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ROCK ART AND RITUAL: SOUTHERN AFRICA AND BEYOND

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ABSTRACT.- *Southern African Rock Art is taken as a starting point in order to argue the shamanic character of European Upper Palaeolithic Parietal Art. The author identifies different stages of production and consumption of rock-art depictions. All of them are embedded in rituals that constituted, reproduced and sometimes subverted power relations. Multiple ethnographic analogies are useful in order to build up an account of the changing association between art and ritual in the Upper Palaeolithic of Western Europe.*

RESUMEN.- *El arte rupestre sudafricano sirve de punto de partida para argumentar el carácter chamánico del arte parietal paleolítico. El autor identifica los diferentes estadios de producción y consumo de las representaciones rupestres. Todos ellos forman parte de rituales que conforman, reproducen y a veces subvierten las relaciones de poder. El empleo de la analogía etnográfica múltiple es extremadamente útil si se quieren detectar las transformaciones en la asociación entre arte y ritual durante el Paleolítico Superior en Europa Occidental.*

KEYWORDS: *Rock Art. Bushmen. Shamanism. Social Relations. Upper Palaeolithic.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Arte Rupestre. Bosquimanos. Chamanismo. Relaciones Sociales. Paleolítico Superior.*

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most debilitating concepts in rock art research has been the autonomy of art. Notions of 'the artist' as isolated from the ebb and flow of daily life, as an Olympian commentator on the foibles and tragedies of humanity, and as an ascetic, inspired individual working not for gain but for the sake of art itself have silently -for they are seldom explicitly stated- undermined many studies of hunter-gatherer rock art. Yet these ideas about artists and their work are not universals: the notion of the artist's separation from ordinary people and the social processes of production developed at a particular time in Western history. Essentially Romantic in origin, the genesis of these ideas was historically situated in a specific social, economic and intellectual milieu; in that context, the Romantic notions about art and artists played an ideological role, often masking social relations and asymmetrical power structures.

Setting aside Romantic ideas about art, I argue that the production and consumption of rock art, like all image-making, was embedded in the social, economic and intellectual circumstances of the community in which it was made (e.g. Wolff 1981). Like language and, indeed, other genres of material culture, rock art did not merely reflect the society in which it was made, its economy, power structures, myths and so forth. It also constituted, reproduced and sometimes subverted power relations. In that sense, the making of each rock art image was a socio-political intervention that either underwrote power relations based, often, on the possession of arcane knowledge by a select group, or challenged existing structures by attempting to shift the locus of divine sanction. Exactly what those social relations were and exactly how any given rock art images reproduced or subverted them are specific historical questions.

If rock art is seen as active in the constitution of social relations, rather than as a passive re-

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flection of society, it cannot be studied and understood in isolation from power relations and, moreover, from other expressive forms, such as myth and ritual, that similarly reproduce or subvert social relations. I therefore begin with a very brief review of nineteenth-century Bushman (San[1]) shamanism and the politico-religious setting of the production and consumption of nineteenth-century Bushman rock paintings (I do not consider southern African rock engravings; see Dowson 1992). I then discuss in more detail the relationship between southern Bushman rock paintings and ritual. In doing so, I show that the rituals associated with the making and viewing of the paintings, as well as the ritual context from which much of the art's subject matter derived, were deeply embedded in social relations and that these rituals constituted and in some instances subverted those relations. Finally, I move on to some broad and preliminary implications for the study of West European Upper Palaeolithic art and ritual.

2. BUSHMAN SHAMANISM

Research conducted over the last twenty years has eroded the older notions of art-for-art's-sake and hunting magic as explanations for southern African rock art. Today most researchers accept that much of this art was implicated in the beliefs and rituals of Bushman shamanism (for a history of southern African rock art research see Lewis-Williams in press a). The last paintings were made towards the end of the nineteenth century, and our information about Bushman religion in that century comes principally from three sources: first and foremost, the voluminous W.H.I. Bleek and L.C. Lloyd Collection of verbatim texts that were obtained from Bushmen who came from what is now the Northern Cape Province; secondly, J.M. Orpen's comparatively brief account of the mythology of the Maluti San of what is now Lesotho; thirdly, some less satisfactory but none the less valuable material that the missionaries T. Arbousset and F. Daumas collected in the 1830s in what is now the eastern Orange Free State and Lesotho. I supplement these nineteenth-century sources with material collected in the twentieth century from Bushman communities still living to the north in the Kalahari Desert. Finally, although there are now no recognizable southern Bushman communities, I also draw on information obtained from a descendant of one of these communities and from a Basotho man who knew them well. We must, of course, bear in mind that these ethnographic and historical sources cannot be projected to cover all rock art throughout southern Africa; they constitute a temporal and spatial mosaic that gives indications of what happened at specific times and in specific places. (For a fuller account of nineteenth-century Bushman shamanism see Lewis-Williams 1981; Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1989).

