

XHABBO XAM

A fiction by Michael Picardie

DEDICATIONS

FOR MY DAUGHTER JUSTINE PICARDIE WITH LOVE AND ADMIRATION.

AND FOR PETER AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE NGUBANE FAMILY, WHO WERE MY CARERS AND FRIENDS IN CHILDHOOD - HERBERT, BOB, WILLIAM, THEMBA AND CHARLIE.

PREFACE:

This is a work of fiction, but it has a setting in history and in modern Botswana where the author worked in 1995-1997 teaching psychology to social work students who for the most part helped majority and minority African “tribes” (the various geographical and language sub-groups of black people) who are mainly farmers and urban workers with a small professional or entrepreneurial elite class. Small communities of the indigenous San continue to live as hunter-gatherers rather than herders and farmers although some are now “villagized” (urbanized) and have some access to primary, secondary and tertiary education. There are also San in neighboring countries on Botswana’s north-west borders. These are found in bush and semi-desert regions of north-west South Africa, north-eastern Namibia and southern Angola.

The African origin hypothesis suggests that the San descend from African *homo sapiens* and their remains are found dating back 45,000 – 75,000 years from the present epoch. The more recent Bantu-speaking Africans’ immigrations into Southern African occurred from about 500 CE to about 500 CE. Colonizing white Europeans arrived from 1652 onwards in the Cape. All these groups are modern humans whose ancestors first evolved in Africa by about 200,000 years ago and developed different ethnic characteristics since that period of time as a result of migrations to and from different ecological niches in and out of Africa¹.

This story takes place in the realm of the Real. It is an historical and philosophical fiction. This Real is the actual immediate of everyday life and death. It is symbolically represented in language and in Wittgenstein-type language-pictures. The Real draws from what Lacan calls the “Imaginary” to which all cultural groups, have some kind of adherence, let alone the San.² The Imaginary varies and is the individual and collective unconscious, and the individually acquired semi-conscious whose purpose is to fulfill desire, sometimes socialized or culturally acquired desire which may be tabooed in the same

1. “Recent African origin of modern humans” from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. This page was last edited on 16 December 2019, at 02:35 (UTC).

On the folklore of the /Xam San see W.H.I. Bleek and L.C.Lloyd (1911) *Specimens of Bushman Folklore* (London, George Allen). See Theal’s typically Victorian “official” racist introduction to this book. Richard B. Lee and Irven De Vore et al (1976) *Kalahari Hunter-Gatherers: Studies of the !Kung San and Their Neighbors* (Harvard University Press) report on the hunter-gatherer San’s extraordinarily extensive knowledge of flora, fauna and the environment on which they depend for food and medicine and for protection from animal predators and the presence of hostile humans.

2. On Ludwig Wittgenstein see his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* first published in 1921 in *Annalen der Naturphilosophie*. English Edition (1922) first published by Kegan Paul, Trench and Trubner translated in 1966 by D.F.Pears and B.F.McGuinness, Routledge & Kegan Paul, revised 1974, Routledge Classics 2001; published again in the series Routledge Great Minds 2014, Abingdon and New York, with an introduction by Bertrand Russell, and a forward by Ray Monk (2014). On Lacan see Malcolm Bowie *Lacan* (1991) Fontana/ Harper Collins reference to the Real order on pp 91, 94-95, 98, 102-103, 107, 109-110, 119, 194 and index references to the Symbolic and the Imaginary.

or a related or a different culture in the Real. The Imaginary is not “untrue” but deals in the poetic, in ritual, in magic, in religion. It is composed of all the *poetics* of a culture in the sense meant by Aristotle in his eponymous book. The Imaginary is larger than life, but lifelike, beautiful or captivating even when it describes horror and moral ugliness which it must do because of its proximity to and recoil from the brute Real. Even Nothingness conceived in some way is a variety of the Real the Imaginary and the Symbolic, such as the void of the pre-creation state. The Symbolic is the world of ingrained Wittgenstein-type word-pictures and word-scenarios we use to communicate. The Symbolic speaks of that which is logically or scientifically or sociologically possible and in this way is close to the Real, but uses metaphors and similes which exist in the realm of the poetic Imaginary.

If, God forbid, the industrialized urban world collapsed due to nuclear war or global warming we might *have* to learn to live again in a more viable relation with the pre-historically human, animal and biological worlds. This the traditional Bushpeople always did leaving enough game and vegetation for *other* human inhabitants, for non-humans and for the bush - allowing regeneration.

There are very few totally “untouched” hunter-gatherer groups left in the arctic, in the jungles and the semi-deserts of the modernizing and globalized world – such is the pervasiveness of modernity. However, there are remnants of ancient paleolithic and Mesolithic economies and polities to be found in remote and in built-up areas. Further their genetic traces are to be found in contemporary immigrant and colonizing groups.

Modernity which is in its brutal form a Real world, is Symbolically sanctified as *logos*.³ But what is happening to the San is analogous to the whole of *homo sapiens* under pressure from over-population, maldistribution of resources, gross inequalities, spiritual enervation, materialism and consumerism, a nightmare vision of the Real pervaded by a horribly real Imaginary.⁴

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According to archaeological findings the San or “Bushmen” (note the assumed gender allocation of this ethnic group – why? -) and the Khoi herders of what was the Cape Colony in South Africa may be really one group, the KhoiSan, differentiated and distinguished now as between the Bushpeople (the San) and, for example, the Nama whose language is closer to the Khoi-Khoi or “Hottentots.”

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⁴ See Bessie Head’s *Where Rain Clouds Gather* on the corruption engendered by exploitative Batswana chiefs.

The Africans of the south belong to the Bantu-speakers' two main groups, the Xhosa/Zulu/Swazi/Ndebele (the Nguni) group and the Sotho-Pedi-Tswana group. In the 18th century, Dutch farmers on horseback and their collaborators, the Griqua, who were a mixed- race / Khoi group, killed the Cape San, the /Xam, in what would today be regarded as a genocide and the victims were referred to in Afrikaans as *ongedierte* - in Dutch also *ongedierte* – a word expressing total dehumanization meaning “vermin” - in response to cattle theft and alleged mutilation of stolen animals which they, the /Xam San, could not immediately eat or hide.

Some of the refugee Cape San may have fled to the western part of the Kgalagadi Wilderness in Botswana. Or they may have been descended from the original modern humans there. At least their language and their Cape name survive there: they call themselves the /Xam. The diagonal stroke in front of this San “tribal” group-name is one of the five click sounds of the various KhoiSan languages of which /Xam is one. Xhabbo Xam⁵, Mordechai Maimon and the other characters in this novella of discourse⁶ are fictions, but I try to depict characters living in the Real, the brute Real of life and death, and in everyday living⁷. What is Real, of course, is also relative and partakes of the social construction of reality but the way it interpenetrates the Symbolic and the Imaginary is Jacques Lacan's great contribution to critical theory and to the psychoanalysis of the text.

Xhabbo Xam⁸, Mordechai Maimon and the other characters in this story of “discourse”⁹ are fictions, but I try to depict characters living in the Real, the brute Real of life and death, and in everyday

⁵ For the orthography of the Bushpeople or San languages see W.H.I. Bleek and L.C.Lloyd (1911) *Specimens of Bushman Folklore* (London, George Allen). This is republished in a facsimile edition by Daimon, Einsiedeln, Switzerland. The English translation of the /Xam originally dictated text in the /Xam language is reproduced in Bleek and Lloyd's printed volume and there is an online version of this. Daimon have also published a popular edition of Bleek and Lloyd edited by Gregory McNamee (2001) called *The Girl Who Made Stars and Other Bushman Stories*. I have simplified, explained or omitted some of the 5 click signs and the other special aspects of /Xam orthography, to make the names more readable. One of the original narrators of the 19th century text in /Xam was //Khabbo whom name I have changed to Xhabbo and given to a modern, contemporary /Xam person.

⁶ Michael Wessels 9/11/2007 “The Discursive Character of the Xam Texts: A Consideration of the Xam “Story of the Girl of the Early Race, Who Made Stars” <https://doi.org/10.1080/00155870701621806> Taylor and Francis online accessed 27/08/19. See his extensive bibliography. On modern literary discourse theory I have been influenced by Fredric Jameson's (1981) *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. (London: Methuen,) and as indicated, by Jacques Lacan.

⁷ For Jacques Lacan's orders of the symbolic, the imaginary and the real, see index references to these categories in Malcolm Bowie's (1991) *Lacan* (London: Fontana/Harper Collins) also summarized on p. 3 above.

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The fictional Xhabbo was born into a real ethnic group, the /Xam, hunter-gatherers, who to this day, some of them, are not "villagized" or are only partly assimilated into modernity with all its ills and benefits. Sometimes they practice traditions at odds with what is called Western civilization with its central ideas of the ownership of everything including land as property. In other instances, it is impossible for them to render themselves impervious to modernity and possessive individualism – say when they are evangelized so as to become Christians.

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So, in summary: the reason for them being hunted down in the 18th century in the Cape, when they were perceived as vermin (*ongedierte*) was that, so it was alleged, they stole and mutilated cattle. The Dutch or Afrikaner response to this was, so we are told, a genocide. The truth is no one knows if there were, as some have postulated, 250,000 San or /Xam or Cape Bushpeople in Southern Africa before the alleged genocide. What is certain, is that very few still speak the /Xam language in South Africa itself.¹¹

Some survivors were absorbed into the Afrikaans-speaking "Coloured" group in the apartheid classification, (previously the white / black / Coloured / Indian segregation hierarchy which preceded the apartheid government at a time before 1948 when apartheid was not always institutionalized in legislation and actual forcible removal).

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¹¹ See Richard B. Lee and Irven De Vore (1976) *Kalahari. Hunter-Gatherers: Studies of the !Kung San and Their Neighbors* (Harvard University Press) introduction.

That (a) hierarchy or (b) more democratic pluralization was (a) legalized through apartheid but (b) persists today by people who have partially internalized the apartheid groups and reified their indigenous group-cultures. They call themselves Coloured and they have a mixed cultural identity, often speaking Afrikaans and English rather than any black African language such as Xhosa, the predominant African language of the Cape, where many of the Coloured people achieved their distinct identity from remnants of the Bushpeople and the Khoi-Khoi (the so-called “Hottentots”) plus the descendants of mixed marriages and liaisons, and Malay slaves imported from the Dutch East Indies in the 18th century who retain their Muslim religion and other cultural aspects of identity as a distinct subgroup *within* the Coloured identity group.¹²

San were recruited into the apartheid government’s armed forces and used as trackers against SWAPO guerrillas in what is now Namibia, and for their own protection had to be re-located in South Africa itself when SWAPO became the government of Namibia. In the same way Jews inside the Nazi concentration camps were used as *capos* and became part of the killing machine or became heads of ghettos and were forced to select fellow Jews for deportation. They were also called vermin by the Nazis.

Cattle require land. But from an indigenous point of view it wasn’t the San’s (the Bushpeople’s) or the Boers’ or the British settlers’ hunting and grazing land to acquire, let alone steal.

Some assume that land belongs to those who occupy it for the longest time within collective or historically ascertainable memory. In biblical law the land belongs to God. It is loaned by covenant to mankind. In reality land is obtained by war and colonial dispossession, or just occupied if it is empty of human beings, and defended against the next group of invaders.

Wild fauna and flora are, tragically, not seen as having equal “rights” to the land, hence the despoilation of land sustaining wild animals, grasses, flowers and fungi, adding to ecological imbalance. The new South Africa’s ferment can be understood as a matter of competing social classes and the clash of ideologies. Under *capitalism* the land belongs to the proprietor but subject to law in *democratic* capitalism. Under *socialism* the land belongs to the *state or a local collective*. No one national system can cope with the world-wide problem of climate change and the degradation of the natural environment.

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¹² See J.S.Marais (1968) *The Cape Coloured People: 1652-1037* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press)

Even formerly dispossessed people dispossess others, both sides claiming fundamentalist religious or political or cultural or legal land rights, for example, as between the warring ideologies of Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs.

Mass murder and terrorism may follow such disputes such as the events of 25th February 1994 when an American Jewish extremist, a follower of Rabbi Meir Kahane's *Kach* party, Baruch Goldstein, a medical doctor, wearing Israeli reservist uniform, shot and killed 29 Muslim Arab worshippers and wounded 125 with his Israeli Defence Force automatic rifle on the festival of Purim in the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, before being beaten to death. In the riots that followed 25 Palestinians and 5 Israelis were killed.¹³

Killings by jihadists of non-Muslim or non-fundamentalist Muslim citizens happen periodically world-wide.

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There is, then, a great gulf between universalist ethics and particularistic faith which Soren Kierkegaard¹⁴ and other existentialists deem an abyss, containing, as it were, the daemon of the irrational. In colonialism and the reaction of the indigenous to murder and occupation of their historic land, becomes a reason for war, riot, terrorism, the breakdown of civilized behavior. God and faith can become a source of ethical faith but cannot be fully based on reason because of the abysmal "absurd" into which one falls if one misses one's step in the leap of faith. The "absurd" goes beyond logic. Faith is beyond logic.

This story rests on the assumption that faith and ethics are based on a leap into humane belief.

But to return to logic: Xhabbo Xam eventually becomes a lecturer in philosophy and finds that in the last decade of the 20th century he and his adoptive brother have to teach a logical philosophy of language written in the middle of the Great War by Ludwig Wittgenstein. Their assumption is that

¹³ [Baruch Goldstein - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baruch_Goldstein) en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baruch_Goldstein

Baruch Kopel Goldstein (Hebrew: **בָּרֻךְ קוֹפֵל גוֹלְדְּשְׁטֵין**; born Benjamin Goldstein; December 9, 1956 – February 25, 1994) was an American-Israeli physician, religious extremist, and mass murderer who perpetrated the 1994 Cave of the Patriarchs massacre in Hebron, killing 29 and wounding 125 Palestinian Muslim worshippers. He was beaten to death by survivors of the massacre.

¹⁴ See Soren Kierkegaard's (1843 / 1985) *Fear and Trembling* translated by Alistair Hannay (London: Penguin Books)

despite cultural disparities, logic is *logic* amongst the indigenous, and *magical thinking* is found amongst both the pre-modern indigenous and the modern.

Extensive if unwritten scientific knowledge of flora and fauna enabled the San to survive over tens of thousands of years. Then, illegitimately, according to the absurd “logic” of power and the ability to claim sovereignty over territory *acquired* by the Others, the indigenous, the native peoples were dispossessed and killed in South Africa, having been deemed non-human, *ongedierte* – vermin – by the technologically more advanced but often morally inferior conquerors of the land. The same thing happened to the Jews at the hands of the Nazis even when they were fully in the epoch of the modern.

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The family of Ludwig Wittgenstein, going back generations, were “ethnically” Jewish, or Jewish by descent, and therefore seen as *untermenschen* by the Nazis in the 1930s. The Wittgensteins of the mid- to late 1930s had to be granted *Mishlung* or mixed-race status by Hitler himself in exchange for gold in order to survive the Nazis – that is not to be deported to a death camp and killed. Jews were also regarded as vermin.¹⁵

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As for the theme of this novel: “illegitimacy” would not be an issue if handled discreetly as in traditional San society where there is marriage and morality, but such discretion is ripped away when ownership accompanies “modernisation”. The migrant labour system creates not only the ownership of precious metals, diamonds and gold, which become share-profits, but money for dowries in which women and children are no longer exchanges creating attachments, but as a result of which people are bought and sold.

Spouses, lovers and children are objectified, whereas in the traditional “tribe” everyone is ethically human as long as there is respect for what is common and what is individually owned. Males may fight over power to create a dominance hierarchy of stronger over weaker males, and females may fight over more attractive and more available males but when jealousy reaches murderous proportions, as in this story, redemption has to be found outside the “tribe” whose norms have broken down. At that point the state has to intervene.

¹⁵ On Wittgenstein’s views about his Jewishness see Ray Monk (1991) *Ludwig Wittgenstein – The Duty of Genius* (London, Jonathan Cape /Vintage) pp 313 ff.

In this narrative Xhabbo is extruded by murderous jealousy and resentment concerning the “ownership” of him by his biological father, the betrayal by his birth-father of his San mother, his neglect by his “social” father (his step-father) and his adoptive parents. Xhabbo is initially adopted by two medical doctors, a married couple, who have a surgery in the capital of the Kgalagadi Wilderness, to which the author gives a fictional name, Kgalagadi Town.

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These doctors, John and Jessica Maimon, although fictional, are representative of Jews whose families were killed by the Nazis during the Second World War. John and Jessica are also fictional models of people who served in Egypt and Libya towards the end of the conflict in Montgomery’s 8th Army fighting against Field Marshall Rommel.

To go back to World War 2 to get the racism issue in perspective, it should be remembered that Rommel was not a Nazi and was forced by Hitler to commit suicide when it was alleged that he was involved in a plot against the Führer. Of course, Rommel was collusive with Hitlerism or he would have been killed or side-lined before he was put in charge of the Afrika Korps as a Field Marshall in North Africa at the beginning of WW2. In the same way conflict in Southern Africa does not always imply racism, but nationalistic struggle often amongst rivals who are equally corrupt and use their own or the Other’s racism to justify crime.

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The sacred nature of the traditional Bushperson’s creator-god, Mantis, or Moon, according to Xhabbo’s Xam’s interpretation, confers protection and holiness on the whole of nature and of the astrophysical world.

Mantis and the Moon are able, magically, to transform to re-create and to banish death. They are able to resurrect creatures underneath the influence of heavenly bodies and sacred animals. So, for the San, the Sun first lived in some semi-divine person’s armpit, until it and the Milky Way (originally ashes in a fire) were thrown into the sky so the San could hunt and see their way better during the day and night. At first there was no death, as in the garden of Eden in the Jewish legend.

Their detractors regard the San as “primitive”, the lives of hunter-gatherers differing from those called “civilized”: their enemies perhaps covertly admired hunter-gathering but had to be hide their guilty longing to return to “Eden” rather than remain in a catastrophic “civilization”.

What is certain is that the San have to fight to live - literally from hand to mouth, being hunter-gatherers. This way of life is being eroded by “modernization” which means incorporation into a market-economy in which they become agriculturalists or urban traders or urban workers like a vast proletariat of Africans some of whom have entered a professional or semi-professional middle class.

The actual history of colonization is either reified as a redemption through suffering or castigated as something only the Others did. British Bechuanaland in 1966 became Botswana, where horrors such as death-camps were, as far as one knows, unknown, except in the shadow and historic memory of the British concentration camps set up during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 in South Africa itself in which tens of thousands of Boer women and children and old people died of insanitary condition. This is not to idealize the Batswana and the San where traditional medicine and *mores* still create horrific superstitions like the fetishization of body parts for which animals and human beings are killed so as to make purely symbolic and clinically ineffective *muti* – quasi-medication.¹⁶ Far worse was the attempted genocide of the Herero, the Namaqua and the San by German colonists in South West Africa between 1904 and 1908. These native peoples were slaughtered in battle, or driven into the desert to die of hunger and thirst, or placed in a concentration camp on Shark Island – a rehearsal for the Holocaust of World War 2.¹⁷

During the Anglo-Boer war, murder on a vast colonial scale occurred. Africans working for the British were shot by the Boers in their thousands. But the /Xam, survivors of the Cape San’s 18th century’s

¹⁶ See David Hammond-Tooke (1989) *Rituals and Medicine: indigenous healing in South Africa* (Johannesburg : Ad. Donker) on magical (concrete) thinking.

¹⁷ Encyclopedia.wikipedia.org /wiki / *Herero and Namaqua Genocide*
accessed 15/11/19 11.55 GMT

nearly forgotten and terrible history of persecution, like the Jewish people, lived on, albeit in small numbers in the British Bechuanaland Protectorate which became independent Botswana in 1966. No one needs reminding of the possibility that Israel's treatment of the Arab Palestinians is, in part, although in a lesser degree, persecution by the previously persecuted. And vice-versa. In the same way amongst the San in my story the idealistic poet-farmer husband takes out his vengeance on his San wife.

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We certainly need a philosophy of psychological and ethical realism, or the Real in Lacan's terms. Ludwig Wittgenstein conceived and wrote his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* in the midst of the carnage of the Great War. The *Tractatus* starts with the unflinching realism of its first proposition: *The world is everything that is the case*. Although not a work of ethics, this realism is predicated on *modern* de-humanization of a sort even more extensive than happened in pre-colonial Africa simply because there were weapons of mass-destruction as never before by 1914.

In his case, despite the great wealth of the Wittgenstein family, or because of it, *anti-Semitism was in some measure part of the everything that was the case*. Nationalistic hatred was on a huge scale as part of the carnage of the Great War, during which Wittgenstein, fighting for the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was decorated for bravery several times. But, again, the *Tractatus* ends with the implication that it is impossible to *speak about* ethics and aesthetics. Goodness and beauty can be showed in action, but they cannot be *explained*. They must be passed over in silence, according to Wittgenstein, although it is by no means clear how it is possible to be absolutely silent about what are the viable bases of civilization.

CHAPTER ONE

On the 13th August 1946 under the light of the Milky Way in the very early hours before the African dawn Xhabbo was found on the doorstep of the Maimons' veranda, wrapped in a jackal *kaross*. His cradle was a tied-up cardboard box with air-holes punched in. It read in big printed black letters: "Gilbey's London Gin" and was addressed to the Kgalagadi Town Hotel. It smelt of gin. One of the bottles must have cracked as it was being delivered. Someone just stole the box on the way from the backyard of the hotel.

His mother, a Bushwoman, five miles away, had conceived at a time when her husband was working on the gold mines in Johannesburg. She had a lover. A white man. Jakob Van Wyk. Not only a farmer on the limestone ridge under which there were wells of millions of gallons of water. A poet. She had worked for him as his house-servant when she was not with the Bushpeople's band. /Xam was their language. Van Wyk's wife had died of cancer. They had no children. /Nisa who was nursing a three-year old /Xam child was thought to be going through an infertile period biologically unique to the San or Bushpeople an evolutionary adaptation so as to promote a long period of breast-feeding and birth-control. She was subject to fits of melancholia and phobic anxiety attacks, and was afraid of returning to the /Xam camp that night after finishing her housework and asked to have a bath in the house itself and share Van Wyk's bed. That was nine months ago.

She herself thought she was bewitched. She was avoided by the other women even when they went gathering together. She saw ghosts of her parents and grandparents and the Christian God condemning her. She had joined the Dutch Reformed Church run by a man and his wife who moved around giving peripatetic services amongst the hunter-gatherers. This couple who were mixed-race people, came from the Cape and spoke Afrikaans. They condemned what they called immorality as the wages of sin at the expense of the family, which should be modelled on the Holy Family. Conception was holy even if not immaculate.

Jakob Van Wyk, was a strange and unusually gifted man, a poet looking for understanding amongst those whom he romantically perceived as the original children of God – the San. Jakob, followed his servant /Nisa out of the house when her labour pains began. He was the only person present helping her with the birth, but he was frightened by her distraught state and her plea to strangle the baby and bury his body. She looked at it and could see it was what others called Coloured – half-white and half-Bushman.

So Xhabbo's father was an Afrikaner outsider, with a university degree from Stellenbosch, who inherited a farm on the Bechuanaland limestone ridge. When his wife died of cancer quite young, he took his Bushwoman servant /Nisa as a kind of concubine, a practice going back hundreds of years amongst the Afrikaners of South Africa.

He was unusually gifted intellectually; and as a poet he had been published in South African literary journals. He was a new-comer to the Afrikaner Kgalagadi community farming on the limestone ridge above an ancient aquifer. None of his neighbours had a university education or wrote poetry. Jakob could quote ancient mythology and the Hebrew Bible better than his own white pastor who presided over the Dutch Reformed Church in the town and the peripatetic Coloured clergy.

The white pastor, the Reverend Jan Du Preez refrained from approving the patriarchs of the Old Testament who took concubines: Abraham and Hagar, Jacob and Bilha and Zilpa. Moses married a Midianite Zipporah. Moses was a light skinned Mesopotamian perhaps originating from the Caucasus and she a dark Egyptian.

The trouble was: – apartheid - although this was not South Africa but Bechuanaland Protectorate, later Botswana. His Afrikaner neighbours had already ostracized Jakob Van Wyk when he turned down their eligible daughters after his wife died. They already blamed him for not getting his wife to a specialist oncologist in Johannesburg in time.

Once she became Jakob's concubine, the woman /Nisa felt she should be allowed to live in the house and share Jakob's bed. He allowed this only when they were alone, and made her move into her corrugated-iron back room in the yard when there were other Bushpeople, relatives of /Nisa at the house, or white visitors from the other farms.

Gradually they overcame their segregation prejudices. In time she became his wife. That was later.

Xhabbo's exact birthplace was a few hundred yards from the nearest encampment of his mother's San family. She had her back against a five-hundred-year old baobab tree. His maternal grandmother, hearing hyenas and jackals howling and barking at these human intruders, ran to the birthplace to find the baby's father delivering the afterbirth.

They spoke in a mixture of Afrikaans and /Xam.

Jakob Van Wyk's conscience was troubling him, and, making an excuse to leave his Afrikaner visitors, who knew full well what was due to happen, he sought /Nisa out in the veld beyond his own farmland where, given the noise of the wild dogs coming from the baobab where other women gave birth, he estimated she needed help. He brought a first-aid kit with him, surgical gloves, disinfectant, cotton-wool swabs.

When she recovered from the exhaustion of her labour pains and the birth, Jakob cut the umbilical cord with a sterilized steel knife, cleaned up the birth canal and the baby with the right medications bought from the town pharmacist, Abe Abrahams. He put the healthy crying baby to /Nisa's breasts which leaked colostrum, and buried the after-birth in a hole dug with a sharp large stone. That was what the wild dogs were after.

The grandmother asked her daughter /Nisa what she was going to do with the baby. Xhabbo's mother hearing strange hallucinated voices made a gesture of dismissal. She said in /Xam: "Give him to the doctors in the town. Another baby will be a companion for their new baby... He'll have a chance in life. Our life is *sheta*..." Jakob Van Wyk protested. /Nisa shouted that he had no right to have the baby whilst he treated her as a servant. She was not allowed in his bed except in secret because he was ashamed of her.

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Miles away in the town, another semi-circle of hyenas and wild dogs sniffed around Xhabbo's makeshift cradle: the box reading "Gilbey's London Gin." /Nisa's mother had picked it up from the back yard of the Kgalagadi Hotel. It was new and clean and probably sterile because it stank of gin. The grandmother hiding across the road waited to see if anybody would answer the doorbell she had pressed at a God-forsaken hour of the night.

/Nisa had gone back to Jakob's farmhouse with him. He put her in the marital bed, tried to reassure her that when she felt better they could retrieve the baby. He held her in his arms and reassured her that the voices and visions she heard and saw were the result of post-puerperal depression not ghosts.

The grandmother hid across the road behind a garden fence, throwing stones at the predators who retreated. And then people in their nightwear came to the door and took the child in its Gilbey's London Gin package indoors.

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Dr. John Maimon on whose doorstep the baby was left, was descended from Maimonides a 11th-12th century Spanish doctor, rabbi, and philosopher, eventually known throughout the theological

Jewish and Christian worlds. The “active intellect” – Maimonides’s watchword - included not only medical science and the Hippocratic oath, but a kind of Godly spirit not an anthropomorphic being. For this descendent of Maimonides, God was at least the symbol of acts of healing and charity.

