# Storytelling and engravings, Past and Present: Biesje Poort, Northern Cape

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## Acknowledgements

## Abstract

The Biesje Poort rock art project was a research collaboration led by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS) and funded by the National Heritage Council. The project focused on the recording of previously undocumented rock engravings as well as the recording of the research teams' (including Kalahari representatives) stories inspired by the rock art site. The greater scope of the paper is that of the gaining and sharing of knowledge in relation to the Biesje Poort rock art site. The three authors, all part of the Biesje Poort research team, focus on different aspects of the project which are presented here in a dialogical manner. Miliswa Magongo explores the role of participatory communication in the recording of tangible and intangible heritage as well as the use of participatory communication in promoting skills transference and community empowerment. Mary Lange focuses on the use of a multiple intelligence approach to research in relation to the recording of rock art and oral narratives north of the Orange River. Shanade Barnabas discusses the tourism potential of the Biesje Poort site and the most appropriate methods of representing the rock engravings to the broader public. The storytelling discussed in this paper includes representations of the indigene, their knowledge, and multidisciplinary, varied interpretations of the rock art by the multidisciplinary and multicultural Biesje Poort research team.

## Introduction

**Mary:**

This paper focuses on the gaining and sharing of knowledge in relation to the Biesje Poort, Northern Cape, rock art site. The storytelling discussed in this paper includes representations of the indigene, their knowledge, and varied interpretations of the rock art by the multidisciplinary and multicultural Biesje Poort research team at the site.

**Miliswa:**

The research team comprised of a co-ordinator and representative of an arts for peace non-profit organisation, ARROWSA, The Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS), University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) researchers (for qualitative research investigating educational potential and level of participation in the project in terms of

development communication), landscape architects from the University of Cape Town (UCT) and University of Pretoria (to facilitate cultural mapping), an archaeological team from the McGregor Museum (to facilitate recording methods) and Kalahari residents (to gain recording skills and share local knowledge and stories of engravings and material culture found).

**Shanade:**

The paper includes a discussion on: the role that participatory communication plays in the recording of tangible and intangible heritage; the use of a multiple intelligence approach to research in relation to the experience of the Biesje Poort site; and, sharing of the knowledge gained from the heritage resource at the site.

**Participatory Communication and heritage recording**

**Miliswa:**

Participatory communication is arguably an ideal approach when used in multidisciplinary and multicultural projects as it, "helps break the social and cultural barriers to acceptance of new ideas and practices at the same time preserving cultural identity" (Nair and White, 1994:357). However, the uncertainty of various scholars as to what might be an accurate definition of participatory communication may be a leading contributor as to why some theorists question the credibility of applying a participatory communication approach in a development project. Participatory approaches have been criticised by some scholars as being 'utopian' (Huesca, 2008:187), 'fragile and often contradictory' (Gumucio-Dagron, 2008:71) and 'impractical as they do not offer specific, practical guidelines for the different contexts or communities where they can be applied' (Waisbord, 2001:22). However, participatory research is becoming increasingly popular in social development (Titterton and Smart, 2006).

The debate surrounding the definition of the participatory concept has been ongoing since the 1950s and 1960s. According to Thomas Tufte and Paolo Mefalopulos (2009:4) "[n]o consensus exists around a common definition of participation: it varies depending on the perspective applied....Stakeholders often have very different visions and definitions of participation in development". The problem associated with participation as an approach to social development is its lack of a theoretical and consistent definition (Lubombo, forthcoming). A number of theorists and researchers have documented that this has led to inconsistent methods of application by organisations claiming to use this concept (Jacobson

& Storey 2004; Melkote 2006). Guy Bessette (2004) also warns that as a result of being used in many ways to cover diverse projects, the concept of participation is sometimes used as a legitimisation of non-participatory approaches. He argues that "we cannot refer to a participatory approach when researchers and development practitioners use participatory techniques in a context where they use the information generated for the purpose of the research or development project itself, rather than for the purpose of a community owned initiative" (Bessette, 2004:18). For the purpose of this paper participatory development communication is defined as:

> a planned activity, based on the one hand on participatory processes, and on the other hand on media and interpersonal communication, which facilitates a dialogue among different stakeholders, around a common development problem or goal, with the objective of developing and implementing a set of activities to contribute to its solution, or its realization and which supports and accompanies this initiative (Bessette, 2009:9).

This definition highlights some important elements such as dialogue, participation and mutual sharing; these elements are also characteristics of storytelling. From this definition it is clear that communication for participatory development stands in contrast to the philosophy and practice of the dominant paradigm of development communication which has its emphasis on communication that is top-down and imposed whereby beneficiaries are assumed to be passive receivers of a development 'command' (Tufte, 2005; Melkote & Steeves 2001; Dyll, 2009). As the scope of this paper is limited to a few concepts, only some of those that influence the role that participatory communication can play in recording tangible and intangible heritage will be discussed. This includes how participatory communication can promote skills transference and empowerment when academics and indigenous communities collaborate and work towards one goal. The main concepts that will be discussed are: *shared knowledge*, *dialogue and conscientisation*, *context*, *power relations*, and *empowerment*.

