Introduction

Why focus on anthropological scribbles about a piece of marginal land like Namibia? Precisely because peripheral vision can allow one to see critical issues more clearly. Recent histories of the rise and demise of apartheid have either ignored or dismissed the significance of South Africa's colony, the mandated territory of South-West Africa.[1] *South Africa's Dreams* redresses this fault by pointing to the significance of South-West Africa (SWA) for understanding the development of apartheid and the role of experts in its elaboration.[2] John Ellis, in his classic *The Social History of the Machine Gun* (1975), showed how military technology was first tried out in frontier or colonial areas before being brought back to the metropole, with deadly results. I suggest that a similar pattern can be detected with regard to the technology of internal pacification. The social technology for internal pacification was field-tested in Namibia and then transferred back to South Africa as part of its strategy for suppressing internal dissent.

How anthropology is imbricated in the practice of apartheid, and more broadly colonialism, is a vexing and contentious issue. It has been discussed in numerous articles, reviews, and essays but generally in a rather piecemeal fashion. *South Africa's Dreams* proposes a different tack. It focuses on a single space on the globe and examines how, in the course of time, the space became a colonial place, eventually named Namibia, and how people commonly known as "native experts" helped imagine, shape, and consolidate this colonial enterprise. I place this historical inquiry into the development of vernacular anthropological knowledge within a larger project of understanding the ways knowledge practices shape and, in turn, are conditioned by interaction between heterogeneous worlds in a colonial setting. I am interested in how geopolitical formations shaped the work of these experts and led to occlusion: how their work led to concealing, blocking, and closing off understandings of SWA society through the deployment of conceptual grammars that rendered certain situations visible while making others invisible. What were the political logics and epistemic assumptions that rendered some events or actions visible? Occluded histories can take varied forms, as Ann Stoler (2016) points out,

but especially in Namibia through benign mislabeling. Occluded knowledge, she suggests, leads to aphasia, a political condition that simultaneously allows one to know and not to know, a space between ignoring and ignorance. It is something more than self-delusion. Such a perspective ties in with an emergent discipline called agnotology, the study of the social production of ignorance (Proctor and Schiebinger 2008). These questions then shape the second focus of this book: Why and how did these experts, often highly intelligent, good Christian men, not see, or at least articulate, that their work and recommendations flew in the face of reality, even with the wisdom of hindsight?

An Afrikaner variant of anthropology called *volkekunde*, an effort at a decolonized and indigenized anthropology, came to dominate this exercise. My concern is not with volkekunde per se, or with ethnology, as *volkekundiges*, its practitioners, glossed it in English, but rather with the relationship between self-proclaimed "native experts" and their (potential) patrons and how this relationship shaped their creation of knowledge. Except for a smattering of articles and a rather dated book (Schmidt 1996), volkekundiges have largely been ignored or dismissed by English-speaking anthropologists and historians as pursuing a fringe activity, especially with regard to how they went about the business of creating material. One can go further and argue, like Peacock (2002), that one can see the center more sharply by engaging in peripheral vision, so this is also a critical appreciation of volkekunde. After tracing the historical roots emphasizing the contested role of "native experts," especially in the international sphere as constituted by the League of Nations' Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC), this volume examines how the only large-scale effort at grand apartheid—the large-scale consolidation of native reserves to create homelands—was attempted in SWA. The intellectual midwife and initial administrative wet nurse in this exercise was the volkekundige Johannes P. van S. "Hannes" Bruwer, who also doubled as the main expert witness called by South Africa to justify apartheid at the 1962–66 International Court of Justice (ICJ), or World Court, case concerning South Africa's jurisdiction over the territory.[3] When this homeland policy failed, the ensuing long-drawn-out low-intensity guerrilla war resulted in the South African Defence Force (SADF) becoming one of the largest employers globally of ethnologists, who were engaged in assorted civic action programs and covert operations. The lessons learned and experiences gained here were then taken back to South Africa and applied to countering anti-apartheid protest in the seventies and eighties. A number of the rising stars in the South African security/internal pacification establishment also cut their teeth on Namibia before being promoted to key positions in South Africa. This book serves as a corrective to previous analyses of apartheid (itself a cottage industry) that have ignored the co-

lonial connection. I examine how, through time, native experts, especially volkekundiges, imagined, described, advised, and helped create the edifice now known as Namibia. I scrutinize how they created information that was used, often uncritically, by others, ranging from colonial speculators, to government policy advisers, to expert witnesses at the World Court, to writers of tourist guides. Such a discussion forces one to consider ethics and the role of anthropological knowledge in the contemporary world.

