



**Kleinplasia Living Open Air Museum:
A biography of a site and the processes of history-making**

1974 – 1994

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of MA in History with a specialisation in Museum and Heritage Studies.

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DECLARATION

I, Michael Jesaja Jonas, declare that “Kleinplasia Living Open Air Museum: A biography of a site and the processes of history-making 1974 – 1994” is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Michael Jonas

14 November 2012



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Abstract

Kleinplasia Living Open Air Museum in Worcester:

A biography of a site and the processes

of history-making, 1974 – 1994

In 1974 an Agricultural Museum Committee was established at the Worcester Museum which ultimately led to the development in 1981 of the Kleinplasia Open Air Farm Museum. This began a new phase in the museum's history, one that I will argue was particularly closely linked to Afrikaner nationalist historiography, in particular to ideas about frontier farmers and pioneer farming lifestyles and activities.

This study will take the form of a critical analysis of the establishment of Kleinplasia Living Open Air Museum from 1974 until 1994. It will evaluate the making of exhibitions, its architecture, and the performances and public activities in the establishment of the institution as a site of memory and knowledge. The key question this work engages with is how representations, performance, exhibitions, museum activities, and public involvement were shaped to create particular messages and construct a site of cultural identity and memory at Kleinplasia Living Open Air Museum.

It will also deal with questions around who decides on the voices and content of the exhibitions, architecture and displays. The role played by professionals, those who claim to represent community, donors and other interests groups will also be placed under the spotlight. There are also questions around the provenance of collections, the way they were acquired through donations and sponsorships, and the crucial role objects played in the construction of the narrative and identity of the museum.

A key question that emerges from my own work is the connection between the Afrikaner nationalist scholarship and the development of the open-air museum based on the life of the frontier farmer at Kleinplasia. While Kleinplasia does not seem to follow the monumental approach that was evident in schemes such as the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria, where triumphalism and conquest are key metaphors, it does rely on a sense of

'independence' and self-fulfilment in social history type setting. There is thus a need to consider how Afrikaner nationalist historiography impacted on the way history was depicted at Kleinplasia. P. J. van der Merwe's studies of the character and lifeways of the trekboer (*Die Trekboer in die Geskiedenis van die Kaapkolonie*), seems to have played a central role in the construction of the theme and narrative. This three-volume trilogy provided Kleinplasia (literally, 'little farm') with a social and cultural history on which to construct its version of the past.



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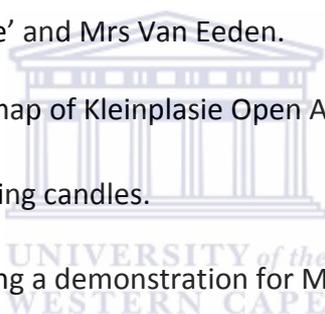
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Chapter 1: Open Air Museums: Development in Scandinavia and South Africa

My first encounter with Kleinplasia Living Open Air Museum in Worcester takes me back to a visit as a 2nd year University of Stellenbosch *Afrikaanse Kultuurgeskiedenis* (Afrikaans Cultural History) student in 1992. As a tradition, and forming an integral part of the course, a site visit to Kleinplasia was deemed compulsory. Here we had a first-hand experience of a supposedly authentic, 'historically correct' portrayal of the early pioneer lifestyle. During our visit at this reconstructed farmyard we were exposed to what Jay Anderson¹ refers to as 'living history' of people depicted as pioneers. This 'living history' was presented through the supposed daily activities: demonstration of home industries like wine making and *witblits* (white lightening, raw spirit, home-made brandy) distillation, the making of soap, candles, coffee, the baking of milk tarts, and bread. These were interpreted by demonstrators who appeared in apartheid's racial classification of 'white', the descendants of those who had made these items in the past. Through its core function Kleinplasia Open Air Museum created a space for the recollection and reiteration of a shared culture, identity and nationhood of a past that was both depicted as 'white' and 'Afrikaner'.

Looking back at this visit, and after being employed at Kleinplasia from 1995 to 1998, when the institution was struggling to change its meaning and depictions, I am interested in the processes that lead to the making of this museum. The key questions I am grappling with are: Why an agricultural museum? What was the intended purpose? Who or what was the driving force behind it? How was the museum developed and how were its narratives constructed? It also raises question around who decided on the voices, representivity and content of the exhibitions, architecture and displays. The role played by professionals, those who claim to represent community, donors and other interest groups also need to be examined. There are also questions around the provenance of collections, the way they were acquired through donations and sponsorships, and the crucial role objects played in the construction of the narrative and identity of the museum.

The key question this work engages with is how representations, performance, exhibitions, museum activities, and public involvement were shaped to create particular messages and

¹ See Jay Anderson, 'Living History: Simulating Everyday Life in Living Museums', *American Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1982), 290 – 306, where he unpacks the definition of living history and the different ways it was utilized in North American context.

to construct a site of common, shared cultural identity and memory at Kleinplasië Living Open Air Museum. This study will therefore take the form of a critical analysis of the establishment of Kleinplasië Living Open Air Museum from 1974 until 1994 and evaluate the making of exhibitions, architecture, performances and public activities in the establishment of the institution as a site of memory and knowledge.

Open Air Museum

One area in which this mini-thesis situates itself is in the writing on open-air museums. Much of the writing on the concept of open air or outdoor museums deals with their development in Scandinavian countries and how it was supported by the movement of national romanticism between the end of the nineteenth century and the Second World War.² These 'outdoor museums' have been seen as recreating a landscape of the past, a village farming settlement emphasising folk culture and its architecture,³ that links people to a cultural heritage, supposedly providing a better understanding of their modern pasts. The importance of preserving the rural tradition in the face of the ever increasing industrialization of European societies was also stressed by the early initiators of these institutions like Charles de Bonsetten and the Artur Hazelius.

Toffler argues that these museums developed 'in a period of extremely rapid cultural change, with people engulfed by a tidal "third wave" and in a state of "future shock".' Living history farms, he claims, were seen to offer a respite by providing "enclaves of the past and future."⁴ At best, these enclaves he argues provided 'large numbers of people with the opportunity to "back sight" and identify meaningful cultural landmarks, functioning as collective exercises in ethno history. At worst, they were "temporary escapes for a people

² See S. Rentzhog, *Open Air Museums: the history and future of a visionary*, (Östersund: Jamtli Förlag, 2007), where he provides a comprehensive history of open air museums worldwide. He explores the founding days of the movement, the reasons for collecting buildings, folk trades and crafts, and rural traditions in contact of intense nation building. He also focuses on the impacts of the world wars, politics and capitalism has on the development of these museums.

³ R.W. E Perrin, 'Outdoor Museums', *Milwaukee Public Museum Publication in Museology* No.4 (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1975), 9.

⁴ A. Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York: Random House, 1970), Ch. 17.

suffering from acute nostalgia.” “The potential for the popular culture to exploit living history and use it for political purposes” was very real, he maintained.⁵

The discipline of the open air museums

Foucault⁶ argues that “knowledge is produced under certain ‘conditions’ and ‘relations’, where these relations ‘are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, (and) modes of characterisation.”⁷ I am particularly interested in the role that the fields of folklore, ethnography and the disciplines, anthropology, archaeology, *Volkekunde*, [Cultural Anthropology], and cultural history played in constructing national identity in both Europe and South Africa and how this knowledge was employed and represented in the narrative of open air museums.

Paul de Beer⁸ situates the interest of museums in folk culture, the Romantic Movement⁹ of the late 18th century, the developments in the field of folklore and the emergence of the industrial revolution in the middle of the 19th century. These were contributory factors that influenced and stimulated the process of developing open air museum as a movement to preserve national folk traditions. In his analysis de Beer regards the mid- 19th century shift in the western museum’s culture of collecting from that favouring the upper classes to that of

⁵ J. Anderson, ‘Living History: Simulating Everyday Life in Living Museums’, *American Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1982), 306.

⁶ M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2001), 44-45.

⁷ M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 44-45.

⁸ P. J. de Beer, *Die Fenomeen Opelugmuseum in Kultuurhistorieses Perspektief*, (Transvaalse Provinsiale Administrasie Biblioteekdiens-en Musemdiens, (Pretoria, Heer Drukkers, 1982), 10.

⁹ The concept of open air museums also known and folk museums originated in the Scandinavian countries and was supported national romanticism in these and neighbouring countries between the end of the nineteenth century and the Second World War. Also See S. Rentzhog, *Open Air Museums: the history and future of a visionary* (Öatersund: Jamtli Förlag, 2007), where he provides a comprehensive history of open air museums worldwide. He explores the founding days of the movement, the reasons for collecting buildings, folk trades and crafts, and rural traditions in contact of intense nation building. He also focuses on the impacts of the world wars, politics and capitalism has on the development of these museums.

As concept the Romanticism was historically orientated. According to the thinking of Johann Gottfried von Herder, the uniqueness of individual groups are determined in terms of their history, tradition, language, culture, outlook on philosophy of and the religion. The Romantic Movement was also heavily influenced by other thinkers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) See P. Ter Keur, ‘Museums between Enlightenment and Romanticism. Early nineteenth century roots and modern practices, Putting University Collection to Work in Teaching and Research’ – Proceedings of the 9th Conference of the International Committee Of ICOM for University Museums and Collections (UMAC), Berkeley, USA, 10th – 13th September 2009, 11-20.

everyday life, as a major impetus for the establishment of cultural history museums.¹⁰ Exhibition areas began to present bedrooms, kitchens, and living rooms with folk furniture, working implements and clothing. Museums and International Exhibitions went further by recreating living rooms behind glass.¹¹ An example of this was an entry by the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* (ZAR), (one of the Boer republics established in 1892, later the Transvaal) where they attempt to recreate a *Boerewoning* (white farmer's dwelling) at the World Exhibition, Paris, in 1900. It used period furniture from South Africa in an attempt to exhibit the life of a typical Transvaal Boer.¹² This shift in collecting strategies from patrician culture to the lifestyle of ordinary people most probably served as the impetus for disciplines such as folklore.

The new trends or criteria for the selection and collecting of museum artifacts were further stimulated by the Romantic Movement of the late 18th century, which was a reaction to Rationalism. In reaction to the enlightenment and rationalism, thinkers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-178), Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) and Giuseppe Mazzini (1805 - 1872) came to the fore. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, considered to be the father of the Romanticism, argued that meaning can be derived from the day to day, everyday life of peasants, hence his philosophy of going "back to nature", the *Lebenswelt*. Another component of the Romantic Movement was the rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century that would have profound influence on the development of the open air museum.¹³ The thinkings of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), another German stressing the foundations for disciplines such as anthropology and linguistics, inspired the Brothers

¹⁰ P. J. de Beer, *Die Fenomeen Opelugmuseum in Kultuurhistorieses Perspektief*, 10-13, the philosophy in Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo periods of classification, categorization of museum objects/artifacts according to aesthetics, intrinsic value, valuable, in favor of the upper culture, with exclusion of the folk culture.

¹¹ A. J. Bernet Kempers, *Vyftig Jaar Nederlands Openluchtmuseum* (Arnhem, 1962), 132.

¹² P. J. de Beer, *Die 'Zuid-Afrikaansch Museum'*, Dordrecht 1902-1921 (unpublished MA-thesis, University of Pretoria), 45.

¹³ Jacob Grimm (1785-1863) published *'Kinder-und Hausmärchen'* in which he captures the simple nature of the folk tales, sages, legends amongst farming communities. With their efforts the Grimm-brothers created, what they labeled as 'authentically German' folklore and identify that was based on 'localization of culture' and the existence of a historical ethnic culture. This led to a romantic nationalist concept.

The work of the Brothers Grimm influenced other collectors, both inspiring them to collect tales and leading them to similarly believe that fairy tales of a country were particularly representative of it, leading to the neglect of cross-cultural influence and the notion that culture is not stagnant, it evolves, gets shaped and reshaped through different kinds of dynamics. Later folklore studies have not borne out this belief in the preservation of folktales from time immemorial.

Grimm to start recording German folklore. The brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were the first to establish it as a science.¹⁴

As a concept, Romanticism was historically orientated and focused, according to the thinking of Herder, on the uniqueness of individual groups in terms of their history, tradition, language, culture, outlook on philosophy and religion. This nationalism placed the nation, and not the individual, in the centre.¹⁵ Museums were used as instrument or platform to promote these objectives. At the end of the eighteenth century the German Romantic Movement was the forerunner in utilizing the authoritative influences of museums to showcase national past, pride, and to encourage patriotism.¹⁶ The establishment of 'Heimatmussen' in each region in Germany served as centres for the education of the nation, where the public could view themselves, and their heritage. Another component of the Romantic Movement was that of the rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century that would have a profound influence on the development of the open air museum. All the pioneer founders of open air museums were inspired by the nineteenth century tradition of Romanticism.

As part of the establishment of a unique, common identity, the Romantic Movement considered language as a vital focus. This prompted research in Philology, through which the origins and uniqueness of a language was discovered. The research conducted mainly focused on rural populations and farming communities because they were considered less affected by the economic and social developments of the time. Earlier attempts focused on intangible heritage oral traditions whereby the unique identity of individual groups were recorded through sagas, (legends, stories), customs, beliefs, morals and tradition that were transmitted.¹⁷ The scientific approach and establishment of this field as science contributed

¹⁴ According to P.W Grobbelaar the German Wilhelm Riehl was the first person that defined Volkskunde properly as early as 1853 in his *Naturgeschichte de Volkes* (Natural history of a nation) and in with his *Culturstudein aus drei Jarhrhunderten* (Cultural History of out of three centuries).¹⁴ It also need be noted that the Grimm- Brothers used the term volkskunde, but this referred to the folklore studies.

¹⁵ See P. Ter Keur, 'Museums between Enlightenment and Romanticism. Early nineteenth century roots and modern practices, Putting University Collection to Work in Teaching and Research' – Proceedings of the 9th Conference of the International Committee Of ICOM for University Museums and Collections (UMAC), Berkeley, USA, 10th – 13th September 2009, 11-20

¹⁶ P. J. de Beer, *Die Fenomeen Opelugmuseum in Kultuurhistorieses Perspektief* (Pretoria: Heer Drukkers, 1982), 10

¹⁷ According to P. J. de Beer, *Die Fenomeen Opelugmuseum in Kultuurhistoriese Perspektief*, 11, the following works and related themes were published James Macpherson's (1736 – 1796) 'Tales of Ossian' (1760), where he captured the oral traditions of farming communities. Thomas Percy (1729-18110) 'Reliques of Ancient

to the authoritative meanings attached to museums as place of authority, expertise and professionalism, in the development of open air museums. All the pioneer founders of open air museums were inspired by the nineteenth century tradition of Romanticism.

The Development of Open Air Museums

Most open air museums deal with the recreation of landscapes of the past, i.e. “village farming settlement emphasising folk culture and its architecture”,¹⁸ that supposedly link people to a cultural heritage. Through a physical representation of structures and dwellings with accompanied trades, material culture is constructed and is claimed as a particular version of culture or ethnicity. The reconstructed visible and tangible remains are employed to serve as visual evidence and as an educational medium to enable an understanding of a particular culture/ethnicity/nation. It furthermore presents the visitor with the means to compare the past ‘way of life’ with that of the present. The importance of preserving the rural tradition in the face of increasingly industrialized of societies was also stressed by the early initiators like Charles de Bonsetten¹⁹ and Artur Hazelius.

It is important to note that one can distinguish between three different types of living open air museums. The three types can be categorised into Swedish or Scandinavian models, North American living museums and lastly ethnographic villages.

The Swedish and Scandinavian model

The Swedish and Scandinavian model focused on folk life²⁰ and the preservation of rural tradition. Early attempts in the development of open air museums were marked by

English Poetry’, (1765) collected English folksongs, in Germany, Johann Gottfried von Herder, ‘*Stimmen der Völker in Leiden*’, (1778), Joachim von Arnim, and Clemens Brentano (1778-18720) collected folk poetry, sages and fairy tales. Six hundred German folksongs were published by these gentlemen under the title ‘*des Knaben Wunderhorn*’ (1805 – 1808) were the term folklore was used for the first time. Also See Peter Burke, ‘History and Folklore: A Historiographical Survey’, *Folklore*, Vol. 115, No.2 (August, 2004), 133-139 (Taylor & Francis Publishers) where he provides an overview of the development of folklore in both England and Europe, the interdisciplinary relationships, changes in approached and the influence it had on each other.

¹⁸ R.W. E Perrin, ‘Outdoor Museums’, 9.

¹⁹ Charles de Bonsetten (1790) a Swiss scientist, spend time in Denmark in at the end of the eighteen century are credited for providing a wealthy Norwegian with the idea of dismantling a house and re-erecting it outside Christiana in 1867. This became the core of the Norsk Folkemuseum at Oslo, which opened for the public in 1902. D. P. Kelsey, ‘Outdoor Museums and Historical Agriculture, *Agricultural History*, Vol. 46, No. 1, *American Agriculture*, 1790-1840: Symposium (Jan., 1972), 106-128 (11).

²⁰ The folk life in context of theses museum are referred as the every practices, beliefs, customs, traditions of ordinary people

founders being amateurs, voluntarism and untrained enthusiasts influenced by the national romanticism.

Arthur Hazelius (1833-1901)

Dr Artur Hazelius was influenced by the Romantic Movements and the thinking of the Brothers Grimm, Von Herder and others. Hazelius, teacher and amateur ethnographer and considered as the founder of the first open air museum in the world, was born on 30 November 1833 in Stockholm, Sweden. As a teacher and scholar of languages influenced by the Romantic Movement, and concerned about the possible loss of the rural Swedish 'way of life' due to increasing industrialisation in particular, he deemed it important to preserve Swedish culture and traditions as prime elements in the construction of a Swedish ethnic nationalism. He thus started the recording of traditional folk life. His labour, starting with his own research in Sörmanland in 1872, began to bear fruit with the opening his first stand/pavilion in the newly opened *Nordiska Museet* (Nordic Museum) on the 24 October 1873. The *Nordiska Museet* (Nordic Museum) was fitted with interiors of rooms of farm dwelling.²¹ It conformed to conventional exhibition techniques of safeguarding the collection behind glass, but at the same time it attempted to portray a scene of domestic life as 'real'. This was a move away from the museum as presenting collections in assemblages in glass cases.

The terrain of his choice for his first open air museum was on the island Djurgården where he built Skansen, a name meaning 'where a house previously stood'. The open air museum was officially open on 11 October 1891. Several buildings were moved to the museum site.²² In line with Romantic Movement of the time, Hazelius used this base at Skansen sought to construct a Swedish national identity. Stanley posits that, "The significance of the Swedish venture lies particularly in their weave of architecture and artefact salvage with similar salvage ethnography. These when united with an emphasis on folklore provide material for a new kind of ethnography which is in turn a potent source for developing

²¹ At the Paris International Exhibition of 1878 Hazelius was involved in putting together a diorama of his collection. "Two types of dioramas were shown. The first showed Lapps working in as display entitled "The Autumn Move in Lule Lappmark" and others was interiors, N. Stanley, *Being Ourselves for You*, 28-29.

²² N. Stanley, *Being Ourselves for You: the global display of cultures*, (London: Middlesex University Press, 1988), 28 – 30.

ethnic nationalism.”²³ Distinguishing features of Swedish ethnic nationalism were language, construction of a common origin, culture and ethnic composition. These were incorporated in of narrative of Skansen in the demonstrations, folk festivals and depictions of “daily life of the past”.²⁴ Skansen at the time of opening claimed that that “sites and buildings filled with historic and contemporary artefacts provide a real panorama of Swedish life.”²⁵ Nick Stanley argues that Skansen presented an alternative tradition compared to the ethnographic displays at world exhibitions and fairs. “What distinguished Skansen’s view from that of the evolutionist universal expositions is that humans are adaptable to circumstance but dependent upon tradition which, if lost, diminishes cultural wealth.”²⁶

Hazelius managed to create a presentation of the cultural history of the Swedish rural community. His efforts appear to have served as a catalyst for national festivals and the tradition of folkdancing in different regions of Sweden. Hazelius’s work seemed to inspire other Scandinavian countries and eventually the world to develop these kinds of museums as medium to preserve and conserve what was depicted as their nation’s folk culture.²⁷

The rapid development of open air museums in Scandinavian countries saw the development of over 700 institutions. By 2004 a third of all museum visits in the European Union were to ethnographic open-air museums, equaling about 166 million of the 500 million visits.²⁸ Skansen became the prototype of a regional, agriculturally oriented open air museum.²⁹ Demonstration of activities related to rural life such as cheese making, spinning, and weaving are depicted. Specific period in time with their implements, tools, animals, and the setting or atmosphere, are re-created and portrayed. Interpreters in

²³ N. Stanley, *Being Ourselves for You*, 29.

²⁴ E. A Chappell, ‘Open Air Museums: Architectural History for the Masses’, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 58, No. 3, Architectural History 1999/2000 (Sep., 1999), 344.

²⁵ N. Stanley, *Being Ourselves for You*, 30.

²⁶ N. Stanley, *Being Ourselves for You*, 30.

²⁷ Other noteworthy efforts in includes; Bernard Olsen’s ‘*Frilandsmuseet*’ in Denmark, in efforts in a park in Copenhagen in 1897, that was later moved outside the city to Lyngby, *Sorgenfri* (1901), , Axel Olai Heikel of Finland, Finland (*Fölis*, 1908), ‘Other successors (Arnhem – 1911 and Bucharest -1936) Outside Europe – there were; (Upper Canada Village, 1959), America the phenomenon of ‘Restoration Villages’, New-Salem State Park, 1920 the era of The ‘American way of life’, Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia - Congress and Conference.

²⁸ S. Rentzhog, *Open Air Museums: the history and future of a visionary Idea*, 59.

²⁹ R. D Hurt, ‘Agricultural Museums: A New Frontier for the Social Sciences’, *The History Teacher*, Vol. No. 3 (May, 1978), 369.

historical costumes are often employed to portray and demonstrate the lifestyle of these earlier periods.³⁰ The focus is also on the farming process.

The major critique of these open air museums is that in their effort to construct nationalism, the displays, according to Edward Chappell, are informed by ethnographic studies where field research seems to focus on the , 'unchanging nature of folkways'. A general tendency is to focus on the subtle differences between groups of native people or cultures. Chappell goes on to say that "In fact, *scientific* is the adjective most often used to describe the ethnographic research still pursued along traditional avenues of field recording in Europe. European peasant communities are often portrayed and interpreted as in a "natural state that must be captured and preserved, like endangered species, before their remnants are lost forever."³¹ This leads to the reinforcement of a preconceived set of visual stereotypes.

Chappell argues that it is "that sense of truth, or inevitability" that "is also the chief danger of such creations". "It is dangerous because the choices of what to show are subjective and the relationships among the parts are largely fictitious assemblages. These are important concerns because the choices of elements affect whose stories are told, and the relationships of the physical elements suggest social relations."³² Museum planners are accountable for choices made in terms of what gets included and excluded in the narrative.

The Danish archaeologist, Sophus Müller, was of the opinion that original buildings lose their original context and significance when moved. He suggested that they should rather be preserved *in situ*. New contexts and meaning were being created in the relocated sites, often by well-informed professionals. The constructed or reconstructed story became more important than the artefact and building.³³ These kinds of museums also posed a threat to buildings which would otherwise have been preserved in their natural locations/settings.

³⁰ See Jay Anderson, 'Living History: Simulating Everyday Life in Living Museums', *American Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1982), 290 – 306, he draws comparisons between the folk museums in Europe and America. He argues that one of the most fundamental differences was that European folk museums were more interested in the material rather than the cultural aspects of material culture, 292. He also looks at challenges faced by professional in the recreation of an 'accurately recreated farm or village, methodology, and approaches. 299.

³¹ E. A. Chappell, *Open Air Museums: Architectural History for the Masses*, 335.

³² E. A. Chappell, 'Open Air Museums: Architectural History for the Masses', 340.

³³R. Paardekooper, 'Book Review: Sten Rentzhog, *Open Air Museums – the History and Future of a Visionary Idea*', *European Journal of Archaeology*, (London: Sage Publication, 2008), 313 - 315, (314).

There was also the concern that the country areas were being stripped bare of traditional life.³⁴

Paardekooper also suggests that open air museum became venues where political influence was exerted. He notes that various shifts occurred, such as a shift from ordinary people's perspective to that of institutionalized views of government. This particularly happened after the Second World War.³⁵ He furthermore argues that during the post-war period, open air museums were not 'living museums'. The 'living' aspect of these museums was replaced by a more "scientific approach", placing the importance of the object in the centre. Objects were often seen as tangible manifestations, supporting a particular ideology or representation of identity, culture or the group. At a later stage, following the post-war period, a shift from buildings back to a people focus occurred.³⁶ The living aspects of the museums, linked to the demonstrations of crafts and performance of folk activities, became the focus point.

