

**REPRESENTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF  
THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK AND THE  
MANYELETI GAME RESERVE,  
1926-2010.**

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**ABSTRACT**

In 1926 the Kruger National Park in South Africa became the first national park in Africa to accept visitors. Since that date there has been a propaganda campaign to convince people outside of the administration of the importance of the national park project and the value of the wildlife inside the parks. As a large tract of land in a land-hungry region of the country, the Kruger Park required both political and public support to ensure its survival. This attempt to communicate with the public is the subject of my thesis.

The idea of the national park, and the natural world that it contained, altered dramatically since 1926. At times the message was tightly managed, and at others that control was loosened. As various interests intervened and encroached, new discourses developed and struggled for influence. Contained within the messages around the park and its wildlife were ulterior strands and ideologies that impacted in various ways on the idea of the national park. Nationalism, race, gender, class and status all became constituent parts of a heterogeneous construction. My thesis interrogates those strands within the discourse on the Kruger National Park.

In 1967 the Manyeleti game reserve, on the western borders of the Kruger Park, became the first segregated game reserve for the exclusive use of black South Africans. Through this parallel project African visitors, who had been generally ignored in the Kruger Park setting, became the focus of propaganda efforts intended for a black audience. Race, gender, and class merged with the environmental messages in this unique setting to create new directions in conservationist rhetoric.

My thesis sets these diverse messages communicated at Manyeleti alongside those transmitted through and about the Kruger Park.

Conservation has been a dominant lens through which historians of the environment have regarded national parks and game reserves. Alfred Runte's seminal works on Yosemite, William Beinart and Peter Coates' comparative study on America and South Africa, and Jane Carruthers' work on the Kruger National Park all have strong conservationist weights to their inquiries. Yet the cultural aspects of national parks and reserves have also been an equally powerful parallel thread. The construction of the idea of nature and wilderness have been mainstays of American literature since the work of Roderick Nash, and were taken up most stridently by William Cronon, among others. Jane Carruthers and David Bunn have both worked on cultural factors in the history of the Kruger National Park, exploring the impact of Afrikaner nationalism on the creation and popularisation of the park.

Each of these works have been important in our understanding of how the national park idea developed, yet there are limitations in the current scholarship which this thesis addresses. Firstly, many works place their focus upon instrumental figures in the conservation story. I believe that the experience of the public, for whom the national parks were created, has been largely overlooked. Secondly, the public that has been envisaged as users of parks and game reserves has tended to be taken as white and urban. While not denying the predominance of this group in the national park story, my thesis expands the idea of the public to include various communities who were in receipt of all manner of park representations. This is most explicit in the work on Manyeleti, which builds upon a growing field of scholarship that looks at African engagement with the national park project, as seen in the work of Reuben Matheka and Adrian Browne. Thirdly, analyses of cultural representations of parks have tended to utilise a single medium, such as photography or architecture, to explore park communication with the public. My thesis makes use of the gamut of representational material to get a fuller sense of the representational space.

Lastly, this thesis applies social and cultural theory to provide a foundation from which to interrogate the representation of the Kruger Park, Manyeleti, and the wildlife inside. Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony helps to place the discursive material within a dynamic circuit of production and consumption that moves away from a purely ideologically driven analysis. Through such a lens class and status become more significant social forces in the process of representation,

alongside race, nationalism and gender. By envisaging the park, and the game reserve, as institutes of legitimisation (cultural spaces akin to opera houses or theatres), I have found that the work of Pierre Bourdieu on distinction sheds much light on the cultural usefulness of a space such as Kruger. Michel de Certeau has helped to temper this approach and make some space for the users as valuable agents in the production of meaning through the use of the representational material. In terms of analysing the discourses that go into this process of distinguishing, the work of the historian Michel Foucault has been instructive. Of particular assistance in deciphering representations of Kruger and the natural world in South Africa have been the concepts of 'encoding/decoding' and the 'regime of representation,' as discussed in the work of the cultural theorist Stuart Hall. From this theoretical foundation the ways in which discourse has reinvented and reinforced ideas of nature are examined.

