

THE INFLUENCE OF WESTERN CULTURE ON THE BASOTHO RITUALS.

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I, the author, hereby certify that all the material in this research study, unless otherwise stated, is my own work and has not been submitted for qualification purposes at any other institution.



P. V. A. George



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CHAPTER 1

1.1. The Statement of the Problem

Each culture has its own ritual that it performs before, during and after the burial. The rituals before, during and after the burial are important to the Basotho and throughout the centuries these rituals changed and adapted to new rituals. When the settlers from Europe colonized Africa, they influenced the Africans and their ways of life, thinking and rituals. One example of a ritual is the custom to slaughter a cow in honor of the deceased. The cow that had been slaughtered days before the burial was used to feed the family attending the funeral. The skin of the cow was dried for the deceased and used as a coffin. The deceased was wrapped in the dried skin and buried. Even today, the ritual of slaughtering a cow is performed.

1.2. The subproblems

The aim of this project is two-fold:

1.2.1. The first subproblem will be to determine how Western culture has influenced the Basotho, concerning the rituals before, during and after the burial.

1.2.2. The second subproblem will be to determine how the influence of Western culture on the Basotho, concerning the ritual before, during and after the burial can be depicted in selected artworks of the researcher.

1.3. The Hypothesis

1.3.1. The hypothesis to subproblem 1 is as a result of economic, religious and social circumstances, the Basotho have been influenced by Western culture, concerning the rituals before, during and after the burial.

1.3.2. The hypothesis to subproblem 2 is that the rituals before, during and after the burial were of great importance to the Basotho, but Western culture has influenced these rituals.

The research to be done on the rituals before, during and after the burial plays an important role and had great impact on the researcher's practical work. Interviews, photographs and excursions (visiting and attending funerals) guided the researcher to depict the Western influence and the rituals before, during and after the burial in selected artworks. The information found was used as a source of inspiration and an own interpretation of the theme.

1.4 Definition of terms

The words in brackets are the Sotho word for the term:

1.4.1. Influence. Power to persuade, from social authority. The influence dealt with in this research, is the influence of Western culture on the Basotho rituals before, during and after the burial.

1.4.2. Western culture. Coming from the West - Europe or America as opposed to Asia. Cross-pollination of various cultures, but First-World cultures (developed) against Third-World cultures (underdeveloped).

1.4.3. Basotho. Individuals born in a Basotho culture. The Basotho, who come from Basotholand, which is also known today as the country of Lesotho. Basotho living in the Free State area were investigated.

1.4.4 Ritual. (*Thwaelo*, the Sesotho word meaning ritual). Series of actions. The rituals dealt with in this research are the ones performed before, during and after the burial.

1.4.5. Burial. The burying of the dead. The rituals dealt with in this research will only involve with the rituals before, during and after the burial of the Basotho.

1.5. Delimitations

1.5.1. The Basotho rituals before, during and after the burial are discussed and not Christianity in a broader sense.

1.5.2. Rituals in general will not be investigated, only those concerning rituals before, during and after the burial.

1.6. Assumptions

1.6.1. _The first assumption is that the Basotho rituals before, during and after the burial used to play an important role in the life of the Basotho before the arrival of the settlers.

1.6.2. _The second assumption is that rituals concerning the burial before, during and after the ritual, have been influenced by Western culture.

1.7. The importance of the study

According to Savory (1962: 9) Lesotho, or the country of the Basotholand, occupies the area between latitude 29 degrees South and longitude 27 degrees and 28 degrees East.

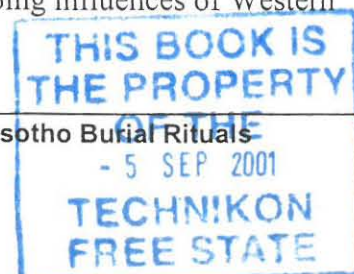
Lesotho is situated in the Southern portion of the continent of Africa. It is a mountainous country approximately 140 miles in each direction. Due to its character, two-thirds of it is too inhospitable for human occupation. Recent statistics show that the South Sotho group consists of only 2 234 992 people. Due to their geographical closeness a study can be made, seeing that the Free State and Lesotho are neighbours.

Lesotho is a small stronghold, with mountains protecting it from all intruders on all sides. The only way of approach is from the west, over the plains of the Free State. Although a warrior nation, the origin of the Basotho are unknown. According to Savory (1962: 9) in the distant past the Basotho believed that they came out of a hole in the ground. The same folktale is told by the Bushmen. The Basotho and Bushmen lived side by side, the Basotho's being agriculturists and the Bushmen hunters. Intermarriage caused a mixed race, and this had a marked effect on the Basotho race, language, rituals and character. These changes already took place some 2,000 years ago, when these two tribes lived amongst each other (Savory, 1962:9). Currently we find Basotho living amongst various different races. It can therefore be deduced that circumstances have changed the Basotho rituals before, during and after the burial.

A brief study has been made of dissertations country-wide. Five dissertations were found on rituals and 39 on death as a theme. No postdiploma / degree dissertations about rituals before, during and after the burial were found. This information was gathered from the Anthropology Department from the University of the Orange Free State.

Not many books were found on this specific subject field, and the researcher relied on the Basotho peoples' memories that have been passed on from generation to generation, and that have also changed throughout the years, as well as on relevant literature on the subject. Influences from the Basotho to Coloureds and from white to black caused intercultural rituals. The Coloured community inherited rituals from both the black and the white man. Burial rituals seen at a Coloured funeral and at a Basotho funeral have much in common. All the influences therefore started with the intercultural interactions, which changed old rituals to new ones because of ongoing influences of Western

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cultures. The investigation of the Basotho's rituals before, during and after the burial would therefore assist the researcher in understanding their rituals in a broader sense.

At present the Basotho are living with various other races like the Tswana, Xhosa, Zulu and Coloured community in South Africa through intermarriage. The Basotho are a small population group in comparison with other South African ethnical groups, and South Sotho is the most common language amongst the Basotho in the black community in South Africa. The researcher lives in a heterogeneous community and the accessibility found to South Sotho speaking individuals easy for the purpose of this study. Cultural differences and rituals performed before, during and after the burial are sometimes taken for granted. Even the smallest ritual within a culture could broaden ones understanding of other cultures.

The value of the study is therefore to provide insight into the topic, and to produce a series of works in printmaking techniques that depicts the results obtained.

1.8. Method of investigation

The researcher consulted journals and scientific books on the topic. Photographic references were used as a source of inspiration for own practical work as well as to document the rituals and funerals. Not only photographs were used, but also what was experienced and seen on excursions, as this conceptually enhanced practical work. Interviews with the Basotho people together with a personal interpreter, were used to gather more information.

The second subproblem (practical component) was completed by means of the intaglio process. The term *intaglio* (from the Italian *intagliare*), means "to carve or cut into" by using metal plates for traditional techniques, such as nonacid techniques and acid techniques. The following intaglio techniques were used in the researcher's practical component as indicated below:

Nonacid Techniques:

Drypoint

Chine Colle

Acid Techniques:

Etching

Aquatint

In printing an intaglio plate, three basic steps are followed: "(1) a soft but not runny ink is pushed into the lines. The surface is then wiped clean, leaving ink in only the recessed areas; (2) the plate is placed on the bed of an etching press and the etching paper is then dampened with water to soften its fibers. The paper is then placed on the inked plate; (3) the paper and plate are rolled through the press with substantial pressure, so that the dampened etching paper is forced into all the lines and recessions of the plate to produce a richly ink impression." (Ross, Romano & Ross, 1990: 75). Different line types and aquatints were therefore used to enhance the atmosphere and emotive quality of the work.

1.9. Reference system

The Harvard method was used as the reference system for this research study and it entails the following information:

1. The author of the book, the date of publication e. g. (Ashton, 1967....)
2. The page number of the book, e. g. (...100)

According to this method, the information is furnished in brackets throughout the text and is mentioned in detail in the literature list. The literature is arranged alphabetically according to the author's surname and is placed at the end of the research study.

1.10. Visual material

All photographs are placed separately from the text in an annexure at the end of Chapter 5. The researcher made use of visual material obtained in library books and magazines relevant to the field of study. Illustrations of the works of artists and visual material featuring the researcher's practical work will be available for the analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER 2

2. THE BASOTHO. FOLKTALES AND THE INFLUENCE OF WESTERN CULTURE (THE ARRIVAL OF THE MISSIONARIES)

2.1. Introduction.

"It must be thought that all fancies are dark and sinister, but there is a wealth of legend amongst the Basotho's and their fairy tales." (Dutton, 1923: 93). According to Jacottet (1958:xiii) the stories that are transmitted orally from one generation to another deserves to arrest the attention of the anthropologist, historian and philosopher. They take us to the environment where the Basotho forefathers lived and gives us an insight into the working of the primitive mind. The details of folklore are older than the oldest library monuments of the ancient world.

Dutton (1923: 93) wrote that the overlapping of folklore and tales are increasing. According to Jacottet (1958: xiii) one cannot but be struck by the similarity of thought and structure displayed in the folk tales of Europe, Asia, America and Africa. To classify any of these folk tales (specifically Basotho) is next to impossible, because tales appear to have been wafted from land to land (Dutton, 1923: 93). There is an astonishing similarity in tales from all over the world. Stories and incidents related to early chapters in the Bible, for example Cain and Abel, have many similarities to the jealousy of an elder brother to his younger sibling. These feelings of sibling rivalry have universal application. According to Jacottet (1958: xiii) many of the African folk tales can also be compared to the stories in the book of Genesis (Dutton, 1923: 93).

According to Jacottet (1958: xxvii), in some Bantu, Basotho and even Ronga tales the jackal (the African representative of the European fox) takes the place of the hare in Bantu folk-lore. However, most of the tales in which the jackal is substituted is of genuine Bantu origin. In the Hottentot stories the hare played the role of the messenger of

the dead. The Dutch settlers, however are believed to have used the European fox as their messenger.

Bantu tribes (Tswana, Xhosa, Zulu and Basotho) scattered throughout Africa tell more or less the same stories. According to Dutton (1923: 94) it is extraordinary considering they have been passed down orally from generation to generation. As in nearly all other matters connected with modern investigations of Africa, the missionaries were first to disseminate these folk tales (Jacottet, 1958: xv). For nearly two decades the tales of the European missionaries were the only Bantu or South African folk-tales known to the world. Because folklore is transmitted verbally, finding original dates for stories would be almost impossible (Dutton, 1923: 94). The story line of these tales are startling in their similarities to the European fables. The stories were told to an attentive, circular audience around an open fire. They were not only told to the young, but also to the young at heart.

Jacottet (1958: xvi) indicated that the collection of Bushmen texts made by Dr Bleek, the German philologist, and his collaborator and sister-in-law Miss Lucy Lloyd in 1889 amounted to over 12,000 pages translated and annotated, preserving the San, a culture now extinct. According to Jacottet (1958: xix) it is worth noting that all the collections of folk-tales we have, are by virtue of the missionaries who were obliged to live in close proximity to the African natives. In this way they learnt to know the Basotho more intimately. It must be remembered that these tales are to the Basotho what our circulating libraries are to us, the only difference being that the tales have a relatively much larger circulation (Dutton, 1923: 94).

New tales are gradually spread throughout the country, because many of these tales are now told by the younger boys and girls presenting a considerable admixture of incidents taken from the Dutch or English stories (Dutton, 1923: 94). Unfortunately, many changes are taking place in these tales in the Basotho culture. With the arrival of the missionaries and European institutions they gradually became bowdlerized by a new

Christian sense of shame and embellished with typical allusions to and incidents in the life of the Basotho.

Jacottet (1958: xxiv) believes that foreign influences may have been brought to bear upon the Basotho tales, but no nation has ever been so completely isolated as not to draw anything from another race. In the case of the Basotho tales, such borrowed elements have been so completely assimilated that they have become an integral part of folk tales and cannot be distinguished any more. According to Jacottet (1958: xxviii) the course of the simple and unadorned story of the Basotho cannot be compared with the wealth of the wit and fancy to be found in the Persian and Arabian stories which are so beautifully told in the *Arabian Nights* (Ruth Sandys, 1941). The native tales are worthy of more than passing attention, and they help us to some extent to enter that closed chamber, the native mind, and to understand a little better what passes in it.

2.2. Native folk tales about death.

The old Basotho believed when a person has died or passed away, the message is announced during the evening. According to Ashton (1967: 102) to avoid frightening the children, they whisper in their ears, "So-and-So has passed on" or "So-and-So is missing." The children were never told the truth. Ashton (1967: 102) indicated that they were told that the deceased had been taken or stolen by a hyena. They strongly believed that man is not an animal and therefore one cannot bluntly say he or she is dead. The deceased should be referred to as the 'late'. The dead were always buried at night so that the corpse and the spirit would arrive on the other side of the globe during the day time. They believed that nobody wanted to arrive at night, or in the dark, in the world of spirits. The deceased's body was placed in a crouching position, thus they squatted east. According to native beliefs all good things come from the east because the sun rises in the east. It is therefore clear that the Basotho associated the hereafter with the east and all the good things connected to it.

When regarding death as extinction, the euphemism *o ipolokile* ("he has saved himself") is an everyday Becwena (another Basotho tribe) expression for "he is dead" (Willoughby, 1989: 2). They therefore use the verb "to go" as an equivalent of "to die". The embryonic posture of the corpse, which is common amongst the Bantu, is usually thought to indicate that death is merely birth into another life. Ask the older grey man why the corpse is placed in this manner, and you will be told that a man can rise up more quickly from a sitting than a recumbent posture. Willoughby (1989: 2) therefore believes that the evidence of life after death is overwhelming.

Many variations of the same story are told by the elderly of many tribes about the origin of death (Willoughby, 1989: 3). According to one of these stories God sent out one of his slower creatures, (some say a chameleon), to tell man he was not to die but will rise again. The chief sends a second confirmatory message with a messenger with nimbler feet and a slacker brain who arrived first with a caroled message: "God says you are to die, and dying leave the world for good." When the correct message came, it was too late because death had already set in.

Jacottet (1958: 47) refers to another story which is told about death and according to the *Ashantis* (a former native kingdom and British protectorate in western Africa, included since 1957 in Ghana) the two messengers were a goat and a sheep. In one of the versions, the true messenger of life is the goat, but the sheep goes off by itself with the message of death and arrives first. In a second version the two messengers are sent by God with two different messages, who ever arrives first will be the correct one (Ibid, 1958:47). According to Bleek and Lloyd (1968: 69-73) the Hottentots believe it is the moon and not God, which sends the hare to man with the message of life, but the hare, out of mere malice, turns it into a message of death. However, Jacottet (1958: 47) referred to in a different version in which the true messenger is an insect which allows the hare to go to man in its place. In one of the Basotho versions the name of the first messenger was Leobu which is said to mean chameleon, and in another he is said to be the chief's son. It becomes apparent that Ashton, Jacottet, Willoughby, Bleek and Lloyd, wrote of the same stories about death, only in different versions and with different

animals. It can therefore be deduced that the moral of these stories, regardless of their metaphor of the messenger, reveals that man will die and that there is no promise or guarantee of everlasting life.

According to Mphahlele (1994: 132) Africans in general fear physical pain, more than death. He illustrated this statement with the true story of the troop ship, Mendi, which collided with the SS Daro off the Isle of Wight, where 615 men drowned without panic and confusion.

Physical pain can be extended over a long period of time whereas death is sudden and the spirit lives on with the guarantee of no pain. The researcher can make the deduction that most Bantu people, since early times and childhood, were prepared for death by means of one or more folk tales about death. These folk tales were transmitted from one generation to the next, and regardless of what animal was messenger, the moral of the tale stayed the same, the message being that all will die.

2.3. The influence of Western culture on the Basotho. (The arrival of the missionaries)

Lesotho lies in the heart of Southern Africa, surrounded by the Provinces of KwaZulu-Natal on the east, the Free State in the north and west, and the Eastern Cape in the south. It occupies the area between latitude 29 degrees south and longitude 27 degrees and is situated in the southern portion of the continent of Africa. It has an area of 11, 716 square miles (about the size of Belgium) and a population of about 2 234 992 people.

Lesotho was a British colony. It was administered by the British Government through the Commonwealth Relations Office, and was governed by the High Commissioner through the Resident Commissioner, Secretariat, Technical Officers and District Administration. According to Ellenberger and MacGregor (1912: 1) the first inhabitants of Lesotho were the Bushmen. The Bushmen were never a large population, but their blood still flows in the veins of the Basotho and individual Bushmen may still be found. Savory (1962: 9)

wrote that intermarriage caused a mixed race and this had a marked effect on the Basotho's race, language, rituals and their character. The Bushmen have left their memorial in fine rock paintings scattered about the country, and the Basotho boys' initiation rites, and other rites, were largely attributed to the Bushmen. However, there are doubts as to whether these rites were derived from the Bushmen.