Like all forms of shamanism, nineteenth-century Bushman religion was constituted by institutionalised altered states of consciousness. As in all shamanistic religions, certain kinds of trance experiences and hallucinations were accorded the status of visions; people in general accepted the shamans' accounts of their visions as insights into what was happening in the spirit world. It seems that approximately half of the men and a third of the women in a nineteenth-century Bushman camp may have been shamans, as was the case in some mid-twentieth-century Kalahari Bushman communities (Marshall 1969; Katz 1982). Being a shaman did not confer any general authority; nor did it bring with it any special privileges. Shamans were, however, respected and some enjoyed considerable prestige.

Bushman shamans entered an altered state of consciousness either at a large communal trance dance or in more private circumstances. Trance was induced not through the ingestion of psychotropic drugs but by intense concentration, prolonged rhythmic dancing, audio-driving and hyperventilation (but see Winkleman and Dobkin de Rios 1989). In an altered state of consciousness, shamans cured the sick, controlled the movements of antelope herds, journeyed to god, went on out-of-body travel to distant Bushman camps and made rain by capturing a (hallucinatory) `rain-animal'. To achieve these ends they harnessed a supernatural potency, *!gi:* or *//ken*, that was associated with large game animals, especially the eland. Shamans were said to `possess', for example, eland, giraffe or gemsbok potency.

The alternative reality to which animal-potency gave access, associated as it was with the Bushmen's comparatively egalitarian social structure, was not as complexly constructed as that of some other, more complex shamanistic societies. Yet, like many other shamanistic views of the spirit world, the Bushmen's alternative reality was essentially immanent; like altered states of consciousness themselves, it was `next to', or `within', people, not situated at a remote distance; it interdigitated with the world of daily life. At the same time, the cosmos, of which this alternative reality was a part, was, like the cosmoses of many shamanistic societies, conceived of as tiered. The Bushman cosmos comprised three levels: (1) the surface of the earth, the level of daily life; (2) a spiritual underworld that was associated particu-

larly but not exclusively with the dead; and (3) a spiritual realm above the earth that was associated with god, the spirits and also with shamans. The spirits were, however, not located exclusively in the realm above; they also walked the earth with people. Most importantly, the shamans had the ability to transcend the three-tiered cosmos and thus to move between realities. Bushman shamans were essentially mediators of the cosmos.

The principal nineteenth-century southern Bushman spiritual figure was /Kaggen, a name that is frequently translated as 'the Mantis', although the insect *Mantis religiosa* was only one of his many manifestations. He created all things, yet was, at the same time, mischievous and often stupid (Schmidt 1973; Lewis-Williams 1981: 117-126). He was, moreover, the original shaman, and he created and gave to human shamans the supernatural animal-potency that they harnessed to achieve their ends. His favourite creature was the highly potent eland; when he created the eland, an event recounted in a cycle of myths, he in fact created the basis for the whole shamanistic enterprise. Although he was especially associated with the eland, he created and protected all animals, releasing them to hunters only under certain circumstances. He protected his animals from hunters and used various ruses to outwit them. In this sense, he was a Lord of the Animals, a figure found in many shamanic religions.

On the other hand, nineteenth-century Bushman shamanism departed in a number of ways from the 'classic' shamanism of central Asia. For example, although Bushman shamans used dancing rattles, flywhisks and tortoise-shell censers, they did not have the highly elaborate, symbolic costumes and paraphernalia that are associated with some other shamans. Nor was shamanic power concentrated in the hands of one or only a few people; the egalitarian ideals of Bushman society (perhaps not always realised; Gulbrandsen 1991; Wilmsen 1989) militated against the centralization of power. Anyone could try to become a shaman. Those who did not manage to master altered states of consciousness were not in any way despised. In 'traditional' Bushman society shamanic power was thus generally separate from political power, which was itself distributed throughout the social unit. In recent times, however, when some Kalahari Bushman communities lost their land and were reduced to wage-earning serfs, shamans began to emerge as political leaders (Guenther 1975). Today these political shamans do not produce rock art, but rock paintings in the southern Drakensberg suggest that eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century shamans in that region did begin to assume political importance and that some shaman-artists used rock art to negotiate their positions in the changing and complex southern African society of that time (Dowson 1994).

Broadly speaking, Bushman rock art comprises a range of depictions most of which are referable to one or other aspect of Bushman shamanism. These depictions include: trance dances; shamans identifiable by a number of features, postures and gestures; animals, like the eland, that were considered sources of supernatural potency; 'scenes' that appear to record historical events, but that sometimes incorporate shamanistic elements (Campbell 1986); various activities that shamans conducted in the spirit world, such as out-of-body travel and the capture of a rain-animal; shamans partially transformed into animals (therianthropes); other experiences, including shamanistic hallucinations; and 'abstract', geometric motifs that probably depict the geometric entoptic mental images experienced in an early stage of trance (for reviews of these various classes of imagery see Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1989; Lewis-Williams 1981, 1990; Dowson 1992).

