Human-Animal Relationships in San and Hunter-Gatherer Cosmology, Volume I

Therianthropes and Transformation

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For Daniel and Stephan

The original version of this book was revised. This book was inadvertently published with few errors which has been corrected now. An erratum to this book can be found at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21182-0_8.

Preface

This book is written to fill two gaps in anthropology, in two of the discipline's research fields, the one in hunter-gatherer studies, specifically its subfield of Bushman studies, the other in the more recent field of what some refer to as "The Anthropology of Ontology" (Scott 2013) and others have dubbed the "New Animism" (Harvey 2006: xi)—as opposed to its "Old", evolutionary rather than relational, predecessor, *pace* Tylor. These two fields at present exclude each other, in terms of ethnographic substance and theoretical discourse, to the detriment of both. This book sets out to bring the relational ontology paradigm to San studies, and *vice versa*, to the respective research fields' benefit.

This goal is all the more apposite in that hunter-gatherer studies and relational ontology have been linked from the start, back in the 1990s. This is when the "ontological turn", which has since then been taken in socio-cultural anthropology generally and is part of an even wider—posthumanist—turn across Western thinking generally, was first taken in Amazonian studies, among such hunting people as the Achuar, Araweté and Avila Runa, by Philippe Descola, Eduardo Vivieros de Castro and Eduardo Kohn, the three leading voices in Amazonian studies (Costa and Fausto 2010). Through the influence of another leading voice, Tim Ingold, studies of relational ontology were undertaken at around the same time in the Subarctic, from northern Scandinavia, through Siberia (Brightman et al. 2012; Halbmayer 2012) to North America, where ethnologists such as Adrian Tanner, Harvey Feit, Robin Ridington, Colin Scott and Robert Brightman had worked on relational and cosmological aspects of hunter-prey relations even

before the 1990s. The influence is evident in these ethnographies of another Subarctic researchers, Irven Hallowell, who a generation before, in an essay on Ojibwa ontology that has since become a foundational article in relational ontology, conceptualized the "non-human person" (or "other-than-human person"), thereby widening the field of social relations—and the concept of both society and of culture—beyond humankind (1960). A similar recasting of "animism as relational epistemology", that acknowledged Hallowell's influence, was the theme 20 years ago of a then seminal and now classic *Current Anthropology* article by Nurit Bird-David (1999: S71), which situated relational ontology among a number of hunter-gatherer-horticulturalists in southern Asia.

Yet, the ontological turn, for all of its paradigm-shifting effects on the study of hunter-gatherers during the last and first decades of the previous and present centuries, all but by-passed the Kalahari, amongst whose hunting-gathering people ethnographers were wont to examine the human-animal relationship not in social, cosmological, mystical fashion but instrumentally and strategically, as a meat-on-the-hoof resource, cherished—more so than plant—for its high caloric yield and thus a key concern of the "foraging mode of production" and its *modus operandi*, "optimal foraging strategy". This cultural-ecological, theoretical-materialist bent in San studies was especially marked and engrained in San studies, with the San, ever since the path-breaking "Man the Hunter" conference in 1966 (and conference volume with the same title edited by the two conference organizers published two years later), and as a result of a large number of high-quality ethnographic writings on the San. The effect of all of this was to render this foraging group one of the two (alongside the Aché) textbook case of the optimal forager, whose "immediate-return" subsistence economy was seen to afford people "affluent" lifeways. When Amazonian and Subarctic hunting became considered in social-relational and cosmological terms rather than instrumental-alimentary ones, in the 1990s, the materialist paradigm continued to inform research in San studies (albeit, not exclusively so, especially through the "Revisionism Debate" this field generated, in terms of political economy and World Systems theory, both paradigms the discursive links of which to relational ontology are no closer than they are to optimal foraging).[1]

I set out in this book to show that San worldview and lifeways are in fact also, at the ontological level, the way people conceive of, perceive and