### Shared knowledge

The literature of development communication highlights that the advent of participatory communication ushered in research and practice that acknowledges that development must include subject groupings or the beneficiaries of development (Melkote and Steeves, 2001). "[Participatory communication] stresses the importance of cultural identity of local communities and of democratization and participation at all levels - international, national, local and individual" (Servaes, 1996:15). Acknowledging people at the grass roots level

means that more and more development practitioners are finding it important to bring about development which is not only participatory and context specific but also recognises the value of indigenous knowledge and local solutions (Nair and White, 1994; Quarry and Ramirez, 2009). As "[p]articipatory research innovators began using Gramsci's term 'indigenous intellectual,' which gave recognised status and value to the grass roots person" (White, 1994:27).

In the participatory communication field, research collaborations between scientists and indigenous communities are encouraged. Through engaging in dialogue, participants from diverse cultures and disciplines are able to share knowledge and create critical understanding around particular issues. In critiques offered in the development communication literature some theorists recognised that "a partnership between scientist and people at the grass roots provided a stronger case for knowledge generation and application via useful and contextual research and practice" (White 1994: 27).

In line with a participatory communication approach, the research team that recorded rock art at Biesje Poort was multicultural and multidisciplinary. During the recording of the rock art all participants were given an opportunity to share their own interpretations of the rock art and the landscape. The indigenous knowledge provided by the Kalahari participants gave the project a local dimension. Their analysis, unlike their fellow participants, was not based on text-book knowledge but was based on intangible heritage passed on to them through oral tradition and shared skills by their forefathers. The recording process became a learning experience for all participants as everyone fed from each other's wealth of knowledge. For instance, when we discovered some smooth stones in Site 12, Lydia Lys Kruiper told us that they were grinding stones. She even demonstrated to us how they use them to grind *tsamma* melon to make a meal. Furthermore, every night during supper we would sit and discuss the day's events. By collectively discussing what we knew, what we didn't understand, and how we felt about particular issues and events during the recording, we collectively created and shared knowledge.

As Shirley White (1994:27) eloquently puts it the "important outcome of knowledge sharing and joint discovery was the feeling of worth and equality which grew out of interpersonal interaction... Simultaneously, the scientist or agent learned from the people, gaining a new respect for both the person and for his/her ideas and insights". This collective dialogue and knowledge sharing by participants can thus be viewed as a form of storytelling.

*Dialogue and conscientisation*

Principles of participatory development communication approach are founded on Paulo Freire's (1972) critical pedagogy. Although Freire's ideas and methodologies were originally applied in Latin American society in relation to adult education, Dominique Nduhura (2004) suggests that the participatory strategies embedded in the pedagogy are well suited to any society, particularly to African contexts. This is because issues such as oppression, empowerment, conscientisation and genuine participation of all stakeholders involved are still a universal concern.

"The central concept in Freire's educational theory is the concept of conscientization" (Elias 1994:122). Conscientisation entails a critical awareness of one's abilities and shortcomings and the conviction to change through action or participation. Conscientisation is also defined as "the process in which men, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives, and of their capacity to transform that reality through action upon it" (Freire, 1972:27). Moreover Pradip Thomas (2005:51) cautions that, "it is not merely awareness or the act of knowing or nominal involvement that is important, but its relationship to a project of social transformation, whereby consciousness and action on consciousness are dialectically related". Thomas' warning highlights what John Elias (1994:128) refers to as a "serious weakness in Freire's concept of conscientization". He argues that knowledge alone is not enough to spur positive development as there is a likelihood that "people involved in conscientization might become even more entrenched in their thinking once they see the full impact of oppression in their lives" (Elias 1994: 128). One of the positive outcomes of the Biesje Poort project was that upon realisation of the significance of recording heritage the participants from the Kalahari said they wanted to form a heritage team and proposed that the same group continue working together to record some heritage sites that they have in Witdraai.

Another Freirean concept which can be linked to participatory communication is *dialogue* or two-way communication in knowledge sharing. "[I]f there is only one thing that we can all learn from participatory communication experiences and their mixed results, it is that dialogue is the key for development" (Gumuci-Dagron, 2008:81). After all, conscientization is achieved through critical thinking which is usually triggered by dialogue (Gerace and Lázaro, 2006). In addition, "dialogue is promoted as an ethical communication choice within

the development context [or within participatory communication]" (Huesca, 2008:183). This means that every participant in a development project has a right to talk or communicate. However, being involved in the community dialogue does not mean that the community's problems will automatically be solved. "Often opinions differ as to the nature and extent of the problem and a lively public and political debate is generated" (Schoen, 1996:252). Diverse views by community members and stakeholders on particular issues may lead to conflicts and power struggles in which if not properly managed may bring a proposed project to a halt.

"For people to participate, they must become conscious of their own dignity. This in turn means that they must express themselves and be given the opportunity to have their say, based on the individual reality that infuses each person's life" (Gerace and Lazaro,2006:63). Freire (1983:76) advocates that this is not a privilege of some few men, but the right of every man".

However, since community members are hardly ever a homogenous group, conflicts and disagreements are bound to happen as different people are given an opportunity to express their different needs and opinions. To overcome conflicts and other obstacles in the project good leadership and two-way dialogue are important. Maria Figueroa *et al* (2002:8) advise that "If any conflict or dissatisfaction arises, then community leaders have to resolve the conflict before much progress can be made with the problem. To resolve the conflict, more clarification may be needed".