I show how attempts to use ethnology and cognate disciplines in social engineering took place, not always or everywhere, but in specific places and times where they can be investigated in detail. *South Africa's Dreams* examines activities not only on the public front but also backstage. Looking at how these experts operated allows one to infer how policy makers thought, how the state assessed the threats to its monopoly of power, and how it tried to cope with these threats.

History is a narrative construction that calls for a reflection on the convolutions of the sources used. What was the context in which the source was created, by whom, and for what purpose are some of the many questions that need consideration. Despite the scarcity of documentation, not only were many of the official police files, reports, and photographs concerning the "bush war" destroyed in 1993, but the archives of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) were also infamously purged of much material considered sensitive, and even the material still on file had to be cleared, mostly by Warrant Officer Blaauw, to whom I owe my thanks. However, to paraphrase the historian Robert Darnton (2014, 13–19), given the rich run of evidence, one can tease out the underlying assumptions and undercover activities of those charged with undertaking these activities. I seek to show the unspoken attitudes and implicit values as they were inflected in their actions. This is done by interrogating certain experts by recovering their voices from the archives and questioning them while reading documents, asking how they worked, how they understood their work, and what effect their words had. Apart from interviews and on-site visits, I was privileged to work in other archives and collections, especially those in Windhoek, Swakopmund, Pretoria, and Cape Town over the last fifteen years.

Personal experiences were critical in shaping this book. I have long been intrigued by how "difference" and "identity" were culturally constructed and reinforced, since my earliest days growing up in southern Namibia where, especially on the school playground, we, the English and Jewish kids, got beaten up by bullies from among the Afrikaner majority. Only later did I realize this was a matter of exclusion, the flip side, if you will, of their self-identification. Eventually I was packed off to boarding school in Cape Town. It was there, in grade nine, that I decided that anthropology might be a good career choice. It suited my emerging political and

anarchist sensitivities, as it emphasized the opposite to what apartheid stood for: here was a career that required one to meet and talk across the racial and cultural boundaries. Needless to say, my father was none too excited by my wish to become an anthropologist and dispatched me to Stellenbosch to read law and become "bilingual," although his fear that I might become a "Communist" if I went to an English-language university factored into the equation. Stellenbosch, which styled itself as the Harvard of Afrikanerdom, was where I developed an appreciation—more, a love—for the Afrikaans language. It provided an unexpected education, not so much from the professoriate, who, except for one or two, were a rather dull and pretentious bunch, but on how politics worked. In my third year my father relented and I was allowed to major in anthropology along with Bantu law and administration. Eventually I was allowed into that sacred sanctum of the Department of Bantoekunde (Bantu studies), the tearoom, as junior lecturer (temporary), and thus exposed to the oral history of the rather contentious and contested role of this particular department in the elaboration and activation of the ideology of apartheid. It was here that I first heard of P. J. "Piet" Schoeman and Bruwer, two anthropologists whose careers were closely intertwined with developments in Namibia. My junior lectureship did not last long, and I was downgraded to a technical assistant (half-time), ostensibly because someone better qualified had been found, but no doubt the fact that one of my colleagues referred to me as "that Semite" probably also played into the equation, abetted possibly by, shall we say, some political (mis)adventures. However, by this stage I had already decided to leave the country, with the notion of studying the Afrikaners in Patagonia, a group of people who after the Anglo-Boer war decided that they could not live under the yoke of British imperialism and sought their Calvinist utopia in Patagonia, only to find that they had landed in a Catholic hell. Regrettably, funding and opportunity did not align, and I wound up doing my dissertation on a Namibian copper mine (Gordon 1977).

   A second formative episode was when, after being awarded my doctorate, I wound up in Papua New Guinea, where, as stated in my application, I intended to do an anthropological comparison of Australian and South African colonial policies, since both New Guinea and South-West Africa, as former German colonies, had been administered as Class C mandates under the League of Nations. Apart from the fact that both mandatories had to answer to and provide annual reports to the PMC and thus provided similar comparable data, both South Africa and Australia had themselves recently been colonies, and I wondered how this experience had factored into their administrative techniques and strategies. In proposing this research, I was undoubtedly influenced by the radical anthropology of the seventies, in particular Laura Nader's (1969) seminal essay

on the importance of "studying up" and Asad's (1973) classic edited volume *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*. Over time my position has matured: rather than study down or up, one should study around. While I never managed to do this project, it did lead to my examination of the PMC activities and was to lead to chapter 1 of this book.