Dr Jessica Cordovero , his wife was also a medical doctor and also descended from Spanish Jews, actually from Moses Cordovero, a Kabbalist of the 16th century.

Jessica and John were fortunate in being rescued from Nazi Germany at the age of 16 by the *Kindertransport* in 1939 and grew up in London and studied at Oxford and a London medical school. All their relatives, except their parents who went into hiding in the Netherlands, and eventually joined them in Bechuanaland, were killed in the Nazi death camps. After the war they headed for the Bechuanaland Protectorate because they preferred the wilderness to civilization. Abe Abrahams, the one and only pharmacist in Kgalagadi Town was a cousin of theirs and he visited them in Oxford and London suggesting they take over a medical practice near Kgalagadi Town. The British government subsidized a minimal infrastructure with the churches including this medical clinic and local schools.

The Maimon-Cordoveros had great respect for the San - the Bushpeople - who in turn, when the trance-dance failed to cure physical illnesses appealed to science in the form of western medicine. The San also believed in a prevailing ghost, //Gauna, who appeared at trance-dances. For about 45,000 to about 75,000 years, since they arrived in Southern Africa, magic was also invested in the moon, lightning, thunder - entities which could turn people into frogs or pond-flowers for infractions of taboos embodied in their folklore. Mantis was their insect Man-God. The trance-dance which bound the whole clan-group together, created redemption by means of a catharsis, a cleansing of the soul.

Even in the most remote areas trade and small industry was changing everything, undermining traditional religions, substituting for //Gauna the Israelite prophets and Jesus who decried adultery and sex outside marriage. At first Jakob Van Wyk certainly wouldn’t marry a San woman and he respected her wish for the doctors to bring up their child. But he wasn’t happy the grandmother had left it on the doctors’ doorstep although it was /Nisa who decided the baby should at least be offered to the Maimons as a kind of twin for their new birth child, Mordechai.

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In any event the doctors had to make sure that the mother and the father and at least the potential step-father, /Nisa’s husband, who had come back from the mines, really wanted to give him up for

adoption. He had been told of the child's birth. After the baby was born the mother and Jakob Van Wyk and /Nisa's husband, /Han=I=kasso signed consent forms for the adoption. These were explained to them by the Maimon doctors and /Han=I=kasso went back to the mines in Johannesburg. His wife and his San family had written him off. He had found an African woman in one of the townships who found his San magic intriguing. A group of San goldminers started a regular trance-dance session in a nearby township and African miners chipped in with small amounts of money so as to be admitted to this therapeutic ceremony. His neighbours received Jakob Van Wyk back into the fold now that the embarrassing child was properly adopted by prestigious parents like the Maimon-Cordevero couple. Jakob Van Wyk confessed his fornication to the white Dutch Reformed Church preacher and /Nisa was "paid off" with what to her was a large sum of money - £100 - but Xhabbo was told about his birth-mother and the Maimon-Cordeveros brought him to visit her at her nomadic encampments. They would leave him with his half-siblings and his cousins periodically and he learned the /Xam language from them by the time he was talking.

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Mordechai, the Maimons' actual birth-son was already two weeks old when Xhabbo arrived, newly born. Even as a baby, Mordechai had a happy acceptance of life, secure in his parents' love and in his own growing capabilities. He was white in a brown and black world, but in their situation then that meant power. His parents being doctors had science behind them and were venerated and behaved generously. They were paid, only in part, by the Bechuanaland Protectorate government. They accepted payment in kind – skinned fresh buck meat and wild nuts and veld vegetables, for medical treatment. The nomadic San had little money except from brewing beer and selling it to local San and Batswana wage-earners on the Afrikaner farms.

For their general kindness John and Jessica Maimon were taught the trance-dance by their San patients who lived in the Kgalagadi Wilderness near Kgalagadi Town. Some were full-time hunter-gatherers, some were servants on the nearby Afrikaners' farms on the limestone ridge below which there were ancient wells from which the Boers pumped up water through boreholes with windmills standing like steel and aluminum sentinels guarding these outposts.

The few whites did make a qualitative difference even before diamonds were discovered in 1966 and British Bechuanaland became independent – and suddenly it was a rich country. Then Africanisation became the order of the day but the Bushpeople were perceived as being left behind. Some were enslaved.¹⁸

¹⁸ Bessie Head (2010) *When Rain Clouds Gather* and *Maru* (Virago Modern Classics) – Helen Oyeyemi (Introduction). This originally South African novelist explores social change in late Bechuanaland and modern Botswana. The former novel describes slavery in modern Bechuanaland.

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So Xhabbo was an accident landing up in a European world coming in part from a culture in Southern Africa nearly a hundred thousand years old. They were direct descendants of the first *homo sapiens* in Southern Africa. His other forbears were the Afrikaner Europeans in the Cape only since the 17th century. For him, Xhabbo, unlike Mordechai, the world was not an unfolding of love and acceptance. Even though Bechuanaland wasn't a colony but a Protectorate. Would Xhabbo really belong in the white world or the Bushman world or the African world? Could a divided soul be happy? He would be materially secure and might become emotionally rooted in the white European world. Yet adopting a half-Bushperson half-white child was unknown amongst professional, middle-class, educated whites in this remote area of Bechuanaland, later Botswana. Historically the Boers and rich Batswana cattle-owners simply fornicated to increase their stock of virtual slaves, serfs, too poor to leave the land unless they had connections and assertive enough personalities to survive in the big towns and cities.

Hopefully, the Maimons named him "Dream". His name, strictly speaking "///Khabbo",¹⁹ meant "dream" in the Cape Bushpeople's language which was also one of the Northern Bushpeople's languages, /Xam. They changed the spelling to make it easier for Europeans and Africans to say it.

"///Khabbo" in the /Xam language transliterates better as Xhabbo if you are an African language speaker like a Xhosa person.

"X" is the lateral click: what Europeans say to horses corresponding to the // in the /Xam language.

/is the dental click: "tsk". To a European this sounds like an expression of irritation with the tongue pulled away from the front top teeth although it signifies no such thing in the /Xam language. When San hunters talk softly in the bush the five click consonants or fricatives make them sound like insects – various beetles and cicadae – and camouflage their presence from the prey as do their apricot-brown bodies blending into the olive-green or dried out veld bushes and trees and when they freeze stock-still looking like shadows.

¹⁹ The name of one of Bleek and Lloyd's informants.

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By the 1890s Cecil Rhodes had given a group of trek-Boers land in the western Kgalagadi where there was underground water. As if it was his to give. He certainly had the power to give it if not the justification – being one of the richest men in Africa and England, owner of the Kimberley diamond mine and many gold mines on the “Rand” – the Witwatersrand, with a whole country to the north-east of Bechuanaland conquered by his British South Africa Company and named after him – Rhodesia. His mining companies had global connections.

The Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain and the Westminster Parliament put into legislation or allowed executive orders in line with what the “Randlords” and Rhodes wanted. As long as there was an advantage for British settlers. Thus he “placed” Afrikaners in the Kgalagadi as a buffer against the Germans who had colonized and terrorized South West Africa.

Liberal agricultural colonialism in the mid-Victorian Cape Colony had mutated into a fiercely racist industrial and financial capitalism and imperialism with the British competing with the Germans in South West Africa and further north, the French and the Belgians in the Congo, and the French in Niger, Mali, the Cameroons. In or bordering South Africa which was dominated by the English-speaking and the Afrikaner/Dutch, were the three British Protectorates showing a sense of obligation to the indigenous peoples.

To the north-east, however, the British South Africa Company had been an armed invading force of adventurers equipped with the newly invented Maxim machine gun, out for land and wealth legitimated by missionaries who offered education but on condition that the natives knew who was boss in the new white colonial world.

The Reverend John Moffat played his part in tricking King Lobengula of the amaNdebele out of his land, Matabeleland, and destroying Ndebele hegemony over Mashonaland. John Rudd and Cecil Rhodes and Dr. Jameson were behind it all.

So in Rhodesia in the 1890s the British South Africa Company’s forces displaced the amaNdebele and the Shona chiefdoms – executing the Shona spirit mediums Nehanda and Kagubi for inspiring a bloody, murderous revolt, cheating King Lobengula of his kingdom and driving him to a humiliating and desperate death.

The cultural lines of authority in the remnants of the Mwene Mutapa and Rozwi Empires which had been founded in the early modern period were ostensibly eradicated except that some institutions mutated into the mid-20th century liberation movements – like the Shona spirit mediums.²⁰

In Bechuanaland the Khama dynasty in the Bamgwato tribe was allowed to rule within a moderately permissive colonial framework – until independence in 1966, underwritten by the discovery of diamonds in the eastern Kgalagadi.

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The furthest reaches of British Bechuanaland were only theoretically under district commissioners and a police force acting to enforce the law. It was so big and so poor before diamonds were discovered in 1966-1967, that one could, literally, get away with murder and the enslavement of lesser tribes like the San since the worst Batswana chiefs and their tribespeople's deeds could be hidden away, in the vastness of this harsh, lovely Wilderness.²¹

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Mordechai Maimon and Xhabbo were treated as twins by the Maimons. Xhabbo, began to talk fluently at 2-3. He began to ask why he was brown and Mordechai white. John and Jessica explained the circumstances of his birth. Unable to bear “the shame” Jakob Van Wyk had shut his doors to his child and his previous concubine /Nisa. He worked his farm from morning to night and spoke to nobody besides his San and Batswana workers with an occasional visit from his Afrikaner neighbors who pitied him.

Of course, the adopted child was included in joint birthdays, and made fully part of the Maimon family. When they took him to visit his birth-mother everybody found that through the Maimon's counselling and the trance-dance she, /Nisa, had recovered from a post-puerperal depression. But there was no daily and therefore no deep-rooted attachment between Xhabbo and /Nisa.

²⁰ See Terence Ranger (1969/1979) *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896-1897* (London: Heinemann Educational Books)

²¹ See footnote 10 on Bessie Head (2010) *When Rain Clouds Gather* (Virago Modern Classics) – [Helen Oyeyemi](#) (Introduction).

They handled the situation as tactfully as they could. His birth-mother spoke to him in /Xam and he began to understand his relationship with her and her husband, his step-father who was away in the gold-mines of Johannesburg when he was conceived having an affair with an African woman in a nearby township. Nothing was said about his biological father, Jakob Van Wyk. In traditional San society this distinction between fathers and lovers did not necessarily produce “illegitimacy”. Now “Time” and “Political Territory” and “Property” and “Apartheid” seeping from across the border between Botswana and South Africa, had been imported into San society and with it the whole question of biological legitimacy, that is patriarchy, became an issue. Or perhaps it was there, concealed, from the start.²²

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When they were 13 years of age, events starting on the 21st March 1960 had a profound effect on all their lives. They had been having lessons at home from the age of 7 in what was still Bechuanaland with Petrus Ngubane, John and Jessica’s *major domo* teaching them Zulu and Sotho. His Setswana, wasn’t so good so they relied on Bontle his Batswana wife to teach them the national language. John taught them science and maths and Jessica history, geography, German and French.

Xhabbo’s birth mother and San step-father when he came home from the mines, eventually disentangled himself from his African lover in Johannesburg and were with difficulty persuaded to visit the Maimons, plus one of the few San teachers in Bechuanaland – working in the Dutch Reformed Church school so Mordechai and Xhabbo continued to learn the /Xam dialect of Xhabbo’s mother’s indigenous group.

As he grew older Xhabbo did become less distantly attached to his birth-mother and her husband, his “step-father” and was happy to remain adopted by the Maimons. He didn’t want to meet his biological father, Jakob Van Wyk, who anyway, perhaps reciprocating the same feeling of rejection acquired from the puritanical Christian ethic, had shut his doors to everyone. He still wrote poetry in Afrikaans and translated them into English for religious journals.

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²² Marjorie Shostak (2009) *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman* Harvard University Press on discovering sex, taking lovers, trial marriages, marriage, and a healing ritual (the trance-dance).

Events starting on the 21st March 1960 when they were 13 years of age, had a profound effect on all their lives.²³ On the radio - the English programme of the South African Broadcasting Corporation - they heard about the Sharpeville shooting of the 21st March 1960.

Sharpeville was - is - on the way to Vereeniging which is on the Vaal River which bordered the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, now Gauteng and the Free State. Sharpeville was to become engraved on the national consciousness in South Africa itself and throughout the world - an African township about 30 miles south of Johannesburg which you pass nearby on the way to the coast – to Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth.

People had been forcibly rehoused in what became the Sharpeville township from their original home in an area which was more or less forcibly confiscated for white housing adjoining a salubrious suburb.

In British Bechuanaland over the border from South Africa, the Maimon's immediate neighbour's a farmer's house, was in the town. Mr Van Der Walt had a new Land Rover in which he had just returned on 23rd March from the nearest big railhead with supplies including the Johannesburg newspapers in English and Afrikaans to be delivered in *lieu* of credit with the Indian shop-keepers who retailed them.

There were horrifying pictures of the dead and wounded of the Sharpeville shooting: 69 of an unarmed crowd were killed and scores seriously injured, some shot in the back fleeing. One man in the crowd had a pistol which he shot into the air which coincided with a policeman stumbling, giving the impression that the crowd had firearms and was dangerous. Some in the crowd threw stones at the police-station and pressed up against its fence.

In 1960, in South Africa itself, the Pan African Congress led by Robert Sobukwe, was a rival of the African National Congress. The ANC's head at that time was Chief Albert Luthuli, a distinguished man, a Christian and a Zulu from Natal. The ANC was partially under the control of the South African Communist Party. It was multi-racial and Nelson Mandela who had been a leading figure in the ANC Youth League, although also a Christian, was also a SACP member for urgent strategic and tactical reasons.

²³ Wikipedia *Sharpeville Massacre* edited 31 October 2019 accessed 24th November 2019

It was a banned secret organization providing the only means of meeting between all the radical leaders of all the ethnic groups. This would have been otherwise impossible because of apartheid's laws and regulations. Its ideology of pro-Soviet Union Marxism, ignored Stalin's crimes.

By contrast the PAC emphasized black African nationalism rather than multi-racialism. It had started an anti-pass campaign, asking people to leave their passes or references books at home and to assemble for speeches, songs and marches. The pass or reference-book was a document, an internal passport, which all Africans over 16 had to carry. It recorded their movements – their employer's signature, their current location, their "legal" place of residence and their photograph. It was issued by the local African administration board and had to be signed by the African's employer. It had to be carried at all times and if the person did not have it on his or her person when out and about, or if it was not signed and up to date in terms of employment, he or she might be liable for arrest.

S/he had to appear in the magistrate's court and could be fined, imprisoned and deported back to his or her place of so-called "tribal" residence, whether or not s/he had emigrated elsewhere although s/he could be exempted under the Urban Areas Act if born in a city or town area, or registered as an urban person. Otherwise s/he, might be deported to a bleak "tribal" township up to 5 hours journey away from work each way. Its purpose was to control almost enslave black African labour.²⁴

The crowd at the Sharpeville Township Pan African Congress rally had thrown stones at the police station. At another anti-pass rally in Durban months before, several policemen had been killed, and some disemboweled.

Now at Sharpeville armoured troop carriers arrived heightening the tension. Harvard Trainer planes flew overhead low and so did jets "buzzing" the crowd but the crowd took no notice, assembling in their thousands, singing liberation songs, dancing and listening to speeches by leaders.

Before any warning could be given, one African in the crowd fired a shot in the air and a policeman stumbled coincidentally within sight of the crowd and in full view of the police behind their fence using the police station as a fortress. Now the fence began to give way. Taking this to be the beginning of an armed attack by the crowd of about 10,000 people, the white police, numbering

²⁴ See Edward Roux's *Time Longer than Rope* University of Wisconsin Press 1962 on the pass laws and Leo Kuper's *Passive Resistance in South Africa*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1956, on the Defiance Campaign, and Wikipedia *Sharpeville Massacre* edited 31 October 2019. On the role of women see Beata Lipman (1984) *We Make Freedom* (London, Pandora Press).

about 50 men (there were also African constables without firearms) armed with rifles with full magazines and without giving a warning over loud-hailers, without orders, started firing into the crowd who then retreated, some being shot in the back.

The figure of 69 dead and scores wounded was illustrated by Ian Berry's photographs showed the dead and wounded being carried away by black and white police with medical care and ambulances arriving on the scene long after the carnage.

At home the phone rang that evening whilst they were looking at the shocking pictures in their house in Kgalagadi Town in Bechuanaland, two days after the shooting at Sharpeville.

John and Jessica Maimon were experienced in war-wound surgery which they had perfected in the last year of the war Up North in the medical corps in Libya, Egypt and Italy during the 8th Army's campaign against Rommel and then the Italians. In March 1960 the boys were only 13-14 and too young for direct involvement in the post-Sharpeville repercussions. They had a holiday due and all four of them flew in the doctors' medically equipped bi-plane to Jan Smuts Airport and then stayed with their cousins Minna and Jack Sachs who, with Jessica and John's help with capital, had built a block of flats in Johannesburg after leaving from Nazi Germany in the 1930s and kept a furnished apartment for visits by relatives and friends.

Because of the medical situation in the African hospitals, John and Jessica were co-opted as extra surgeons to treat the wounded survivors of the Sharpeville shooting in the segregated African hospitals nearby Sharpeville - such as Baragwanath - using sophisticated techniques they had perfected during the war: for extracting bullets, disinfecting and suturing serious wounds and taking measures to treat spinal injuries in patients shot in the back whilst fleeing but survived. Their cousins Minna and Jack Sachs were low-profile but important members in the South African Communist Party.

The SACP *cadres* in the African National Congress and the Congress Alliance were determined to seize the initiative from the Pan African Congress in the now escalating anti-pass campaign which had encouraged the formation and growth of what would become a world-wide anti-apartheid movement.

The ANC planned to outbid the PAC in running an even more militant campaign. Minna and Jack gave John pamphlets for delivery to ANC contacts in the townships. The slogan was: "Chief Luthuli burns his pass! Come to a meeting on X day at X o'clock at X place and..." (the implication was "...burn your pass!") There were spaces left for local details. Local branches of the ANC would

arrange campaign details but Jessica was against getting involved in this. Given the massive reaction all over the country, the Afrikaner Nationalist government would seek to detain thousands of people already on the Special Branch files. Jessica and John had contacts with SACP comrades whom they suspected would be targeted. Why inflict further suffering on the already suffering by inspiring them to burn their passes? Not even the PAC had called for this – just leave pass-books at home.

What would become of their good works in Bechuanaland if they became party to a violent insurrection? What would become of Xhabbo, their brown child, let alone Mordechai if their parents were murdered by extra-judicial killers acting for South Africa's military intelligence who could – (and would at a later date) cross over the border into Bechuanaland and assassinate scores of political opponents in exile? The two boys stayed in the guest flat in Eden Court looked after by Petrus Ngubane who himself had been a political exile in Botswana.

Despite Jessica's protests, John accepted boxes of ANC pamphlets from Minna and Jack so they packed them in the boot of their hired car. They were bound for Albertynsville Township. During the journey they called in at the house of a colleague doctor who lived in the same township – Coleridge Machobane. Jessica persuaded John to stick to working in the hospitals and then go back to Kgalagadi Town, to drop the whole idea of taking up the liberation struggle in South Africa itself other than doing medical work in township hospitals.

Apartheid and repression had reached such a pitch that politics were extremely dangerous for anyone who was already getting a potentially high profile by violating the extreme taboo of bringing up a child – Xhabbo – across ethnic lines. It was illegal in South Africa itself. Both of the boys at 13 was doing well at their school-at-home - learning languages, history, literature and science. The Enlightenment had dawned on them and on the other children who joined the Maimon's charitable and government subsidised home-school in Bechuanaland where they could transcend apartheid. Why would they want to put all this at risk?

Coleridge Machobane was glad of a lift home from an ANC assembly point, but was alarmed at the Maimons and Minna and Jack's arrival in Albertynsville Township which was on the way to Germiston and a network of roads across the Witwatersrand. His house was within sight of the police station, in fact, now that it was evening, it was lit up by a search-light on a huge pole planted in the grounds of the station adjusted to illuminate exactly who was coming and going down the main street into the township and actually going into or emerging from his and other leading comrades' houses. It was already the beginnings of a police state. Coleridge suggested the three of them get into the car and drive to a less conspicuous place, in fact bordering a *kopje* in the veld.

Before they could discuss how to get the pamphlets into his house and to local ANC contacts, Coleridge read one. He said he disapproved of it. He didn't want people to burn their passes because this would lead to big trouble: arrests and people being fired from their jobs. Perhaps even more police killings. He was in favour of non-violent free speech, consciousness raising and if provocative action, action which would succeed not be frustrated by the growing police repression.

As if to confirm his worst forebodings the police arrived in a van from up the road with dogs which were trained to track down people who didn't smell like the police, although they were deep in the veld. And there they were caught red-handed. In the parked car, in its boot the pamphlets were stored and now seized. The sergeant in charge, his face flushed red with anger, read a pamphlet and denounced it as incitement to civil disorder which, since there was now going to be a state of emergency, would cause them to be detained.

The police sergeant realised he had said too much and calmed down. He said he wanted to give the Maimons, Coleridge, Minna and Jack advice because he recognised them as Jews and an educated African. He then made a speech fit for the occasion of catching agitators for democracy: he cited African backwardness as reasons for its impossibility here, by comparison with what God's chosen people could do in Israel where the Arabs were, he implied, similarly, backward. The Jews belonged in Israel to uplift the Arabs.

They were amazed that an Afrikaner police sergeant was so articulate if predictably reactionary. He had also fought Up North against Hitler: his fluency befitted an ex-preacher:

“Ons het u ook gered van Hitler ten koste van baie Afrikaner-lewens. Julle, dokters, is veronderstel om mense te genees. In plaas daarvan versprei u die siekte van demokrasie vir agterlike mense. Het u al gesien hoe hulle polisiemanne in Durban doodmaak deur hul ingewande oop te sny? Maar in plaas daarvan om dankbaarheid te betoon as die mense van die Boek, wat God gekies het, in plaas van om na Israel te gaan en die Arabiere namens God te veg, staan u saam met die swartes wat niks van die geskiedenis weet nie. Columbus Machobane, sou hy die kans gekry het om in die middeleeue in 'n ander plek in Afrika nog as dokter te kwalifiseer? Jy sien? Julle dink ons Afrikaners is almal onopgevoede dwase?”

[“We also saved you from Hitler at the cost of many Afrikaner lives. You, doctors, are supposed to heal people. Instead you spread the disease of democracy for the backward. Have you seen them on the rampage killing policemen in Durban by cutting open their guts? But instead of showing gratitude as the people of the Book, God's chosen, instead of going to Israel and fighting the Arabs on behalf of God you side with the blacks who, apart from the educated like Coleridge here, don't have enough education. Coleridge Machobane, would he have been given the chance of qualifying as a doctor

anywhere in Africa which is still living in the middle ages? You see? You think we Afrikaners are all uneducated fools?"]

He had predicted a state of emergency but did not arrest John, Minna, Jack, Jessica and Coleridge simply confiscated the pamphlets. He seemed somehow to be sympathetic to the educated African doctor and seemed pleased that John, Jessica, Minna and Jack were Jewish. The other policemen lounging around the van laughed at their colleague and called him *die liberalist predikant* – the liberal preacher. He chided them as sinners. In fact, the whites and Coleridge learned later that he had been a conventional Dutch Reformed Church cleric and had been caught up in a sting operation with a mixed-race (“coloured”) congregant under the Immorality Act and stripped of his clerical status and position and had to find another job. Being well-educated and having influence through his family, he ended up as a police sergeant.

The following night at about 2 o’clock in the morning the Special Branch police raided Minna’s flats Eden Court and Coleridge Machobane in Albertynsville. The police said they were acting under powers granted them under a state of emergency which suspended the rule of law.

John and Jessica, Jack and Minna were taken to Marshall Square prison and Coleridge to the Fort in Hillbrow. There were tens of thousands of opponents of the government of all races galvanised by the Sharpeville shooting in these prisons – and in prisons all over the country, so they learned later. Many were held in confinement for up to 6 months after being interviewed by the Special Branch and warned of the consequences of their dissent.

Other cousins in Eden Court, Hannah and Jerry Idelman, looked after Mordechai and Xhabbo and took charge of the block of flats. Hannah played the cello, Jerry was a composer. They were amazed at Xhabbo’s literacy and knowledge of science. They managed to get the British High Commissioner in Pretoria to intervene to get John and Jessica released, given that they were British subjects living in British territory and had committed no crimes. The pamphlets had not been distributed. Jerry drove them to the Jan Smuts Airport where their medical-ambulance bi-plane was stored in a hanger. John paid the rent and airport charges due, filled up with fuel, switched on the radar and opened up the maps and with much celebration and singing of liberation, Setswana and traditional /Xam songs, radioed the control tower to be allowed to taxi to a runway and return home.

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Sharpeville was over 60 years ago. Now Xhabbo and Mordechai taught part-time in the Department of Theology and Philosophy in this university in Gaborone.

All philosophers know or should know of Wittgenstein and this is how they taught his work. They explained his propositions and they related them to reality, their reality, European reality, Bushpeople or San reality, African reality. They presumed that in a university philosophy section of a theology department there is a joint reality. Of course, they weren't

fools. They knew that there were some illiterates in English and perhaps illiterates in Setswana actually admitted to do degrees. They didn't know exactly how this could happen. But this was Africa. Obviously, there must be either corruption or incompetence or just inadvertence in the admission procedure. Everyone knew that the admission tutors were themselves defeated by a corrupted system.

On the other hand, some illiterates were not illiterate in the full sense but were actually dyslexic, or simply never learned other languages. Mordechai and Xhabbo were not fully literate in Setswana for other reasons. This is because the African languages they heard as very small children were mainly Zulu, and Sotho, because the Maimons spoke Zulu and Sotho which they had learned in Johannesburg after the war, and their *major domo* in Botswana was Petrus Ngubane, an African Zulu speaker, originally a gold-miner, then a comrade in the liberation movement in South Africa, then an exile in Botswana who could make himself understood in Setwana but was not fluent. Even his wife Bontle who was Batswana spoke Zulu in the house. Because she chose to.

The nearest language to Setswana that they had learned completely fluently in Johannesburg was Sesotho.

"So," they would say in the philosophy class, "this is how Wittgenstein's Proposition 1 in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: can be translated."

Proposition 1. The world is all that is the case. (And we should add:) but it is sensed, perceived and experienced as such not only by scientific reason.

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Lefatše ke ntho e ngoe le e ngoe e joalo = The world is all that is the case.

"But we need to discuss 'but it is sensed, perceived and experienced as such not only by scientific reason.'"

Which in Sesotho is:

“empa e bonoa, e lemohuoa ebile e na le boiphihlelo joalo ka ha e se feela ka mabaka a mahlale.”

Mordechai and Xhabbo, read the *Tractatus* in adolescence, because it was brilliant and yet imperfect. Imperfect because there is subjectivity in the world “being the case” making it only variably or proximally “the case”.

So, one can choose to use nuclear physics to destroy the world that becomes the case or to save the world and that becomes the case. It seemed to them that to leave aside the ethics of what was (scientifically) “the case” was a huge mistake.

The proposition can't be predicted absolutely as the *world-being-the-case* unless you add the hyphenation to open up its possibilities. The world is not really everything “that is the case” unless you know that by even saying it in space and time you change it.