The participants in Biesje Poort engaged freely and openly with each other in spite of their diverse cultural and academic backgrounds (self efficacy through dialogue). However, there were a few instances where epistemological and ontological differences triggered the need for dialogue to resolve possible misunderstandings between participants. For instance, participants had different concepts of time and budget management. The Kalahari participants said they did not like the specific hours set for them to work as it went against the way in which they normally work. They felt that working within a set time limit was restricting and suggested that we start work earlier than the set time. But then it was explained to them that in order to work out a budget for the project certain labour laws had to be observed. One of them is that workers cannot work more than 8 hours in a day. So enforcing the 8 hour rule in the field was done to protect all participants and to ensure that they did not feel exploited.

After this conversation consensus was reached and the working hours were adjusted to suit all participants.

*Context*

Context remains one of the most influential aspects of participatory communication. "[D]ialogue and collective action ... are affected by contextual factors in the environment that constrain or support the progress of a community toward its envisioned goals" (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009: 1319). Context is generally defined as among other things, the people we working with, their culture, the geography and funding rules (Quarry and Raminez, 2009). Recognising and understanding all the dimensions that make up a people's context will help ensure a successful participatory communication project. Even when doing research with illiterate people" project leaders must never forget that, "people usually know what is best for them. [Their role therefore] is to believe that and be open to the possibility for dialogue, listening and discussion" '(Quarry and Raminez (2009:17).

During the Biesje Poort project everyone participated freely and with enthusiasm both on and off the field. Participants were always willing to be interviewed anytime of the day by student researchers. Good relations, mutual respect and cultural sensitivity towards one another contributed towards creating a favourable context or environment for all to work in. The geographical location and relatively small team working together may have shaped the favourable context at Biesje Poort. The fact that Biesje Poort is a private farm and we were only there for a short while to strictly record the rock art meant that we did not have to deal with community politics of the place. Working in a small group is more manageable compared to working in a big group.

*Power relations*

Participatory communications places a huge emphasis on equal sharing of power which unfortunately contrasts sharply with community realities. Although some scholars say "it is naive to assume that modern society can function without some people submitting their will to others" (Lozare, 1994:228), the distribution of power and structural changes often decreases the advantage of certain groups (Servaes, 2006). As a result conflict and power struggles are a common feature in communication for participatory development projects.

When it comes to dealing with societies' power relations, participatory communication is seen as necessary by those who believe development is a social process of transformation

(Nair, 1994; Chitnis, 2005:31). Yet some scholars believe that participatory communication is incapable of dealing with power relations in society. For instance Robert Huesca (2008:190) says, participatory communication is "...necessary but not sufficient for engaging and altering power relationships". Instead it is capable of reproducing in-egalitarian power structures, especially in regard to gender relations (Huesca, 2008; Wilkins, 2000).

Participatory communication projects need good leaders referred to as "champions" by Quarry and Ramirez (2009) who "understand the dynamics of power relationships and to manage conflict in such a way that these elements contribute positively to the development process" (Lozare, 1994:230). This means that a good balance of power and manageable conflict is good for the project.

During the Biesje Poort recording process the language barrier caused a minor conflict in one instance. English and Afrikaans were the two main languages used. The participants from the Kalahari could only speak Afrikaans and English [some spoke Nama] had to be translated for them to understand and I do not speak or understand Afrikaans. Whenever it was spoken I relied on other participants to translate to English for me. At some point while in the field some members felt that the simultaneous translation 'diminished' the record in some way and so the information/conversation should be summarised after people had finished speaking. Others felt it was necessary for people to understand what was being discussed as people were speaking. Since it was a multicultural and participatory project then all the 'different voices' reflected had to be recorded as they reflected the reality of the nature of the project (Dyll-Myklebust, 2011). However, through dialogue the researchers came to understand that since they were coming from different disciplines they therefore had different research approaches and methods of gathering data. Fortunately we learnt to work together without stepping on each other's proverbial toes.

Besides the everyday meetings we had as a group, the project leader (Mary Lange) also made it her duty to frequently meet with individuals and the different groups such as the ≠Khomani to find out how everyone was doing. Having someone who all the participants trust and could count on created a positive environment and improved social relations in the group.

*Empowerment*

Empowerment is achieved through conscientization and through participation people are empowered (White, 1994). "Empowerment means different things to different people" (Melkote and Steeves, 2001:36; Rowlands, 1998; Rozario, 1997). The primary objective of the Biesje Poort rock art recording project is linked to individual skills acquisition and self-awareness as a producer of knowledge together with collective empowerment. Collective empowerment can be defined as collective action at the local and higher level to bring about social change (Melkote & Steeves, 2001). Empowerment is a process where organisations, individuals and communities obtain control over their socio economic conditions through democratically inclined participation (Melkote & Steeves, 2001).

Research participants in Biesje Poort were empowered in many ways. The fact that everyone's voice mattered and all participants had the freedom of expression was empowering to the participants. This led to collective efficacy as for instance the Kalahari participants requested afterwards that the same group continue working together and implement a similar project in their local community. All participants gained rock art recording skills. One of the youngest participants and a member of the Kalahari !Klankie Dawid Kruiper was taught how to use the GPS by Liana Müller.

However, the very notion of empowerment can bring about challenges in the recording of tangible and intangible heritage. "There is a problem of researchers exciting a community's interest and raising expectations of improved services and greater participation. It can be a disempowering experience if nothing happens" (As Titterton and Smart, 2006:56). They warn researchers that they must be open and honest with research participants at all times and avoid creating unnecessary expectations among participants.