A third event occurred in early 1981 when Cultural Survival, an anthropologically based human rights organization, asked me to write a short essay concerning a *Science* article reporting on the controversy that had erupted at the first International Conference on Hunters and Gatherers when Richard Lee presented a petition protesting the militarization of the Bushmen. Not knowing much about the situation, I wrote to the heads of all the anthropology departments in South Africa, enclosing the *Science* article and asking for their comments. The response was an eye-opener. While the English-language anthropologists pleaded lack of knowledge, the Afrikaner anthropologists were effusive in their criticism of Lee, one going so far as to write a ten-page critique, which even referred to statements made by Lee in the Canadian press (in a pre-Internet age, suggesting possible connections to the South African intelligence services?). Another sent South African newspaper clippings about how the SADF was protecting the Bushmen and improving their living standards. Most significantly, my query was forwarded to the chief ethnologist of the SADF, who responded with a five-page letter about how the SADF was "uplifting" the Bushmen. Needless to say, I opened a file on this matter and in 2015–18 was able to visit the SANDF archives to collect further information to complement the recent flurry of books on Bushman soldiery.

The fourth experience that molded this book was an invitation to spend two years at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein in 2012. Many colleagues dismiss Bloemfontein as a scholarly desert, but it does have its pleasures, including the National Literature Museum, which houses the P. J. Schoeman papers and, more importantly, the holdings of the Institute for Contemporary History (now known as the Archive for Contemporary Affairs), which contain the personal papers of many prominent Afrikaner leaders, including those of Bruwer and Hendrik Verwoerd, the assassinated hard-line apartheid prime minister. Consequently, I spent many engrossing hours going through these reams of files. Bruwer turned out to be critically important for understanding events that shaped modern-day Namibia. In 1961, as a rising star in the Broederbond, a secret society promoting Afrikaner nationalism, he wrote a study piece for the organization arguing that SWA was a good testing ground for grand apartheid, as the different ethnic groups had not yet undergone "large-scale mixing." He anticipated that a public referendum would eventually resolve the territory's legal status, and thus it was crucial to convince Indigenes of South Africa's good intentions through a massive propaganda

and development effort in order to persuade them to reject the United Nations (UN). Sued by Ethiopia and Liberia in the ICJ for failing to implement the League of Nations mandate to administer the territory in the best interest of the Indigenes, South Africa decided to use this as a forum to convince an increasingly skeptical global audience that apartheid was indeed the only viable solution. In this selling of apartheid, Bruwer was the star witness. Bruwer was also instrumental in developing the only serious, coordinated large-scale effort to impose grand apartheid, with the purchase of some five hundred white-owned farms.

When this strategy failed in the face of mounting resistance to South African overrule, the situation became militarized, and the SADF developed the Civic Action Program (CAP) as part of its Winning Hearts and Minds (WHAM) counterinsurgency campaign, drawing on the advice of many ethnologists and other social scientists. While these ethnologists failed to gain much credibility, they served an important supporting role in special operations, which were largely devised by an educational psychologist, one Dr. Louis Pasques. After successfully field-testing this counter-mobilization campaign in Namibia, according to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, it was later implemented in South Africa to counter anti-apartheid resistance. But Namibia was a testing ground in another way as well. Many of the irritations and obscenities entailed in what was known as petty apartheid were first abolished in Namibia and then, having been judged successful, ended in South Africa. Thus, in 1967 the ban on the sale of alcohol to non-Europeans was lifted, but the big social innovations came ten years later, when one of the first acts of the newly appointed administrator-general nullified the notorious Masters and Servants Proclamation and repealed the immorality and mixed marriages laws, as well as the pass laws and influx control. In addition, the Bantu Education Act and urban segregation were scrapped, while equal wages for equal work was introduced. When these changes did not signal the collapse of heaven for whites, they set the precedent for similar actions in South Africa.

I mention these details, biographical and chronological, to show how they have molded my interests and approaches in shaping *South Africa's Dreams.* This work can best be characterized not as ethnography or historiography, but as pornography. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, that great arbiter of matters of this nature, defines "pornography" as the "description of the life, manners etc. of prostitutes and their patrons," while "prostitute" is defined as "one who debases her/himself for the sake of gain" and, more intriguingly, as "a base hireling, a corrupt and venal politician." At the same time, the case could be argued that these "native expert" prostitutes in turn (re)present their subjects as prostitutes, since in their

accounts they present Indigenes as "debased by being made common or cheap," despite their professed intentions to do the opposite.

