinary scholarship in Indigenous Studies, repeatedly produced evidence in elder KhoeSan women's narratives of gender egalitarianism, in the sense of women and men being equal, as well as the norm of mutual respect, and even love, between women and men. Additionally, both literature analysed, as well as research participants in person, also frequently referred to the sacredness of femininity, and claimed this variously as indigenous generically, and decidedly KhoeSan specifically.

This thesis also shows that the patriarchal myth of women's subordinate status can be transformed with the support of thorough evidence of the existence of gender egalitarian societies around the world, and the KhoeSan especially. Growing scholarship in the inter- and multi-disciplinary area of Gender Egalitarian Studies further shows the sacredness of femininity in many indigenous societies. This thesis extends this scholarship to include the KhoeSan, another first.

Hence, through focusing on KhoeSan women, this thesis contributes to the multi-disciplinary literature on peaceful societies generally, and gender egalitarian societies specifically, from a KhoeSan woman's perspective, as a precedent.

Clearly, given the limits of time and other resources, as well as the limited scope of a Masters thesis itself, ongoing further research is needed. Additional research in this area will be invaluable for addressing violence in South Africa specifically, and

Southern Africa generally, especially among and for the benefit of the KhoeSan, and KhoeSan women especially.

Further and more detailed evidence and elements, among the KhoeSan, of values and practices of non-violence and peacefulness, social egalitarianism and collective leadership, as well as gender egalitarianism, as well as of consciousness and spirituality, needs to be explored and documented. Research should be broadened to include KhoeSan communities across Southern Africa, in rural and urban contexts.

Given the limits of scope of this Masters thesis, masculinities, in relation to the KhoeSan in particular, could not be explored in great detail. Hence the issue of masculinities among the KhoeSan is highly recommended for future research.

As discussed in the previous chapter, further analysis and documentation is also needed on the relationship between gender violence in national society in general, and gender violence of the minority KhoeSan communities, especially regarding actual comparative statistics. A critical additional question that needs further exploration is how KhoeSan normative nonviolence impacts on perceptions of gender violence, particularly related to incidence and severity of violence.

So too, strategic interventions are needed to develop female participation and leadership through capacity building and empowerment which is built on indigenous knowledge systems reflecting values of participation, gender egalitarianism, respect for nonviolence and consensus building. This will also serve as a positive model to empower women and girls specifically, and communities in general, to reclaim their

own power and rights, and significantly develop women leadership and position as powerful rolemodels.

It is especially critical that KhoeSan women are primarily responsible for scholarship on KhoeSan women specifically, and KhoeSan communities in general, due to issues of representation and power. Scholars such as I may be gifted by the support of not only our own communities, but allies across other communities, as the Acknowledgements of this thesis show.

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