In spite of diverse arguments by scholars in the development communication field about which approaches are best the common thread seems to be the need for grassroots participation in development.

The intended outcomes of a multicultural project are seemingly positive and empowering. Crabtree (1998:200) elaborates that "cross-cultural interaction can be expected to produce transformational and empowering outcomes for participants; the differential power relationship between the interactants' cultures is constantly present and reproduced in interaction". However, Henrik Moller *et al*. (2009:234) warn that "many local communities

struggle with "external interference" in managing local resources and science is often seen as trumping local knowledge to inform decision making about what should and should not happen in local neighbourhoods". Therefore, researchers who intend to apply participatory communication in their development project must critically be on the lookout for not only the intended outcomes, but also the unintended outcomes that an intercultural and multidisciplinary project such as the one conducted at Biesje Poort can have on the participants and how the different forms of knowledge (science and local) are acknowledged and mobilised.

Dialogue, active participation and sharing of cultural knowledge are at the core of participatory communication just as they are in the core of storytelling

**Multiple intelligence approach to research in relation to the experience of the Biesje Poort site**

**Mary:**

An emphasis on a multiple intelligence research approach is in line with a participatory communication for development approach as both promote inclusivity.

To be there, to read with the body and all the senses, to experience the physical space and *genius loci* of a place, is to be inspired to explore, to learn more, to theorise and to share the encounter – a feeding of the mind and spirit which creates a meaning not found in texts, but a personal sensory meaning that sustains more than intellectual interest until the next encounter (Lange, 2011 forthcoming). I record my experience of the past rock engraving place, and the present oral narrative encounter, with a view to imparting the significance of this aspect of research in the type of methodology that I employ. This comprises an endeavour to demonstrate the role held by physical encounter with place and people in a multiple intelligence approach to research. The approach does take cognisance of the fact that a combination of intelligences is utilised in a task (Gardner 1993:26) and that "all humans possess certain core abilities in each of the intelligences" but also that individuals may possess a dominance of a specific intelligence.

> It is a pluralistic view of mind, recognizing many different and discrete facets of cognition, acknowledging that people have different cognitive strengths and contrasting cognitive styles. (Gardner, 1993:6)

Individual aptitudes are seen as a unique combination of intelligences or skills. Although based on the physical this is not a deterministic approach as it includes the significance of culture (Lindauer, 2003: 4).

> The emphasis and development of a specific intelligence is influenced by the importance placed upon it by the culture within which the individual finds him/herself. The outcome of the development of intelligence influences the time and attention paid to that particular intelligence specifically during the formative years. (Lange 2011 forthcoming)

It further does not exclude the aspect of spirituality and appreciates that all intelligences may also be applied aesthetically (Gardner, 1993).

A multiple intelligence approach to research encourages optimum learning by conscious inclusion of spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, verbal and non-verbal linguistic, musical and intra- and interpersonal intelligences over and above the traditional emphasis on the written linguistic and logical mathematical intelligences (Gardner, 1993). It is further proposed that a holistic study of rock art and oral narratives is promoted by considering the various intelligences.

Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence is reflected in "the control of body movement" and is one of the intelligences applied aesthetically in dance. Spatial intelligence would have been applied aesthetically by rock artists and would also have been needed for tracking. Intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences both embrace an understanding of people. Intrapersonal intelligence includes an accurate understanding of oneself and effective application of this knowledge within life whereas interpersonal intelligence is the ability to accurately read other people: "what motivates them, how they work and how to work cooperatively with them" (Gardner 1993:26). Hunter-gatherings need high interpersonal intelligence application due to the need for group cooperation, Gardner identifies religious leaders, including shamans, as possessing high intra- and interpersonal intelligences (1993: 27).

The great distance between our hunter-gatherer past and technologically advanced present was bridged somewhat when scrambling over the rocks at Biesje Poort when hunting for rock engravings. Of course our clothing and footwear today is vastly different; whether to our advantage or disadvantage being debatable. The rugged terrain and testing temperature ensured that we relied heavily on a combination of our bodily-kinaesthetic and spatial intelligences. As in any group it was evident that some had higher intelligence quotas in these areas than did others. The Kalahari participants as well as the professionals in the research team, who had not only specialised in archaeology, landscaping and architecture but regularly practised in the field, crossed the terrain with no problem and 'read' the landscape. The less experienced and more academic, city folk, did struggle

a little.  Lack of natural aptitude can be compensated through teaching and I learnt skills needed for crossing the hazardous terrain when I literally followed in the footsteps of a kind Kalahari resident crafter, Lydia Kruiper (Lange 2011a; Barnabas 2011).  Professor Emeritus in architecture, Roger Fisher, also 'taught' me how to read the easiest path to the top of a *koppie*.  This meant going against my instinct of following my nose in as straight, and therefore I thought shortest, route to the top but rather zigzagging up the rocky slope (Lange, 2011).

There are several rock engraving sites within the Western Biesje Poort area (Morris, 2011).  Possibly due to my theatre trained development of intelligences related to ritual, oral narratives and art I had a personal interest in the site that included an unusual large pecked composite engraving which touches on a smaller buck engraving.  This interest led me to apply for funding from the National Heritage Council. Despite visiting the site a number of times previously the complexity of the site and the mediocrity of my combined bio-kinaesthetic spatial intelligence in such a setting was made evident by the fact that on the March 2011 recording field trip I could not find the site until the second last day of the week.  The days of hunting did, however, result in the capture of many other pecked rock engravings that included a variety of animals.