If there is one common denominator running through this account, it is that I see the role of the anthropologist to be that of challenging the comfortable assumptions of those in power about difference. I make no great claims for social scientific knowledge, and less for anthropology as an interpretive science. On the contrary! In this era of late capitalism, the best the anthropologist can hope for is to be a trickster: not only speaking truth or alternatives to those in power, but challenging the certainties that everything is a question of black and white, literally and figuratively.

Framing Notions

Three notions frame this project. First is an insight by an obscure political economist, Moritz Bonn. Largely forgotten nowadays, in the interwar years Bonn was considered to be one of the foremost experts on colonialism.[4] Unlike most armchair theorists of colonialism, Bonn had done extended research in the colonies. In 1907, while clicking his heels in the dusty streets of Windhuk, capital of German Südwest-Afrika, and frustrated by an obdurate bureaucracy, Bonn had an epiphany: colonialism was not only racist and exploitative but also ridiculous. It was uneconomical on both the macro- and the interpersonal level. Indeed, he found the colonial situation so ludicrous that he became the first scholar to seriously discuss the necessity of decolonization (Gordon 2018a). It was the ridiculous rules governing etiquette between colonizer and colonized that inspired many of the pioneers in the anti-colonial movement (Shutt 2015). There is also a growing body of literature showing how important joking and satire were for survival in the colonial situation. I take this perspective as a starting point to read against the grain the major forms of knowledge settlers had of "the native."[5] Foolishness is far more common than we realize. In 1984 the historian Barbara Tuchman published her classic *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam*. Misgovernment, she claimed, came in the form of tyranny, excessive ambition, incompetence and folly, or perversity, which was the pursuit of a policy contrary to the self-interest of the group or constituency. In the Namibian case, all four characteristics were present, guided as they were by folly, which is distinguished by "wooden-headedness, the source of self-deception, . . . a factor that plays a remarkably large role in government. It consists in assessing a situation in terms of preconceived fixed notions while ignoring or rejecting any contrary signs" (Tuchman 1984, 7). I confess sly pleasure in this concept of "wood head" because its Afrikaans version *houtkop* was an offensive mode

of address or reference to black Africans. One measure developed as a pro-phylactic to folly was the professionalization of the civil service, but this can easily boomerang, as bureaucracies can also become a field enclosed by protective stupidity, repeating simply what it did yesterday, so that, like a vast computer, it rolls on ineluctably, having once been penetrated by an error, duplicates it forever. She concludes, "The problem may not be so much a matter of educating officials for government as educating the electorate to recognize and reward integrity of character and to reject the ersatz" (Tuchman 1984, 386–87). The point about treating colonialism as ridiculous or foolish is not to belittle the suffering, indignities, or exploita-tion of the colonized but rather to accentuate the trauma in the tragedy. The challenge is to understand why colonials did not see their actions as ridiculous. This calls for a careful analysis of the social situation in which they found themselves.

Second, as a number of scholars, most notably Steinmetz (2007, 2008) and Mamdani (2012), have argued, the defining feature of mod-ern colonialism was not economic exploitation but native policy that was based on two fundamental conditions, namely that sovereignty was an alien imposition and that the Indigenes are treated as different and in-ferior. Viewing these actions and utterances as ridiculous or, to be more euphemistic, as examples of temporal dissonance provides a fresh per-spective on important issues. It provides a scalpel with which to dissect the colonial fantasy world that was so crucial for colonialism to work (Naranch and Eley 2014). The anthropologists and native experts dis-cussed in *South Africa's Dreams* were obsessed with cultural difference and, at the same time, tried to make a difference in consolidating settler rule; they saw themselves as scholar-activists. Colonialism thrives, and indeed is only possible, by dividing people into different categories, and anthropologists of the "translation of culture" mode have indeed made a profession out of being experts on the boundaries of these culturally constructed categories.