Skansen became the prototype of regional, agriculturally oriented, open air museums.³⁷ Open air museums in Canada and United States of America appear to have followed the European approach.³⁸ Open air museums set themselves up in contrast to conventional museums, claiming to have 'superior education potential',³⁹ because of their claims to an 'authentic' 'closer to reality', family and multi-generational experiences.

North American Living Museums

According to Edward Chappell, living museums "specialize in the re-creation of vanishing scenes of human life, often complete with animals, crops, and ancient vehicles."⁴⁰ He states that buildings, in most cases folk architecture, are often the fundamental element. Breaking away from the Colonial Williamsburg approach whereby the lifestyle of the elite or upper class culture was interpreted, living history sought to become "living museums of

³⁴ E. A. Chappell, 'Open Air Museums: Architectural History for the Masses', 336.

³⁵ R. Paardekooper, 'Book Review', 313.

³⁶ R. Paardekooper, 'Book Review', 314.

³⁷ R. D. Hurt, 'Agricultural Museums: A New Frontier for the Social Sciences', *The History Teacher*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (May, 1978), 369.

³⁸ E. A. Chappell, 'Open Air Museums: Architectural History for the Masses', 377-338

³⁹ R. Paardekooper, 'Book Review', 314.

⁴⁰ E. A. Chappell, 'Open Air Museums: Architectural History for the Masses', 334.

everyman's history."⁴¹ The farm, farming activities, and lifestyle became associated with living history.

American living museums tend to evoke concrete historical periods and try to recreate them. One however needs to note that European open air museums focus on vignettes, a brief description and representation, combined with formal typologies which include systematic classification of types of buildings, furnishings, vehicles, etc. as primary medium, with the emphasis on creating a visual experience while the American open air museum, creates spaces/sites for interactive experiences.⁴² I would say that the American open air museums are also more about defining history around a specific set of events or place.

Performance and historiographical practices at American living museums have been critiqued in the past several years by scholars of anthropology and theatre for creating false senses of authenticity and accuracy. It is feared that it becomes *Folklorismos*, or as it is known in America, "fakelore." Another criticism of living history museums is that they often glorify the positive aspects of a particular history, while neglecting the more controversial aspects of the past. Most of these institutions do not address the social context of the time/period or new social history themes like gender, social hierarchies and the function of material culture. What is presented is a version as produced by the professional.⁴³ An "artifactual history" is depicted whereby a 'common' way of life and patterns are depicted.⁴⁴ Sites such as Williamsburg, however, have begun to move away from single-voice history by including the histories of previously marginalized communities.⁴⁵

⁴¹ J. Anderson, 'Living History', 293.

⁴² E. A. Chappell, 'Open Air Museums: Architectural History for the Masses', 377-338.

⁴³ See E. A. Chappell, 'Open Air Museums: Architectural History for the Masses', 340, where he sight the example of the First Baptist Church at Colonial Williamsburg used by the an African-American congregation in 1780's that was demolished, that most probably lead to exclusion of the their involvement in the narrative of the Williamsburg and removal of evidence that are in competition with the theme or histories.

⁴⁴ J. Urry, *the Tourist Gaze*, (London: Routledge, 1990), 112.

⁴⁵ S. Magelssen, *Living History Museums: Undoing History Through Performance*, (London: Scarecrow Press, 2007), Also see E. Cable and R. Handler, *The New History in an Old Museum*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), where Colonial Williamsburg wanted to include/incorporate marginalized black history into their narrative.

Ethnographic villages

The third category of museum is the ethnographic village. These villages were derived from the world fairs and the displays of living people. The International Exhibitions in London (1851), Paris (1855), Copenhagen (1879) and Amsterdam (1881) and national museums became the exhibiting space for showcasing 'own' culture, prestige citizens, and to project Foreigners and Others, thus creating a sense of a local, regional and national identity with the viewers. Through the intervention of ethnographers and anthropologists the construction of and reconstruction of culture, the past and visual stereotypes took place at these international exhibitions and world fairs. By placing colonised subjects on display in their 'authentic sites', 'Otherness' was entrenched between those that were displayed and those that viewed, thus reinforcing visual stereotypes that are further informed by the "reference to taxonomies of body size and degrees of civilisation this quotation emphasises the significance of anthropology in sustaining this evolutionary tableau."⁴⁶ Stanley goes on and suggests that "Otherness became inextricably entwined with issues of progress and specifically with a crude form of evolutionism"⁴⁷. World Fairs and international exhibitions, along with their ethnographic displays, would serve as the inspiration for the initiator of the first open air museum, Artur Hazelius, who was also influenced by the Romantic Movement.

The ethnographic village has been criticised by scholars like Nick Stanley for reinforcing stereotypes and are seen as a continuation of the traditions of the world fairs whereby indigenous people paraded in 'authentic', historical settings and habitat to be viewed by all.⁴⁸ He argues, "[E]thnographic parks offer a version of its own idiosyncratic manner, in a constructed programme promoting a version of ethnicity."⁴⁹

The distinction between the different types of open air museums is, I suggest, necessary because this enables us to see how Kleinplasia, the subject of study, and draws from all of these three models. Although Kleinplasia Living Open Air Museum's approach was a mixture of certain elements mentioned above, it appeared that if the American living museum

⁴⁶ N. Stanley, *Being Ourselves for You*, 23 -26.

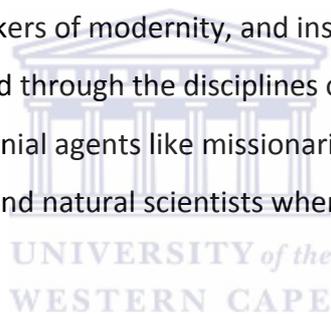
⁴⁷ N. Stanley, *Being Ourselves for You*, 23 -26.

⁴⁸ N. Stanley, *Being Ourselves for You*, 30, in his focus on the design, making, mediation and the roles objects play in giving meaning to experience and ordering relations among people in ethnographic displays.

⁴⁹ N. Stanley, *Being Ourselves for You*, 88.

approach appears to have served as the dominate prototype for the future or new development and enhancement of Kleinplasia Open Air Museum. Both the museum managers, Heloïse Naudé (1973 till 1987)⁵⁰ and Gerrit Swanepoel (1987 till 1994),⁵¹ were afforded the opportunity by the Board of Trustees to travel abroad and study open air museums. Both opted to include open air museums in America as part of their travel itineraries. From its conceptual phase, the objective of Kleinplasia was to represent an ethnographic regional culture and lifestyle. It had to reflect the lifestyle of the early pioneer farmers of the region, agricultural developments, home industries and pre-industrial technologies and skills from the eighteen century.

Before I engage with the development of Kleinplasia Open Air Museum, I deem it important that one should first look at the political and social context of how firstly museums, secondly cultural museums and lastly open air museum developed in South Africa. Museums are epistemological institutions, markers of modernity, and institutions of knowledge that create understanding of the world through the disciplines of classification. Many museums acquired collections through colonial agents like missionaries, administrators, amateur ethnographers, anthropologists and natural scientists where colonial forces had influence.



⁵⁰ Marthinus van Bart regards the late Heloïse (Pellissier) Naudé as a person of culture who, through initiative, passion determination and zeal, made her mark in the field of conversation. Naudé was trained as a social worker. She was the Head (curator) of the Worcester Museum from 1973 till 1987. Van Bart credits her as the driving force behind the idea of the agricultural museum, its collection and fundraising efforts. Naudé was also instrumental in the founding of the Hugo Naudé-art Centre museum and the expansion of the Jean Welz art collection in at the centre in Worcester. According to van Bart Naudé had a great interest in heraldry, genealogy, library science, agriculture, the conservation/preservation of culture and tourism. She was a member of the Huguenot Association, many national organisations and the Simon van der Stel Foundation, who awarded her a gold medal for conservation in 1985. She died on the 3 January 2011. Her successor Gerrit Swanepoel came from even more diverse background and training. M. van Bart, 'Hulde aan twee voorvatters', [Tribute to two leaders] *Die Beeld*, 30 Januarie 2012.

⁵¹ Before coming to Worcester in 1987, Gerrit Swanepoel was a curator at of the Port Elizabeth Museum where he worked for ten years. According to a newspaper article, Swanepoel was a leading figure in the establishment of both the Cuyler and Drosty Museums in Uitenhage. He was trained in *Toneelkunde*, [dramatic arts]⁵¹ and was apparently well-known in drama circles. He received many accolades as a producer and player. The Port Elizabeth Afrikaans Amateur Toneel (PEAAT), [Port Elizabeth Amateur Dramatic Society], acknowledged Swanepoel as the best performer in 1986. Before joining the museum in Uitenhage, he was a lecturer in drama. His focus at Kleinplasia was about ensuring the 'correct version' representation and to bring in the 'living element' to the museum. He was an accomplished cook and may have inspired the live demonstrations of preparing preserves and jams from seasonal fruit. C. Smit, 'Maak kennis met die nuwe museum-hoof', ['Meet the new museum manager'], *Worcester Standard & Advertiser*, 18 Friday September 1987.

The development of the scientific disciplines, during colonial times, of folklore, ethnography, anthropology, natural science, archaeology, cultural history, and history could be considered central to the development of museums all over the world in late nineteenth century and in South Africa in particular. Cultural history museums were stimulated by nationalist movements and the interest in *volkskultuur* (folk culture), which later led to the birth of open air museums.

Early museums in South Africa and the influence of the disciplines

Alan Bewell in his focus on the scientific and literary dimension of natural history notes that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries “saw the emergence of natural history as the dominant science in the public spheres, a science intimately connected with economics, politics, and the arts.”⁵² Natural history was firmly located in the Romantic Movement, and also appears to have become a platform through a common identity was constructed. As a science linked to colonialism, natural history’s development was informed and insight formulated based on the colonial world.⁵³ Based on collected information, specimens, national history text and the philosophy of natural history, colonial forces were able to expand their empires through colonialism.⁵⁴ Colonial forces furthermore employed natural history texts (both print and material form the colonial world) to measure their level of progress.

In the development phase of museums in South Africa it is thus not surprising that the first museums seemed to conform to enlightenment traditions of the colonial expansion. Natural history expeditions undertaken by explorers, scientists, amateurs and botanists formed part of the ‘discovery’ and salvaging of the new world for further expansion and scientific study. The South African Museum (1825), Cape Town, started during the British administration as a private club and was later reconstituted as a public museum in 1850.⁵⁵ The first items, objects and artifacts collected during these expeditions, along with scientific classification linked to disciplines such as physical anthropology and institutions like the

⁵² A. Bewell, ‘Studies in Romanticism’, Vol.43, No. 1, *Romanticism and the Sciences of Life*, (Spring, 2004), 10.

⁵³ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eye: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 38.

⁵⁴ M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eye: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 38.

⁵⁵ S. Dubow, *A Commonwealth of knowledge: Science, Sensibility and White South Africa 1820 – 2000* (Cape Town: Double Storey, 2006), 37.

South African Association for the Advancement of Science (SAAAS),⁵⁶ were central in the justification of apartheid based on scientific grounds. In Grahamstown (1855), a Literary, Scientific and Medical Society was formed that facilitated the development of a natural and ethnographic collection that later became the Albany Museum, the Natural Society was the origin of the Frontier Districts Museum in 1898, later reconstituted as the Kaffrarian Museum (later renamed the Amathole Museum), followed by the museums in Port Elizabeth (1856) and Durban (1877). All these museums followed similar patterns of collection informed by a colonial history of ethnography, anthropology and archaeology, as did other museums established under British rule.

By employing museums as centres of representation and knowledge production, objects that are the essence of the traditional museum collections, created markers of cultural and racial differences between groups. However it was not only the physical presence of the object that was important but the meaning attached to the object became just as important in the processes of knowledge production.⁵⁷ Apart from natural history/science collections the early museums also provide space for ethnographic- and archaeological-based collections. Colonial agents like missionaries and administrators, as amateur ethnographers, appear to have played an important role in collecting information on different cultural groups prior to the establishment and development of anthropology at universities in the 1920s.⁵⁸ Museums became sites where the narrative was informed by themes linked to colonial conquest, knowledge building and the projection of 'Otherness'.

⁵⁶ The prior to the institutionalization of anthropological and ethnographic knowledge, the founding of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science (SAAAS) in 1903, modeled on the British Association and sponsored by the South African Philosophical Society took place. The SAAAS run eugenic program during post-World War 1-period with interest on heredity and the environment, Paul Rich, 'Race, science, and the Legitimization of White Supremacy in South Africa, 1902 – 1940', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (1990), 676.

⁵⁷ H. Lidchi, 'The Poetics and Politics of exhibiting other cultures' in Stuart Hall (eds), *Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage,1997), 162.

⁵⁸ See D Hammond-Tooke, *Imperfect Interpreters: South Africa's Anthropologists, 1920-1990*, (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2001), 10 for a comprehensive historical overview of the development of ethnography and the institutionalized anthropology in South Africa. (Introduction, page 1) in line with the Foucauldian argument consideration should be given the anthropologists' theoretical assumptions, their impact on political and administrative developments in the "fraught period in South African history". Ethnographic displays which came under criticism in the 19th Century, people and things were displayed as objects of curiosity and 'otherness', through process of classification and museumization. Indigenous people were and their cultures were displayed as 'society on the verge of extinction and trapped in the 'primitive'. Treated as 'objects of knowledge' and study the objects furthermore reflex the attitude of time and ideology of the time/period. Like case of archaeology, ethnography the disciplines were stuck in the Victorian tradition,

The development of open air museums gained momentum with the establishment of two national museums in the Boer Republics (Orange Free State 1877 and ZAR, Transvaal, Pretoria, 1892). As in the case of German cultural history, these museums served as centres of learning, shaping people's ideas around national culture, patriotism and history. These national museums, although they had collections linked to the natural sciences, did not entirely adhere to their British counterparts in the rest of South Africa. Despite this, the road to the establishment of cultural history museums in South Africa was marked by a period of frustration, neglect of cultural history collections, and little or no scientific research or development.

***Volkekunde*: Afrikaner discipline linked to nationalist nation building and myth construction**

The election victory of the National Party in 1948 paved the way for Afrikaans-speakers trained in *Volkekunde* [Cultural Anthropology] and *Toegepaste Volkekunde* [Applied Anthropology] to occupy prominent roles in the civil service. Afrikaans-language universities' departments of anthropology became the providers of 'experts', in indigenous cultures for structures within the Department of Native Affairs.⁵⁹ The role of the Afrikaans ethnologists, trained in the discipline of *Volkekunde*, seemed to be closely linked to the ruling Nationalist government and the quest to segregate people along racial grounds.⁶⁰ Along with *Volkekunde*, the discipline of Archaeology would be influential in the construction of a South African National History based on 'scientific facts'.⁶¹ The prehistoric past provided the emerging national identity with a platform for the idea of Union. Through

it was also a case whereby the practitioner were colonials studying the indigenous people and the processes of the 'Discovery of the Other' where the indigenous voices were omitted from the final monographs and publications. New meanings are created through process of museumization in form of classificatory system and visual representation and the context in which it gets display.

⁵⁹ J. S. Sharp, 'The Roost and Development of *Volkekunde* in South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, Special Issue on Anthropology and History (Oct., 1981), 17.

For the historian W. M. Macmillan, *My South African Years* (Cape Town, D. Philip, 1975) the key/fundamental difference between Anthropology and *Volkekunde* the was 'whether the African people should be studied in the context of our common human history or be relegated to a special inferior category', 218.

⁶⁰ Robert Gordon in his article, 'Apartheid's anthropologists: the genealogy of Afrikaner Anthropology', *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 15, Issue 3, August, 1988, argues that Afrikaner anthropology has played a significant role in the legitimizing and production of the apartheid social order, as an instrument of control and as a means of rationalizing it.

⁶¹ See N. Shepherd, 'State of the Discipline: Science, Culture and Identity in South African Archaeology, 1970-2003', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (Dec., 2003), 823 – 844, Shepherd, provides an comprehensive overview of the development of archeology as colonial discipline in South Africa and its links to nationalist projects.

site reports, syntheses, speculative papers written by professionals trained in the classificatory and scientific practices and methodologies of the discipline provided the basis for archaeological imagery and myth-making.⁶² As a science, it provided the national project with scientific evidence.

The development of a national Afrikaner identity⁶³ was constructed through employing the notions of romanticism and the development of the discipline of cultural history. An Afrikaner identity and culture appears to have been further stimulated through the discipline of *Afrikaanse Kultuur en Volkskunde* [Afrikaans Culture and Folklore]. Combining tangible and later the intangible culture as evidence of common identity/origins, it is thus not surprising that the development of *volkskultuur* [folk culture] in South Africa followed the same patterns as its counterparts in Europe. The establishment of folklore in South Africa assisted in the process of nation and identity building. Grobbelaar notes that the term life studies are used in English while in Afrikaans, *Afrikaans Kultuur- en Volkskultuur* [Culture and Folk Culture] is used.⁶⁴ *Afrikaans Kultuur- en Volkskultuur* was often closely linked to university departments of *Volkekunde* that studied the Afrikaners cultural history.



⁶² See C. Bundy, *Re-Making the Past: New Perspectives in South African History* (Cape Town, University of Cape Town, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, 1986), 8 and ' J. Deacon, 'Weaving the Fabric of Stone Research in Southern Africa', in P. Robertshaw (ed), *A History of African Archaeology* (London, James Currey, 1990), 39-58, "South African archaeology was a beneficiary of the resurgent economy of Vorster government and 'racial capitalism – government increase spending on museums and universities - 1962-1972.

⁶³ J. J. Oberholster, 'Die neerslag van die Romantiek op geskiedskrywing: Gustav S. Preller', compiled by B. J. Liebenberg, *Opstelle oor die Suid- Afrikaanse historiografie*, (Pretoria, 1975), 11 argued that the romanticism, and its nationalist ideas were appropriated and shaped to serves as medium to shaping a nation with common destination/ identity. Oberholster depicted the Christian faith as major characteristic of Romanticism. According to Oberholster the Afrikaner's life and world outlook was centered and on the teaching and philosophies of the Holy Bible and they identified with history, the theme of freedom, the people and circumstance of people as contained in the Old Testament. "Aspects of Romanticism like the emphasis on religion, freedom, and history suited the Afrikaner's needs and they adopted and altered it into a unique South African trend." E. Oliver, 'Afrikaner spirituality: Complex mixture', Reformed Theological College, (*HTS Theological Studies*, 62 (4) 2006, Open Journal Publishers, Oasis Pty Ltd, Tygervalley, 1479. Afrikaner unity and nationalism however would become a major nationalist project in the decades to come in the twenty century. In the creation of creating or constructing common Afrikaner common origins facilitated through the same traditions, customs, but especially language was considered of utmost importance.

⁶⁴ P.W. Grobbelaar, *Volkslewe van die Afrikaner, Die verhaal van volkskunde* (Kaapstad and Johannesburg, Tafelberg, 1974), 63. Grobbelaar furthermore provides a comprehensive overview of the development of science in South Africa and further developments at. Other Afrikaans universities that followed were; *Department of Afrikaanse en Nederlandse Kultuurgeskiedenis* (Department of Afrikaans and Dutch Cultural History),(Pretoria), *Department of Kultuurkunde* (Department of Cultural Science), Potchefstroom's University for Christian Higher Education, and at the *Departement of Nederlandse Kultuurgeskiedenis*, (Department of Dutch Cultural History), Cape Town, where they covered the Cape-Dutch architecture and the Cape furniture/science.⁶⁴ More on training of Museum Service and the Department of Afrikaanse Kultuurgeskiedenis in

Telling moments that stimulated the development of open air museums in South Africa

A common cultural identity, led by amateurs in the form of the *Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners* [Association of True Afrikaners], only emerged in South Africa with the establishment of common dynamics that included a common language. The development of this new identity was boosted by the trekboer [migrant farmer] movements, and the commemoration of the Great Trek during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The development of a nationalist consciousness was further stimulated by the establishment of the two Boer Republics, (the Transvaal in 1877 and the Orange Free State in 1854), and the British policy of non-intervention north of the Orange River.⁶⁵

Another telling moment was when...“a resurgent Afrikaner nationalist movement drew its dynamism mainly from three sources: the development of Afrikaans as high-culture language, the propagation of a nationalist history and the effort to promote Afrikaans businesses.”⁶⁶ Afrikaner nationalism was further stimulated by the elevation of Afrikaans as a standard language, events linked to Nationalist identity projects and the founding of pro-Afrikaner civic organizations.

Events like the declaration of Afrikaans an official language in 1925, the construction of a national literature by writers like W.E. G.Louw, Elisabeth Eybers, Uys Krige, translation of the Bible in 1933, and the quest of discovering themselves through rediscovery of heroism and the suffering through happenings of events that were then titled ‘Great Trek’ and ‘Anglo Boer War’ in publications, provided the stimulus for the resurgence.⁶⁷ Witz posits that the

Chapter 4 and the discipline of history at Afrikaans Universities, like Stellenbosch that would become the training grounds and disciplines for employers/experts trying to find jobs in the museum sector.

⁶⁵ During the pre-academic phase, amateurs like the members of the *Genootskap van Regte Afrikaner* [Society of True Afrikaners], were at the forefront of producing literature and ‘official’ nationalism. Rev. S. J. du Toit was a Dutch minister and one of the founder members of the *Genootskap*. His book, *Die Geskiedenis van Ons Land in die Taal van Ons Volk*, [The History of Our Land in Language of Our People] was published in 1877 It was one of the first publications dealing with history in Afrikaans. This book perpetuated the narrative of Afrikaner hardship, struggle and oppression. The 1899-1902 Anglo Boer War or the South African War became another key event that stimulated emerging nationalist identity. W. Visser, *Trends In South African Historiography and the present state of historical research*, paper presented at the Nordic Institute, Uppsala, Sweden, 23 September 2004, 3.

⁶⁶ H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *New History of South Africa* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2007), 288.

⁶⁷ H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *New History of South Africa*, 288-289.

1950s and 1960s were marked by concerted events focusing on the creation of a white nation based on a common past, settlement and racially ethnicity.⁶⁸ “The Apartheid policy-based segregation ‘History’ that was employed in South African museums reproduced the divisions between the racially bound nation and ethnically separated ‘people’”.⁶⁹ The following decades also saw the establishment of various exclusively Afrikaner cultural organizations which were responsible for the organisation and introduction of festivals and commemorations. Organisations like *Dingaansdag-Propageeringsgenootskap* (Dingaan’s Day Propagation Society), the general *Dingaansdagkommissie* (Dingaan’s Day Commission), the *Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuur Vereniging* (ATKV) (Association for Afrikaans Language and Culture) and the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge* (FAK) (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Association).⁷⁰

These organisations were responsible for organising festivals like the *1938 Groot Trek Eeufees*, [Great Trek Centenary] commemoration of the Great Trek. The *Rapportryers* organised fifteen routes to Pretoria, symbolising the route travelled by the *Voortrekkers*. The inauguration of the Voortrekker Mounument in 1949, attended by a quarter of million visitors, with the highlight being the celebration on Friday 16 December 1949,⁷¹ would serve as a personification of Afrikaner pride and nationalism. The four festivals, the Tri-century Festival Van Riebeeck Celebrations in 1952⁷², *Honderdjarige Fees van Pretoria* (Centenary Festival of Pretoria) in 1955, die *Uniefees* (Union Festival) in 1960, and *Republiek wording* (Republic celebration) in 1961, were instrumental in the government’s plans of constructing a common identity. These events provided the foundation of the cultural history museum.

⁶⁸ L. Witz, ‘The appearance of a reluctance tradition: Changing museums in post –apartheid South Africa’, paper presented at the ‘Heritage Matters’ Conference, University of Michigan, Accra, 15-17 December 2007’, 6

⁶⁹ L. Witz, ‘The appearance of a reluctance tradition’, 9.

⁷⁰ See C. Rassool and L. Witz, ‘The 1952 Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival: Construction and Contesting Public History in South Africa’, *Journal of African History*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1993), 447 -468.

⁷¹ H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *New History of South Africa*, 298 -292.

⁷² Rassool & Witz, ‘The 1952 Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival: Construction and Contesting Public History in South Africa’, *Journal of African History*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1993), 447 – 468, argues was used a mediums/platforms, ‘attempt to display the growing power of the apartheid state and to assert its confidence’. It was also the ‘construct of white domination in civil society and unifying the white settler races’. Various other happening also contributed to the awakening of the Afrikaner in his heritage.