The physical encounter with the harsh heat and difficult terrain and the stress on humour at the rock engraving site included an appreciation for the need for high interpersonal intelligence for survival. The cooling shower of rain that fell and filled up pools of fresh water that could be lapped up at the composite engraving site led to a greater understanding of theories of 'the power of the place' (Deacon, 1988) and the significance of engraved lines that led from images to water-catch areas in the rock (Morris, 2002). The sweet smell of the long grass just after the down pour explained the inclusion of such places in the list of the Water Snake dwellings (Hoff, 1997).  The three nights in a tent with thunder and lightning storms, lashing rain and a whirlwind led to an appreciation of the identification of the control of the elements with a higher being and the dualistic nature of the weather specifically rain and wind that can bring growth or destruction (Hoff, 1997). All this understanding could not have taken place through only the application of the written linguistic and logical mathematical intelligences.

The composite engraving I interpreted as including therianthropic elements that combine features of ostrich, giraffe, scorpion, wildebeest and snake (Lange, 2007). There are apparent similarities between the painting of a horned snake by a contemporary San artist, Tchaba, and the Biesje Poort engraving in general shape and inclusion of geometric shapes. The association of the horned snake head with an antelope is also a sustained image despite the distance in time and space between the two artworks. This composite embodies the fluid aspect of rock art discussed by Morris (2011) whereby, like oral

narratives, the original art does not remain static but is revisited and reinvented. Both spatial and verbal linguistic intelligences are applied in a creative manner.

In 1778-1779 Hendrik J. Wikar describes lions, elephants, hippos, buffalos, rhinoceros, giraffes, gemsboks, kudus, ostriches and a range of smaller animals inhabiting the Orange River area (Cornelissen circa 1975, unpublished). Rock art images found in the Green Kalahari, the southern area of the Kalahari which has a slightly higher rainfall then further north, confirm that an abundance of these animals roamed the area in prehistoric times (Butzer, 1989). Many animals vanished from the landscape, as did indigenous people, with the colonial introduction of guns (Penn, 1995).

There are other animal images that are incorporated in present day Kalahari artists and crafters that are very similar to pecked engravings at Biesje Poort. An image of an ostrich and its nests engraved on an egg bought from a San in Ngwatle, Botswana is uncannily similar to one of the more recent (perhaps not pre-colonial) rock engravings photographed by David Morris (2010) at Biesje Poort. The ostrich features strongly in the folklore of the southern /Xam (Deacon, 1994) and present Botswana San (Fourie & Maunick, 2000). The stories recorded from Botswana reveal the ostrich as a creature associated with birth, creation, transformation and transitions in man's survival. The ostrich is present in stories relating how a feather became an ostrich, the gemsbok's acquisition of long horns, the origin of the Bushmen, and man's introduction to food of the forest and man's acquisition of fire and subsequent cooked food (Fourie & Maunick, 2000). Deacon suggests that the male ostrich can be seen as a metaphor for rebirth after trance in the same way that the eland is seen as a metaphor for 'death' (1994: 251, 252). Ostrich eggs have 'supernatural potency' for the !Kung according to San ethnographer Lorna Marshall (Lewis-Williams & Dowson, 1989:136). As in Pagan and Christian beliefs, where the egg is a symbol of rebirth, so too could the egg – and especially the ostrich egg – be a symbol of fertility, rebirth and growth in San and subsequent Biesje Poort cultures' belief systems. Ostriches feature frequently in rock engravings, sometimes in association with geometrics not unlike those seen on engraved ostrich eggshell fragments from archaeological sites (Beaumont & Morris, 1990) or geometric images on whole ostrich eggshells.

The giraffe is also an image that features prominently not only in this site at Biesje Poort but throughout the overall site. A present day ≠Khomani artist from Rietfontein has accurately depicted a giraffe on an egg that I purchased at Witdraai in 2011. The image too is similar to one of a giraffe that lies east of the therianthropic image previously mentioned. Both images do not include completed legs and merge into the surface. This 'half finished' effect is reminiscent of engravings at Wildebeestkuil for example that of an eland which is interpreted by David Morris as indicative of a seeming symbolic interaction through animal imagery with a spirit world within the rock (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990)

I purchased the giraffe-decorated ostrich egg from ≠Khomani crafters at the side of the road at Witdraai. I joined them and a group of Durban University of Technology students at their fire for a number of hours in July 2011. The students had sat with them for many hours the previous day too, sharing their work inspired by the art of the late Vetkat Regopstaan Kruiper. When I joined the group the crafters started to tell stories as they worked. One crafter was skilfully burning an image on bone whilst the other was deftly filling an empty brandy bottle with layers of different coloured Kalahari sand. Their storytelling included their non verbal linguistic skills even more than they would normally have done due to my and the students not always understanding their particular metaphorical Afrikaans dialect despite some of us being fluent in Afrikaans. They communicated not only with us whilst they practised their craft but also now and then conversed with each other in Nama. The storytelling was a thoroughly interactive experience with all of us participating either via non verbal communication of nods or vocalisations but also through interjections and questions. The fact that some of the group could not understand Afrikaans at all meant that pauses were also needed for translation.