3. BUSHMAN RITUAL AND ART

The range of subject matter in Bushman rock art throughout southern Africa suggests that it was concerned not with a single, monolithic 'meaning' but rather a closely interrelated set of meanings, a broad diversity situated within an essential unity. This tension between diversity and unity derives from the socio-political role of the art (Dowson 1994) and its association with rituals that, like the Bushmen's cosmos, were posited on altered states of consciousness. Indeed, rituals involving altered states of consciousness were implicated in a series of four stages in the production and consumption of Bushman rock art: (1) the acquisition of some of the art's subject matter; (2) the making of paint; (3) the painting of the images in the rock shelters; (4) the use of the paintings once they had been made. I consider each of these stages in turn.

3.1 The acquisition of imagery

There were two contexts in which Bushman shamans acquired their visionary insights into the spiritual world. Each was associated with two related oppositions: first, society and the individual; secondly, socially informed and sanctioned visions and the novel, unexpected visions that altered states of consciousness inevitably produce.

The principal Bushman shamanic ritual, the one that brought together all people no matter what their age or sex, was the curing, or trance, dance. One of the earliest accounts we have of such a dance was recorded by Arbousset and Daumas in the 1830s. It is, of course, an 'outsider's' view and is shot through with these missionaries' manifest distaste for indigenous beliefs and rituals. The dance, they said, was performed by moonlight and consisted of "irregular jumps... They gambol together till all be fatigued and covered with perspiration" (Arbousset and Daumas 1846: 246-7). The dance was so "violent" that some dancers fell to the ground "exhausted and covered with blood, which pours from the nostrils". These "exhausted" dancers were cared for by some of the women. About forty years later, Orpen (1874: 10) recorded a similar dance which, he said, was circular. He too noted that dancers fell down "as if mad and sick" and that blood ran from the noses of some.

The wider importance of blood in Bushman ritual and art will become apparent as I proceed. Here I note only that Bleek and Lloyd found that it was shamans who suffered nasal haemorrhages and that they rubbed their blood on those whom they wished to heal; they believed that its smell would keep evil spirits at bay. Twentieth-century researchers in the Kalahari did not encounter much nasal bleeding among shamans, but they were told that a shaman may bleed in especially challenging or dangerous circumstances (Marshall 1969: 374; Lewis-Williams 1981: 81). The depiction of nasal haemorrhage is one of the distinguishing features of paintings of trancing shamans. Neither Arbousset and Daumas, nor Orpen, nor Bleek and Lloyd seem to have had any understanding of trance, but today it is clear that these early writers were in fact describing trance dances similar to those still performed in parts of the Kalahari Desert.

During the course of a present-day trance dance in the Kalahari, when a number of shamans are in trance, one may draw the others' attention to what he or she believes he or she can see, perhaps a number of spirit-eland standing in the semi-darkness beyond the light of the fire. The others look in the direction indicated, and then they too see the same visions. There is thus a sharing of insights that makes for commonality of visions. Moreover, the describing of visions after everyone has returned to a normal state of consciousness is a further powerful influence on what people 'see' in future trance experiences. People tend to hallucinate what they expect to hallucinate.

At the same time, there are forces pulling in the opposite direction. No matter how powerful the informing social influences may be, the human brain in an altered state of consciousness always produces novel, or aberrant, hallucinations. Most people ignore these sports of the human nervous system because they are seeking specific kinds of visions that they can understand and that will make them feel part of a social group. But some people seize upon hallucinatory novelties and then present them to others as specially privileged insights that set them above others or, more forcefully, that challenge the whole structure of power relations. In some circumstances, the individual visionary thus opposes social constraints. Both these attitudes to the mental imagery of altered states of consciousness are found among the Bushmen.

The role of individual Bushman shamans is also seen in the way that they understand dreams, the second and more personal context in which they obtain visions. The Bleek and Lloyd collection records the ways in which nineteenth-century shamans made rain and went on out-of-body journeys whilst in a dream (Lewis-Williams 1987). In a particularly striking and well documented twentieth-century instance, Beh, a Kalahari !Kung woman, dreamed of galloping giraffes (Biesele 1993). When she awoke, she was able to discern in the rhythm of their pounding hoofs the metre of a song. She was not herself a shaman, but when she sung the song to her husband, who was a shaman, he instantly recognised it as a new source of animal-potency. In a comparatively short time, the giraffe 'medicine song' had spread across the Kalahari and was being sung along side of the older songs, such as eland and gemsbok. Beh and her husband became well-known, though not politically powerful, people. As I have said, all people experience unusual visions and dreams, but only a few seize upon them and recognize their potential.

This tension between personal revelations and socially sanctioned visions is evident in the rock art (Dowson 1988). Many rock art motifs are widespread. The eland, for instance, is the most frequently depicted animal in most regions of southern Africa. Yet, idiosyncratic motifs do occur. For these motifs to have been intelligible to other people they must have fallen within the broad, general framework of Bushman symbolism and experience. A unique painting of crabs, for instance, develops the Bushman metaphor of being underwater as a way of expressing the sensations of trance experience (Dowson 1988: fig. 3). Crabs as a motif did not become accepted by other shaman-artists, so we can conclude that the artist who painted these unique images retained, unlike Beh and her husband, the special insight; the prestige of having acquired a unique insight into spiritual

things was not shared and thus dissipated amongst shamans in general. Whether this prestige developed into political power is a question that we cannot now answer.

