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### Shifting frameworks for understanding otherness

*The Cape Khoi in pre-1652 European travelogues, an early modern Latin letter, and the South African novel Eilande (2002)*

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## THESIS STATEMENTS

# Shifting Frameworks for Understanding Otherness

### The Cape Khoi in pre-1652 European Travelogues, an Early Modern Latin Letter, and the South African Novel *Eilande* (2002)

1. The formation of knowledge is a matter of framing, not of discovering 'facts'.
2. There seems to be little point in attempts to describe Cape texts from the decades following Van Riebeeck's landing as Dutch-South African or South African-Dutch texts, as they predate the concept of the nation state by roughly two centuries.
3. What is past is prologue: Study the past. (Inscription on the two pillars lining the entrance to the United States National Archives, Washington D.C.).
4. The example of Vasco da Gama, who, on Saturday 8 July 1497, had an Angolan slave put at his dinner table in a frustrated attempt to overcome the language barrier with his guests, the Khoi, admonishes us today to be aware that the designation 'Khoi', in turn, denotes separate clans, each with their own language and cultural identity.
5. The case of Grevenbroek, who was more of an ethnographer with good Latin than a Latinist with some ethnographic skills, shows the indispensability of Latin in the study of the past.

P.T.O.

6. *Eilande* certifies that the historical novel has been a popular medium in the postcolonial circumstance and a powerful instrument in healing such a society, because 'there is no such thing as a *single* correct view of any object under study but there are *many* correct views'. (White, H. (1978), *The Historical Text as Literary Artefact*, 47).
7. The relation between the urgency and impact of one's research on the one hand, and the distance to the place where it is carried out on the other, is one of exponential regression.
8. The linguistic reality of South Africa calls into question the alleged objectivity and impartiality of 'Academic' English.
9. The Khoi may stake a similar claim against the Europeans as the Native American princess Pocahontas when, in the title song to Disney's 33<sup>rd</sup> animated feature film, she sings the profound 'you think you own whatever land you land on'.
10. The Cape refreshment station was not founded by Jan van Riebeeck, but by another commander of the same name.
11. No matter how a day's grafting at a PhD goes down, lamb chops and pinotage are not only the most tasteful, but also the most versatile food and wine combination at the inevitably ensuing South African braai.