Events leading up to the establishment of the first model open air museum for South Africa

In South Africa, new types of museums were created in the 1950s and 1960s as cultural history museums became carriers of the 'living' history of European settlement while the history of indigenous people was left in the shadows or in natural history museums.⁷³ De Beer regards the 1960 as 'golden years' of the cultural history museum.⁷⁴ The Museum Commission of 1950 was introduced to investigate the status of museums in South Africa. Three of the major findings of the Commission were the neglect of cultural history collections, the need for these collections to be separated from their natural science/history collections and the need for trained professionals to look after the cultural history collections.⁷⁵ With the implementation of the findings of the Museum Commission, along with government policies and strategies, the idea of a heritage of settlement permeated in different collections, and contributed to the establishment of museums at provincial and national levels. The establishment of forty-one cultural history museums between the period 1961 and 1971 was enhanced when a clear separation between cultural and natural collections were made. The establishment of these museums was made possible by a period of unprecedented economic growth. Cultural history museums gained their independence: the Transvaal Museum (1964)⁷⁶, the Albany Museum (1966),⁷⁷ the South African Cultural History Museum (1965)⁷⁸, and Durban got a museum dealing with local history. De Beer argues that the making of the cultural history section as an independent section, with its own identity and character, contributed to the establishment and meaning of the cultural history museum.⁷⁹ The main focus in the cultural history museums was on the artefact that represented and was associated with the political, economic, common history of the

⁷³ Marilyn Martin, 'Kwiste en Kwaste', *Die Burger*, 28 September 2010, Conference/Panel Discussion, 'Social History Collections: Registering Change in Iziko after Apartheid', presented by Iziko Museums of Cape Town on the opening of the Social History Centre.

⁷⁴ J. de Beer, *Die Fenomeen Opelugmuseum in Kultuurhistorieses Perspektief*, 41.

⁷⁵ J. de Beer, *Die Fenomeen Opelugmuseum in Kultuurhistorieses Perspektief*, submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree Doctor Philosophiae Faculty of Arts, University of Pretoria, April, 1979, 56-59.

⁷⁶ H. Frasen, *Guide to the Museums of Southern Africa* (Cape Town: South African Museums Association, 1969), 133.

⁷⁷ J. de Beer, *Die Fenomeen Opelugmuseum in Kultuurhistorieses Perspektief*, 43.

⁷⁸ H. Frasen, *Guide to the Museums of Southern Africa* (Cape Town: South African Museums Association, 1969), 21, The local or indigenous people remained in the 'natural' in the nearby natural history collection in South African Museum.

⁷⁹ P. J. de Beer, *Die Fenomeen Opelugmuseum in Kultuurhistorieses Perspektief*, 43.

Afrikaner. It also conflated whiteness with settlement to create notions of a racially exclusive South Africa, not based on conquest, but on ideas of founding and conveying 'civilisation'. The Transvaal Provincial Museum Service was established in 1970 and it proclaimed themes for each region in the Transvaal; Middelburg focussed on cultural anthropology of the South-Ndebele, cultural history was the focus at Fort Merensky and the concentration camps, mission stations, and agriculture were the focus east of the High Veld.⁸⁰ The Free State Museum followed the same pattern with a Museum Service of Orange Free State established in 1977. The status of cultural history was further enhanced with the appointment of the first professional staff to these cultural history museums. The appointment of professional, academically, trained staff, was supposed to give 'scientific' attention to cultural history museum collections. Kotie Rood-Coetzee⁸¹ and Mary Cook. Dr. Mary Alexander Cook, British-born medical trained practitioner, was by 1950's considered as the biggest authority on old Cape homes houses. Her knowledge and insight led to her appointment in 1959 at the South African Museum in Cape Town in the cultural history section, which later became an independent section. She was co-publishers along with Hans Fransen of the book, *Old Houses of the Cape* (1965), which were seen as the first comprehensive inventory of white architecturally important buildings⁸² were amongst the first. It needs to be noted that although Cook was not academically trained in cultural history, she became *the* authority on Cape-Dutch architecture and dedicated her time to the

⁸⁰ P. J. de Beer, *Die Fenomeen Opelugmuseum in Kultuurhistorieses Perspektief*, 41-42.

⁸¹ Kotie Roodt-Coetzee was appointed in 1953, considered as one of the most important milestone in the development of the cultural history museum. She played an important role in the documentation of cultural history objects, the conversation of important collections in South African and the construction of common Afrikaner based on material evidence of artifacts. P. J. de Beer, *Die Fenomeen Opelugmuseum in Kultuurhistorieses Perspektief*, 42.

⁸² A. Malan, 'Reflections on half a century of vernacular architecture studies at the Cape', *VASSA Journal*, number 11, June 2004, 21. In 1964 she was appointed as curator of the Drostdy Museum in Swellendam, 'MARY COOK EN HAAR VAK GEHULDIG', *Die Burger*, 10 Desember 1971 and, 'Dr. Mary Cook's achievements', *The Times* November 27, 1971. MARY COOK EN HAAR VAK GEHULDIG, DIE BURGER, 10 DESEMBER 1971, The writer argues that the present of honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Stellenbosch University's graduation ceremony are not brought to exceptional individual but for the discipline of cultural history as science too. Cultural history, a study that deals with cultural expression in their inter relationship, with emphasis on the tangible culture are seen young/new independent discipline that was introduced at some of the Afrikaans universities. Cook's contributions were considered instrumental in establishment of the discipline. Unknown 'Dr. Mary Cook's achievement', *The Cape Times*, November 27, 1971, "She has devoted almost the whole of her life in the past 30 to 40 years to fighting for the preservation of the fast-disappearing, unique [white] man-made heritage, and has probably done more than any other person alive to-day to awaken the public to the beauty old Cape architecture....." The Mary Cook movement has burgeoned into the Simon van der Stel Foundation and other institutions and societies which are fighting for the protection and preservation she boldly called for.

cultural history collection at the Cultural History Museum in Cape Town. The appointment of professionally trained staff also played a huge role in the positioning and the construction of the cultural museum as an authoritative, scientifically-based institution that could contribute to the body of knowledge and education. The first successfully established open air museums were under the control of the National Cultural History Open Air Museum, which included the Pioneer Open Air Museum in Silverton, Pretoria, and Willem Prinsloo Open Air Agricultural Museum, Rayton. Both were linked to Afrikaner icons, such as the Voortrekker Davis Aalwyn Botha. In the case of the Pioneer Open Air Museum, it was the prominent Prinsloo- family.⁸³

Conclusion

The development of open air museums should be seen in the context of the historical development of museums in South Africa, the influence of early disciplines (natural history/science, archaeology, anthropology, cultural history of Afrikaner), the shaping of content of early museums in the country and the political context of the time.

As a concept, the open air museum deviated from the conventional museum and has been seen as an evolution within museums. As extension, as suggested by De Beer,⁸⁴ of the cultural history museum, open air museums claimed to place cultural history collections in new vibrant spaces and showcase the scientific, historical and cultural heritage of a nation/people. Open air museums could thus provide artifactual evidence, 'authenticity', and be employed as a medium to evoke ideals of the Nationalist government in their quest to construct identity based on a history of common origin, civilisation and settlement. It also brought to the fore the importance and value of preserving the nation's cultural history and the role it plays in nation building and creating national pride.

⁸³ P. J. de Beer, *Die Fenomeen Opelugmuseum in Kultuurhistorieses Perspektief*, 43.

⁸⁴ P. J. de Beer, *Die Fenomeen Opelugmuseum in Kultuurhistorieses Perspektief*, 43.

CHAPTER 2: *The planning and development of Kleinplasia Open Air Museum*

Introduction

This chapter will look at the planning and establishment of Kleinplasia Open Air Museum from 1970 to 1994. It will focus on the driving forces behind this idea of an agriculture museum, the processes of collecting and the fundraising strategies. It will furthermore focus on the role of the architect Gabriel 'Gawie' Fagan and his influence on the design, layout, and narrative of the museum. I will argue that in the processes of planning and developing the Kleinplasia Open Air Museum, the architect and the museum staff created a space for collective memory. They did so by emphasizing a particular aspect of Afrikaner national history.¹

The Design of an agricultural museum in the 1970s and 1980s

Museum documentary evidence such as minutes of Board of Trustees meetings, minutes of the Agricultural Museum Committee and photo albums suggests that the planning, development and inception phase starting from the early 1970s until the mid-1980s of Kleinplasia took place during a harmonious period of the town of Worcester's history. If one however, starts to engage with the happenings of the period, one realises that the circumstance during the development and inception phase of Kleinplasia were far from harmonious.

The 1970s and early 1980s, in particular, were volatile periods in the history of Worcester. Political events and activities of resistance synonymous with these periods in other parts of the country, escalated in the town of Worcester. These happenings would have profound influences on relationships between the different communities. While there was a bitter struggle for political and human rights in the town, a section of the community was involved in what appeared to be an independent, state and community-funded project that I postulate led to an engineered collective memory and construction of a social history for members of the Worcester community that were sustaining an identity as 'white'.

¹The origins of the frontier farmers was claimed by white Afrikaner as an integral part in defining their racially exclusivity.

The 1976 Soweto-uprising by learners can be considered to be the catalyst that led to escalating political resistance, political violence, government repression and their efforts to reform the apartheid system. Worcester's political resistance was personified through the activities of community activists of people such as Bibi "Aunty Bibi" Dawood, David "uncle Davie" Peterson, Hennie Ferus, Johnny Issel, Keke Toli, Ben Baartman, John Alwyn, Joseph Mpoza, Julius Busa, Joe Ndamoyi, George Mpinda and Joe Ngulube and many others who placed the spotlight on Worcester. These political activists, along with learners, university student, teachers, workers, and church leaders organized people for various campaigns, ranging from bus boycott campaigns to consumer boycotts in Worcester and elsewhere throughout the late twentieth century.

The Soweto Uprisings on 16 June 1976, against the instruction of Afrikaans at educational medium, served as the catalyst for on-going resistance that swept across all townships in the country leaving many youth arrested and detained. People in the township of Zweletemba,² and Esselen Park Senior Secondary School, in the residential area for people designated as 'coloured' under apartheid, were at the forefront of the uprisings. These periods were marked by strong police presences and some on-going clashes between the police and youth.

At the same time the Agricultural Museum Committee organized two *Oesfeeste* [Harvest Festivals] in 1978 and 1979 in its efforts to raise funds for Kleinplasia.³ What is also interesting were the efforts made to include the community within the racial category of "coloured" in the festival activities. Apart from the quest to include the people racially classified as "coloured", similar festival activities planned for the main festival which included wine tasting, a dance and church service, were to be organized for the "coloured" community at a separate venue in their residential area. This was most probably because

² The township of Zweletemba and Worcester Agricultural Show, the site for the proposed agricultural museum, was separated by the industrial area.

³H. Naudé, 'Betrokkenheid van die plaaslike gemeenskap by die Opelugmuseum', ['Involvement of the local community at the Open Air Museum'], Speech at the Annual General Meeting of Robertson Museum, November 1980, she noted the two harvest festivals, could considered as huge successes, due fact that it raised R6, 000,00 in total.

people classified as “coloured”, and who predominately occupied positions as labourers in the farming setup, were seen as part of the agricultural community.⁴

The early 1980s saw the resistance being intensified and the formation of community resistance organizations.⁵ The United Democratic Front (UDF), established in 1983, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) (est. 1985), became leaders in the fight against apartheid. Many community organizations in Worcester became affiliated to the UDF and actively campaigned for the end of apartheid, the release of political detainees, lower rent and food prices, and improved living conditions.⁶ Clarence Johnson, a local political activist, was detained in 1979 under the Terrorism Act and released in mid-1980. Jonny Issel, a founder-member of the United Democratic front (UDF) and a Worcester resident, joined the Black Consciousness student movement and the South African Student Organisation, later becoming the chairperson. During the boycotting of classes in the 1980s, Victoria Park Primary School in Riverview and Esselen Park Secondary School were set alight. Johnny Issel,⁷ in a campaign to popularise the African National Congress (ANC) in the Western Cape, was instrumental in the display of the banned ANC flag at the funeral of local political activist, Hennie Ferus, who died in a car accident in 1981.⁸ According to many activists, this led to greater cohesion amongst resistance movements, providing the stimulus for the formation of an umbrella organisation such as the United Democratic Movement in 1983 to coordinate future defiance campaigns linked to the ANC and the underground.

⁴P. H. Kapp, ‘Ons Volksfeeste deel III’, in P.W. Grobelaar (red.), *Die Afrikaner en sy Kultuur*, (Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1975), 167 – 171, provides an overview on Afrikaner *oesfeeste* (harvest festivals) and where it fits in the social relationship between the farmers and the labourers. On wheat and wine farm in the Boland, harvest festivals at the end of the harvest was seen as a celebration of gratitude from the hardship, trials and trauma the farmer along with their labourers had to endure. It was time for dance until the early hours of the morning and preparing meals and consuming alcohol. Kapp notes that different kinds of food were prepared according to existing social hierarchies. He cites the example of a grape harvest festival in towns in Boland – area in Western Cape, that the theme of the Kleinplasia covers, where in the 1930s where Afrikaner dressed up in colonial attire dating back to the Dutch East Company rule of the Cape and Voortrekker attire to perform and partake in *volkspele* (folk games) and traditional dances.

⁵ H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *New History of South Africa*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2007), 379.

⁶ Worcester Museum ‘Proposed Draft Exhibition Text’, 2011.

⁷ R. Fisher, ‘Johnny Issel: What he meant to me’, posted on: 3 February, 2011, <http://www.thoughtleader.co.za/rylandfisher/2011/02/03/principled-struggle-of-a-larg>, accessed, 24 August 2012.

⁸ Issel, J. 2003. Interview, South African History Online, http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/interviews/2003_interview_jonny_issel.htm, accessed 31 October 2012.

Many were sentenced, killed, tortured, and detained without trial for taking in an active stance against apartheid in their quest for freedom.⁹

Apart from the school boycotts, one of the events that would be ingrained in the memory of people racially classified as African and “coloured”, took place in June 1985 when a State of Emergency was declared in Worcester. Under these emergency regulations many people in Zwelethemba were arrested for public violence, detained and assaulted by police. A 7pm-7am curfew was imposed. On 2 August police and army sealed-off Zwelethemba as a consumer and bus boycott got underway. Eighty-five people were arrested and on 16 August 1985, Zwelethemba-resident Nation Nkosana Bahume was shot dead after a petrol bomb-incident. On the 18th of August 1985 women from the township marched to the entrance of the township with a banner calling on government to stop their actions.

The planning of phase of Kleinplasia Open Air Museum, especially in the late 1970s, and the inception phase that covers the opening up until the mid-1980s, which I consider as both the most important and successful period in its history, took place without any recognition of what was happening in the rest of community. It appears that two totally separate worlds existed. It was at this time of political resistance and upheavals in Worcester that the development of Kleinplasia Open Air Museum was taking place.

Humble beginnings: Planning of an agricultural museum

In its own official history published in 1995 it is claimed that the idea of an agricultural museum in Worcester originated with the donation of a horse mill by Mr Hugo of Touws River in 1965.¹⁰ Due to a lack of funds and buy-in from the community, it was only after five years, at a Worcester Museum Board of Trustees Meeting held in 1970,¹¹ that the curator Heloïse Naudé tabled a request to start negotiations with the Worcester *Landbougenootskap* [Worcester Agricultural Society] to give consideration to the possible restoration of one of the old *Roodewal*¹² farm buildings, located on the agricultural show

⁹ ‘Proposed Draft Exhibition Text’, Worcester Museum, 2011. Cecyl Esau (1985) was detained and harassed through preventative detention laws and emergency regulations and was arrested in terms of the notorious Internal Security Act for activities connected to the ANC armed wing Umkhonto we Siswe. He was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment to Robben Island and released in 1991.

¹⁰ N-M. Venter, *Kleinplasia Open Air Museum* (Worcester: Worcester Museum publication, 1995).

¹¹ ‘Minute of Board of Trustees’, Worcester Museum 2 February, 1970.

¹² *Roodewal* was one farm where the town of Worcester was established.

grounds, which could be utilised as an agricultural museum. This proposed museum, she argued, would form a sub-division of Worcester Museum, because it seemed unlikely that the Provincial Administration would be willing to subsidise another museum in the area. Prior the idea of creating an agricultural museum, Worcester Museum, a province-aided museum known until 1969 as the Afrikaner Museum, comprised three separate sites each covering a specific theme. Beck House depicted a rural residence of the late nineteenth century, while the Afrikaner Museum building focussed on consulting rooms of a doctor, attorney, and the surgery of a dentist in 1900s. The third museum site, Hugo Naudé House, was the home of the painter Hugo Naudé and housed a collection paintings and personal belongings.¹³ These sites already received extensive funding from the Provincial Administration.

The idea of an agricultural museum received further support and prominence through a *Sentrale Raad van Boereverenigings* [Central Council of the Farmers Unions] decision on the 13 January 1973 to establish a complete agricultural museum in cooperation with the Worcester Agricultural Society.¹⁴ A further important development in the inception phase of conceptualisation was the Agricultural Society's letter, tabled at the Worcester Museum Board of Trustees Meeting on the 5 August 1974, in which permission was granted for the alienation of 2, 5 hectares of ground for the establishment of an agricultural museum. It took nearly another a year before the Board received a letter stating that the Worcester Agricultural Society approved the transfer of 2, 5 hectares to the Worcester Museum for the establishment of an agricultural museum.¹⁵ At the same meeting it was also decided to approach the well-known and respected conservation architect, Gabriël Fagan, to assist with the development of this museum.¹⁶ This was not surprising if one starts to look at this architect's experience and the magnitude of projects that he was involved in at the time. These projects were often linked to a heritage that promoted ideas of whiteness.

¹³ H.M.J du Preez, *Museums of the Cape, A Guide to the Province-aided Museum of the Cape*, (Cape Town, Department of Nature and Environmental Conversation of the Provincial Administration of the Cape of Good Hope, 1982), 58 - 60.

¹⁴ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 6 August, 1973.

¹⁵ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 5 August, 1974.

¹⁶ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 5 August, 1974.

Gabriël Fagan, producer of heritage

Gabriël Theron Fagan was born on 15 November 1925 in Rondebosch, Cape Town. On completion of his architectural studies at the University of Pretoria in 1951, he found employment with *Volkskas Bank* [People's Bank] in 1952 in Pretoria.¹⁷ *Volkskas*, founded in 1934, was a product of the resurgence of Afrikaner nationalism from the 1920s onwards. With the expansion and growth of Afrikaner business, *Volkskas* was one of many institutions that benefitted in the post-1948 period.

In his twelve years at *Volkskas*, Fagan designed twenty-five bank buildings in South Africa. These buildings were mostly located in rural areas, each with its own unique design. Design elements, as per brief, had to differ from "English" competitors. These contemporary elements included, "bright interiors visible from the outside, through large panes of glass, illuminated at night to discourage burglars. The only conservative touch was the large Roman letters, individually cast in bronze, for the name on the outside of the bank."¹⁸ Clyde Meintjes, Fagan's colleague at *Volkskas*, notes that each interior was designed from scratch to avoid duplication. He recalls an instance where solid timber was used for an "entrance door that was pivot-hung (off-centre) with the wider section opening inwards so screening the wider Blanke [White] entrance from the narrower Nie-Blanke [Non White] one on the other side."¹⁹ In 1964 he started his own practice in Cape Town. Under his supervision, important restoration projects were successfully completed: Government House (1967), La Dauphine homestead, Franschhoek (1968), the restoration of Church Street, Tulbagh to its nineteenth century appearance after the devastating earthquake in 1969, and the Castle the Cape of Good Hope. All these projects were seemingly linked to a colonial heritage that promoted a long history of common origin and descent.

Gabriël Fagan received numerous awards and gold medals for his contribution to architecture and in particular what was deemed by Afrikaner cultural and civil organisations as nationalist architecture, in South Africa. These recognitions came in the following forms:

¹⁷ H. Binckes, S. Chapman, M. Ellis, M. Floyd & J. Saxon. 'A tribute to our Octogenarian Vernackers', *Vernacular Architecture Society of South Africa*, Number 14, December 2005, 22.

¹⁸ C. Meintjes, 'A tribute to Gabriel Fagan – on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, 15th November, 2005', <http://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/articles.php?artid=381>, accessed, 25 October 2012, 1.

¹⁹ C. Meintjes, 'A tribute to Gabriel Fagan – on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, 15th November, 2005', <http://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/articles.php?artid=381>, accessed, 25 October 2012, 1.

together with his wife, Gwen, he received a gold medal from the Council of National Memorabilia (1973), a gold medal from the South African Academy for Science and Art, (1975),²⁰ the Cape Times Centenary award (1979), a gold medal from the Foundation of Simon van der Stel (1982), the Cape Tercentenary Foundation and a gold medal from the Institute of South African Architects (1988).²¹

Fagan's involvement and association, as one of the leading architects of history, with the town of Worcester started in 1972, where he formed part of a renowned and illustrious group of architects which kept the concerned local residents interested in conservation informed on architectural and conservation matters by presenting periodic lectures.

Presenters included the who's who of the South African conservation, architecture world that seemingly linked to Afrikaner heritage and organisations such as Van der Stel and the Vernacular Architecture Group at the time. The list included Prof Bax, Dr. Mary Cook, Hans Fransen, Revel Fox, Andre Hugo, Julian Beinart, Gabriël Fagan, Prof Bun Booyens, and Prof Frans Smuts.²² All included on the list was regarded in conservation circles as authorities, experts in the respective fields and champions in architectural matters. As one of the new generation Afrikaner architects of 1960's, along with architects like Karl Jooste and Barrie Bierman Gawie Fagan was "seeking for a regional expression true to South African ethos, cultural and physical."²³ Fagan and his wife Gwen were regarded architecture community and conservation bodies focussing on what seen as colonial architecture as being "deeply involved in projects related to South Africa's early history."²⁴ Gwen would often be responsible for the extensive archival research for his projects.

²⁰ Korrespondent, 'EREPENNING VIR ARGITEK', *Die Burger*, Maandag 30 Junie 1975. Gabriël Fagan was the recipient of a gold medal Architect from the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns – [South African Academy for Science and Art], (1975). This was for his comprehensive contributions towards South African architecture/architect of the past present and future. In his inauguration speech presented by Professor Frans Smuts in the absence of the writer Professor Barrie Biermann, Fagan gets credited for one being one of the leaders during the post- Second World that was instrumental for construction of a South African brand of architecture. He was also praise for performing on the following three levels of his discipline; as 'renovator' with risky new design directions, as 'adaptor' of new design at existing buildings/structure, and as 'restorer' of that worth of conservation. During his speech Fagan made a case for more funding towards the study of South African vernacular architecture.

²¹ "http://myfundi.co.za/e/Dr_Gawie_Fagan", overview of Fagan's life story, accomplishments and awards, accessed, 31 July 2011.

²² M. Nel, 'Hier word nie gesloop nie! Restourasie op Worcester', *Die Burger*, Donderdag, 9 Maart 1972

²³ J. Jooste, 'Africana in a Democratic Propinquity', Department of Architecture, Technicon Pretoria. [www.architec.co.za/research/2000/Africana.htm], accessed, 10 July 2010.

²⁴ 'Gawie Fagan poised to set sail into history', *Cape Times*, 18 July 1987.

Gabriël Fagan is considered a leading figure in South African vernacular architecture²⁵ and in conservation organisations such as Vernacular Architecture Groups (VAG)²⁶ and the *Stigting Simon van der Stel* (Simon van der Stel Foundation) that predominately focused on white colonial heritage.²⁷ The Vernacular Architecture Group's emphasis shifted, according to Malan, "from colonial, elite architecture to 'folk' architecture and life of ordinary people." In the working and philosophies of the Vernacular Architecture Group it appears that, "folk architecture" was seen and defined as being linked to the racial category of white.

Architecture seems to have played a leading role in the 'inventing of heritage' for the South African Union. Antonia Malan claimed that "the rediscovery, restoration and adaptation of the Cape Dutch homestead, a movement also known as 'Cape Dutch Revival', was employed as strategy for reconciliation, unity and nation-building during the post Anglo Boer War period".²⁸ These architects were also under the influence of James Walton, considered to be the founder of the Vernacular Architecture Groups (VAG) and the father of vernacular architecture in South Africa. Walton most probably provided the impetus for the development of Kleinplasia when he expressed his concern about the possible dangers of having no tangible records of vernacular architecture. He suggested a "folk park where a surviving early house can be re-erected and preserved."²⁹ Based on this pedigree, his links with the Afrikaner Nationalist establishment and with numerous successfully completed projects under his belt, the Board of Trustees decided to approach Fagan as the only architect to provide guidance and leadership on the project. Fagan's heritage and conservation projects like the Afrikaans Language Museum (1975) makes him one of the most prolific producers of heritage.

²⁵ A. Malan, 'Reflections on half a century of vernacular architecture studies at the Cape', *VASSA Journal*, number 11, June 2004, defines the term 'with the express purpose to reveal, record and understand the special architecture of South Africa' Vernacular architecture also known as 'the architecture of the people', 19.