The world being the case is not the same as the earthly globe. We make the world. Existence makes the world. The Earth is a planet in orbit round the sun, our star. The universe was born about +/- 13.78 billion years ago, then the solar system came about and then geological Earth and then *social being-in-the-World*.

Proposition 2.1 *We picture facts to ourselves.*

In Sesotho: Re ipapisa le linnete.

Xhabbo's friend and brother Mordechai ben Yochanan ben Yosef Maimon belonged to a family, to history which was pictured to them: so, Xhabbo added: facts are subjective and objective. They both agreed on that.

Mordechai drew a diagram in chalk on the blackboard of his family tree and next to it a caricature of Hitler and Nazi SS guards at the gates of Auschwitz with 40 relatives from the family tree – the Jaffs, the Yaffsitches, the Oshrys, the Bialiks, the Pomerances, the Pekarskys, the Groenblatts – in striped prisoners jackets and trousers, yellow stars of David sewn on, together with others signifying that they were homosexuals, criminals, disabled, or Gypsies. There was another diagram of them being packed into a representation of a gas-chamber and yet another of bodies being fed into crematorium ovens.

Xhabbo was conceived by accident. Xhabbo, also belonged, but tenuously. How could any God or ethical predisposition have willed the circumstances which inadvertently caused deep hurt, punishment, poverty, stigma, caused by his accident of birth?

Xhabbo suffered from ontological anxiety. *Ontos*. Greek. Being.

That anxiety had to be pictured. Later he learned from his more distant family of how his grandmother virtually saved him from being murdered by his depressed mother.

Xhabbo drew a picture of his step-father working in the gold-mines and his mother's lover, his biological father, Jakob Van Wyk on his farm at different times and in different places over the years 1945-1946 in which he was conceived and born.

He pictured his mother's vision of the ghost of Gauna, drawn in ghastly detail, possessing her and using her to dig a grave for himself as a newly born child. Then he crossed that out and he drew a picture of his grandmother walking five miles from their camp and taking him to the Maimon's in the earliest hours of the morning of the 14th August 1946 and so on.

Mordechai belonged as a native belongs. Even though white and European in origin he belonged there in what was Bechuanaland and is now Botswana.

Xhabbo, often felt he lived on the edge of an abyss between two worlds. He had apricot-brown, have half-moon eyes, high-cheekbones, pepper-corn hair – but, on the other hand his beloved adoptive parents and adoptive brother were white Europeans. That was also pictured to himself including love and their love which aroused the ethical feeling of love.

Ironically the white brother felt he belonged more to the “black” country than the “black” brother because the Batswana often enslaved the San.

Xhabbo’s adoptive parents could not have been more loving, and yet not as indigenous Southern Africans.

What Xhabbo had to deal with psychologically was that the San, the Bushpeople had lived there for about between 45,000 to 75,000 years. Both the whites and the Africans enslaved them but only the whites tried to, and largely succeeded, in wiping the /Xam out in South Africa itself about 250 to 300 years ago. And then went to church the following Sunday.

And yet the Maimon’s religion ethics were only implicit *a priori*. There was a chasm, a gap, and abyss between ethical certainty and belief. One had to leap from universalist ethics across the gap onto safe particularistic ethics.

A metaphor could be pictured by a chalk drawing similar to the painted engravings found in the caves of the Drakensberg Mountains dividing Kwa-Zulu Natal from the Eastern Cape which pictured war between the San and the Boers, but taking place behind a large perfectly engraved and subtly coloured drawing of the sacred eland dying with its back legs crossed as if it was a king of the animals they hunted but they also prayed to the king of the elands, asking for forgiveness and protection.

They did diagrams of /Xam refugees in Botswana fleeing from the north-west of South Africa being shot at by Boers in hats against a notation placed by the Archaeological Society of the time which read: “18th century when the Dutch genocide of the Cape San took place.”

*

At this point in the lecture, seminar or tutorial Xhabbo might add: “Jews gave, me Xhabbo Xam a name and a home when I could have become an unwanted presence in San society because it has changed into a partly Christian, partly animistic, pagan yet increasingly a materially possessive society and nobody truly wanted me.”

*

The Maimons, born in 1920 came to Bechuanaland, as it was then, in 1946 after the terrible war in Europe and North Africa to recover in the peace and beauty of the Kgalagadi Wilderness and to practice the medicine they had studied in Oxford and London during the period of hostilities. When they were 25, living in Johannesburg they saved some money and were able to help their cousins Minna and Jack Sachs build a block of flats, Eden Court, in Observatory.

In the Kgalagadi peace and beauty could also become terrible heat, drought and poverty and the endemic diseases of poverty, partly based on the persecution of the poorest, the San. Unlike the Jews they had no promised land as did Maimonides. Once the whole of a fertile South Africa was full of game and wild veld-food. It was their Canaan, but then it became more like Palestine, a battleground for competing peoples.

World attention focussed on Botswana as a suddenly wealthy democracy, highlighted the plight of the San as a deprived ethnic minority with few means of accessing power even in the nation's new parliament because the political parties were skewed by majority tribal allegiances. So philosophical logic became political theory and government. They did Venn drawings showing the relation between demographical and socio-economic and political forms of logic.

Someone in the classroom asked if the Spanish Catholic Majesties were a model for Hitler? Ferdinand and Isabella expelled the Jews from their ideal of a new Jew-free and Arab-free Spain in 1492 if they refused to convert. They burned the *conversos* if they were alleged to be secretly practicing Judaism or Islam

For Hitler, likewise, one couldn't eradicate the Jewish psyche without destroying it. It was, according to Muslim law impermissible to convert to another religion. So, the answer was crusade, death to all anti-Christian infidels.

The Spanish monarchs called the converted Jews Marranos. To mock what they believed was their secret Judaism. Marranos means pigs. The Spanish exiles, Sephardim, sought refuge in Holland and Germany then England, constantly under suspicion.

How could the very people chosen by God to produce the Messiah, the very Christ, reject him as the Messiah? They must be the nearest thing to the devil. It undermined the very validity of Isaiah's prophecy, attacked the whole of the Hebrew bible's basic assumption that Jewish history must culminate in a Christ-Messiah. What could you do with such recalcitrant subversives but torture and kill them in the name of a love which they rejected?

Jessica Maimon (née Cordevero) came from Germany. She was saved by the *Kindertransport* from the Nazis in 1939 aged 16. John Maimon aged 17 was also a *Kindertransport* child from Germany where he was studying. Both their sets of parents escaped Lithuania in 1938 by going into hiding in the Netherlands, where Dutch people hid them.

*

As philosophy teachers who did their undergraduate degrees in Oxford Mordechai and Xhabbo returned as fully-fledged doctors in the ancient subject and at the university in Gaborone, the “twins”, now adults felt obliged to *live* philosophy, to discredit Nazism, fascism and Japanese imperialism. Segregation and apartheid.

Thus, proposition 2.063: *The sum total of reality is the world, given that [1.2] the world divides into facts [including what Mordechai and Xhabbo and the San and many Africans experienced in history – which is genocide or extreme persecution]*

So the sum total of reality is the world = Kakaretso ea 'nete ked lefatše.

Wittgenstein, for Mordechai and Xhabbo and their students created some sort of logical order out of chaos.

Wittgenstein, genealogically was more Jewish than Christian and must have known what would have been his fate under Hitler and, having won fame at Cambridge as the writer of a new symbolic philosophy of logic during the Great War whilst still fighting for the Austrians and the Germans, became a hospital porter during the Luftwaffe’s blitz of London after he had become British.

His sisters, still in Vienna bought their lives from the Nazis with their vast family fortune.

He gave his share of the family fortune to poor artist geniuses in Vienna.

Hitler was gassed in WW1 by the Allied forces. He wanted to be an artist. He was rejected by the Vienna school of art. Which he imagined must be in the grip of the Jews. His father was illegitimate. His father was adopted by the Hiedlers. Adolf went to the same school as Wittgenstein in Linz.

If not for Hitler the Maimons might not have sought quiet refuge in Bechuanaland after the war. If not for the Maimons and their library and cultural talk harking back to the Enlightenment, there would have been no one compassionate enough to adopt Xhabbo in an emergency – given his birth-mother’s potentially murderous post-puerperal depression.

San society was already undermined by the cash economy brought about by diamond mining and individual farming.

What else could go wrong between periods of happiness and contentment?

A lot. When they were 30 in 1976 there was another uprising in South Africa ten years after Bechuanaland had become Botswana. People like their cousins Minna and Jack again needed them to help with medical assistance. Police beatings, attacks from police dogs, torture in prisons and Special Branch offices were the South African state’s response to the Soweto school students uprising which had spread all over the country. The guest flat in Eden Court had been turned into a small hospital ward of four rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom.

*

Xhabbo’s Bushman step-father killed his, Xhabbo’s biological father when Van Wyk left his security gates unlocked. At first they both got drunk but old hostilities broke out when Van Wyk’s brandy was finished and he asked Xhabbo’s step-father to go. They started to fight.

*

Xhabbo had one living birth-parent, a mother, but her husband robbed him of his biological birth father. He killed Van Wyk in his farmhouse with a poisoned arrow.

*

So /Han=/=kasso was sentenced to death. He would be hanged in Lobatse Prison. To pass the time Xhabbo was allowed to visit him in his cell. Xhabbo told his step-father his life story:

Hyenas and wild-dogs following Xhabbo's rescuer whom he called his grandmother, who walked into the town from the Kgalagadi. She walked into Kgalagadi Town holding him in the crook of her left arm with a spear in her right-hand to fend off the scavengers until she found a cardboard box and string at the back of the Kgalagadi Wilderness Hotel.

The hyenas and wild-dogs made a half-circle round the doctors' door-step, after she left him there in my factory-made, cardboard, *ad hoc* cradle, picked up on the way into the Kgalagadi Town itself and tied tight with string like a parcel with air-holes punched in with a knife. She had worked it out beforehand. She wanted to save him.

The predators from the Wilderness must have been following his grandmother as she cradled him in her arms before she put him in his box, closed the lids to protect him from the ravening beasts, wrapped it up in string strong enough to resist a hyena's teeth for a few minutes, with holes to allow him to breathe on the door-step of the Maimon's house and surgery.

The box read: "Gilbey's London Gin" and a neat printed address label noted its original destination: "Kgalagadi Wilderness Hotel".

The woman who became his adoptive mother, Jessica Maimon, kept it for him as a sentimental memento. There were scores of such boxes for bottles of all kinds in the back yard of the one and only hotel in Kgalagadi Town waiting to be dumped. Now there is re-cycling. The local farmers and a few shopkeepers and professionals drank, ate and socialised there.

His saviour as he called her must have picked any old box up in the dead of night / early-early morning taking Xhabbo to a house where there was some chance he would be given a better life.

Maybe the laughing hyenas spared him because they didn't like the residual smell of Gilbey's London Gin after his grandmother rang the front door bell of the dark and silent house. One of the bottles must have broken when it was first delivered to the hotel so the whole box stank of gin. He must have inhaled the spirit saturating the cardboard. So, he was probably mildly drunk. Drunk at 1 or 2 hours old. Wonderful start in life.

His grandmother must have retreated fast back to the Kgalagadi itself in case someone woke up and arrested her for kidnapping and abandoning a child.

*

It was 1946. The court was in the old Bechuanaland Protectorate capital of Mafeking. A white judge and two white assessors – advocates on the bench - found the stepfather guilty of killing Jakob Van Wyk.

The Maimons started a fund to finance an appeal to the Privy Council in London which in practice meant Law Lords considering the case again. Given that this was a crime of passion they set aside the conviction for murder and recommended that the step-father be jailed for manslaughter.

So, the step-father was saved and released from prison after two years in Lobatse. The relatives of the victim, the murdered mother's lover, his biological father, were also relieved.

They didn't want to feud with Xhabbo's mother's husband, a murderer. Becoming a philosopher - not just I in Wittgenstein's shadow - helped Xhabbo untangle these knots of historical guilt and shame.

On his birthday, Xhabbo and Mordechai drink Jewish Sabbath wine – sweet, sticky and comforting. They had a sabbath service at home.

Xhabbo's San mother, still, was miraculously alive at a great age due to improved medical care now that epidemiology has reached the Kgalagadi.

She still traded skins and hides to make *amasi* or *mafi* which is a milk fermentation, a drink more to Xhabbo's liking than gin but not Sabbath wine.

The purely hunting and gathering San still have no domesticated milk-giving animals. Xhabbo's mother and her relatives has a great routine as the Original People still almost living the traditional life. There is an element of show in it. They and their village dance the medicinal trance-dance for the tourists.

The tourists like Xhabbo's mother /Nisa was not averse to charging a modest fee, discreetly mentioned by a guide who refers to the pressures the San are under to abandon hunting and gathering. The cattle farmers drive the game away to the north and buy more and more of the Kgalagadi from the government. Is there corruption here? Don't ask. Or "enriching the economy" so more wealth trickles down to the San still trying to live their traditional lives. For them villagization and mining breed, literally dis-ease, and the end of what they regard even after Christianity as a good. Because an ancient life, decreed by the moon and the sun and the Milky Way before the great slaughter in South Africa nearly 300 years ago.

That is why Hare could not believe his mother Hare was dead, not sleeping, in the old legend. Perhaps that is why Moon came down from the sky and smashed Hare's upper lip and Hare's mother did die.

She responded to gifts with a traditional clapping of hands and curtsy. All the money was shared.

She spoke Xam, Setswana and Afrikaans. They walked any miles to a Dutch Reformed Church on Sundays.

She believed in God and Moon and Mantis as joint arbiters of fate, as well as the Rain Bull and Lightning and Thunder as god-like entities.

*

Xhabbo's first encounter with a living being after his birth-mother's tormented and tearful first embrace, came after his passage from the wilderness into Kgalagadi Town, spared from the predators, and then licked by the Maimon's Rhodesian Ridgeback dog, Sheba, who came round the

house from the back garden. She was still nursing her puppies who ran along with her and smelt Xhabbo out, mixed up with the smell of gin in his improvised cradle.

An hour or two earlier his birth-mother lifted Xhabbo up to her breast, umbilical cord still attached and placenta being ejected.

When Xhabbo was 5 years old he learned that her own mother was her midwife, and she, my grandmother, cut the umbilical cord.

Xhabbo's adoptive mother Jessica and father John and Mordechai his brother, when they were still children went to the funeral and trance-dance held when his grandmother died to welcome her into the world of the ancestors over which //Gauna and Mantis preside as head-spirit and creator of the Earth and World. And Moon who is near to God. That's what they believed.

When they go to a Dutch Reformed Church in the Town Jesus joins ancestors and *anima* spirits.

To both Xhabbo and Mordechai Jesus was a Jewish charismatic healer from Galilee who could cure hysterical illnesses through faith-healing and was a gifted teller of parables. If only he had not gone to Jerusalem he would have escaped Temple and Roman politics. But what is the use of what ifs?

Xhabbo met his birth-mother and her husband whom he called step-father and his very old maternal grandmother five years after his birth and this event had a tremendous impact on him. He brought them gifts every year and their descendants and relatives: – He

felt he owed something to all of them. He would kneel respectfully and, embarrassed they would take gifts and money from him, clapping, bowing and curtsying.

So, in the world which is the case, as Ludwig Wittgenstein would have it, is also a subjectively variable case.

Xhabbo attached more to his social mother Jessica Maimon than his birth-mother /Nisa.

It was she and John Maimon who brought Mordechai and Xhabbo the gifts of the Enlightenment.

Perhaps Xhabbo's imaginary picture of his birth-mother and murdered birth-father operated at some deep level of his mind just as powerfully as the love Xhabbo felt for Jessica and John Maimon. Because of a shared ethnicity. Because of the actual or imaginary power of the biological bond? Despite the adultery? And the murder? Rather than hate and fear them Xhabbo brought them gifts.

*

The *physical* reality of the geological Earth, Botswana in this case, and the *social reality* imposed on the *Earth* as a *human World* here in the western Kgalagadi are certainly different.

The world which, as Wittgenstein says, is the case would be different for a child adopted across ethnicities, Xhabbo, than that for his European Jewish brother Mordechai Maimon whose social mother was his biological mother.

So, in Ludwig Wittgenstein's immortal proposition what does "the world is all that is the case" really mean?

Perhaps he means "on the planet Earth, the World is only approximately the case. Since it is perceived subjectively and objectively." Since mothering, or temperament whether biological or social or both in origin, vary individually, one can never predict the effects of attachment, as to what is the case.

Who could have predicted that his San "step-father" would have murdered his biological father in a fit of jealousy, and suffered imprisonment, but because the defence counsel argued it was a crime of passion, when he was temporarily insane, the Law Lords in the Privy Council accepted the argument, after an initial guilty finding by the original court.

For us, Mordechai and me, and for Ludwig Wittgenstein the words "the world is all that is the case" are a tautology as he himself says in the Tractatus. They enclose everything about the human and animal and vegetable *life-World* and the planet Earth and the universe in terms of provable fact.

What else could the World be - which is what humans impose on the Earth and includes the Earth - but "the case"?

Tautologies are ways of describing philosophical truth because they speak for themselves.

Of course, by definition, the world is everything that is the case. At least attention is directed to a particular science in terms of which one would prove this. But how can one prove a case of love? Or the degree and kind of attachment? Could you do it behaviourally and or even existentially?

What it means, though, in practice, is this *question*: is it that the world of one culture **is more or less the case as agreed between individuals engaged, in logic, or through science, or as a psychological prediction, or by intuition?**

Will I survive psychologically caught between the imaginary and the real/truth?

*

The Hubble satellite circling the earth in space suggests a universe about 13.75 billion years old. In which Moshe ben Maimon, the medieval Spanish ancestor of the Maimons may well have thought that every soul is unique.

Maybe every galaxy, nebula, star, planet, asteroid, comet is unique.

The Hubble data as represented in the background microwave radiation map of the known universe is graded by colours of galaxies and stars suggesting their age and position. This led to Stephen Hawking and others making this hypothesis: the universe began with a Big Bang and may end, when it stops expanding, with a collapse inward into a Big Crunch when black holes have consumer their galaxies and each other and space and time collapse into a singularity again..

So, my alienation occurs because their world is not really my world. My San mother and her husband whom I call my step-father, the murderer, believed Mantis re-created his own son Gaunu-tsaxau after he was killed by baboons. The baboons used his eye in a game of ball. Mantis retrieved the eye and told the eye to grow into Gaunu-tsaxau again, which it did. This is presumably magic but allegorical, a metaphor for the creative process. The eye not only sees but is a source of visual consciousness. Theologically, the eye is the window of the soul. But theology is not science.

Well, if in Genesis God *speaks* and then as a result the Earth comes into being, and then as a result of that the World comes into being, why not attribute the anthropomorphic quality of God to Mantis who only had to think of transmuting the eye of his son to recreate him wholly?

My alienation is somewhat assuaged when I find in science there is a partial overlap with legend. There once was no death and no real time because no real space. Just a singularity. Eternity packed into a point.

This was because in the Xam imaginary time, in the time of the creator-god Mantis, there was indeed no death - according to the “eternal” Moon. The disbelief of the truculent Hare brought death into the world – as the serpent and Eve and Adam did in Genesis.

The Moon said of Hare’s mother that she was just sleeping not dead at all: according to the dictates of the Moon. God said just leave the special fruit alone - the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil: implication - live on the fruit of the rest of the garden, the fruit of innocence, and death will keep away.

Because there once was no time. Space and time come and go in an eternity of other universes so far away their light will never reach us. In these universes timelessness, deathlessness did once exist because they too must have sprung into life from their separate, different singularities.

Time itself may indeed not have originally existed before the first few milliseconds after the big bang within our universe and the other universes.

Therefore, death may not have existed. Space-time may not have existed.

There may have once been a near-Nothing expanding only after a special event - the Big Bang producing a universe which in the future will contract into a singularity again, an infinitely small materiality which was its origin, but “packed” full of near-eternity. An oscillating universe. Bang. Very big. Oh dear, exhausted. Collapse. Very small.

From that point of view - of the World and the Earth existing at all in a time and place - this is an object of both scientific and mystical wonder.

That Earth was embryonically present in everything about 13.75 billion years ago, or thereabouts when, as far as we know, at a certain moment, space-time came into

existence. So, the universe is anthropic. We are bound to see it this way because it has made us in its own image. I was determined to exist: for the most part, that is, proximally.

Evolution had to produce one day, a Darwin, an Einstein, a Hawking, partially “by accident”, partially as a matter of probabilities.

But what was going to happen now on the doorstep of the Drs. Maimon?

*

1.1 The world is a totality of facts, not of things. (But I add and say are sensed, perceived and experienced subjectively as well, therefore the contexts of the facts affects how we see and use them which constantly changes their applicability).

I, Xhabbo and my brother Mordechai are writing this book together. This World and even planet Earth would **become** the totality of facts, not **merely** things. It would be possible to view facts through the perspective of science but not as a totality of things as **things**, because as a totality, **things** are infinite in number and type, therefore not within our range as a **totality**.

Why should we doubt this, and why should we doubt the impossibility of counting the number of things in the world? Why should we want to do this? What is the essential task of philosophy? Surely to find in what mode we exist. Ethical. Aesthetic. Spiritual.

Before the Earth is extinguished because the World has broken down.

Cogito ergo sum. says Descartes. I think therefore I am. But also, we might say: *cogito ergo nos sumus, et tu es: we think therefore we are and you are.* The social contract. Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Mill.

These are the crucial facts, not the number of things in the possibly infinite number of universes: **we think therefore we are and you are.**

On the Maimon's surgery doorstep Sheba was joined by her dog-mate Good Boy. They must have smelt a human pup through the stench of gin.

*

Could hyenas have a doglike intuition that a small, fresh body, stinking of gin, was going to be dumped?

Evidently yes, according to Bontle, the first person whom I, Xhabbo, encountered after my birth-mother must have held me for a few minutes and her husband my step-father abducted me, and left me on the doorstep of the first people he could trust to keep me alive and with whom I learned to speak.

Eventually he sought out and killed my birth-father.

And for his trouble, in saving me, the judge and two assessors sentenced him in Mafeking Bechuanaland Protectorate court to die by hanging in Lobatse Prison. My biological father who was murdered was also called Xhabbo: "Dream". We changed the spelling. The Bantu-languages lateral click. As in "Xhosa".

The San, the Bushpeople believe in dreams. No doubt neuro-science corroborates the importance of dreaming as a means of integrating and reinvigorating the brain's experiences and memories. Because of its importance, in this family and network we all dream various versions of the appeal to the Privy Council – the Law Lords in Westminster – my biological father's murderer being saved by a new verdict of manslaughter not murder and getting out of prison after 2 years.

CHAPTER FOUR

Petrus Ngubane our *major domo's* wife Bontle was an African. She was a Batswana person not a *Basarwa* – not a Bushperson like me, Xhabbo. She's a very old lady now, and lives with Mordechai and me, now that she and Jessica and John too have reached their 90s. We live sometimes in Gaborone and sometimes in Kgalagadi Town.

The Bangwato are the ruling tribe, headed by the leading family, the Khamas.

The struggle for survival and sexual selection must be the dynamic leading to the origin of species. Darwin. We *all* share a common ancestor with the chimpanzees about five million years ago, although some *homo sapiens*, modern humans, emerged in the Rift Valley in Kenya about 250,000 years ago. Perhaps other modern humans came about *independently* in Europe, Asia, the Americas. The Neanderthals emerged in Africa but left it and settled in Europe .

The Maimons, white Europeans, saw an adoptive brown child as an asset, an aid to their survival in an African country. I am sure they loved me too for what I was and when I began to develop into a clever child.

What would have happened if I couldn't "keep up" with Mordechai?

Fortunately, there were as many brown people as white people in our household. Fortunately, I was gifted.

*

Darwin and the modern ethnologists might say: even hyenas are attached to each other and experience mother/father/brother/sister love.

They are attached to each other in various formations built on a dominance hierarchy adapted to fighting and hunting. I have seen a pack of them with their asymmetrical back and front legs about to take down a black-maned lion until "his" lioness arrived to fight them off.

That is a reason why both species have survived. Fighting spirit.

7 billion of us survive in a World on the Earth.

*

Mordechai writes: I try to give my brother Xhabbo hope when he becomes apocalyptic. Because he feels his existence was an accident, he finds it harder than me to believe in the Eternal. For human purposes, setting limits.

We have Shabbat and Festival services for no more than ten to twenty of us: - our parents, grandparents old Dr and old Mrs Maimon, plus our helpers who are Africans and San - Christians. But, to our great relief, even though 6 of us are isolated as Jews in Kgalagadi Town, the others join in and affirm the Eternal in English and even in the Hebrew they have learned phonetically.

Then there is the pharmacist Abe Abrahams and his family.

*

Sometimes, if not for my brother Mordechai, I, Xhabbo would not be able to go on.

Wittgenstein speaks of all the facts. Who knows all the facts? A hypothetical God or simply Being inside and outside immediate space and time? Who can grasp Being or count beings? Kgalagadi Town was plagued by a lack of God, or Reason, and the over-presence of wild beings: late-night laughing hyenas, wild-dogs, jackals, until a fence was built around the town which proudly called itself the capital of the Kgalagadi.

My adoptive grandmother old Mrs Maimon, with my grandfather old Dr Yosef Maimon were Holocaust survivors who were hidden by good Dutch people in the Netherlands. They said of me when they woke up because of all the noise and staggered into the kitchen, picking me up and taking me in their arms, in Yiddish, so Jessica and John told me when I was 2: "*Danken Got. Der kind lebt: thank God. The child lives*". She said the same when Jessica Kahn and John Maimon were saved by the *Kindertransport* from Germany in 1939.

We picked up Yiddish to communicate with the grandparents in 1946 whose story they would tell Mordechai and me in years to come. She could speak 6 languages but preferred Yiddish. So did old Dr Yosef Maimon. They were both medical doctors from Germany.

Bontle, which means "Beauty", drove away the animals with her Zulu husband's assegais and ox-hide shield.

He, Petrus Ngubane was in Jo'burg working in the mines and on his departure enjoined his wife Bontle to watch out for any kind of trouble, and if necessary to use his traditional weapons to literally keep the wolf from the door.

He had learned Setswana when he was forced into exile in what would become Botswana, previously Bechuanaland, after becoming a member of the African National Congress on the East Rand Premier Mine (E.R.P.M.) where the mine police watched him as a trouble-maker, but saved his

job for him as long as he didn't teach literacy in the mine barracks; literacy which was equated with spreading communism. His "Learn Basic English" books were carefully scrutinised but everyone knew they couldn't stop him improving his mind especially now he was a citizen of a British Protectorate – Bechuanaland.

His world entailed all the facts which included the life-saving fact that Petrus was a comedian despite his sufferings at the hands of the South African Special Branch. If he made his Afrikaner mine-bosses laugh down in the pits they would dispense with the daily dose of verbal abuse.

"Van Der Merwe went on holiday to London. He was amazed to see white British workmen spending hours digging up a road to do some repair to an underground cable. They spent all day, with time off for tea and lunch-break. 'Ag,' said Van Der Merwe, "With a couple of blacks I could do the job myself in half an hour!"

Putting it in Ludwig Wittgenstein's terms, but moderating his logic with a dash of common sense: the history of Petrus and Petrus' traditional weapons and his jokes tells one how the totality of facts *might* determine what was the case and also what was not the case in the history of South Africa.