3.2 The manufacture of paint

Very little was recorded about the ways in which Bushman artists prepared their paint. Perhaps the early writers considered this too prosaic a matter to warrant their attention. There is, however, an important account that strongly suggests that the making of paint was far from prosaic.

In the early 1930s Marion Walsham How was able to converse with a seventy-four year old Basotho man, Mapote, who, as a young man, had learned to paint with Bushmen in their caves. He was a son of the Basotho chief Moorosi, and he had half-Bushman stepbrothers, the sons of Moorosi's Bushwoman wives (How 1962: 33). According to Mapote, the "true" Bushmen painted at one end of the cave, while he and his half-Bushman stepbrothers painted at the other end. A distinction between paintings at opposite ends of rock shelters has not been observed, so we do not know how general this separation may have been or, indeed, how many Basotho people were taught how to paint. It may have been something that happened only once.

When How produced some red Bushman pigment that a friend had given her some time before she met Mapote, he declared it to be authentic "*qhang qhang*"; it "glistened and sparkled" in contrast to commercially available ochre which was dull by comparison. *Qhang qhang* was dug out of the high basalt mountains, and many Basotho people regarded it as a "powerful medicine" that would ward off lightning and hail (*ibid.*: 34). Not only the Bushmen themselves but also neighbouring people thus believed one of the pigments to have supernatural powers.

The transformation of this highly prized pigment into paint was, according to Mapote, accompanied by ritual procedures. He said that a woman had to heat the *qhang qhang* at full moon out of doors until it was red hot. It was then ground between two stones until it was a fine powder.

The role of a woman in the preparation of pigment recalls the part played by women at a trance dance. Although up to a third of the women in a Kalahari Bushman camp may be shamans, they generally sit in a circle with all the other women around a central fire; some may dance with the men for a while. It is all the women together who supply the vital singing of 'medicine' songs and the complex rhythmic clapping that helps the dancing shamans to enter trance. Within the contexts of both the dance and the preparation of paint men and women co-operated. It does, however, seem that women were nevertheless generally accorded a supportive rather than a central or equal role. So constituted, the dance and the preparation of paint were both potential ritual arenas for the negotiation of gender roles: although women seem to have been generally subordinate to men, their contribution to shamanic rituals was nevertheless crucial, and individual women could no doubt have manipulated these male: female relations to their own advantage.

After some commercial ochre, specially purchased for the occasion (How deemed her piece of *qhang qhang* too precious to be used), had been ground to a powder, Mapote asked for another highly significant ingredient for his paint: "the blood of a freshly killed eland" (How 1962: 37). *Qhang qhang*, he said, was the only pigment that the Bushmen mixed with eland blood. If the blood were not fresh, it would coagulate and not soak into the rock. As How observes, the need for fresh blood implies that painting took place after a successful eland hunt. Mapote then set about painting an eland because, as he put it, "the Bushmen of that part of the country were of the eland" (*ibid.*: 38).

The importance of eland blood as an ingredient in the manufacture of red paint was confirmed and enlarged upon in the early 1980s by an old woman of Bushman descent, known as `M', who was living in Transkei, to the south of the Drakensberg (Jolly 1986; Lewis-Williams 1986; Prins 1990). Her father had been a shaman-artist, and she pointed out paintings that he had made. Her elder sister, who had died a few years before she was interviewed, had been taught her father's shamanic skills and had been well known locally as a rain-maker. According to M, the whole sequence of events started with a ritualised eland hunt. She explained that a young girl accompanied a group of hunters who went out after an eland. This girl `hypnotised' the eland by pointing an arrow at it; on the arrow was `medicine' that had been prepared by shamans. Dazed, the eland was then led back, again by supernatural means (though the movements of exhausted or wounded eland can in fact be fairly easily controlled), to a place near the rock shelter where the people were living and where the paintings were to be made (Jolly 1986).

The people then prepared a mixture of eland blood and fat. M explained that eland blood contained supernatural potency (Jolly 1986: 6). Used in scarification rituals, this mixture of blood and fat imbued the recipient with eland potency. She went on

to say that eland blood was also used in the preparation of paint and that a painting made with eland blood was a kind of storehouse of potency.

It should be noted that a dying eland bleeds from the nose, even as a shaman who, in the Bushmen's own phrase, is `dying' in trance bleeds from the nose. Qing implied this parallel when he told Orpen (1874: 2) that the therianthropic figures in the art (shamans partially transformed into animals; Lewis-Williams 1981) had entered trance "at the same time as the elands and by the dances of which you have seen paintings" (for a fuller interpretation of Qing's highly complex statement see Lewis-Williams 1980).

Two kinds of blood were thus involved in the production of rock paintings. First, shamans bled from the nose when they entered trance to obtain visions of the spirit world. At this time, their `dying' in trance and bleeding paralleled the nasal bleeding of a dying eland. Secondly, the potent blood of an eland was, at least sometimes, used to make rock art images of these visions. Moreover, the accounts provided by Mapote and M corroborate one another in suggesting that different interest groups, men and women, were involved in various ways in the manufacture of paint and, further, that the manufacture of some paint was highly ritualized.