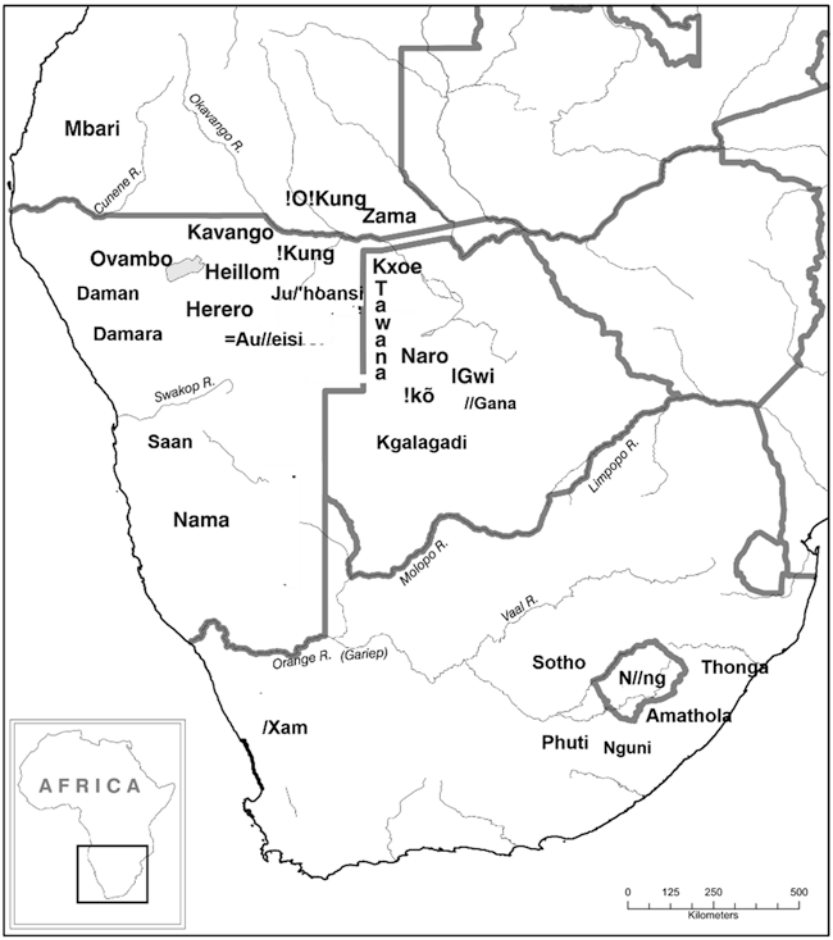
[1] For elaboration on these points see Guenther (2015: 281–82, 302–9; 2017: 3–4).

experience their interaction with animals, along with other beings of their (preter)natural world, pervaded with relationality and intersubjectivity (and have done so in the past, on the basis of ethnohistorical and archaeological evidence largely on southern San that will be marshalled). In filling this gap in our understanding of San ethnography and culture I will also fill the gap in ontological anthropology, which has excluded these southern hunting people from its neo-animistic purview. Apart from adding new insights to the relational ontology perspective in anthropology, this study, of "San-imism", also underscores the important insight that animism is not some monolithic schema or cosmologico-religious complex but something diverse and multiplex, structurally varied, ecologically and historically contingent. Indeed, as I will also argue, one such included in many and varied animisms of people and cultures of this world are Westerners.

I have recently dealt with these issues in two exploratory articles on relational ontology in the context of San cosmology and lifeways, namely "'Therefore Their Parts Resemble Humans, for They Feel That They Are People': Ontological Flux in San Myth, Cosmology and Belief" (in *Hunter-Gatherer Research* (2015) and "'The Eyes Are No Longer Wild: You Have Taken the Kudu into Your Mind': The Supererogatory Aspects of San Hunting" (in *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* (2017). These articles provided the impetus for this book, with some encouragement from colleagues and friends. It adds to, as well as expands and complements, what is presented, more or less provisionally, in these two articles.

The ethnographic base of this book consists of both my own field work and of ethnographies by other Kalahari anthropologists, as well as of ethnohistorical sources, both published and archival. Given the quantity and variety of all of this source material, most of the contemporary and historical San linguistic groupings of southern Africa are referenced in this book. (See Map 1 for their distribution over southern Africa, and some of their Khoe- and Bantu-speaking neighbours.)