²⁶ A. Malan, 'Reflections', 21 Fagan was a founder member of VAG and chairman in 1969, H. Binckes, S. Chapman, M. Ellis, M. Floyd & J. Saxon. 'A tribute to our Octogenarian Vernackers', *Vernacular Architecture Society of South Africa*, Number 14, December 2005, 22.

²⁷See Brunskill, R.W., *Traditional Buildings of Britain: an introduction to vernacular architecture* (London: Victor Gollanz, 1981), 15 "the term...has been adopted to define that sort of building which is deliberately permanent rather than temporary, which is traditional rather than academic in its inspiration, which provides for the simple activities of ordinary people...which is strongly related to place, especially through the use of local building materials, but which represents design and buildings with thought and feeling rather than in a base or strictly utilitarian manner,"

²⁸See Peter Merrington, 'Heritage, pageantry and archivism: creed systems and tropes of public history in Imperial South Africa, circa 1910', *Kronos* 25: 129 -151.

²⁹ J. Walton, *Homesteads and Villages*, (Pretoria: Van Schaik, 1952 (1965 reprint)).

Gabriël Fagan and the Development of Kleinplasia Open Air Museum

On the 22 October 1974 Hans Rabie, Member of Parliament for Worcester, accompanied by the Curator Heloise Naudé, met with the architect Gabriel “Gawie” Fagan to discuss his involvement in the development of the proposed museum. A *Landboumuseum Komitee* [Agricultural Museum Committee] had been formed and met on 23 January 1973 to facilitate the planning process, fundraising and the establishment of an agricultural museum.³⁰ The Agricultural Museum Committee, responsible for the planning, conceptualization and establishment of the museum, gave the Board of Trustees of Worcester Museum the go ahead to start raising funds. Gabriël Fagan visited Kleinplasia on the 6 December himself with the site and to collect information for the drawing of draft plans.

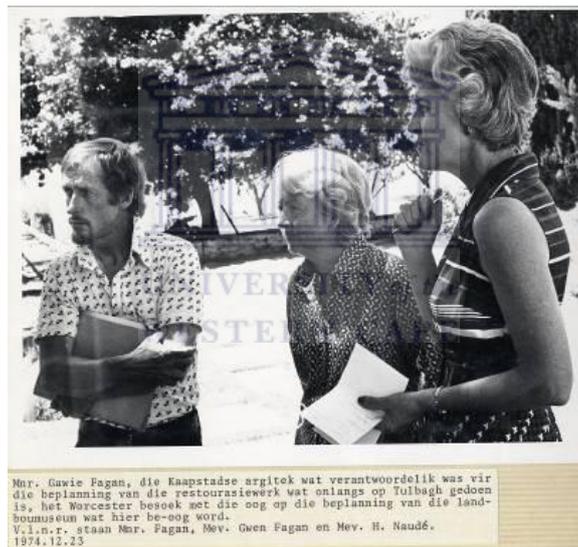


Figure 1. “Mr Gawie Fagan, the Cape Town-based architect that was responsible for the planning of the restoration work that was completed recently at Tulbagh. He visited Worcester as part of the planning process for agricultural museum that are planned. From left to right stand Mr Fagan, Mrs Fagan and Mrs H. Naudé, 1974.12.23” Source: Worcester Museum³¹.

Fagan was accompanied by his wife, Gwen, on this first site visit which was followed by another two visits, including a site visit to surrounding farms in the region. Based on these visits, Fagan made the suggestion that the proposed agricultural museum should have two

³⁰ ‘Minutes of Board of Trustees’, Worcester Museum, 4 February, 1974.

³¹ Worcester Museum, Photo Album, 1974 – 1981, Visit by Gawie and Gwen Fagan to the site of the proposed museum, 23 December 1974.

sections, one dealing with the representation of a pioneer farm in the Breede River Valley and the other section could deal with the development of different farming activities, with farm/working implements that were used over identified periods.³² A clear distinction was made between what was considered local and national farming history. In a letter dated the 24 February 1975, Gabriël Fagan accepted the responsibility for planning and drawing designs for the agricultural museum.³³

From the inception phase Fagan's influence and philosophy became evident. In a slide presentation to the Agricultural Museum Committee and members of the Board of Trustees, draft drawings were presented by Fagan that envisaged a museum which he maintained would serve both educational and conservational purposes. It appears that the proposed museum was to serve as an education centre where visitors would be edified around the past 'way of life' of the Cape pioneer farmer through artifactual evidence and demonstrations. It was also envisioned that the museum would be an education centre for learners in the region where a sense of and appreciation for local and regional customs and traditions could be inculcated. Fagan also placed a high priority on the conservation of structures that were deemed as having historical significance. His proposed drawings included what he saw as a modern UNIVERSITY complex, a reception area that contained a graphic representation of the history of the region, illustrated deeds of transfer of early farms, drawings by early travellers as well as depictions on the development of agriculture at different levels. He also suggested the construction of an administration building, spaces for museological work, storage facilities and a restaurant. Provisions were also made for the exhibition of farm implements in replica buildings on the 'historical farmyard' that was to be used or linked to farming activities in the Breede River Valley. The purpose of these draft plans, so Fagan claimed, was to provide suggestions for the location of each building and types of buildings that could be used.

With the finalisation of the project, these suggestions were to become the blueprints for development of the site/museum. To create an atmosphere of farm landscape with the necessary backdrop, Fagan suggested additions such as the erection of pomegranate and

³² 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 10 February, 1975.

³³ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 14 April, 1975.

quince fencing, planting of fruit trees, vineyards, *rietbos* [reed bush] and the building of a duck pond. These ideas found favour with those present at the meeting.

At the same meeting a unanimous decision was taken and minuted that the new extension would be known as the '*Landboumuseum*', [Agricultural Museum].³⁴ By September 1975 completed drawing plans were received from Gabriël Fagan³⁵ and a decision was made that Fagan would work under the supervision of the *Boukommissie vir Landboumuseum*, [Building Commission for the Agricultural Museum]. At a Special Board of Trustees meeting held on 1 March 1976,³⁶ a decision was taken to accept the offer from the *Landbougenootskap* [Agricultural Society] to transfer the property, erf 6974 and a piece of erf 186 in Worcester that encompassed 2 1771 hectares, to the Worcester Museum Board of Trustees.³⁷ A loan of R338, 000 was also approved by the Provincial Administration.

In a memorandum concerning the negotiation between the members of the Agricultural Society and The Board of Trustees,³⁸ the architect Gabriël Fagan explained that there must be a clear separation between the old and new buildings. He suggested that all the old buildings should be grouped together due to the limited amount of land available and the fact that the modern building would not be placed on another site. In his slide presentation,³⁹ Fagan also suggested that the modern building will be placed in such a way that it would not dominate the layout. With this in mind, the modern building was to be placed at the lower end of the southern side to allow for extensions to the exhibition hall.⁴⁰ The Board instructed Fagan to add four more blocks to the exhibition hall to ensure that there was enough space to cover more themes if necessary, such as poultry, dairy farming and transport. Fagan was furthermore instructed to draw working plans for the layout of the ground, as well as the water and electrical supplies.⁴¹ The final plans were approved by the Board and the Provincial Administration at a special meeting held on 24 January 1977.

³⁴ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 4 August 1975.

³⁵ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 25 September 1975.

³⁶ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 1 March, 1976.

³⁷ 'Minutes of Special Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 1 March 1976.

³⁸ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 7 October 1976.

³⁹ 'Minutes of Special Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 24 January 1977.

⁴⁰ For advice, the architect approached Dr. Eckhardt (Cultural history Museum, Cape Town) and Dr. T. Barry (from the South African Museum) for advice. Both were of the opinion that the administrative block and workshop was too small.

⁴¹ 'Minutes of Special Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 24 January 1977.

The Board of Trustees decided to request assistance from the Provincial Administration for the payment of the services of Gabriël Fagan and Willem Jordaan, a graphic designer,⁴² for the design and development of the exhibition at the entrance and in the exhibition hall.⁴³ An amount of R2, 500 was made available for the professional services of Fagan and Jordaan. A budget was subsequently made available by the Provincial Administration for the payment of these services.⁴⁴ Fagan, on his own initiative, designed and built a model for the entrance. The model, which cost an additional R1, 139-, featured the layout of the museum and was placed in the front foyer on Fagan's insistence in order to guide the visitor in a particular direction. The museum was charged a further R300 for professional services rendered by Gabriël Fagan for construction of the model, which according to the curator was not part of the original quotation or agreement. Naudé was also not happy with the design of the exhibition cases by Fagan and refused to accept it.⁴⁵ Naudé was of the opinion that the museum could not be held liable for the expenditure of R1, 872 for 8 exhibition cases.⁴⁶ The scale model was incorporated at the entrance to the museum with the aim of guiding and orientating visitors to the site. In documentary evidence, no further mention was made concerning the exhibition cases. Fagan and Jordaan managed to complete the exhibitions at entrance and the section on the wool industry in the exhibition hall. Themes to be covered, that were still outstanding included: wine, dried fruit, canning, dairy, tobacco, deciduous fruit, transport, organised agriculture and the combating of pests.⁴⁷

⁴² Willem Jordaan was graphic arts and cartoonist artist assisted Fagan with museum exhibition such SA Breweries, illustrator of books. Designer of 'worker with sickle' -logo's for Kleinplasia Naspers logo, Sanlam, etc. Arnold Ras, 'Ontwerper Willem Jordaan (86) sterf', [Designer Willem Jordaan (86), died], *Die Burger Wes*, 16 Augustus, 2007 and <http://152.111.1.87/argief/berigte/dieburger/2007/08/18/BY/13/WILLEMJORDAAN>, accessed, 24 October 2012.

⁴³ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 14 July 1980. The exhibition at entrance of was completed by these two gentlemen, but the exhibition hall was only opened in 1988.

⁴⁴ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 3 November 1980.

⁴⁵ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 22 June 1981.

⁴⁶ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 22 June 1981.

⁴⁷ 'Annual Report 1 January 1980 - 31 December 1980', Worcester Museum.



Figure 2. Fagan under the supervision of the Building Committee by November 1979 oversaw the completion of main building, tobacco shed, soap kitchen, horse mill, watermill and the wine cellar.⁴⁸ Source: Worcester Museum

Gwen Fagan, along with labourers from farms in the region, was meanwhile in process of establishing the gardens for the museum.

Architect of the site

Fagan requested that the organisers collect beams, doors, windows, and cleaned reeds for the planned reconstruction and replica structures.⁴⁹ Through “salvage architecture”, some examples of ‘typical farm structures’ were identified, dismantled and re-erected on the planned museum site. Fagan created what Stanley calls an “architectural grammar”⁵⁰ through a site that considered sound, smell, soil, vegetation, placement of parking, structures, visitor flows and a network of displays that personified local cultural elements. In this way a supposedly ‘authentic representation’ of customs, lifestyle and trades of the past, supported by artifactual evidence, could be constructed and reconstructed. Fagan also seemed to have followed a “scientific approach” and what Paardekooper calls the “old-

⁴⁸ Worcester Museum, Photo Album, 1974 – 1981 and ‘Annual Report 1 January 1980 - 31 December 1980’, Worcester Museum.

⁴⁹ ‘Minutes of Board of Trustees’, Worcester Museum, 4 Augustus, 1975.

⁵⁰ Nick Stanley, *Being Ourselves for You: the global display of cultures*, (London: Middlesex University Press, 1988), 133.

fashioned views” whereby buildings were collected and preserved as presentation of a material culture and social structure “with the aim of providing a didactic experience where they draw a comparison between life in the past and the present.”⁵¹ Fagan’s approach appears to have provided visitors with a sensorial experience. Stanley posits that in cases where “cultural theme parks or centers” are considered ‘living museums’, that the two major elements in these parks are performance and architecture. In the case of Kleinplasia, Fagan’s design attempts were made to preserve the symbolic and intellectual culture of people deemed to be pioneers by employing material that served as ‘memory triggers’.⁵² As an ethnographic display it attempted to portray a lifestyle in a particular form of representation and visualisation linked to a particular ‘topography’. Tradition, lifestyle, culture, trade and home industries were associated in the museum landscape with Afrikaners as self-sufficient pioneers. Identity was constructed by employing two traditional means: architecture and performance linked with trade and home industries, combined with the narrative based on the lifestyle of the *trekboer* [migrant farmer].

Fagan, along with the museum’s staff and management, nurtured the idea of creating of a template of a typical Breede River farm. In line with other international phenomena, Kleinplasia also had a national and regional focus whereby certain aspects of culture, informed by ethnographic studies of indigenous folk culture in the 19th century, embodied “the same sense of nationalism expressed in folk-revival design extending across Europe in the same period.”⁵³ Naudé also thanked Fagan, in her speech presented at the regional conference of the South African Museums Association (SAMA), for sticking to the belief that everything (buildings, structures, demonstrations, artefacts, and atmosphere) should be “*eg*” [authentic], despite complaints from the *Bou Kommissie* [Building Commission] appointed to supervise the architect/designers. She furthermore claimed that the buildings were exact replicas and that in some instances the same building material and methods were used.⁵⁴ In the process Fagan consolidated “a new, normative form of [Afrikaner]

⁵¹ S. Rentzhog, Open Air Museums – the History and Future of a Visionary Idea, Roeland Paardekooper, *European Journal of Archaeology*, 2008 11: 313.

⁵² N. Stanley, *Being ourselves for you*, 42.

⁵³ E. A. Chappell, ‘Open Air Museums: Architectural History for the Masses’, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 58, No. 3, Architectural History 1999/2000 (Sep., 1999), 334.

⁵⁴ H, Naudé, Speech at Regional Meeting of SA Museums Association, Paarl: 14 and 15 August 1980

The proposed programme for the opening on the 21 March 1981 and the attendance of the Administrator was confirmed at a Board Meeting on 15 September 1980.⁵⁷ The day started with receiving and welcoming of VIPs, which included staff, members of parliament, staff of the Provincial Administration, local politicians, businessmen, farmers and members of civil organisations, at the old Drostdy in the centre of town, where tea was served. From here guests were transported in horse carts and vintage cars and escorted by horse riders to Kleinplasië show grounds, two kilometres outside the Worcester. On arrival the guest participated in the official unlocking of the museum and attended the official address, delivered by the Administrator of the Cape Province, The Honourable Gene Louw. Refreshments were served to the special guests from 11h00 until 17h00, while *braaivleis* (barbecue) lunches were offered on sale to the public. VIPs also experienced exhibitions and demonstrations which included rolling tobacco, thong tanning (the conversion of animal skin into leather), making raisins, grape *trap* [pressing] and cooking soap.

At 13h00 the 400 guests were treated to a traditional lunch in the *Wynhuis* (the restaurant that had been constructed on site). KWV provided a luncheon with a spread of traditional cuisine based on a menu offered to the German doctor, traveller Henry Lichtenstein, when he visited the same historical homestead in 1803.⁵⁸ Proceedings concluded with a harvest dance.⁵⁹ According to the chairperson, Erns Bruwer, “the opening day is an event not easily forgotten” that even surpassed the expectation of the Administrator Mr Gene Louw.⁶⁰ The opening was attended by approximately 1000 people. It was decided to charge 50 cent admission fee at the official opening of the museum in order to curb the “problem of vagrants and undesirable elements.”⁶¹

Funding and Marketing

The dream of an agricultural museum was realised through calculated fundraising, a marketing campaign and a museum collections drive. From documentary evidence it becomes evident that the planning phases of the museum were coordinated by the *Landbou Museum Komitee* [Agricultural Museum Committee] consisting of pre-dominantly males

⁵⁷ ‘Minutes of Board of Trustees’, Worcester Museum, 15 September 1980

⁵⁸ ‘Annual Report 1 January 1980 - 31 December 1980’, Worcester Museum, p4 - 6.

⁵⁹ ‘Minutes of Board of Trustees’, Worcester Museum, 11 May 1981.

⁶⁰ ‘Annual Report 1 January 1980 - 31 December 1980’, Worcester Museum. p5.

⁶¹ ‘Minutes of Board of Trustees’, Worcester Museum, 2 February 1981.

from the local farming community Heloïse Naudé, the curator, was the only woman on the committee. The planning phase also shows various sets of role-players participating in the collection, marketing and fundraising of the events in the process of establishing the museum. Concerted efforts were made to co-opt members from the surrounding farm-owner community and related industries on to the committee. The interest and buy-in from provincial, national and local government, civil society organisations such as Rotary, Lions, and the *Vroue Landbou Vereniging* (VLV), [Women Agricultural Society], farmers, the white community, and corporate wine cellars (De Wet Cellar donated R500 in 1976 and R250 for each year over period of five years and Aan-de-Doorns Cellar donated R100 in December).⁶² As an officially sanctioned institution of the Cape Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation, in terms of the Museum Ordinance no 8 of 1975, it was formally linked with the ruling Nationalist government right from the start. These links allowed for becomes through the approval of government funding, the opening by the Administrator Gene Louw, and various official visits by government ministers and officials.⁶³

What became apparent is the vast number of organisations like the *Koöperatiewe Wijnbouwers Vereniging, K.W.V.*, [Corporate Wine Producers Union] *Suid-Afrikaanse Droeëvrugte Raad* (SAD) [South African Dry Fruit Board], local corporate wine cellars, businesses, and agricultural corporations that were instrumental in providing the funding for Kleinplasia.⁶⁴

The main donors, it seems, were the community within the town of Worcester, prominent businesses, civil society organisations and the farming communities that associated themselves with the theme of the proposed museum. In its fundraising efforts, the Agricultural Museum Committee reached out to civil society organisations such as the Rotary, Lions, and the *Vroue Landbou Vereniging*, (VLV), [Women Agricultural Society]. Collections list were sent to *Landboumuseum-Komitee* [Agricultural Museum Committees] members to recruit farmers to become members at a subscription cost of R10, 00 per year. Businesses with supposed interest in farming like, Hextex, Langeberg Canning, South Africa

⁶² Letter to members of the Board of Trustees and Agricultural Museum Committee, 'Landboumuseum', 12 January 1976.

⁶³ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 1 February 1982, the curator and Personnel got thanked for the program they organized during the Agricultural Show that was open by the Mr. John Vorster (prime minister). According the Chairperson the State president and his wife enjoyed the visit to the museum a lot.

⁶⁴ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 14 October 1974.

Dry Fruit Board and *Koöperatiewe Wijnbouwers Vereniging (K.W.V.)* [Corporate Wine Producers Organisation], etc. provided raw material and artefacts for exhibition purposes. On the 24 November 1975, the K.W.V. confirmed the donation of approximately R25, 000 for the building of the harvesting cellar.⁶⁵ Donations and sponsorship were also received from the cooperative wine cellars. The Provincial Administration also agreed to pay the architect's account of R 1, 778, 83.⁶⁶ Civil society organisation sponsored construction or reconstruction of individual structure on the site. The Afrikaner nationalist organisation, the *Junior Rapportryers*, provided for the roof of the horse mill,⁶⁷ and the local Lions organisation handed over the tobacco shed on 21 March 1980).⁶⁸

At an Agricultural Museum Committee meeting held on 18 February 1978,⁶⁹ the curator explained her decision to turn the *Oesfees* [Harvest Festival] that had been held in Worcester since 1978 into an annual fundraising event to support the agricultural museum. The first one was planned for 29 April 1978. The support of the following organisations was to be obtained: *Koöperatiewe Wijnbouwers Vereniging (K.W.V.)* [Corporate Wine Producers Organisation], *Sentrale Bottelering* [Central Bottling], cooperate wine cellars, farmers union/organisations, *Koöperatiewe Vroue Landbou Vereniging (V.I.V.)* [Corporate Women Agricultural Union], *Voortrekkers*, Scouts & Guides, correctional services, *Rapportryers*, *Afrikanerklub*, members form German, Italian and Portuguese communities, folk-dancers organisations, *Landbougenootskap* [Agricultural Society], folk-games players organisations, schools, Gymkhana club, *Jukskei Klub* [yoke-pin club], etc. It was a rousing success, adding R6, 000 to the agricultural museum's building fund.⁷⁰ What I also found very interesting about this event was the request forwarded to groups designated as Italian, German and Portuguese communities to assist in the fundraising efforts. Were they considered as part of the target audience that that would identify with the future museum? Was it about the notion of racial classification? Naudé claimed that the two Harvest Festivals included the whole community, but this was not the case because most of the local community was

⁶⁵ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 24 November 1975.

⁶⁶ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees, Worcester Museum, 9 February 1976.

⁶⁷ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 4 June 1979.

⁶⁸ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees, Worcester Museum, 4 February 1980.

⁶⁹ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees, Worcester Museum, 18 February 1978.

⁷⁰ See C. Rassool and L. Witz, 'The 1952 Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival: Construction and Contesting Public History in South Africa', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1993), 448, how a white South African nation was constructed based common European and racial descent.

excluded. In her speech at the AGM of Robertson Museum in November 1980, titled '*Betrokkenheid van die plaaslike gemeenskap by die Opelugmuseum*' ['Involvement of the local community at the Open Air Museum'], Heloïse Naudé⁷¹ provided an overview of the involvement of what she claimed was 'the community' in the development and establishment of the museum and the contributions they made. These contributions include providing transport, farm labourers, and knowledge pertaining to particular structures, traditional building methods and materials, supervision of the construction process, advice, and serving as volunteers that performed or demonstrated old farm industries at the museum.

The following list gives one an indication of who was involved in the project. The replica and some of the reconstructed structures for the museum were sponsored by the following institutions/organisations: soap kitchen (Afrikaner Club), farm-dwelling (Matroosberg Divisional Council), watermill (Rotary), wine-cellar (KWV), coach house (own funds, museum funds generated through fundraising, sponsorships and revenue generation), smithy or forge (own funds), *kapstylhuis* (own funds), labourer's cottage (Provincial Administration) and Khoekhoe huts (Provincial Administration). These organisations, businesses, agricultural association or organisations and individuals were also involved in the donation of objects that was seen as tangible evidence or markers of the period that the museum covered. Naudé was central to the process of fundraising and marketing the product to a specific target audience with exceptional results. Her strategy seems to have focused on community organisations, individuals and businesses that were sympathetic towards conservation. Documentary evidence furthermore suggests that the support and contribution of the Member of Parliament for Worcester, Mr Hans Rabie, who served on the Agricultural Museum Committee, was vital in canvassing support in parliament for such an idea as an agricultural museum.

Cost and funding of infrastructure

Funding and the support for the idea of an agricultural museum was further enhanced through the willingness of the Provincial Administration to cover the interest and redemption on the approved loan of R388, 000, that the museum secured from the

⁷¹ H. Naudé, '*Betrokkenheid van die plaaslike gemeenskap by die Opelugmuseum*', speech delivered at the AGM of Robertson Museum, November 1980.

Worcester Municipality. Conditions for the loan stipulated that the funds could be used for the construction of the agricultural museum and this loan was over a two year period ending 1978.⁷² An estimated cost of R340, 000 for the development of the agricultural museum and an estimation of R45, 000 for the exhibition hall were budgeted for.⁷³ The original tender for the main building by J. P Hanekom for R359, 795 was later reduced to R320, 000.⁷⁴ This tender excluded the administration block with new extensions. The office block that was added to the main building, completed in 1981,⁷⁵ was originally estimated to cost R94, 000.⁷⁶ The quotation from F & F Construction for R129, 750 was eventually approved.⁷⁷ A quotation by Vanzaghi Broers [Brothers] for R16, 880 for building of the wine cellar, excluding filling, water connection, building in of stills, was accepted.⁷⁸ The Cafeteria, where tea and other confectionary were served, was completed for R10, 958. The costs for the rest of the infrasture were as follows: Farmers dwelling (±R7, 000)⁷⁹, Coach-house, Harness room and Stable (R10,388), Smithy (R1,500),⁸⁰ Gawie Fagan's professional services, (R16 ,560 until 1982),⁸¹ engineering cost (16,000),⁸² exhibition photographs for dried fruit and wheat exhibitions (R1, 100), for exhibition material (R32, 198),⁸³ for electrified irrigation system (R4, 106), and fencing (R1, 976). Completion of Phase two was estimated at R161, 000 by P. Maré the quantity surveyors.⁸⁴ The estimated cost for the first two phases, estimated at R570, 000, was covered mainly by both provincial and local government loans, civil organizations and other donations.

Government was also responsible for the funding of 95% of the approved staff establishment of the museum. The funding of staff by government also contributed to the making of the biggest, and one of top, government museums in the Cape Province. Its staff

⁷² 'Minutes of Agricultural Museum Committee', Worcester Museum, 25 January 1977.

⁷³ Letter to members of the Board of Trustee and Agricultural Museum Committee, 'Landboumuseum', Worcester Museum, 12 January 1976.