In contrast to Ellenberger and MacGregor's theory, Savory (1962: 9) believed that the origin of the Basotho people was unknown. The Basotho people themselves however believe that they originally came from a hole in the ground. According to Savory (1962: 9) the same story is told by the Bushmen and the people of Nyasaland, which will point out the very hole from which they came. Savory, however, also indicated that Darwin believed that all mankind evolved from the earth, and therefore Savory admitted there might be something in what the Basotho and Bushmen believed. However Rakotsoane (1996: 40) wrote that the Basotho people originated from Tanzania. Although these authors have conflicting opinions and theories about the Basotho origin, it is at this point that it must be stressed and emphasized that folktales are considered important to the Basotho, and it became an integral of their cultural, social and religious framework. Whether the Basotho originated from a hole in the ground, or from Tanzania, where the Tanzanians probably believe in a similar story, the fact remains, that folklore are intermixed with culture, which in turn forms an important part of their historical backgrounds.

According to Lestrade (1933: 66-67), the Nguni group were the first inhabitants to live in Basotholand. They crossed the Drakensberg from the east in three groups and settled south of the Caledon river. They were the Polane, Phuthi and the Phetla (the "pioneers"). Years later they were joined by the "First Basotho" and they were the Peli, Phuting, Sia and Tlokoa. They were then followed by the other clans, namely the Fokeng, Koena and the Taung.

Ashton (1967: 2) wrote that the Tlokoa were at one time the most powerful military group particularly in the days of the famous "Queen" Mantatise and her son Sekonyela.

All the above-mentioned groups were scattered around and dependent on each other. They lived in harmony and had a peaceful existence with only the odd cattle raid. In the early nineteenth century this peaceful existence was disturbed by a young man called Chaka Zulu, a great Zulu warlord. He was determined to impose proper military discipline, perfected his organization of his *impis* (a military group of Chaka Zulu) and spread war and destruction. Most of the neighboring tribes fled across the Drakensberg before him. The Tlokoa was one of the first that was invaded by Chaka and his *impis* and they eventually broke under the strain and moved southward. In 1831 the last of the invaders were driven out and Moshesh (a young Koena chief) became the leader of the Basotho within a few years.

Moshesh restored peace and prosperity to his people, but trouble was to come from the white settlers in the south. So he turned to the missionaries, hearing what good services they gave. According to Casalis (1861: 9) he was determined to get his people help and gave his informant, Adam Krotz, 100 head of cattle to "procure in exchange, a man of prayer". Three missionaries arrived from France by ox-wagon in Thaba Bosiu in June 1833. These three missionaries were from the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society; Messrs. Arbousser, Casalis and Gosselin. Ashton (1967: 3) wrote that the missionaries helped them through critical times over a hundred years (from 1833) and profoundly influenced their way of life.

According to Jacottet (1908: 62) Europeans passed through the country, and their arrival were described in earlier folk-tales by the Basotho: *"The people of this tale are light colored people, with hair like hair on a cob of maize. They eat meat with big needles; they eat stooping down. They have a white hut; you may see it from afar. It is drawn by oxen with their tails. There are many goods in it.. Their huts are very large, full of goods, there pots are of iron, they have much brass and lots of beads."*

The Europeans came in, since the 1800's, travelling lightly and then returning to their homes in the Cape Colony. Later they came with their families and they were still granted the usual rights of travellers - grazing and land for temporary cultivation

(Lagden, 1909: 462). But it soon became apparent that they intended to settle with their different ways and it was obvious that trouble laid ahead between them. Moshesh was convinced that the only hope for his people is in the support of the British Sovereign. Moshesh desperately had to fight the invading of the Boers. Loyalty and advice from the French missionaries encouraged him till 1868. The Boers, who then thought that they were to run the whole western Lowlands of Lesotho, protested in vain about the interference of the British, but 'Basutoland' was already proclaimed British territory. Moshesh died in 1870 with content knowing that his people were folded in the arms of the Queen (Lagden, 1909: 462).

During 1871, Lesotho was annexed to the Cape Province and a small British administration was established.

The Boer War intervened in 1899 to 1902, and the Basotho were not ready in any way for this war (Ashton, 1967: 5). Although the Basotho helped the British forces with medical supplies, horses and military intelligence, they feared that the British might be defeated by the Boers and withdraw. According to Ashton (1967: 5) this fear could be attributed to the fear of the reprisals from the Boers. Lerothi, who succeeded Moshesh, remained loyal to his people, but many of them turned against him and one of his strong chiefs openly allied himself with the Boers. This was a temporary setback for their loyalty. In 1906 four South African colonies were formed, which revived these fears. This caused the Basotho to ponder their own future. A draft Act of Union was established and their land and institutions were threatened. During 1909 a petition was drafted in England so that Basotholand may not be part of this Union, independent as it was. The deputation was informed that it was the purpose of His Majesty and His Majesty's Government to be Basotholand's advisers and still enjoy the privileges which they possessed (Lagden, 1909: 624).

Ashton (1967: 8) indicated that the main impact on the Basotho were the missions and the European trade and industry. They brought a new religion, education and widened further spheres of European contact. These missions bloomed into 81 stations, with 86

Basotho evangelists, 5, 000 adherents and 42 schools (Lagden, 1909: 636). The first missionaries were joined in 1864 by the Roman Catholics and in 1875 by the Anglican Church which had been working from a nearby station for some years.

According to Ashton (1967: 8) irreparable damage has been done to much of the Basotho culture. In contrast to Ashton the Resident Commissioner of the British Government said during Lesotho's 1908 jubilee; *"If one influence more than another had helped the Basotho it was the missionary influence which began 75 years ago"*. (Lagden, 1909: 6)

CHAPTER 3

3. BASOTHO RITUALS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE BURIAL AND THE WESTERN INFLUENCE ON THESE RITUALS.

3.1. Introduction.

Rituals are codifications of and statements of attitudes. Ideas create rituals and rituals spawn ideas (Browne, 1980: 1). They are codes of and methods of behaviour. Ritualism draws people's certain attitudes and potential actions, codifies and forms them and then imposes them on the people in the form of approved forms of behaviour with certain mystical or religious overtones which makes these actions acceptable. In today's increasingly secular society rituals are still important, though in many ways changed from their antecedents as the Basotho society needs and attitudes have changed. Browne (1980: 2) indicated that some changes have been revolutionary and others evolutionary and some have been "progressive". Because they closely reflect a nation's heartbeat and bloodstream some have therefore undoubtedly become reactionary.

According to Browne (1980: 19), Frederick Bird (an author) believed that it was necessary to set forth a general sociological theory about the nature and function of ritual forms. This is to differentiate between the various kinds of rituals in relation to the manifested ritual objects and latent social functions, and to analyse the contemporary shifts in ritual practices from the perspective of these conceptual assumptions. Rituals are a cultural phenomena. They work as symbolic codes, regulate human interactions in a wide variety of contexts from religion, types of therapies, ceremonies and intimate exchanges. Browne (1980: 19) clearly emphasized that without an understanding of rituals and their functions, we are liable to arrive at a few distorted views in which the ritual plays a central part. Browne also stated that phenomenologically, rituals may be defined as culturally transmitted symbolic codes which are stylized, regularly repeated, dramatically structured, authoritatively designated and intrinsically valued.

Rituals surround us and offer opportunities to make meaning from the familiar and the mysterious at the same time (Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992: 5). Rituals bestow protected time and space to stop and reflect on one's transformations. Imber-Black & Roberts (1992: 6) wrote that symbols and symbolic actions are powerful activators, and stories that are recorded from precious times when similar rituals were enacted or when people were together. According to these two authors rituals appeal to all ages because they create a special time out of ordinary time to make sense out of where our lives have been and where they possibly are going. They also believe that rituals are a lens through which we can see out emotional connections to our parents, children and friends. They connect us to our past, define our present life, and show us a path to our future as we pass on traditions, objects and symbols handed down from previous generations. All human beings are born and die, therefore they simultaneously have beginnings and endings. According to Imber-Black and Roberts (1992: 268) these changes require holding and expressing both joy and pain. Thus they shape and give voice to conflicting beliefs. It is little wonder that every culture has created rituals to celebrate and guide our way through life-cycle passages.

3.2. The Basotho's spiritual beliefs.

Basotho beliefs regarding death and afterlife are far from being stable and uniform (Ashton, 1967: 112). Some of the old beliefs can still be found, but they have been fused in varying degrees with Christian doctrines. Man (*motho*) is believed to be composed of two elements; the corporeal body (*'mele*) or flesh (*nama*) and the incorporeal spirit (*moea* which means wind or shadow). According to Ashton (Ibid, 1967: 112) the body is therefore subject to decay and destruction, but the spirit is indestructible and immortal.

During life the spirit resides in the body, although various people say in the heart and some in the head, but the general view is that it suffuses the whole body (Casalis, 1861: 305). According to Ashton (1967: 112) the spirit may leave the body at night and wander at will; therefore dreams are the consciousness of these experiences. The Basotho believe

that a witch is the only person who can deliberately make the spirit leave the body and direct its activities because of the deceased's previous wrong-doings. Thus the spirit is not subjected to illnesses and afflictions of the flesh, but it may become disordered as a result of sorcery. These disorders affect the normal functioning of the body and can cause hysteria and other mental aberrations.

According to Ashton (1967: 112) the Basotho believed that the spirit is not regarded as a motor or a vital force, but a part of a person which sojourns in the body. When death occurs, the body ceases to function and the spirit departs from it. For a time it hovers near the body and even goes into the grave with it. According to the orthodox doctrine, the spirit is not completely released from the body until the grave has been 'made firm'. This has to be done in order to protect it from sorcery (Ashton, 1967: 112). The spirit could be captured and turned into a ghost by cutting the deceased's tongue or driving a peg into its head. Therefore the spirit needs protection from medicines like *botheketheke*.

When the final rites have been performed, the spirit rises to its feet. To help the corpse, it should therefore be buried in the crouching position. This will assist the spirit so that he/she can proceed on its way to *Ntsuanatsatsi* (earth or heaven). Therefore the body must (according to the older rituals) be placed in the correct position so that it go on its journey. If this was not done the body might fall into the hands of witches and wander aimlessly as a lost soul (*sethotsela*), plaguing its living relations until they set it on a proper path by sacrificing an animal (Ashton, 1967: 113).

From the grave the spirit goes to the ancient tribal home (Ashton, 1967: 113). According to Casalis (1861: 309) nobody knows whether *Ntsaunatsatsi* is in earth or in heaven, though everyone seems to agree it is not the bowels of the earth as their fathers believed. The Basotho believe that the spirit lives in the same way as on earth. Ashton (1967: 113) wrote that according to the Basotho the spirit lives in villages very similar to home life. There should also be some kind of social organization under the leader of their former chiefs, and so they must take everything with them to establish their new crops, herds and homes. The seeds and *mohloa* grass (the grass which is a symbol of family and

community life) must be placed in the grave so that their essence may be taken by the spirit (Ashton, 1967: 113).

According to Ashton (1967: 113) the journey will be uneventful if the spirit was not guided on the right path. Some Basotho believe that the spirit needs an introduction to gain admission to the heavenly home and they consider the *mohoha* beast to provide this. If this was not done, the spirit will wander and worry the survivors until the beast has been killed. Some also say that the *khomo ea khurumetso* (was the Tlokoa chiefs) 'pass' across the Stygian river which must be crossed first. Ashton (1967: 113) wrote that the Stygian river idea was fairly common and it was mentioned as one of the barriers on the road to heaven. However, there is no explanation as to why the spirit has to cross the river. Casalis (1861: 310) recorded that the Bapeli's (a Basotho group) river was called the Tlatlane, but gave no details to connect the two ideas. The same concept of crossing the river was treated by Michaelangelo, a High Renaissance painter (1745-1864) in his painting, entitled the *Last Judgement* (Fig. 2) where the human spirit also had to cross the river Styx. A comparison can therefore be made between these rivers. Regardless of their religious or cultural origins, the fact remains that a river is seen as a barrier on the road to heaven in various cultures.

According to Ashton (1967: 118), the old ideas of *Ntsuanatsatsi* and the tribes' spiritual beliefs are also changing and are becoming mingled with ideas of Heaven and Hell. The result is confusing, and many Basotho are not sure where the spirit goes when it leaves the body. Whether it goes to *Ntsuanatstasti* as a sort of paradisiacal half-way house to Heaven or Hell or directly to one or the other place depending on the conduct of the deceased on his repentance, forgiveness and redemption. Nor can they explain it in terms of Christian belief or any other coherent remnants of old beliefs and practices which still persist, such as the traditional orientation of the body to the east and the killing of the *mohoha* beast. If they are forced to recognize the inadequacies and contradictions of their present beliefs and practices, they merely shrug their shoulders and say "We do not know", and leave it at that. According to Ashton (1967: 113) the Basotho's dread death. They feel exposed and defenceless and that death may be their lot at any time and

therefore they fear the subject and treat it with some delicacy. They consider the dead should remain with the dead and not try to make any contact; they would rather forget. This is therefore the significance of their prayer, to be left in peace. And this is also the reason for throwing earth into the grave at the funeral and bespattering it with chyme afterwards. Therefore this ritual can be considered as the symbol of the final severance. The *qati* of the chyme was taken was the second stomach of the cow and once the animal's fodder has reached the stomach, it cannot be returned to the mouth (Ashton, 1967: 114). This therefore symbolized finality. This is also a reason why few people favour the memorial in the form of a tombstone, and why graves are treated with respect. Contradictory to Ashton, Casalis (1861: 324) wrote that graves are not regarded as sacred except in mission cemeteries. If a mother saw her child run over a grave she would light a small fire under the child's feet to purify the child. However Casalis (Ibid, 1861: 324) also indicated that these days Basotho people have no hesitation in walking over or sitting on a grave.

Ashton (1967: 114) indicated that the living are afraid of the dead, so they resort to various measures to stop it from visiting them. If the deceased is just a glimpse in their dream, it may not mean much more than that they are still interested and fond of one; but if they appear looking cross or loving, it is serious and means that they are either angry for one having neglected some obligation toward them or toward the living relative, or that they long for one to join them. In the first case a sacrifice of a goat or a libation of beer can still a guilty conscience. They can also go to the original graveside, and by spitting on a stone, and throwing it on the grave, and saying again "Sleep peacefully for us". If this is not done it will bring trouble to the household, and its people will become moody and listless, fall ill and die.

Ashton (1967: 114) stated that this belief is still firmly held and people will go to great lengths to propitiate the dead. For example an old man of over eighty, who had been Lilingoana's doctor and companion, made a long journey to KwaZulu-Natal to Malingoaneng simply to 'soothe' the spirit of the old chief who has been appearing in his dreams. The spirits of the dead are therefore not regarded as malevolent. On the

contrary, Ashton (1967: 114) wrote that the *balimo* (which is a term translated as 'ancestor' spirits though it means the spirits of the departed and may refer to childless adults and children of living people) are expected to take an interest in their survivors' well-being. They have some interest in the crops and can improve the harvest if they want to. They often send a bumper harvest (*lehlona*) after the death of a parent of a child to console the survivors. Their help is acknowledged at the end of each season by the fits of (*phabalimo*), by occasional brewings of *joala ba leoa* and by pouring a little *setoto* (the porridge used for making beer, before it has started to ferment) into a fire when beer is brewed for important occasions.

Casalis (1861: 114) wrote that in the past the family was considered to be under the direct influence and the protection of its ancestors and the whole tribe under the protection of the ancestors of their chief. Thus it was believed that the earlier gods were more powerful than the recent ancestors, and this is why many of their prayers began with the phrase: "New gods pray for us."

When the missionaries arrived in Southern Africa they were overjoyed that the Basotho had some idea of a Supreme Being which vaguely corresponded to the Christian conception of God (Ashton, 1967: 116). The traditional Basotho believed that God was a very distant being situated somewhere in the heavens and too aloof to pay attention to man and his petty affairs, though prayers were made to relieve drought and/or sickness. The Basotho carried a clay doll on their backs like the children used to do and prayed, "Oh, Light, through this child grant me a child". Such prayers were sometimes accompanied by sacrificing a sheep or a goat (Ashton, 1967: 116).

The Supreme Being was known as *Molimo* (God), *Leseli* (Light), *Ra'Moloki* (Protector, Father of our Saviour) or *Hlaa-hlaa-Macholo* (Ashton, 1967: 116). Except for the first two terms they are not ordinary speech, but in special occasions they are used in witch-doctors' initiation rituals. According to Casalis (1861: 289-299) the old Basotho had only vague ideas about the Creator and it never occurred to them that the earth and the sky is the work of the invisible being, and they were greatly concerned about this. The Basotho



said that God sometimes manifested Himself in the form of lightning or a thunderbolt. When lightning struck the village, a feast would be held in honor of his visit (Dieterlen & Kohler, 1912: 142-143).

Dieterlen argued that the older generation of Basotho knew more about religion and had a much fuller belief in God than the Basotho of around 1912. Dieterlen & Kohler (1912: 132, 137, 143) regarded "the few fragments" of their religion less as the first groupings after a God than as the vestigial and shapeless debris of a religion that has known better days. However according to Mphahlele (1994: 144) the African goes to church every Sunday, formally and smartly dressed, but resorts to his own traditional way of worship from Monday to Saturday.