Most of the archival sources consist of unpublished /Xam texts from the Bleek/Lloyd archive. They are referred to by the notational system used by Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd that differentiated between interlocutors, informants (by the first, Roman numeral), and by the notebook number and its page number(s); for example L VIII.—4, p. 6365 rev. (Lloyd, /Han‡kasso, notebook 4, page number 6365, back of page). These archival text references can be readily looked up in University of Cape Town's open-access digitalized Bleek/Lloyd archive ("Digital Bleek and Lloyd", lloydbleekcollection.cs.uct.za). The identifying Roman numerals for the other two key narrators are II for //Kabbo, V for Diä!kwain; for the two majn !Kung informants, !Nanni



Map 1 Distribution of Khoisan- and Bantu-speaking groupings of southern Africa

and Tamme the identifying numerals are XI and XII. For more information on the /Xam informants, see Bleek and Lloyd (1911: vi–xvii), Deacon and Dowson (1996: 11–43), Guenther (1989: 25–29), Lewis-Williams (2000: 32–33) and—for the most comprehensive account—Bank (2006a).

In addition to these mostly anthropological sources I draw on the writings, rich in quantity and quality, of scholars from a number of other disciplines who have worked in the field of Khoisan studies (many of them drawing on the Bleek/Lloyd archive). These are archaeology, rock art

studies and history, as well as folklore and cultural studies, art and literary criticism. The interdisciplinarity of source material has also left its imprint on the content and scope of this book, which, in Vol. II, moves from the San to their Khoe- and Bantu-speaking neighbours in southern Africa, to the Inuit of the eastern Arctic and to the Two Cultures of the West.

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In the process of this far-reaching project, I have engaged with the ideas of many scholars, both through their writings and in person. Many of these researchers are recognized in the introduction—the section on interdisciplinarity—and here I again acknowledge the quality of their scholarship and the intellectual stimulation I have derived thereof in my own work, over the years and decades.

I especially acknowledge the many colleagues and friends whose ideas and counsel I have been able to draw on with respect to this project in discussions, both at home in Canada, or at various conference or guest lecture venues in other countries, and in southern Africa. The former, in alphabetical order, are Leila Baracchini, Alan Barnard, Megan Biesele, Laird Christie, Ute Dieckmann, Thorsten Gieser, Jean-Guy Goulet, Erica Hill, Bob Hitchcock, Rockney Jacobsen, Dean Knight, Tihamer Kover, Frédéric Laugrand, Megan Laws, Jenny Lawy, Richard Lee, Chris Low, Andrew Lyons, Harriet Lyons, Junko Maruyama, Bob McKinley, Mark Münzel Elisabeth Marshall Thomas, Ingrid Thurner, Thomas Widlok, Rane Willerslev, Sandra Woolfrey.

Before turning to the long list of colleagues from Africa, I acknowledge three special debts of gratitude. They are to Pieter Jolly and Neil Rusch of the University of Cape Town, for inviting me (in October 2017) to accompany them on a field trip to the Northern Karoo, the home territory of // Kabbo, /Han‡kasso, Diä!kwain and the other /Xam story tellers from whom Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd obtained their—and the world's—treasure trove of /Xam myth and lore. Apart from viewing many rock art sites that derive from ancestral /Xam hands and specific features of the

landscape that are referred to by the story tellers in one or another tale, this visit afforded me a feel for the landscape—the /Xam *!kau:xu*, or "hunting ground". Another debt to my two hosts and travel companions is that they gave me permission to use some of their images (photographs and rock art tracings).

At the occasion of that trip to South Africa I also visited David Lewis-Williams, who had invited me to Witwatersrand University's Rock Art Research Institute (of which he is the founder), as well as showed me around its exhibition at the Institute's Origins Centre museum. I have admired David's work on San religion, mythology and art ever since I first became acquainted with it when reading and reviewing his path-breaking *Believing and Seeing* almost four decades ago. I was eager to discuss my current project with him at the occasion of my visit (which, as expected, was most fruitful).