3.3 The making of rock paintings

The ways in which Bushman artists applied paint to rock surfaces has been much debated. They achieved remarkably fine lines and delicate detail; the lines are often as fine as those made by a thin lead pencil. How (1962: 33) noted that Mapote made small brushes from feathers and tiny reeds, but the very finest lines must have been made with something even finer, perhaps a quill or a sharp bone point.

The delicate workmanship that is evident everywhere in southern Africa suggests that it is most unlikely that shamans would have painted while in trance; if not actually unconscious, they tremble violently. More probably, they painted while in a normal state of consciousness, recalling their vivid glimpses of the spirit world and making powerful images of those visions and of eland, their principal source of animal-potency. Like Wordsworth's observation on poetry, Bushman rock art should probably be seen as powerful emotion recollected in tranquillity. In the Kalahari today, people listen intently as, the day after a dance, shamans recount their spiritual experiences; each account is accepted as a revelation even if it seems -to ordinary people who have not experienced the kaleidoscopic world of trance- to contradict someone else's account. Rock paintings depicting therianthropes, greatly elongated figures, bizarre animals and so forth may have, in some sense, paralleled the modern Bushman shamans' verbal reports of spiritual things. By looking at these paintings, people could obtain a vivid idea of what shamans saw in the spirit world. This parallel between paintings and verbal accounts of trance experience should, however, not be taken too far. The potent ingredients *qhang qhang* and eland blood caused paintings to be powerful `things-in-themselves', not just pictures or representations of other, much more important, things.

The status of rock art images as something more than mere pictures is further seen in the way in which some of them enter or leave cracks, steps or other inequalities in the rock face. Sometimes an antelope, a snake or a rain-animal is painted in such as way that it seems to be emerging from behind the rock surface. This feature of the art is probably related to the Bushman belief that the spirit world is reached by means of an underground journey. For some nineteenth-century shamans this journey started by diving (in their trance experience) into waterholes (Bleek 1935; cf. Biesele 1978). It seems probable that rock shelters were also sometimes seen as potential entrances to the spirit world and that the rock face was a kind of `veil' suspended between this world and the spirit world (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1990). Shaman-artists used their skills to coax the animal and spirit inhabitants of the spirit world from behind the rock and then, using ritually prepared, potent paint, to fix these visions on the rock for all to see.

Unfortunately, we do not know if this fixing of visions was accompanied by rituals or how a shaman-artist prepared him- or herself for the task. For instance, was the fixing of visions considered as dangerous as spiritual journeys to the other world? Perhaps, like the dance in which visions were acquired, this fixing of visions was also considered an appropriate occasion for the singing of 'medicine songs' to strengthen shamans in their work. Whatever the case, it seems unlikely that Bushman artists were anything like the detached ascetics of the Western Romantic fiction.

3.4. The ritual use of southern African rock paintings

Once made, many of the images seem to have continued to perform a significant ritual function. The rock shelters were not simply `galleries', as wri-

ters on rock art often call them, where people could view 'works of art'. As I have already argued, the paintings were 'things-in-themselves', not just pictures of things that existed elsewhere. Many of them were, moreover, made with special, ritually prepared paint and thus became reservoirs of supernatural potency.

Again, there is, unfortunately, little ethnographic information on precisely what happened to these potent images after shaman-artists had made them. On the face of it, it seems unlikely that the paintings would have simply dropped out of the ambit of Bushman ritual and belief. Indeed, such evidence as we do have suggests that they continued to play an important ritual function.

For instance, M said that, if a 'good' person placed his or her hand on a depiction of an eland, the potency locked up in the painting would flow into the person, thus giving him or her special powers. To demonstrate how this was done, she arranged my fingers so that my entire hand was on a depiction of an eland. As she did so, she cautioned that, if a 'bad' person did this, his or her hand would adhere to the rock and the person would eventually waste away and die.

The importance of touching, and not merely looking at, rock paintings is supported by evidence from the Western Cape Province where there are patches of paint that have been rubbed smooth (Yates *et al.* 1991). It is not entirely clear what the patches were rubbed with, but the smoothness of the rock, particularly in the centre of the patches, is easily discerned. Similarly, the making of the positive handprints that are common in some parts of the Western Cape was probably closely associated with ritual touching of the rock rather than with the making of 'pictures' of hands.

There is thus evidence that some of the paintings were not made merely to be looked at, like works of art in a Western gallery. After they had been made, they continued to be involved in rituals in ways that we do not fully understand, but it does seem that physical contact with some of the images facilitated the acquisition of supernatural potency.

In addition to physical contact, the images were important visually as well, but, again, not simply as Western notions of art suggest. This contention was borne out by M. She demonstrated how, long ago, Bushmen had danced in the painted rock shelter to which she took Jolly and me and how they had raised their arms and turned to the paintings when they wished to intensify their potency. As they danced and looked at the paintings, potency flowed from the images and entered into them. This was, I believe, her way of saying that the sight of the paintings deepened the dancers' trance experience.