Ashton (1967: 116) wrote that since the early 1800's a fairly definite belief in God was widespread owing to the missionary influence over the past hundred years. Christianity was presented as a package which include Christianity, Education and Western Culture. Therefore Mphahlele (1994: 147) argued that education was used as bait, because all schools belonged to the Church, and it meant one had to be converted, Christianized, civilized, change one's name, culture and outlook on life. Thus Mphahlele (1994: 147) believes practically everyone has some knowledge of Christian doctrines. But Ashton (1967: 116) argued that the degree to which these doctrines and old ideas have been accepted varies greatly and therefore the present Basotho beliefs range from the complete orthodoxy of ministers and teachers of the gospel to the traditional paganism of the conservative Tlokoa. The beliefs of the Basotho fall somewhere between these extremes. Although some of them are turning to the belief of the Supreme Being which has been accepted widely by other Basotho, the Tlokoa used to believe strongly in the ancestor spirits. The Tlokoa are probably the only people who practice what has just been described, although they have modified this belief and now pray directly to God instead of appealing to the ancestors.

The Tlokoa's beliefs are mostly Christian but tinged with sectarian doctrine. Though the Tlokoa had a French Protestant Mission amongst them for over four years, and the

Roman Catholic Mission just across from the Orange River for over ten years, they remained pagan until the 1930's. Ellenberger (1930: 74) wrote that during this time not a single Tlokoa was a Christian and the only Christians among them were immigrants from other parts of Basutholand. They widely believed that God was the Founder of the world and many people believed that the Old Testament accounts for the Creation. Many Basotho also believe that God is the ultimate source of power and of good and bad fortune. From this the researcher can conclude that God's Will is the ultimate arbiter of their affairs. Thus they say, "It will rain, if God wills".

Ashton (1967: 117) also indicated that the Basotho people believe that He takes a kind interest in human affairs. It is therefore a tendency to regard Him as remote and detached, as a chief who is interested in his people, from a distance, rather than a fond parent. In all services held at churches or funerals, a Christian leader is present to pray to and offer petitions for all good things of the earth.

According to Ashton (1967: 118) it is difficult to say how religious beliefs influence conduct. Religious conduct is a vast and intricate subject, the researcher can therefore only offer some brief and superficial observations. The old religion had little concern with conduct, except with observance of certain rites and kinship obligations and its influence was retrospective rather than prospective. If a person wanted to shirk his obligations, he did so without the thought of the gods, and only if this affected his behaviour and should later on experience displeasure, which induced him to make amends.

Ashton (1967: 118) wrote that Christianity is deeply concerned with conduct. Therefore Ashton briefly summarized conduct as the love of God and desire to please Him, hope of Heaven as reward for good behavior and fear of Hell as a punishment of sin. This scarcely affected the Tlokoa, except isolated converts, for their belief in God does not portray Him as a being to whom one could pay personal devotion. Still less does it indicate Him as the personification or presentation of the Ideal to be striven after for its own sake. Heaven is thought of as a place somewhere in the skies, consisting of

magnificent tall shining buildings. The central one contains a hall where God presides, seated on a dias, beautifully dressed, crowned with a golden crown, and surrounded by angels, radiantly arrayed and singing His praises. According to the Basotho it is commonly believed that God will be very happy and that there will be lots of singing.

Hell and hell-fire have caught on as popular belief amongst the people (Ashton, 1967: 119). They are not quite sure where and what Hell is, but they are prepared to believe that such a place exists, a 'place full of fire and boiling rocks', as some describe it. The missions and churches have their own rules for conduct, and some forbid the observance of traditional customs like dancing, beer drinking, polygamy, marriage and funeral rituals, brideprice, medicine, divination and mediumship (*bokoma*). They also have their own sanctions, ministerial disapproval, punishment by fining, exaction of unpaid work for the church, imposition of various penances, and finally excommunication and expulsion. Their control of schools and hospitals also provides opportunities for exercising moral pressure.

Schapera (1934: 65) indicated that the white settlers came from England, France, other European countries and America to accomplish a twofold task in South Africa, namely to uproot beliefs and customs and to replace these by Christian ideals and life. Schapera (1934: 65) already indicted in 1934 that almost half of the black population had been converted to Christianity because bibles were already available in seven South African languages creating easier access to the Christian Religion. Christianity spread through missionaries and European Christians, changed the Basotho's lives and their religious conduct. This has been done by the teaching of Christ and Christian ways.

Schapera (1934: 67) believed that the Basotho share a common belief of mankind and the survival of the soul after death. According to Hiebert (1983: 372) there is a distinction between the Western world and other cultures. Agreeing with the author Hiebert, Schapera (1934: 67) believed the difference between the two groups is that the Christians believe in God and the Basotho's believes in their ancestors. The moral power of the ancestral spirits which sustains tribal law is the most powerful. The Basotho also believe

in magic and magic rituals which have become part and parcel of their tribal religion. Schapera (1934: 67) indicated that this old official church of ancestor worship is typical of Basotho religion. They also believe that political and religious activities cannot be separated because the ruler is also their priest. Stoffberg (1988: 100) indicated that as a result of this confused state of affairs, the Basotho were subjected to diverse teachings, namely Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinistic doctrine, etc. Many tribal and religious ties have been severed as a consequence.

3.3. Basotho rituals before, during and after the burial.

3.3.1. Rituals before the burial

Death is the end of corporeal existence, it is accepted as normal and inevitable. According to Ashton (1967: 100) the dying are treated in the same way as the sick. Friends and relatives are only informed of his/her condition when it becomes obvious that the person is going to die. This will give the village people enough time so that they may gather and prepare themselves for the funeral. The actual moment of death is not heralded by ritual wailing or in any other particular way.

Death was announced verbally or by letter to the deceased's relations, friends and headman by the next of kin. It was and still is customary to make an announcement by expressing sympathy or condolences on the loss of a friend. Where the deceased was a person of note, his/her death should be reported to the local chief and even to the Paramount Chief, and the announcement should be accompanied by a "consolatory" gift of cattle according to the importance of the deceased.

Jacottet (1909: 46-48) indicated that formerly the message of death was made known to the neighbours by piercing and lugubrious cries. Those family members and friends concerned simply reacted to the situation according to their own personal feelings. Women usually weep a little and so do men but on the whole both sexes behaved with restraint. To avoid frightening the children, death was announced at night, by whispering

in their ears: "So-and-so has run away". The deceased was referred to by name, *mofu*-the 'late'. This was fairly punctiliously observed and preparations for the burial began as early as possible. According to tradition the corpse was placed in a crouching position with the knees drawn up to the chin and hands clasped in front. The corpse was then tied with grass called '*moli*' ropes. If rigor mortis had set in, the sinews had to be cut so that the limbs could be bent and tied. The corpse was washed, dressed and wrapped loosely in black ox-hide, and then lightly bound with more grass ropes. According to Ashton (1967: 102) in the modern days the crouching position is regarded as disrespectful and the body is laid straight out with hands folded across the chest, clothed in European dress. The corpse is then wrapped in an old blanket or animal skin and laid down in a wooden coffin, only if a coffin could be afforded.

The laying out of the corpse was done by close relatives of the deceased and had to be supervised by a doctor. The corpse was not ritually cleansed or purified in any way, although amongst important families it was washed with a lotion prepared from various indigenous plants like '*khashe or lokolo*', which cleansed the whole corpse and also served as protection against witchcraft. The relatives involved with the cleansing of the deceased also washed and cleansed themselves with medicines such as '*lefero or balao*' and the hut occupied by the deceased had to be fumigated with *sehalahala-se-se-putsoa*. If this was not done, the Basotho believed their crops would be ruined. Thus everyone who worked with the corpse had to be purified, even the doctor had to wash himself with '*bolao*', lotion and sprinkle all his medicines with froth before using them again (Ashton, 1967: 102).

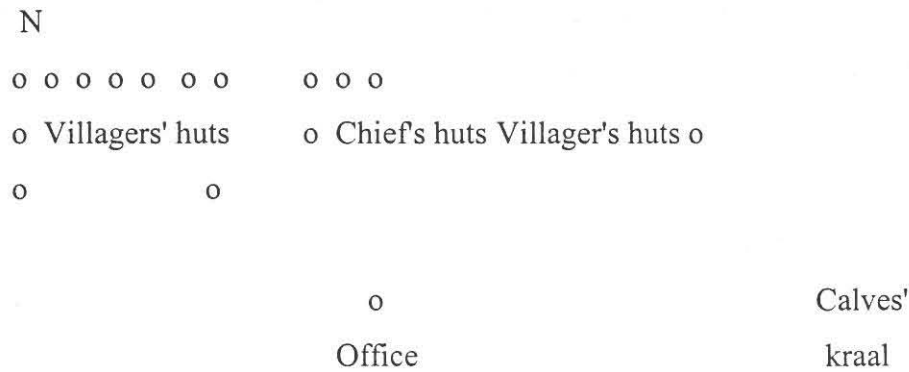
According to Ashton (1967: 109) the deceased's hut was in constant use. The floor had to be smeared immediately with fresh unmixed cow dung for protection from sorcery. During the period from the day of death until the day after the funeral, members of the deceased's village should not do any agricultural work, except if it was a prearranged work party (*letsema*). Domestic chores and smearing or repairing of huts should not be allowed. No cow dung should be taken from the local cattle kraal until the *tea lejo* (firming of the grave) ceremony was held (Ashton, 1967: 109). They therefore should

abstain from ordinary domestic activities for several days. Work in the fields could be damaged by hail in summer or frost in winter if this was not done.

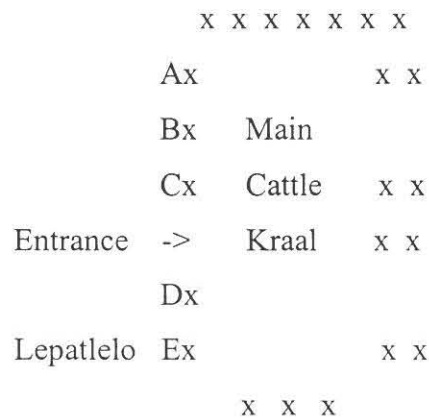
Ashton (1967: 102) indicated that the burial took place soon after death, allowing time for friends and relatives to attend the funeral. All of them should view the body to pay their last respects. The corpse was kept in the principal hut of the household and watched over day and night. If the deceased was a man, three to four adult male relatives slept in the same hut, while the other males slept in the courtyard outside the hut or if it was too cold in the neighbouring hut. If the deceased was a woman, the near kinswomen and co-villagers slept in the hut and the men slept in the courtyard. According to Ashton (1967: 103) this was purely done for sentimental reasons because the Basotho's believe it would be cold and unfriendly to leave the corpse alone and therefore they slept with the deceased to protect the corpse from witchcraft and to prevent sorcerers from molesting it. During the day one or two attendants remained constantly with the body.

According to Ashton (1967: 104) the Basotho believed that the dead should be buried at home and if the person died somewhere else, the body should be brought back home if possible. The grave site was pointed out by the local headman. Previously the graves were situated in the kraal to prevent sorcerers and enemies from rifling it. This custom has now faded out, although many still bury the dead underneath the kraal wall which is temporarily pulled down for this purpose. The graves of the senior members are situated at the mouth of the kraal, the young children and kinsman just outside the kraal and the other villagers just outside the village.

3.3.2. DIAGRAM: LOCATION OF GRAVES AT MALINGOANENG - LESOTHO



[Lekhotla]



o - Huts

x - Graves

x x - Other graves

A = 'Matoots, Lelingoana's second wife.

B = Lelingoana.

C = Mokotjo, Lelingoana's senior grandson - senior son of Mosuoe, who is still alive

D = Mamosuoe, Lelingoana's senior wife.

E = 'Masemai, Lelingoana's fourth wife (his third was still alive).

An explanation of this diagram follows below:

Graves A - E were all made under the kraal wall, which was pulled down each time to enable this to be done. Other wives, children and kinsmen of Lelingoana, together with the latter's wives and children, were buried under the three remaining walls and in the ground just beyond the wall. Other villagers are buried in a small courtyard, not demarcated, about 100 yards from the kraal (Ashton; 1967: 103).

This custom of burying in or near the kraal is no longer followed (Ashton, 1967: 104). Today people are buried in cemeteries. All the graves are situated together outside the village, sometimes in a cemetery enclosed and marked off, but more often just in the open veld. Missions have consecrated cemeteries near the church where their adherents may be buried. Chiefs like Moshesh were buried on top of Thaba Bosiu, unless for personal reasons they preferred to be buried at home or in the mission cemetery like the late Paramount Chief Griffith. Stillborn babies may be buried in the household ash-heap, courtyard, or under the hut floor.

According to Ashton (1967: 104) people who have drowned or were killed by lightning should be buried near the river. The Basotho believe the river would be deprived from its victim and will seek others if this was not done. During the funeral service, the river is asked to be satisfied with the victim it has already taken, to leave the living in peace and to allow them to cross the river without fear. Ashton (1967: 104) also indicated that the Basotho believe lightning and water are one, therefore if the deceased was struck by lightning and not buried near the river it was feared that the lightning would strike the whole village. People killed in battle should also be buried at home or where they lie in the battlefield. This was to protect the corpse from enemies like witchdoctors who could gather the remains for their medicines.

Ashton (1967: 105) wrote that a traditional grave is still used by some Tlokoa which is a small oval cave, hollowed out of the side of a grave-pit. This cave is large enough for a corpse which is buried in the crouching position. The actual size of the cave is measured with a reed which is left in the cave. The traditional western grave which is known and widely used, is a narrow trench which is approximately 6 to 7 feet deep and about 2 feet

wide. Occasionally a combination of the two graves are found which are used by some of the Basotho. The grave was dug in the morning. Martin (1903: 89 -91) recorded various customs whereby the time of day and the spirits influenced the site of the grave as well as the deceased. The members of the deceased's family predominately males, each receives a chance to dig out the grave. The digging is done in order of seniority and therefore each of these males merely digs two spades full of earth. The number of men taking part depends on the importance of the family. After this the local male villagers take over in shifts. The close relative should be spared, but even the brothers and sons of the deceased may have to dig. According to Ashton (1967: 105) various rules are enforced concerning grave digging. *"Rule 30, of the Laws of Lerotholi, makes it a civic obligation on every male adult residing in the village to help in digging the grave, and empowers the chief, sub-chief or headman to order any adult male to help if there are no male adults in the village. Refusal to obey such an order is punished with a maximum fine of 3 Leera"*.

Whenever possible a feast is provided for the relatives and friends (Ashton, 1967: 107). Food and drink should be consumed before the funeral actually takes place so that the visitors who travelled a long way can reach their homes before dark. Ashton (1967: 107) wrote that according to strict Basotho custom a beast called *mohoha*, pure black and the same sex and approximately the same age as the deceased was killed. According to (Massmann, 1998) the age was determined by counting the teeth of the animal. A cow can live for up to ten years before it dies from old age. The age of the cow can thus be determined by taking the age of the cow and multiplying it by eight. If the cow was 5 years old its equivalent human age would be 40 years old. According to this custom of equivalent age to the deceased a *mohoha* beast was killed and this method was the most logical way to determine the age of the beast according to the age of the deceased. If a beast could not be afforded, a sheep or a goat would be used for this purpose. The meat was cooked and distributed amongst all the guests with beer which was provided.

The *mohoha* is said to be the deceased's 'companion' on his heavenly journey and according to some, furnishes him with a blanket to cover his nakedness in the next world

(Ashton, 1967: 107). According to Ashton (1967: 107) a story of the origin of this custom reflects popular belief about this custom. A rich man died and was buried like all other people, but his spirit returned and became a ghost. At night he went to his cattle and opened the kraal gate. The village people tried to keep the cattle in, but they always seem to get out. Then the people of the village went to the diviner for help. The diviner went to his medicine hut and anointed himself with foam of various medicines, came out and said, "Alas, alas, a great man has died, a rich and proud man." The gods have refused to allow him into the village saying that he is too proud and too arrogant for them to let him in. And so the spirit has returned to the cattle for shelter. The people of the village appealed to him to advise them what to do. He again returned to his medicine hut and the people waited. Amazed at this happening, the diviner ordered them to kill the biggest ox and skin it quickly the next morning. Before they had finished skinning the ox they should take out the stomach (*khitsane*) and the second stomach and from the little pocket in the first they should take the cud that had not been chewed. As the sun rose they had to take the cud and spit on it and throw it on his grave. They did so and the cattle were quiet ever after (Ashton, 1967: 107).

However Casalis (1861: 309) wrote that "Madness of the deceased's spirit was believed to be an affliction sent by the gods. Casalis (Ibid: 309) also recorded that the Baralong, a Basotho group, actually regarded the mad with awe, believing them to be under the direct influence of the gods. These organs used in this ritual were associated with the ancestors and regarded as their meat. It can therefore be deduced that the *mohoha*, its stomach organs and cud and the use of these in the ritual before the burial, was considered very important by the older Basotho to prevent the spirit from returning or going mad.