*

Even the one from Shaka's day he lovingly repaired when the leather binding perished: two hundred years old. This was an Iron Age society encountering modernity. During Shaka's rule a warrior who returned without his assegai would be summarily executed as ignoble, a failure, a coward.

Victory in war was not necessarily a divine cult driven by God, *Unkulunkhulu*, but in Shaka's case more by a tyrant, who was himself tormented by his half-brothers who stood between him and kingship, indeed threatened his basic survival with his mother Nandi whom his father married after she conceived and gave birth to his first male child.

She, Nandi, and Shaka as a child were mocked and tormented by his father's other wives and younger sons.

He learned superhuman military skills in fights with his half-brothers. Alone, he could outmatch them by using the terrain, including hillocks which enabled him to leap upon his tormenters and

inflict wounds which he himself could evade because of his phenomenal physical agility and tactical understanding.

He, Shaka, having built an empire, could only be replaced by assassination.

His brother Dingane drowned Shaka whilst he was bathing.

The world of Shaka's militarism consolidated an indigenous empire which, given his successors pride in their fighting tradition, could hold the early British imperial conglomerate and the enclaves of Boers at bay till the last quarter of the 19th century. The technology of the rifle, the machine gun, the cannon and the never-ending spread of gold and diamond money-as-power ended Zulu hegemony by the time of Dinizulu, Paul Kruger and President Brand, the Afrikaner heads of the Boer Republics when the Anglo-Boer war broke out in 1899.

Shaka left no offspring although he had many women in a harem.

Old Dr Yosef and Mrs Rose Maimon managed to get books on South African history in Afrikaans which being derived from Dutch derived from German which was related to Yiddish. Soon they were reading English too. In some ways Petrus' English was better than theirs', in fact he may have been a multi-lingual genius. So, it was Petrus who read to the Maimons somewhat as follows – given that I was only young at the time.... (What had happened was that Mordechai was sports-mad and never at home but training or playing in the Town's sports grounds which John Maimon our father was trying to integrate racially with some success since even in t 1956, when we were 10 - times were changing.) Petrus read, a little haltingly from two books. The first one read: "Some historians assume that Shaka was a homosexual who created a cult around his mother Nandi." The second read: "***Shaka ordered that no crops should be planted during the following year of mourning [after Nandi's death], no milk (the basis of the Zulu diet at the time) was to be used, and any woman who became pregnant was to be killed along with her husband.*** At least 7,000 people who were deemed to be insufficiently grief-stricken, were executed, although the killing was not restricted to humans: cows were slaughtered so that their calves would know what losing a mother felt like."²⁵

²⁵ Donald R. Morris, (1965/1994). *The Washing of the Spears: A History of the Rise of the Zulu Nation Under Shaka and Its Fall in the Zulu War of 1879*. (London: Pimlico.) ISBN 978-0-7126-6105-8. p. 99. Accessed through Wikipedia 16/8/19.

Old Mrs Rose Maimon had also been a medical doctor in Lithuania before the war and translated what she heard into Yiddish simply to familiarise herself with this whole new African world. She murmured to herself and old Dr Yosef Maimon “*Shaka hot bafoyln az men zol nit flantsn keyn krops in dem kumedikn yor fun troyer, aun keyn milkh di iker fun der Zulu dyete in der tseyt zol zeyn geveynt, aun keyn froy vos iz gevorn shvanger zol zeyn gehrget tsuzamen mit ir man.*”

Petrus, the language genius, more or less agreed, from his knowledge of history, English and Yiddish with what the author of *The Washing of the Spears* had written. But he was shocked to see it in black and white. Old Dr Yosef and Mrs Rose Maimon and Petrus went on their morning walk together. By this time, Petrus had given up working for E.R.P.M. and had gone on an English-language course in the adult education section of Kgalagadi Town High School, earning a salary as a part-time tutor to new adult readers.

*

It’s me Xhabbo: logical space can include war and tyranny as purely social facts. After 1948, in South Africa itself, across the border, came the imposition of a white supremacy state based essentially on Afrikaner revenge on not only the Africans, but for what the “rooinekke” – the rednecks – the British - had done to the Boer republics. This was the “logical space” of the quasi-Biblical children of Shem and Japhet suppressing the children of Ham.

This included – particularly - the fatal conditions in concentration camps set up by the British during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, and exposed by Emily Hobhouse to the shame of the English government of the day.²⁶

The Boers and imprisoned Africans died in their tens of thousands. But not before Roberts, Kitchener’s and Buller’s scorched earth policy was implemented, so that the Boers, including their women, children and old people, were starved and incarcerated and killed by epidemic disease until they could fight their guerrilla war no more. The necks of the British were sunburnt under the unforgiving but harmless-looking blue skies – this accounted for the Afrikaner nick-name for the British: “Rooinekke”.

The British learned the lesson of the First Anglo-Boer War. They were besieged on a

²⁶ Thomas Pakenham (1979) *The Boer War* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson) index references to concentration camps p 643.

hilltop – Majuba - in 1881.²⁷ This is where they were utterly defeated suffering a huge number of deaths and wounded, held at bay by simple farmers, who picked them off if they so much as raised a head six inches above a line of fire 100 yards including boys, with Mausers away. The British were told to set their rifles at 400-600 yards whilst the battle raged at about 100 yards. The Boers were hidden in long grass and bush at the bottom of the hill. All one could say was “it was murder”. This was the logical space of the Battle of Majuba Hill. There were two spaces. The Boer logical space and the “logical” space of the British unused to Boer commandos who knew how to use the terrain. The British produced a false logic in which they situated themselves in an unviable military position, and, so, in a way, it was not logical space. But what does it say about logic without ethics, let alone military sense, to say that a concentration camp is the logical space of total war so as to avoid another battle of Majuba?

Wittgenstein wrote the *Tractatus* during the Great War of 1914-1918, when he served in the Austro-Hungarian army. So, he knew the logic of military space and the nature of terrain. But that was another war, the logic of which broke down in relation to Wittgenstein’s silence about ethics. Logic only works feasibly and decently in conjunction with ethics. The silence generated by pure logic must be broken. But perhaps pure logic kept Wittgenstein sane when he led his men from a viewing point on the edge of no-man’s land?

Xhabbo says: The Anglo-Boer Wars happened south of the Protectorate of Bechuanaland in the late 19th century. Bechuanaland was more benign than South Africa.

I was saved me from butchery by hyenas because Sheba and Good Dog alerted the household to a human pup vulnerable on their door-step.

²⁷ Donald Featherstone (1992) *Victorian Colonial Warfare - Africa* (London: Blandford,) accessed through Wikipedia 16/8/19. See references to “Battle of Majuba Hill”. The Wikipedia page on Majuba was last edited on 8 June 2019, at 16:32 (UTC).

Someone wanted to get rid of me, but not kill me outright because I was on a dividing line in the world between the “civilized” and an old stone age culture. I had ignited some jealous feud in a world divided by differently interpreted facts, ones which condemned me and others which saved me.

Mordechai: there is no way of knowing whether anything but sheer happenstance protected Xhabbo from infanticide immediately after his birth on the 13th August 1946 at about 2 or 3 a.m. His mother’s husband or his mother could have killed him outside their encampment. Certainly, his mother’s husband killed his father.

*

Xhabbo: that is why I feel my existence is a matter of sheer accident. But now that I exist, I am, as Heidegger said, delivered over to myself, authentically able to assert my being-here.²⁸

[This is the Heidegger writing in the 20s before he joined the Nazi Party in 1933 to save his skin. You may know that his authenticity included an affair with one of his students Hannah Arendt who defended him at a de-Nazification hearing held by the French occupiers of Germany after the war. You may or may not want to make allowances for a non-active Nazi who succeeded in deconstructing and reconstructing Western philosophy.]

Xhabbo writes: as for my display of authenticity, instead of being given over to myself, I might have allowed myself to be defeated, to throw myself away, to be at the mercy of the idle talk of the Them, the They, to be driven out of my mind by the ambiguity of **not-knowing that one person might read about my life and understand it and understand his own better, whilst everything else about him would remain the same.**

It was old Mrs Rose Maimon who decided I, Xhabbo, needed to meet my birthmother but that was five years after I was born.

²⁸ Martin Heidegger (1962) *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwells). P.67 ff on being “delivered over” to one’s own Being which is not so much “present-to-hand” as a technical issue, but is ontological – that is, partakes of the transcendental and the immanence of Being and beings.

Mordechai: Bontle, Good Boy and Sheba, me and the four Maimon adults and Petrus and Bontle took a fancy to Xhabbo. There he was still digesting whatever new-borns survive on before they suckle properly, probably enjoying the warmth of the jackal *kaross* and its smell and feel.

Xhabbo: Bontle and Good Boy drove the hyenas down the road. When she returned Bontle found Sheba licking me clean of the amniotic fluid still sticking to my skin. My first smiling human face had suddenly gone chasing hyenas, and I must have cried. Sheba apparently got into the box, thinking perhaps that I was in some way a hybrid between a human and a strange kind of brown, hairless puppy.

*

Xhabbo: Like the wolves who reared Romulus and Remus her teats even squirted milk into my face as I turned and touched this maternal being. At least she and I were mammals and she was tuned in to infantile squeaking, canine and human. A family as a fact is joined together by this state of affairs: attachment.

Mordechai: I, as the Maimon's biological son, only 13th days older than Xhabbo, realised *our* authenticity, a state of affairs, but which has to be put as a question. Even though our brotherhood was never in doubt. To me, Xhabbo, is the essence of brotherhood. I see him as apricot brown and my own limbs and face-in-the-mirror as brownish white. Because I must have inherited a Jewish skin colour from ancient Israel and Judea.

Xhabbo: I was born under a baobab tree. The tree had been there for perhaps five hundred or a thousand years.

Mordechai, our parents Jessica and John, our grandparents, Bontle our maid and the others in the household, the adolescent San twins would, with Good Boy and Sheba, and Petrus Ngubane become our family.

English, Setswana, Afrikaans, Yiddish and Xam were our languages and Jessica would coach us both in Hebrew.

As the youngest in the family, I Xhabbo, was the one who had to ask the Four Questions on the eve of Passover: “Why is this night different from all other nights?”

2.01 A state of affairs (a state of things) is a combination of objects (things) [and subjects].

We were more than objects. We were subjects. These people were African, San, European Jews, and we “combined” with domesticated and even wild animals with whom we led parallel lives even when we hunted them. We combined with each other and the animals to make cultural entities. Animals too are subjects even in “a state of affairs”. They may not all have the consciousness that we have, but primates do have something of our being-in-the-world and many of them may have some sense of agency.

*

2.011: “It is essential to things as objects [and to subjects] that they should be possible constituents of states of affairs.”

Semper aliquid novi Africam adferre: Africa always brings us something new: a cliché suddenly absolutely true. Was I, Xhabbo, the first Bushman Jew in Africa?

Mordechai: perhaps the mixed multitude that exited from Egypt under Moses in about 1250 BCE contained some old stone age hunter-gatherers who paved the way for the Hebrew agriculturalists and their flocks. Forty years in the wilderness without tilled fields and regular crops for them and their livestock: they surely needed to be backed up by hunting and gathering. Perhaps the Exodus and even Moses were heroic and salutary myths.

We later discovered that much of the story of the Exodus and the purported temporary settlement of Israelites were in villages and towns which only existed six-hundred years later. This is accepted by secularist Israeli historians and archaeologists.²⁹

²⁹ Schlomo Sand (2010) *The Invention of the Jewish People* (London:Verson)

Actually, there were Israelites and Judeans living side by side with Canaanites long before the exodus and the conquest of Palestine by Joshua.

Esau, Jacob's older twin brother was a hunter and his wives and concubines must have been gatherers. If they existed at all as more than mythical heroes. And as for the Blessed Name – *regard Him, Her or It as symbolic of the total and eternal contingencies of a moral existence, ethical constants in the states of affairs of societies.*

The Eternal – a state of affairs that is humanly ethical - has pity on the isolated who cannot keep up alone outside hunter-gatherer or “civilized” society such as the sick and dying in cities. You see them and in the wild, asking, waiting to join a pack, a flock, a pride, a collection, a state of affairs, but alone, terribly alone. Suffocating slowly without the oxygen of sociality. Regard the Eternal as Being at one with the Other, which we all should express in our existence. Heidegger assumes Being-With-The-Other is feasible. Buber regards it as the main basis of ethics. The Zionists who regarded him as pro-Palestinian rejected him as *the* Jewish theologian of the 20th century.

In proposition 2.012 L.W. says that in logic nothing is accidental: if a thing can occur in a state of affairs, the possibility of the state of affairs must be written into the thing itself.

Bontle must have been talking to me in Setswana or my native Xam because my skin was apricot-brown and I looked out of sickle-moon shaped eyes and I was short like a Bushman child, an Original Person.

She hushed and cuddled me till I stopped crying. Then she rushed out to deal with the hyenas. Then she came back to find me crying again. I *could* have been rejected and I *could* have rejected my new family. Nothing is accidental in *human* logic. ***if a thing can occur in a state of affairs, the possibility of the state of affairs must be written into the thing itself.***

I have to repeat it as my foundational mantra: Bontle must have been talking to me in Setswana or my native Xam because my skin was apricot-brown and I looked out of sickle-moon shaped eyes and I was short like a Bushman child, an Original Person.

She hushed and cuddled me till I stopped crying. Then she rushed out to deal with the hyenas. Then she came back to find me crying again.

She tells me she put me on the kitchen sink, put mild disinfectant on the stump of the correctly severed umbilical cord, wiped dog-milk off me with a lather of Sunlight Soap, cleaned my *kaross* also with Sunlight Soap, which she dried, wrapped me up again and wanted to wait until dawn before she took me into the Maimons' bedroom saying "*Mpho mme nnyaa Mpho*", which means "a present but not Present" (her daughter's name).

But, reluctantly wakened by the barking at 3 o'clock in the morning, Jessica and John dragged themselves out of bed, thinking there was some sort of medical crisis which had arrived on their doorstep.

Outside in the main street of the town Sheba and her puppies, and Good Boy, Sheba's mate, infuriated by the hyena pack/wild dogs, barked and chased. Jessica instinctively looked into Mordechai's nursery to see if he was alright. He, a very equable baby, was still sleeping. "*Mpho mme nnyaa Mpho*", said my saviour-from-the-hyenas in Setswana as she presented me to the white woman who would become my adoptive mother.

I have to stop myself uttering a Blessing of the Name the vital legend to which I cling if I fall psychologically into Kierkegaard's abyss on the edge of what is lovely and good – if thinking about the creator god Mantis fails me. It was only later, much, much later that Mordechai and I needed to read philosophy.³⁰

Logically you cannot have a precarious existence as the only Jewish Bushman unless this accident of fate is anticipated, written into the totality of possible identities.

There must be Jewish Australian Aborigines, Jewish Native Americans, Jewish Maoris who have been confronted with this problem.

³⁰. Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) is regarded as the founding person of existentialism. His great contribution to philosophy is the idea that an aesthetic and ethical life eventually stops short when it comes to faith. Nothing can actually prove the Eternal as Being in the form of a religious redemptive actuality. It is as if a precipice or abyss exists threatening my existence as a person facing eternity or total Nothingness. I must therefore leap into faith, not necessarily into the presence of his fundamentalist Christ as messianic redeemer. Today existentialism requires that I exist as a person with my being in the world committed to some form of engagement which gives meaning to my life. I leap into faith from the ethical across the abyss or void of Nothingness. So there is some grounding for faith.

Basarwa: that's what the Batswana call Bushpeople. Sarwa and Morwa may be related. *Morwa* means "son" in Setswana. *Sarwa* is the plural.³¹

Perhaps the *Batswana* men who usually dictate the language may have a taboo about sex with San women who are seen unconsciously as male children – sons. So *Basarwa* their name for us could mean, literally, people / sons, or male offspring: but of which exact parentage? It doesn't matter – just children.

This is so ambiguous that it could mean anything. At worst it means we are permanently regarded as children.

Taking me with her a couple of days after I was born, Jessica Maimon drove out of the town in the four-wheel drive into the Kgalagadi Wilderness and turned off the dusty red-earth main road onto side tracks into the bush where San encampments were situated by river-lets and water-pans.

She had brought an emergency breakfast with her and a pre-prepared bottle of milk. I wanted more. So, Jessica sat me up and burped me and fed me direct from the breast already spurting as if Mordechai was there in the Jeep we had in those days. He was at home nursed by John Maimon from another warmed-up bottle.

No one admitted to any knowledge of or responsibility for the situation that had arisen on the Maimon's doorstep. Jessica explained the situation in her more than adequate Xam and Afrikaans, the two current languages, and left pound notes at each Xam encampment with San spokespeople as a reward in case someone could tell them to whom I really belonged. Later she and John informed the District Commissioner and police in Kgalagadi Town. Only later, much later, did the truth emerge.

Perhaps Jessica had actually seen a murderer and a kidnapper face to face in one of the encampments two mornings after my birth. Perhaps, out of fear of official retribution the San had hidden my distraught birth mother out in the Wilderness to stop her screaming out the truth.

³¹. As in "morwa mmanagwe", "his mother's son" so there may be a link to "Basarwa", which means San. See p. 611 under "son" in Z.I. Matumo (1993 revised since 1875) *Setswana/ English/ Setswana Dictionary*, MacMillan Botswana Publishing Co. The entry under "Bushman" is "Morwa" singular, "Basarwa" plural. There is no entry under "San". *Basarwa* literally means "sons" in Setswana – male offspring, but of whom? Perhaps the implication is that the *Basarwa* will always be children, but at least male children!

Some people must have shaken their heads in incomprehension. Perhaps mothers who had lost children wept or shed a tear. Others no doubt laughed at this sudden break in reality. The white woman's burden: her guilty conscience, her sense of duty, her medical ethics. And the San, the naughty San, whose hunter-gatherer lives were being wrecked by the onset of modernisation, when husbands went off to the mines in Jo'burg – *eGoli – Gauteng* and God knew what went on sexually..... Or, more philosophically, the Europeans: "It could happen anywhere. It's people, that's what people do. Ever since *homo sapiens* evolved. Original sin, y'know." That's what the sympathetic District Commissioner ex-R.A.F. captain Bertie Walden suggested. They had a kind of club in 1946, a colonial club for acceptable whites and few Indians and educated Africans – a couple of teachers in the Kgalagadi Town school and their spouses. They drank gin and tonic and played snooker and rummy on Group Captain Bertie and Veronica Walden's veranda and on winter nights sat in the lounge with a woodfire burning. He somehow kept his R.A.F. rank even after the war.

Only later was I to learn that my mother's husband had killed my father, her lover. He knew I couldn't be his own - my mother's husband's child, because like Petrus Ngubane, Bontle's husband, both of them, had been away nine months or more previously. Working in the gold-mines in *eGoli – Gauteng* together. I find this thought repeats itself as an obsession in my head.

This has to be emphasised by the vertical lines next to these paragraphs. Of course, one would leave an unwanted baby with a pair of highly devoted doctors. But had there been a crime of passion? I can tell you there had. The murder of my father by my mother's husband. If not, why the secrecy in the middle of the night? Well the one– kidnapping - doesn't necessarily follow from the other - murder. But there had been a murder. And there was the death penalty for murder on the Bechuanaland Protectorate's statute book and gallows in Lobatse prison near the eastern border with South Africa. Next to a psychiatric hospital. Next to an abattoir. Oh, the British Protectorate looked like a paradise. For condemned humans and the mentally ill and edible domesticated animals it was ultimately an Un-protectorate. Very, very hot too, in the summer.

It has its bright side. As a teenager, when my brother Mordechai and I were out and about walking with a hunting rifle for use only in an emergency away from the safety of the family Land Rover, we found we could feed meat to the smaller and less ferocious carnivores, like lizards, and the omnivores the baboons and monkeys, and to certain birds, the weaver birds and the *piet-my-vrou* - seeds and nuts - and they would listen to us talking to them, making

soothing noises about their and our existential condition! Ridiculous! At least the baboons interacted when I told them a baboon story in the original Xam which we had told our children for thousands of years but I had to learn from the ethologists.³² I highlight them as unforgettable memories, of my, Xhabbo's life. Just reading them and then talking to the real baboons in the Kgalagadi!

³² Originally in W.H.I. Bleek and L.C.Lloyd (1911) *Specimens of Bushman Folklore*. (London: Allen and Unwin) and on the website "Sacred Texts.com [!GauNu-Tsaxau \(The Son Of The Mantis\), The Baboons,](#)

“The baboons beat the son of the god Mantis who was called Gaunu-tsaxau, with their fists. They broke his head, they knocked out his eye, they sang while they were playing ball there with Gaunu tsaxau’s eye. Mantis rescued the eye. He washed it in the water. The eye grew into a little child. He anointed the child with his scent. ‘I am your father. I am the Mantis.’ ”

And even the springbok mothers had a particular gentle call they used to soothe their young which Mordechai and I could imitate since this we had actually heard. It was preserved in Xam tradition recorded by Victorian ethologists and so accessible to us directly and indirectly as a human lullaby. This was in a research study in Xam and English written by Dr. W.H.I Bleek and Miss Lucy Lloyd:

A-a hn,,

O springbok child,

Sleep for me,

A-a-hn,

O springbok-child!

*Sleep for me.*³³

The birds, a wild array of finches, wagtails, *piet-my-vrou* birds (named after their courting call “Piet my wife” only uttered in Afrikaans since the English translation didn’t have the right alliteration of the bird’s call). We could well believe that animals could be imaginatively perceived as talking or singing words.

As for me and my unknown origin: whispered gossip soon circulated. About what my step-father did to my father. This I learned from my adoptive mother when I was 5. Old enough to deal with it emotionally? Perhaps I was too young. At the time of my birth the authorities had begun to intensify their enquiries amongst the San encampments. People were torn between telling the truth as to who had suddenly disappeared after two males had suddenly come back from *eGoli – Gauteng – Jo’burg*, one of them, my mother’s husband, intending to “unearth” my mother’s lover, even with

And The Mantis accessed from the internet 16/8/19

³³ The Bleek and Lloyd transcripts of stories, poetry and songs were originally in Xam and English and are edited in English by Gregory McNamee (2001 in *The Girl Who Made Stars*. (Daimon Verlag Einsiedeln Switzerland.) See p. 98 for the “Song of the Springbok Mothers” in McNamee.

the possibility that he might face “the rope”, the other Petrus Ngubane, Bontle’s husband who had struck up a friendship in E.R.P.M. with my “step-father” – the murderer.

But for weeks, a biological mother, a newly dead father, siblings, uncles, aunts, grandparents, who, given my looks, all Bushpeople, for them, at the moment I mysteriously didn’t exist although everybody knew I did.

I didn’t fully belong to a transcendent idea of The Original People. I was in the space of some sort of existential Nothingness, however much my adoptive family tried to fill it. Is this pretentious – this way of conceptualising? I leave it to your unprejudiced mind to judge.

If only I could have been born with consciousness, fully formed, fully armed leaping out of Zeus’s forehead!

I would have got Sheba and Good Boy to track the *Basarwa* footprints to some makeshift San encampment where a recently delivered mother wept, with grief or relief, perhaps, only to be plunged into terror when the murder and the kidnapping occurred. She didn’t want me back. My “step-father”, the murderer didn’t want me back.

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An intelligent policeman helped in the immediate moment: did they have police dogs in 1946 trained to follow a trail of new footprints in the untarred dusty streets of Kgalagadi Town back into the bush? Soon my birth-mother’s husband was obvious miscreant.

Mordechai speaks: “Who has done this thing?” was the question hanging over my brother Xhabbo. Perhaps he was too young at 5 to deal with the circumstances of his origins.

Xhabbo: but from a Western moral perspective, limited though this is, it would be clear why a normally harmless affair the product of which could be disguised as a legitimate birth, was not “normal” by looking for a husband who was away from home nine months ago or more. What right had he, my mother’s husband, to rob me of a biological father, her lover? Many urbanised San went to the Reverend Van Welleigh’s Dutch Reformed Church in the town. Criminal responsibility took on a new significance. Finding and justifying a murder in court is a potentially fatal language game requiring a court hearing, witness evidence, forensic evidence, cross-examination, defence in mitigation, verdict, sentence, carrying out of sentence. In the ancient times a crime of passion wouldn’t be a capital offence.

1.1 The world is the totality of facts not of things.

Xhabbo speaks: my adoptive brother Mordechai and I came across Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigation* during our final fourth year Honours degrees in theology and philosophy at Witwatersrand University in 1966. Rather than sink into a

quagmire of existential anguish as to what was to become of us, living in the back of beyond, of three different ethnic groups, Ashkenazi Jews and San or Bushpeople and the Africans, sceptical of ever finding an answer to the problem of identity, we suffered the feeling that we were mis-located, or mis-laid. We purged ourselves of metaphysical doubt: we would narrate

our stories within parameters of linguistic rigour. We found an answer to our questions towards the end of the *Tractatus*:

6.5 When the answer cannot be put into words, neither can the question be put into words. The riddle does not exist. If a question can be framed at all, it is also possible to answer it.

6.4312 The solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies outside space and time.

Xhabbo speaks: Being-in-itself overflows itself says J-P. Sartre. Being-in-itself, like a neonate, is the immanent, and nihilates Being-for-itself, the transcendent, the fully conscious human trying to be God.

Mordechai: They, including the me, the baby Mordechai in my perfect white shawl, looked at Xhabbo in his jackal *kaross*, clean and dry, but leaking a million questionable things.

Xhabbo must have smiled at these equally smiling white and brown faces. A totality of attachment.

They wanted Xhabbo. Xhabbo wanted us.

That was a totality of facts when both Xhabbo and Mordechai were still hardly more than immanent things becoming facts entering the world's totality of facts.

Xhabbo and Mordechai agreed: a hypothetical God solved the riddle of life by simply being what He / She is: an hypothesis outside space and time, asserting the fact that He / She *is* and therefore I *am* consciousness and Being *in myself*, whilst He / She is *for Herself and in Herself, All-Knowing*. In Hebrew She is called the *Shekhina*. It may be a myth. But it is better to believe in a myth of the Eternal than to give up on the world as facts.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Wittgenstein course continues at the university in Gaborone:

1. The world is the totality of facts not of things – again!

Together, as children, we attended our lessons given at home by Jessica and John Maimon. We learned a good deal of science: Good Boy was not a problem if you knew enough evolutionary biology.

Sheba's dog-mate was a domesticated dog-hyena, huge and gentle, ferocious too if ill-treated, with a sense of humour who used his nose as a hockey stick guiding a tennis ball as well as able to dribble a football with nose, begging you to play with him.

Good Boy was originally ejected from a pack of hyenas because he was genetically an aberration on the wildness/tame spectrum.

Being the runt of the litter, injured, torn and bleeding, a genetic regression, he was rescued from his wild siblings by Mrs Halliday the local vet, part of *our* world rather than the Kgalagadi Wilderness.

He too arrived on her friendly-smelling doorstep, hungry, rejected by a pack that ventured forth in the dead of night who ranged all around Kgalagadi Town scavenging before the protective fence was built.

Good Boy looked like a hyena but was more like a genetically mutated dog, but spotted, with asymmetrical front and back legs, with hugely powerful jaws.

Biological evolution determined Good Boy as a random, dog-like mutation. I, Xhabbo suppose that Ludwig Wittgenstein's intelligence sprang partly from selective Jewish breeding. Why do they produce a disproportionate number of Nobel Prize winners? You need brains if you are going to be evicted from country to country because brains are transportable assets.