The third debt of gratitude is to the late Irene Staehelin, founder and *spiritus rector*, as well as initial funder, through her Swiss-based UBUNTU Foundation, of !Khwa-ttu, a San culture and education centre which, quoting from its mission statement, "celebrates San culture, present and past, for a better future". This NGO has been able to do all that and more, in the 20 years of its operation. I have been fortunate to be associated with !Khwa-ttu on a couple of occasions. One was in 2011 when Irene invited me (along Megan Biesele) to assist in setting up a museum exhibition on /Xam cosmology, around the theme of "The Mantis and the Eland". It was the discussions, planning and research on this project, and head-long delving into the /Xam archive, that spawned this book project. Irene, who died early this year (2019), has drawn a number of other San researchers to !Khwa-ttu, to assist and consult, with the salutary effect of making and keeping them aware of problems and issues about the San people that are more real and urgent than so much that "academics" think and write about in academe's ivory tower.

Colleagues in southern Africa who provided valued input to my project over the past few years are Sam Challis, Josè Manuel de Prada-Samper, Janette Deacon, Janet Hermans, Jeremy Hollmann, Mary Lange, Willemien LeRoux, Al Morris, Alicia Mullen, Richard Northover, John Parkington, Riaan Rifkin, Pippa Skotnes, Andy Smith, Larissa Swan, Carolyn Thorpe, Helize van Vuuren and David Witleson.

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Contents

Note on Orthography

All San (and Khoe Khoe) languages include clicks within their inventory of consonants (Guenther 1999: 11). The four that are best defined, phonetically and phonemically, and that appear throughout this book whenever vernacular words, terms and expression are cited are:

1. The dental click (/), produced by placing the tip of the tongue against the back of the upper incisors, creating a sound similar to what we transcribe as "tsk, tsk" (the vocalization used when gently chiding a child).
2. The lateral click (//), produced by placing the sides of the tongue against the sides of the upper row of teeth, creating the sound a rider makes when urging his/her horse on to greater speed.
3. The alveolar click (ǂ), produced with the tongue pressed against the bony projection on the roof of the mouth (alveolus).
4. The cerebral (or alveopalatal) click (!), produced by placing the front of the tongue against the roof of the mouth, behind the alveolus, creating a "cork-popping" sound.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: "… some subjective identification … which I failed to understand more deeply"

Almost 50 years back, in an article on Namibian! Kung (Ju/'hoan) Giraffe Dance, Lorna Marshall cited an informant's remark about the dance which struck her as enigmatic and puzzling: "We sing it for the tail, it begins at the tail, the way it waves it" (Marshall 1969: 364). The reason she was perplexed was the discrepancy between what the trance dancer's remark suggested—that "the !Kung may think that the sounds or gestures are in some way imitative"—and what was, in her considered opinion based on her ethnographic understanding, actually transpired at the dance—that "the dance steps are definitely not pantomime." Marshall notes that the latter, mimicry of animals, was something the !Kung sometimes practised, with uncanny effect, in ludic dancing or when silently and stealthily approaching a hunted animal, but it was "definitely" not a component of the curing dance, notwithstanding her dancer-informant's comment. She adds the caveat that, "nevertheless, a dancer may occasionally move his head or shoulders almost imperceptibly, in such a way as to suggest the movement of an animal's head," suggesting thereby that there is in fact an element of mimicry, involuntary to the dancer, insinuating itself on her/his body as (s)he dances the Giraffe Dance, and almost imperceptible to the ethnographer.

Thirty years later, in the chapter on the trance dance in her *magnum opus* on Ju/'hoan religion (1999), Marshall cited the same informant's statement on the Giraffe Song, along with another dancer's statement that

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hints not only at mimicry but also, squarely, at metamorphosis: "When a man dances the Giraffe Dance he becomes a giraffe" (ibid.: 73). Marshall continues to be puzzled about such statements, as "the dance steps are definitely not intentional pantomime" and she rephrases her earlier caveat, more strongly than before: "this suggests some subjective identification on the part of the dancer." To this she adds that it was an aspect of the dance "which I failed to understand more deeply".

The aim of this book is to continue where Lorna Marshall left off: to "understand more deeply" what was intimated and tentatively suggested by the ethnographer—and explicitly stated by her San informants—about the elements of mimesis and metamorphosis in the San curing dance, by placing the same within the wider context of San cosmology in which, as I will demonstrate, these two processes of ontological transformation are prominent.