All the while the crafters continued their work whilst the storytelling took place, pausing sometimes for effect in a crucial aspect of the story. A crafter also took time to apply his musical intelligence (Gardener, 1993) as he played his bow and told of how his music spoke to God and asked for rain and materials for them to make their crafts. The soft melancholy sound had to be heard and the listener had to be in the sand and have travelled the many miles between the shop and that fire to understand the spiritual connections.

The application of musical intelligence at rock art sites has been highlighted by Sven Ouzman's auditory related research and rock engraving creation and rock gongs (2001). Man's interaction with the landscape and potential application of musical intelligence at the Biesje Poort site was discovered by Landscape Architect Liana Müller in July 2011. This was made possible by her bodily-kinaesthetic interaction with the site:

> As I jumped from one rock to the next, the solid object under my feet produced a hollow sound. I tapped around its surface and the moment I reached the point where the rock almost touched the white pinnacle's base, the sound reverberated, clearly ringing out over the landscape surrounding me. I experienced the intense rush of discovering something very profound. I continued testing the remainder of the rocks strewn along the base of the pinnacle – they all reverberated, albeit at different frequencies. Needless to say this only served to further fuel my active imaginations of the place and possible human interactions with it. (Muller 2011)

The smoke from the Witdraai crafters' fire was in our faces in July 2011 but we kept close due to the cold and the intimate space that it created. This space was intimate despite the location on the side of the now tarred road to the Kgalagadi Park and the occasional wheel spinning of a South African San Institute (SASI) vehicle driving out from the kiosk at the entrance to Witdraai or the engines of 4x4's driving into the Molopo entrance opposite. A pair of horse riders also stopped by at the stall during the storytelling session. The stories moved easily from fictional stories dominated by the trickster jackal e.g. how he got his black back to true anecdotes such as that of how a baboon grabbed a jackal amongst the sheep and threw it over the fence.

The privileged sensory experience of observing the present day Kalahari crafters and artist's application of their tuned spatial intelligence in their craft and participating in their excellent interpersonal and verbal and non-verbal linguistic skills led me to reflect on the synergistic relationship between rock art, storyteller and oral narratives. Prof Fisher speculates that the rock engravings served to stimulate discussion after we witnessed the Kalahari team avidly debating in Nama an image of a rhinoceros (Fisher, 2011). This interweaving of the creation of visual art and oral narrative was emphasised too by the working reality of our tracing the rock engravings at Biesje Poort where interpersonal relations were strengthened not just by the bodily-kinaesthetic action but also the accompanying verbal linguistic discussion. A jewellery student who sat around the fire observing the craft making and listening to the stories confirmed that a strong interpersonal energy within their studio also sparks greater creativity.

The place and storytelling content reminded me of sitting with Vetkat Kruiper under a Shepherd tree at his home at Blinkwater when I met him in 2000. He had his artworks spread out on the red sand and a group of young children sat around him whilst his fingers traced various images and he told them stories jogged from his memory by the images. He wrote that to understand his art would take a 'long sit around a fire' (Kruiper, 2011). Active participation physically in the ritual of storytelling around the fire would be necessary to understand rather than just listening to a once off answer. Vetkat also told me the story of the jackal and the lion where the lion is rather dull and the jackal outwits him. This story is related on the !Xaus Lodge facebook site and is a common story heard amongst the ≠Khomani community. A member of the !Xaus Lodge facebook site queries as to the symbolism of the jackal and a !Xaus Lodge staff member answers that the Bushman identify themselves with the jackal.

Vetkat and I discussed the difference in the Western negative view of a jackal as sly and a thief and yet Vetkat included many jackal therianthropes in his artwork (Kruiper 2011). He shared that the jackal was admired in his culture as a clever and resourceful creature. He asked me in Afrikaans:

"Who would you rather be; the sheep or the jackal?" If the jackal symbolises the Bushmen then the lion symbolises the Park (cf. Bregin and Kruiper, 2004; Dyll-Myklebust, forthcoming). The stories of the Kalahari jackal turns on its head typical power relations (Van der Westhuizen, 1993) and thereby predicts change and therefore hope for the future. These present day discussions on art and related oral narratives from the Kalahari clarified for me discussions on 'animism' and prehistoric rock art, particularly engravings, (Parkington et al 2008; Morris 2010). The identification with an animal that could transfer the listener or viewer to a liminal place points to a belief system that, like the belief in the water snake, despite alterations according to place and time (Morris, 2010, Lange, 2011) has nevertheless essentially withstood the test of time in this type of landscape.

The art of the late Vetkat Kruiper does include a strong narrative element and he shared how some were maps or mind maps of places and people of significance in his life. Vetkat applied within his visual art, both written linguistic as well as spatial intelligence, resulting in a holistic merging of oral and literary cultures that Prof Professor Joan Connolly (Durban University of Technology) believes is rarely achieved (2011). The context of present day mapping and necessary knowledge of landmarks by present day Kalahari dwellers (an emphasis on spatial intelligence) possibly influenced Dawid Padmaker's interpretation of Biesje Poort rock engravings as geographical maps (Padmaker 1998). Rather a possibility as an interpretation as internal maps has been suggested by Sven Ouzman (Lange 2011). Thus the bio-kinaesthetic and spatial intelligence interaction with the physical site and verbal and non verbal intelligence interaction with the present day Kalahari dwellers reinforces textual knowledge of the importance of context: not only of the rock art site ("place") on the engravings (Morris 2010) but also of the interpreters and triggered oral narratives or "stories" (Morris 2011).