According to Ashton (1967: 108) the *mohoha* rite is one of the few rituals which is still widely observed by Basotho Christians and non-Christians. This rite is also executed to 'make the grave firm' and to pay one's last respect. The *mohoha* is called the deceased's table (*tafole*) at which they are eating for the last time. Depending on the expense of the funeral, most people combine the two, either immediately after the funeral or some months later. The Puthi, another Basotho group, mixes some of the strainings of the beer

with the chyme of the *mohoha* beast and leaves it in a broken potsherd near the grave. Friends who wish to pay their last respects take a pinch of this mixture, spit on it and spatter it on the grave.

Ashton (1967: 108) indicated that the Tlokoa chiefs slaughter two beasts, one for the feast and the other (*khomo ea khurumetso*), for a special rite. The second stomach (*khitsane*) of the latter beast is removed, cleaned and fitted over the deceased's head just before the burial. This is called his hat or covering (*khurumetso*). The beast is closely related to the deceased therefore the meat may not be eaten by the relatives because it would be as if he is eating himself. The meat should only be eaten by strangers or tribesmen of low caste. In the case of the Tebele, members of the Sekhosana, their chief's personal servants and those who act as his bodyguard, are also debarred from eating it.

3.3.3. Rituals during the burial

The funeral takes place in the afternoon after the sun has passed its meridian, before sundown if possible, but the funeral must be completed by sunset. Unimportant people may have to bury their dead in the morning depending on how they delay the funeral. Their rituals are simple and straightforward. The corpse is carried out feet first by one of the close kinsmen and taken to the grave by the shortest route. The corpse was never taken through the door, but a gap was made to the right of the door for the men and the left of the door for women. This was done so that the spirit of the deceased could not return and worry the living (Ashton, 1967: 105).

Amongst other Basotho namely the Fokeng, Koena and Taung, the deceased should be taken through a hole pierced through the back of the hut (Ashton, 1967: 106). Nowadays it is customary to invite the priest to say a few prayers before the body is taken out of the home. Reaching the grave, the corpse is handed down to two or three men standing inside the pit and the corpse is gently slid into the little cave. The Tlokoa believe that the corpse (head and feet) should be facing north-east towards their original home, whereas the Basotho face the corpse to the east. If the deceased is buried according to European

methods (a grave which is a narrow trench, approximately 6 to 7 feet deep and about 2 feet wide), but without a coffin, the body is placed on its back, head resting on a pillow in the proper direction. The grass ropes that were used to tie the body are then cut and left in the grave. Gourd, sorghum and pumpkin seeds are placed next to the body with wisps of *mohloa* and *molile* grass in miniature platters. According to Ashton (1967: 106) the pumpkin seeds are said to be the original food of the Basotho and therefore new seeds such as maize and wheat should not be put in the grave. The deceased's snuff box was also placed beside the corpse with the words, 'there is your tobacco'. Amongst the Tlokoa, a few beads were also buried with the deceased. According to Ellenberger & Mac Gregor (1912: 262) the man's milking pot and thong that were used by him were placed in his grave, and the woman's stirring rod and porridge stick in her grave. This is no longer customary. Bread and water may also be placed at the grave in a clay pot.

Ashton (1967: 106) indicated that at this time a priest was asked to say a few prayers and he concluded by throwing into the grave a few handfuls of earth, saying "Dust unto dust, ashes to ashes." The mouth of the cave was then sealed with flagstones and interstices. This was carefully done so that the earth should not fall and besmirch the corpse. According to Ashton (1967: 107) during this time the relatives had no rite for any organized wailing. The people were restrained except for bursts of sobbing when the corpse was lowered into the grave and the earth was finally shovelled in. In order of seniority the relatives moved closer to the grave and shovelled a little earth into the grave. When they had finished the helpers took over to cover the grave and if the deceased was of importance a 'kraal-grave' was used. The kraal wall had to be rebuilt by the helpers. The men gathered around the grave when they had finished, then spit on a pebble and tossed it onto the grave murmuring, 'Sleep peacefully', 'Go in peace' (*U re roballe borokotsamaea ka khotso*). At smaller funerals these traditional rituals have been abandoned and now the women may join the men for the last salute. The women may also do it at a later stage. Where the grave was outside the kraal they may mark the grave at the foot and head with a couple of stones at each end. Only later an inscribed tombstone or an erect cross was put at the grave site.

Ashton (1967: 106) wrote that at important burials the chief makes a short speech and then announces a period of mourning. During this period of mourning, the tribal courts will be closed and agricultural work will be forbidden. If the deceased was a headman, the name of the successor may be announced, and then the guests return to the village for the funeral feast which concludes the funeral ceremony.

3.3.4 Rituals after the burial

Ashton (1967: 108) indicated that during the evening when all the visitors have departed, a doctor was chosen by the family head to sprinkle the grave and soil around it. This must be done so that the deceased's corpse can be protected from witches, who might try by means of powerful medicines, to open the grave and control the deceased's spirit.

During the next morning all the relations of the deceased should have their heads shaved, except his widows and his daughters (Ashton, 1967: 108). The hair must be burned and buried in the ash-heap or in a marshy place near the river so that sorcerers or witchdoctors cannot get hold of the hair and through it do harm to the people concerned. According to the Basotho, birds may build the hair into their nests and this can cause them to go mad. Both men and women, and that includes all the local villagers, must bathe and anoint themselves in medicines (*selepe and mathethebane*). The relatives wore a sign of mourning (*thapo*) which consisted of *teele* grass or a strip of black cloth which was worn either pinned on their jackets or strapped around their upper arms. The widows threaded a metal chain or link onto the *thapo*, and orphans wore a necklace of chipped ostrich egg shells, together with a chain or link on their *thapo*.

Ashton (1967: 109) emphasized that relatives must wear somber clothes and black *doeks*, keep their heads shaven and not drink any medicines until they are purified. The period of mourning may last up to three months for the wives and sons of chiefs or chief's kinsmen. Village life is not interrupted and sexual intercourse was not forbidden, although people were expected to abstain from the day of death until after the funeral, for decency's sake. Widowers continued to lead a normal life, although their behaviour

should be sober and quiet for a while. Widows and children and their close kinsmen should not have sexual intercourse until they have been purified. Men sleeping with them are liable to *mashoe*, a venereal infection which can only be cured by special and little known medicines.

A week or two after the funeral, the family head carries out a small rite to purify his womenfolk (Ashton, 1967: 109). It was a quiet and undemonstrative family affair, except amongst the wealthy Tlokoa. All female members gathered at his village and sheep were killed for each of those who were to be purified. They were shaved, hair being moistened with the sheep's bile, and the gall bladder was strung round each women's neck or wrist. The family head presented them with a new set of clothes, a blanket, skirt, blouse and *doek*, which took away the impurities from their mourning clothes. The mourning clothes were given to the women in the village and not to the deceased's wives and sisters because it would be considered demeaning to them.

Ashton (1967: 109) indicated that if the village was poor and a sheep cannot be killed for each woman, they should be anointed with aloe juice instead of gall. The bitter quality of the aloe juice was probably a symbol of the bitterness of mourning. In the afternoon the women from the neighbouring villages came to pay their respects and join in the small feast provided. When the women returned home the family head had to give each woman a beast to take home with her, but only the rich could afford this.

After the funeral, months or perhaps years later another purification ritual was performed (Ashton, 1967: 110). This was to 'make the grave firm' (*he tea lejoe*) and at the same time to wash the deceased's objects used at the time of the funeral. The male relations gathered in the village on this occasion. Again a black beast, called *mohoha* similar in age to the deceased was slaughtered just before daybreak and disemboweled. The chyme of the second stomach (*quit or ntlo-ea-lehlanya*) was placed in the potsherd and the stomach was thrown to the dogs or given to some poor old lady. In the late afternoon when the first star rose and the first glimmer of dawn appeared, the men gathered around the grave, murmuring "Sleep for us", 'Send us *mabele*'(sorghum), and bespattered the

grave with chyme. Only later, after the beast had been skinned, the women and wives came together in the courtyard. In order of seniority, each received a strip of suet (*mohlehlo*) taken from the *mohoha* ox, tied it around their necks or wrist, or pinned it to their blankets. This was a "sacred" ritual and nothing modern could be used. It must be worn until it falls off, but the younger men take it off after half an hour and throw it to the dogs.

According to Ashton (1967: 110) the deceased's personal property was collected and each article was smeared with the chyme from the *mohoha* ox by a junior relative in the presence of relatives and friends. The articles that were not required for daily use were laid away in the storeroom. The tools that were used during the digging should also be smeared, whereby these articles became 'firm'. It was said that these tools became weak and watery, because they had been mourning for their owner and if they were to be used they would break or be damaged. The floor of the hut should also be smeared with fresh cow dung mixed with chyme. A few days later the (*moupello*) doctoring of the hut floor must be renewed, lest the death should have affected its potency. The deceased's personal belongings are distributed after this rite or during the following winter (Ibid, 1967: 111). This was only done in the fear of provoking frost, hailstorms or damage to the crops.

The deceased's maternal uncle or if he was dead and unable to do so, the son, carried out the distribution of the deceased's belongings. On this day the uncle accompanied by his relations were met on the outside of the outskirts of the village by some of the local villagers who killed the ox he brought with him and carried the meat to the village. Ashton (1967: 111) indicated that once again the deceased's belongings were smeared and brought out of the hut where they had been stored. The maternal father picked out the articles he was entitled to inherit and presented some to the sons or brothers and the family. The heir received the rest of the goods. A small feast was held using the meat and the beer which were provided by the villagers from the same village. After the feast the uncle was provided with an ox to transport his goods home, and if this was not done

he may 'lose his way', whereby the relationship with the family of the dead man may be embittered and the ancestors provoked to make trouble.

The woman's property must be distributed as soon as the winter comes after the 'firming of the grave', without further ceremony (Ashton, 1967: 111). Her beer pots and other pottery should not be used until purified by a further small feast. The beer was brewed specially to 'wash' them, or until they had been washed with the juice of the spotted mountain aloe. This was also done according to strict custom.

Ashton (1967: 111) wrote that only the wealthy Basotho people could observe these rites fully, therefore poorer people used simpler purification. They may kill a sheep and smear some of the chyme on their heads or on their eyebrows and cut off their hair. In the evening the meat was eaten by close friends and kinsmen.

'To wash the pots', was another rite, according to Ashton (1967: 111). This was held some time or perhaps years after the person's death. A beer feast was held in honour of the dead and was attended by his or her friends and relations. Two or three pots of unstrained beer (*mohlaba*) were kept overnight for the elders to drink the next morning. This was only held for prominent members of important families.

According to Ashton (1967: 111) these traditional series of mortuary rituals were observed more or less by a small section of the Tlokoa, principally the chiefs and other leading families. Even there, rituals were rapidly breaking down and losing their significance. For instance, at the purification rites after the death of *Mokotjo* (the chief's senior son), several of the leading participants were uncertain about various details, such as whether the goods should be purified before or after the mourners had received the *mohlehlo* strips, nor did they care very much about it one way or the other. When additional strips were needed they were surreptitiously cut with a knife instead of with the traditional cumbersome split reed. The other proceedings were generally carried out in an atmosphere of casualness and indifference. Elsewhere the rituals have been

abandoned to a greater or lesser degree, or replaced wholly or in part by rites of European origin, such as church services (Ibid, 1967: 112).

3.4. Munro's Theories

Munro (1975: 332) stated that decline and the fall of nations and of civilizations is a frequent spectacle of nature. This suggests that change is normal.

The large-scale dissolution of an advanced civilization and its arts (Munro, 1975: 332), as in the fall of the Roman Empire, it is involuntary, uncontrollable, and predominantly destructive. Many rich cultures have ceased to exist as distinct social groups. In such disasters there is never an exact return to earlier cultural forms. Like the Romans, the Basotho have lost many of their traditional rituals (especially in accordance with this research, traditional burial rituals).

The complex art and tradition of the Romans is dead and only the skeleton remains. Again a comparison can be drawn to the Basotho, because much of their art and especially their traditions are lost with a bare minimum remaining.

When a certain style has reached a dead end and exhausted all possible development, investigating for new development and inspiration, it is not unreasonable to look over its past history to see if some older experiments need to be carried further (Munro, 1975: 340). However this is not the case with the Basotho rituals, because the potential in a visual medium is vast as the researcher will illustrate in her practical component and as old style catches on it will be modified to suit present tastes.

3.5. An investigative process of the Western influence on rituals before, during and after the burial.

3.5.1. The Method.

A descriptive survey method was used in this research. This method is discussed by Leedy (1993: 185) as: "*A descriptive survey method deals with the situation that demands the technique of observation as the principal means of collecting data by means of interviews and questionnaires.*" A convenience sample of 10 Sesotho speaking subjects, students and workers from the Free State Technikon were used. This sample makes no pretense of being representative of a population.

The researcher used a structured interview to obtain information on the rituals before, during and after the burial. The interview consisted of three questions that the researcher put to the subjects namely: 1) What rituals or events take place with regard to the deceased? 2) What events take place at the burial? 3) What mourning (events) do the Basotho undertake? The researcher then analyzed and interpreted the subjects' responses to the questions.

The questionnaire was designed in English, which resulted in complications because of a language barrier. This was overcome by using an interpreter. The researcher used 10 subjects from the Free State Technikon who were divided into 3 age groups. The groups consisted of: *group one* 18-30 years, *group two* 30 to 45 years and *group three* 45-60 years. The subjects were all South Sotho speaking and most of them could speak and/or understand Afrikaans. The subjects had an average of four years of schooling. Four of the subjects in the age groups 18-30 years reached grade 12.

Bias is inherent in all research. Bias is "*any influence, condition, or set of conditions that singly or together distort the data from what may have been obtained under the conditions of pure chance*" (Leedy, 1993: 213). It is also "*any influence that may have*

distorted the randomness by which the choice of sample population has been selected".

This is applicable to this research as the researcher used a convenience sample.

3.5.2. The results

The subjects appeared to be apprehensive of the interviews. The results from the sample may perhaps have been skewed by this. Most of the subjects preferred to answer in Afrikaans while some answered in English. Two subjects did not understand English or Afrikaans therefore a interpreter was used in this instance.

Group three (45-60) knew more about the traditional rituals practiced before, during and after the burial, although not all traditional rituals practiced today. The younger individuals *group one*(18-30) knew less about the traditional ritual before, during and after the burial on account of Western Christian influences. It became apparent that most of the subjects belong to the Roman Catholic or Methodist churches, hence their lack of knowledge of traditional burial rituals.

In reply to question one: (about embalming), *group one* (18-30) could not respond, while the other two groups believed that the body is prepared at the mortuary. All the groups said the body is dressed in white and religious preparations take place. They confirmed that close friends and relatives gather at the deceased's home and no artifacts are buried with the deceased. The exception was *group two* (30-45) where one of the subjects stated that when the deceased was a member of the church the body may be buried with church attire if the decision is made by the family to do so. The priest and the eldest family member take responsibility for the funeral.

In reply to question two, all the groups confirmed that the body is buried the modern way in a coffin lying straight on its back; no artifacts are buried with the deceased; the deceased was buried in a cemetery; church choirs sing at the funeral; and when the deceased is lowered into the grave, close family and relatives throw a handfuls of earth

onto the coffin to show their last respects and to show the linkage between the family and the deceased.

Answers to question three :

* *Group one* (18-30) confirmed that the relatives do not wear any specific clothing while the other two groups stated that women wear black clothing and men wear a black cloth around their arm.

* Groups 2 and 3 agreed that both men and women cut their hair to show a death within the family. Members of the younger group, *group one* (18-30), because of modern Western fashion, were less inclined to cut their hair.

* It was confirmed by all three groups that the Basotho go through a period of mourning and two out of the three groups (*groups two and three*) believed that they wear a black cloth around their arms to show grief. The subjects of group two did not, however, know how long they were expected to wear the cloth because they no longer practice this ritual. The older group, *group three* (45-60), stated that the man is to wear the cloth for six months and the women has to wear black clothing for a year (only if their spouses died).

* All the groups confirmed that the clothing of the deceased are shared amongst all the relatives; everyone gathers at the deceased's home to drink traditional beer and eat the food to their fill.

* Two subjects from group *two* (30-45) stated that they wash the digging tools used at the burial in order to wash away the death. Also after a month the men and women cut their hair again to rid themselves of the mourning period and one subject from group *two* (30-45) believed that the spirit of the dead person visits you in your dreams and will ask you a favour. If the dead is not satisfied with what you have done it will return. If he comes back you must take a small rock and place it on his/her grave and by doing this, it will bring you good luck.

CHAPTER 4

4. *PIPPA SKOTNES - VISUALLY REVIVING AN EXTINCT CULTURE.*

4.1. Introduction.

Skotnes is very important within the context of this study, as the researcher used Skotnes and her research, both visual and literary as inspiration for the purpose of this study. The researcher also believes that one can draw a parallel between Skotnes, and her revival of the San, and the researcher's study of the Basotho burial rituals. Skotnes also influenced the researcher's use of imagery (e.g. the wagon, representative of the West).