⁷⁴ Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 6 February 1978 Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 6 February 1978.

⁷⁵ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees, Worcester Museum, 22 June 1981, p2.

⁷⁶ Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 1 October 1979.

⁷⁷ Letter to Direkteur Departement van Natuurbewaring, Worcester Museum, 3 Desember 1979.

⁷⁸ 'Minutes of Agricultural Museum Committee', Worcester Museum, 25 April 1977.

⁷⁹ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 28 September 1981.

⁸⁰ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 28 September 1981.

⁸¹ Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 5 October 1982.

⁸² 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 1 February 1982.

⁸³ 'Annual Report, 1 April 1987 - 31 March 1988', Worcester Museum.

⁸⁴ Letter to Fagan, 'Boland Plaasmuseum Worcester: Fase II', P. Maré & Vennote/Partners, boureknaars/quantity surveyors, 27 November 1980.

establishment also reflected the growth, popularity and importance of the site as a tourism commodity. As one makes an analysis of the Museum's Annual Reports from 1979 to 1994, it becomes apparent that government support and funding had a huge impact on how the museum expanded and diversified its services.⁸⁵ The following information serves as evidence of the site development. For the financial year 1 April 1979 to 31 April 1980 the museum had the following occupational classes and staff numbers: Museum Human Scientist (1), Artist (1 plus 3 assistants), Technicians (2), Admin assistant (1), Factotums (4), Non- White (cleaners (1), Gardeners (4)). These numbers drastically increased from 15 to 29 staff members with the opening of the new open air museum as a satellite of Worcester Museum. The revised staff establishment looked like this: Museum Scientists (4), Library Assistant (1), Display Artists (1), Horticulturist (1), Clerical assistants (5), Museum assistants (6), Factotums/Gardeners (2), Non-White Factotum (1), Night Watchmen (2), Gardeners (6).

The growth was also noticeable in the Financial Statements. Income (Provincial Admission fees, Divisional Council contributions, Municipality) increased from 1980 to 1981 from R52, 432 to R70, 218; expenditure (travelling and subsistence allowance, printing, fuel, Furniture, Petty expenses, insurance) from R54, 714 to R105, 433. The Financial Statements for the financial years 1981 to 1982/83 showed an increase in Income (R70, 218 to R143 871) and a decrease in Expenditure (R105, 433 to R104, 545). Furthermore, the Government Subsidy on the approved budget increased from 50% to 75%. The staff in the 1983/1984 financial year consisted of a staff establishment of 46 to deliver services and special programmes to visitors which included, ploughing and sowing days, threshing time, barley festival, etc. 34 257 special programmes visitors out of 50 666 visiting the open air museum in the 1983/84 financial year and 24 078 out of 38 793 in 1982/83).⁸⁶ This staff establishment of 46 prevailed until the resignation of Naudé on 31 January 1987. A

⁸⁵ One needs to note that a cost analysis unfortunately could not be made due lack of reporting on salary expenditure not being reflected in the Annual Report nor in the Boards of Trustees Meeting Minutes for Worcester Museum.

⁸⁶ Curator (1) Beckhuis (Human Scientist (1), Museum Assistants, Beck, Afrikaner-Museum, Stofberg (6), Non-White Factotum (1) Cleaners (2), Gardeners (2), one being pay from the museum funds **Total of 12 staff.** Staff Kleinplasia Scientist (2), Teacher (1), Artist (1), Library Assistant (2), Horticulturist (1), Technician (2), Guide (1), Admin Assistance (3), Museum Assistance (7), Factotum/Gardener (1), Non- white Factotum (1), Night Watchmen (2), Labourers (6), Cleaners plus supervisors (4) plus 2 being paid with museum funds. **Total of 34 staff**

moratorium was placed on the funding of additional posts by government in the 1983 financial year⁸⁷

The staff establishment was altered by Swanepoel to suit how he saw the operational requirements. Staff employment seemed to have focused towards the open air museum. The approved staff establishment remained more or less the same until the 1994/1995 financial year. Under Swanepoel, we also see the introduction of relief personnel to perform duties when needed, on weekends and on special days.⁸⁸ The staff establishment, detailed in the Annual Report 1989/1990 looked like this:

Curator (Senior Museum Human Scientist) (1), Human Scientists: Historian, Exhibition and Collections, Demonstrations, Horticulturist (4), Education Officer (1), Education Officer: Guide for adults (1), Senior Technician: Exhibitions (1), Technician: Restoration (1), Technician: Maintenance and Repair (1), Farm Foreman (1), Senior Administration Clerks (3), Museum assistants for both satellite and Kleinplasia, restaurant, (10), all white Open Air Interpreters (8), Assistant to Farm Foreman (1), Maintenance (1), Cafeteria (1), Cafeteria and laundry (1), Cook (1), Waitress (3) all contract paid with museum funds not civil servants, Shop Assistant (1), Cleaner supervisor (1), Night watchman (2), (Cleaners (4), Horticulturist assistance (2), Groundsman (1), Technical Museum assistance (2), Aflos Personnel (14).⁸⁹

Along with their fundraising campaign, Naudé and the Agricultural Museum Committee ran an extensive marketing campaign, using the printed media like *Landbou Weekblad*, *Framer's Weekly* and *Die Burger*, whose activities, sentiments and audiences were specifically targeted to the farming community. Another communication strategy was the use of brochures in 10 different foreign languages, focusing on the overseas tourist and the bilingual in-house publication like *Korrels en Kaf* [Chat and Chaff], which served as the official voice of the museum. It contained anything from events, anniversaries, and

⁸⁷ 'Annual Report, 1 April 1986 – 31 March 1987', Worcester Museum.

⁸⁸ 'Annual Report, 1 April 1988 – 31 March 1989', Worcester Museum.

⁸⁹ A Total of 58 permanent, contract and relief staff were employed to serve a total of 93 528 visitors of which 57 071 visited the open air museum. The cafeteria and restaurant was new additions since 1988, according to the Annual Report 1991 -31 March 1992 total of staff increased to 65 (5 more relief staff and two more horticulturist assistances was employed). The Annual Report for 1 April 1994 – 31 April 1995 suggest drastic drop back in the number. Only 40 members of were employed, most probably due to financial constraint caused by the new extension.

birthdays staff matters. The museum was also marketed as heritage⁹⁰ and a space for cultural expression.

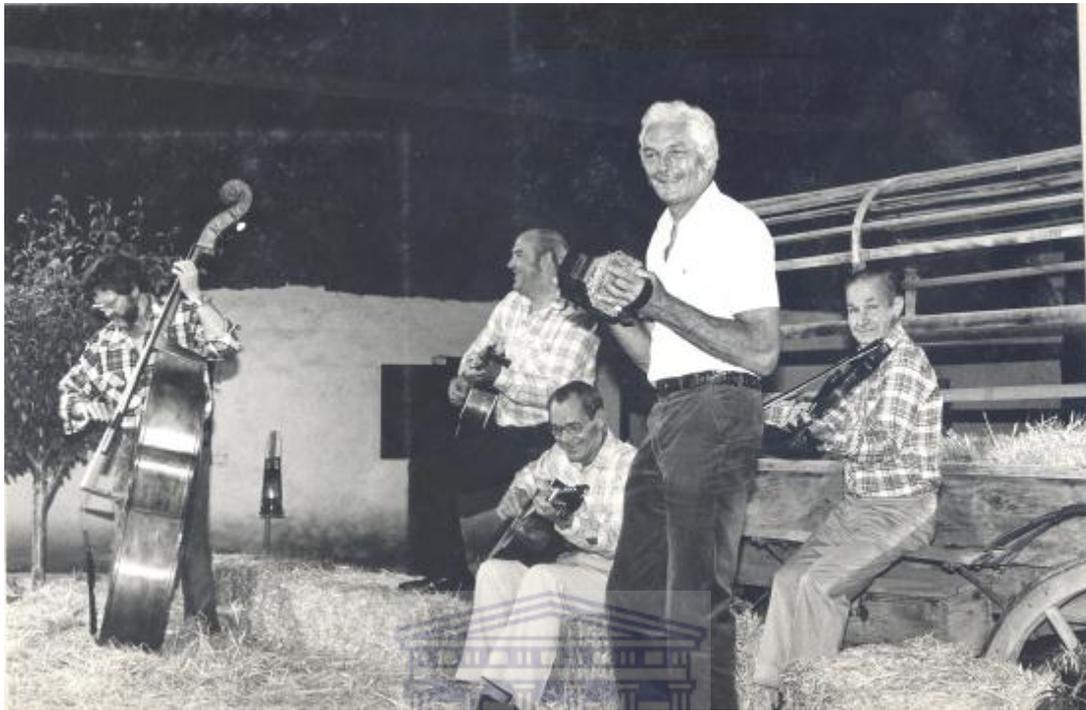


Figure 4. Kleinplasia Open Air Museum became a popular site for recording of inputs for television programmes. Here is a band performing Boeremusiek traditional music, 1983⁹¹ Source: Worcester Museum

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⁹⁰ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum 24 October 1988 Museum involvement with identity and cultural projects, the museum was approached by the *Volkswag* (an exclusive Afrikaner cultural movement/organisation) to participate in a stacking of cairn at museum as part of the celebration of the Groot Trek. The Director (former curator) initially gave his permission, but withdraw after the *Volkswag's* arrangements got out of hand. This is very interesting as the *Volkswag* was under the auspices of the Conservative Party and the HNP and thus represented a more conservative brand of Afrikaner nationalism. What this suggests to me is that you cannot make sweeping statements about Afrikaner nationalism which was constantly changing. So 1948 Afrikaner Nationalism was not the same as the 1970s or late 1980s.

⁹¹ Worcester Museum, Photo Album, 1982 -1986



Figure 5. Also a site of cultural expression. Here folkdances are demonstrated on April 1989.

Source: Worcester Museum⁹²

It also served as a site for the recording of television programmes. KRAAINES, a South African Broadcast Corporation (SABC) actuality programme on tourist attractions, two recordings on church history of South Africa, and an English television overview of different types of mills of South Africa were shot at Kleinplasië.⁹³

Naming the Museum

The naming of Kleinplasië turned out to be a lengthy process. With the submission of the draft plans for the new museum, the Board of Trustees also put a request forward for the new museum to be named the '*Bolandse Landboumuseum*' [Boland Agricultural Museum]. Meanwhile, at the Annual General Meeting of the *Verenigde Breëriver Ontwikkelingsvereniging* [United Breë River Development Union], a unanimous decision was taken to change the name to '*Landboumuseum Breëriviervallei*', [Agricultural Museum Breë River Valley]. The Board decided to support this decision because this could contribute to the increased awareness of the regional identity of the Breë River Valley.⁹⁴

Another turning point that contributed to the decision to change the name and force the museum to reconsider its theme and focus, was when Minister Koornhof made a radio

⁹² Worcester Museum, Photo Album, 1987 - 1989

⁹³ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 16 August 1981.

⁹⁴ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 4 August 1975.

announcement that the first national agricultural open air museum in South Africa was to be established just outside Pretoria in December 1976.⁹⁵ The minister's announcement was met with great disappointment in the Breede River Valley.⁹⁶ The national museum also contacted potential donors for funding in the Breed River Valley-area. Naudé's reaction to the announcement and possible loss of potential donors prompted the Worcester Museum to place an article in the *Worcester Standard* and *Die Burger* newspapers, send information to the *Landbouradio* (radio geared at people with agricultural interests) and the ministers Koornhof and Schoeman to notify them of the project at Worcester Museum.⁹⁷ Worcester Museum's plans of becoming the first open air agricultural museum had to be slightly adjusted. Due to this announcement the curator Heloïse Naudé foresaw certain possible difficulties that the museum could encounter with raising funds, and accordingly requested the reconsideration of a name change. She argued that apart from the cooperative wine cellars, little financial support was received from the towns in the Breë River Valley. She also argued that the name '*Boland-Landboumuseum*' [Boland Agricultural Museum] would have a bigger impact and would attract more interest. After a thorough discussion the proposed name was accepted by the Board in 1976.⁹⁸ In 1981 it was decided to change the name to the '*Opelug Plaasmuseum*' [Open Air Farm Museum] instead of *Boland Landboumuseum* [Boland Farm Museum] to minimise confusion.⁹⁹

If one however studies photographs and documentary evidence dating from 1982 to 1986, the name Boland Farm Museum was used at the entrance to the museum and on official correspondence. This was however not the end to this saga. Seven years later the argument concerning the name change surfaced again under the newly appointed director Gerrit Swanepoel.¹⁰⁰ At a meeting held on 29 August 1988, it was requested that final proposals for an official name be tabled at the next meeting. The proposal on the table was '*Kleinplasië Lewende Opelug Museum*', [Kleinplasië Living Open Air Museum]. None of the members present at the Board meeting were certain of the official name. The director was thus tasked to investigate the matter by consulting previous minutes of board meetings and

⁹⁵ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 6 December 1976.

⁹⁶ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 25 January 1977.

⁹⁷ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees' Worcester Museum, 6 December 1976.

⁹⁸ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 6 December 1976.

⁹⁹ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 2 February 1981.

¹⁰⁰ During the Swanepoel-era the title of the head of museum changed from curator to director of the museum.

provide clarity on why the museum was also referred to as; *'Boland Opelug-Museum'* [Boland Open Air Museum], *'Boland Landbou Museum'* [Boland Agricultural Museum], and *'Plaasmuseum or Kleinplasië'* [Farm Museum or Kleinplasië].

In the Minutes of the Board of Trustees of 20 March 1989, Swanepoel attempted to explain why the confusion existed. In his detailed discussion, he came to the following conclusion: that the name Boland referred to the boundaries that are derived from the name limiting the museum to a set area or region. It also caused confusion and took away the opportunity for other farming communities to get involved with the living open air museum. The name 'Farm Museum', he argued, also did not fit the site at the time. He argued that the site falsely created the impression that the site depicted a typical historical farmyard in the Breë River Valley. Swanepoel was furthermore of the opinion that the replica structures are merely examples of early eighteenth and nineteenth century industrial structures that would not all be on a traditional farm at the same time. He used the different kinds of mills as an example. He stated that the museum site was not a farm museum, but rather a living museum. As an interim arrangement the Board decided, on the basis that no decision could be reached on the naming of the site, to postpone the matter until a new extension was completed, but in the meanwhile the name *'Kleinplasië Lewende Opelugmuseum'* [Kleinplasië Living Open Air Museum] would be used because the Board felt that it captured all the scientific and technical elements in the name.¹⁰¹

The whole debate is significant because of the different ways that Naudé and Swanepoel saw the museum. Naudé, relying heavily on the expertise of Gabriël Fagan, attempted to reconstruct a representation of the Breede River valley, while Swanepoel, with the advantage of being surrounded by a pool of training professionals, opted for what he maintained was a more 'historically correct' representation. In his approach, and influenced by his experts, he thus opted to go the route of the living open air museum rather than what he considered a mis-representation of a farm museum.

¹⁰¹ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 20 March 1989.

The workers

From the inception phase in the processes of preparing the site, labourers who were racially classified as 'coloured' worked under the supervision of the architect to prepare the site for the establishment of the agricultural museum.



Figure 6. Gwen Fagan and Naudé overseeing farmer workers preparing the grounds and garden for the museum.¹⁰² Source: Worcester Museum

Documentary evidence shows farmers of the surrounding areas were requested, as part of their supposed civic duties and responsibilities towards the preservation of heritage and culture, to make their labourers available.¹⁰³ On one such occasion, Mr du Toit, a local farmer owner of the district, undertook to organize farmers to make available teams of their 'volk' [labourers] to assist with work on the embankment around the museum.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Worcester Museum, Photo Album, 1974 – 1981, From 1978 onwards Gwen Fagan took responsibility for the preparations of the gardens at Kleinplasia. She ably assisted by labourers from the surrounding farms.

¹⁰³ H Naudé, Speech at Regional Meeting of SA Museums Association, Paarl: 14 and 15 August 1980, Gwen and Gawie Fagan made extensive use of coloured labourers. Gwen was ably assisted by one farmer and twenty of his 'volk' (workers/labourers), because reason being that the Department (government) only made provision for one white foreman and four 'tuinvolk', (garden folk/labourers, workers). The district was divided into wards and during the year, every second Tuesday a farmer plus twenty of his 'volk' (workers) would assist Gwen with her work.

¹⁰⁴ Minutes of the Agricultural Museum Committee, Worcester Museum, 6 May 1978.

The names of the big contractors who tendered for the jobs are named, and the contributions of individual farmers are recognized in documentary evidence, but the labourers however remain nameless and faceless. One starts to wonder whether their contributions were seen as unworthy the museum's management. One can merely speculate about the contribution of the permanent *tuinjong* [labourer], Louis Williams,¹⁰⁵ who was appointed on the 30 December 1976 at Kleinplasië.¹⁰⁶ Williams was the only government appointee responsible for preparation, maintenance of the existing land and rendering assistance with the establishment of the gardens. Under the heading 'Personnel' in the Minutes of the Board of Trustees, a clear distinction is made. There was a category for museum workers (largely classified as white) and for labourers (who were largely classified as coloured). This prejudiced mind set was also evident in the former curator, Heloise Naudé's, speech at 15th anniversary of the museum¹⁰⁷ where she referred to the 'coloured' staff as farm workers despite the fact that the majority of these staff members were permanently employed in terms of the government's Personal Appointment System (PAS). The PAS made provision for job titles, like tradesmen aid, groundsman, general assistant, etc. This to a great extent reinforced and reflected the hierarchy and racial order in the workforce of the museum.

Another source that displays the power relationship of the workforce is the museum's photo albums. As one starts to analyse the photo albums that served as a record and visual source of the museum's development, the captions on most of the photographs also reflect and depict the racial distinction and hierarchies of the time.

¹⁰⁵ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 7 February 1977.

¹⁰⁶ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 28 March 1977, a member of Board of Trustees and later chairperson, Mr. P.A. Venter questioned the rationale behind the Municipalities decision pay a starting wages of R 16, 56 for labourers. He saw as totally unrealistic as benchmark for paying a Coloured person at the time. Out of documentary evidence it is clear that segregation between white and non- white staff existed and formed part of the daily operation ethos.

¹⁰⁷ *Korrels en Kaf*, Worcester Museum in-house publication, March 1996.



Figure 7. The caption to the photography clearly states the perceived hierarchies that existed at Kleinplasië. Also notices the different in dresses/costumes.¹⁰⁸Source: Worcester Museum

Demonstrators, museum staff and volunteers are addressed as *meneer* [sir] and elderly white persons in respectful forms such as *Ta* [Aunt], *Oom*, [Uncle], while Coloured workers often remained nameless. In some cases first names or nicknames were used. It brings to mind Leslie Witz's argument¹⁰⁹ around the process of defining a South Africa nation along common origins in the 1950s. Although Naudé attempted to deny the discourses around the

¹⁰⁸ Worcester Museum, Photo Album, 1982 -1986

¹⁰⁹ L. Witz, 'A Nineteenth Century Mail Coach, a Fifteenth Century Sailing Ship and a Bus Crash: Re-Thinking Collection and Display in Transport Museums,' *South African Historical Journal*, 63: 3, (2012), 435.

construction of race,¹¹⁰ I will argue that their attitudes and modus operandi were 'saturated with racial connotations.'¹¹¹

Demonstrators

During the inception phase of the museum, public and education programmes included agricultural-based/themed productions: harvesting time, baking and slaughtering, harvest festivals, wheat threshing. These programmes were performed and demonstrated by volunteers and retired farmers who appeared to be racially classified as 'white'.¹¹² Farmers and corporate wine cellars continued to supply raw materials for the demonstrations and activities. At a later stage this relationship came under pressure due to the management style and ideological approach of the successor to Mrs Naudé, Mr Gerrit Swanepoel. Financial constraints also contributed to the decision to make use of workers racially classified as coloured as demonstrators.

It was only in the time of Gerrit Swanepoel (1987-1994) that people of colour like Gerrit Julies were appointed as demonstrators and not just as labourers or assistants at the tobacco shed.¹¹³ They would become an integral part of visitor's experiences to the museum site. Minutes of the Board of Trustee Meeting of 24 October 1989, the Chairperson, Mrs de Kock,¹¹⁴ reported that she had received complaints from the *Vakkundiges* (Scientist) who did not see the necessity of attending staff meetings with the rest of the staff. In his response Swanepoel argued the personnel should be seen in its

¹¹⁰ Form the first two Harvest festivals Naudé made attempt to involve the Coloured members from the community What was also very interesting is the fact that no exceptions or exclusion were made with regards to entrance fees for both white and non-white visitors to the museum. Both groups were charged 10 cents for admission during the inception phase, charity groups and pensioners entered free of charge. 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 2 February 1981. In letter dealing titled 'Classification of Museums', 3 September 1985, to the Director of the Department of Nature Conservation, under which province-aided museum were funded, Naudé also that museum had few Coloured 'friends of the museum' that attended functions and annual general meeting.

¹¹¹ L. Witz, 'A Nineteenth Century Mail Coach', 435.

¹¹² 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, May 1981, it was minuted that Mr. du Toit from the farm *Dasboschrivier* would demonstrate the distilling of *Witblits* (*raw spirit, home-made traditional brandy, moonshine, white smoke, white lightning*). In a Museum Friend of the Museum Newsletter, 6 August, 1981, gives an indication of sites popularity. A call is made for members of the public to assist with guide activities, due to an increase in the numbers of visitors and sizes of the groups. The Museum promised to provide training, through an orientation presentation, using slide to bring potential guides up to date with museum's history, the exhibitions and demonstrations.

¹¹³ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees Minutes', Worcester Museum February 1988.

¹¹⁴ Mrs. de Kock, wife of farmer, was only the secondly that was appointed to the Agricultural Museum Committee form where sy worked her on the museum's Board of Trustees.

totality and that general personnel/staff meetings are platforms where items are discussed and applicable to all staff. With this response it appears that Swanepoel regarded all employees as staff of one institution and not as separate. This was different to the former curator's approach where in minutes of Board Trustees Meetings and Annual Reports, a clear separation existed.

The success story of the museum

From its opening, Kleinplasia Open Air Museum appeared to be a success story, as evidenced in documents and visitor statistics. It seems like the addition of the agricultural museum brought an immediate increase in visitor numbers. The official museum statistics indicate 19 315 visitors in the 1979/1980 financial year. The number rose to 27 128 for the 1980/1981 financial years. A decade later, Kleinplasia Open Air Museum was firmly established as the major tourist attraction in Breede River Valley, attracting 100 000 visitors in the 1990/1991 financial year.¹¹⁵

This becomes more apparent when an expansion was envisaged. In a motivational letter addressed to the Town Clerk of Worcester Municipality, dated 9 April 1984, additional land, the *Ou Spoorwegrangeerwerf* [Old Railway shunting yard], was requested for museum expansion. It also provides an indication of the success of the agricultural museum: 'The farm museum has become too small to accommodate the huge number of visitors, it would be a shame if provision was not made for possible expansion in the future.' The official visitor statistics for 1 April 1983 to 31 March 1984 at the three museums were 50, 666, of which 34, 257 visited at the Farm Museum. For March only (1984), the Farm Museum was visited by 4, 414 visitors.¹¹⁶ These totals and the position of the museum as a leader in the tourism sector served as sufficient motivation for Gerrit Swanepoel's expansion plan of creating a Victorian village in the form of a theme park bordering the 'historic farmyard'. But these numbers could not be sustained. A significant change in visitor numbers from the 1991/1992 to the 1994/1995 financial year is evident. Over a period of five years, the

¹¹⁵ This analysis of visitor number is drawn from the Worcester Museum Annual Reports from 1976 through to the 1996 financial years. A financial year for province-aided museum would have been from 1 April to 31 March of each year. The numbers are of course debatable; irrespective of this a clear increase is still visible. One also need to note that the numbers are a combination of the both the three sites, Hugo Naudé Arts museum, Beck House, Stoffberg House, (all sites in town and Kleinplasia). At least 90% of the visitors came to visit Kleinplasia.

¹¹⁶ Letter to Worcester Municipality, Town Clerk, Worcester Museum, 9 April 1984.

visitors dropped from 90, 375 to 64 747 visitors. The drop in numbers and increasing expenditure almost certainly led to Swanepoel's perceived failure as a director. He resigned in 1995.

Praise for the museum also came through official government channels. In a speech at the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Worcester Museum on the 22 July 1988, the then Minister for Culture, Mr Kobus Meiring, praised Worcester Museum for the pioneering work they conducted in the museums sector with the establishment of the living museum (Kleinplasia). The museum was seen as a pioneer in the depiction of the '*lewende kultuur*' [living culture] of a community. He claimed that Kleinplasia, in its representation of the early white pioneer farmers, used both tangible and intangible heritage in their collections and exhibition. The tangible was reflected by the buildings, utensils and equipment associated with farming activities and intangible takes the form of the demonstrations that relayed the story to visitors based on oral traditions and oral history recordings. He argued that Kleinplasia had broken away from traditional museum practices in order to include the spiritual assets of the cultural heritage.¹¹⁷ This cultural history created at Kleinplasia, included expressions of ways of living transmitted from generation to generation and included knowledge, skills, customs, practices, objects and tangible representations of values and beliefs.