Bonn's frustration with the colonial bureaucracy was prescient. One of Bismarck's greatest legacies was the creation of a new form of bureaucratic organization. Taking his cue from the Prussian military, he militarized the civil service, insulating it from the swing of politics and giving its officials a clear incremental career path in which one was not rewarded for do-ing more than expected but punished for stepping out of line. Bureau-crats lived in a Weberian iron cage (Sennett 2006). A related Bismarckian legacy that had important consequences, not only in colonial affairs but also in bureaucracies globally, was the invention of the professional native affairs expert. In 1908 the first professional school for training colonial officials was opened in Germany. Inspired by the new scientific manageri-alism, the Colonial Institute created the new discipline of *Kolonialkunde*

(colonial studies), which merged theory with practice (Pugach 2012). A variant clone was established in South Africa with the establishment of schools of African life and languages, or *Bantoekunde*, at English and Afrikaans universities in the twenties, which had as one of their principal aims the professionalization of "native administration," signaled by the appointment of a government ethnologist in 1925.

Modern colonialism was legitimized both locally and internationally by invoking expertise in "knowing the native." Colonial policy was premised on what Mamdani (2012) termed "define and rule." Native policy became the centerpiece of modern colonial rule and gave rise to the native expert. Steinmetz (2007) has explained variations in German colonial policy by showing how different European social groups competed for a specific form of social or ethnographic capital, the rather vague claim to "knowing the natives." Credentialed "native" expertise gained further traction in the early twentieth century, with the establishment of the League of Nations and later the UN (Mazower 2012).

Third, taking the lead from recent studies both in the history/sociology of science and latterly in anthropology (Carr 2010), expertise is conceived not so much as intellectual knowledge but as performance. These experts demonstrated their knowledge to a multitude of audiences, local and international, real or imagined. As Robert Frost put it in *A Masque of Reason*:

> Society can never think things out:
> It has to see them acted out by actors,
> Devoted actors at a sacrifice—

While experts certainly are crucial in policy making, they also perform two types of symbolic role (Boswell 2009, 7–8). First, the perception that the administration possesses reliable and detailed information creates confidence that their policies are well-founded, thus leading to legitimizing and bolstering the administration's claims to jurisdiction, or what is known as "epistemic authority." Second, proclamations of expert knowledge could lend authority to particular policy positions by substantiating South Africa's policy preference and undermining alternative policy options. Of course, while experts might have enhanced the administration's credibility, this does not mean that they necessarily improve the quality of the administration's performance, as Boswell points out.

Apart from audiences, real or imagined, context and conditions, especially the sociopolitical and scholarly situations, shaped their expert products. Simultaneously, however, these overlapping and sometimes distinctive situations enabled experts to claim some autonomy, frequently expressed as self-doubt, hence making some of their decisions, and actions,

moral. Was the response I got from volkekundiges concerning the militarization of Bushmen largely a consequence of their search for recognition?

The international arena provides a stage for performances ranging from the PMC, the UN, and especially the ICJ to local village-level performances. These presentations are especially fertile for understanding how colonialism works. For one thing, they illustrate how colonialism, which depended on "the white man's burden" for its moral justification, did not simply occur but was dependent upon and influenced by audiences, local and international (Rutherford 2012). These international audiences had the capacity to profoundly affect the practice of colonial policy. Reading documents in the Namibian archives, one cannot but be impressed at how seriously the South Africans took any (potential) international criticism, especially after the so-called Bondelzwarts Rebellion (1922). Even a report alleging Bushman slavery by the Anti-Slavery Society would provoke a full and detailed report. For many years after World War II, foreigners were barred from doing social research in the territory for fear of what impact their findings might have on international audiences. Colonialism had to play to different audiences, including Indigenes and local settlers, as South African prime minister Verwoerd showed with the festive launch of the Odendaal Commission recommendations that, I would suggest, had less to do with promoting the welfare of the Indigenous inhabitants than impressing an international audience, especially those located in the halls of the UN.

Experts, specifically ethnologists, were to profoundly shape how Namibia was imagined. However, their claims to expertise were to be constantly challenged, exposing their fragility, which leads to the main concerns of this monograph: How did these authorities get their expert evidence so wrong that it made them ridiculous? Moreover, why were these absurd ideas believed to be credible? Using a situational analysis perspective, I trace the networks of a number of interlinked personnel and ritual situations in which volkekunde came to imagine a utopian *apartheid* state. In sum, if colonialism is the history of the gradual emergence of state structures and societal forms and geographic expansion, what role did ethnology play in this exercise at least in one particular country, Namibia?