Pippa Skotnes is a printmaker, an academic, an artist and an archaeologist. All her disciplines possess rich histories in her creative and research activities. This reveals her own awareness of time as an agent of change and transformation. According to Godby (1993: 2) Arnold believes that there is a strong sense of history and tradition infuses Skotnes' visual images but the connections she makes between the past and the present imbue her work with contemporary significance. Pippa Skotnes was mostly influenced by Lucy Lloyd, sister-in-law of the German philologist Wilhelm Bleek. Lloyd was dismissed from her position at the South African Library and struggled for years to find support to publish her book, *Specimens of Bushmen Folklore*, and for the past one hundred years she is regarded by most academics from all over the world, to have made a contribution to ethnographic studies, virtually unequalled anywhere. Lucy Lloyd was almost single-handedly responsible for preserving knowledge of the Bushmen (San)-a culture now extinct. According to Godby (1993: 2) Arnold stated that the heritage of Lucy Lloyd and the experience of Bushman paintings has been the inspiration of Skotnes's works for the past seven years. In addition, her work is an attempt to contextualise the fate of the southern Bushmen in the South African present and to promote the acknowledgment of a common responsibility for what happened in the past.

Her formal studies in archaeology and Western cultural and aesthetic references pose important debates about the transformation of her imagery.

According to Godby (1993: 2) Arnold says that Pippa is fascinated with the San culture and she tries to interpret ancient and weathered imagery as a tool of understanding the lifestyle and the belief system of these indigenous people. According to Vosloo (1994: 9) her work celebrates the richness and mystery of the San world-view and she wants to contrast it with “the generally materialistic character of settler thought”. According to Godby (1993: 2) Arnold writes that her etchings utilize established graphic techniques: the tonal aquatints, hard and soft grounded etched lines and textures of the intaglio process impart density, subtlety, juxtaposed forms and symbols. The layered forms (*White Wagons*, Plate VI, Fig. 10) resemble the evolution of visual signs of time. Therefore time features prominently in her art. Not only were the images modified over a period of time as forms through a process of superimposition, but the actual forms refer to a trance state experienced beyond terrestrial time (Godby, 1993: 2). By using the San’s visual language, she re-connects the past and the present. A womb-like container, the bag, is literally and metaphorically unpacked to yield meaningful objects and concepts. The physical sense of the bag was used by women who were responsible for collecting and gathering food and therefore the object assumed spiritual meaning, because the hide of the springbok was transformed into leather to become an utilitarian object.

According to Arnold she attempts to re-vitalize the bag by bestowing contemporary meaning on it (Godby, 1993: 2). Through her use of symbols and certain stylistic conventions she refers to traditional art of Africa and links it to the traditions of Western art. According to Garner (1994: 10) the etchings display an ongoing interest in the mythical beings which inhabit the San imagination, featuring an assortment of gravity-defying anthropomorphic figures (having human form or human characteristics).

4.2. Portfolios

Kuijers (1993: 13) wrote that Pippa Skotnes was the first artist to receive the Helgaard Steyn Award in 1987 for the private production, hand-bound and graphic book with text for the portfolio *Sounds from the Thinking Strings*, 1991, which consists of 20 etches, an edition of 50, and 12 artist's proofs. The *White Wagons* portfolio of 1993, consists of 7 etches with an edition of 25. This portfolio was a tradition started by her father Cecil Skotnes in 1973; in this instance a historical text combined with a narrative text. The term used for these portfolios are "Block Book". The term indicates the number of hand-printed etches (with text) that are bound in a book format. The "Block Book" must therefore fulfil the following criteria in order to be considered a "Block Book".

- * The text in a Block Book must be cut out or scratched out.
- * The text must be handled in the same way as the artworks.
- * The Block Book must be hand-bound.
- * Only a limited edition should be printed.
- * The text should be lightened by the artworks.

The term "book" must therefore be considered with care, as portfolios may elsewhere (and by other authors) also be called "books" (Berman, 1983: 190)

4.3. Sounds from Thinking Strings.

According to Godby (1993: 6) the starting point for Pippa Skotnes was an exhibition of etchings and water-colours. Skotnes (1989: 4) indicated that for the two years following 1987, she was engaged in research into the southern San mythology and rock art. The aim of this project was to explore the richness and variety of the San intellectual life of the time when it was finally exterminated towards the end of the last century. This has become a major source of inspiration for the series of copper-plate etchings entitled *Sound from the Thinking Strings*. According to Skotnes (1989: 4) *Thinking Strings* is the literal translation of the /Xam San word for 'thoughts' but it is a complex term also used

to describe consciousness - at death, the ‘thinking strings’ snap and the heart (both believed by the /Xam San to be located in the throat) falls into the chest. These etchings have also drawn images from rock paintings found in shelters in the south-western Cape, the Maluti and southern Lesotho mountains, the Drakensberg and the rock engravings of the northern Cape - areas which were inhabited by the Bushmen (San). Skotnes (1989: 4) argues that the term ‘Bushmen’ itself is argued to have been applied by the Dutch in the 17th Century, *Bosmanneken* being a literal translation of a Malay word for Orang Outang (man of the forest).

According to Skotnes (1989: 5) it was fortunate for South African history that a German philologist Wilhelm Bleek and his sister-in-law Lucy Lloyd initiated research during the 1870’s. Godby (1993: 6) wrote that interviews were conducted with San people who were serving, or who had recently completed, prison sentences at the Breakwater Convict Station in Cape Town. According to Godby (1993: 7) Dr. Bleek’s original aim was to gain a “thorough knowledge of Bushmen language and literature”, but the project grew with the involvement of his sister-in law and, as the prisoners were permitted to stay at the Bleek family home in Mowbray, it came to include not only the oral literature of the San, but also myths, legends, folklore, and personal histories. After Dr. Bleek’s death in 1875, the project was continued until the publication in 1911 of Lloyds *Specimens of Bushmen Folklore*.

The Bleek and Lloyd archive is generally recognized as essential to any interpretation of the San Rock Art, and Skotnes came to know it well in the course of her research for her doctoral degree (Godby, 1993: 7). The *Sound from the Thinking Strings* provided a sense of the landscape, both physical and intellectual, inhabited by the /Xam and with many precise and haunting images. The actual form for many of these images was also suggested by examples of Rock paintings with which Skotnes is very familiar. The etchings in this series therefore draw directly on the images from the /Xam artistic expression to represent the complexity and richness of their intellectual life.

The motivation for the current project is self-evident. In the words of Stephen Jay Gould:

“As maximally different from - yet entirely equal to - our highly technological Western lifestyle, we could have learned so much about our joint essential nature from these victims of cultural genocide....We should have seen the /Xam for what they are and all cultures are - brothers and sisters on their particular island in the sea of human cultures - with all islands as wonderful places to visit, all equally instructive, equally complex, and equally beautiful” (Godby, 1993: 6). Godby (1993: 6) also argued that we all lose a vital piece in our lifestyle and in our soul. Therefore the /Xam culture cannot be reconstructed (Ibid, 1993: 6) any more than it can be recreated. The interpretation of San Rock art is therefore evidence that its fate can be mourned and its spirit re-envisioned so that all people can learn from it.

4.3.1. Relative artworks: Sound from the Thinking Strings

The *Sound from the Thinking Strings* have been drawn from San mythology and re-situated images drawn from rock paintings and landscape settings (Skotnes, 1989: 5). In a sense they also refer directly to the museum dioramas, only here it is not the physical evidence of the San life, but rather the metaphysical aspects of mythology that are asserted. The realism of the diorama persuades the viewer to ignore the artificiality of the display and believe in its objectivity. In these etchings Skotnes has emphasized the museum case (box-like frame), drawing attention to the act of presentation, and used as a metaphor for the viewer’s own subjectivity and prejudice.

In many of her etchings she has employed the San painter’s convention of conflating human and animal forms (Skotnes, 1989: 5). These *therianthropes* (the representation of preternatural beings in combined forms of man and beast) which appear in profusion in rock art appear to depict the *Shaman* (a medicine man or a magician) in a state of liminal transformation. Consumed with great energy during the trance dance, the shaman is transfigured and by this act metaphorically overcomes death (Katz, 1976: 81-86). The transformed shaman hovers at the interface between what is known and what is unknown, between ordinary and non-ordinary reality, between life and death, and in so doing facilitates the work of symbolic repair which lies in the root of much art.

4.3.1.1. *Sound from the Thinking Strings III 1988 (Fig 3)*

The background of this plate is worked in areas, only made visible is the tenebrous figure of the feline (Skotnes, 1989: 6). Lions were often associated with, or believed to be, shamans and were greatly feared. Dia! Kwain told a story of how a medicine man, Xa: a-tin died after being shot by a Boer, when he was out one night in the form of a lion. On his death bed he sang a song: “*People were those who broke for me the string...*” (Bleek, 1936: 131-134).

The content of the artwork is drawn in the shape of a box-like frame to remind the viewer of the San and the memories now seen only in glass cases in museums. The background is treated darkly to emphasize the white flag on the left and a *theriantherope* on the right. The soft and lightly detailed line further enhances the images in the foreground to stand out. The researcher finds that the emotional quality of the work suggests a lonely feeling as if the *theriantherope* is going on a lonely journey.

4.3.1.2. *Sound from the Thinking Strings VI 1989 (Fig 4)*

Traditional /Xam San land is now mostly owned by the white farmers, according to Skotnes (1989: 7). Much of this land is barren and the impact of the white man’s settlement is seen in erosion resulting from over-grazing. Most of the farms bear archaeological evidence of thousands of years of occupation, and now the hunter-gatherers (San) are extinct. Many of these farms still have small family graveyards and in this etching Skotnes has used the graveyard in conjunction with the *theriantherope* figure as a symbol: an evocative of the quick and the dead, a fusion of ideas of physical transience and spiritual immutability.

The content of the artwork is again drawn in the shape of a box-like frame to remind the viewer of the glass cases in the museums. The foreground consists of a single figure

suspended in the air, but according to the researcher it could also be seen as a scarecrow placed there to protect the surrounding graves. The footpiece emphasizes this idea.

The composition of the etch is full and cluttered, and the figure seems to take up most of the space in the etch. It seems that the focal point is the floating figure. The atmosphere in this work is eerie and dreamlike and the dark aquatint in the background enhances the spiritual-like being.

To the researcher, Skotnes's work is difficult to understand unless the text has been read. Though the objects used in her etches is quite cleverly contemplated with precision, she escapes by using the same objects in her portfolios in different ways.

4.3.1.3. Sound from the Thinking Strings Fig 5

According to Godby (1993: 7) this etching contains images that can be related directly to the Bleek and Lloyd archive. The mood of this etching is dark with its dark tones and bleak landscape. Skotnes (1990/91: 28) wrote that in the /Xam mind the rain was personified as an animal. Soft, soaking rain, or "female rain", was greatly desired. Animal legs could be seen in sheets of falling rain. On the other hand "male rain" was undesirable, because it brought thunder and lightning. A young woman was once caught in the thick mist and was described by one of Lloyd's informants. Rachel (a San child) had been taken up by a rain beast and was lost. Relating to the story of the rain animal, Rachel said she "had not seen these things (the water's children) but she heard that they were beautiful and striped. The water was great, as a bull, and the water's children were as cow's children (the size of latter), being the children of great things." Therefore according to the San's beliefs, the shamans were responsible for controlling the rain. They would capture the rain animal (most probably during a trance or hallucinatory experience) and drag it across the landscape, ritually transforming its milk and blood into rain (Skotnes, 1990/91: 28).

The researcher considers this work to be the most successful work in this portfolio. The text portrayed through the eyes of Skotnes in the form of an artwork gives the viewer the feeling that the rain animal floating in the sky, bringing rain, is the way it really happened and as it was described by the San. The rain animal is the focal point in the etch which takes up the entire space in the artwork. The landscape is treated much smaller than the rain animal itself. This gives the feeling that the power of the skies is greater than that of the land. The animal can barely be seen (accept for the head) because it becomes part of the moving clouds.

4.4. The Dream

In 1991 Skotnes published another block book called *The Dream*. In this book she published five etchings - two monochrome and three multiplate colour etchings with five texts drawn from the Bleek and Lloyd archive. Unlike the /Xam whose history and belief system was the subject of the *Sound from the Thinking Strings* her etches are still concerned to capture the magical quality of the San imaginative expression (Godby, 1993: 11).

Her etches from *The Dream* series exceed the sparse narrative of their literary sources by involving such pictorial references as optic spirals and trance lines, dramatic changes of scale, and the extraordinary settings of anthropomorphic figures in the sky to suggest an indefinable scale (Godby, 1993: 11). As in the series, *Sound from the Thinking Strings* Skotnes uses her colour to present objects without spacial context and to some extent disembodied. The colour plates become mantric objects of contemplation, microcosms of life and of energy that have no dimension, but are still infinitely potent.

A technique called blind embossing was used. In this technique she used hand-cut copper plates that are pressed, without ink, and printed on soft Zerkall Buetten paper. The paper receives the contour of the plate as well as the forms engraved on the plate. Throughout the *Dream* these images float between different levels of reality. The reason for this is that they appear to occupy the space of the book as San stories as well as the space of a

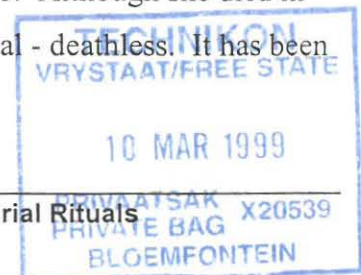
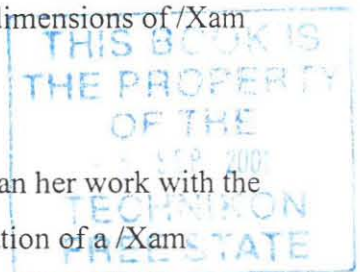
landscape. These embossed areas also refer to the footprints in the sand that the San believed would be filled by the wind when a person died. These forms evoke a sense of the fragility of the existence of dream-worlds and the dreamers.

The three books that Skotnes produced show magnificent range in the way that pictorial language communicates. In the *Sound from the Thinking Strings* and *The Dream* the monochrome plates work in part as illustrations of literary texts or motifs and in part as imaginative recreations, or re-envisionings of the San mythical universe.

4.4.1. Relative artworks: The Dream

According to Skotnes (1990/91: 30) these are her own visual interpretations of the aspects of the history and cosmology of the /Xam. Much of the iconography was formed by rock paintings, and historical, archeological and mythological knowledge. These etchings are not merely illustrative of the essays and the poems but through the images she has attempted to present a perspective on /Xam life, missing from other sections of her book. This is an important part of her overall intention that the poems, images, the historical and archaeological essays would create links with one another, each complementing and adding something to the understanding of the others. It was her conviction that only an approach that combined these various component disciplines those of the artist, the poet, the historian and the archaeologist could present some of the many dimensions of /Xam life.

Skotnes dedicated this book to the memory of Lucy Lloyd. She began her work with the /Xam by assisting her brother-in-law Wilhelm Bleek with the compilation of a /Xam dictionary and describing the /Xam grammar. She gradually dedicated herself to the collection of /Xam mythology and history as described by her informants. This work was continued for many years after Bleek's death and it was with great difficulty that she finally found a publisher for her *Specimens of Bushmen Folklore*. Although she died in 1914, her achievement was in a sense real rather than sentimental - deathless. It has been



given to few people to be the guardian of an entire culture, but it is largely to her efforts, that we have the knowledge of the culture of the /Xam and the reality they inhabited.

4.4.1.1. *Artwork 1 (Fig 6)*

Skotnes (1990/91: 28) indicated that snakes and buck-headed snakes often appear in San rock paintings and often referred to danger or death. One of Lucy Lloyd's informants, Dia! Kwain, identified a "large headed snake whose name is to be feared" in a copy of a painting by Stow, shown to him. This etch also refers to the belief that certain snakes announce the death of a family member and must not be killed, for that snake is the dead person's snake. But snakes were not only malignant. In a healing ceremony described by //Kabbo, an ignorant man became paralyzed after digging up a poisonous root. He was treated by a medicine man and then surrounded by snakes which departed, taking the scent of the poison with them.

The composition in this artwork is filled with more objects like the snakes intertwined and floating in the air. It becomes apparent that Skotnes uses the same composition in most of her artworks from this series and according to the researcher it becomes monotonous. Although in this artwork she uses different line and textures which become much more exiting for the viewer. Textures are extremely important in most cases because it can be manipulated and worked with to such intensity that the skin of the snake in this specific etch appears real.

4.5. **The White Wagons Series.**

In the *White Wagons*, the portfolio of seven monochrome etchings, published by the Axeage Private Press in 1993, she abandons the medium of the book and returns to pictorial form. The portfolio consists of a short text which is a starting point for the series. According to Godby (1993: 15) the text was collected at the beginning of the century by Samuel Dorman, an Irish Presbyterian missionary, from the Hietshware

Bushmen of the eastern Kalahari. It tells the story of how the first appearance of the wagons of the Trek Boers made an impression on the Hietshware. It describes the aggression of the people who came into direct contact with the Boers. The Boers were desperate to reach Lake Ngami but many of them died together with their oxen of thirst and sicknesses before they could reach the lake. The others were killed by the Bechuanas who also took their women. Godby (1993: 15) writes that in the end an unknown narrator put it; “*The wagons died on the veldt*”.