In order to fully incorporate the 'regime of representation,' my thesis has taken a broad approach to its source material. In those sections on the external means of representation films, photographs, brochures, articles, guidebooks and websites have been analysed. To understand the representations at work on the perimeter legal codes, employment records, business plans and interviews have been particularly instructive. For the sections on representations made inside the park I have made much use of architectural plans, letters, minutes, maps, and interviews. Most material has been gathered either in the Kruger Park, the National Archives of South Africa in Pretoria, or at the British Library in London. Previous scholarship on the cultural materials surrounding national parks have relied upon one or two types of source for analysis. My research utilises a broader range in an attempt to capture a fuller picture of the regime of representation at work. Each cultural form, from the family photograph to the park map, exists within a discursive system. Without a breadth of sources I would argue this discursive system would have only partially been revealed.

The thesis is divided into chronologically determined parts, and then further into context and content driven chapters. Each of these chapters is further divided, organising the representational process spatially. By looking at external, perimetrical, and internal means of representation, the assorted discourses at play in different spaces can be more clearly understood. This permits a more inclusive understanding of the public than is often used by scholars, and allows for the insertion of more recipients of the national park messages that were being transmitted.

The first part explores the Kruger Park from its proclamation in 1926 until the restructuring of the National Parks Board in the 1950s. The focus is on the creation and transmission of a national park idea to a public unfamiliar with ideas of preservation or conservation. Chapter one outlines the administrative developments in the park, as well as the attitudes towards representation within the National Parks Board. Chapter two investigates the discursive landscape that was forged during this period. A principal theme of this section is the evolution of the park as a cultural form that enabled social distinction. The second part begins in 1951 and explores the engagement of a more informed public with the national park idea and the tensions that arose out of particular park policies. It also explores the Manyeleti game reserve, which opened in 1967 for an African middle class clientele and has attracted no historical scholarship to date. Chapter three details the social and political developments in South Africa that had bearing on the Kruger Park's representational strategy, while chapter four provides the administrative context at Manyeleti. In chapter five, the content delivered to patrons of the park and reserve is explored, concentrating on specific media and identifying significant themes. The final part explores the Kruger Park from 1990 until the very recent past. Chapter six investigates the way in which the park managed its transition to the new South Africa. The perimetrical becomes an important space of interaction with the inclusion of groups living around the park via community forums and various educational programmes.

By using a range of material, and by taking this theoretical approach, my thesis challenges various assumptions about nature, national parks, and the public in South Africa. The national park becomes a key coordinate in the cultural map of South Africa. Through the discourse on it, ways and means to socially distinguish were forged, that allowed for a variety of different ideas about the Kruger Park to emerge. The African experience of game reserves is also brought to light, and Africans are discussed as consumers of nature rather than merely victims of it. The concept of wilderness, also, is shown to be more flexible and adaptable than many studies have allowed. Finally, my thesis confronts the assumption that national parks were always understood by the public as undisturbed 'Edens', or slavishly followed the lead of key individuals. Instead, a more perceptive and discerning public is revealed, that discusses nature as a modern and dynamic entity.

Such a study adds to the debate within environmental history on a global level, speaking to the work on American national parks just as much as to the work on African ones. Yet as a work of cultural analysis, my thesis also adds to newer fields in African history, such as the history of tourism and the history of leisure, which are still comparatively nascent in the South African context. The inclusion of Africans in this story as consumers of a pastime traditionally associated with white clients opens up numerous possibilities for further research.

## **ABSTRACT (SHORT VERSION)**

In 1926 the Kruger National Park in South Africa became the first national park in Africa to accept visitors. Since that date there has been a propaganda campaign to convince people outside of the administration of the importance of the national park project and the value of the wildlife inside the parks. As a large tract of land in a land-hungry region of the country, the Kruger Park required both political and public support to ensure its survival. This attempt to communicate with the public is the subject of my thesis.

The idea of the national park, and the natural world that it contained, altered dramatically since 1926. At times the message was tightly managed, and at others that control was loosened. As various interests intervened and encroached, new discourses developed and struggled for influence. Contained within the messages around the park and its wildlife were ulterior strands and ideologies that impacted in various ways on the idea of the national park. Nationalism, race, gender, class and status all became constituent parts of a heterogeneous construction. My thesis interrogates those strands within the discourse on the Kruger National Park.

In 1967 the Manyeleti game reserve, on the western borders of the Kruger Park, became the first segregated game reserve for the exclusive use of black South Africans. Through this parallel project African visitors, who had been generally ignored in the Kruger Park setting, became the focus of propaganda efforts intended for a black audience. Race, gender, and class merged with the environmental messages in this unique setting to create new directions in conservationist rhetoric. My thesis sets these diverse messages communicated at Manyeleti alongside those transmitted through and about the Kruger Park.





## INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

Nature's show ground.<sup>1</sup>

This epithet encapsulates much of the complexity contained within the idea of the Kruger National Park. James Stevenson-Hamilton, the first warden of the park, was reflecting on his achievements when he used this phrase to describe the place that he had helped found in 1926. His readers, largely preservationists from across the imperial establishment, had mostly never visited the Kruger Park, but all recognized its status as a showpiece institution, and as a 'show ground' *par excellence* for the natural world. Yet despite its succinctness, the phrase captures more than this one reading. The juxtaposition of 'Nature' and 'show ground' implies exhibition, demonstration, and performance. It recognizes the park as a gathering place, as a nexus point for the transmission of knowledge. It implies a populated place where an audience gathers to see a 'show'. It insinuates a takeover by populist forms of entertainment. It indicates the approach of hotels and music halls. It is both literal and metaphorical. It evokes a multitude of meanings.

This thesis is a cultural history of a key national park and game reserve in South Africa. It interrogates them as socially or culturally constructed spaces. In some respects, it is clear that those two entities have been constructed, in that they have been legislatively designated.<sup>2</sup> In that sense their construction is obvious. Yet in order

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<sup>1</sup> J. Stevenson-Hamilton, 'A Game Warden Reflects,' *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, No. 54, 1946, p.20.

<sup>2</sup> I. Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge, 1999), p.13.

to survive and become socially relevant, they needed to generate meanings that would ensure popular and political support. Those meanings shifted and evolved over time as the idea of national parks and their realization in South Africa developed. This thesis tracks and interrogates those meanings.

At the heart of those meanings was the desire for the national park to become culturally significant in South Africa. This thesis argues that the park had to become a 'show ground' of sorts to acquire that significance: a space of cultural happening. The park became an overtly cultural idea that secured coordinates to enable comparison with other cultural practices. From there the park developed meanings and purposes that tied the national park idea into broader networks of distinction at work in South Africa. Various groups used and developed these meanings to help them distinguish, discriminate and differentiate themselves from others. This became part of the everyday understanding of the park, and when looking at the historical sociology of ideas and knowledge, it is the everyday understandings that are most important. As Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann have argued in their seminal work on social construction, 'common sense contains innumerable pre- and quasi-scientific interpretations about everyday reality, which it takes for granted.'<sup>3</sup> It is this 'common sense' around the idea of the national park that this thesis both reconstructs and deconstructs. It explores the momentum behind those 'taken-for-granted' interpretations, and highlights the power dynamics contained within the 'common sense' meanings.

For the conservationists in South Africa, the public was in constant need of instruction. The borders of knowledge surrounding conservation kept changing and public ideas of nature and national parks never quite matched those at the helm of the South African conservation departments. Often the national park concept, along with conservationism more generally, acted as an evangelical movement, with conversion at the forefront of the minds of the authors, educators, filmmakers, information officers and guides who interacted with the public and tried to garner support for their ideal. This thesis examines the knowledge about the Kruger Park and its wildlife that was produced and circulated from its inception in 1926 through to the recent past.

The Kruger National Park makes an excellent case study for several reasons. Firstly, it was the first national park in Africa to accept visitors on a large scale.

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<sup>3</sup> P. Berger and T. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, (London, 1991), p.34.

Secondly, it has proved a popular national park, both with South Africans and people from overseas (three cars visited Kruger in its opening year and by the 1950s the park was welcoming over a hundred thousand visitors per annum, which rose to over a million after the turn of the millennium). Thirdly, partly because of its popularity, the Kruger Park came to represent much of nature in the mindset of many members of the public. Fourthly, the Kruger Park produced large quantities of promotional material in an attempt to reconfigure popular conceptions of the park ideal: it took an active and anxious role in the production of meaning about itself. Following on from this, the park inspired a raft of visual image and literature by external seats of production, from film companies to publishing firms. Lastly, Kruger was often the testing ground for new ventures concerning public engagement in national parks in South Africa: from environmental education to film shows.<sup>4</sup> For these reasons the Kruger Park is an apt example for the investigation of meaning and the national park idea more broadly.