When Lorna Marshall dealt with these aspects in her two articles, in the 1960s and 1990s, the study of San religion did not readily provide an explanation for the dancer's—or shaman's[1]—ontological transformation. The first article was situated within the *zeitgeist* of anthropological theory of cultural ecology, a cultural-materialist paradigm (Guenther 2007: 371–74, 2017: 3–4) that paid little heed to the symbolic, ritual or mythological domains of San culture (let alone if approached with a phenomenological or ontological slant). As for the second of Marshall's articles, students did in the 1990s consider that domain; however, they did so in the grips very much of the influential "trance hypothesis" which held sway not only in San studies but in the study of shamanism generally, in contexts ethnographic, ethnohistorical and prehistoric (Clottes and Lewis-Williams 1998; Lewis-Williams 2002), not without criticism (Bahn 2003, 2010: 123–31; Dowson 2007). This paradigm led researchers of San religion to focus symbolically and phenomenologically on how the shaman-dancer intensifies and transcends his *human* self, through a psychological experience of an Altered State of Consciousness, rather than being transported out of this self into another, *non-human* being and subject, through a phenomenological experience of ontological transformation (or, as it were, of an Alternate State of Being). This is the focus of the present book—on the modes and limits not of a human being's human conscious-

[1] As before (Guenther 1999: 7), I refer to the San trance dancer by this forever arguably arguable term. See also Lewis-Williams, who concurs (2015b: 62).

ness, through trance, but on those of his or her humanness, through transformation, especially *vis-á-vis* animals.

The now classic study of the San—specifically Ju/'hoan—trance dance that focused on Altered States of Consciousness is Richard Katz's *Boiling Energy* (1982). The work was followed by a sequel of sorts a generation later (with Megan Biesele and Verna St. Denis in 1997), which considers the political implications of the dance and the ever more professionalized dancers. The element of the dancer's transformation, specifically into a lion, was dealt with as well in this study (as will be seen later in this book, which draws on Katz's ethnography); however, its core concern was trance and transcendence (see also Katz 1976) and their psychological and synergistic effects on the trancer-curer and the participants and attendants at the dance. The anthropologist-cum creative therapist and spiritual healer Bradford Keeney's studies on trance curing among the Ju/'hoansi of north-eastern Namibia two decades later are likewise squarely focused on trance and transcendence, in an analytical key that blends anthropological cybernetics with New Age spirituality, through which transcendence and transformation are transposed by the analyst into the loftily elusive domains of God and Creation (1999, 2015, with Hilary Keeney).

Around the same time, in 1999, I published a book—*Tricksters and Trancers Bushman Religion and Society*—in which I considered transformation of a person, a trance dancer, primarily in the psychological, Altered States sense, into a transcended self, and secondarily in the ontological, Alternate Species sense: his—the trance dancer's—or her—menarcheal girl's—transformation into an animal, either a lion or eland (1999: 173–78, 182–92). Having revisited and expanded on this matter in two recent articles (2015, 2017), it constitutes the subject matter of the present book, on San human-animal relations. A title I had considered for the book at one time—and soon rejected for its cumbersomeness—was *Therianthropes and Transformations* as its alliterative echo with the *Tricksters and Trancers* reflects a certain degree of continuity, as well as complementarity. Both books are treatments of the theme of ambiguity. The earlier book considered its pervasive hold on San social organization and values as well as on ritual and belief, with the spotlight on the former cultural domain, *via* the trance dancer/shaman and the initiand, and the latter *via* the trickster protagonist of myth. These social and cultural domains are seen to be linked through feedback loops that sustain the anti-structural makeup of each. In dealing with these linkages not so much conceptually as phenomenologically—that is, via experience and perception rather than cognition—the

present project goes deeper: it grounds social-structural and cosmological-mythical ambiguity ontologically rather than conceptually, in terms of the continuity, rather than discreteness, of human and non-human beings.