The conscious application of multiple intelligences in the sharing of knowledge gained from the physical encounter whether for education or tourism will also promote holistic understanding of heritage.

**Sharing of the knowledge gained from the heritage resource at the Biesje Poort site**

**Shanade:**
South Africa's National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) of 1999 defines a heritage resource as "any place or object of cultural significance" (Section 2(xvi), 1999). More specifically, that which is defined as heritage may include:

> …tangible immovable resources (e.g. buildings, rivers, natural areas); tangible movable
> resources (e.g. objects in museums, documents in archives); or intangibles such as values,

customs, ceremonies, lifestyles, and including experiences such as festivals, arts and cultural events (Timothy and Boyd, 2003:3).

According to the Heritage Act, objects and sites of sixty years or more years old legally qualify as a heritage resource. The Act claims that heritage resources "of cultural significance or other special value for the present community and for future generations" are to be considered part of the national estate. The national estate may include: buildings, landscapes, graves, human remains, movable objects such as those recovered from archaeological and paleontological sites, art objects, books, records, photographs and other audio/visual material not part of the public sphere. The national estate includes "property, movable or otherwise, which by virtue of its importance to the heritage of the country remains the property of the people, held in trust and controlled by heritage authorities" (Ndoro, 2009:31).

Under the Heritage Act, heritage authorities are required to assist communities to gain 'reasonable access' to heritage resources (Hall, 2009:69). The constituents of what is 'reasonable', however, remains debatable[1]. Further, Section 5(4) of the Act establishes the rights of communities over heritage resources, and their right to be consulted on heritage matters and to be involved in the management of heritage sites (Hall, 2009:74). In addition to the difficulties of enforcing obligations onto the public to protect heritage sites a number of questions arise: How do we define the cultural 'meaning' of certain sites when we cannot always identify the meaning makers of those sites? How do we then represent the sites?

Research on the Biesje Poort site (which includes historical, linguistic, archaeological and ethnographic studies) has shown that over the past two thousand years at least three different groups, namely San, Korana and Khoi, may have sojourned through the place (Lange, 2011:100; Traill, 1970; Beaumont et al, 1995; Penn, 1995). Moreover, it is difficult to ascertain which engravings belong to which group (Lange, 2011:100). While all the

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[1] With regard to certain rock art sites, "some traditional healers scrape paintings off of the rock faces to collect the paint for healing, general luck and rainmaking and lightning prevention medicines" (Francis, 2007:129). This is positioned in a paradigm of re-articulation of the site instead of meticulous preservation. These actions are in danger of defacing and ultimately removing the rock art such that there needs to be a controlled measure of re-articulation and re-use of such sites.

engravings were created using the pecking technique[2] there are differences in form and subject matter. The early engravings are naturalistic, with detailed forms and the dominant presence of the eland image while the more recent engravings include colonial imagery and geometric patterns with infrequent images of domestic animals (Lange, 2011:91). In some instances newer engravings are found to be pecked over older ones. Interestingly, Butzer notes that the engravings at 'Biesjespoort' as he called it "give hints of the styles used in South West Africa [now Namibia]" (1989:147).

The Kalahari crafters who joined our research team included ≠Khomani[3] San, an ethnically disparate group. Their interpretations of the engravings were steeped in their knowledge of the surrounding 'lived in' area and possibly their previous encounters with academics. Similarly, in response to David Padmaker's[4] interpretation of the site, Sven Ouzman noted that while Padmaker's interpretation has no greater or lesser import than that of an academic, one needs to acknowledge the effects of violence and dislocation in the sense of a people not losing their history but rather reading the past through the present and the recent past (in Lange 2011:100). Representation (and perhaps the interpretation of the engravings as a form of storytelling) thus becomes a difficult terrain in which to navigate.

On the other hand, the ambiguities and mixed heritage of the site may be seen to offer a richer cultural landscape. In regards to the prospects of heritage tourism, Biesje Poort certainly presents another layer of richness to the cultural heritage offerings of the Northern Cape, however, the harshness of the terrain[5], the great travelling distance and the fragility of the landscape[6] rule out the possibility of the site as a sustainable tourist venue. While (with

[2] The pecking technique involves the use of a hard stone to "chip away the outer crust of the rock, exposing the lighter coloured rock beneath" (Morris 2004:2).

[3] In August 1995, the Bushmen of the Northern Cape Province lodged a restitution land claim that "brought together about three hundred adults who constituted themselves as a group for the purposes of the claim" (Tomaselli, 2007: viii). This was an ethnically disparate group but for the importance of the land they came together under the collective name '≠Khomani' (2007: viii).

[4] Padmaker was a farm hand who acted as guide to Mary Lange on her initial visit to the Biesje Poort site in 1998.

[5] The rock engravings are not easily found, they are speckled all over a large area which means one would have to traverse the rock face in a terrain that is not for the faint-hearted.

[6] There is a scattering of engravings at Biesje Poort and one may be standing on an engraving without recognising it as such. Moreover, some of the older engravings have all but disappeared and are easily

the farmer's permission) the camp operator at the Khamkirri campsite (the nearest campsite to Biesje Poort, approximately a 40 minute drive away) has been taking tourists to view the Biesje Poort engravings, these visits are unsupervised and, as mentioned regarding the fragility of the landscape, it is perhaps not in the best interest of the site (Fieldnotes, April 2011).