Proposition 1.11 The world, writes Wittgenstein in the "Tractatus...", is determined by the facts and by their being all the facts.

Xhabbo says: my adoptive grandparents, parents John and Jessica and my brother Mordechai, and Bontle Ngubane the maid and her daughter Mpho (the one with the name meaning "a Present"), and two other young San servant/pupils and above all Petrus Ngubane showed me nothing but love and acceptance and sweetness. The streets and the trees and the bush and the wild animals and the farms on the aquifer, the sun, the air, the summer rain and the clear, cold winter sky at night spread out and sparkling with the Milky Way, especially the star systems Sirius and Canopus, only a few light years away. All were things, yes, but recurred with the certainty of facts.

But behind it all there was the shadow of the crime. My father, my mother's lover, was murdered. I grew up not so much seeking revenge but to find redemption. I was glad to be alive and in such a welcoming family. Every August on my birthday I would weep for my

dead father and hardly known birth mother and her murderous husband, and light a candle to commemorate my murdered father. Being Jews, John and Jessica taught me to say the prayer praising God but commemorating the dead, the *Kaddish*.

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It was still 1946, the year of our birth. It would be 50 years before the apartheid hierarchy would become a thing of the past. Across the border. Here, Botswana was a British Protectorate. Until 1966. We lived in the shade of apartheid. The full glare was on the other side. As Hades was to Olympus. Refugees from Hades came our way, some tortured, some guilt-ridden, some with bullet wounds, some psychotic, some suicidal, trying to piece their lives together. The four Maimons, Good Boy and Sheba, Mordechai and me, Bontle, her daughter Mpho, Petrus Ngubane, Bontle's husband Mpho's father, the other San servants – the twin adolescent boy and girl who went to Reverend Van Welleigh's Dutch Reformed Church and his primary and junior high school - made up a totality of our world.

1.11 The world is determined by the facts and by their being all the facts – again!

We had to go back over Wittgenstein. A few years ago, there would have been no certainty of rescue from the brutality of infanticide, no thought of love and respect, dignity and truth. Ethics lie unspoken beneath the facts, implies Wittgenstein, reflecting Kierkegaard. I could perhaps have been strangled and buried at birth. As it was, my father, my mother's lover, had been murdered. It was a scar across my soul. Right and wrong had become complicated. Wasn't this Wittgenstein's intention – to write a book, the *Tractatus so obvious and crystal clear that one could eventually throw away its propositions as so much scaffolding? Knowing all the facts puts a crime of passion in a special light. Wittgenstein refused to say directly but implicitly what ethics are: love and respect, dignity and truth. A priori. Once you know all the facts you can assess guilt and innocence which lie beneath the determination of all the facts.*

Mordechai and I shared mutual anguish, he a Jew from the middle of nowhere in a country no one but its inhabitants and immediate neighbours and a few specialists knew anything about, me a San, a Bushman, stereotypically in the minds of racists - primitive.

When faced with incomprehension or rejection I developed a dignified smile. He, being European could shrug it off. With me it was: "*a Bushman boy in nice European clothes, lucky to be educated!*".

My adoptive father John, the doctor, and adoptive brother Mordechai taught me how to fight, bare-fisted if need be, but better still, how to box in the ring. Cricket, rugby, swimming, tennis, running – fight them on their fields of “play.”

Take the privileged education offered. From my adoptive mother Jessica, also a doctor, Mordechai and I learned about the mythological and the real, the ethical and the artistic, the literary treasures of ancient Judea and Israel, Greece and Rome, the Enlightenment, the great sweep of modern history and how tenuous was civilization. Their house was so full of books, it was a veritable library. Mordechai and I studied together educated mainly at home by our parents. John our father taught us science: maths, zoology, chemistry and physics.

1.12 For the totality of facts determines what is the case, and also what is not the case.

“San” in the Khoi-Khoi (“Hottentot”) language means those who live from the earth and are poor. For years, in modern times, these were the facts. In fact, we were here for between 75,000 to 45,000 years, reliant on a life of hunting and gathering where the game and edible vegetation were abundant. Now, the Cape Xam and the Botswana Xam are the remnants of the north, only remnants, the majority of us having been the victims of a genocide in the 18th century, killed by Dutch farmers and their Griqua commandos in the south. Poisoned arrows against muskets and a Boer on a horse, careful to keep out of range of the arrow and the bow. Fifty yards between life and death. The poison on the arrow is so terrible that once in the bloodstream the wounded human cries out for the blissful peace of death.

Genocide wasn’t all. Now we all suffer from climate change, frequent drought and desertification. The arrival of a capitalist system of cattle-ranching intrudes on our hunting and gathering. The whole world is rushing towards global warming. Great and wonderful beasts of Africa are dying out, poached illegally and only a few activists seek to protect them.

When the delight of childhood faded, Mordechai and I, Xhabbo, felt a strange and even cathartic melancholy. Bouts of anguish haunted by a sense of “nothingness” or more benignly, emptiness where there had been fullness, plenitude.

We read existentialist philosophy voraciously to quieten a terrible sense of absurdity which negated the totality of facts, so that it didn’t matter what was the case. When desperate we could return to

science and Wittgenstein. When we first went to university for our pre-Honours B.A. degrees at Gaborone, the capital near the eastern border with South Africa, we had to convince the authorities that the sciences and humanities and the languages - all the degree courses - should include teaching on the ecology of climate change. The totality of facts included our freedom, including our fear of our freedom, since the authorities could and did punish us as “troublemakers” with the threat of expulsion or suspension of our studentships.

Europeans like Mordechai were an anomaly in an African university. There were many brilliant British educated Batswana professors and lecturers, a few African genius-philosophers from Ghana and Oxford who taught modern European philosophy. There were some outstanding Indian mathematicians, and mixed-race Coloured exiles from South Africa who wrote poetry and novels and taught literature. I got to know Bushpeople, San and Khoi-Khoi from other tribal sub-groups. We organised demonstrations and boycotts. Compared with Rhodesia-Zimbabwe, the two Congos, the Central African Republic, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria – Bechuanaland becoming Botswana was paradise.

We had the vestiges of parliamentary democracy and no civil war between tribes. Botswana had diamonds. By the late 60s the country was rich by African standards. But why did Naledi the outlying township of the capital Gaborone, and the city itself not have central heating systems fired by fuel less polluting than what was happening: each individual house poured carbon-laden smoke from innumerable coal and wood-fired kitchens and living rooms. Why a coal-fired electricity power-station? Why not a nuclear power station?

CHAPTER SIX

1.13 The facts in logical space are the world.

Mordechai and I did our fourth-year Honours dissertations and examinations in theology and philosophy at Witwatersrand University. We then went to Israel to learn more Hebrew (Mordechai) and for me to get to know something about prehistoric hunter-gatherers in ancient Palestine and the transition to agriculture which I (Xhabbo) might apply to what happened in Southern, Eastern and Central Africa. We did doctorates at Oxford financed by Rhodes' scholarships. Mordechai did a thesis on Platonic influences on medieval Jewish mysticism, the Kabbalah, found mainly in the text of the *Zohar*. I got involved in British studies of Neolithic stone circles and compared Roman reactions to Druidic religious beliefs with white colonial genocide of Khoi-San "barbarians".

It was 1969-1970. Oxford was full of linguistic philosophy which like Wittgenstein (who died in 1951 and was buried in Cambridge) in the *Tractatus* regarded metaphysics and existentialism as thinking which should be passed over in silence. It was only at parties and in a personal *tete-a-tete* that the British philosophers could allow logically "therapeutic" space to overcome the pure logical space of the religious confessional or the therapeutic clinic where metaphysics and existentialism truly belonged. We were now moving from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* to the more sociological *Philosophical Investigations*.

1.2 The world divides into facts.

Geography. Jewish history. There was a girl. A young woman. We had met her on the *kibbutz Mishmar haYezriel* where Mordechai and I learned more Hebrew. I used it as a base from which I could travel to join up with archaeological digs into New Stone Age and Iron Age settlements, and Old Stone Age caves used by hunter-gatherers in Israel.

She was actually the only child of originally Spanish Jews called De Leon. Rachel. Rachel. *Ra-ch-el*. Meaning “ewe”. (All the names and identifying facts have been changed).

They invited us home when we got to England. Clearly Rachel had not described me to her parents, other than Mordechai and I were from South Africa, which was not strictly true. No one then knew anything much about Botswana and no one wanted to describe its previous colonial status as the place where the King of the ruling tribe was exiled because he, a barrister, trained in London, had married a white woman in London.

The heir to the monarchy of Botswana was exiled for fear of the apartheid regime putting an embargo on the export of South African uranium because a black prince was married to a white English girl.

Rachel’s father was a stock-broker and they lived near London. He was a cheerful, apparently happy “bloke-ish” sort of bloke, into golf and South African gold shares. Her mother was reserved, guarded, like Rachel. There was a temperamental link, perhaps, between mother and daughter. Rachel was already doing Modern Languages at Oxford and she spent her summer holiday in Israel learning Hebrew. She was exceptionally shy, quiet, introverted although she could chat with other young people in Israel in Hebrew and depending on their original nationality, in Italian, French and Spanish. She spoke Spanish at home which was the original source of Ladino, the language of the Iberian Jews, basically medieval Spanish.

She was strikingly beautiful. She had wild, curly black hair and an olive-skinned Mediterranean profile. She hardly drank wine, was largely silent on long walks through the most stirringly lovely Valley of Jezreel, and when we visited her in their fine mansion in a large garden in a village on the South Downs of Sussex, she was quiet and dignified.

Was it my colour? Not exactly, but ... She was equally quiet when she was with Mordechai. Mordechai was into Hebrew and Kabbalistic mysticism. When he talked non-stop and his eyes blazed

with the emanations of Adam Kadmon and the *Zohar* I could see the De Leon family rolling their eyes slightly. And they knew that the author of the *Zohar* was Rabbi Moses De Leon. They weren't that interested in their own heritage.

Did a brown Jew, a stone-age person from remote Botswana make her feel alienated because I was so "alien"?

We tried to put her at her ease by talking about how post-Holocaust Jews who had saved themselves or had been saved from the death-camps in the 1930s (like John and Jessica Maimon our parents and old Dr and Mrs Maimon and they, the De Leon family living originally as Sephardi Jews in Holland) – how everybody reacted differently.

Some became angry extraverts, intent on the prosecution of Nazi war criminals, others withdrew from a world seen as laden with anxiety, some were happy to be alive and became religious, some took up humanism or socialism and rejected religion.

Rachel was interested in Wittgenstein. I said perhaps some people didn't exist fully or at all as subjects. Wittgenstein thought the subject couldn't experience its subjectivity as a logical subject, just as the eye as such itself couldn't experience its vision. That must be why he referred to all subjects as objects in the *Tractatus*. Then he changed.

She took me aside and let Mordechai and her parents walk on through a footpath on the South Downs. We sat on a stile. But after a few minutes instead of just calling back and asking us to "Come on! Catch up!" her mother returned and looked at us balefully, saying nothing. "It's all right!" I said. "Rachel and I were talking about Wittgenstein."

Mrs De Leon muttered some Spanish curse against Wittgenstein. Rachel protested. I knew enough to know that what followed was actually a tirade against not me as a person but indeed against the alien-ness that I represented.

¿Crees que pasamos por el infierno de la guerra solo para que termines en el estado nazi de Sudáfrica con un bosquimano? Ve y habla con Mordejai

["Do you think that we went through the hell of the war only to have you end up in the Nazi state of South Africa with a Bushman? Go and talk to Mordechai"]

What could one say? "I don't understand your Spanish fully, Mrs De Leon but I guess you don't like me a *un bosquimano*?" She started to apologise saying she had nothing personal against me. I said she had invited Mordechai and me "*who are both Jews* to visit you after Israel. What are you doing to her? Keeping her on a leash? Made expressly for this purpose by Hitlerites? Besides we live in the democratic Republic of Botswana, not *el estado nazi de Sudáfrica*, not in the Nazi state of South Africa".

The balloon had gone up. Mordechai and Mr De Leon must have heard the altercation and returned to the stile. With these reinforcements newly arrived Rachel exploded into life – at last. She grabbed my hand and hopped through the hedge.

We hared through a field of maize and made for a wood two more fields away. There she found a tree, an old oak tree, in the top branches of which there was a platform on which was built a children's tree-house.

She hushed me to be quiet and lie down next to her. Sure enough, the others followed us, but the tree house must have been a secret not known to the parents. We could hear them fifty feet away. The father tried to pacify the mother who was determined to call the police.

Mordechai begged them to go home and promised to find us and bring us back home safe and sound. He called and called. Rachel wouldn't give in. Minutes went by. Mordechai left the wood, cursing me, shouting that I was courting disaster. We both had more than a smattering of clinical psychology: "Can't you see, the woman is a *hysteric*! She knows nothing about Botswana! If you're not back home in half an hour *she will call the police and then you and I will be in shit-street!*"

In retrospect it sounds unbelievable. But what was to unfold was even more surreal. Rachel and me, Xhabbo, were both adults. There was no colour bar in Britain against inter-racial sex. Besides we were just friends.

We were in the tree house now that the Not-Christopher-Robins had retreated to the big house which with brilliant originality went by the name on the front gate of: *Chez Nous*, with Mrs De Leon shrieking about calling the police to rescue Rachel from "abduction"!

The following dialogue then occurred:

Xhabbo (*Soothingly*): Rachel, this is all too much. Your mother is hysterical. All this is feeding her Jewish phobia about inter-racialism. She needs post-Holocaust therapy. Think of it: you – we - all could have ended up in Treblinka or Dachau or Auschwitz for being what we are – like Anne Frank.
(*Gently*): Look, you're locked in a dysfunctional relationship with your mother...

She burst into an uncontrollable spasm of weeping, sobbing convulsively like a child.

Nothing happened. But when we got home we found they had called a friend, a family doctor, an elderly gentleman who had given Mrs De Leon a tranquilliser and she, the distraught mother, was lying down moaning quietly.

CHAPTER SIX

(A)The world divides into facts.

We had literally been divided into different parts of world-facts by geography and ethnicity and gender and social class. Of course, by racism.

Mordechai and I now teach at Botswana University in Gaborone and volunteer as game rangers. Gangsters, usually the poorest Africans, are hired by profiteers, to poach rhino. The big shots sell powdered horn to middle men.

This is a product which ends up in China and elsewhere in the east, where, superstitiously, the male customers believe that the constituent of the erect horn aids potency. If the poacher fires at the armed rangers, they fire back.

This is not only to protect the big game, but to keep the tourists coming in, spending their pounds, euros, dollars, yen to see our “unspoilt” Kgalagadi Wilderness.

What mad pseudo-logic is Wittgenstein refusing to discredit as twisted in a divided world? He called logic “things” related to “states of affairs,” as opposed to “facts” emerging from true propositions.

Only years later after the *Tractatus* did he realise that the social context could totally transform the facts in logical space. He should have known that from the start. Three of his brothers committed suicide and his sisters only saved themselves from the Nazis with huge bribes made possible by their father’s enormous fortune as an iron and steel magnate. (They were originally descended from Jews, a paternal great-grandfather called Maier, renamed himself after his employer’s name “Wittgenstein”. One of us may have told you that before. We are keeping it in to remind ourselves that anti-Jewish prejudice is and was pervasive in Austria and Germany. The other day in German local elections the *Alternative for Germany* party spokesperson called the Jewish Holocaust Memorial in Berlin – a disgrace.)

*

The gun, the game-ranger, the conservation system, the game-reserves fit into a partly state-collectivised, partly capitalist world system, all logical spaces but motivated by considerations of profit and cultural identity.

I pity the *dangerous* logic of the poverty-stricken African poachers.

Is this logical?

How is one to save the planet if places like the Kgalagadi Wilderness are plundered of trees and bush when the poachers set fire to the veld to drive the animals towards their guns?

The “logical” spaces of our world have to do with national economic interest, the poverty of the masses from whom the poachers are recruited.

The vulnerability of the wild animals is the logical space of conservation. But the logic of capitalist economics defeats the logic of conservation.

The Wilderness is already afflicted with drought. We have to bring in irrigation from mobile four-wheel drive tankers drawing from boreholes to save hundreds of thousands of dying bushes and trees and wild animals because the water-tables near the city and the towns are drying up.

Many of the Bushpeople I know in Botswana have become a rural proletariat surviving on wage-labour working for the farmers on the limestone ridge which contains natural aquifers reached by boreholes.

Some of the game have moved north more or less permanently towards the Okavango Delta. Cattle-ranching, and diamond-mining have improved the lot of the black working class and the elite but climate change has disturbed the balance of hunting-and-gathering in relation to the natural environment which sustained us since human time began - if you trace us back to the original *homo sapiens* which evolved in the Rift Valley of East Africa about 200,000 years ago.

Don't you realise how young the human species it? A mini-second in the great span of time? That is why we make such fatal mistakes. Even more alarming is the new research that we may not all have common ancestors in Africa. The Neanderthals didn't. Maybe *homo sapiens* had different ethnic and biological as well as different environmental roots in different parts of the world. One more “liberal” presupposition of commonality bites the dust.

The Africans arrived between 500 and 1500 years ago. Then the savanna was verdant enough to capture carbon emissions from Bushpeople's and Africans' fires and methane from their cattle. Now the whole world is threatened by 7 billion of us.

Those are the facts in the logical space of ever-more effective medical science, industrialised agriculture, and globalised world trade in meat and animal products and endless stuff for luxury consumption.

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(B) The world divides into facts.

All our ideas about the universe were steeped in mythology. Science has shattered our old cosmologies. For the better in the short run, but with dystopian ends.

These are the possible astrophysical facts.

The universe began with a **singularity**, infinitely small and dense, perhaps the result of a **previous contraction** of stars, planets and gaseous matter.

What is mystical is why there is a universe at all. Not God. Being. Now we know how to split the atom, the civilized can destroy the world many times over whilst descendants of “primitives” like us Bushpeople are at the mercy of mineral and fuel prospectors **and have to teach them civilization**: do not exhaust the earth to build cities which will produce more carbon emissions.

Now in a still expanding universe, its individual stars like our sun - within its galaxy, our galaxy, the Milky Way - our sun will explode when its nuclear fuel nears exhaustion, becoming a red giant, heating up and wiping out life in a nearby planet like Earth and virtually destroying all its other nearby planets in about five million years' time. A supernova. Then a blue dwarf.

Why? Where is there God to answer this question?

Man, writes Sartre right at the end of *Being and Nothingness* before the Conclusion is a useless passion because we can't be **for ourselves** and be **in ourselves**. Because there **cannot** be a God in the world as such (where is S/He after Auschwitz?) – that is why man is a useless passion.³⁴

³⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre 1943 /2003 *Being and Nothingness* (translated by Hazel E.Barnes) London: Routledge p.636.

Wittgenstein *says* there are no rational metaphysical questions, but: ***the sense of the world must lie outside the world, which is a metaphysical question.***

Some exploding stars, supernovae, as our sun will become, may contract into black holes swallowing everything near them. No one really knows for absolute certainty whether a collapse inward of an entire universe formed our original singularity. And there may be other universes obeying the same or different laws of physics. Might “open” universes swallow each other up? Or collide, being young enough to avoid the fate of being swallowed eventually into a multiplicity of black holes which collapse into singularities? But as people say there is no planet B for us, now, earthlings.

6.45 Yet to view the world sub specie aeterni is to view it as a whole, a limited whole. Feeling the world as a limited whole – it is this that is mystical.

So there is an end to logic and secular philosophy. Even in Wittgenstein there is religion. The end of the *Tractatus ties in with the beginning*:

1.21 Each item can remain the case or not the case whilst everything else remains the same.

Is this true? Is this horribly, horribly true? If it hadn't been for me, the apparently redundant extra being, the insignificant scrap of life left on a doctors' doorstep, would everything else have remained the same? Do Mordechai and I as a unique friendship practically make no difference to everything else? Does anybody hear? Is this a case of what we cannot speak about and thus we must pass over in silence? Is this Kierkegaard's abyss where reason stops and we must leap over into faith? A terrible YHWH who encourages Israelites to dispossess and wipe out their enemies the Anakites? A gentle Jesus in whose name the Maimonides of old were tortured and killed, though not Moshe ben Maimon himself. Blessed be the Name.

Mention Kierkegaard in Botswana outside the departments of theology and philosophy in Gaborone and no one here in Kgalagadi Town except the Maimons know who or what one is talking about. Mordechai and I are bonded together in love and a sense of the ghastliness of Nothing, which “is the recoil from fullness of self-contained being” according to our dear absent, only other bookish friend Jean-Paul S., may he rest in peace.

Mordechai comforts me when I wake in terror because Nothingness has swallowed me up into its emptiness and I am being eaten alive by some nameless primeval horror – a hyena at the doorstep. I scramble under my bed to find my Jean-Paul S.'s *Being and Nothingness* and read the special terminology at the back: "N" for Nothingness. Mordechai laughs and tells me to piss off and go to sleep.

I am saved from spiritual suicide in the middle of the night: "Nothingness.... allows consciousness to exist as such." I feel I am not, therefore I am. *Et ego non sentire, ergo sum*. Blessed be the Name. Jessica taught me to say the *Shma* prayer in Hebrew: to love God with all my heart with all my soul with all my might.

We, the stone-age hunter-gatherers inherited a cultural belief in an eternal after-life which in ancient days meant we would never have left the only environment we knew even after death, and in which we were deeply and profoundly immersed, despite all its dangers, despite tribal wars, despite diseases, despite droughts and poverty.

Now Mordechai and I have to persuade the insurrectionaries who try to save the planet – the activists fighting the police, to make common cause with the philosophers and the game-rangers and the politicians who still remain human in a full sense – that it is worth putting themselves on the line but when will they be strong enough to replace the corrupt and rotten operatives of a world driven mad by its dysfunctionality?

In fact if we were not "the case" others would fill the space empty of us. But who are they?

2. What is the case – a fact – is the existence of a state of affairs.

We have to go back to the first propositions. With us there was division of labour but not on the terrific scale found in the industrial state. There were men and women, adults and children, hunters and gatherers, trance-dancers and the more or less sick. Not a class or caste system of universal proportions, run by bureaucracies. *At first* it did not matter to us that our cosmology was culturally at odds with the modern world and scientifically *wrong*. Now it does matter. The modern world will swallow us up like a black hole if we remain as we are - the remnants of stone-age hunter-gatherers living on the fringes of modern societies, liable to alcoholism and family breakdown and ill-health and poverty and not well versed in advanced experimental science. We were and are well-versed in the plant and animal biology of the Kalagadi, knowing a huge amount about animal psychology and the zoology and the ecology of the region. We knew that before western education arrived.

Before the Europeans arrived in numbers to settle in the Cape from 1652 onwards - Dutch, French and German farmers brought here by the Dutch East India Company - we, stone-age people, lived in small groups with no national institutions. We felt at home in our world which we tried to share with the taller, tribal, Iron Age military cattle-keeping nations, the Bantu-speakers, the Nguni:

like the Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi, Ndebele;

like the Herero, the Northern Sotho, Tswana, Pedi, Tsonga, Shangaan, Venda and Shona;

like the Southern Sotho;

all of whom immigrated into Southern Africa from the north, and were settled here about 500 AD , some say later about 1500 AD.

Now the Africans are dominant. In alliance with the power-brokers of Western, Russian and Chinese societies. We call the African ruling class the "amaBenzi" . Enough said, Mercedes-Benz.

2.01 A state of affairs (a state of things) is a combination of (I add subjects and) objects.

We were hunters and gatherers but we lived alongside the Bantu-language speaking Africans, and the animals. We did dispute land rights and there was fighting before we ourselves were hunted almost to extinction in South Africa itself in the 18th century what some historians regard as a genocide as a retaliation for what was alleged: that we stole and mutilated the European farmers' cattle. When they could they enslaved us, Africans and Boers.

This happened in South Africa itself, where our remnants were absorbed into the "Coloured" "combination-group" to use Wittgenstein's terms, in the apartheid hierarchy alongside our early neighbours, the cattle-herding nomadic Khoi-Khoi, the Hottentots, some of whom also became slaves of the white farmers, or at least serfs. They killed them as *ongedierte* too, worth less than cattle which they could at least eat. Or enslaved us both. Some call us the KhoiSan. The Nama and the Naro in Namibia are related to us.

2.011 It is essential to things that they should be possible constituents of states of affairs.

Now only perhaps 60,000 of us Bushpeople or San survive on the margins of society in the Southern African states bordering South Africa and Namibia. Some of us serve in legislatures, because we have become trained, educated, therefore occupy positions of power in modern parts of new societies. This is a new state of affairs. I don't see them laying down their lives to save mankind which used their forefathers to slave in the mines and work the farms and watch over their herds for their profit.

2.012 In logic nothing is accidental: if a thing can occur in a state of affairs, the possibility of the state of affairs must be written into the thing itself – again!

Magical thinking: In immemorial time according to the legends recorded by Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd, I would have felt that I, as a Bushman, could be incarnated as a spirit in an antelope who might visit my grave. I might in Wittgenstein's terms interpose magical thinking in an otherwise scientific and logical chain of events: I might interpret a creature visiting a grave as an incarnation of the buried one, me, and this incarnation becomes – imaginatively - *true*. In a sense an hallucination or a leap of the imagination can become a symbolic truth.

Magical thinking: Think of it. Looking after my own grave. Respected as me, Xhabbo Xam. A gentle antelope.

Further Xam magical thinking: During my life I would have been felt embodied in clouds which mimicked my white hair as I aged. I would have been able to gaze upon water-flowers which would have symbolised or even incarnated young girls who were killed by the Lightning which we concretised as a personification, as a literal, embodied metaphor, as we did Rain. I would have believed that death would be signalled by shooting stars, and spoken about by woodpeckers which would bring news of mortality to fellow San, news which was magically contained in reflections in a deep river into which shooting stars (meteorites) and woodpeckers would deposit and retrieve news of human fatality.

Scientific thinking: In fact, woodpeckers simply attract their potential mates' attention to insect-ridden, living and dead trees, enabling survival for the chosen mate and their hatchlings by boring a nest in the wood. When we go and investigate, the cunning old bird draws us on to further

exploration – “peck-peck-peck!”, because for 200,000 years and longer, the bird which pecked loudest and harvested and nested well would pin-point, would release more insect-food for them and us and other animals to forage and make a viable nest for a him and a mate and chicks. A symbiotic relationship would emerge with evolutionary consequences because their attractiveness to the bird of the opposite sex and to hungry humans and other animals who eat insects would correlate with their wood-boring and insect-acquiring abilities. Thus, the wood-pecker is invested with magical status. And shooting stars.

Scientific thinking: So magic, the imaginary, is invested in the symbolic because it is perceived as producing results in the real: somebody is bound to have died somewhere as long as we wait long enough to hear the news directly. And so:

2.0121 It would seem to be a sort of accident if it turned out that a situation would fit a thing that could exist entirely on its own.

Since deaths occur all the time there will be accidental coincidences of wood-peckers pecking or merely appearing and meteorites shooting. And soon – sure enough – someone would be bound to hear news of a death.

Mordechai my natural-born brother and I, Xhabbo Xam adopted by his parents, studied Latin amongst other subjects for our university matriculation 17 years after our births in 1946 and came to the hair-raising conclusion that *fortuna* was arbitrary. If John and Jessica had not produced Mordechai in August 1946 Jessica would not have been producing the maternal hormones that help attachment and would not necessarily have wanted me as an adopted baby.