Connective Cosmology and Mutable Ontology

This continuity, and the state of ontological mutability that derives from it, is embedded within a cosmology of interconnectedness, of beings and states that in so many other cosmologies are discrete—more or less and never consistently, as we will see when looking at one of them (our own Western cosmology, often dubbed "Cartesian" because of its penchant for dichotomization). The South African archaeologist Sven Ouzman has characterized San cosmology with the apt term "connective cosmos" (2008: 219–22), a designation that resonates with South African poet Antje Krog's "interconnected world view" (2009: 184). Like Ouzman (and Low 2014: 351), Krog sees "this interconnectedness with 'the wholeness of life'" (Krog 2009: 184), as something distinctively Khoisan, which some of the other indigenous South African peoples, such as Nguni/Sotho-speakers, "inherited from the First People population … [of] southern Africa" (ibid., quoted in Wessels 2012: 187). In a connective cosmos—"a boundary-less universe whose entangled people and animals move across time and space" (Low ibid.)—ontological boundaries, between species and worlds, are fluid and porous and beings and states are not set each in their respective moulds and modes but interact with and flow into each other.

Ontological mutability is manifested by hybrid beings and by transformation that brings them into and out of being, to varying degrees of explicitness, from incipient stirrings of sympathy or attunedness to the animal, through different forms of mimesis, to complete metamorphosis. Like other researchers before me, I examined trance-induced transformation—"tranceformation"—into a lion, antelope or giraffe, in which transformation can be at its most real to the person undergoing it and most direct and discernible to those who watch it unfolding. In addition I consider transformation outside the trance experience, in such cultural domains and practices as mythology, art, initiation rites, ludic dancing and hunting. These all display transformation in various phases, from incipient to full-blown, fixed, in the form of a hybrid being, or in the process of becoming one, at various phases of perceptibility on the part of the principals or the participants. Such a proneness for transformation and onto-

logical inconstancy is given play in the context of a cosmology within which ontological boundaries between human and non-human are porous. The non-human that is central to this study is the animal (although, as seen in the next chapter, that may also be trees, as well as other plants and "things" of the hunting ground).

While some therianthropes—many of them inhabiting Myth Time—may be constitutionally hybrid, others—some of them featured on rock surfaces—gain their ontological hybridity through transformation, the process that brings such ontologically ambiguous beings into being. The process is elicited either through a being's own volition or through the agency and magical power of another being. This in San mythology is usually a trickster; in other mythologies the agent of transformation may be a sorcerer or witch, such as Ježibaba in the Slavic transformation-tale Rusalka, whose three therianthropic servants—a were-raven, a were-cat and a were-rat[2]—are failed transformation attempts. Or he may be a mad scientist—Dr Frankenstein comes to mind, or Dr Moreau, who, assisted by his chimerical multi-species servant M'ling, populates his dreary island with a dozen-odd like ontological oddities.

Transformation is therianthropic *sui generis*: in its transitional phase between being A and being B, and, as we will see, even as transformed, the latter being, in San mythology, will always contain in its beings the elements of the former, in varying measures. Transforming and transformed beings, as well as the therianthropes of San myth and art, each retain elements of their original being, and through it, autonomy and identity, notwithstanding the inroads of ontological alterity on the integrity of its being. As will be seen, the same can be said of lion- or eland-transformed humans in trance and initiation rituals; indeed, it applies even to hunters. They are all therianthropes of a sort, with the anthro-morphic dose of their being, somatically and mentally, proportionately higher than in their theri-morphic kin-beings of myth, all the while retaining each element of its species autonomy and integrity.

Therianthropes and transformation, the two fundamental manifestations of ambiguity in San cosmology, are thus conceptually and phenom-

[2] They were featured as such in the Met's 2017 production of Dvořák's fairy tale opera "Rusalka", staged by Mary Zimmermann. As playwright and producer a few years earlier of an adaptation of Ovid's "Metamorphoses" (2002), Zimmermann has a professional interest in the mytho-magical and mytho-poeic phenomenon of transformation which is beguilingly evident in her work on Rusalka.

enologically linked: the one, therianthropes, the product of ontological mutability; the other, transformation, its process. These two manifestations of ontological mutability lie at the basis of another conceptual and terminological distinction, the one static, the other dynamic: that between therianthropes—human-animal hybrid beings—and zoomorphs—beings transforming into such (Skotnes 1996: 243), from either a human or an animal form. We encounter both in San myth and art, as the embodiments *par excellence* of ontological mutability. The latter is given the widest scope phenomenologically for humans engaging with their expressive culture, ritual and hunting, as animal-beings and as being-animal.