Overall the case can be made that a historically informed anthropology and an anthropologically informed history enrich, enliven, and provide fresh insights into old shibboleths and taken-for-granted flat historical descriptions. But, then again, while I do not think the chapters in this book are particularly innovative, they do show how a certain perspective can bring new insights to bear on old problems and problematize simplistic answers that can easily take on the character of myth or urban legend. Treating colonizer and colonized, military occupiers and *plaaslike bevolking* (local populations, or LPs) as being part of the same historically grounded social system allows one to appreciate more fully acts of resis-

tance, by knowing at least partially what they were up against and how the structures they resisted were created, organized, and maintained.

This volume contributes to a new subfield in anthropology, the anthropology of colonialism. While the anthropology of colonialism is of recent vintage, going back perhaps a decade or so, its roots go back much further. Its emergence was perhaps inevitable given the alignment of a number of contingent disciplinary interests in literary studies and history and, of course, most importantly, the critical or self-reflective nature of anthropology. Given the self-reflective nature of anthropology, a turn to the historical was inevitable. Indeed, if there is one overarching concern in this collection it is that anthropologists and policy makers ignore histories at the peril of getting things gloriously wrong.

The Order of Chapters

Chapter 1. *"Beleaguered Knowledge: The Interwar Irrelevance of Anthropological Expertise"*

The League of Nations ushered in the era of scientific colonialism in which international expertise was valued. Awarded the territory as a C Class mandate by the league, South Africa had to submit annual reports to the PMC and justify its native expertise. There is nothing like a scandal to bring the experts to the limelight. The Bondelzwarts Rebellion, in 1922, when an impoverished Indigenous group was brutally suppressed, was one such example. This chapter examines how South African claims to expertise on the basis of 250 years of "contact" were justified. Ridiculousness in its full theatricality was manifest not only in the field but also in the hallowed halls of the League of Nations in Geneva. The PMC hearings of mandatory reports were highly scripted, but also absurd, events dealing with important matters. The South Africans cynically played to the formulistic scripted rules of legalism, but the suspicion emerges: Were they so taken in by their own performances that they eventually believed it themselves? As the Canadian novelist Robertson Davies (1974, 251) observed:

> We all create an outward self with which to face the world, and some people come to believe that is what they truly are. So they people the world with doctors who are nothing outside of the consulting-room, and judges who are nothing when they are not in court, and businessmen who wither with boredom when they have to retire from business, and teachers who are forever teaching. That is why they are such poor specimens when they are caught without their masks on.

While the administration belittled professional "native expertise," for the remaining German settlers, especially those belonging or aspiring to

the *Bürgertum* (middle class), such expertise became a significant mark of distinction and an important rationalization for why they felt the mandate should be returned to Germany. Key to this exercise was the missionary ethnologist Heinrich Vedder, who after World War II was appointed to the South African senate as an expert on the natives of the territory. Much of this activity was concentrated in the South-West African Scientific Society. Significantly, the ethnic group highlighted was that labeled Bushmen, the forgotten victims of a series of genocidal actions ranging from 1911 to 1915. They were the quintessential "Other." The case is made in this chapter and the next for the importance of that cultural construction known as the Bushmen as crucial for settler identity. The importance of Bushmen is underlined by the contradictory and troublesome relationship settlers had with them and how this was enveloped in a distinctive mythology often supported by a scholarly imprimatur. The assumed uniqueness and scarcity of Bushmen allowed settlers to develop what I term the Leporello syndrome. In the opera *Don Juan*, Leporello was Don Juan's procurer in chief, and what these largely amateur scientists in SWA did was to procure raw material for the metropole. While Bushman imagery extends back to precolonial times, this era marked the increased velocity of recycling of images and written representations of Bushmen for various purposes, creating more robust tropes of their alleged characteristics.

Chapter 2. "Post–World War II Ethnological Dispositions in a Disputed Territory"

Refusing to relinquish the mandate to the UN after World War II and fearful of international embarrassment, South Africa started to bring professional experts onto the stage of world opinion. The initial stimulus was the well-funded International Africa Institute's Africa Survey, which led to the appointment of a German ethnologist, F. Rudolph Lehmann, who was later succeeded by the German expatriates Günter Wagner, Oswin Köhler, and Kuno Budack, who, as foreigners, made ideal servants of power. They conducted a number of district surveys in areas that had a sizable Herero population, notable for being "troublesome" by petitioning the UN. At the same time, Dr. Nikolaas J. van Warmelo, the chief ethnologist in the South African Department of Native Affairs, made the regions beyond the Police Zone—the densely populated Ovamboland and Kavango—the major sources for contract labor and the isolated Kaokoveld into his personal realm of expertise, making frequent visits, to advise on chieftaincy problems especially. Of more immediate concern, though, was the perceived imminent demise of the Bushmen, now recast as an increasingly important scientific commodity, which needed to be saved. A Commission for the Preservation of the Bushmen was created

and chaired by Pieter J. "Piet" Schoeman, an Afrikaner anthropologist heavily influenced by Bronislaw Malinowski. This single-minded emphasis on Bushmen served to divert international attention from problems in other parts of the country.