More than that, the fixed visions already on the rock face probably contributed to the dancers' hallucinations, informing and constraining the stream of mental images that the human nervous system produces in altered states of consciousness. The painted images thus became part of a complex ritual of dancing, singing and clapping that controlled the spiritual, or hallucinatory, experiences of shamans and, possibly, other people as well.

As time went by, certain rock shelters acquired more and more of these potent spiritual images. In some shelters paintings were done one on top of another, thus building up multiple layers of images, the oldest ones fading into a blurred red background. The potency of paint, the ways in which some paintings enter or leave the rock surface, and the way in which the potency stored in the images could be tapped, all suggest that some of the most densely painted rock shelters must have been regarded as places of exceptional potency. Moreover, there can be little doubt that the shamans who lived and painted in those shelters enjoyed enhanced prestige and, in more recent times, political power as well (Dowson 1994). The art was therefore not something separate from daily life but was deeply embedded in the negotiation of socio-political relations. The making of paintings did not merely reflect those relations. On the contrary, the making of paintings should be seen as a highly ritualized way of reproducing, entrenching and, in some instances, challenging power structures.

Seen in the light of the evidence I have presented, the southern African painted images were clearly not just pictures of events or exercises in aesthetics. Rather, they were an integral part of a series of complex ritual procedures in which, first, social tensions and, secondly, tensions between socially acceptable visions and those novel visions thrown up by the nervous system were mediated. Ritual, in this sense, was 'theatre': some of the 'props' were rock art images that proclaimed and, indeed, were palpable, tangible evidence for the shamans' access to spiritual realities.

4. BEYOND SOUTHERN AFRICA

If the intimate relationship that existed between southern African rock art and ritual is to be taken as the source of an analogical argument that will extend this sort of relationship to other rock arts, the structure of the argument must -in each case- be clearly stated and subjected to scrutiny. I therefore

restrict the 'beyond' of my title to the Upper Palaeolithic parietal art of Western Europe, leaving aside the rock arts of the Americas, Australia and so forth. This restriction is useful because the structure of the analogical argument linking Upper Palaeolithic and southern African rock art has been set out elsewhere and need not be repeated in detail here (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 1992; Lewis-Williams 1991). As in my discussion of Bushman ritual and rock art, I concentrate on Upper Palaeolithic parietal paintings rather than engravings.

Briefly, the argument is founded on what I argue are secure 'relations of relevance' (see, for example, Wylie 1988) between altered states of consciousness and a defined progression of mental imagery that develops from the luminous, geometric entoptic phenomena seen in light trance to the overwhelming hallucinations of monsters, people and emotionally charged objects of deep trance. If depictions formally referable to all stages of this progression of mental imagery are found in a rock art, there is a strong implication that those images derived, at least in part, from the experiences of altered states of consciousness. If it is known that the rock art was made by a hunting and gathering society, there is a further implication that the people practised shamanism in one form or another. Confidence is lent to this form of argument by the southern African case. We know independently of the art (that is, from the ethnography) that its makers practised a form of shamanism. The formal parallels that are discernible between southern African rock art imagery and the mental imagery of altered states of consciousness can therefore be explained by the universality of the human nervous system and the ways in which it behaves in altered states. It is thus the universality of the human nervous system that provides a 'bridge' between nineteenth-century Bushman rock art and Upper Palaeolithic parietal art (see also Brown 1991). Both arts may be legitimately described as 'shamanic'. I now take these previously published conclusions as read and move on to elaborate them.

The altered states of consciousness that were implicated in the production of Upper Palaeolithic parietal art must have been to some, no doubt temporally and geographically varying, extent institutionalised. One of the reasons for institutionalising altered states of consciousness would have been to mediate the tension between the free-flow of mental imagery and the specific, limited range of socially sanctioned images that makes sense in a given society. As the tension between the novel, or aberrant, mental images of individuals and the canon of socially meaningful images was played out, power groups must have employed ritual to restrain and socialise the experiences of individuals. At the same time, rituals must have been developed to present the 'spiritual' experiences of those whose visions were sanctioned to the rest of the community, that is, to those who did not have personal access to the revelations of altered states of consciousness and who were therefore politically and socially to some extent disadvantaged. It seems reasonable to conclude that the whole process of the production and consumption of Upper Palaeolithic parietal art was ritualised and that these rituals were, broadly, shamanic.

Attempts to discover some of the elements and forms of these rituals must take full cognizance of the temporal and geographical diversity of Upper Palaeolithic art. The 20000- year period must not be homogenised into a replica of any single ethnographically observed society; multiple analogies and interpretations will be required to build up a multicomponent mosaic that fits the highly diverse empirical evidence of Upper Palaeolithic art. Because such a task would require too much detail for a paper such as this, the suggestions that I make should be seen as highly general and in need of temporal and geographical refinement. I simply suggest some broad features of the temporal trajectory of Upper Palaeolithic ritual and art.

5. UPPER PALAEOLITHIC RITUAL AND ART

Taking the four stages that I have identified in the production and consumption of southern African rock art as a model, I argue that (1) Upper Palaeolithic peoples' acquisition of imagery, (2) their manufacture of paint, (3) their making of rock art images, and (4) the ways in which they subsequently used these images were all ritualised.