These two ontological concepts and experiences—and the process that links them, transformation—highlight the non-human beings that hold centre-stage in this study: animals. They are central also to this book's theoretical framework, animism (the "new" version), the core concept of which, "anima" ("soul"), is semantically linked to "animal". Animals are front and centre also in San myth and cosmology. Animal stories are generated through the hunt, which provides an inexhaustible supply of narrative to San story tellers, who, in retelling the hunt and the animals encountered, through exciting or dangerous hunting endeavours or because of uncanny, "counter-intuitive" behaviour on the animal's part rendering it beguiling and "attention-demanding"[3] and transporting it into the realm of legend and myth. The latter domain, the First Order of Myth Time, was inhabited by the First Race, human or humanoid, alongside and interacting with animal-beings, all with a penchant for transformation into one another's kind. Other members of the First Race are animals or hybrid beings that blend human aspects within their animalian ontological makeup, creating multi-species chimeras or, more commonly, human-animal hybrid beings. Such were-beings also appear on rock surfaces, most commonly as antelope-headed men or antelope-legged women, transposing the theme of ontological hybridity from myth and oft-told stories to art and onto frequently encountered, widely seen paintings or engravings (Lewis-Williams 2002, 2015a: 149–72).

Therianthropes from Myth Time may be present also in the Second Order, set in historic or present time, joining their hybrid counterparts from that world, trance-transformed lion-shamans of the Ju/'hoansi and ≠Au//eisi of Namibia and Botswana or greed- and malice-transformed

[3] The terms are Pascal Boyer's (2001) and refer to what according to him constitutes the evolutionary and cognitive basis for religious thought.

Hyena People of the Omaheke Nharo (Naro) of Namibia. Animal identities are mimed and may be partially and fleetingly assumed in ritual or recreational dances, by shamans, young and old women and men at initiation rites and old and young at recreational dances. All of these animal experiences, coupled with sightings and hunts of real animals, and killing and butchering their carcasses, dividing and sharing, cooking and eating their flesh, while, in the process "telling the hunt", give prominence to animal-others in San cosmology and experience.

All of this instantiates and endorses a cosmology of ontological mutability of human and animal, relayed through widely told myths and widely viewed images and embodied, either through mimesis or metamorphosis, by the transforming and transformed shaman and somatically sensed by the girl in her seclusion hut and the hunter when he stalks his poison-wounded prey and closes in on it for the kill. They did so back in the nineteenth century, among the now vanished and vanquished /Xam of the Cape and, it appears, notwithstanding processes of disenchantment in the intervening generations, still in truncated fashion do, among contemporary Kalahari San.

Mimesis and Metamorphosis

These two terms crop up throughout this book, as they are the two modalities through which San experiences ontological transformation. How connected, phenomenologically, are these two processes? The experience of being-changing among the San suggests to me that they are in fact connected, on an experiential continuum, with mimesis, as experienced by San dancers and hunters (as well as some of the were-beings featured in myth and art), a precursor to metamorphosis. While some of the human-animal transformations of people from the real world are less explicit and extravagant than those from Myth Time, they all, to varying degrees, bring about an experience, more or less fleeting, of cross-species blurring of identity and alterity. San cosmology recognizes, in myth, ritual and hunting, this spectrum of ontological transformation, from "playing at" transformation through pantomime to playing it out, experiencing it through the morphing of identities. This process, as seen in most of the following chapters, ranges from incipient to full-blown, partial to complete, ephemeral to lasting, temporary to permanent.

Because transformation lies on so wide a spectrum and assumes so many forms, ontological mutability becomes enrooted and implanted within San cosmology, so much so that, using David Lewis-Williams and

David Pearce's words, "for the San transformations like these are part of everyone's thinking, if not their experience; they are part of life" (2004: 159). Indeed, in his study of the connection between hunting and rock art that included a stint of field work with Namibian Ju/'hoan hunters in 2014, the Finnish artist and art historian Mikko Ijäs found animal transformation, as connected to hunting and trance curing, "were all everyday knowledge to them", so much so that this researcher "found it striking that these connections had not been made previously"[4] (2017: 12).