On the other hand, having seen my neediness as a foundling, and living in an African country she might have wanted a brown child anyway and this situation could “accidentally” have triggered an attachment to me as a foundling since attachment by means of love for the infant as well as pregnancy and birth can produce the hormone which “fixes” the attachment “by accident.”

Jessica’s hormonal state fitted me quite by accident. Or she could have loved the look of me entirely on its own, hormones or no hormones.

The ancient Greeks called it *moira*. Fate.

The Jews called it *mazel*. Luck.

If John's wife and Mordechai's mother, my adoptive mother Jessica, had not been saved by the *Kindertransport* at 16 in 1939 she would have been worked to death or gassed in a German concentration camp or died of typhoid or some other camp epidemic like Anne Frank. John was 18 but passed for 16 and was also rescued from Germany. That old Dr Moses and Mrs Rose Maimon escaped the *Einsatzgruppen* murders of Jews in Lithuania and found Dutch Jews who would hide them in the Netherlands was a miracle and another story to be told.

The rabid poison of ethnocentric discourse came partly from being born just after the days of Hitler's unspeakable war, from which the British Empire in 1946, despite its divide and rule racism (think of Hindu-Muslim mass-murder in India-Pakistan in 1947 after Partition) was a haven.

We were just over the border from the toxic environment of the Union, then the Republic of South Africa which never fully transcended the *corruption* of apartheid even after Nelson Mandela, great man though he was, came to power as leader of a liberation movement. The ANC as a whole, knew little about representative parliamentary party politics, a skilled civil service, an independent judiciary and the rule of law. Otherwise how could they have produced an AIDS denier like President Thabo Mbeki who indirectly killed hundreds of thousands for the sake of a populist propaganda point and President Jacob Zuma who used his position on the Parliamentary select committee on defence to receive bribes from British and French armaments companies so as to build a fiefdom - Nkandla? They knew about the betrayal of liberal democracy under apartheid but so worshipped the patriarchal leader that suddenly liberal democracy was trashed.

We lived in the British Protectorate of Botswana where the art of political civilization was a little better known but there was no full democracy until independence came just before diamonds were discovered in 1966 / 1967.

And yet, by accident, *fortuna*, *moira* and *mazel* found me a mother, a father and a brother.

2.0122 It is impossible for words to appear in two different roles: by themselves and in propositions.

Xhabbo is easier to read than Xhabbo which is Bleek's and Lloyd's spelling of my name in the Xam San language orthography they invented to accurately record real speech. It means "dream".

Xhabbo = a proper noun; **is** = the verb "to be" singular present tense; **-easier** = an adverb, in the comparative case, etc. which is impossibly different from:

"Xhabbo is easier to read than which is Bleek's and Lloyd's spelling of my name in the Xam San language orthography they invented. It means 'dream'".

The first word I uttered was "Mordy" – so they told me when I started talking at about 2 – pointing at him. Simultaneously Mordechai called me by my San name Xhabbo because he had learned the clicking sounds of the San from the San twins who at that stage went to the pre-school playgroup attached to Reverend Van Welleigh's Primary and Junior School in Kgalagadi Town and were actually niece and nephew of Bontle because her brother had, unusually, married a San woman who left the hunting and gathering band and worked in the Kgalagadi Wilderness Hotel as a skilled chef.

Our names, mutually understandable, stood for the implicit proposition: **"Mordechai is to me, Xhabbo what I am to Mordechai: my significant Other who gifts me an identity as I gift one to him."**

Authentically, it should be spelt and pronounced Xhabbo according to Dr Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd who first recorded our ethnology and orthology. But the // click, the lateral click, is hard for Europeans to learn because it doesn't exist in European languages nor is it written as such in African languages, so my parents and Mordechai and the Africans called me Xhabbo, and my birth and adoption certificates say Xhabbo – virtually the same click in Xhosa and easy to recognise and write.

With our five clicks we are not ashamed of sounding like bird-people and insect-people. If the world stopped dead in the old stone age life would have been nastier, more brutal, poorer and shorter than it is already but the world would have had a future – until the sun blew up in five million years' time.

2.01231 If I am to know a (subjective) object though I need not know its external properties, I must know its internal properties.

Mordechai and I played together protected by !Ka!karo and !Gae on the shady veranda of our parents' house in Kgalagadi Town town.

A kind and beautiful Batswana woman, Bontle Ngubane, helped with the baby-sitting so that her daughter Mpho, and !Ka!karo and !Gae could go to Reverend Van Welleigh's school and attend his church where he was the Dutch Reformed Church minister. He had three trained teachers for African children, a few Afrikaner children, and some San children who were taught in English, Afrikaans and Xam.

John and Jessica would teach Mordechai and me Xhabbo at home because we were Jewish, but broadly speaking we would share the same syllabus and join up for some classes.

It was the winter school holidays, in July. !Ka!karo and !Gae talked to us in one of the local San language, Xam, with its five click sounds, specific gutturals, and intonational vowels. The click sounds make our speech in the bush sound like insects, or birds, like aural camouflage. Putting the prey off-guard.

Perhaps this was its evolutionary rationale. The older boys and the men would be hunting with bows and arrows poisoned with the lethal juice of a certain grub, and the women and children gathered roots, shoots, leaves and nuts. In fact, many had also to work for farmers as labourers and herders, kitchen maids and only some would be fortunate enough to be educated.

Subjectively, internally, we became at one with the insects and the birds through our clicking, fluting, whispered speech in the bush.

2.0124 If all (subjective and objective) objects are given, then at the same time all possible states of affairs are given.

In the school holidays, when Mordechai and I were 7 in 1953 our parents and the local San who lived outside the town in the Kgalagadi Wilderness let us go hunting with them. We carried bows and poisoned arrows and spears.

I was not as used to the sun despite all the melanin in my brown skin and was not as practiced as the “real” San in barefoot and sandal running. I had to wear trainers to protect my soles from the rough grass and stones, a long-sleeved khaki shirt, long trousers, a sun hat. My brother Mordechai, came with, dressed the same, with sun-block on his hands and face.

If the San knew who my birth parents were, they were not letting on. They certainly knew and respected the medical expertise of John and Jessica Maimon, who, conversely, also learned veld-medicine from the San. There are hundreds of plants with distinct medicinal properties including hallucinogenic agents which aid the religious ritual of the trance-dance.

San hunting usually involves wounding and chasing the running prey although they will wait patiently all night at a porcupine hole. They also set traps and snares. The poisoned arrow leaves a superficial or a deeper wound. The poison is made from the larva and pupae of chrysomelid beetles in the genus *diamphidia*.

It may take hours to run down and kill a small buck just wounded with a poisoned arrow, and even a day or more to kill a large antelope like an eland, which we would have to follow by tracking footprints over miles.

We, the two youngest of the boys and men, had shot a small springbok. Typical of enlightened liberals of the time John and Jessica had brought us up to eat only a little meat.

Making sure they had no cuts in their mouths or lips Ka!karo and !Gae showed us how they sucked out the toxin from the springbok without swallowing it and how to sterilise the wound with a paste of veld-medicine. We tied up the shocked and exhausted springbok who, amazingly, survived its slight poisoning and the trauma of capture.

That winter’s evening we were brought home by !Ka!karo and !Gae dead tired but alive.

San boys and girls had previously taught us how to follow our tracks home recognising our footprints. Besides, we had our own household dogs Sheba and Good Boy to sniff the way home. John and Jessica put Bokkie in a pen with our other pets including porcupines, armadillos, hares, guarded from aerial and land predators by our dogs and vertical fences, open to the sky. This was before Kgalagadi Town had its own fence.

Sheba and Good Boy would share the pen with the menagerie to deter raids from the air and land.

Fed and watered, the pets became tame. We tried to find mates for them and help them breed offspring.

If they seemed unhappy we would drive into the Kgalagadi Wilderness and camp out with them, shepherding them into safe havens and helping them dig new nests.

It was impossible to keep a springbok which can leap 12 feet. So, when Bokkie recovered from his wound he leapt over the six-foot fence and we followed him in the Land Rover till he caught up with a herd and we waited to see if the group of springbok would accept him.

Hunting it and the cure of its wound and freeing it had been a kind of initiation ordeal. How could one kill and eat something so beautiful? But of course, another culture dependent on hunting would find us strange or sentimental. Our vegetarianism would have caused them malnutrition and they found us abysmally out of touch with the real world.

So, this is how we lived, because everything was a known quantity. The Kgalagadi Wilderness dictated how we *could* live as hunter-gatherers if civilization collapsed.

Yet who could have predicted we would be kind and save the springbok from death? The San laughed at us, laughed and laughed. We could have come from another planet.

2.0124 and illustrating Wittgenstein: so, if all (subjective and objective) objects are given, then at the same time all possible states of affairs are given: soft-hearted middle-class European liberals can sentimentalise what Africans and Bushpeople see as hard reality. Both sets of attitudes are given in the subjectivity and objectivity of the person/objects.

2.0131 A spatial (subjective) object must be situated in infinite space. A spatial point is an argument place.

That night we joined in a San trance dance to celebrate the freeing of the springbok and our first hunt. The moon was full. The truly indigenous Xam San knew this prayer to the moon but we had to learn it from the old Cape Colony ethnologists and orthologists, Bleek and Lloyd:

“O Moon yonder! Take my face! Give me your face! Take my face! It does not feel pleasant! Give me your face! When you have died you return. When we think we will not see you again you return!”

Of course, it is a prayer for eternal life. ***It was as if a line drawn from our little group did go on through the cosmos forever, as if the solar system was not our astronomical habitat.***

But even the moon will be destroyed by the exploding sun in 5 million years' time. Therefore, a voice in our heads said: “Dear people, show *uBuntu* which means humanity, now”.

2.0131 Modifying L.W.: spatial subjective object (like a human being) must be situated in infinite space. A spatial point is an argument place.

What does this mean?

This may mean we relate to infinite space through religion and philosophy and must continue to do so.

The San were interested in whether John and Jessica believed in any religion. How did Jews see the moon?

Wasn't it true that the disobedience and distrust of the Hare drove the moon to come down to earth to punish the impertinent animal who insisted his mother was dead, not, as the moon assured Hare, only sleeping?

Did they not believe that in ancient times there were only just a few Bushpeople in the world and therefore room for an infinite number of them living forever, with food enough for this infinite number of Bushpeople constituting mankind?

Where and what was the Jewish God?

2.0131 S/He must be situated in infinite space. A spatial point is an argument place. Of course. Every point in the world has distant implications for the rest of the world and given war and nuclear weapons, for the cosmos.

But: was the Jewish God really related to Jesus Christ? How could Jesus have been born to a virgin? If he was crucified and died on the cross how could he have resurrected?

They believed that the son of Mantis, killed by the baboons, was resurrected by Mantis growing his son's eye, which the baboons used as a ball, and grew it into his whole resurrected body.

But the son of Mantis and Mantis had nothing to do with the ghosts of people, let alone a Jewish saviour from Galilee.

Jesus lived at an exact point in time two thousand years ago.

Surely //Gauna was only in an imaginary sense the god of the trance-dance who healed the sick through the sweat of the trance-dancer. Psychological illness cured by the love or concern of the therapist.

Being quite near the Dutch Reformed Church in Kgalagadi Town they had been to Reverend Van Welleigh's services on Sunday and enjoyed the singing.

The services were in Afrikaans, Xam, Setswana and English.

They had heard of Moses.

//Gauna, the ghost of the trance-dance was surely as powerful a healer as Aaron the priest, and the descendants of both performed the prescribed but superstitious rituals which healed psychological illness and coincided with spontaneous remission

CHAPTER SEVEN

Who was, what was, and why was there Hitler? We could hardly imagine the figure of 80 million killed in two world wars including 6 million Jews. What did this actually amount to in terms of piles of corpses?

2.0201 Every statement about complexes can be resolved into a statement about their constituents and into the propositions that describe the complexes completely.

These are some statements that throw light on the proposition that might described these complexes:

1. Mordechai and I must have been attached to each other as a kind of twin-entity, separated in age by less than a month. When we were still toddlers, a favourite game was looking at each other in the mirror of our parents' bedroom, and chatting with the reflection of the other in the mirror.

2. We took it for granted that the significant Other one to me Xhabbo (apricot-brown), was Mordechai (olive-white) and vice-versa and this was in the order of things.

3. Mordechai and I wanted to be like our parents Jessica and John. When we were very young we were not conscious of being white and brown, European and San. It soon dawned on us over the years of adolescence, reading our parents medical, history and philosophy books, their novels, poetry and plays with a dictionary and encyclopaedia to fill in what we didn't understand, that our relationship was virtually unique in Botswana or at least in Kgalagadi Town in the late 1940s.

4. Western knowledge eventually made sense to us. And African anthropology. And even the post-biblical ***rational commentaries*** in Hebrew and English.

5. The tribal Hebrew God mellowed in the writings of the rabbis. It took us time to realise what a kaleidoscope of cultures we inhabited.

6. Just growing up, even going from day to day, things that we took for granted as part of our rich complex mixed world would, through the eyes of the average African, European or San person in Botswana, seem extraordinarily difficult to negotiate.

7. I, Xhabbo was desperate not to lose touch with Xam culture, so I memorised the Cape San folklore in the original language although it was already on the wane.

8. Mordechai became obsessed by Jewish identity and the Holocaust, by Hebrew language and literature, by Zionism.

9. John and Jessica's income as government advisors on public health programmes as well as their medical fees and their parents' and their reparation payments from the German government for their forced emigration from the Nazis meant they had enough income to buy the books Mordechai and I needed to deepen our different understandings of philosophy, anthropology and Judaism.

10. When the school holidays were over at the end of July, our mother, Dr. Jessica Maimon, would be running the medical surgery in the front rooms of the house, and teaching us every other day. Our father would be doing clinics in outlying villages, or at public health planning meetings in the afternoons every other day and would teach us on the days Jessica was seeing patients. They were both profoundly intelligent, wise and ethical people She was loving, resolute, kind. John was strong, loyal and confident. We grieved that our grandparents would eventually "pass away".

2.061 States of affairs are independent of one another. From the existence or non-existence of one state of affairs it is impossible to infer the existence or non-existence of another.

At night the sight and smell of our parents' bodies, arms over each other in a double bed made us feel secure long after the sun set and jackals and hyenas could be heard calling their mates and young outside the fence surrounding and protecting the town from the Kgalagadi Wilderness. This picture of John and Jessica's fidelity and happiness, made Mordechai and me happy. This picture of them happily conjoined in bed was a picture of what marital love was in its logical space. The grandparents quarrelled discreetly and patched things up.

They argued, they disagreed but their logical spaces were their marriages. They were Jews, they were doctors, they brought with them ancient cultures of learning, compassion for the stranger, the widow, the orphan, the refugee, even for the murderer.

That didn't mean automatically Mordechai and I would have equally good and happy lives. But there *was* a connection. We **might be happy because we had learned how to be happy partly through them.**

2.061 States of affairs are independent of one another. From the existence or non-existence of one state of affairs it is impossible to infer the existence or non-existence of another.

On the other hand, outside our loving and happy home the world might be in a wholly negative state of affairs.

A rich Batswana chief who shifted the fences of his grazing land to include more and more of the Kgalagadi Wilderness thus cutting off the wild animals and the San from *their* hunting and gathering land, infiltrated paid informers into my putative San mother's and my San "step-father's" clan group until there was enough evidence to charge him, my "step-father" with my mother's lover's (my father's) murder.

The accuser wanted to demoralise the San, get the murderer charged and hanged, accuse other San of trespass and illegal hunting on private land.

Money was collected by John and Jessica and the grandparents, to engage a South African advocate for a trial at the High Court in Gaborone. As I told you he was found guilty and sentenced to death.

But then as I told you, my "step-father" was found not guilty of murder, after an appeal to the Privy Council in London – the Law Lords - given a short prison sentence for homicide -manslaughter - with extenuating circumstances. Justice had been done.

I was eventually old and mature enough to meet my birth mother and visit my father's grave.

I was five and Jessica came with me. My birth-mother's husband had served two years in Lobatse prison and whilst grave and silent joined us in a squatting group by the baobab tree outside the encampment where I was actually born.

My mother was a beautiful woman of about 30. She had dressed in what looked like a new *kaross* and wore bead necklaces and bracelets and braided hair. I called her "Mamma" and her husband "Tata". They had brought hot water and tea and *marula* nuts to eat and drink.

Jessica spoke for me describing how we lived and invited me to explain what I was learning in my lessons. She and them spoke either in Xam or Afrikaans.

My birth-mother's other children joined us and Jessica invited me to give them and "Mamma" and "Tata" presents of sweets, bead necklaces and bracelets and ornaments.

Then, with gravitas "Tata" took me by the hand to show me a group of graves marked with branches, twigs and flowers and pointed out my father's burial place some distance from the encampment.

He hummed a tune and broke into a quiet song. I knew enough of the Xam language to know it referred to the dark part of the crescent moon where the ghosts of the dead lived.

In fact a crescent moon was just rising above the trees. Jessica, fearing it would all be too much for me, joined us and led me back to the Land Rover.

Incongruously she left her professional calling card with Mamma and Tata which I was certain they could not read. Speaking in Xam and then in Afrikaans, Jessica said to Mamma and Tata that if they needed medical care they were welcome to come to Kgalagadi Town to see her or John in the surgery.

We knew the San nearby the towns used money so Jessica, embarrassed, left what would be for Mamma and Tata be a huge sum of money – a £100 in cash in a finely made African hardwood box.

Mamma and Tata appeared moved to tears and clapped their hands in the traditional African response to receiving a gift. We drove back to Kgalagadi Town happy that it had all gone off as well as could be expected for such an emotionally traumatic occasion.

Jessica and John took great care putting me to bed that night and when I woke at midnight because the lions in the Wilderness could be heard roaring during their predation, she led me back to Mordechai's room because I wanted to sleep in his bed. But I was disturbed by seeing my father's grave and having to make friends with his murderer.

So, Jessica and Mordechai sang me synagogue songs in Hebrew and I sang him San and Sotho and Setswana tunes till all three of us slept happily in each other's arms.

A European NGO had put up the money for the engineers and the materials, and volunteers from the Southern African universities came to work-camps in their holiday time so as to help erect a fence with gates and animal-grids negotiable by people and drivers so making the townspeople safe from predators. At the same time students studying surveying and the District Commissioner who was sympathetic to the San re-drew the map of the Kgalagadi and the illegal extension of fences enclosing new farmland was reversed.

2.1 We picture facts to ourselves.

Just after independence in 1966, after diamonds were discovered, the town council laid on water-borne sewerage in a facility on the side of the town where the prevailing breeze took the smell away.

This happened when Botswana became rich: officially diamonds were discovered just after the time of independence in 1966 – actually 1967. Perhaps those in the know already understood before 1966 that diamonds were likely to be present in kimberlite deposits.

We were 21 and away at university in Johannesburg doing our fourth Honours year in Hebrew (Mordechai) and philosophy (me). In Kgalagadi Town a water-works was installed with pipes to individual houses, even ones which could not afford the rates and taxes of the town council. The rate of endemic diseases, like intestinal infections fell. The next epidemiological threat was AIDS which arrived in the 1980s and 1990s, brought in by lorry drivers and liberation fighters who used sex-

workers based in small towns and villages along the roads running through Botswana to and from South Africa, South West Africa (later Namibia) and what was Rhodesia (then Zimbabwe) and Angola.

Mordechai and I took photographs of everything and everybody.

Then we would buy sketch-books and crayons and coloured pencils and canvas in frames and tubes of oil and tempera paint, palettes and brushes from Johannesburg. The sky, the bush, the animals, the stars, the moon and the sun, the people hunting and doing the trance-dance, our family: there was near-eternity and extreme transience all around us which needed to be pictured just as I write this story so as make a mark against the ravages of time.

2.151 Pictorial form is the possibility that things are related to one another in the same way as the elements of the picture.

White liberals like Mordechai and Jessica had a job explaining Cecil Rhodes “gift” to the natives through the Colonial Office and with the agreement of his friend Joseph Chamberlain the Colonial Secretary of State in the Westminster Parliament, of what never belonged to the British government – the Protectorates - in any other sense but as geo-political facts: land-grabs – yet with a moral purpose: to “protect” the indigenous.

We found photographs of Rhodes and the early colonials in biographies and histories of the period and in the texts derogatory accounts of Africans, Afrikaners, Jews – everything “alien” to the British point of view.

It became a kind of genuine Protectorate which in 1966 mutated into an independent Botswana, and thus an autonomous member of the British Commonwealth. The British originally needed the Protectorate to abut and defend the railway, and the road leading to the next territory of the Empire going north – Rhodesia – named after one of the few men in world history to have a country named after him in his lifetime.

Mordechai and I weren’t great artists, but it gave us pleasure to bring history to life. We painted Shaka Zulu, Rhodes, Chamberlain, Rudd, Beit, Lobengula, the Shona spirit mediums Nehanda and Kakubi whom the British hanged in Rhodesia, Sol Plaatje the founder of the African National

Congress, the Khama kings of Bechuanaland, King Edward VII, King George V, King George VI, Winston Churchill, Field Marshall Smuts, Nelson Mandela, Ruth First whom we met at Witwatersrand University and whom the South African military intelligence agent Craig Williamson assassinated with a letter bomb.

2.1511 That is how a picture is attached to reality; it reaches right out to it.

Jacob was re-named Israel by a dark angel of God with whom he wrestled all night long. And America was named after Amerigo Vespucci. I liked those facts or legend-facts. They seemed to ideologically humanise what were otherwise just landmasses belonging since time immemorial to – who? *Homo sapiens* and the other animals? God? The cosmos? Now even huge abstract entities can “own”, “let”. “invest in” millions of square miles of what we saw as animal and human space - like “our” Kgalagadi Wilderness. We painted literal and imaginative representations of how pictures are attached to reality.

2.1512 It, a picture, is laid against reality like a measure.

Rhodes would have left his huge wealth to a young man called Pickering who died prematurely. Pickerania doesn't have the same classical aura as Rhodesia: Rhodes. Crete. Sicily.

Rhodesia and then Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe had its own Iron Age ruins dating from the Shona-speaking empires of Mwene Mutapa and the Rozvi which flourished and then died about the 16th century. Drought, disease, plunder, Portuguese colonialism – trading in gold using slaves. Africans certainly had non-literate civilizations and when the Arabs arrived they used Arabic and then the Europeans arrived and they used Portuguese, French, English.

2.1513 So, a picture, conceived in this way, also includes the pictorial relationship, which makes it into a picture.

Mordechai and I had to study for our Cambridge “O” and “A” levels privately tutored by our parents. The alternative was to study at Gaborone High School 800 miles away to the east and full of children of the black and white elite who might have looked down at me as San.

There were a handful of Jewish boys and girls – children of traders and Israeli academics whom we had met at Passover time in Kgalagadi Town and Gaborone. We found their own suffering as Jews made them sympathetic to us as San and to Mordechai, John and Jessica and the grandparents as Jews stuck out in Kgalagadi Town which was the end of the world, a paradise and a claustrophobic hell. They wanted to get away from memories of Europe, the death camps, the *Einsatzgruppen* which murdered their relatives in Eastern Europe and Western Russia.

John and Jessica had wanted to see the Original People, the world as it was at the beginning of time, a sense of what our friend J-P Sartre called Being In Itself and For Itself and Martin Heidegger Being-in-the-world and Kierkegaard knew as the anxiety of the abysmal Nothing where ethics end and faith has to begin in the leap from ethics into faith.

Now they knew how Abraham felt when he thought he heard God order him to sacrifice his beloved Jacob: Kgalagadi Town felt like the end of the world. Its surroundings were full of hallucinating trance-dancers, jealous murderers, abandoned babies – like everywhere else, only in the context of a primal Wilderness. One had to just try and keep sane, as if the world was everything that was the case by scientific and self-revealing ethical proof

2.19 Logical pictures can depict the world.

Jessica had a dream before I arrived on their doorstep, about a week after Mordechai’s birth. In the dream she gave birth to a San baby as a kind of delayed twin. She dreamt it the very night I arrived on the doorstep.

I imagine post-puerperal mothers often have strange, coincidental dreams. Although they had lived amongst Bushpeople and Africans only since 1946, the year Mordechai and I were born, their unconscious minds were being permeated by Southern Africa. Perhaps San people overheard the gossip about the meaning of the dream. Africa is like that. Everybody knows everybody else’s intimate business. They intuited or had overheard Jessica talking to John about a wish fulfilment dream – a San “twin”. But not as a result of a lover murdered by a jealous husband.

A number of logical pictures of irrational but highly possible various outcomes was being painted all over the place through gossip and the pictures emerging from the unconscious mind and the fury of a jealous husband.

And so, I had to confront the possibility that amongst other possible reasons I was given away partly to fulfil Jessica's dream. And this was another reason I was named "Dream", "Xhabbo" in Xam.

Except that it is really spelt and pronounced Xhabbo in the ethnographically received language.

2.202 A picture represents a possible situation in logical space.

John and Jessica had trained at Oxford and in London in the early 1940s and served in North Africa towards the end of the war. They saw and treated surgically, terribly wounded bodies – burned, lacerated, broken men, experiencing terrible agony – men dying in their hundreds and thousands. Rommel wasn't a Nazi but there were SS units in other parts of North Africa. The SS deported the Jews of Libya to Auschwitz, according to Primo Levi in his book *If This Is A Man*.

3 A logical picture of facts is a thought.

3.031 It used to be said that God could create anything except that what would be contradictory to the laws of logic. The truth is we could not say what an "illogical" world would look like.

In London, after they immigrated from Lithuania, young and the old Maimons made friends with rabbis from Eastern Europe, Germany and the Netherlands, imams from Pakistan, Iraq and Yemen with their mosques, Brahmin priests with Hindu temples. Old Dr Maimon had even acquired a specialisation in psychiatry in 1945 after the war.

Old Dr Moses and Dr Mrs Maimon, had been rescued from Lithuania and the Netherlands just before the war which they had spent in hiding. The old parents had been general practitioners in Vilnius and only heard about working Nicholas Winton rescuing Jewish children from the fate that awaited them in the death camps after the war. John, had got to England in 1938 and began to study medicine

with Jessica. It was only later that our grandparents met their future daughter-in-law Jessica Kahn, rescued by the *Kindertransport* from Germany, and Jessica had their medical training in Oxford, met Jessica at a cousin Maimon's house in Hackney. He was 18 and she was 16 and it was, so they said, love at first sight. They were and are quite handsome and beautiful and learned and wise. Like a fairy story. She improved her English quickly and passed her school-leaving exams in science subjects so they were able to do the pre-medical science courses in Oxford and the medical training in London together.

They and the refugees soon realised that there was an insane and a sane logic. Neville Chamberlain and Lord Halifax and the major part of the Conservative Party except for Churchill and his group of rebels opposed to the appeasers, had been sucked into the Nazi, Italian-Fascist and Japanese military-nationalistic logic: that it was possible to conquer the whole world to free it from Jewish-capitalist and Jewish-Bolshevik control, but to leave the other Aryans like the British and the Americans alone. A mad logic.