5.1. The acquisition of imagery

As Dowson and I have argued (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988), much, but not all, of the imagery of Upper Palaeolithic art was acquired by shaman-artists in altered states of consciousness. During the course of the Upper Palaeolithic the rituals of image-acquisition almost certainly varied considerably in, first, the ways in which these rituals were socially situated and, secondly, the ways in which altered states were induced and experienced.

At some times, especially but not exclusively at the beginning of the Upper Palaeolithic, and

in some places these rituals of image-acquisition were probably communal. Like the Bushmen's trance dance, these rituals probably brought together large numbers of people, and shamans obtained their visions in the midst of society, witnessed not only by other shamans but also by ordinary people. Under such circumstances, there was a direct, visible association between the acquisition of visions and the body social. Ordinary people supported the shamans and encouraged them in the face of spiritual hazards. Such power relations as were under-written by the possession of visions were thus reproduced and entrenched by direct, virtually unmediated relations between shamans and ordinary people.

In such communal circumstances, the various participants would have experienced a range of altered states of consciousness. Those who were most intensely seeking visions may have used psychotropic drugs to induce deep trance. Others, caught up in the ritual dancing and music, believed that they could share some but not all of the insights that the leading shamans were experiencing. Still other people, on the fringe of the activity, were probably less intensely swept along by the ritual; they experienced euphoria and ecstasy but did not themselves see visions. On the other hand, some people may have felt themselves to be opposed to the whole ritual procedure.

More complex social and ritual relationships are suggested by those Magdalenian images that are deep underground and can be viewed by only a few people, perhaps only one person, at a time (Bender 1989; Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1993). These remote images imply something like a vision quest, as practised by, for instance, North American shamanic groups (cf. Whitley 1992), but not by the Bushmen. During the Magdalenian, shamans in search of repeated visions and novices seeking them for the first time seem to have separated themselves from society and, in the remote, dark, silent recesses of the caverns, sought the altered states of consciousness that would provide their visions. In some instances the often hastily executed rock art images of the remote areas may have been made in a light state of altered consciousness as the questers' mental imagery was projected onto rock surfaces rather like a slide or film show (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988); in other cases, the questers probably made images after they had reverted to a normal state of consciousness, as did the Bushmen.

5.2. The manufacture of paint

The paint that vision questers took with them into the depths of the caves, as well as that used to make large images nearer the entrances, was probably considered to have special, supernatural properties, as were at least some of the Bushmen's paints. At present we know that Upper Palaeolithic people took great care with the manufacture of paint and that they used different recipes (e.g., Clottes *et al.* 1990; Clottes 1993; Ballet *et al.* 1979; Vandiver 1983; Leroi-Gourhan and Allain 1979; Lorblanchet *et al.* 1990). These recipes should be considered to see if they contain any evidence for rituals. Whatever such a study may reveal, it seems likely that Upper Palaeolithic people would have considered the materials necessary for the fixing of visions to have properties commensurate with the potency of the visions themselves and that the preparation of paint would have become hedged around with prohibitions and rituals that would have defined social relations.

5.3. The making of rock paintings

The sheer quantity of paint needed for making large images seems to imply rituals of some sort. The images in the Hall of the Bulls and the Axial Gallery at Lascaux, for instance, demanded large quantities of paint and the construction of scaffolds (Leroi-Gourhan and Allain 1979). The making of these images therefore involved the active participation of a large number of people who went out to find the pigment and, possibly, the medium, who brought them back to the cave and mixed them, who built the scaffolds and, finally, who applied paint to large areas of rock surface. The rituals that attended the making of these paintings were, I argue, different from those performed in the depths of the caves, as, for example, in the Chamber of the Felines at Lascaux, where images were delineated by only a few strokes. Communally produced art needs to be distinguished from individually produced art; both kinds of art imply rituals that define and reproduce social relations, but they do so in different ways.

5.4. The ritual use of Upper Palaeolithic rock art

A further implication concerns the ways in which painted and engraved images were used. The large, impressive images in such places as the Hall of the Bulls at Lascaux or the Salon Noir at Niaux probably performed a function similar to many Bushman rock art images. Placed at or within comparatively easy reach of the entrances to Upper Palaeolithic caves, these images probably prepared questers for the visions that they would see in the depths of the caves. As I have said, people hallucinate what

they expect to hallucinate (or what they have been deliberately led to believe they will hallucinate), and we may postulate the performance of preparatory rituals that dramatically revealed communally made entrance art to vision-seekers (and to others as well) in an attempt to inform the hallucinations they would experience in remote solitude. Such rituals would have reduced the personal element by controlling, to some extent, the range of hallucinations that the nervous system generates and by alerting questers to only certain kinds of mental imagery. Indeed, social control of altered states of consciousness lies at the heart of shamanism.