A "connective cosmos" so premised on ontological mutability as to make "transformations a part of life" raises phenomenological issues and questions for an anthropologist or archaeologist, a folklorist or literary or art scholar, trying to understand the world view, the values and beliefs, the life- and being-in-the-world-ways of the people who subscribe to such a cosmology. Much of the theoretical component of this book (in Vol. II) is concerned with them.

Anthropocentrism and Anthropomorphism

Another conceptual pair that needs to be recognized in the context of this study of human-animal relations, and to be distinguished, is that of "anthropomorphism" and "anthropocentrism". It brings into focus one of the "us"-"them" distinctions that will be dealt with later in the book: the Western and the San (and hunter-gatherer) perspectives on this matter.

The first, anthropocentrism, is deeply engrained in the Western mind the intellectual and religious gatekeepers of which, Cartesian philosophy and science and Christianity, assign a unique status to humans. This leads to two seemingly paradoxical perspectives on animals—the one anthropocentric, the other anthropomorphic, expressed by the English zoologist-philosopher Charles Foster as "humans striding colonially around, describing what they see from six feet above the ground, or about humans pretending that animals wear clothing" (2016: 1). Anthropocentrists either exclude animals altogether from any human sphere or they may assign them to a lower ontological, moral and social stratum on the Great

[4] I suggest some reasons for this elsewhere, prime of them theoretical and analytical blind-sightedness of many San researchers by a perspective deriving from a cultural-materialist paradigm (2017: 1–2). The Danish anthropologist Thea Skaanes, on the basis of recent field work among the Hadza of Tanzania, found a similar bias among researchers of this iconic African hunter-gatherer people, and, resulting from it, a lack of recognition of, and research on, their "religious, ritual and cosmological complexity" (2017: 12).

Chain of Being. We see the latter tendency lexically exemplified in German world view by the use of two sets of words for vital functions, human ones—such as *essen* (eat), *trinken* (drink), *gebären* (give birth), *sterben* (die)—and animal ones (*fressen, saufen*, *werfen, verrecken*, respectively). Not only are these terms mutually exclusive but the latter are also employed as insult terms by humans for members of their own kind they dislike or look down upon. As for anthropomorphism, in its Western guise, in—if—paying attention to animals and their behaviour, for instance "companion animals" (i.e. pets), the Western tendency is to give these a human cast, morphologically, mentally and behaviourally, thereby obscuring or denying animal's autonomy, identity and integrity.

San world view, and other hunter-gatherers, does not hold so human-exceptionalist a view of animals. Its anthropocentrism is balanced by "theriocentrism", through myth and lore that feature animal protagonists and perspectives, and through a "becoming-animal" ability by humans in certain situations and to varying degrees of awareness. Such "zoomorphing" also tempers San—and hunter-gatherer—anthropomorphism, as such occasional ontological identity and species boundary dissolutions, such experiential "becoming-animal" moments, put a check on humanizing animals through species-solipsistic projection.

Interdisciplinarity in Khoisan Studies

As so many other works in the field of Khoisan studies (Solomon 2009, 2014), this book, too, draws on a number of disciplines other than anthropology. The one most indispensable to this project is archaeology, especially the work of the many, mostly South African, archaeologists[5] who have dealt with aspects of San symbolic and expressive culture, especially rock art. I draw, almost as much, also on the humanities, the prolific writings of folklorists, literary critics, historians, rock art specialists, art historians and art critics, as well as artists, poets and novelists, whose work is defined and inspired by San oral literature, mythology and imagery and

[5] Such as David Lewis-Williams, Janette Deacon, John Parkington, Pieter Jolly, Andy Smith, Sam Challis, Mark McGranaghan, Sven Ouzman, Anne Solomon, Jeremy Hollmann, Aaron Mazel, Francis Thackeray, John Kinahan, Thomas Dowson, Siyaka Mguni, Edward and Cathelijne Eastwood, Geoff Blundell, Frans Prins, Andrew Skinner, David Witleson, Larissa Swan, Alicia Mullen.