CHAPTER EIGHT

PLACE, REPRESENTATION AND MYTH

Keyan G. Tomaselli

On our return from the bush camp we were stopped just outside the KTP’s entrance by a group of large drunken men who were manning an illegal roadblock. One in camouflage clutching a beer bottle sauntered over and demanded to see my ‘jagter se lesensie’ (hunter’s license). On checking out the Nissan Patrol which contained me and four young females, he must have wondered what I was up to. Similar experiences were reported by Nic, Mick and Nelia who were driving the other three 4x4s behind us. I lodged a complaint at the Park’s new SA Police Services office. The kindly officer assured me that with regard to the men who had just accosted us, that ‘we don’t dress like that anymore’. ‘Did you get their number plate?’ he asked. ‘No’, I said, ‘There were six of them. I just got the hell out of there.’ (Field notes, July 2009)

Who is allowed to be where and who and what permits mobility? This geopolitics confines all of us. Where is our “place”? Where is your “place”? This chapter discusses different kinds of cultural tourism destinations (conservancy, living museums and cultural ecology sites), the myths via which they are constructed, and the ideological implications thereof. The case study here is the Kagga Kamma Game Park.

Kagga Kamma, advertised as the “Place of the Bushmen”, is a small game reserve, established in 1989, in the Western Cape Cederberg area (see White 1995). The Bushmen were invoked for two reasons: a) no less than 20 rock-art sites, some dating back 6000 years, and some associated living spaces, were discovered on what was in the 20th century a sheep farm; and b) in 1990, the owners of the Park invited the Kruiper family from the Northern Cape to live in the Park. The brochure stated that “No Bushmen had lived in the area for 250 years”. The owners had seen a 50:50 TV insert on the plight of the Kruipers, and invited them to translocate to Kagga Kamma. The Kruipers agreed to “hunt and gather, earn money by

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1 Since the Bushmen have left Kagga Kamma is now marketed as an upmarket spa retreat.
making ethnic crafts and artefacts and live as close as possible to the traditional lifestyle of their forebears’. They also earned income from ‘gate money’ paid to them by the Park with regard to each visitor joining the short 4x4 expedition to their front stage performance area. During a visit in May 1999, it was made clear that the Kruipers received no salary, were not part of the Park, and that they themselves decided whether or not to meet the tourists.

The brochure continued, “While we cannot preserve the Bushmen’s culture or determine their destiny, we hope that by creating a relatively traditional environment and lifestyle, at least we can give them a home close in harmony to nature as well as the benefit of eco-tourism”. The discourse of eco-tourism which gained currency in the mid-1990s, in which Bushmen groups are asked to live in harmony with wildlife, and according to their ‘ancient’ customs, underpins “a strange alchemy of traditional Bushmen and modern science” (Dancing at the Future 1996). “Ecological legitimacy”, a term initially used by scientists when discussing Bushmen (see Clarke 1956), is found in various forms and articulations in relation to cultural tourism: for example, in the guise of conservancy, living museums, and cultural ecology.

Conservancy

While Kagga Kamma was a private park and not a state-managed conservancy, it operates similarly to the Eastern Bushmanland conservancy in Namibia. In Nyae Nyae the Ju/'hoansi precariously live off the land, off government rations, from the erratic proceeds of some cultural tourism, and small scale animal husbandry and vegetable farming. Some act in movies, and a few service academics as translators and guides.

The idea of a ‘conservancy’ evokes in the minds of its detractors the image of a nature and/or game park or of a “human zoo” (Kagga Kamma Brochure). This zoological portrait works on a number of levels: first, is the expeditionary discourse of early films like The Denver Africa Expedition (1926); a safari of observers through a kind of primeval human zoo-land (see Gordon 1997). It is perhaps coincidence that much of the fascinating Kagga Kamma landscape resembles what Jeffrey Sehume (Chapter 7) calls “the set of the Flintstones”; some tourists saw a close resemblance between one rock formation and Jurassic Park. Others recalled films of the Bushmen

3 The conservancy model is explained in Jones (1995) and a variety of Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism documents.