According to Godby (1993: 15) the principal image in this series is the wagon. All people in general have their own opinion of the wagon and it is seen in different ways by those who travelled, lived and saw it entering the territory for the first time. Skotnes uses the shape of the wagon wheel to make this point throughout her etches. Skotnes represents the wagon in deliberately polyvalent fashion: the rough circular shapes that contain all seven images are intended to suggest the form of the wagon wheel. The number of wagons would be turned for defensive purposes and the gathering of the bag of the San, (which Skotnes explored in the colour etches of *Sound from the Thinking Strings*) shielding the Bechuana who were contesting the territory with both the San and the Trek Boers. Therefore she was able to draw on the actual presentations of wagons and other Trek Boer equipment that occur in San Rock art and incorporate it into her work.

The wagon and its gun-bearing occupants in the series are described in the manner of Rock art painters (the San), and the screen of the white forms that are also drawn from San art and appear to float between the spectator and the wagon, is intended to suggest that the wagon is being seen through the eyes of the San. Godby (1993: 16) argued that this series requires the viewer to look at the objects and the events represented as the relationship to his or her own history. Each plate in the *White Wagon* series therefore has its own story. The first plate bears no relevance to this study.

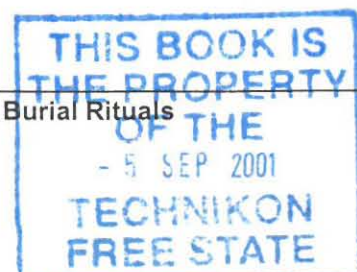
The second plate shows the Trek Boers oppressed by the weight of their own history and the occupation of the landscape by symbols of the San presence. Plate VI (Fig. 10)

depicts the contrast of the value systems of the two groups with the San represented by the cosmic space of their landscape as Skotnes explored in monochrome etchings - and the world of the Trek Boers suggested by the earth-bound form of the wagon weighed down by the flags it is carrying to claim possession of the material reality of the landscape. The contrast of the two groups is shown in another way in plate VII (Fig. 11). This artwork depicts the abandoned equipment of the Boers, the uses of which the inquisitive San could not have known. The flags once again, shows a form of ownership, farm equipment that will transform the land and sustain inhabitants, and rifles that will slaughter wild-life on which the San way of life had depended.

In plate V (Fig. 9) and plate VII (Fig. 11) of the White Wagon series, Skotnes makes it clear that the Trek Boers have influenced the San's way of living and disturbed their ways. The *White Wagons* therefore does not aim to tell a story of the early encounters between the San and the Trek Boers from the San point of view, instead the series attempts to give reality to the San modes of perception and credence to the values that effectively died with them (Godby, 1993: 16). According to Godby (1993: 17) Skotnes demonstrates that the San belief system is perhaps the chief casualty of the loss of their culture, because they believe that the landscape is a physical and spiritual space. She also concentrates on the folk stories told and the rituals and beliefs of the San which she explores in her etches. Skotnes portrays the fish as a symbol of a state of trance, in Plate VI (Fig. 10), which was believed to be a sort of death. The death of the shamans and possibly the San, suggests that they were unable to resist the repeated invasions of their territory.

Godby (1993: 17) indicates that Skotnes used different symbols to represent different aspects in the context of the etch, for example the San bags of material and spiritual life are conjured into the harmony of the power of the shamans' magic. Other plates celebrate the heritage of the San.

The series of this portfolio is a set of seven large monochrome colour etchings which are named after individual San contributors to the Bleek and Lloyd archive. These etches



were done over a period of two years from 1992-1993 in which she made the *White Wagons* and some of the water-colour sketchbooks. Skotnes (1992/93: 52) indicated that the format of the portfolio is a combination of word and image and is designed to facilitate inter-disciplinary discourse, rather than provide illustrations for the Hietshware text from the early twentieth century (which itself, requires interpretation). The text was collected by Samuel Shaw Dornan, an Irish Presbyterian missionary, surveyor, and amateur anthropologist who came to South Africa during the Anglo-Boer War. At the time there had been reports of unhappy relations between the Hietshware (Bushmen of the eastern Kalahari) and their Bantu-speaking neighbours (Tswanas). Skotnes (1992/93: 52) wrote that later in the Tagart report of 1933, detailed accusations of enslavement and mistreatment of the Bushmen were found. It was then obvious that the Bushmen and Tswana had bad relations between them, but it was not as disastrous as the contact between the Bushmen and the White settlers (Barnard, 1992: 120).

According to Skotnes (1992/93: 52) the text describes the desperate progress through Hietshware land of the Trek Boers in search of water, and the Bushmen's reaction to the Trek Boers cattle and wagons. A Bushman informant speaks of this as his first encounter with the wagons. The text describes how the Trek Boers became victims themselves, not only of conflict but of the land and drought. The story highlights the unfriendly relations between the Boers, the Bushmen that had prevailed throughout Southern Africa during the previous century.

In naming this series Skotnes does not intend to recount the personal histories, although in some cases specific anecdotes may be connected to an individual (Godby, 1993: 19). The plates commemorate the individuals as individuals, but also in the testimony which was provided in some cases, where in people's only source of knowledge of a world has vanished. This series therefore collapses the history of the individuals into a history of the world they came from and the history of the world that destroyed them. The representation is synchronic, a unified vision created from separate times of San cosmic life, their perception of the Trek Boers' invasion into their world and the entry into modern time, and the ruination of their culture that this entailed.

The etchings in this portfolio are drawn on 30cm square plates (Skotnes, 1992/93: 53). The images are contained in four basic shapes: - A suggestion of the wagon wheel and laager, gathering bag and shield. Each shape evokes aspects of conflict suggested by the text. The images themselves focus on a certain confrontation between Boer and Bushmen that resulted in being driven from their land and robbed of their livelihood (Skotnes, 1992/93: 53).

4.5.1 The Text

The text describes the ignorant Bushmen's first encounters with the Boers, and how the Boers influenced and changed the Bushman lifestyles. A culture which is now extinct.

The first time we saw the wagons was when the Trek Boers went up to lake Ngami [Ngabee derived from Ngami, which means giraffe]. We thought the wagons were big animals. There were many oxen going before, and these big animals were going after, as we thought. Some of the old Bushmen had seen such things before. They looked like elephants, but they were white. We watched them a long time, and saw that some of them stopped.

There was not much rain that year, and the grass was not good. The oxen were thin and then they died. Many died before they got to the lake, and sometimes we had some of the flesh. At last we saw one day some of the Trek Boers take all the cows out the wagon and leave it on the veldt. We were afraid to go near it. We thought we had left it to graze, but we saw that its feet did not move. Some got near then, and we looked in. There were lots of things inside, but we Bushmen did not know their uses so we left them. We found some dry meat which we took. Then we went on after the others, and we were near the wagons, so the Trek Boers got their horses and they galloped after us. Three of us were caught. They tied up our hands, and they told us to take them some water. I was young then. They tied us up at night, but one of us got away in the darkness.

After a time all the cattle died of sickness, and the Trek Boers got sick and died too. They left the wagons. At first when we saw them they were living in the wagons. Many of the Trek Boers were killed, many died, and others went away. Some of the women were taken by the Bachuanas, but I don't know what they did with them. We Bushmen never killed any of these people, but we took their cattle and ate many of them. The wagons died on the veldt, and some of them were burnt. That is what I knew of the Trek Boers. (Skotnes, 1992/93: 53).

4.5.2. Relative artworks: White Wagons

4.5.2.1 Plate II (Fig 7)

Skotnes, (1992/93: 54) indicated that in this etch the wagon is in the centre of the foreground. The pockets of imagery surrounding the wagon refer to the ships and the origins of the Boers. The nested U-forms, often found painted in association with hand-prints, suggest a generalized version of the individuals' imprint, and the dead bloated figure of an animal is a reference to the water-starved cattle of the Boers and to the dead game which was the livelihood of the Bushmen.

The composition in this artwork is filled with a variety of images drawn from both the San and the Boers. Like all the other prints this etching includes an image of a wagon. The wagons are loosely based on rock paintings from the Ceres region (Skotnes, 1992/93: 53). The shape of the image is round and the researcher assumes this round shape is the shape of the wagon wheel. The wagon wheel to the researcher is a form of a trapping mechanism which traps the San from their normal daily activities. Skotnes used the images like the rifle to emphasize the presence of the Boers and their arrival. Various patterned objects were layered into this composition with the emphasis on the square in the middle of the composition. The square depicts three men, probably hunters, with rifles aiming at what the researcher can gather, either humans or animals. In this way Skotnes wants the viewer to interpret the meaning and become part of the essence of the artwork.

4.5.2.2. *Plate III (Fig 8)*

The male figure in this print is taken from a rock painting near Ceres in the Western Cape Province. Skotnes (1992/93: 54) extended the fingers, penis and feet which refer to the sensations of elongation and extension experienced in altered states of consciousness and described by contemporary Kalahari shamans. The trance of the shaman was an event during which potency was conjured and used to effect cures to illness and intercede on behalf of the society in the spirit of the world. Godby (1993: 17) said that the shaman that is in a state of trance and excitement shows a wished-for-state of being in which the symbols of the different orders of being - the Trek wagon and the San bag, amongst other forms of material and spiritual life - are conjured into the harmony of power of the shaman's magic. Skotnes (1992/93: 54) indicated that in this image a group of disparate objects associated with pastoralist, Trek Boers, Bushmen and altered states of consciousness, surround the shaman-figure. The figure symbolizes the unifying potential that may derive from the expression of a common search for restitution for the fate suffered by the Bushmen. According to Godby (1993: 17) the plate celebrates the world-view of the San, but Skotnes intends it to also represent the idea that the restitution of their heritage to the San would act to restore and to heal the spirit of our common humanity.

Once again the image was placed in the shape of a wagon wheel to emphasize the Boers. This image consists of a landscape with a single white figure with its elongated penis, feet and fingers which to the researcher looks like the figure of the San, afraid of the arrival of the Boers. The background consists of a combination of Boer and San working utensils seen through the eyes of the San. The images in the background are floating in the air as if they are tumbling down to the earth, coming to haunt the San. The animals like the elephant could also refer to the extinction of animals which once roamed the South African lands. The atmosphere in the background is dark and dramatic and this tends to enhance the frightened figure in the foreground even more because the white figure is the first image that catches the viewer's eye.

4.5.2.3. *Plate V (Fig 9)*

According to Skotnes (1992/93: 55) this etching operates in two zones. The sky contains a collection of images related to the Bushmen iconography and taken from rock paintings. The images float freely in the sky and the landscape contains a single Boer wagon. The wagon is earth-bound and lists under the weight of its flags.

The image recalls the shape of a wagon wheel. To the researcher it seems that the Boers have already set in and the traditional ways of the San have faded out and this is enhanced by the single Boer wagon in the landscape. The San images in the sky appear to be floating away from their land. The wagon shape with its occupants could refer to the Boers, which in a way were captured by their circumstances and the new unknown land.

4.5.2.4. *Plate VI (Fig 10)*

This image refers to the Boer laager. The central wagon is surrounded by animal-drawn wagons. Inside the central wagon is an ox surrounded by fish. According to Godby (1993: 17) the symbolism of the fish is two-fold. In the text, the Bushmen hold the key to the Trek Boers' survival, they 'own' the water and the knowledge of its location. At the same time the fish are a trance or death image. The fish also suggest the death of the San as they are unable to resist the repeated invasions of their territory. Shamans die in order to cure and are then resurrected. Here the fish signify both the shamans' potency in effecting the death of the oxen and their impotence in preventing the ever-tightening grip of the Trek Boers' stranglehold (Skotnes, 1992/93: 56).

The ox in the centre is the focal point, with the bottom of the wagon which is aquatinted darker to the rest of the image. The images surrounding the centre image was treated

more lightly and it resembles rock engravings. It becomes a pattern of the Trek Boers and their survival.

4.5.2.5. Plate VII (Fig 11)

In the text according to Skotnes (1992/93: 56), the Bushman informant tells that he saw many things inside the wagons but did not know their uses. The final plate in this portfolio describes what some of these may have been: pitch forks and spades for digging and sowing where once food had been freely available for gathering; rifles for slaughtering animals and the Boers satisfaction of bloodlust; flags for the claiming of land, the theft of their son's birthright.

The imagery which takes up the whole space of the artwork, the researcher interprets as the final stages and the settling in of the Boers. The wagon-like shape fills the centre of the etch, immobile and stagnated. The wagon shows most of the Boers' working utensils and this emphasizes that the Boers are staying. The three flags could also indicate the Boers' claiming of land. The emotional quality of the work suggests a feeling of finality, that nothing further can be done to save the San from the Boer invasion.

It becomes apparent that Skotnes uses the same format and images throughout this portfolio, but she uses them in an exiting and interesting way that enables the viewer to look for different meanings in the different works.

CHAPTER 5

5. THE THEME PORTRAYED BY THE RESEARCHER IN PRACTICAL TERMS.

5.1. Introduction.

The earliest intaglio prints can be traced to the work of the fifteenth century European metal craftsmen (Ross, Romano & Ross, 1990: 65). The print engravings evolved out of the need to record a design engraved on a piece of armour or a decorative gold object. The goldsmith's art of engraving with a sharp tool into precious metal was highly refined, compared to the art of the woodcutter, or *formenschneider*. The first known engraver to work on metal was Martin Schongauer (1440-1494), a fifteenth century German painter.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century in Germany, the Master of the Housebook created a more free and a more painterly approach to produce the first dry-points. However, because so few prints could be pulled from a drypoint, artists interested in marketing their work preferred engraving. It was not until more than a hundred years later that the creative genius of Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) revived the dry-point and used it extensively to achieve rich tonalities without waiting for acid biting (Ross, Romano & Ross, 1990: 70).

Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) was, according to Ross, Romano and Ross (1990: 68), the most illustrative artist of his time. He was the first important artist to experiment with etching in the Italian Renaissance period. In the seventeenth-century Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) was classified as the most gifted painter-etcher of his century. He presented the drama of light and dark not only in his paintings but also in his prints.

Francisco Goya (1746-1828) was the most important painter-etcher of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Ibid, 1990: 70). His visionary work *Se Repulen (They Spruce Themselves Up)*, 1799, from the Los Caprichos series, done with incredible skill

in the newly developed aquatint method (tone and chiaroscuro), is important not only for its unique compositional simplicity, but for its political and social statement.

After Goya, according to Ross, Romano and Ross (1990: 72), the remainder of the nineteenth century brought only a steady decline in etching as a creative medium. The revival of the etching in a truly explorative and creative manner came with the advent of Expressionism and Modernism in Europe. Artist like Kathe Kollwitz (1867-1945) a German Expressionist (e.g. *Death, Woman and Child*, 1910) and the etching genius of this century, Pablo Picasso [(1881-1975) e.g. *Blind Minotaur Led Through the Night by Girl with Fluttering Dove*, c. 1935, are only of the few who revived and worked with the print media and which inspired the researcher.

5.3. Discussion of individual artworks.

5.3.1. Shh! For they will hear. (Fig12)

The Basotho believed when a loved one has died, the little ones are not to know. If the children were to ask why someone is missing the adults would whisper in their ears that the hyenas came to take that person, or so-and so has gone away. This is done to avoid frightening the children (cf. Chap 2, p10). The researcher was inspired by this folktale because of its simplicity. Fine detailed line was used throughout the etch to enhance the etch's quality to a more spiritual world by concentrating more on the ears growing like a plant species from the landscape and the protruding face in the sky. The dark aquatint also further enhances the spiritual world's deep sombre feeling.

The etch consists of three levels: the underground, landscape and the sky. The underground level which consists of severed feet and hands suggests and could symbolize the death of loved ones. The dark aquatint in the underground enhances the sense of death pertaining to this etching. The rope could be the metamorphosis between the stems of the growing leaves. The Basotho tied up the body with ropes so that it could stay in a

crouching position (Ashton, 1967: 102). Therefore the growing leaves in the underground sprout like germinating seeds which refer to new life. Death is inevitable and no one can escape it, but life must go on. Life is a cycle, one is born to live life to its fullest extent and then die for others to live again. The landscape refers to a typical Free State grassy plain in the background and ears growing from the earth. The ears growing from the earth are the ears of the young Basotho generation who are listening to the spiritual being in the sky.

The sky consists of the spiritual being tattooed with African motifs on the face with its finger on its lip, warning the ears, amongst others to listen to what the grownups are telling them. The being which seems to protrude from the top of the etching enhances the floating quality of the spiritual world. The deep sombre or dark aquatint places the scene of the image in the night time. According to Ashton (1967: 135) the dead were always buried at night so that the corpse would arrive on the other side of the globe during the daytime. They believed that nobody wanted to arrive at night or in the dark, in the world of spirits.

The three levels in this etch work as a whole. It describes a story told by the Basotho to their young ones when someone has died, from the researcher's point of view. The viewer can also see the artwork from his/her own point of view, and see different meanings in the symbolism used by the researcher.

This edition consists of 50 prints.

5.3.2. Sangoma. (Fig13)

The Basotho believed the body of the deceased had to be buried in a crouching position and if rigor mortis had set in the sinews had to be cut for the corpse to be placed in this position. Cutting the sinews inspired the researcher to use hands and feet to a more severe extent, to overemphasize the Basotho cutting custom (cf. Chapt 3 p). The severed hands and feet could therefore be associated with death. The etch consists of two levels: the underground level which consists of severed hands and feet of a human body

buried together with a dead chicken, and the second level which consists of the squatting sangoma performing his/her ritual to protect the dead from any evil.