Chapter 3. *"Performing for All the World to See: Bruwer and the Fashioning of Modern Namibia"*

In the late fifties and early sixties, pressure mounted on South Africa, both internally, through the formation of Indigenous nationalist political parties, and internationally, at the UN and in various court cases heard at the ICJ. The most famous case was when Ethiopia and Liberia sued South Africa for breach of Article 2 of the mandate, which stipulated that the mandatory had to administer the territory in the best interest of its Indigenous people. At the World Court hearings, South Africa mounted a major campaign to justify apartheid to an increasingly skeptical international audience. Three of the thirteen expert witnesses they called were anthropologists, of whom one, J. P. van S. "Hannes" Bruwer, was the key figure, spending more time giving evidence and being cross-examined than anyone else. Bruwer is crucial for understanding the shaping of modern Namibia. He was the driving force behind the Odendaal Commission, which represents the only serious attempt to implement grand apartheid, the South African nationalist utopia. Archival research shows that one of the commission's main purposes was to mollify international audiences, and Bruwer was appointed commissioner-general to guide this effort. This chapter examines how Bruwer's network and key role in organizations like the Afrikaner Broederbond (AB), a secretive organization promoting Afrikaner nationalism, framed his anthropological praxis, which led him to make statements that were patently absurd.

Chapter 4. *"From WHAM to Countermobilization"*

Failure to find a diplomatic solution for the territory's legal status led to the so-called Border War, an eighteen-year low-intensity war on Namibia's northern boundary. This represents what Agamben (2005) would term "bare colonialism": while oppressing the population, the authorities were also trying to enlist their support for the regime. The favored strategy in this regard was the SADF's Civic Action Program, a notion that was borrowed largely from the US military in which social scientists played a crucial role. The SADF became the largest employer in Africa of ethnologists, who were drawn almost exclusively from volkekunde departments. From the archival record, their major activity appears to have been developing etiquette guides for how to interact with the local population and

organizing youth camps. They also tested and developed covert counter-insurgency projects, which, according to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (1998), were later applied in South Africa to counter anti-apartheid resistance. While there is a substantial literature on violent covert action by the regime (see, e.g., Schutte, Liebenberg, and Minnaar 1998), especially the activities of the infamous 32 Battalion, the notorious Civilian Co-operation Bureau (CCB), the brutal Koevoet police unit (modeled on the Rhodesian Selous Scouts), and police hit squads, my focus here is on the oft-neglected soft psychological operations in which front organizations and the above-mentioned youth camps featured. This chapter, based on interviews and material from the SANDF archives, critically evaluates the role of anthropologists and psychologists in what was ultimately a futile and ridiculous exercise.

Chapter 5. "Bringing Bonn Back In"

Building on the insights of Moritz Bonn, who produced the first scholarly counter-narrative of colonialism, the praxis of these volkekundiges is critically evaluated. Settler *Umwelt*, the social space around people from within which signs for alarm can come, created the dominant ethos in settler colonies, which Agamben (2005) calls *état de siège*, or besiegement. Volkekundige concern was not with appreciating cultural diversity or Indigenous ingenuity, but rather with "undercurrents" and uncovering the "secrets" of the Other. These attempts, however, amounted largely to the production of "potted knowledge" produced by acts that resembled that of divination. Like the officers in Jaroslav Hašek's classic anti-war novel *The Good Soldier Švejk*, settlers and their volkekundiges could not decide whether Indigenes were stupid or having them on.