Wittgenstein discovered later that the *Tractatus* was wrong. It was possible to know exactly of what an ***anti-mad logic consisted***. What the very wealthy assimilationist Viennese Jews like the Wittgensteins were able to do was to buy their freedom from the ***insane logic of Nazism***, whilst the poorer Jews, including Freud's sisters went to the gas-chambers not because they lacked logic but because they lacked huge sums of bribe-money. Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito as human gods defied the Judeo-Christian ethics of a probably non-existent but symbolically real, ethical God. Hitler's vision of a pure Aryan race defied the laws of genetic science and Nazism was consequently a perfectly *illogical* self-contained system, like Stalinist Marxism with its equal hatred of Jews and Trotskyists, and Red China's hatred of non-Han minorities and bourgeois Chinese. Mad logic backed up with enough torture, exile, execution and starvation would deprive the people of any choice. With no choice but to follow the terrifying edicts of the Leader.

The Maimons were only too happy to leave a Europe defiled by psychopathic madmen. South Africa itself was also in the grip of a lunatic ideology of white supremacy. At least the Bechuanaland Protectorate was far enough away from the European psychosis of nationalist power to be viable as a place of logic and care.

At the University in Johannesburg in 1946 the young Maimons found a remarkable African linguist, a lecturer in African Languages, Dr Moloi, who gave them lessons in Sotho and in the languages of Botswana and how to pronounce the clicks in Xam such as /, the dental click ("c" in Zulu and Xhosa) and // which is the lateral click, equivalent to the Xhosa/Zulu click "x". And the gutturals. And the *intonation* of the vowels in words and sentences. "!" is the palatal click – "q" in Zulu/Xhosa. Capital "X" is a guttural in Xam but the lateral click in Xhosa.

As long as they didn't actually call me, Xhabbo, "Dream" in English which has quite a different connotation – making people laugh.... Which just shows how the two cultures differ. We, the San took our dreams seriously.

CHAPTER EIGHT

4.1122 Darwin's theory has no more to do with philosophy than any other hypothesis in natural science.

Abe Abrahams, the Kgalagadi Town shopkeeper and pharmacist, had come to Botswana before the war and also served Up North in Libya and Egypt in the 8th Army.

His wife Lydia and their grown sons and daughters-in-law and their grandchildren had a farm locally, and his family helped with Abe's general store and pharmacy.

As a qualified pharmacist Abe sold medicines or made them up in a tiled, easily cleanable, hygienic part of the shop. His sons, Ike and Zac, who like their father had gone to Johannesburg to train as pharmacists, worked their small farms as well.

They had made such a success of their farms and the shop that they had bought a light bi-plane so they could fly to Jo'burg and import drugs and medicines which otherwise arrived from pharmaceutical wholesalers by train and lorry. Taking weeks from when a telephone order was made.

Abe hadn't accumulated a big library but what he had were the crucial texts of what he called Western civilization. Of course, this included Darwin. *The Origin of Species*. Like many Jews he worried away at the idea of how and why they kept winning Nobel Prizes out of all proportion to their numbers in the population. The answer was this: they never knew when they might have to

pack their bags and leave an anti-Semitic situation. So sexual selection and cultural learning were for traits that were immediately exportable: intelligence, creativity, business acumen. Wittgenstein was not wrong about epistemology, but should not have excluded Darwin by name as not any more relevant to a theory of language than any other branch of science, especially when the Wittgensteins were a generation back all Austrian Jews who converted to Christianity because of anti-Semitism. They all married money

and brains, enterprise and creativity. Some of which traits may be transmitted biologically.

6.421 It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words. Ethics is transcendental. Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same.

Our parents, John and Jessica, in their 20s-30s, had to get baby-milk powder. It proved too difficult for Jessica to suddenly have to cope with a couple of babies breastfeeding, one, me, Xhabbo who arrived totally unexpectedly. Mordechai and I swapped between the breast and the bottle, the bottle and the breast. Apparently, this suited us. Jessica wanted us to grow up with a sense of fairness. Sometimes she would feed us simultaneously, the one at the breast, the other at the bottle, sometimes one at each breast. This made John and the old Maimons laugh because it looked so beautiful.

4.2211 Even if the world is infinitely complex There would still have to be objects and states of affairs.

Life on earth entails objects (and subjects) entering into relationship with each other to sustain existence.

There was, besides the shop / pharmacy in Kgalagadi Town, an hotel, a few other grocery and clothing shops owned by Asians, garages run by Afrikaners, and farmers' agricultural supply stores.

Eventually modernity arrived in the form of a police-station, a post-office, a local government office responsible for rates and taxes and the water, electricity and sewerage services - after independence in 1966.

There was a mixture of stone and corrugated iron roofed houses for the local professionals and shopkeepers, and on the outskirts, still traditional mud and thatched huts and *kraals* for cattle, sheep and goats. All protected by the invaluable town fence and animal grids and farm gates across the roads keeping the Kgalagadi and its wild animals out and the humans and domesticated beasts in.

Abe Abrahams the pharmacist, was, he said of himself, when the 1960s arrived, the most *far out* Jew in the Protectorate. By this he meant he read and wrote modern poetry, played modern jazz on a saxophone to the accompaniment of Stan Getz records at parties. *And* he and his family were the *farthest* Jewish people *out westward* going towards the remote border with what was South West Africa which had been German West Africa in pre-World War One days.

Abe didn't feel at home with Germans. The war. One street, in Windhoek was named after Herman Goering's father. Plenty of Abe Abrahams had died in the Holocaust. Six million if you reckoned that all Jews are actually or symbolically descendants of their father the biblical Abraham.

Xhabbo: The war. The old Maimons and Jessica and John told us about the war. Then there were the Gypsies. And the political and religious dissidents. Oh, so many more died. They say 20,000,000 Russians. And innocent Germans, and the French Resistance. In the 20th century perhaps 80 million died in wars in Europe and the Far East. Why do people call us primitive or refer to the pre-modern mentality as "The Savage Mind" – anthropologists too?

5.6 The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.

I looked indubitably like a San person. Could the Maimons cope with that as well as a white child of their own? I can just imagine them thinking of all the complications likely to await us. John Maimon had Jewish origins like his father and mother who were proud of coming from Sephardi Spain and Protestant Holland before they went to Germany and then Lithuania and then emigrated or were rescued so as to get to England to escape Hitler.

They tried to explain all these cultural complexities to me and Mordechai, bit by bit over time, until we were old enough to grasp it and, and the need to be against race prejudice and discrimination by teaching us to be brave, strong and proud of our own and their cultural and biological heritage.

They would buy textbooks and audiotapes of all the languages they could speak and to learn others. During the European summer we would visit Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal. They encouraged us to speak to local people and took us to great and splendid houses, museums and galleries. Theatres, opera houses and concerts.

Mordechai as the naturally born Jew of a Jewish mother was not so burdened by anything like a mysterious birth as I was. We came to love each other as brothers should. The Cain /Abel and the Ishmael/Isaac and the Jacob/Esau complexes seemed to escape us.

I developed a neurosis about sudden death in the very early morning. As a teenager I would awake before dawn with morbid thoughts. I would feel for a stick or a gun underneath my bed. As if I was re-living the birth event and the foundling experience. In the very early morning, coinciding with the time I was discovered on the Maimon's doorstep. With the imagined threat of scavenger or hunting animals who could walk or fly into the town. There was no fence then. Hyenas, vultures, eagles.

We had Sheba and Good Dog sniffing the dawn air for predators watching over the pets' pen. We needed the dogs in the night if John and Jessica were called out by a farmer's family when someone was suddenly taken ill 10 or 20 miles away on the limestone ridge.

4.12 Propositions can represent the whole of reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it – logical form. In order to be able to represent logical form, we should be able to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say outside the world.

This is the supra-world of ideology and ethics going beyond self-interest, and ethics according to Wittgenstein have to be left implicit.

In the 1980s and the early 1990s there were ex-soldiers from the liberation armies based in Namibia and Angola who became criminals.

The liberation armies produced mutinous and AIDS infected soldiers. It was a job getting them to take anti-retrovirals and use condoms, even though they knew they were not only dying themselves, but transmitting death to others.

Across the border in South Africa a President banned anti-retrovirals because he chose to believe that AIDS was a disease of poverty alone. This view was ideologically convenient and subjected thousands, potentially millions of citizens to chronic illness and death so creating a submissive public too terrified to resist the ruling party which then had a superstitious and malignant power over them. This was the party of their hero and icon, Nelson Mandela.

Tens of thousands died because of the post-Mandela President's apparent propaganda ploy. Then, also across the border in South Africa, another President enriched himself with bribes from arms companies cultivating the South Africa military, naval and air-force for new weapons like frigates and the latest in fighter planes bought from Britain and France.

Again, this was largely accepted by a paralysed and terrified mass of the population, a submissive public too inoculated with their toxic superstitions to resist the ruling party which then had a malignant power over them. This was the party of their hero and icon, Nelson Mandela.

4.121 Propositions cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored in them. What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent. What expresses itself in language, we cannot express by means of language.

A Mrs Alice Halliday, a semi-retired university lecturer in anthropology who published research papers overseas, protected an elderly lion. Who could not keep his place in the pride. Leo had learned to growl outside her front door on the outskirts of the town. This was beyond and outside the protection of the town's fence, gates and animal-grids. She fed him haunches of dried and salted buck which she had shot on expeditions in her four-wheel drive to parts of South West Africa, later Namibia and the Kgalagadi Wilderness and over the border in South Africa where it was legal to hunt.

We, the Maimons, also animal lovers, in Kgalagadi Town, kept an ear cocked for Leo's roaring in case his secret hiding place, accessible to scavengers like vultures, was discovered. A gang of vultures might bring him down for the hyenas to finish him off. He would be crouching in a baobab, miles out of town where he concealed himself in the high branches in dense greenery into which he was strong enough to climb after a meal of a few haunches of dried and salted hartebeest and a drink from Mrs Halliday's tin bath filled to the brim with fresh slightly treated water outside her front gate. She had her own borehole.

She was on the town council and cooperated with Abe Abrahams' pharmacy in getting the local authority to buy government subsidised water-purifying tablets for the African, San, Asian and European populace given that the aquifer water pumped up through boreholes was not altogether safe. Eventually there was a water-works with a borehole serving the whole town and waterpipes running under the pavements and under tarmac roads to the mud-huts and *kraals* watered through taps. There was even a borehole for the San miles into the Kgalagadi Wilderness. Until the Botswana People's Party government shut it down to keep out the San who frightened the game away by hunting at the expense of lucrative overseas tourism. They wanted tame animals to photograph. The primeval and the modern had coincided.

Leo would have not lasted long, terrifying the locals not used to the English love of animals. Leo was already under sentence of death for hunting pet cats and dogs who had escaped the town's protective fence. Without Mrs Halliday's near-miraculous relationship with the lion, Leo would probably be shot by a resident emerging from his farmhouse on the limestone ridge if his dogs scented Leo. Or the dreaded scavengers would tear him to pieces.

The English lady regarded it as a duty to save donkeys, mules and horses, abused or neglected by the very poor Batswana. A petition was organised and the Queen was written to recommending that Mrs Halliday be given an OBE or at least an MBE. She did in fact get a medal. At Buckingham Palace. It just goes to show. There is such a thing as respect for life, even the lives of the humblest animals. We respected hares, lions, ostriches, porcupines, giraffes, wildebeest, buffalo, duikers, dassies. And the secretive leopard. And the swift cheetah.

Mrs Halliday was incensed by cruelty to chickens being marketed in the streets, their claws tied and hanging upside down *alive*. She would buy bunches of them and put them in a hen-house where they could live out their days in peace before humane slaughter by Mrs Halliday herself who would then give the chickens away to the poor, after the birds were plucked and gutted, and their heads and claws removed by her rubber-gloved hands.

She had a field for the elderly, or ill-treated donkeys, mules and horses. She was the nearest thing to a Doctor Doolittle. She lent Mordechai and me the paperback novels whenever we visited.

Rather more dramatic than Dr Doolittle's animals was Mantis, a god-man with gossamer wings, goggling eyes on stalks, and razor-saw teeth as hands who swayed as if praying. There I was, a Bushman child, adopted by Europeans, learning about my culture from a white anthropologist.

CHAPTER NINE.

4.1121 Psychology is no more closely related to philosophy than any other natural science. [The] theory of knowledge [epistemology] is the philosophy of psychology. Does not my study of sign language correspond to the study of thought processes, which philosophers used to consider so essential to the study of logic? Only they got entangled in unessential psychological investigations, and with my method too there is an analogous risk.

This was our Ur-myth: so as to fool the children, Mantis reassembled himself after they had chopped him up when they found him as an apparently dead hartebeest lying somewhere in the old Cape Colony without a wound on his body. They had cut him into parts to make it easier to carry the large animal home to roast and eat. But he was a god, or perhaps even God.

He became himself no matter how many times the children cut him up. Mantis=Mantis. He was himself, was identical with himself, infinitely compressed into himself. Not a trace of Nothingness seeped out of him, as Sartre would put it. He resurrected his dead son, killed by baboons who played with his eye which sees all things and having washed the eye, Mantis brought his son back to life, by cloning him from his eye. Which tells you about San ontology and epistemology, a prelude to science.

4.1121 Again. Psychology is no more closely related to philosophy than any other natural science. [The] theory of knowledge [epistemology] is the philosophy of psychology. Does not my study of sign language correspond to the study of thought processes, which philosophers used to consider so essential to the study of logic? Only they got entangled in unessential psychological investigations, and with my method too there is an analogous risk.

I once questioned my adoptive father about the unconscious substrate of the Christian myth - of the naked torment of the man Jesus and the resurrection of Christ. He covered his face to conceal his own conflict between his medical science and the Judaeo-Christian religion: not Judaism but Christianity is the only religion which has a tortured and humiliated man as its central icon.

My adoptive father John Maimon, a Jew, said all religions faced the issue of suffering, death and the hope of real or symbolic resurrection – the symbolic but cathartic forgiveness of sins, painfully regretted and confessed. Jesus the Jew was one of many Galilean charismatic healers.

Forgiveness of sin was our father John Maimon's central idea: it came about as the effect of prayer to and meditation on ethical Being-In-The-World as a transcendent, what Sartre called the *pour-soi*. It was transcendent but one could grasp it as an idea. Doing good didn't necessarily mean doing God. You had to address the in-itself, the *en-soi* also, which was the good deed, the particular thing, the phenomenon "in-itself". It was infinite by its very nature as a not fully graspable "thing-in-itself". He was not a missionary, but a liberal Jew, not a Christian in a formal sense. He did a Ph.D. in philosophy and theology in his 70s driving or flying to Gaborone University where the head of department was a very eminent Ghanaian, originally a bishop.

Compared with the average medical doctor he really knew that the essence of Man was existence, and Being was always to be interpreted, not given as a dogma in the world or in a doctrine of substantiation or reincarnation but rather as a symbolic resurrection not necessarily Jesus as the Christ. But did Elijah really bring the mortally sick or the dead back to life? Sometimes John Maimon would give a sermon in Reverend Van Welleigh's church on Judaism. Van Welleigh invited the Hindu and Muslim shopkeepers and their educated children whom he and his teachers taught at the junior school to come to the church. So sometimes the sermon was Gujarati or Koranic Arabic. They would make their discourse more practical focussing on good works as the fully understandable basis of faith. As his father the old Dr Moses Maimon did in London.

In his own mind I think he accepted Freud and the anthropologists who suggested the Communion meal of Christ's body and blood was a symbolic enactment of the earliest pre-historic experience of the sons banding together to challenge the father's monopoly of the women, and the Ur-god's

jealousy of his own children. There was, he thought, nothing wrong with benign forms of ritual and symbolism which we call religion if it led to charity, kindness, brother- and sister-hood. Mantis resurrected himself and his partially blinded son and gave him a healed eye.

It was not necessary to fill the minds of believers with the gory details concerning the sons' guilt after castrating the Ur-father as happened to Uranus. At the hands of Chronos. They, the sons, Time and the Planet-Gods – Mercury, Mars and Jupiter-Zeus, emasculated and cannibalised the jealous father who ate his children and then by displacement, the sons ate his blood and flesh, re-enacting a ritual common in post-prehistoric religion. But this was just Greek myth. Even then good could come of it. From the drops of Uranus' blood in the foam of the sea-shore Aphrodite appeared – goddess of love.

There was a *sacred* reminder in the Communion when one eats Christ's body and drinks his blood of how Abraham nearly killed his own son Isaac in a sacrifice on an altar which pre-modern peoples might have eaten. Cain killing Abel could also have been a flesh and blood sacrifice to bring about fertility. The serpent in Eden wrecked God's heaven and earth, but brought about a human understanding of good, evil, obedience, disobedience, truth, by teaching us the meaning of guile, corruption, death and work in the world.

Messianic figures taught wisdom - Moses, Buddha, Socrates.... Later Einstein, Hubble, Hawking taught science. For John Maimon it was not necessary to plunge too deep into the connections between science and religion through the Unconscious when there were so many pressing issues to do with sheer poverty and cruelty suffered by his congregants.

4.1121 Again. Psychology is no more closely related to philosophy than any other natural science. [The] theory of knowledge [epistemology] is the philosophy of psychology. Does not my study of sign language correspond to the study of thought processes, which philosophers used to consider so essential to the study of logic? Only they got entangled in unessential psychological investigations, and with my method too there is an analogous risk.

Why were we, faced with modernity, still stone-age hunter-gatherers? That was the question. Like Humpty-Dumpty on words: words mean what you want them to mean: the implication of "still" as backwardness.

To which we replied: why not still be hunter-gatherers? Words mean what Humpty-Dumpty chose them to mean: it was a question of who will be master (of words and everything else including the contemptuous use of the idea of hunter-gatherers “still” being at a “primitive?” – level of economic development). What could be more primitive than having enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world many times over? However, the mere knowledge of mutually assured destruction keeps the world relatively at peace. Does unilateral nuclear disarmament fit into the theory of knowledge which sees people in a war potentially producing a horrible state of nature which is nasty, poor, brutal and short? Usually there is no Hitler, Stalin, Hirohito, Franco, Mussolini preparing for an apocalyptic end of the world. So in this state of affairs a nuclear weapon could act as a deterrent, unless there was also mutual disarmament at the same rate in each state prepared for a more and more pacific state of affairs.

2.223 In order to tell whether a picture is true or false we must compare it with reality.

The real question was: why had the civilized committed an alleged genocide against us? As the Dutch farmers did in the 18th century Cape Colony. Survival. Survival of the “fittest” – the more technologically advanced. That was it. Where was God? Where is God after Auschwitz? What is mankind going to do to make up for God?

With many of Jessica’s Khan’s and John Maimon’s family gassed in Auschwitz, Sobibor and Treblinka or shot by the *Einsatzgruppen* of local Lithuanian, Polish, Ukrainian, Belarussian Nazis under SS command, Jessica also knew how to stand her ground as a Jew in a Jew-hating world. She would show me and Mordechai our family tree and who were killed in what camp or shot by a death squad in the outskirts of a what particular village or town.

*

As a very young woman, still an adolescent girl really, before she took up medicine, Jessica our mother was a literary prodigy. After she came back from her training in Oxford and the war she went on writing novels and short stories about Hitler’s Germany and the *Kindertransport* as a miracle which saved her as a girl of 16. She had them published in South Africa and London. Some royalties still came in. She loved the wild, unspoiled Kgalagadi Wilderness where she and John and friends from London and South Africa would go on camping holidays and see the wild-life.

*

I have the photographs John and Jessica took with their Leica camera of the Union Jack flag in Mafeking's central square outside the pre-independence British Protectorate's office, quite different from the South African flag. They had taken the plunge and adopted me.

They registered both my and Mordechai's birth in Mafeking in late August 1946 and legalised my adoption after an official procedure. Mafeking was where the colonial Protectorate had its capital before it became independent Botswana in 1966. There were no race laws prohibiting inter-racial adoption in the British Protectorates.

But sometimes in adolescence and early adulthood the same thoughts would go round in my mind. Who and what was I really?

My mother wanted me to be Jewish. And a San person. If I could happily combine both. She found old Hebrew prayer-books but delayed the *brit milah* – the initiation into the covenant of Abraham. They could not find 10 Jews to form a quorum for my and Mordechai's circumcision. The Jews only came to Kgalagadi Town for Jessica's and John's sake at Passover time in April or thereabouts. So, they delayed the ceremony till then, although we were much more than 8 days old, the ritual requirement. Our father John could and did perform the operation. He used a local anaesthetic so we didn't feel the pain at 8 months old. No doubt I would be mocked as a Jewish San person. Unheard of. The only one in the Kgalagadi Wilderness's capital Kgalagadi Town. Perhaps the only one in the world.

*

The same obsessional thoughts went round in my head in adolescence: it became a mantra for me: Bushman prisoners first taught Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd the Cape San language and its folklore. Their homeland was the Northern Cape – actually originally the whole of Southern Africa was their hunting and gathering land. Then in the 19th century the Northern Cape was banned as a hunting-ground for Bushpeople. Hence their conviction for hunting giraffe. And punishment by hard-labour building the breakwater in Cape Town harbour and sleeping in a prison.

White civilization: Jessica my adoptive mother and Mordechai were good therapists when we were adolescents. There were advantages to civilisation.

We – John, Jessica, Mordechai and me – decided my brother and I would go on being Jews. We would have a delayed *bar mitzvah* in 1966 when we were already 20 and at the university in Johannesburg. The service would take place in the house of one of the Israelis in Gaborone where there was a congregation. He was a trader called Avner Bloom who had built the first supermarket in what was to become the capital city. This coming of age ceremony was not a crisis for the family although John and Jessica had their hands full with the school and the medical practice. Additional teachers and nurses had to be paid for by the church, the British government and Anglo-American Diamonds which was revitalising Botswana.

Jessica would teach us Judaism and the biblical Hebrew so we could read from Avner's Torah scroll.

*

In 1994 a government of liberation came to power and apartheid was abolished

across the border. Mandela was democratically elected and the African National Congress ruled in a South Africa already riddled with crime and corruption inherited from the apartheid regime.

By the 2000s General Peter Kgosi, the king of the Bangwato, the ruling tribe, headed the government of Botswana on behalf of a democratically elected Botswana Peoples Party.

One farmer who came to John's surgery liked to talk politics and would say to him: *"Oooh Magtig, van wat praat jy? Vryheid in daardie land volgens vier-honderd jaar van apartheid? Miskien in Ghana. Miskien hier. Maar nie tussen die Oranje en P.E. Ag! 'N miljoen jaar voor regtige vryheid kom in daardie vervloekte land!"*

"Heavens, what are you talking about? Liberation in that land after four hundred years of apartheid? Perhaps here. In Ghana, or here perhaps. But not between the Orange River and Port Elizabeth! A million years before real freedom comes in that damned country".

*

A Labour Government under Clement Atlee in the post-war period banished the heir-apparent to the deceased king of the Bangwato, the ruling tribe. He had trained as a barrister in London, but married a white Englishwoman, a secretary, in London, thus upsetting the apartheid government in South

Africa. It had banned interracial marriage and sex under the Mixed Marriages Act and the Immorality Act, none of which could possibly apply to the still British territories on its border – the Protectorates.

But the U.K. government needed to pacify the Afrikaner Nationalists' government: they needed uranium for their nuclear weapons. And other precious metals. Their financiers had billions invested in gold and diamonds and other forms of mining.

So, the traditionalist uncle of the heir-apparent became regent in place of his colour-blind nephew and became paramount chief of the Bangwato and thus *de facto* co-ruler of Protectorate with British officials under the Colonial Office in London. Only the discovery of surface diamonds in the east of the Kgalagadi rescued the legitimate heir from racial and tribal stigmatisation because now the Protectorate didn't need either South Africa or Britain to prop it up as one of the poorest countries in Africa. It was rich.

Independence came in 1966 and eventually diamond mining taxes enabled services and infrastructure. There would be eventually some hundreds if not thousands of fully literate San out of a total of about 60,000 in the Protectorate, South West Africa (later Namibia), and millions of literate Africans in Southern Africa because of state and business-funded education and modernisation.

The Afrikaner Nationalists had tried to teach a degraded apartheid-type education in state schools producing a near-revolution in Soweto led by school students in 1977.

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So, Mordechai's grandfather, John's father, and John's grandmother were descended from the 17th century Sephardi Jewish immigrants invited into England by Oliver Cromwell from Holland where they had taken refuge from the edict of expulsion decreed in Ferdinand and Isabella's Spain of 1492. Being merchants, they re-emigrated to the Netherlands, Germany, Lithuania.

My brother Mordechai's middle name was Baruch – after Baruch (later Benedict) Spinoza, a 17th century Sephardi Jew who was excommunicated by the Amsterdam synagogue for deconstructing the Hebrew bible as legend and wisdom literature and went on to become a philosopher admired by Descartes and offered a university chair by the German Hapsburg Emperor on condition that Spinoza did not undermine the state-supported Lutheran and Catholic faiths of the old Holy Roman Empire.

Needless to say, Spinoza turned this offer down. He made his living grinding lenses for spectacles and died of a lung disease, phthisis, caused by ingesting glass particles, but happy that he had altered European philosophy for the better, although he never fully succeeded in reducing Descartes' ethics to geometric formulae.

Even as small children Mordechai and I, Xhabbo, looked up Jewish philosophy and history in our parents' Encyclopaedia Britannica and for our B.A.Honours and later our M.Phil. reading had access to university libraries. Not long after Spinoza, three hundred and seventy years ago, the Dutch Jews under Menasseh ben Israel were invited to return to England by Oliver Cromwell. Their predecessors had been expelled in the 12th century and their goods confiscated and their medieval predecessors' community in York committed suicide in their hundreds.

That our mother Jessica was alive was enough of an acknowledgment of *her* Being-In-The-World as she put it – adding “...One in the eye for Heidegger who became a passive Nazi when it suited him”. The old Mrs Maimon cursed him in Yiddish: “*Er zol vaxn vi a tsibele mit zeyn kop in genem.*” (“May he grow like an onion with his head in hell ...”).

But even the old Maimons recognised that Being-In-The-World was Heidegger's, indeed modern sociology's and psychology's basically correct assumption refuting Descartes separation and re-joining of mind and body – *cogito ergo sum* - and the medieval separation of essence and existence.

It was with Jessica our mother that we had our most profound discussions. She had read Heidegger who joined the Nazi party in 1933, the year Hitler became chancellor of Germany. She turned Heidegger on his head, literally towards hell, as Marx did to Hegel. Freedom was not the German state. The German state was wage-slavery. But Heidegger with his Bavarian peasant background valued *heim*. Some sort of Jewish existence would be home for her, Jessica – part of her essential or existential being-in-the-world. Not due to Heidegger. The Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs put her in touch with a metaphorical “God” who was already in-the-world as a symbol.

That is perhaps why she loved the Kgalagadi Wilderness. This was the world ready-to-hand not the alienated world of urbanisation which was only present-to-hand if you had money and technological know-how.

Her father Professor Hans Kahn was a pupil of Heidegger whose concepts of Being these were.

*

He, Jessica's father - and her mother - were murdered in Auschwitz, suffering the fate of the medieval citizens of York, later Speyer, Worms, in the 13th century - God knows where else – practically everywhere in Europe.

For after all, didn't the Jews constitute a world-wide conspiracy, as outlined by the Protocols of the Elders of Zion (a Tsarist Russian anti-Semitic forgery which inspired Hitler) and didn't Arthur Balfour – he of the famous pro-Zionist Declaration in favour of a Jewish homeland in Palestine – also believe in giving the Jews what they wanted since, allegedly, in every philo-Semite's mind – the Jews ruled the world anyway?