5.5. Ritual, sound and art

Another common component of ritual deserves mention. Sound plays an important role in shamanic rituals, not only amongst Bushman groups but worldwide (for a review see Dobkin de Rios and Katz 1975). Rhythmic and audio driving induce altered states of consciousness and provide a framework for a visionary's concentration. Musical instruments are also used to imitate sounds made by animals and birds. There is evidence that music, or at any rate sound, was a component of Upper Palaeolithic rituals. A number of 'flutes' have been found in West and East European Upper Palaeolithic sites. Further, Huyge (1991) argues that the 'horn' held by the so-called Venus of Laussel is a scraped idiophone. These and other instruments, such as bull-roarers and drums, could have been used to suggest the presence of animals as well as to provide a hypnotic rhythm (see also Waller 1993). Given the Upper Palaeolithic understandings of the underworld and the rock face for which I have argued, the suggestion that sounds were produced by striking stalactites is particularly interesting (e.g. Dams 1984, 1985; cf. Needham 1967, and Tuzin 1984); some of the struck stalactites were marked with geometric motifs that probably derived from entoptic phenomena seen in an early stage of trance. I argue that the striking of stalactites would, in itself, have been a way of arousing and communicating with the spirit world that would have worked together with paintings, singing and dancing to constitute complex ritual sequences. An association between sound and art is also suggested by Reznikoff and Dauvois (1988) who argue that there is a correlation in some Ariège caves between areas of resonance and the presence of rock art. Maximum resonance, they claim, is achieved by the human voice, and this leads them to suggest that chanting may have been part of rituals that were associated with rock art (Scarre 1989).

5.6. Ritual cosmology and power

Although there were almost certainly major differences between the rituals associated with paintings and engravings near or at the entrances to Upper Palaeolithic caves and those situated in the depths, art in all parts of the caves displays a characteristic that suggests an important, fundamental commonality. In all parts of the caves, artists exploited natural features of rock surfaces in ways that imply that they believed the animals they were depicting existed behind the rock face; their task was to entice these spirit-animals through the rock so that they could establish a spiritual relationship with them that would empower them to perform their shamanic tasks (Lewis-Williams in press b). The Upper Palaeolithic cosmos was, as in many other shamanic societies, probably conceived of as tiered. Within such a cosmology, the spirit world was probably believed to be underground, and journeys into caves were probably believed to be journeys into that realm. Rituals formalising the manufacture of paint, the making of painted images and, indeed, the uses to which the images may have been subsequently put were probably all posited on the existence of a subterranean, animal-filled realm that held the supernatural potency that sustained the universe and, more especially, that shamans sought and harnessed for the good of society.

Control of this potency was reserved and protected for limited numbers of people by means of rituals. It seems that, during the course of the Upper Palaeolithic, as the depths of the caverns were increasingly explored, society became more and more complex and hierarchical, with political power being increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few shamans (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1993). The whole complex ritual process of acquiring visions, making rock art and using the images was implicated in power struggles, as was Bushman art during the nineteenth century (Dowson 1994).

6. FUTURE WORK

Taking southern African rock art as a starting point, I have shown that the acquisition of visions, the making of paint, the placing of images on the walls of rock shelters and the subsequent use of the paintings were stages in the production and consumption of Bushman rock art and that these stages were all embedded in rituals that reproduced social relations. Within this framework there was, nevertheless, room for individual Bushman shamans to ac-

quire novel visions and to use these visions and the representations that they made of them to subvert social relations for their own political ends.

Further, I argue that Upper Palaeolithic parietal art was, like southern African rock art, shamanic and that many of the images in the caves of Western Europe depict visions. The same series of four stages in the production and consumption of these depictions as I identified in the production and consumption of southern African rock art probably obtained in Western Europe. As in southern Africa, each stage was probably set in a ritual context; indeed, it would be hard to imagine that the 'fixing' of potent, supernatural images was *not* ritualised. If, as Dowson and I have argued (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988), altered states of consciousness lay at the heart of Upper Palaeolithic religion, those states must have been institutionalised and ritualised. Finally, the series of rituals associated with the production and consumption of rock art must have changed during the course of the Upper Palaeolithic as social relations changed.

These very general observations and hypotheses need to be refined and tested. First, we must reject Romantic notions of 'the artist' as an isolated genius driven by some powerful aesthetic imperative.Instead, we should construct hypotheses that situate the production and consumption of Upper Palaeolithic art in the changing social and economic processes of the time in which it was made (cf. Lewis-Williams 1982). Secondly, if we accept this theoretical position, we can start using multiple ethnographic analogies with strong relations of relevance, the distribution of art within the caves, data retrieved from excavations, paint analyses and so forth to build up an account of the changing association between art and ritual in the Upper Palaeolithic of Western Europe.

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[1]Bushman communities speak many mutually unintelligible languages. There is therefore no single Bushman word to cover all groups. "Bushman" is, in the view of some writers, a pejorative and sexist word, although some of the people themselves do choose to use it. "San", a Nama (Khoekhoen) word, is preferred by many, but by no means all, academic writers. Unfortunately, it means something like "vagabond" and is therefore also pejorative. There is no unanimity on which word should be used. In using "Bushman", I explicitly reject any pejorative or sexist connotations.

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