Conclusion. "'Have We Met the Enemy and (S)He Is Us?' (Pogo)"

A significant factor leading to an inability to see and to aphasia is the result of "group think," a concept developed by Yale psychologist Irving Janis and what Max Gluckman termed a closed system of thinking in which contrary information is either discarded or incorporated to strengthen the closed system of thought. Perhaps the most effective way of dealing with such purveyors of what is now known as fake news is to raise doubt and thus to stimulate their curiosity about how others might see or act on similar problems. One way to do this is to act as privileged jester in the late capitalist world, but with appropriate intellectual and moral humility, as the slippage between jester in the court of neo-feudalism and buffoons in the circus of neo-fascism is very easy. Indeed, while I ridicule volkekunde, I also seek to show how it became ridiculous and suggest that its value

lies in revealing deep uncertainties and anxieties in settler society; the lesson is clear: there by the grace of God go we. Should anthropologists simply write an exposé describing the pornography of power within the discipline in an effort to simply engage in the politics of embarrassment, a strategy that seems to work in reasonably democratic societies? Should they become jesters in the court of neo-liberalism?

Notes

1. The authoritative two-volumed *Cambridge History of South Africa*, edited by Carolyn Hamilton, Bernard Mbenga, and Robert Ross (2011), does not even list Namibia or South-West Africa in its index.
2. Here tribute is due to the pioneering historiography examining South Africa's imperial role as epitomized by the special issue of the *Journal of Southern African Studies* entitled "Rethinking Empire in Southern Africa" (Henrichsen et al. 2015).
3. This book serves to recap and develop some ideas first published in Gordon 2018b.
4. Colonialism was a part of the imperial project, which Bonn defined as the employment of the engines of government and diplomacy to acquire territories, protectorates, and/or spheres: "The economic essence of imperialism is predatory; plunder, not profit, is its aim, while the political aim was 'ruling space' not 'living space'" (Bonn, "The Economic Basis of Imperialism," n.d., Nachlass Moritz Bonn N. 1082, Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Germany [hereafter cited as NMB]). For imperialism to succeed, wrote Bonn, the collaboration of the Indigenes was necessary, obtained either coercively or voluntarily, and typically occurred on two fronts: political colonization (*Herrschaftspolitik*), entailing conquest and administration and focused on territorial expansion; and capitalistic colonization (*Handelspolitik*), manifested in financial reorganization and capitalistic development and largely concerned with trade. Both modes of control rely on superior strength, technology, and knowledge. The purpose was "to squeeze out an income for the mother country," and this exploitation was in open contradiction to Christian principles and emerging beliefs about democracy. European industrialization shifted the equation somewhat by emphasizing the search for markets. Growing surplus generated by industrialism needed investment to grow. As capital moved to backward countries, it needed security achieved through open or disguised political control. With remarkable prescience in the interwar years, Bonn was claiming, "The business of Empire was converted into the Empire of business" (Bonn, "The Twilight of Economics," n.d., NMB).

   It was the agrarian variety of colonialism that was to be Bonn's métier. Colonialism transpired, whether by the conquistadors or Canadian pioneers, when people sought items of value beyond their native territory. Initially the colonial project was not to deal with excess or overpopulation, rather the *auswanderungslustige Elemente* (those willing to emigrate) were drawn from the (aspiring) middle classes and the nobility, especially younger sons who were cut out by the inheritance system but who had some capital and dreamed of setting up a latifundia system to lord over large estates. At root it was not genuine capitalism but rather a mock capitalism, a concept that Bonn unfortunately did not elaborate upon but that displays kinship with Marxian primitive accumulation and Weberian adventure or booty capitalism. The moral justification for colonialism was invariably "'the white man's burden,' a profitable though onerous task laid upon the back of a masterful race of white men . . . whose strong altruistic feelings tempted them to take it upon themselves in the interest of mankind, as long as it was a paying proposition," noted Bonn (1925, 19). Where Indigenes such as North American Indians or South African Bushmen did not fit into the activities the colonials wanted them to undertake, they are declared unworthy and incapable of adapting to higher

forms of production. Dilettantes proclaimed that it was the "law of nature" that the less capable "races" had to die out before the more capable ones (Bonn 1909). These "votaries of cheap Darwinism" forgot to mention the spread of contagious diseases, the sale of alcohol and firearms, and the decimation of game (Bonn 1938, 280). After years of colonial pressure, Indigenes started accepting the inevitability of their fate: it entered their consciousness (Bonn 1909, 675).

5. My approach shares kinship with J. M. Coetzee's reading of Geoff Cronje, a major sociological theorist of apartheid, as mad (Coetzee 1996, 163–84). Initially those about to be colonized also saw colonizers as ridiculous (Rutherford 2012). It was this burden of absurdity that made colonialism intolerable. See also Alison Shutt's excellent *Manners Make a Nation* (2015).