Lloyd George thought that. Ernest Bevin hated the idea of a Jewish Palestine. Was he an anti-Semite or just a trade-unionist who identified the Jews with the capitalist class? Like Stalin executing all the Jews originally on the Politburo which led the Bolshevik revolution condemning them as “rootless cosmopolitans” except Bevin had no British institutions which would tolerate totalitarianism.

Jessica had read Sartre and De Beauvoir, and knew that De Beauvoir worked as a broadcaster for the Vichy pro-Nazi regime. They had to eat. De Beauvoir wrote not of “authenticity” (Heidegger the Nazi collaborator did) but of the “ethics of ambiguity”.

Who is without sin, let him or her throw the first stone – was Jessica's philosophy. And De Beauvoir's.

Camus thought it was all totally absurd. There was no escape from absurdity except courage to bear it.

Sartre thought “hell was other people”. It was certainly hell for Jews in Europe from 1939 to 1945. Most of my fellow San knew dimly by family legend of their forefathers' 18th century genocide by the farmers of the Cape and the attempted genocide of the Herero in German West Africa (Namibia) before the first world war. The educated San knew. The product of rational enquiry had to be made known. Otherwise it might happen again. It kept happening

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For both of us, Mordechai and Xhabbo, there was joy as well as melancholy. A few Jewish professionals, academics, skilled tradesmen from Israel, mainly based in the capital after independence in 1966 made the long trip to Kgalagadi Town from Gaborone, which had become the main city, for Passover and stayed over with Abe Abrahams and his family and with the Maimons. They drank wine and sang the age-old songs celebrating the Exodus from Egypt – mythical in part – with a symbolically truthful core. It intrigued them that John called himself a Judaeo-Christian.

In later years we all crowded into a Piper Cub plane - John and Jessica's. They became known as the Flying Doctors and the Abrahams family as the Cruising Chemists. We flew to Gaborone for Passover. The plane could be adapted to take two crew and four passengers or space for medicinal equipment and supplies. John and Jessica had trained as pilots in the last year of the war in North Africa, Libya and Italy.

John knew Hebrew from his theology training which he did at Harvard after his medical course at Oxford and London so that was all right: – he could read and sing from the *seder* book. The *Haggada*. A *seder* was a Passover meal. Like the Last Supper of Jesus. He and Jessica had been to *sederim* in Oxford held by Jewish dons and their families. It often coincided with Easter.

*

Liberal non-racism was constantly being explained to us as soon as we could talk and think. So was kinship. Each equally important: exogamy and endogamy. Marrying out and marrying within. Adoption and marrying out crossed over kinship boundaries. One might have to learn two identities.

But then modern life involved divorce, separation, re-marriage, broken families, “illegitimacy” - so thousands, millions, perhaps billions of people have to manage to integrate multiple identities in the modern city or even in what was a largely rural state like the original Protectorate, but especially when it became independent in 1966 and diamonds were discovered and modernisation ensued with all its “pathologies” and benefits.

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Six hundred and more miles away near the border of South Africa in its museum there were still relics of the famous siege of Mafeking dating from the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 - proclamations

and posters, and statues and portraits of Queen Victoria and her successor King Edward VII: “Bertie”. This was the original Protectorate’s capital.

They took a flashlight photo of another photo in the Mafeking museum, of Solomon Plaatje, founder of the African National Congress, and a famous translator, at the *ad hoc* trial inside the besieged town presided over by (later Lord) Baden-Powell.

The accused was a thin, terrified African indicted for treason and sentenced to death because he had been ordered by the Boers to transport (steal) arms and ammunition and food for them during the siege of Mafeking when the Boers on the outside of the town were hungry and short of military supplies.

He too was starving. They paid him. The Boers. To the British it was treason. Treason to feed his starving family let alone the Boers.

I only discovered the photograph years later when Mordechai and I were teenagers. We asked about it. John and Jessica had kept it so as to never forget what imperialism really consisted of – at least in part.

Imperialism also brought a unifying language and an infrastructure for positive aspects of modernisation: education, health care, sanitation, education, transport, equality before the law, representative government. But negatively crime and corruption and pollution – at least in the on-coming New South Africa. But not so much in Botswana. Not that we could see.

*

But this dissonance was nothing as compared with the clash between the idea of the Protectorate and later the democratic state, and the *actual* status of some of the Bushpeople. The San, were sometimes literally slaves of the dominant African tribes. They experienced

multiple forms of prejudice and discrimination. Some of the farmers of Kgalagadi Town in the ex-Protectorate, now Botswana, were good employers. Some were not.

A photo of me obviously a Bushman child, shows a tiny infant in our mother’s white Ashkenazi Jewish arms, attracting attention from passers-by on the pavement in Mafeking in 1946 in the clear

winter sunshine with the sun pouring down. The adoption and birth certificates were photographed too. Mordechai was strapped with a blanket on !Gae our servant / school-pupil's back.

In Mafeking, later Mafekeng, the hotels and public bars, were frequented before 1994 by whites and black in segregated facilities. And even after South Africa's democratic elections (after 1994 with separate bars charging divisive prices) these places were open at lunch-time. There is another photograph of a burly Boer in khaki shorts, shirt, heavy boots and wide-brimmed leather hat confronting me and my adoptive parents, and with an inscription on the back in Afrikaans:

"Magtig, wat doen julle mense? 'N Boesman kind? Maak seker hy nie weghardloop nie om met die diere te lewe. Doop julle hom in die kerk, met n' teken van die kruis op sy voorkop!" ("Almighty, what are you people doing? A Bushman child? Make sure that he doesn't run away to live with the animals. Baptise him in the church with a sign of the cross on his forehead!").

I'm pleased they kept this photograph and the inscription on the back because it showed what I would be up against, although the farmer was well-intentioned. It was taken in August 1946 on the day of my legal adoption. The English-speaking wouldn't say as much openly, but from their looks, seemed equally amazed – so John and Jessica admitted. The Afrikaners were open with their three-hundred and fifty years of experience fighting for their land as white settlers who felt they belonged to Africa, had nowhere else to go.

*

Time flies. Our grandparents have passed away. Our parents aged 80-90 now live in a *rondavel*: it is a circular African hut, with a bathroom and all mod. cons. in the garden of our house in Gaborone, now capital of an independent state.

We would have had a grandparent still alive, John's father, who had lived to be 100 and then died. As it was he received a letter of congratulation from the Queen when he turned 100 in 2000. He would have been 119 now, just like Moses the year before he died. He lived and died as a true descendent not so much of Moshe ben Maimon but Baruch/Benedict Spinoza.

*

When we were not in our farmhouse and small plot of land in Kgalagadi Town, we lived in a colonial house in Otse Village in Gaborone. The department of religious studies and philosophy was where we worked and still did part-time teaching side-by-side with African theologians and philosophers whom we trained years previously. The University let us stay in one of their houses near the campus which we rented because we were still part-time lecturers. Our childhood carers, !Kalkaro and !Gae lived in the *rondavel* in the garden of our Kgalagadi Town farmhouse on the western border and are old. They also have mod.cons.

Mordechai and I became anthropologists and then philosophers, and acquired doctoral degrees.

*

When we crawled as infants into John's and Jessica's room we saw ourselves in the mirror of the wardrobe opposite and touched and stroked our parents' faces, reflected back in our imaginations and in reality. Or at least I often assume that Mordechai and I had a kind of joint identity.

For of course we were different from each other and our worlds were different given the colour difference and the stereotypes other people had of a white child and a San child, differences which we internalised because our socialisation experiences differed, despite John and Jessica being scrupulously careful in treating us as "the same".

*

We told *each other* what they had been telling us ever since we started to think and talk. *Why* it was that I was brown – apricot brown with pepper-corn hair – and slanty eyes and high-cheekbones – and *why* Mordechai was blond (like John), and a bit like Jessica who had red hair and green eyes. Mordechai had a reddish beard when he grew up. We learned about genes and culture. About Darwin. About evolution as dynamic.

But *they had* white skins, bronzed or inflamed by the Southern Africa sun like Mordechai. With a straight, high noses. *My* nose was flat and we differed in other different physical features. They explained how I was found and adopted – an extra gift from some generous person in *the same humanity* – as well as Mordechai being yet another gift born of two known parents – their birth child but me their social child were exactly equal in being loved.

We had the photos of John and Jessica in Libya and Egypt in front of us. But what if he had been killed? Was this what we later would learn to call Thanatos – the death-wish, the partner, complement and opposite of Eros, desire and love? We thought Freud was both right and wrong in this respect: we certainly never, ever wanted him to die – although the Unconscious mind might have thought differently. For he was at times the forbidding father.

But the Gaborone University students we taught purported to want *positivist* social and moral “sciences” without knowing what positivism really was: it would have entailed the betrayal of the whole idea of a humane university. Even in physics, “meta-physics” entered by way of the big bang, Einstein on space-time as curved and relative, which had become the new physics and then there were quantum mechanics, and Hawking’s ideas about the oscillating universe.

*

We had seen pictures and films of tanks and planes and artillery. What if a German bomb or shell had hit John when he was near the battle-field receiving the wounded soldiers? What would have happened to Jessica if she hadn’t been rescued by the *Kindertransport*?

They told us many times until we finally realised fully what Hitler and the Nazis were. But where was God in all this? God hid his face because he could not, would not interfere with the freedom of the will he gave his creatures to choose evil as well as good! Dear God...

OR “GOD IS DEAD”. SIGNED: NIETZSCHE? OR “NIETZSCHE IS DEAD?”. SIGNED: GOD?

If not for the *Kindertransport* Jessica would have died in a concentration camp with her parents. She showed us photographs of them, of Hans and Mathilda Khan. Only later, when our personalities were strong enough to assimilate the horror, did they let us read about and see films about being gassed and who and why Hitler, Himmler, Goebbels, Goring, Eichmann, Streicher, Rosenberg, Heydrich were the way they were.

Rommel who was not a Nazi, did not attack defenceless Jews in North Africa and transport them to the death camps, although Nazi SS regiments did, we learned later.

Rommel was involved in a plot to kill Hitler, and was forced to commit suicide. Tragic. *Treurig*. For him, his wife and children and the rest of his family.

*

!Ka!karo means “moon” in the San language of their “tribe” (and they soon adopted us into the Xam and made it our “tribe”). !Gae means “morning”.

Perhaps they had other San names but these were the names John and Jessica could manage. !Ka!karo and !Gae were only too happy to be known by their picturesque new names.

I remember quite clearly !Ka!karo and !Gae cooking us all scrambled eggs and toast. They were about 14 and their families were farm-Bushpeople, but still San. They sat

in on our lessons at school and at home. Jessica taught them about play and child development. We called !Ka!karo and !Gae uncle and aunt.

*

!Ka!karo (“moon”) was born in the light of a full moon and !Gae (“morning”) took all morning to be born, hence their names or the names John and Jessica gave them. Actually, as they were from a farm-Bushpeople family, my father delivered them in their parents shack on an Afrikaner’s land. We learned Afrikaans from the farm-San and the Afrikaner farmers and the local African language from the Bangwato who visited the church and the clinic, and from the teachers in the primary and junior school attached to my father’s church which *his* father had planned and built after the First World War. He, our grandfather, Dr Moses Ben Maimon had worked with Albert Schweitzer in Lambarene.

We were always aware of contradictions. Was Joseph Conrad corrupt because he allowed his narrator Marlowe to express racist ideas about the Congolese in *The Heart of Darkness*? What about Jane Austen and the slave trade which enriched her heroes and heroines? Not a mention of it. But in the silence, the rotten corruption and evil was definitely known.

*

My *birth* mother may have known they, the Maimons, wanted a child in the year just after they left Oxford following the war and came to the Protectorate. In 1945 Jessica didn’t conceive.

The rumour *may* have reached my Bushpeople's parents, that Jessica was trying to conceive a child, and although she finally succeeded, perhaps they thought she wouldn't mind twins.

Whereas she, my unknown birthmother already had perhaps three San children – one every two or three years – as each child was weaned she would conceive again. Perhaps they were farm-San or hunter-gatherer San, or a bit of both. In my own mind I made a clear distinction between my San mother and my adoptive mother. I loved them both. It wasn't as if a Nothingness haunted Being because I knew what and who I had become. Even if I was to become *muti* for a witchdoctor. I swear this is not racist propaganda.

Sometimes the six of us, !Ka!karo and !Gae , John and Jessica, me Xhabbo and Mordechai would go on round trips in Land-Rovers equipped with medical equipment and drugs to various villages attending to the sick. Later we flew in our Piper Cub.

*

There was occasional violence. We learned about it but never witnessed it.

If a farmer or shop-keeper in Kgalagadi Town or in the villages caught an African or a San-person stealing or even suspected him of some other crime or misdemeanour, or just an arrogant attitude, he wouldn't bother with a formal referral to the police or to the offender's Christian minister or chief or San clan leader.

He would with his reliable servants tie up the supposed evil-doer or "cheeky" non-white person and publicly flog him or even her with his *sjambok*, his whip. Or chase after the accused with his whip and "give him hell" – as they put it.

If John got to know of this he could go to the Dutch Reformed Church white minister or a Coloured DRC churchman in the non-whites (previously) segregated church and there would be further discussions and a temporary cessation of violence and / or alleged stealing and / or alleged insolence. He counselled his Anglican patients if they came to him with private complaints about racial violence. Often a victim would be too afraid to go to the police for fear of more repercussions.

So that is what it was like then. When independence came in 1966 people had to be more careful about inflicting violence, but there was always the latent threat of violence within a racist hierarchy with the San near the bottom. There were other minority tribes and groups of Southern Africans who also experience poverty and violence to this very day but dare not revolt for fear of the secret intelligence personnel who torture, kidnap and kill them, but not in Botswana. This happened in Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe. Who, under the guidance of North Korean officers, directed his Fifth Brigade to kill 20,000 Ndebele in their villages in the early 1980s after independence, and brushed it off 40 years later as a “mistake”. The Ndebele conquered Matabeleland and Mashonaland in the mid to late 19th century. This was their mistaken punishment. Their pacific descendants suffered.

*

Bangwato, the ruling tribe church elders, or ordinary Botswanans took the services in Reverend Van Weillegh’s absence. We had grazing land and vegetable gardens the produce of which we shared with !Ka!karo and !Gae and their families as well as paying !Ka!karo and !Gae wages. As “farm Bushpeople” they were semi-proletarians working for wages and payment-in-kind, for many reasons not able to do full-time hunting and gathering: as I reiterate: there were droughts, occupation of the Wilderness by the cattle ranchers who put up fences to keep out the spread of rinderpest, fences which stopped the game finding water and grazing.

It was a delight to see the windmill turning by the borehole which was situated by a distant fence protecting our grazing land and vegetable garden. One could turn the piping around to fill a stream running into a small pan or dam where, on the other side of the fence in the drought, the Kgalagadi animals could come and drink, usually under cover of darkness in case some other farmers less altruistic and ecologically minded took it into their heads drive out of the town across the animal grid and beyond the fence to shoot a buck or poachers wanted to kill an elephant for tusks.

There were a few game rangers employed by the government. Even before independence the game were protected by law in the Kgalagadi Wilderness, even in the vicinity of Kgalagadi Town. They would arrest alleged poachers who might go to gaol in Lobatsi after a trial or at least be fined.

The San were allowed to hunt but only in some of the game reserves and only with bows and poisoned arrows. Gun were absolutely forbidden. Hunting and gathering full-time became ecologically and economically more and more difficult. Because of the cattle-ranchers using fences and the recurrent long droughts. The game went north to Okavango.

Jessica and John supplemented our and !Kalkaro's and !Gae's learning at home. We had medical reference books, other textbooks, encyclopaedias, novels, poetry, histories, theology books, atlases, the great philosophers and a radio which could pick up the BBC World Service. So, we knew what was happening before the South African weekend newspapers and the British weeklies arrived late. The post arrived from the nearest railhead by train and then by road through a national service with other mail. There was a post office in someone's house.

As we grew older we would play rugby and cricket in the holidays with the African and Afrikaner and San boys on the sports fields of Kgalagadi Town town, also kept green by water from the limestone ridge being sprinkled. The girls and young women would organise tennis and netball, but that was in racially segregated teams in the early days of the Protectorate. In ethnically mixed rugby and cricket after independence in 1966 there was plenty of racism, "sledding" – verbal insults - but usually a "sensible" adult teacher or parent either black or white kept things under control.

The Afrikaners usually sent their children to junior and senior schools in South Africa as boarders. They would call me not Xhabbo, but "Bushy". I took it as a compliment and just played harder.

Except on one occasion when one hefty prop forward tackled me and called me a – "*Vergiftig dier!*" as we both hit the ground. I didn't want to talk about this at first after the match. It means "poisonous animal"

The referee heard it though, and awarded a penalty to our side and the boy who swore at me was sent off for ten minutes. Mordechai took the penalty kick and added three points to our score. Ten minutes and three points to assuage the feelings of a poisonous animal disguised as a human being, humiliated beyond measure.

*

In this remote place in the middle of Southern Africa one sometimes met the most extraordinary people. A new District Commissioner arrived with his wife and they both had relatives in South Africa. My father roped them in to start evening adult education classes - the basics: English literacy, history for new learners, world geography and politics.

Actually, the new D.C. wasn't an Englishman (it was pre-independence), but an educated, liberal, white Afrikaner who wanted to pioneer a new kind of post-colonialism: Pieter Labuschagne. He would encourage liberal students from South Africa to join work-camps to help build a high

school/agricultural college next door to the primary and junior school which the Dr Moses Maimon, our grandfather, had founded before the war. He was helped by a German volunteer community worker Stephan Schlegel.

*

In 1960 when we were 14, and studying at home with our parents, we heard on the BBC World Service news of the Sharpeville shooting in a township south of Johannesburg where on 21st March, 69 demonstrators throwing rocks and stones protested against the pass laws which required internal passports controlling the movement of black men and later women. They were shot dead by the police who panicked in their police-station and fired on a crowd without orders.

The campaign was led by the Pan African Congress and taken up by the African National Congress. The ANC urged the people not just to leave their passes at home when protesting (an offence) but to burn their passes which might have meant terms of imprisonment for breadwinners whose families would suffer. So, this was apartheid and this was the nature of the Afrikaner Nationalist government. And the resistance was potentially very damaging to those heroic enough to take part in what became known as “the struggle”.

When we were 17 in 1963 I, Xhabbo, and Mordechai passed our overseas Cambridge senior school-leaving exams for which our parents had tutored us. !Ka!karo and !Gae also passed but preferred to go to the newly opened Botswana university college linked to the two other British Protectorates' university colleges. The Botswana university college was in the capital Gaborone. They received government scholarships and wanted to become school teachers.

*

Our father John Maimon had learned to fly a plane as an army doctor in North Africa during the war and taught my mother Jessica on the Piper Cub we bought second hand from a local farmer who was selling up and going back to South Africa. So, they were both licenced pilots. When we were old enough they trained Mordechai and me. The plane had a powerful radio tuned in to local and nearby airport wavelengths which would help us navigate and avoid bad weather.

We could fly all over independent Botswana. As long as the self-governing administration or local farmers built landing strips near the larger villages where small clinics were being set up and were staffed by trained nurses, we could get to remote areas in response to telephone or local shortwave radio messages.

Now that diamonds had been discovered in the eastern Kgalagadi Wilderness, Botswana would become a rich, technologically connected African state, instead of remaining one of the poorest in Africa.

*

We did some of the other humanities subjects but the anthropology department at Witwatersrand University had accepted us when we were 21 for a fourth Honours year in 1967. And then a fifth year writing a Master's dissertation.

Because in South Africa segregation and apartheid pervaded all avenues and aspects of life the university authorities at Witwatersrand University had seen to it that we were accommodated in the men's residence for students. We each had a room to ourselves but next to each other. On the campus there was a Students' Liberal Association which had lunchtime talks from anti-apartheid activists and demonstrations against apartheid laws. Inevitably the Special Branch began to take notice of us. Reactionary white racist students in the Engineering Department attacked our demonstrations and tore up our placards. We fought back.

On Saturday nights we went to parties in Sophiatown, a multi-racial freehold township where Africans could still own houses and land. We had to hide the liquor because officially Africans were forbidden alcoholic drink in those days. We stuck to soft drinks and danced with "Coloured", African and white girls who were very interested in our history, and who had never met a San person before.

We went home to Gaborone by train. Mordechai said he was Coloured and showed his British passport and so was allowed to travel Third Class with me in the South African Railways coach! In our parents' small plane, we flew from the new Gaborone airport to the even newer Kgalagadi Town airport for the long summer holidays in June and July of the late 60s.

Philosophy, theology and anthropology had become ruling passions in our lives. Most pre-modern African religions could be studied as a branch of anthropology. They were animistic and differed from traditional and contemporary European ideas, and from existentialism, and from the theologies

of the Abrahamic religions. Given nuclear weapons and world wars who was to say that western philosophies “sophistication” was preferable to animism?

The professor of philosophy was a German-Jewish refugee from Hitler and a rabbi as well who knew Anglican and Catholic, Jewish and Muslim clerics in Johannesburg whose pastoral counselling sessions we were sometimes allowed to attend, bound by a promise of confidentiality.

In the summer holidays we met white and African and Indian students at Pieter Labuschagne’s and Stephan Schlegel’s work camps in Kgalagadi Town. We had read widely in social anthropology and philosophy. We saw the two subjects as linked.

We had become familiar with Levi-Strauss, Malinowski and other theorists of “primitive” or “savage” societies – later Franz Fanon, Aimé Césaire on *negritude*, on Hitler’s and Nazi policy towards Jews as extreme colonialism.

We met communists who tried to persuade us that capitalism inevitably leads to brutal exploitative and genocidal colonialism and that we should look to the Soviet Union for a humanist upliftment of mankind. But we had done two years of political theory and government in our B.A. degrees and we knew very well what Stalin’s USSR was like.

There was the surface and the unconscious meaning of a folk-tale.

Sorcery and magic gave a transcendental meaning to animal and astrological deities as happened in other Palaeolithic, Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age cultures.

Sometimes even modern ideologies had a folkloric substrate open to critical theories. Marxism had been degraded to serve Soviet communism.

So, given that there was a class struggle between good and evil *within* the proletariat and between the proletariat and the rentier / capitalist class *within which* there was also good and evil, what followed? Given liberal Christian, Jewish, humanist values.

Marx and his wife (Jenny Von Westphalen an aristocrat) were from the wealthy classes, Marx from an “aristocracy” of rabbinical Jews. Engels was a factory owner in Manchester and without him the Marx family would have starved – actually did live in poverty. As it was Jennie and Karl Marx lost children to disease brought on by malnutrition.

So, for example in 19th century San folklore amongst the Cape Xam in South Africa itself – good and evil, cunning and innocence, exploitation and escape – as well as Marxist class-struggle between the wealthy chiefs of powerful tribes and the impoverished – were the dominant themes. Marx would have called this false consciousness. Freud would have regarded the telling of myths and legends as sublimation of the *Id*, the It.

*

Mordechai and I in our research tried to find out by probing the Jewish mystical and San folk-stories. We had taken half the stories each in our Masters degrees. And then our Oxford D.Phil. dissertations combined critical theories in different ways as seemed appropriate. So we moved on to critiques of autobiographical and fictional accounts of Jewish and San genocides. We found it originally impossible to completely separate the interpretation of the story from the “pure” narrative since the very presence of a European or a Western educated African researcher recording and translating the story or simply understanding the story or the history behind the story was, as Nietzsche understood, already an interpretation. Everything was an interpretation although there was also a narrative and there was also a history. We both used Wittgenstein’s pictorial and games-theory and Aristotle’s *Poetics* and Lacan’s work on the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary which interpenetrate art and life without confusing them.

*

The Rain appeared in the form of a bull. He courted a young woman who was ill lying in her hut. She must have scented him, because the smell of rain is fragrant.

She had her and her husband’s child with her, although he, the husband, was out – hunting.

And here was an animal deity courting her. In the original Xam and in the translation of Bleek and Lloyd, the young woman refers to the Rain Bull as a “man”. This god-like creature both animal deity and man brings mist and rain. It is as if he is courting “me”, and it is important that “we”

have mist and rain otherwise we shall have no grazing for the wild animals or water for the veld-food to grow, so “I” must not seem ungrateful to him.

Besides, if I do not pacify him he might kill “me” and turn “me” into a frog.

So, she got hold of *buchu* which is a fragrant herb and pressed it down on his forehead.

She pushed him away.

This fragrant herb makes one sleepy.

The Rain Bull became sleepy. She wrapped herself in her leather *kaross*. And she laid her child gently on one side covering the child with a *kaross* for her husband’s return.

She was afraid of dying as a human being and becoming a frog.

And she also knew that if the Rain Bull was not pacified, he might not return to the water pit in which he lived. The pit would dry up and the clouds go away and the people and animals would suffer and die of thirst and drought. So, what should she do?

She mounted the Rain Bull who woke up and she asked him to take her to an enormous tree which grows in the bottom of the ravine, the *kloof*, which is a red bush when it is small.

The Rain Bull who felt she was on his back, was happy because of the smell of *buchu* with which she was still rubbing him. He set her down on the */kuierriten-/kuirettiten* tree. The Rain Bull fell asleep again. But now *she* smelt not only of *buchu* - the smell of the *buchu* herb had made him fall asleep so that she could creep away – she also smelt of *//khou* which grows on the */kuierriten-/kuirettiten* tree. *She must have rubbed herself with //khou from the /kuierriten-/kuirettiten tree and rubbed it on the sleeping Rain Bull’s back.*

So, because the smell of //khou is very much like the smell of the human being, when the Rain Bull woke up he still thought he smelt her and thought she was on his back. But she had stolen away. He couldn't now tell the difference between the /kuierriten-/kuirettiten tree and the girl.

So, this time he didn't know if his "beloved" girl had gone, gone back to her and her husband's and her baby's hut.

He thought he smelt her but it was impossible to find his own way through the mist that surrounded him. But the girl could follow the Rain Bull's tracks back home. And he, the Rain Bull after wandering around all over the place, at last returned to the pool in which he lived, and so the waters from the spring still continued and there was no drought or dying from thirst and no famine.

So, the woman because she smelt now of the fungus //khou which grows on the /kuierriten-/kuirettiten tree, in fact had rubbed herself with the fungus - she was able to escape whilst the Rain Bull thought the woman was still on his back although it was only the smell of //khou which came off /kuierriten-/kuirettiten tree.

The old women who had been gathering saw all of this and burned horns so that the smoke should go up so that the Rain should not be angry with them when he discovered that the girl had finally gone.

*

What was amazing was that despite the 18th century genocide of the Cape Bushpeople at the hands of the Cape Dutch farmers and their Griqua commando forces, the survivors in the 19th century still tried to live in peace and harmony with the natural world, still concretized animals, still gave divine personalities to astronomical bodies, and they still deified the weather.

They were pre-agricultural Stone-Age people who were made to feel ignorant. The British official who introduced the book by Bleek and Lloyd on the Bushpeople's folk-lore regarded them as "childish", forgetting how his own ancestors behaved and what *they* believed in the British Neolithic and the British Bronze Age and the British Iron Age between 2000 and 7000 years ago.³⁵

³⁵ For a scholarly account of the attempted genocide of the Cape San in the 18th and 19th century and the more or less forcible incorporation of their remnants into the "Coloured" (mixed-ethnic) group under segregation and apartheid see J.S. Marais (1968) *The Cape Coloured People 1652-1937*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press index references to "Bushmen" p.292.