Depending on the family sangoma, some families placed more than one chicken in the coffin. This was done because they believed that the chicken would rid of all their enemies or those who wished to harm them. On the other hand a live chicken can also be buried with the deceased. This was done in the belief that the person responsible for the death will die as soon as the chicken has suffocated in the coffin. This ritual is therefore performed to avenge the dead (Jacobs, 1994: 11).

In this etch the chicken protects the dead from evil. The squatting figure represents the sangoma and he/she prays over the dead and throws medicines on the earth to perform the ritual of protecting the deceased's spirit. According to Imber-Black and Roberts (1992: 4) rituals are a lens through which we can see our emotional connections to our parents, children and friends. They connect us to our past, define our present life, and show us a path to our future as we pass on traditions, objects and symbols handed down from previous generations. All human beings throughout time are born and die; therefore they simultaneously have beginnings and endings. Imber-Black and Roberts (1992: 268) argued that these changes require holding and expressing both joy and pain. They shape and give voice to conflicting beliefs. It is little wonder that every culture has created rituals to celebrate and guide our way through life-cycle passages.

Fine detailed line in the etch as well as subtle aquatint in the background with both box and spraypaint aquatint was used. This edition consists of 6 prints.

5.3.3. Man (Fig14)

The researcher intended to bring back or revive some of the traditional Basotho rituals before, during and after the burial by means of an artwork, in other words protect their heritage in a visual form. On the other hand the researcher was also presenting the

Western influences on the Basotho and the crime (by taking away their traditional ways) the Westerners are accused of.

The etch consists of a semi-naked African man with African motifs on his face. The rosemary beads (used for prayer by Catholics) around his neck refer to the Western influences of the churches in general. The black man goes to church well dressed, but he still comes home to practise his own traditional beliefs.

The fish at the bottom of his feet and the embossed fish refer to the Western church and faith (Christianity). The image of the fish which are portrayed twice, in the etch and embossed area below, seems to want to overpower the image, as if Western influence has prevailed, which in most cases it has, according to information from the gathered literature. According to Mphahlele (1994: 144) the African goes to church every Sunday, formally and smartly dressed, but resorts to his own traditional way of worship from Monday to Saturday.

The researcher's intaglio technique consists of a variety of line work combined with different aquatint processes that were used. Embossing is when the acid is stronger than the usual acid which is 1 as to 9 (one part acid and nine parts water) whereas the embossing acid is 1 as to 3 (one part acid and three parts water). Naturally because of the stronger acid the plate is eaten away faster and deeper depending on how long the plate is left in the acid. The longer the plate is left in the acid, the deeper the indent. This is one of the several acid techniques in the intaglio process.

This edition consists of 6 prints.

5.3.4. Decay (Fig15)

Death is universal and no one can escape it. Life is a cycle, one is born to live life to the fullest extent and die in the course of life for others to live life. The Basotho rituals before, during and after the burial which evolves around death and the deceased played

an important role and it culminates in this specific work. The researcher used the fly, larvae and pupae that are associated with death because they represents decay and the physical decay of a dead body. The mating of two flies takes place in the foreground which in turn means more flies will be born and more and more eggs will be laid, which refers to more death to come. It is an ongoing cycle which no one can escape - everyone lives to die.

The three feet refer to the life force. They are walking through the composition as if people are walking through life and pass death on their way. According to the researcher the feet could be seen as the physical transport of the Basotho soldiers going to war to protect their land from the arrival of the Europeans coming to settle in their land. Decay is considered to be a slow process, and thus slow process can also refer to physical as well as cultural and social decay (death) because of the new influences, rituals and customs. On the other hand it must not be forgotten that decay can also be considered as a natural ritual which is performed by the forces of nature. Therefore in Christian rituals the saying “dust to dust” refers to the natural process of decay. The foot in the centre has been chosen by death because the flies are already circling around it, which means that death has set in. The fly is oversized to emphasize the role that the fly (decay) plays and its importance because of the natural process.

Fine detailed line was used in the foreground and appears to be very busy because it enhances the foreground and the activities in the etch. A spraypaint aquatint was used in the background area which is less busy so that the viewers’ attention could be placed on the foreground. Because of its monumental scale and size this etch emphasizes death as a universal subject. The size of this work therefore aims to confront the viewer with death, as no one is protected from death.

This edition consists of 10 prints.

5.3.5. Burial ground, woman (Fig16)

The researcher's aim was also to explore the changes in rituals during the burial in the past and the present. Therefore the researcher's etches are concerned with the traditional rituals during the burial and how Western influences played a vital role in changing these rituals throughout the century. The crime Westerners are accused of, is also emphasized. These rituals are depicted in a contemporary imaginative way by the researcher, in other words, to protect their heritage in a visual form.

It is from the *White Wagon* series that the researcher makes a comparison of the Boers or Western culture and the influences they had on the Basotho traditional rituals before, during and after the burial to what Pippa Skotnes did in her series. The wagon is directly used as a reminder of Western influences on the Basotho rituals. The wagon therefore served its purpose as both an object of another culture (the Boers) and a symbol of Western culture. The wagons are stagnating in the etch, the Boers are there to stay because no oxen are pulling the wagons.

Other objects were also used in the etchings which were mainly the normal household equipment used by the Boers and the Basotho. These objects, like a kettle, a bucket and a *Voortrekker kappie* are tumbling down from the sky, further emphasizing that the Boers arrived and they are to stay as with the immobile wagons. These objects play an important contradictory role in this etch. The grave is surrounded with the traditional utensils used by the Basotho and the Western utensils are tumbling down to fall in place of old ones.

The feet of the cock lying in the resting position in the grave is a metaphor of the woman which means that she is at the feet of the family head. Buried with the female are her stirring pot and stirring stick. In the stirring pot are a few pumpkin seeds which is the traditional food of the Basotho. The Basotho believed that the deceased was going on a journey and the food will be there to help the soul. *Burial ground, woman* and *Burial ground, man* work together as a diptych, but also work as individual pieces.

The open landscape does not necessarily refer in this work to the Western influence on the Basotho, but it can also be interpreted as the Boers that arrived in other parts of the country and influenced other indigenous cultures. The dark sky creates a thundery, somber feeling, enhancing the arrival of the Westerners.

The researcher used the wagon in some of the etches as a symbol of the Western culture and what influences the Boers and others had on the Basotho. Plate - 5 and 7 from the *White Wagons* series formed the principal starting point for this etch.

The Basotho have lost some of these traditional rituals due to Western influences and according to Munro (1975: 333) they can only look back on greatness, and not ahead to it. However through the researcher's eyes the traditional ritual can be preserved and revived like the old San culture by visually elaborating on the traditions and stories throughout history by means of an artwork.

This edition consists of 6 prints.

5.3.6. Burial ground, man (Fig 17)

The scene of this etch consists of the burial ground of the Basotho man and how the West has influenced this burial ritual. The burial scene seems very Westernized, but still has some of the traditional elements in the burial ground. This artwork became the most important etch in the series, because this was where the researcher placed the emphasis between the past and the present burial rituals.

Traditionally the body of the deceased was buried in a round hole made in the ground and the corpse was placed in a crouching position, without a coffin. In this etch the deceased was buried in a rectangular grave six feet deep. However the deceased was replaced by a head of a cock which is a metaphor for the man (the head of the family) lying at the bottom of the grave with head resting on a pillow. On either side of the grave are two (poles) used by the Westerners to gently lower the coffin into the grave, which refers to

the Western influence setting in. The Basotho also buried some of the deceaseds' belongings with them. In the case of the man, his milking pot, thongs and other artifacts were buried with him. These objects were placed at the far end of the grave to represent the old tradition.

In the background is an open landscape (refer to 5.2.5) with a manmade road and an immobile wagon which is stagnating in the middleground which means that the Boers are there to stay. This is emphasized by a single wagon wheel lying in front of the wagon where the oxen should go to pull the wagon. The yoke normally used to keep the oxen together and pull the wagon, is without any oxen, emphasizing the settling down of the Boers. The yoke also emphasizes the placing of the metaphorical yoke on the Basotho people (including other indigenous people) because they were employed as slaves and they were now pulling the white wagons.

In the etch the wagon is not being pulled by an ox, meaning that the Boers have come to stay and to disturb the tradition although it has already set in. The wagon therefore represents the West just like the *White Wagon* series of Pippa Skotnes. The household goods of the Boers (bucket, kettle etc.) are tumbling down from the sky as if they are coming to overpower the traditional burial ground. The wagon and the household goods are invading the space, as if there is a battle between the Basotho tradition and the new Western tradition. Although the West has influenced the traditional ritual before, during and after the burial some of the traditional elements are still preserved in this etch.

The researcher makes use of fine detailed line, box and spray paint aquatint. The dark sky creates a thundery sombre feeling enhancing the coming of the Westerners.

This edition consists of 6 prints.

5.4. Conclusion

It is apparent to the researcher that Ashton, Jacottet, Willoughby, Bleek and Lloyd, wrote of the same stories about death, only with different metaphors of the messengers. It can therefore be deduced that the moral of these stories, regardless of their metaphors, reveals that man will die.

Through the historical overview of southern Africa we can discern the gradual influence of the European people on the Sotho-speaking nation. This influence is apparent in the adaptations of the folklore to incorporate different visual metaphors (for example the jackal replacing the hare as the messenger of death).

The researcher applied the information obtained in Chapter 2 of the research to help ascertain if Western Society influenced the Basotho's rituals before, during and after the burial of their dead. The researcher also used selective imagery obtained from the folklore to improve her visual application of the research.

Throughout the practical research the presentation of traditional rituals together with the Western influences that came upon them, as well as the modern times and how most rituals of the Basotho are lost and ruined, are portrayed in the researcher's etches just like the Basotho culture whose original rituals before, during and after the burial cease to exist, and they cannot go back to it.

In chapter 3 the researcher's hypotheses 1 has been proven correct. Funeral rituals will adapt to change and reflect new spiritual beliefs. From the data obtained from the interviews, all the groups confirmed that the body is buried in the modern Christian way. The traditional burial method is therefore no longer performed. This is evidence that the old Basotho have been influenced by Western culture, concerning the rituals before, during and after the burial. This statement is verified by the findings of the interviews where the modern Basotho were not even aware of most of the traditional burial rituals. The researcher believes this is a result of the fact that the modern Basotho is now a

practicing Christian (a religion which frowns upon beliefs other than those preached in its doctrine, such as the belief in magic and magical rituals).

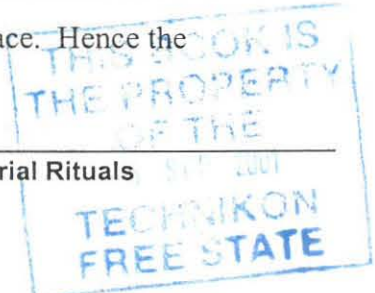
The second subproblem successfully investigates the symbolic and metaphoric use of the Basotho burial rituals and Western influences in selected artworks in the researcher's body of work.

Traditionally the corpse was placed in a crouching position with the knees drawn up to the chin, hands clasped in front in an oval hole in the ground. The traditional Western grave which is known to many Christian Basotho is now widely used, a narrow trench which is approximately 6 to 7 feet deep and about 2 feet wide. Artifacts were originally placed in the graves (woman's milking pot and the man's thongs). The information obtained from the interview (*groups one, two and three*) stated that artifacts are no longer buried with the deceased. This is as a result of Western society and Christian belief.

Purification methods traditionally used to purify both the deceased and the close family relatives protected them from witchcraft and sorcery. A beast was killed in honour of the deceased and the skin was used to protect and clothe the spirit through its journey. In modern society the corpse is fully clothed in European dress.

The similarities between the traditional burials and modern funeral rituals include the sharing out of the deceased's goods amongst family and friends. The coming together after the funeral of the same family and friends to honor and remember the deceased and show support for the family, is a ritual which is timeless.

According to Munro (1975: 332) it is important for the understanding of history to realize that a return to previous conditions is not necessarily a change for the worse. The researcher agrees with Munro as she believes that certain aspects of traditional Basotho burial rituals should be retained. The researcher attempts to revive these rituals in her practical research. The researcher also agrees with Munro that no nation has ever been so completely isolated that it cannot draw anything from another race. Hence the



researcher's belief that Western society has influenced the Basotho so severely that many of the traditional burial rituals have all but become extinct.

Chapter 4 dealt with the artist Pippa Skotnes, who studied the influence of Western culture and the revival of an extinct culture. If one looks at the influence of Western culture and revival of an extinct culture as a theme, it is evident that the theme was seldom used throughout art history or in contemporary Fine Art. The artist studied and treated the images according to her own individual style, and the connections she made between the past and present were imbued with contemporary significance in her etchings.

Skotnes's output was an attempt to contextualise the fate of the southern Bushmen in the South African present and to promote the acknowledgement of a common responsibility for what happened in the past. In comparison to the researcher's practical research it is evident that the Basotho's old and new rituals changed. According to the researcher like Skotnes, the revival of the Basotho burial rituals has to be restored and she attempts to do this in the practical component of her research.

The researcher believe Skotnes proved Munro's theory (cf. Chap. 3 p39) that it is not unreasonable to look at past histories for new development and inspiration. Skotnes looked into the San past and used it to inspire new creative idea's.

Skotnes used imagery as a tool for understanding the lifestyle and the belief system of these indigenous people. The researcher has also applied this method to her practical research (e.g. Burial Ground, Woman Fig. 16). Skotnes makes the fact clear that the Trek Boers have influenced the San's way of living and disrupted their lifestyles. Again this concept was utilized by the researcher in her artworks.

Skotnes is very important within the context of this study, as the researcher used Skotnes and her research, both visual and literary as inspiration for the purpose of this study. The researcher also believes that one can draw a parallel between Skotnes, and her revival of

the San, and the researcher's study of the Basotho burial rituals. Skotnes also influenced the researcher's use of imagery (e.g. the wagon, representative of the West).

It is important to emphasize that Pippa Skotnes's three portfolios, especially the *White Wagons* series, influenced the researcher's practical component. The influence was especially in the area where Skotnes used the San and the Boers and how the Boers influenced this extinct culture. As well as the way in which the researcher used the Basotho and Western influences on the Basotho traditional rituals before, during and after the burial. A parallel can therefore be drawn between the two studies.

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Fig 14 “Man” etch. Penny George. 55\49,5cm

Fig 15 “Decay” etch. Penny George. 54,7\49,5cm

Fig 16 “Burial ground, Woman” etch. Penny George. 21,5\49,5cm

Fig 17 “Burial ground, Man” etch. Penny George. 21,5\49,5cm

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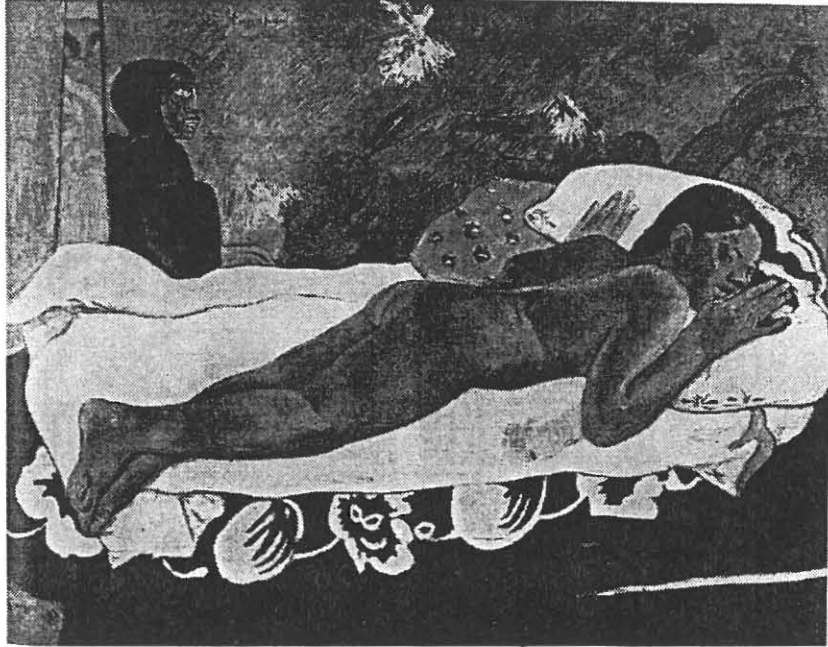


Fig 1 “The Spirit of the dead watching” 1892
Paul Gauguin
Oil on burlap mounted on canvas
28 1/2” x 36 3/8”



Fig 2 “The Last Judgement” 1534 - 1541
Michael Angelo
Fresco on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel
13.41 x 39.01 m