A possible solution to this could be representation of the site elsewhere whether in museums in the surrounding areas or at the Augrabies Falls National Park, a nearby nature reserve and tourist site. Indigenous involvement in this representation remains vital. Conventional representations of rock art sites involve the imaging of existing San/Bushman groups as 'First Peoples' and groups are showcased in traditional attire and performing acts and/or rituals of a 'traditional' nature. While, for a time, this kind of myth-making may be economically beneficial to those communities with a strong financial dependence on cultural tourism it is the view of some that:

> The recuperated image of the Bushmen as a link between the past and the future has the potential to act as a positive, unifying factor in South Africa. However, what is really needed is acknowledgement without mystification. It needs to be emphasised that existing communities are culturally distanced from the painters and engravers responsible for the art, both chronologically and spatially. So while the rock art may be viewed as some kind of bridging mechanism, when the image is used in other contexts it speaks of stereotype rather than recuperation (Jeursen, 1995:128).

This argument, however, does not explain how stereotype can be separated from recuperation. In appropriating past images as recuperated, there is always room for stereotype. Moreover, rarely considered is the impact that rejection of the romantic Bushman myth will have on those communities reliant on this myth for their livelihood. While it is important to move away from stereotype, before this is done, it must be ensured that those communities reliant on it are equipped to do without it. Storytelling, in this regard, should emanate from negotiated representations. Communities, working together with image makers

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mistaken for striations in the rock. The engravings are weathered by the elements, the addition of the human element – people walking over the engravings, disturbing the already cracking rock face in some cases – may prove detrimental to the site.

in the tourism industry, should be able to create a representation that is respectful of the traditions and cultures referenced while remaining enticing to the tourist.

For a long time the dominant view of heritage and cultural heritage in particular in Africa has been Eurocentric (Eboreime 2009; Hall 2009; Munjeri 2009). South Africa's own colonial and apartheid past has played a role in shaping the country's heritage legislation. Together with the country's first democratic elections came a wave of positive social and legislative changes. The nation's new perspective on cultural heritage is evident in the then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's 'I am an African' speech addressed to the Constitutional Assembly of South Africa. In it Mbeki acknowledged (Mbeki, 1996):

> I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape – they who fell victim to the most merciless genocide our native land has ever seen, they who were the first to lose their lives in the struggle to defend our freedom and dependence…(http://anc.org.za).

This address "set the tone and laid the basis for a non-racial understanding and appreciation of the new nation's diverse heritage" (Bredekamp, 2007:2). Political and conciliatory, Mbeki's words embraced "the being and African-ness of all South Africans irrespective of their background" (2007:2). Later, in 2000, the country's new coat of arms was launched. At its centre is the motto "!ke e:/xarra //ke", meaning "diverse people unite" in /Xam, one of the earliest indigenous languages spoken in southern Africa. Collectively, the motto calls for the nation to unite "in a common sense of belonging and national pride", while it also addresses "each individual effort to harness the unity between thought and action" (www.info.gov.za). This 'unity in diversity' is meant to be the foundation of the new South Africa.

A common trend in heritage legislation across most countries is the claim that heritage resources belong not only to the specific communities from which they emanate but to the nation as a whole. Heritage thus acts as a reflection or symbol of national unity, telling the story of the nation as it aspires to be. The State as the keeper of the 'national estate' becomes the embodiment of this unity as well as "a tool for cohesion and for reducing the threats of ethnic and cultural heterogeneity of national communities that might outweigh the unity of the nation" (Négri, 2009:9). "Some African states affirm the pre-eminence of the cultural

dimension to establish national identity"; moreover the "incorporation of cultural priorities in the Constitution may correspond to different objectives" (Negri, 2009:8). It may be that the state seeks to "build a national identity common to the different ethnic groups" or rather that it seeks to promote a dominant national culture "that will compel recognition among the various communities of the state" (2009:8). Whatever the case may be it remains clear that "[w]hen culture is closely linked to politics, cultural heritage becomes a vehicle for transformation of society" (Negri, 2009:8). The politics surrounding heritage management and legislation are steeped in emotion which may be used toward either positive or negative ends. As Morris has noted concerning the Driekopseiland site, the art and it's setting survive as the fragile material traces of meaning both 'full of the past' as well as constituting a making and re-making of individual and collective histories (2010:18).

**Conclusion:**

**Miliswa:**

This paper has offered a three-dimensional discussion on the gaining, sharing and representation of heritage knowledge in relation to the Biesje Poort rock art site. The Biesje Poort case study proves that participatory communication is a viable approach in the recording of tangible and intangible heritage. Similar to storytelling, participatory communication has at its core: dialogue, active participation and sharing of cultural knowledge. The site, with its ambiguities and mixed heritage, offered a rich cultural landscape. In addition, the mixed cultural heritage of the research team, added multiple layers of meaning in the research process which in turn further enriched the cultural landscape.

**Mary:**

The aforementioned is in line with the multiple intelligence approach as the research included a holistic study of rock art and oral narratives. The conscious inclusion of Gardener's (1993) proposed seven intelligences reinforced and expanded knowledge and understanding of the rock art and related theories.

**Shanade:**

Regarding cultural tourism, while representation remains a difficult terrain in which to navigate, this paper affirms the need for negotiated representations. While Biesje Poort itself

may not be a viable tourist venue its representations elsewhere should include the voices of communities linked to the site.

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