Conclusion

The museum, a reconstructed site, emerged as a cultural space where objects, artefacts and material culture was displayed, demonstrated, and preserved as a cultural history of Afrikaners as 'pioneers'. Although most of the artifacts, utensils, structures and buildings are replicas and reconstructions, Fagan, in his efforts, constructed an image of the pioneer farmers and provided it with cultural forms, identity and material culture, based on the myth of the innovative pioneer overcoming hardship and adversity. Fagan created an 'imaginary past', a space where memory was triggered through visual representation in the form of demonstrations, physical structures, replicas, salvage architecture, and artefacts

¹¹⁷ K. Meiring, Minister for Culture, Speech delivered at the AGM of the Friends of the Museum, Kleinplasia Museum, Worcester on 22 July 1988.

CHAPTER 3: *Kleinplasië Open Air Museum: an analysis of the mode of representation*

Introduction

Kleinplasië, as a museum site, was (and indeed still today is) divided into two exhibition spaces that employ two very different exhibition techniques. The first space, with demonstration of early pioneer home industries set in a constructed farmyard, places objects and demonstrations of activities in a 'historically correct' context. Each activity or demonstration is connected to a specific replica or reconstruction of a structure or building. The activities range from rolling and drying of tobacco to roasting coffee beans, making soap, baking bread, roosterkoek and milk tart, and to forging iron. The second space is an exhibition hall, which was completed in 1988 with the idea of providing a 'historically correct'¹ version of the development of agriculture in the region. It consists of what Michael Baxandall calls a "traditional exhibition" or "display of objects for examination"² where the objects are presented 'in vitrines on stands, or on walls and are accompanied by labels, leaflets, or a catalogue.'³

In this chapter I question the ways in which meanings are created and communicated through the displays of artefacts. How does an exhibition speak of people and their understanding of world? How do cultural objects, artefacts, structures and buildings become devices through which identity and cultural history are constructed? In order to answer these questions, it is crucial to look at the processes through which exhibitions are produced.

For the purpose of this study I will attempt to view the museum as a critical visitor might have done.⁴ I am also currently an employee of the Department of Cultural Affairs and

¹ 'Historically correct' was a term employed by museum professionals that referred to the period the museum claimed to reflect and depict.

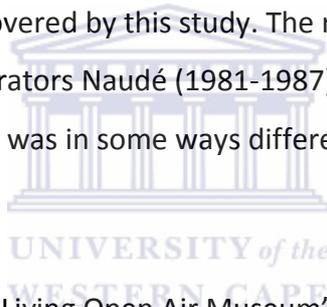
² M. Baxandall, 'Exhibiting Intention: Some Precondition of Visual Display of Culturally Purposeful Objects', In I. Karp and S.D. Levine, *Exhibiting Cultures, the Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, (Washington, D.C, Smithsonian Institution, 1991), 33.

³ M. Baxandall, 'Exhibiting Intention:' 33.

⁴ M. Lindauer, 'The Critical Museum Visitor', in Janet Martine (ed), *New Museum Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), (204), Margaret Lindauer adds a third category visitor, the critical museum visitor which according to her, 'studies how the visual, written, and spatial features of an exhibition collection

Sport, where I have been for seventeen years, and a former employee of Worcester Museum for two and a half years. As a declared provincial museum, Worcester Museum falls within the ambit of the Western Cape Museum Service, a sub-directorate of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport that delivers professional services and provides financial support to this institution.

My visit to Kleinplasia Open Air Museum, was in 1992 as a student at University of Stellenbosch as mentioned in chapter one. I formed part of a group of students of the Department of *Afrikaanse Kultuurgeskiedenis*, a discipline linked to history and the cultural practices and philosophies of the white Afrikaner. A visit to Kleinplasia, one of the flagships of the Department of Nature and Conservation, under which the museum services resided at the time, was deemed as must in order to orientate students to the discipline and the Afrikaner identity. In my analysis, I will focus on my first impressions of the museum, which falls within in the period covered by this study. The reader is also reminded that under the management of the curators Naudé (1981-1987) and Swanepoel (1987 -1995), the Kleinplasia Open Air Museum was in some ways different to how it is today.



With my visit in 1992, Kleinplasia Living Open Air Museum's location, 2km outside the town centre of Worcester neighbouring a site traditionally associated with the Agricultural Society's Annual Show, was the first indicator of uneasiness with this site. One started wondering about the location, a site with seemingly no historical significance, removed from the centre of town and nestled between the industrial area and the African township, Zwelethemba. More questions arose. What is role or purpose of the man-made soil embankment on the left along the Robertson Road as you enter the gates of the Worcester Agricultural Show grounds? What was its intended purpose? Was something being hidden? Is this part of going back in time, and of having a 'real, authentic' experience of the Cape way of life? I wondered about the modern architecture and building in the context of the

implicate on ideal visitors. He or she also looks at what the object and display represents. They critically, 'explore what is unspoken or kept of display. And she or he asks, who as the most to gain or the most to lose from having this information, collection, or interpretation public presented', 204.

'Historically correct' refers to a common term used by the professionals at Kleinplasia Open Air Museum. The term also referred to the approach whereby all activities, demonstrations, structures and utensils should relate to the eighteenth century life style of the cape pioneer farmer the museum attempted to depict.

site and the surrounding buildings. It did not contribute to the atmosphere or ambiance and the museum's quest to create an 'authentic, historically correct' setting of a *kleinplasje*, "a small farm" that I was expecting. What inspired Gabriel "Gawie" Fagan when he designed this building? What was the idea behind it? Was it that the architecture should not distract the visitor from the intended experience? Why the seemingly dead, unattractive, green empty shell, with white walls and corrugated iron roof? As I later found out, and as detailed in Chapter two, the architect Gawie Fagan, envisaged that the modern buildings be separated from the old, authentic, 'historically correct' farmyard.

As one entered the premises, there was an open lawn on the left and a restaurant offering what it said was 'traditional cuisine' on the right. Down the middle was a paved pathway leading to the entrance where the name of the museum was announced in heritage-green letters on sliding doors. The reception area was divided into a number of functional sections: a reception area with a wooden counter where entrance fees were collected; to the left, a museum shop where museum and tourist-related items and souvenirs were sold to enhance or complete the visiting experience (I recall that products manufactured or produced on the historical farmyard used to be sold here). A further section housed an introductory exhibition where the historical development of the earliest farms in the Boland is presented through maps and drawings to provide a historical context to the rest of the museum's content. The last section was a lecture room that could seat 60 visitors where a slide and film shows⁵ were presented to provide visitors, and especially learners, with a background to the history of the various old farm activities. It was decided to name the lecture room after Dr. Douglas Hey, former Director of Nature Conservation of the Cape Province, in recognition of his contribution to conservation in the Cape Province. '*Bewonder and Bewaar*', ['Admire and Conserve'] was the message that the educational services of museum conveyed to the youth and wider public.⁶

After purchasing a ticket and obtaining a visitor's information brochure containing a plan of the site, the visitor had two options: watching the slide show that was intended to orientate the visitor and provide 'sufficient' background, context and understanding to what is about to come, or to proceed directly to the farmyard where there were live demonstrations, set

⁵ This was one of the initiatives introduced by Naudé after her overseas visit to open air museums.

⁶ Minutes of Board of Trustees, Worcester Museum, 1 October 1979.

in a 'historically correct' background/setting. As part of the visitor service experience, a museum official was appointed to guide and explain the predetermined route visitors should follow in order get a 'real, historically correct experience'. This notion was further entrenched by a Gawie Fagan-designed scale model positioned at the entrance to the outdoor space. The 'historical farmyard' consisted of over 21 structures marking the predetermined visitor points, of which nine are historical replica buildings acquired through 'salvage architecture' from farms in the region. The 'historical farmyard' has a 'kapstyl' house, lime kiln, Khoekhoe huts, tobacco-shed, soap kitchen, dairy room, horse-mill, Farm-dwelling, watermill, wine-cellar and witblits stills, bamboo kraal, Labourers Cottage couch house, smithy or forge, dipping-pen, period gardens, duck pond, farm funeral sites, lye pots, bucket-pump, Shepherd's hut , etc.⁷ Entrance to the farmyard was provided through a set of glass-panel double doors. From here the visitor followed a predetermined circular route, supposedly guiding the visitor through a chronology of early forms of folk architecture and the early Cape pioneers farmers' material culture in the form of utensils, tools, trades, home industries and an attempted reconstruction of the living environment of early farm life in the Breede River Valley.



⁷ See *Boer Maak n Plan*, Worcester Museum, in-house publication, 1986), and the museum brochure that provides a short description of each of the buildings and by who it was funded or sponsored.

Kleinplasia Living Open Air Museum
WORCESTER

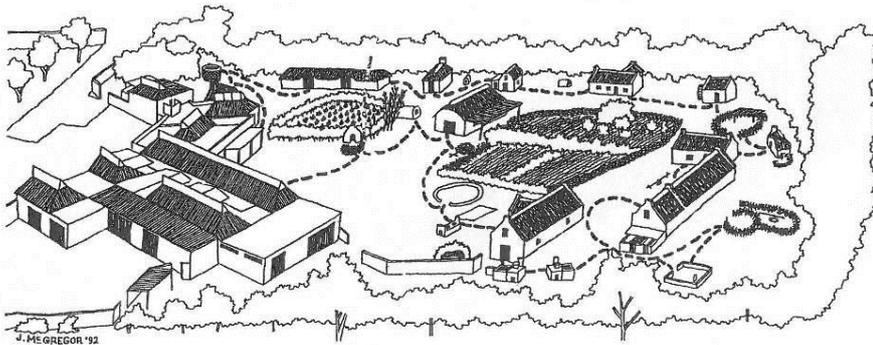


Figure 8. John McGregor's 1992 version of a route map of the site that visitors supposed to have followed.
Source: Worcester Museum

With my first visit in 1992 it was evident that a tension existed between the chronology and the placement of the structure and buildings. The structures seemed to be sequenced in an arbitrary manner with no logic or reference to chronology. The sequence did not make any sense to the claims of the museum of exhibiting the 'way of life of the Cape pioneer farmers' in linear chronology. It also suggested different voices in the establishment of this successful tourist attraction.⁸ It was only after the studying and extensive reading of my archive which includes the minutes of the Agricultural Museum Committee and the Board of Trustees of Worcester Museum, that I became aware of the respective contributions and influences of the former curators Heloise Naudé (1973 till 1987) and Gerrit Swanepoel (1987 till 1994). In terms of reading the site I will discuss the site during the eras of aforementioned curators. It covers the period 1980 up until 1994.

Naudé and Fagan had a clear idea of how they envisioned the site. In a newspaper article⁹ Naudé, then still the curator of the Afrikaner Museum which had been renamed the

⁸ Between the 1991/1992 and 1992/1993 financial years Worcester Museum, received between 86 379 – 90 375 visitors, of which the bulk visited the open air museum.

⁹ Ons verteenwoordiger, 'Landbou kry Museum', *Die Burger*, Vrydag, 10 October 1974-1978.

Worcester Museum in 1969, saw the Boland [region] as ‘the cradle of the Afrikaner’s agricultural heritage’.¹⁰ In this article she also alludes to the fact that no captions would be used to explain or provide information on the artefacts or buildings at Kleinplasië. Also, visitors to the museum would follow a precise, predetermined route and the buildings would be an accurate reconstruction of some of the farm buildings that still existed in the Breë River Valley. During the Naudé-era, that extended from the planning phase, through the opening phase and up until 1987, the core of the museum as it is known today was established. Naudé, along with architect Fagan, established the predetermined, circular route for visitors to the site.

As one entered the farmyard space, a quince hedge was planted straight ahead which Fagan suggested was to create atmosphere. This hedge formed a boundary for the mini- tobacco-land. The first visitor-point on the left was the Kapstyl House, a reconstruction of a temporary dwelling with a cooking shelter used by early Cape trek farmers. As one progressed, one encountered a lime kiln, dated 1850, used for burning of limestone which was applied to walls as whitewash to protect the clay bricks of more permanent dwellings and applied to the exterior of buildings in a traditional farmstead at that time. At this early stage of the visit, the seeming tension between attempting to provide a linear chronology of the pioneer way of life or history and the issues around space and placement is already evident. I found the jump from the temporary dwelling, the Kapstyl House, to a structure associated with the protection of more permanent structures in a later century, the lime kiln, very disturbing. To make matters of logic and chronologically even worse, the next visiting point in the sequence is two reconstructed replica seventeenth century Khoekhoe huts, complete with sleeping holes and replicas of objects, hidden behind two trees on top of the man-made embankment. From the Khoekhoe huts onwards, the structures and buildings relate to specific activities and traditional home industries, interpreted by demonstrators, who mainly appear to be racially classified as ‘white’, in traditional period costume.

At the different sites the following demonstrations took place; at the , Tobacco Shed, a period-correct structure, dated 1900, was located in Piketberg-district in the Western Cape, dismantled, transported and rebuilt on new foundation at the museum. Here one the

¹⁰ Ons verteenwoordiger, ‘Landbou kry Museum’, *Die Burger*, Vrydag, 10 October 1974-1978.

drying, rolling of tobacco and the visitors got the opportunity to snuff grinded tobacco. At the Soap Kitchen making of candles, burning and grinding of coffee beans, cooking of soap with animal fat and lye bush took place. Unique feature of the next visiting room that captured my attention was the well-constructed and rare peach-pit floor. The Diary Room formed the central visiting point with the presentation of education during Dairy-month, when the separating of milk, making butter and cottage cheese was demonstrated. At the neatly white lime-washed *Boerewoning*, [farmer's dwelling], a replica of an early farm residence at the coast, the structure built of limestone and the roof constructed of aloë flower stems.¹¹ Baking bread in outside oven, vetkoek, rooster, milk tart, smearing of floors with cow dung, and a herb garden could also be viewed.

At the rest of the structure rest of the 'farmyard' you experienced the Watermill (Grinding of wheat into flour), Boundary walls and Kraals, this where milking of cows took place during special seasonal days. At the scantily furnished Labourers Cottage the demonstrator presented the stuffing of pillows with dried *sewejartjies* [everlasting]flowers, baking of griddle cake and 'vetkoek' [damper], while the Smithy, a hot, smoked-filled area gave a performance of forging of iron. Here onwards visiting points included the Coach-house, Harness room, Stable, tanning Vat, the Wine Cellar & Witblits Stills, where the fermentation of fruit/pulp for the distillation of witblits (a traditional brandy) took place. The circular route tour concluded with visits to the Lye Pots & Raisin Court (where raisin and 'moskonfyt', [grape-syrup] making), Threshing Floors, for the winnowing of wheat, Whipstick Oven for making of swipes and ended with the Shepherd's Hut.

The Kleinplasië Open Air information brochure informed visitors that "the way of life of the early Cape pioneer farmers is depicted at the Open Air Museum. Various buildings and structures pertaining to early agriculture industries were erected. Home industries and farming activities are practised in and around the different buildings." Each structure, the museum claimed, was correctly furnished according to the time period and its associated function. The museum claimed that every building was rebuilt or reconstructed using the same building materials and building methods as the original. In and around these replica

¹¹ 'Annual Report 1 April 1981 – 31 April 1982', Worcester Museum.

structures, traditional home industries are demonstrated and interpreted by costume-wearing staff members.¹²

A visit by Naudé to agricultural museums in North America had a significant influence on the way the farmyard was depicted. Her report provides a comprehensive overview of her observations, which she appeared to have incorporated into the day-to-day running of the planned museum.¹³ She explained and reiterated that, for demonstration purposes, only replicas or special utensils were to be used at all times. No modern vehicles, water irrigation systems, tractors, spades or other implements were seen on site. She observed that all the old kinds of spades, picks, etc. be replicated for daily use. Interpreters and demonstrators also wore period costumes and the willing to one was served as requirement for appointment. She also reported that all the museums she visited presented an orientation film or slide show of high technical quality, some of which were produced by professionals. The 'old' or 'historical section' of the museum was seldom used for other purposes. Special fundraising activities that did not fit in with the old fashioned or period presentation were done elsewhere or at another museum site¹⁴ Most of these recommendations were incorporated into the settings and processes of Kleinplasië and continued up until the end of her term of office.

During the period of Swanepoel's appointment, a supposedly new shift in attitude and the design of Kleinplasië occurred. Fagan's original architectural plans were slightly altered to accommodate structures like the Khoekhoe huts, a labourer's cottage and shearing pens. With the addition of the Khoekhoe huts and labourer's cottage, Swanepoel claimed to be giving recognition to the role of "Coloureds in the development of agriculture".¹⁵ In his new approach, Swanepoel suggested a movement away from the 'farmyard-idea' to a more inclusive representation that argued for a more 'correct version' of history.

During the first three phases of Swanepoel's Five Year Plan, a Labourer's dwelling, the Khoekhoen huts and the exhibition hall were completed by 1988. At a meeting on 29

¹² in the museum attempts to be 'historically correct' features such clothing, building materials for structures and the different demonstration, draw on the writings of Dr J. P. van der Merwe's *Die Trekboer in die Geskiedenis van die Kaapkolonie (1657 – 1842)*, (Kaapstad: Nasionale Pers, 1938).

¹³ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 14 November 1983.

¹⁴ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees' Worcester Museum, 14 November 1983.

¹⁵ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 29 August 1988.

August 1988, it was also reported that the plans for the 1930 labourer's cottage – as part of the 'historical farmyard' - was approved and that a suitable labourer's cottage was identified in the *Koue Bokkeveld* in the Ceres District. The labourer's cottage would be dismantled and transported to the agricultural museum. The idea was to have it ready for the open day on the 10 December 1988.¹⁶ Fagan's original plans only made provision for structures and artefacts that were linked to white pioneer farmers.¹⁷

Buildings

By employing artifactual evidence in the form of built structures and utensils, a particular version of history and the material culture of the Cape pioneer farmers were presented at Kleinplasië. I will argue that these structures and building¹⁸ should be considered in the broader cultural landscape and the cultural context in which it was constructed. 'Folk architecture' is supposed to reflect the traditions, culture and values of a people and often reflects the identity of a particular region. Their design, conceptualization and construction are the result of social and cultural factors and takes place in specific cultural and socio-economic conditions. It also serves as a tangible record, material evidence which enables one to construct or deconstruct an understanding of the culture allied or associated with it. It also serves as a representation, a symbol of the attitude of a particular period and the material culture of a people.¹⁹ Kleinplasië therefore created a world, rather than merely reflected particular period in history as claimed by Fagan.

As progressed through the predetermined circular route of the reconstructed 'historical farmyard', the architecture, its design, the setting atmosphere and the experience of the activities and demonstrations, one was supposed to become a participative viewer within

¹⁶ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 29 August 1988.

¹⁷ These structures that focused on the early pioneer way of life of the white farmer were; tobacco-shed, soap kitchen, horse-mill, farm-dwelling, watermill, wine-cellar, couch house, smithy or forge and kapstylhouse.

¹⁸ See, C. Well, (ed.), *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, 1, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press), 5, where argues that these structures and building are regarded as sources of information, service as surviving historical records and markers of material culture. Also see, R. W. Brunskill, *Illustrated handbook of vernacular architecture* (third revised edition), (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 18, how different disciplines as come to as inscribe their theories, thinking, methods on vernacular architecture. They also came to realized that that vernacular as source of information is suitable for intensive study.

¹⁹ See Amos Rapoport, *House Form and Culture*, (Foundations of Cultural Geography Series), (New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1969) and Franco Frescura, A glossary of Southern African architectural terms, (Port Elizabeth, The Archetype Press, 1987).

the space. Both Casey and Stanley²⁰ argue that nothing is innocent about these types of representations. The 'historical farmyard'-unit was supposed to reflect the pioneer way of life and activities (home-industries) over time. It provided a reconstructed 'authentic' space for the object and material culture, where the objects are placed in relation to their 'functional context'. Through a particular design, a way of seeing and experiencing, the way of life of the early nineteenth century farmers was re-created. Within the authoritative space of the museum, these collections, including structures, building and objects, combined with performed demonstration and exhibition, according to Nick Stanley, the use of 'authentic reproductions', supported by exhibitionary strategies and techniques of design by the aesthetic, "serves as reminders that triggers",²¹ collective cultural memory. Certain aspects representing Cape pioneer culture were presented through sensorial means. Kleinplasië utilised this standard approach employed by other open air museum whereby buildings or structures representing the agricultural heritage of the region were replicated or 'salvaged', and reconstructed on site with no historical link to the physical presentation (building, structure, etc.). Through the intervention of professionals and the museumization of buildings, structures and objects, new meaning and histories were created in a space of collective memory on a site of no previous historical significance. The buildings, structure and utensils were seemingly exhibited as tangible manifestations, bearers, carriers, markers of history and representations of a particular period/culture. It appears that Fagan attempted to create a spatial hierarchy and cultural authority through the positioning of objects and buildings and in so doing, attempted to construct and re-create a chronology of the development of white pioneer social history. To enhance simulation, an embankment was constructed to create an isolated space to bear the atmosphere and setting of a typical small farm of the Breede River Valley.

²⁰ Architects designs, Stanley argues that 'none of the features is accidental or haphazard' – parks are forms of a 'visual and cultural panopticon', 179 also see V. Casey, 'Staging Meaning; Performance in the Modern Museum', 82.

²¹ Nick Stanley, *'Being Ourselves for You: the global display of cultures'*, (London: Middlesex University Press, 1988), N. Stanley, 'Being Ourselves for You', 84.

Role demonstrators



Figure 9. Kitty Claassens making candles.²²

Source: Worcester Museum

Casey describes live performances and, in the case of Kleinplasië – demonstrations - as a “provocative form of communication” conveying particular message.²³ Casey continues, “[T]hrough the collective behaviour of its visitor, the early museums established an experiential rhetoric of national identity.”²⁴ Ivan Karp posits that in the case of ‘living museums’, a “living person is both an interpreter and part of the exhibition”.²⁵ At Kleinplasië the demonstrators in costume “occupy the ‘authentic’ setting that forms part of the visitor’s experience. By employing this strategy, the museum makes a claim of authenticity and ‘historical correctness’. “[T]he purpose of a costumed, living interpreter-performer is the same – to guide and stimulate the audience to experience a world they know only through the faculty of the imagination.”²⁶ The live demonstrations become a singular representation or view of a group in its cultural form. In the construction of a group

²² Worcester Museum, Photo Album, 1982 -1984.

²³ V. Casey, ‘Staging Meaning; Performance in the Modern Museum’, 85.

²⁴ V. Casey, ‘Staging Meaning; Performance in the Modern Museum’, 85.

²⁵ I. Karp, ‘Festivals’, In *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Displays*, edited by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1991), 280 -281.

²⁶ I. Karp, ‘Festivals and the Creation of Public Culture: Whose Voice(s)?’ in *Museums and Communities*, Ivan Karp, Christine Kraemer, and Stephen Levine (Eds.). Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press. pp.:76-104. 1992.

cultural identity, professionals often draw on appropriate or specifically preconceived stereotypes and images that supposedly serve as a 'true' representation of the group. In drawing comparisons between different models Stanley argues that "memory becomes history and the cultural enactment becomes a dominant historic trope."²⁷



Figure 10. Alwyn Naudé, a volunteer conducting a demonstration for then Mr, Viljoen, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees 1983.²⁸

Source: Worcester Museum

During the early development phase of Kleinplasië, the museum employed knowledgeable volunteers and retired whites as demonstrators. The Worcester Museum Annual Report for 1 April 1980 – 31 April 1981 provide us an idea on how dependant the museum was on these volunteers during the inception phase of the museum. It also appears that the volunteers could have exerted a huge influence on the site in terms of how they perceived their role as interpreters and to what extent they employed their knowledge. On the day of the opening of the museum, no less than seven names of farmers and farmer's wives from the area and other districts in the area were recruited to handle the demonstration and the

²⁷ N. Stanley, *Being Ourselves for you*, 176.

²⁸ Worcester Museum, Photo Album, 1974 -1981

interpretation of different domestic trades.²⁹ These volunteers occupied spaces and position was seen as experts in their respective trade. In their performances they brought their own interpretations and new meanings, identity, not just to their trade or demonstrations, but to the museum's narrative. C van Wyk from Vermaaklikheid, outside Riversdale, was responsible for the construction of 'Kapstyl' house, claiming to use the methods and skills transmitted to him by his father. In another case, with the building of the Shepherd's hut a "Bushman" shepherd knowledge was drawn to finish the structure and the cooking screen made with lye-bush.³⁰

Exhibition Hall

As part of the different modes of representation employed by Kleinplasia was an exhibition hall that was completed in 1988.³¹ Access to the Exhibition Hall was gained through two doors on the right, after proceeding past reception at the museum entrance.