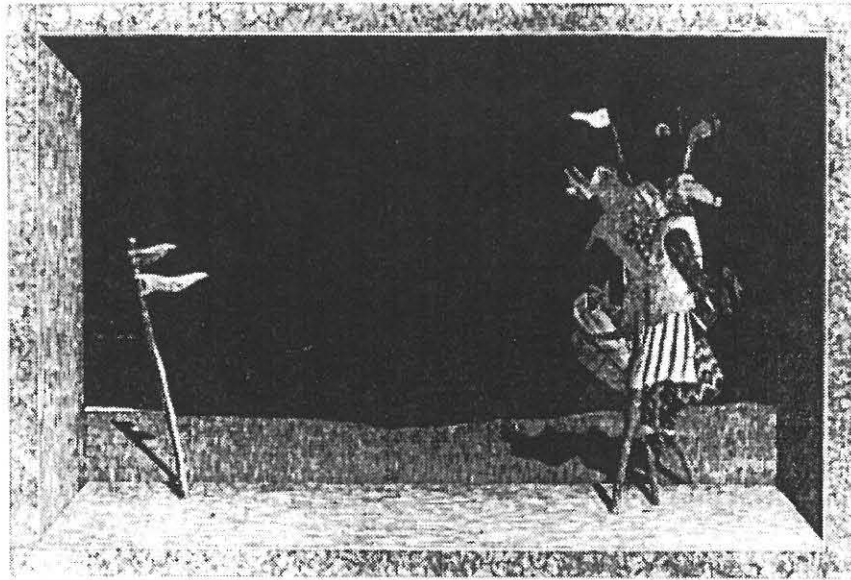


Fig 3 “Sound from the Thinking Strings III” 1989
Pippa Skotnes
Etch
33 x 23cm



Fig 4 “Sound from the Thinking Strings VI” 1989
Pippa Skotnes
Etch
21,5 x 25,5cm



Fig 5 “Sound from the Thinking Strings” 1989
Pippa Skotnes
Etch
Dimensions unknown

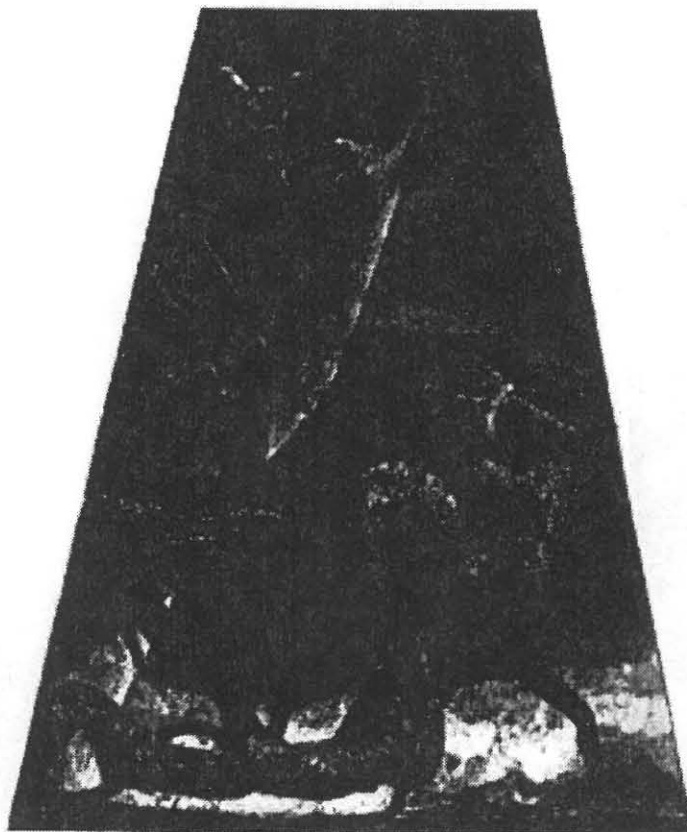


Fig 6 “The Dream” 1990/91
Pippa Skotnes
Etch
Dimensions unknown

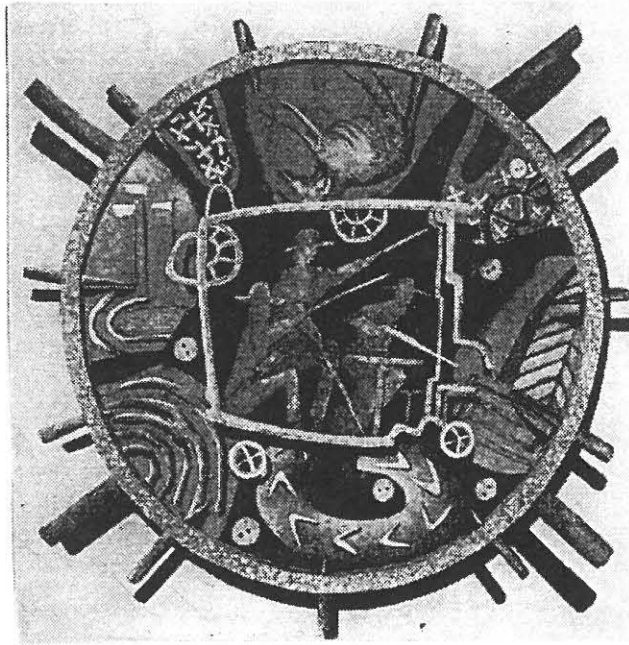


Fig 7 “White Wagons, Plate II” 1992/93
Pippa Skotnes
Monochrome etch
30 x 30cm

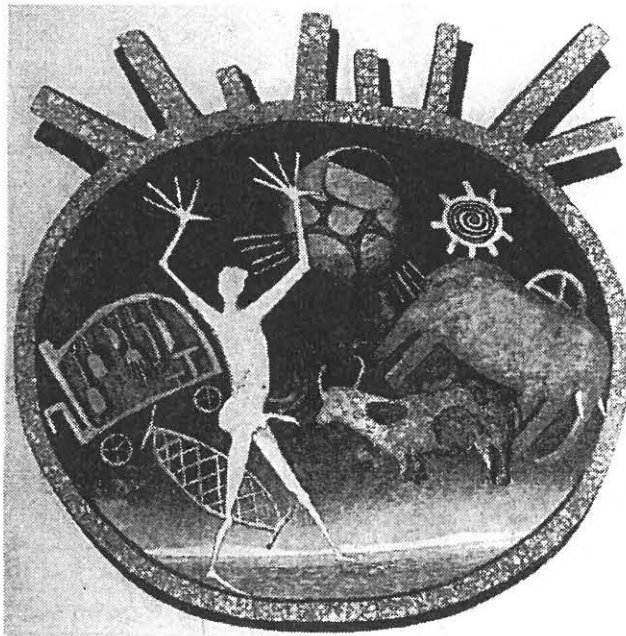


Fig 8 “White Wagons, Plate III” 1992/93
Pippa Skotnes
Monochrome etch
30 x 30cm



Fig 9 “White Wagons, Plate V” 1992’93
Pippa Skotnes
Monochrome etch
30 x 30cm



Fig 10 “White Wagons, Plate VI” 1992/93
Pippa Skotnes
Monochrome etch
30 x 30cm

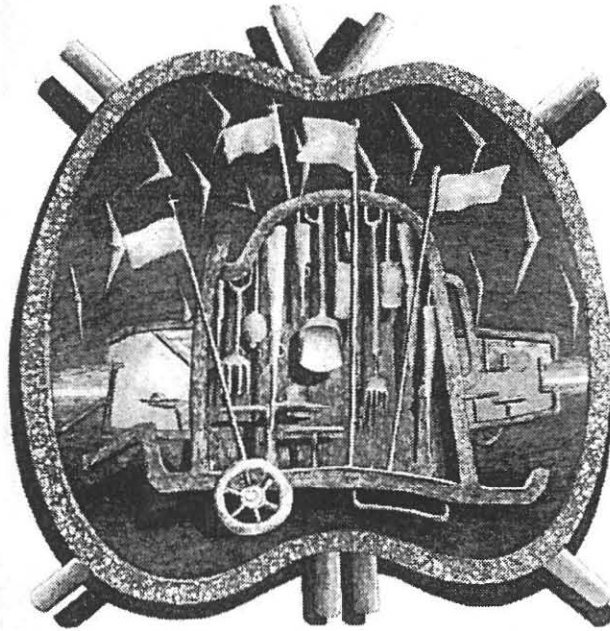


Fig 11 “White Wagons, Plate VII” 1992/93
Pippa Skotnes
Monochrome etch
30 x 30cm



Fig 12 "Shh! for they will hear" 1996
Penny George
Etch
23,5 x 27,5cm





Fig 13 "Sangoma" 1997
Penny George
Etch
15,5 x 18,7cm

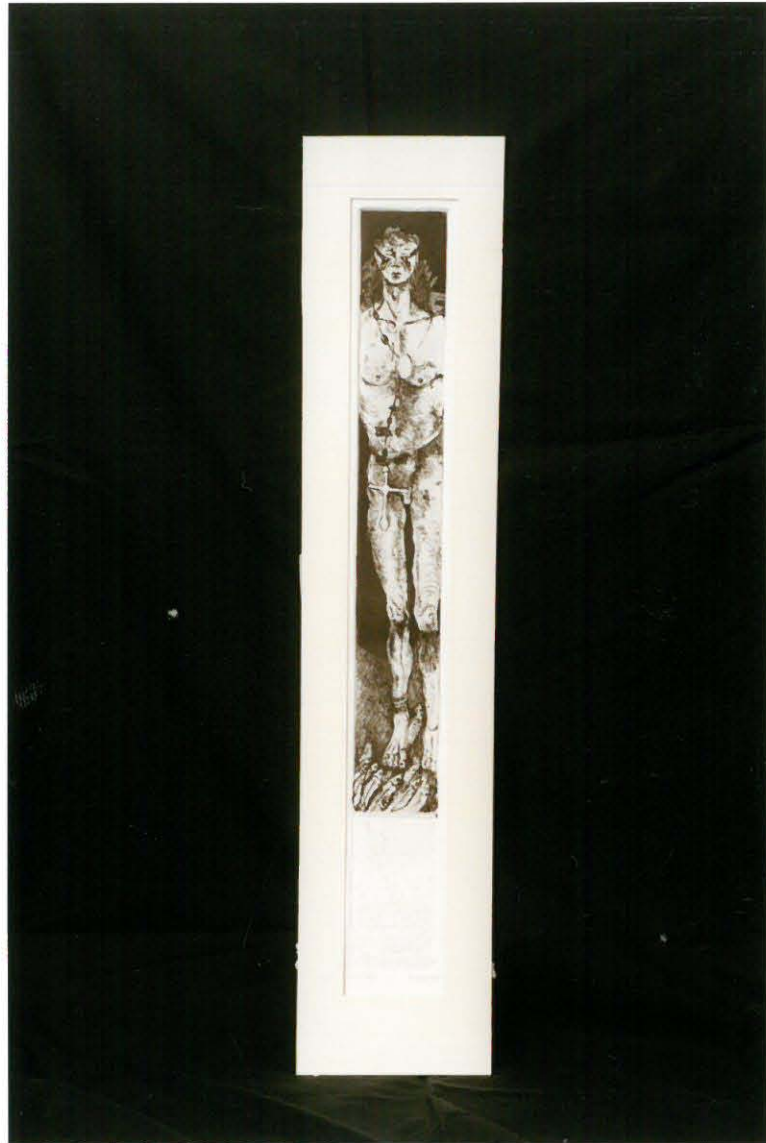


Fig 14 “Man” 1997
Penny George
Etch
55 x 49,5cm

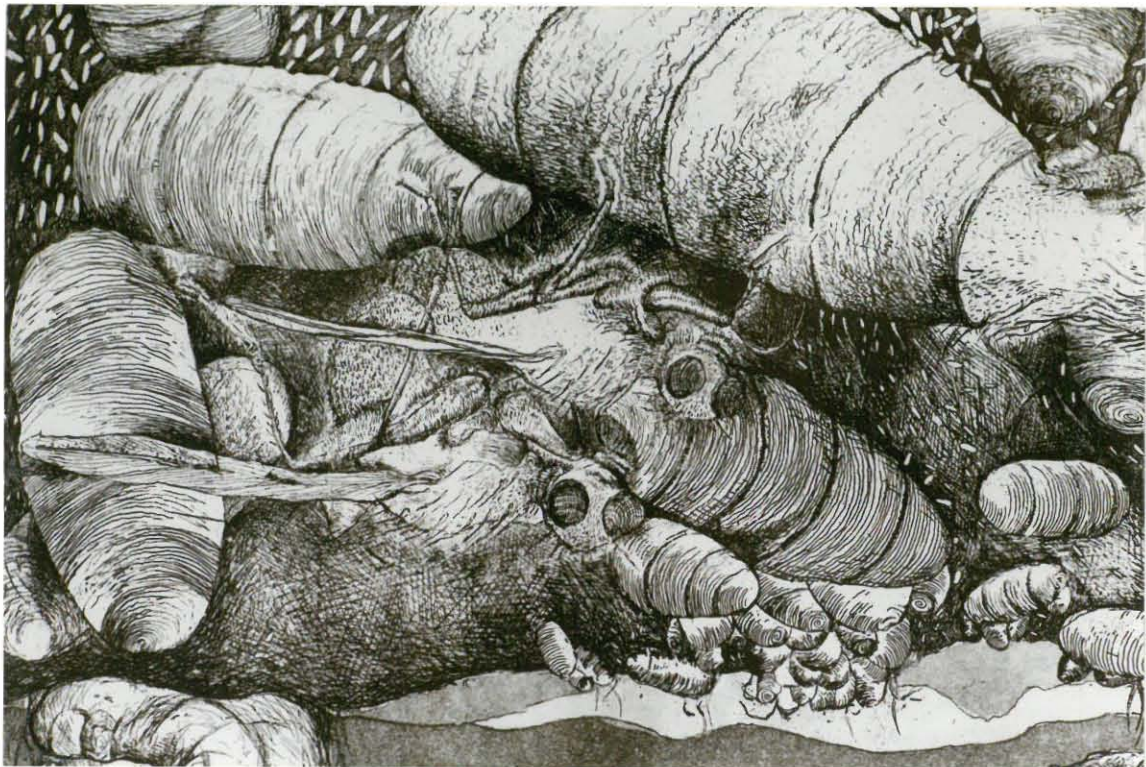
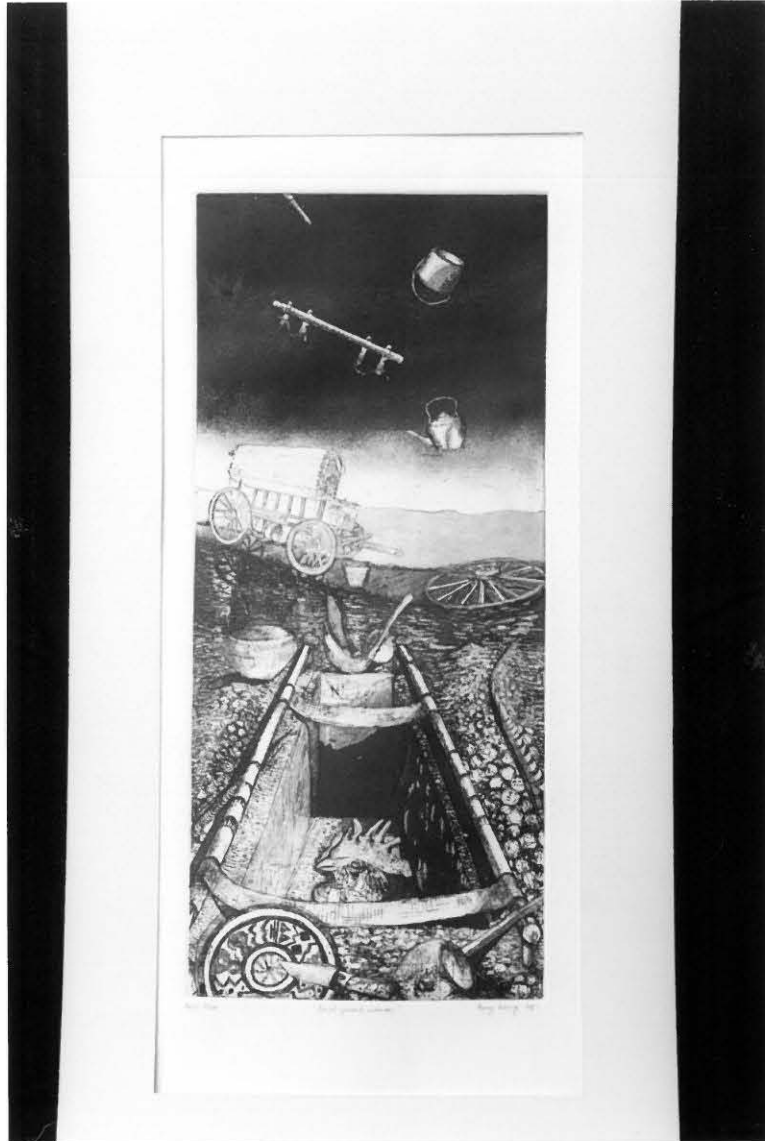


Fig 15 "Decay" 1997
Penny George
Etch
54,7 x 49,5cm



Fig 16 “Burial ground, Woman” 1998
Penny George
Etch
21,5 x 49,5cm



- **Fig 17 “Burial ground, Man” 1998**
Penny George
Etch
21,5 x 49,5cm