The Exhibition Hall followed the route of object-based museology and the established method used by museums, to 'teach by showing'.³² Its narrative focuses on the development of agriculture and pioneer traditions in the south-western Cape. The visual and textual presence of exhibits conforms to a documentary form of history. Swanepoel was permitted to influence the content and to make changes to Fagan's original brief. The exhibitions were only completed in 1988, after he came to the museum, and long after the rest of the site was completed in 1981.

The entrance of the Exhibition Hall, panels on the left included a timeline that gave an historical overview of the role of Jan van Riebeeck in establishing agriculture at the Cape in 1652. The panel facing the entrance had a black and white illustration depicting a scene

²⁹ 'Annual Report 1 April 1980 – 31 March 1981', Worcester Museum, Opening demonstrations included; distilling of witblits (Z. Conradie from Prince Alfred Hamlet, Ceres), making raisins (Hennie du Plessis), beating the grain from rye on the threshing floor, wheat being trampled on the threshing floor, threshing of wheat, (Alwyn Naudé), shoeing of horses (Geoff Dyer), cooking soap (Mrs. Meiring and Viljoen), – Benna Burger teaching one of the museum servants to roast coffee in the farm house, etc. Farmers and volunteers from towns such as Riviersonderend, Swellendam, Piquetberg, Montagu, Prince Alfred Hamlet, Rawsonville, etc. would offer time to volunteer at the museum.

³⁰ 'Annual Report 1 April 1982 – 31 March 1981', Worcester Museum.

³¹ This section of the museum was not as popular as the reconstructed 'historical farmyard'. Visitors came to experience the 'lifestyle' of the pioneer farmer as depicted by the museum.

³² Hilde S. Hein, *The Museum in Transition: A Philosophical Perspective*, (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 8.

with a Khoekhoe kraal and ship in the background. My immediate, and most logically observation was that the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck is depicted at the beginning of agriculture in South Africa. Another illustration depicted a scene of bartering between the indigenous Khoekhoen and the traders from Europe. This section of the exhibition, on the left of the door, covered the story of Jan van Riebeeck,³³ the establishment of the refreshment station, the first efforts to cultivate the land and the role of the company gardener, Hendrik Hendricks Boom.

Underlying all the displays were the idea of the settlers from Europe as the bearers of civilization and progress to Africa, Southern Africa in particular. They were portrayed as discoverers, conquerors, inventors, initiators and leaders. According to Witz and Rassool, “[p]erspectives supportive of the political project of white domination created and perpetuate the Jan van Riebeeck icon as the bearer of civilization to the sub-continent and its sources of history”.³⁴ The museum’s exhibition storyline started with Jan van Riebeeck, as the founder of agriculture in South Africa, which equates to bringing civilization to southern Africa. One got a sense of the glorification of the white contributions in ‘cultivating’ and, as Mudimbe would put it, the “organisation or arrangement” of the land.³⁵ The agenda of the creation and preservation of white exploration into the supposedly unoccupied, open spaces, bringing order and Christianity to Southern Africa, is put on show here.

Once you have entered, there were travellers’ and artists’ impressions of Khoekhoen in the 16th and 17th century, and the introduction of replica Khoekhoe artefacts such as clay pots mounted on perspex stands, mats, digging sticks, etc. If one looks at Swanepoel’s Five Year Plan, he and the museum human scientist, Pauline du Plessis, in an effort to redress and provide a ‘correct version of history’, placed the Khoekhoen in the narrative as the first farmers in the area to alter the exhibition in line with the Khoe huts in the ‘farmyard’.

³³ Leslie Witz suggests that the icon of Jan van Riebeeck was employed to in attempt to create a white settler history, L. Witz, *Apartheid’s Festival: Constructing and Contesting South Africa’s National Pasts*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

³⁴ C. Rassool and L. Witz, ‘The 1952 Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival: Construction and Contesting Public History in South Africa’, *Journal of African History*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1993), 448, 447 – 468.

³⁵ I.Y.V Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1989), Chapter 1, 1.

Section three and four were dedicated to presenting the development of different types of farming, supported by artefacts and pictorial evidence. It dealt with the story of dairy farming, starting with the Khoekhoen, Hendrik Boom and a photographic display of important breeds of dairy cattle. Boom was a gardener from Amsterdam and prepared the first seedbeds and sowed vegetable seed brought from Holland. On the right one could view a display of utensils used in the production of dairy products (butter workers, rockers, churns, cheese moulds, etc.). The depiction was clearly informed by the accounts and records kept by governors such as Jan van Riebeeck. Section four provides an overview of the different farming activities that took place in the Cape Province. Display panels on the left deal with free burghers, stock farmers, dairy and poultry farming, while the right side panels deals with wine, grain, and fruit farming. The somewhat misplaced, enlarged image of a freed slave made it appearances here and looked like it was an afterthought in this section. I started to wonder about the inclusion of this image. If the professionals at the museum were seemingly attempting to provide a linear account of the development of agricultural in the Western Cape, it was surely failing dismally. How does it explain jump from the late seventeenth century to the emancipation of slaves on the 1st of December 1838. Perhaps this image was an attempt by Swanepoel to alter the depictions of history in the museum. On the floor on the right-hand-side was a display of various ploughs and a wooden wheelbarrow. It seemed that the intended purpose of the displays in the exhibition hall was to support and provides insight and context to what was happening on the 'historical farmyard'.

The display in the far right-hand corner dealt with the activities practiced by farmers' wives. These home-industries included slaughtering, food preparation, making soap, raising poultry and dairy processing. The following text served as introductory panel: 'The home-industry of the South African Farmers' Wife developed on isolated farms of the interior. This isolation led to rural industry which [was] directly influenced by the environment.'³⁶ This display, along with text and photographs, carried a very particular message and illustrated the social hierarchies and the subsequent changes that took place in 1988. In one, (photograph, number two: process of bread baking) the hierarchy of power between the white farmer's wife and her relationship with her workers is reinforced and illustrated. It places the white

³⁶ Caption in the exhibition text, Worcester Museum.

women in a supervisory capacity and in control of the processes. In another (photograph 6: the process of candle making), it was evident that a shift has occurred in the museum's depiction of the 18th century pioneer life's. Labourers, traditionally portrayed in a subjugated position are placed in charge in what historically seen as a task performed by the pioneer's farmer's wife. This suggests a clear deviation in modes of depicting the pioneer family as a self-sufficient, innovative and independent unit.

The panel on the left dealt with story of the trekboer, the artefacts he, gendered as male, would have utilized, and the role of tobacco in trade. One wondered whether the cold, dead, sterile, and somewhat morbid atmosphere, and the lack of proper lighting was intended to convey the harsh, cold, uncomfortable circumstances, and the hardship that the trekboer had to endure on their travels. Or was this a message inherent in the narrative or just bad display technique? Section six displays rifles and ammunition secured behind steel bars. On the right, the story of stock farming is depicted and includes a photograph of half-naked African men in traditional attire, milking a cow, as well as an exhibition of associated tools on the left. Section seven is an exhibition on wool, sponsored by Wool Board. It deals with the history of sheep (grazing, lambing time, shearing, etc.), early bartering and farming in South Africa, the history of wool, processes (classification, factory prices, dyeing, etc.) and machinery used in the industry. Section eight deals with machinery used for wheat harvesting, sowing and ploughing. Here the farmer is depicted as an expert and the black labourers portrayed as being fit only for performing menial, hard labour. In the corner, there is a display of tools and the processes of threshing wheat are illustrated. Section nine deals with fruit farming and viticulture. It also showed a photograph of about the 'dopstelsel' (tot-system) where labourers receive wine in a container, in the shape of a horn, at the end of the days' work. A calendar or timeline of what happens in each season and the traditional processes of harvesting and making wine and distillation of Witblits concludes this section. Section eleven reminded one of the theme and narrative of progress. It covered the way of life of the Trekboers in the form of a diorama depicting the 'uitspan' [outspan], with accompanying utensils and a 'togwa' [wagon]. The final themes portrayed in the Exhibition Hall, sections twelve and thirteen respectively, are shoemaking and wagons.

The exhibition hall was divided into different sections, each dealing or representing a specific sub-theme. Located in, what I considered, a dead, sterile environment, with cream walls and cement-topped floors, and with lightning, display board and accompanied designs fashionable for 1980s, the exhibition hall took one on a historical journey through which the colonial developments of agriculture over the last three hundred years with references to the existing indigenous pastoralist who resided at the Cape when the Dutch arrived in 1652, are covered. The exhibition consisted of static, flat display panels with texts and illustrations or photographs. Alternatively boards on wooden stands or legs were used. The exhibitionary approach was a combination of artefacts, objects, and the medium of silk-screen printing with photographs, labels, and text that tries to give brief descriptions of the objects and explain the history and development of agriculture in South Africa chronologically. It also appeared that it attempted to give visitors a 'condensed' context. The artefact or object, along with the meaning, messages they transmit, and material values takes centre stage in the display. One gets a sense of static, unchanging permanence touring through the exhibitions. I experienced a sense of being stuck in time, whereby I have been forced and great extend bombarded with information presented a linear fashion to edify me, around the core themes which focused around the life conditions and progress made by the pioneer. I also got a sense that the exhibition was served a medium to enhance the experiences of what visitors has undergone outside

Not only did the exhibitions transmit the present and past as fixed, permanent and not open to contestation, but there was poor labelling and description of objects. These labels were in two languages, English and Afrikaans. And only some displays and objects had captions. The labels furthermore did not reflect or make reference to the provenance, original setting of the objects, their meaning, cultural understanding, and in what context the objects were used. Wrong or no labelling of and display/arrangement of objects, was very much in contrast to the well thought through and designed 'historical farmyard'.

Conclusion

Kleinplasia can be seen as a historical reconstruction to represent and serve as example of a 'historical farmyard'. It furthermore serves as a re-created landscape that represented what Miller refers as "tangible remnants, manifestations of material culture of an

indigenous cultural patrimony – fatherly inheritance – on a site of no historical significance.”³⁷ Kleinplasia furthermore served as a site of memory where through salvage architecture and reconstruction of replicas, seemingly created to safeguard what was regarded as white pioneer culture. As in the case of Colonial Williamsburg, and through the invention of professionals, a ‘site and source of historical recovery’ was created.³⁸

It appeared that the superiority and dominance of Cape pioneer farmer histories was institutionalized in the exhibition hall. Throughout the exhibitions one singular perspective is presented. By drawing on this fabricated history visitors were treated as passive receivers and consumers of the ‘official narrative’ and themes that are outlined to them. It followed a top-down-approach and did not allow for the engagement of visitors or communities to the sites.

In line with many conventional museums the exhibition focused on the display of the object because of its tangible or material value. No correlation is drawn between the object, and its intangible meanings or knowledge. Information provided was deemed as the prerogative of the professional who decided on what is fit for consumption by the visitor. Through this, the professional acquires control over knowledge production. The exhibition displays and narrates both collective and individual memory, but excluded the history and associated knowledge of the objects. Objects are displayed as a category of understanding for visitor observation. These displays are also deemed to be commemorative and celebratory of the effort of the by Cape pioneer farmers in conquering the land and progress and innovation displayed in times of hardship. In doing so, they created a collective Afrikaner culture using the museum as platform. Karp suggest that because the experts have access to resources in the form of collections, “[E]ven where the purpose of an exhibition is didactic rather than aesthetic, authoritative claim is based on possession of knowledge and those cultural resources we call ‘collection’.”³⁹

Kleinplasia’s claims in depicting the lifestyle of the early cape pioneer farmer shifted over last two decades following the appointment of Gert Julius the first government employed

³⁷ J. S. Miller, ‘Mapping the Boosterist Imaginery: Colonial Williamsburg, Historical Tourism, and the Construction of Managerial Memory’, *The Public Historian*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Autumn, 2006), 54.

³⁸ J. S. Miller, ‘Mapping the Boosterist Imaginery’, 54.

³⁹ I. Karp, “Festivals”, 283.

demonstrator. Today demonstrators who under apartheid may have been classified as 'coloured' are entrusted to perform and lead the demonstration that was historically deemed as reserved for white workers or volunteers. There is general tendency amongst some visitors to question the 'historical correctness' of the positions these demonstrators occupy in the structure of the museum and its programmes. It is furthermore perceived by visitors that they often lack the experience of farming, or do not have necessary knowledge pertaining to their demonstration or the traditional 'way of life'. The museum has clearly broken away from the original idea that 'white Afrikaners' were the leading figures during these demonstrations. Because visitors bring their own meanings and interpretations to the 'historical farm yard', symbolic representations are often met with stern resistance from those who claim an identity as white and Afrikaner.



Chapter 4: Kleinplasië Open Air Museum: The construction of a narrative

Introduction

This chapter will focus on the historiography that informed the collection, exhibition and dissemination of information processes at Kleinplasië Living Open Air Museum. I am particularly interested in the role that curators, researchers, educators, academics and other professionals played in the construction of the narrative for exhibitions, public programmes and in the training of demonstrators. I will argue that a specific version of Afrikaner nationalist history had a considerable impact on the way history was depicted at Kleinplasië.

Kleinplasië as a site of knowledge production

By looking at museums as part of the new scholarship, as places for the production of knowledge, history, and cultural representations, Handler and Cable argue that museums are more than just “simple repositories of cultural and historical treasures, but produced messages and meaningful statements.”¹ This begs the question about whose interests are served by these particular interpretations or representations. Conventionally such questions are normally answered by reading and interpreting the messages provided by museum exhibitions and texts. But, as institutions of public culture, museums are “critical social locations” where knowledge and perceptions [of the public sphere] are shaped, debated, imposed, challenged, and disseminated’.² Issues of power and authority in the processes of the production of knowledge can be linked to museums’ collection methodologies, their exhibitions and the services they deliver. Museum exhibitions, through their visual impact are highly contested projects where groups with different interests to exercise control and assert their own identities. Due to their elite training and position, professionals like curators and historians, exercise control over the development, content of, objects used for, and narratives of exhibitions, but these are often contested.

¹ E. Cable and R. Handler, *The New History in an Old Museum* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 8-9.

² I. Karp and C. Kratz, ‘Institutions of Public Culture: A Collaborative Cape Town-Atlanta Program’, proposal to the Rockefeller foundation, October 1999, 3.

At Kleinplasia I am particularly interested in how histories are presented and produced in and for the public, the sociologies in the process of the production of knowledge in its different forms, practices, genres, methodologies, social contexts and the disciplinary politics.³ It is these processes and hierarchies of knowledge production in the public sphere that need investigation.

Construction of Kleinplasia's narrative

Role of the professionals

It appears that Kleinplasia followed the example of other living museums like Colonial Williamsburg where professionals were entrusted to construct the narrative for the museum. Miller⁴ argued that such narratives were informed by the accuracies of buildings and structures, "original specifications" and "know-how" of the experts. Based on the "original specifications" and "expert knowledge" they were entrusted to reproduce 'authentic' utensils, replicas, etc. They also served as supervisors during the training of those involved in the construction process. I suggest that these professionals did not only recover, but also 'improved' on existing history and structures. The reinforcement of hierarchies of

³ S. Turner, 'What is the Problem with Experts?' *Social Studies of Science*, Vol. 31, No.1 (Feb., 2001), 123-149. (125), Jenkins suggests that we have to look at the epistemological and ideological practices of historians and locate these within the practical sites of historical production. We furthermore should question the historical text, and the interest of the dominant group/stakeholders. In line with this argument, Charles R. Garoian suggests that museums should be analysed as performative sites, where attention should be paid to the following questions: "What does the institutional setting of the museum signify? How do its environmental conditions, the working of its staff, and their decisions of collecting, preserving, and exhibiting artefacts in a museum affect the experiences of the viewers?" C. R. Garoian, 'Performing the Museum', *Studies in Art Education*, Vol. 42, No.3 (Spring, 2001), 246 This will provide a sense of how various professional practices shape the knowledge produced and ultimately 'performed' in the museum through displays and exhibitions. The museum as performative, cultural instrument raises question around the following; what is the relationship between a museum, the cultural artefacts, the collection's provenance, the collectors and the audience? Whose memory and cultural is being performed? It raises issues of the agency of viewers. "Viewers' agency enables their use of museum culture as a source through which to imagine, create, and perform new cultural myths that are relevant to their personal identities." C. R. Garoian, 'Performing the Museum', *Studies in Art Education*, Vol. 42, No.3 (Spring, 2001), 234 -248, (235).

Performance theorist Vivian Patraka claims that they function as a performative site due to the fact that professionals through their invention produce representations for visitors/spectators which are limited or subjected to authoritative interpretation of the professionals. V. M. Patraka, 'Spectacles of suffering: Performing and cultural memory at U. S. Holocaust museums. In E. Diamond (Ed.), *Performance and cultural politics* (London: Routledge, 1996), 89-107) (99).

The museum serves as a stage where history is performed. Garoian posits that, "museum culture represents an exclusionary practice determined by an elite corps of professionals"³ C. R. Garoian, 'Performing the Museum', *Studies in Art Education*, Vol. 42, No.3 (Spring, 2001), 234 -248, (237).

⁴ J. S. Miller, 'Mapping the Boosterist Imaginary: Colonial Williamsburg, Historical Tourism, and the Construction of Managerial Memory', *The Public Historian*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Autumn, 2006), 55-68.

knowledge production was also evident in the work of those involved in the construction processes subjected to professional scrutiny. In the case of Kleinplasia's development, it seems that the role of the historian was to discover, recover, verify, authenticate, inform, and explain to the people. The historian needed to provide context, expertise, ensure the facts were explained in the right context and people received knowledge which was based on facts that could be verified.

Kleinplasia and the professionals

The status, prestige, and reputation of Kleinplasia were marked by the specialization of interactive, interpretative exhibitions and education programmes supervised by professionals.

It seems as if the buildings, structures, utensils and objects were employed as a material expression that embodied an 'authentic past.'⁵ This contributed to the construction of a specific narrative that articulated a predetermined image of Afrikaner culture through a singular powerful narrative. The creation of a sense of historical 'truth', was done through the production of a very 'believable portrait of life in the past'.⁶ Museum professionals were responsible for making choices about what to tell and what to leave out about the past. The settings of the 'historical farmyard' consisted of both original and replicas or reconstructed structures/building and objects representing daily life. The intervention of the professionals made these reconstructions believable as carefully researched and accurate representations of vernacular architecture, traditional 'way of life', trades and home-industries.

Sources used in the construction of the narrative

A museum theme and narrative for Kleinplasia seems to have been constructed based on a national mythology created through Afrikaner nationalist historiography, the discipline of cultural history and the trekboer [migrant farmer] history by P. J. van der Merwe.⁷ Dr. van der Merwe focused on the pioneering history of the Afrikaner prior to the Great Trek:

⁵ E. A. Chappell, Open Air Museums: Architectural History for the Masses', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 58, NO. 3, Architectural History 1999/2002 (Sep., 1999), 334-341.

⁶ E. A. Chappell, Open Air Museums: Architectural History for the Masses', 340.

⁷ *Die Trekboer in die geskiedenis van die Kaapkolonie (1657-1842)*, (1940), [*The migrant/trek farmer in the history of the Cape Colony (1657 -1842)*, (1940)], appeared after the Second World War.

'He concentrated on the migration of the surplus population of the Cape colony and the phenomena of "bywoners", [share-cropper], Boers without land, the desire for space, the trek [nomadic] spirit, economic adaptation and social and economic expansion'.⁸ This publication is regarded as one of the most significant Afrikaner contributions to South African historiography before the end of 1945. A general theme, one senses, is that the state of isolation of the trekboer could have served as an impetus for identity formation. Penn notes, 'a self-reliant, independent class of hardy frontiersmen evolved who, nonetheless, retained their Christian beliefs and who, for the most part, developed a strong sense of being culturally and racially superior to the Khoisan and Xhosa.'⁹ Penn regards the book, *Die Trekboer*, as significant in the construction of early Afrikaner identity. Sean Reading however regards it as a deviation from the traditional works of his peers or contemporaries: "Van der Merwe was less interested in chronicling and promoting the development of Afrikaner nationalism than he was in creating a historically accurate account of early Cape life. The result is a fine grained narrative of life as the white migrant farmers lived it."¹⁰

In my opinion P. J. van der Merwe's study of the trekboer provides a cultural history of the early white Cape pioneer farmer. The significance of this work is that the narrative and theme for Kleinplasia Open Air Museum, I would argue, is to a large extent based on these historical accounts. It could be thus considered as a huge surprise that Kleinplasia professionals opted to academic works that deviated from the traditional Afrikaner Nationalist writing at the time. They propagated the idea of an Afrikaners' destiny as an independent entity in control of a South African Republic. This historiographical tradition seems to have aimed at providing the Afrikaner with a common identity based on the construction of common, shared origins, as well as a shared struggle for freedom and self-determination from British and colonial rule. This sense of nationhood was therefore based on communal struggles and historical grievances. Dr P. J. van der Merwe's *Die Trekboer in die Geskiedenis van die Kaapkolonie (1657 – 1842)*, (Kaapstad: Nasionale Pers, 1938) seemed to have provided the professional with documentary evidence on which the

⁸ W. Visser, 'Trends', 5.

⁹ N. Penn, 'Review', 129.

¹⁰ S. Redding, Review, P. J van der Merwe, *The Migrant Farmer in the History of the Cape Colony 1657-1842*, trans. Roger B. Beck, in *Agricultural History Society*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Autumn, 1995), 641-642.

storyline could be based. Van der Merwe's well researched work, representative, scientific and academically supported version of the early white pioneer 'way of life' appeared to have become the 'truth', 'facts' and the core on which a 'historically correct' theme and narrative for Kleinplasia would be forged. In the analysis of this remarkable work clear correlations can be drawn between the home-trades, trades, building materials used in the construction or reconstruction of structures, period clothing and food.¹¹

Analysis of *The trekboer* and its influence on the narrative through the home-industries

A lot of correlations could be drawn between the content of van der Merwe's work and the portrayal that took place at Kleinplasia.¹² These chapters, I believe, provided the basis of sources that the professionals drew in order to construct pioneering history/characters of the Afrikaner.

Van der Merwe made extensive use of the observations of Martin, Hinrich, Karl Lichtenstein, Andreas Sparman and Hendrik Swelengrebel, as captured in their travel journals. Van der Merwe's work seems to have presented a representation of living conditions of pioneers and way of life in the isolated rural areas of Cape Colony. In chapter one, he deals with the development of the trekboer phenomena during the rule of the Dutch Governor Willem Adriaan van der Stel in 1699 and its rapid growth in the eighteenth century. He provided a comprehensive overview of who the semi-nomadic, hunter-stock farmer that progressed to becoming the *Trekboer* [trek farmer] was.¹³ The 'way of life' as recorded by van der Merwe, provided insight into a life of isolation, self-determination, self-sufficiency, independence and strength to survive hardship and to overcome the unknown. Van der Merwe suggested that due to the nature of their physical location, trekboers, in their state of isolation, formed 'interdependent production units' whereby the trekboer was forced into learning and performing different trades. These trades included bricklayer, carpenter,

¹¹ See P. J. van der Merwe's *Die Trekboer in die Geskiedenis van die Kaapkolonie (1657 – 1842)*, (Kaapstad: Nasionale Pers, 1938) for detailed description of the life of the migrant farmer design and type of housing, building materials used, interiors and furniture, conditions inside the house, 207 –220. Type of food they ate and clothes they wore, 226-237.

¹² See P. J. van der Merwe, *Die Trekboer*, chapter five which focused on economic circumstances, housing, in the rural area, interiors of house, furniture, food and clothing.

¹³ P. J. van der Merwe, *Die Trekboer*, 62.

smithy, and shoemaker. Van der Merwe also noted that hard labour was only fit for blacks and slaves and not suitable for whites due to their social standing in society.¹⁴

According to van der Merwe, each patriarchal *Trekboer* family had to engage with various home industries and trades to sustain themselves. He noted that a clear separation was made for work suitable for males and females. Males were responsible for building their own houses, furniture, transport, tanning thongs, wagon-making/repairs and often operated as transport riders. Women on the other hand were responsible for making clothes, cooking soap with lye bush, and using the hard fat of animals for candles-making. For wicks - old, worn, turned linen were used.¹⁵ Van der Merwe argued that isolation forced these trekboer into becoming versatile and technically innovative in order to carry on operating independently. In its depictions, Kleinplasia appears to have narrated a story of progress and survival. The correlations between the cultural histories depicted in P. J. van der Merwe's *Die Trekboer in die Geskiedenis van die Kaapkolonie (1657 – 1842)*, and the depictions at Kleinplasia seems to bear resemblances. In Kleinplasia's efforts to portray the lifestyle of early Cape pioneer farmers, similarities seem to have appeared between the day-to-day activities performed by farmers, home industries and trades by the farmer himself, and what was offered to visitors at the museum. Further evidence of these similarities are also evident in the design and type of housing, building materials used, interiors and furniture, and the type of food they ate and clothes they wore.

Influence of the professionals at Kleinplasia

Influence of Miss Heloïse Naudé

The first curator, Heloïse Naudé, was instrumental in the construction of the initial narrative. Regarded as the driving force behind this museum's development, Naudé, with the expertise of Gabriel "Gawie" Fagan, envisaged a site that would represent a typical Breede River farm-setup. With this vision in mind, Naudé set out to conduct oral history recordings with elderly white farmers and volunteers that were knowledgeable and deemed as experts in their respective trades or in agriculture. At a Worcester Museum Board of

¹⁴ See P. J. van der Merwe, *Die Trekboer*, 185 – 188 for a comprehensive overview of the living conditions of these pioneer farmers and trade they performed in order to survive.

¹⁵ P. J. van der Merwe, *Die Trekboer*, 203.

Trustees Meeting on Monday, 2nd of December 1974, the curator informed the meeting that she was in the processes of conducting oral recordings through interviews with people knowledgeable about the farm activities, and archival research on inventories of estates of farmers in the Breede River in the 19th century. This research was conducted in order to get written confirmation and proof on farming industries and types of activities during the period.¹⁶ The collected information not only gave written confirmation and verification of the 'facts', but it also enabled the curator to determine and confirm the links between custom, tradition and lifestyle on the early farms in the area. It furthermore provided the impetus for her collection drives, fundraising activities and community involvement in which Naudé seemed to have featured strongly. One also needs to note that as Curator of the Worcester Museum, Heloïse Naudé, as a trained social worker, occupied the position of Museum Human Scientist. She was thus, with no formal museum training, regarded as the only professional at the museum due to the occupational class she occupied.

With the assistance of the architect, a full experience was created through the reconstructed setting and the employment of architecture, artefacts, dress, costumes, demonstration, performances, and customary events. A narrative was developed based on the life experience of *Trekboer* and their hardships. Through visual means, a linear narrative that corresponded with imperialist rhetoric of conquest and progress was constructed. It however only focused on certain significant elements of culture. Kleinplasië claimed authenticity, and being 'historically correct', although most of the buildings are either replicas or reconstructions.

Influences of Gerrit Swanepoel

During the directorship of Gerrit Swanepoel, from 1987 until 1994, the South African state was attempting to 'reform' the apartheid system. While the essential pillars of apartheid such as population registration, segregated education, and the exclusion of blacks from parliament were firmly kept in place, less important policies, e.g. in 1985 urban blacks received full residential rights, racial sex laws were repealed, and pass laws and other forms of influx control, were scrapped in 1986.¹⁷ In line with government thinking of the time, Swanepoel seemed too embarked on a process of changing the traditional views of

¹⁶ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 2 December 1974.

¹⁷ Herman Giliomee and Bernard Mbenga, *New History of South Africa*, 387.

Kleinplasia. Through his *regstellings* ['reforms'], he attempted to address the involvement of the Coloured labourer in the historical development of agriculture.

His 'reforms' and elaborate expansion plans were also geared at positioning and cementing Kleinplasia as one of the most desirable places to visit on a tourist itinerary. One also gets a sense that, in rethinking the role of the museum in terms of the political environment of the time and what happened in museums worldwide during this period that his efforts sometimes were met with subtle resistance. At one of the Board meetings one can detect a sense of animosity between the Museum Director and the Chairperson.¹⁸ With the opening of an art exhibition at Stofberghuis, a satellite of the museum featuring a member of the black community, a Mrs de Kock, a member of the Board, objected to the fact that the Director went ahead and exhibited works of art that were rejected by the local Art Society. According to de Kock, these works did not comply with conventional standards. The Director explained that the museum was firstly a home for all cultural groups and any cultural creations have a right within it. He continued by suggesting that *Volkskuns* [Folk art] must be promoted on all levels and encouraged because it becomes the cultural treasures of tomorrow. He argued that the notion of standards was a subjective one based on the opinion of the Art Society and the Board had a responsibility to exhibit under-privileged groups' cultural expressions and should guard against an over emphasis on high culture.

In providing a 'correct version of history', and in having a more 'historically correct approach', Swanepoel and his Board claimed that they had become aware of the role of the labourer in the development of the museum's agricultural theme as well as the increasing cultural pride of the community classified and set apart as 'coloured'. With this in mind, the Board approved the addition of two labourer's houses as part two of three development phase of the farmyard as recorded in the Worcester Museum *Vyfjaarplan*, [Five Year Plan], 1988-1992.¹⁹

¹⁸ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 24 October 1988.

¹⁹ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 7 December 1987, the development of the phase of the farmyard focused on the following themes; the first farmers until 1600, permanent occupation of land that lead to the establishment of farms until 1750, The Worcester Museum – *Vyfjaarplan*, [Five Year Plan] 1988-1992) focus mostly on new extension, but the five year plan section, 1988-1989 also made provision for new

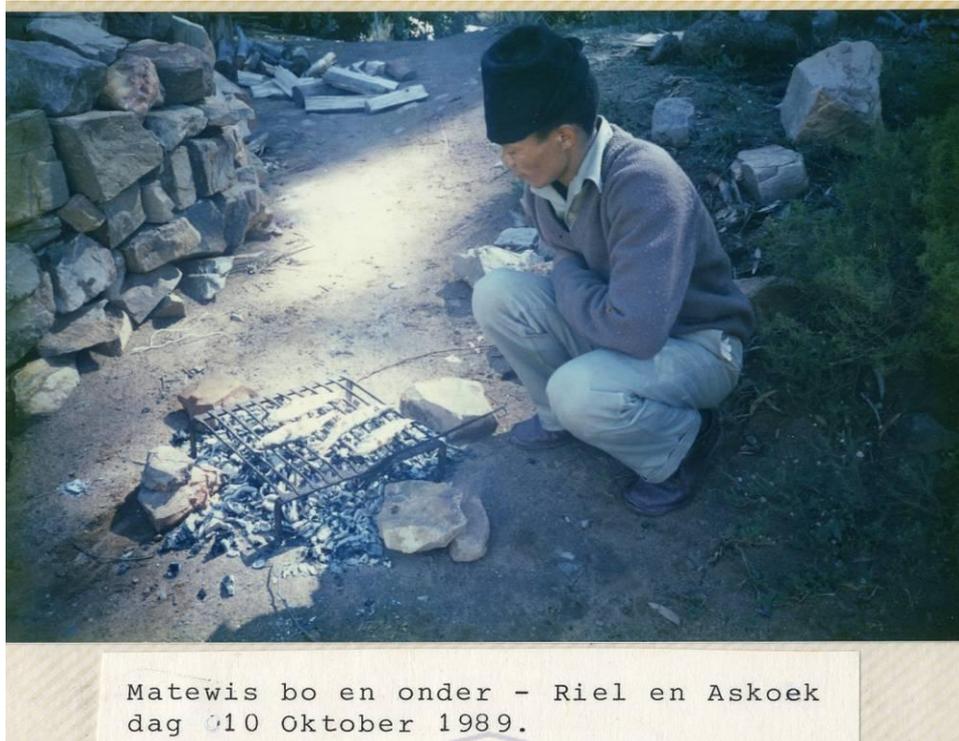


Figure 11. Special Days to such as the *Riel en Askoek* Day [reel dance and dough baked in ashes of a fire] was organised to show the role of the labourers in the development of agriculture. Here Matewis Heskwa, a demonstrator and government paid official, partakes in a demonstration.²⁰

Source: Worcester Museum.

In the first three phases of Swanepoel Five Year Plan, the development of a labourer's dwelling was planned that would provide visitors with a chronology that illustrates the different stadia of the 'Coloured community's involvement in agriculture. The chronology would start with a nomadic labourer with a cooking shelter, then a slave, and ending with a permanently settled labourer on the farm yard. At a Board meeting it was reported that the research on Khoekhoen was completed and a labourer's house was located that could serve as a replica.²¹ They also started with building of the Khoekhoe huts and the re-planning of the exhibition hall was completed.²² Dr. F Frescura,²³ who was seen as an expert on

additions like the labourers cottage, shearing-pen, farm shop, farm school and re-planning of the big exhibition area. The farm school never materialized.

²⁰ Worcester Museum, Photo Album, 1987 - 1989

²¹ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 19 April 1988.

²² The exhibition hall was not opened in 1981 as the rest of the farm yard, allowing for influence from Swanepoel and changes to Gabriël Fagan's Brief and inclusion of new themes.

²³ Franco Frescura was part of a new generation of respected practitioners and academic that were mentored under Barrie Biermann, Hugh Floyd, Douglas Andrews and others, A. Malan, 'Reflections on half a century of vernacular architecture studies at the Cape', VASSA Journal, number 11, June 2004, 21. "He interpreted the rural settlement patterns of indigenous southern Africans as 'text' that can be 'read' for information and

“primitive and black architecture”, was invited to visit the museum.²⁴ It was reported at the meeting of 29 Monday, August 1988,²⁵ that the Khoekhoen huts were completed and open for public viewing. The preparation of the exhibition also progressed well and it was envisaged that the opening would be at the end of 1988. In his efforts to ensure that Kleinplasia reflected the ‘correct version of history’, Swanepoel embarked on a process to raise funds whereby various potential sponsors and donors were approached.

In a motivation letter²⁶ for funding to the Director of the Department Nature Conservation, Swanepoel regarded the existing presentations as not a thorough reflection of the historical nature of the development of agriculture in the Western Cape. He argued that the agricultural museum represented and constructed examples of buildings on traditional farmyards that served as total representation of cultural lifestyles that led to the expansion to all the branches of agriculture in the Western Cape. This, he posited, implied that the origin and history of the Western Cape residents, their culture and utensils and means to survive, are mainly agricultural. Swanepoel continued and suggested, in order to give justice to a ‘historical correct’ representation, that he deemed it necessary that the “Coloured labourers must be placed next to the tractor and the *Boer* [farmer]”,²⁷ and not separate but in the same historically correct context pertaining to development of agriculture in Western Cape. In building his case, Swanepoel argued that the then existing representation did not provide an objective picture of growth and development of agriculture. He also raised the issues around the “increased enquiries and uneasy questions from especially foreign visitors and persons of other races that wanted to know where the labourers fitted in the current representation”.²⁸ There was also political pressure to keep in line with government ‘reform’-policies. He maintained that there was a drastic increase in demands from “other races” to be included in the representation that included their role in the development of agriculture. He was also of the opinion that the employment of a

‘deconstructed’ to reveal gaps and silences, A. Malan, ‘Reflections on half a century of vernacular architecture studies at the Cape’, 25.

²⁴ ‘Minutes of Board of Trustees’, Worcester Museum, 9 June 1988.

²⁵ ‘Minutes of Board of Trustees’, Worcester Museum, 29 August 1988.

²⁶ Letter to Mrs Neethling, Department of Nature Conservation, ‘Korrekte historiese benadering tot die opelug landboumuseum’, Worcester Museum, 30 October 1987.

²⁷ Letter to Mrs Neethling, Department of Nature Conservation, ‘Korrekte historiese benadering tot die opelug landboumuseum’, Worcester Museum, 30 October 1987, 2.

²⁸ Letter to Mrs Neethling, Department of Nature Conservation, ‘Korrekte historiese benadering tot die opelug landboumuseum’, Worcester Museum, 30 October 1987, 2.

“Coloured teacher” would lead to the increase of an “estimated five to ten thousand Coloured learners receiving educational lectures at the museum.”²⁹ He furthermore claimed that the Board also noted the awakening of cultural pride and ownership in line with government’s thinking at the time. With these arguments in mind, the Board took a decision to allow Swanepoel to visit open air and agricultural museums in America in 1988.³⁰ On his return Swanepoel implemented an array of new and hand-on activities, such as making and producing of preserves, manufacturing of goods that were sold in the museum shop with the idea of creating a learning experience that employs all the senses.³¹

Other professionals

Central to the construction of the narrative were the aforementioned curators, ably assisted by Stellenbosch University-trained professionals like Pauline du Plessis. These professionals were often trained in the discipline of History at Afrikaans universities, which according to Witz, used “artifactual legacy aligned with a ‘living memory’ as empirical verification of the past in museum.”³² Artefacts³³ were thus regarded as sources of information and evidence of the past. Witz claims that “History in the museums, became about finding ‘facts and their manifestation in written texts, the oral record and objects, establishing provenance , verifying ‘accuracy’ and bringing these together in a visual narrative that presented claims to a past that was knowable and authentic”.³⁴ Closely linked to the discipline of History was the discipline of *Afrikaanse Kultuurgeskiedenis* [Cultural History of the Afrikaner] at Afrikaans universities.

One such product and professional was Pauline du Plessis, who was central to Swanepoel’s ‘reform’ efforts. Mrs Pauline du Plessis, a *Vakkundige* [Museum Human Scientist], was transferred from the Drostyd Museum in Swellendam to Kleinplasia. Du Plessis had a BA-degree with archaeology and cultural history as majors and completed the *Museumkunde*

²⁹ Letter to Mrs Neethling, Department of Nature Conservation, ‘Korrekte historiese benadering tot die opelug landboumuseum’, Worcester Museum, 30 October 1987, 2.

³⁰ ‘Minutes of Board of Trustees’, Worcester Museum, 1 February 1988.

³¹ ‘Minutes of Board of Trustees’, Worcester Museum, 19 April 1988.

³² L. Witz, ‘The appearance of a reluctance tradition: Changing museums in post-apartheid South Africa’, paper presented at the ‘Heritage Matters’ Conference, University of Michigan, Accra, 15-17 December 2007’, 11.

³³ J. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, (London: Routledge, 1990), 112 John Urry, argued that ‘heritage is distorted through visualisation using array of artefacts including building to portray/create a specific or ‘common’ way or patterns of life. Urry referred to it as ‘artifactual history’.

³⁴ L. Witz, ‘The appearance of a reluctance tradition’, 11.

Diploma [Diploma in Museum Science] in 1983 at the University of Stellenbosch.³⁵ Looking at the content for the Post-Graduate Diploma in Museum Science offered from the mid to late 1980s that Du Plessis would have been exposed to, one gets a sense that the course material pre-dominantly focused on aspects of material culture in both Europe and South Africa. These aspects included clothing fashions in South Africa employing European style periods. Under the theme or section, Clothing Fashions in South Africa in the eighteenth century in the course layout, it is interesting that the course covered fashions worn by the town residents, farmers and *trekboere* during the 1700-1749 periods.³⁶ - Other aspects of material culture included; Cape Dutch Architecture, European Architecture, Cape Furniture and Vernacular Architecture in South Africa. In the section on vernacular architecture, Van der Merwe's *Trekboer* formed an integral part of the content offered to students on the techniques and building process pertaining to what was considered South Africa vernacular architecture.³⁷ The rest of the programme was dedicated to harnessing skills and preparing students to take up professional positions at museums. Museological training included: introduction to Museology and accreditation standards, exhibition techniques, lighting, showcase/exhibition cases, interiors of period houses, research procedures/methodology, working in archives, and conservation of objects, working on different materials in museum collections, museum security and museum administration.

Following the general trend after the completion of the diploma, the majority of students found employment at affiliated museums funded by the Cape Provincial Administration. Du Plessis was no exception. After a period of employment at the Drosty Musuem in Swellendam, she moved to Worcester Museum. Here she was instrumental in shifts in the approach and thinking of the museum. As *Vakkundige* [Museum Human Scientist], she was responsible for the research, planning and erection of the Khoekhoe huts in an effort to give recognition to the first farmers of the area. She was also responsible for the text in the exhibition hall of museum covered in my analysis in Chapter 3.

Kleinplasië's narrative appeared not to have followed the traditional Afrikaner monumental narrative of the conquest of the local inhabitants by a named Boer hero. It rather focused

³⁵ 'Minutes of Board of Trustees', Worcester Museum, 1 February 1988.

³⁶ 'Museumkunde-program, 1987, Departement Afrikaanse Kultuurgeskiedenis', University Stellenbosch, 1987.

³⁷ 'Museumkunde-program, 1987, Departement Afrikaanse Kultuurgeskiedenis', University Stellenbosch, 1987.

on the stories and living conditions of ordinary people and their progress. It seems that the celebration of progress, the ability of the Cape pioneer farmer to be self-sufficient and inventive in isolation, was at the core of the narrative.

The 'historical farmyard' attempted a linear approach in order to provide a narrative of progress. In its approach, it started with the temporary dwelling of the Cape pioneer farmer in the form of the Kapstyl house and its cooking screen and concluded with a permanent settlement –the farm homestead and related structures, buildings, farming activities and home industries. It appeared that Gabriël Fagan and Pauline du Plessis, the professionals involved in the creation of the museum's narrative, relied on notions of nostalgia and thus used structures, object, utensils, and demonstrations as 'memory triggers' to convey a history of advancement. It contained all the elements necessary to script a performance of survival, innovation, self-efficiency, and independence.

P. J. van der Merwe's *Die Trekboer in die Geskiedenis van die Kaapkolonie (1657 – 1842)* is accorded a significant role in the progress of South Africa and white expansion by placing the object in its 'correct historical context'. Replicas are museumized and turned into markers of authenticity. Visitors' experiences and engagement at Kleinplasia have seemingly contributed to the authentication process. By employing objects and demonstrations an attempt was made to take visitors to the site 'back to' the way of life of the early Cape pioneer farmers during the eighteenth century. I suggested that another set of meanings might have been associated with objects due to their placement in the buildings and their use in demonstrations. In the attempts professionals to place the objects/structures in their functional historical pasts, lead to the notion of 'authentic interpretation'.³⁸ In chapter 3 I have argued the flow and chronology of the site was disrupted, making the construction of a linear past virtually impossible.

³⁸ L. Witz, 'A Nineteenth Century Mail Coach', 454.

CONCLUSION

Kleinplasië Open Air Museum became a marker of one's place in and understanding of the world. It became a manifestation marker of history and identity through acts of representation. This work looked at how meaning was constructed through different frameworks of representation and therefore how the poetics of exhibiting are brought to the fore. As noted by Henrietta Lidchi, the politics of exhibiting may be defined as the "practices of producing meaning through the internal ordering and conjugation of the separate but related components of an exhibition"¹ Through the 'poetics of exhibiting' and employing exhibiting and communication strategies, the architect, designers and professionals at the museum were seemingly able to construct cultural memory, identity and a social history for a particular section of the community in the region. Through 'encodement', meaning was constructed through employing exhibitionary strategies.

In this study I have attempted to provide a brief overview and the historical context of the development of both open air museums in the world and of cultural history museums in South Africa. I furthermore focussed on the influence of early disciplines (natural history/science, archaeology, anthropology, cultural history) in shaping the content of early museums in the country and the political context of the time. With this approach I attempted to illustrate the pivotal role that the cultural history museum played in educating, in creating awareness around issues of culture and heritage, and in nation building.

Kleinplasië Open Air Museum, founded on a site of no historical significance, appears to have become a presentation linked to the characteristic of the apartheid society where racial stereotypes and class hierarchies prevailed. This reconstructed site, along with the demonstrations and material culture, seemingly provided white Afrikaners, as I have argued, with the opportunity to reconnect to a social history that was engineered and propagated by the museum. Central to the processes of preserving a disappearing past and creating an identity, museum professionals employed material culture in the form of utensils, artefacts, objects and replicas or reconstructed buildings as evidence of such a social history and

¹ H. Lidchi, 'The poetics and the politics of exhibiting other cultures', in S. Hall (ed), *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*, (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 168.

culture. In an integrated system, all these elements contributed to the notion of authentication whereby a perceived 'real', 'factual' account of history is portrayed.

In its two exhibitions areas, this study has argued that objects, as transmitters of knowledge and message, and knowledge and meaning, formed the core of the processes of knowledge production. The mere fact that these object and artefacts were displayed in museums contributed to the notion of authentication and creating 'real, factual' accounts of history. Museum professionals were employed as carriers or markers of authentic history that the museum aimed to provide to the public. As an officially sanctified site, Kleinplasia deployed authority through objects and spatial hierarchies. It appeared to have created a specific experience of the object and building. Through the processes of 'museumization' professionals were able to manage the object's meaning and emphasize its significance. A narrative of the white Cape pioneer farmer was created by bringing different objects and artefacts together from different places and periods and recontextualising them as an integrated system. These artefacts were acquired from white donors who had a sentimental, emotional and historic connection to them.² The primary research, oral accounts, the writing of P. J. van der Merwe, along with extensive records of topography (landscape, geography, structure, countryside, scenery), architecture, farming activities and home industries and domestic interiors, were all elements that informed the narrative of the museum. In the exhibition hall, oral accounts and research text are supplemented by photography and illustrations to create a visual experience. Photographs and illustrations served as medium to an imaginary bridge between the present and the past with which visitors could identify. It furthermore provided white Afrikaners with, in a didactic manner, a social history. Through perpetuation of narrative and the display of these objects and artefacts, it became part of the 'authentic' nationalist government's collective memory.

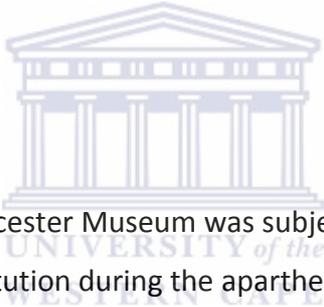
At Kleinplasia Open Air Museum the object acquired new meaning and authority through the process of museumization and the use of a classificatory system. In the collection process these objects and artefacts were carefully chosen by the trained professionals who

² The narrative was however also influenced by civic pride, emotional attachment of donors. If want look at the role of donors, origins of the collection, and the circumstance around the museum's construction you will see that donors and other interested groups had huge influence on the narrative, style, format, shape, budget, and execution. This context contributes to the production of the audiences the museum seeks to accommodate.

drew on the discipline of cultural history, their training in museology and nationalist historiography to convey particular messages. Through different modes of exhibiting which included, selection, placement and labelling, the objects acquired new meanings.

In the case of Kleinplasië, a summary or one singular version of history was provided. One however needs to take cognisance of their shortcomings, the sociologies, modalities, and context in which the construction or production of the histories of that place. By using the exhibitions as a platform, their authoritative positions and resource to their disposal, the former curator and her professionals were able to construct a singular narrative by employing objects, exhibitionary technique and a fabricated historiography. In their research and ethical processes they did not consider or make reference to the multiple sites of knowledge production, the sociologies of the processes, the provenance of objects, how they were acquired, their uses or the meaning attached by their users.

Revisiting Kleinplasië's Narrative



As a government institution, Worcester Museum was subjected to the same social and political orders as any public institution during the apartheid-regime. It still reflects the voices and views of the dominant culture prior to 1994. The narrative based on the discipline of cultural history that favours the constructed nationalist history of the white Afrikaner is still in place. The theme of the white pioneer farmer, his activities, industries and way of life and accompanied hardships and struggles is portrayed as marker of civilization. The pioneer farmer is glorified as the bearer or carrier of civilization and Christianity into dark southern Africa. The involvement of professionals, their existing curatorial practices, the influence of role players like Afrikaner organisations, the agricultural society and certain section of the white community, and the baggage of the past, prevents the museum from writing new inclusive histories and addressing a broader community.

On completion of this mini-thesis, the museum, along with researchers from the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, has embarked on an extensive consultative process with the different communities of Worcester to sell a new idea of the museum. The

team, consisting of the museum manager and researchers, have decided on the following aims, objectives, and themes prior to engagement with the various communities: “to re-align the museum and its activities to respond to the needs of the people; to develop a curriculum-related exhibition that would provide a stimulus that is realigned to education; to refresh the story-line of the museum to be representative, inclusive and holistic; and to build pride and identity in order to contribute to the fundamental values as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The theme would be Worcester in the 20th century: Agriculture and the people – the socio-economic impact of agriculture on the people of Worcester, with sub-themes focusing on, but not limited to the political and social landscape of Worcester and resistance to political, social and economic exploration and inequality.”³

The museum has the opportunity to reflect upon its own history, development, collection, messages it wants to transmit and services that it should deliver. The new process also provides opportunities for the inclusion of different voices, representative, alternative histories and to attend to the demands of becoming a service-orientated centre. It should furthermore investigate the object’s associated interpretations and meanings, consider the context of knowledge production, and give recognition to the politics and poetics of representation.

³ Taken from a power point presentation of the Project Team of the Museum Scientific Services, Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport that gets presented at community consultation meetings.

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