This thesis widens the traditional lens of national park literature by exploring the Manyeleti game reserve alongside the Kruger Park. The history of national parks and game reserves in South Africa has almost exclusively explored white interests in the history of conservation. Manyeleti, however, was a small game reserve established on the borders of the Kruger Park in 1967 for the exclusive use of black South Africans. Its history complicates the relationships between conservation, race, class and gender, and acts as a counterpoint to the Kruger Park. Most importantly, perhaps, Manyeleti enables a discussion of African engagement with game reserves that extends beyond the African as victim to include the African as consumer.

Much of the literature on the Kruger National Park has highlighted the linkage between the park and white nationalism.<sup>5</sup> The representations and perceptions of the park have tended to be viewed within this theoretical context.<sup>6</sup> These studies have been important in understandings of the Kruger Park as a vehicle of ideology. However, I argue that the park was connected to other important social and cultural impulses that have been neglected in South African studies. As various interests intervened and encroached on the national park idea, new discourses developed and struggled for influence. Conservation, nationalism, patriarchy, race, class and status

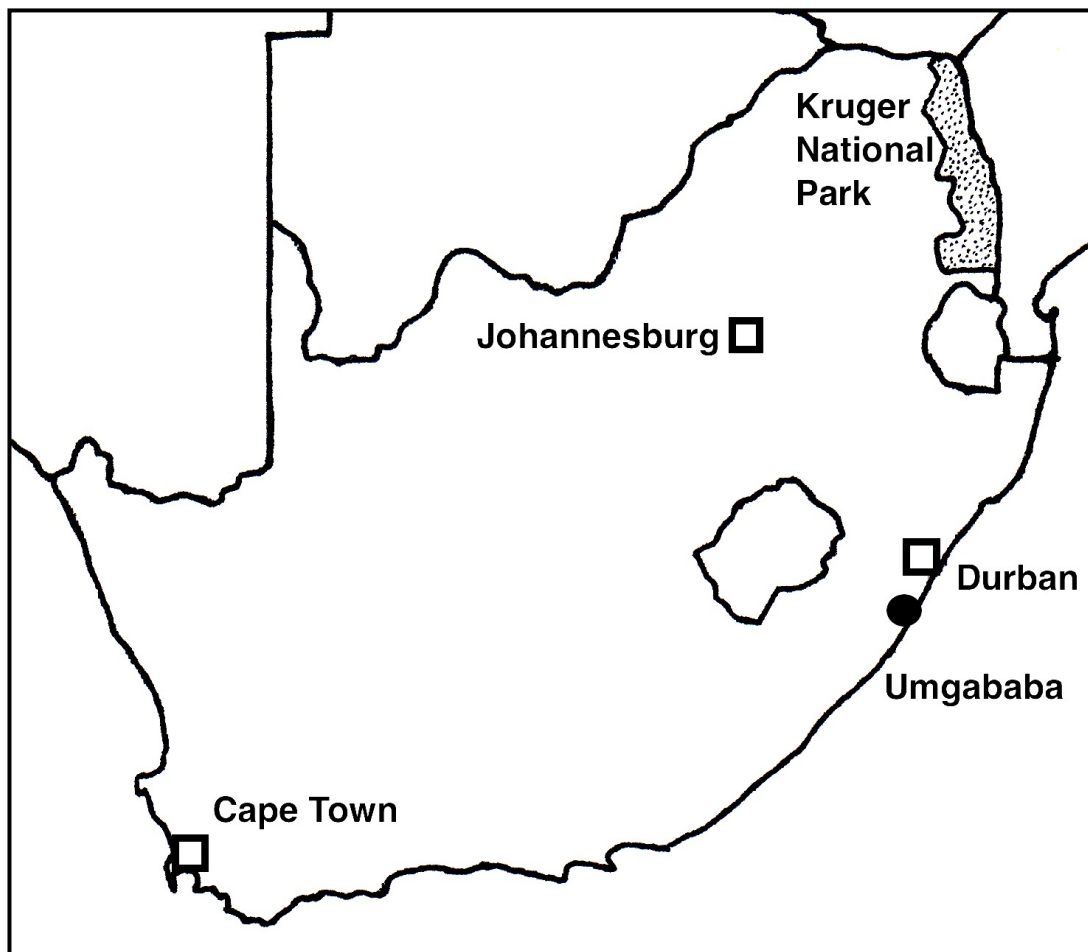
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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, *African Wild Life*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 1967, p.187.

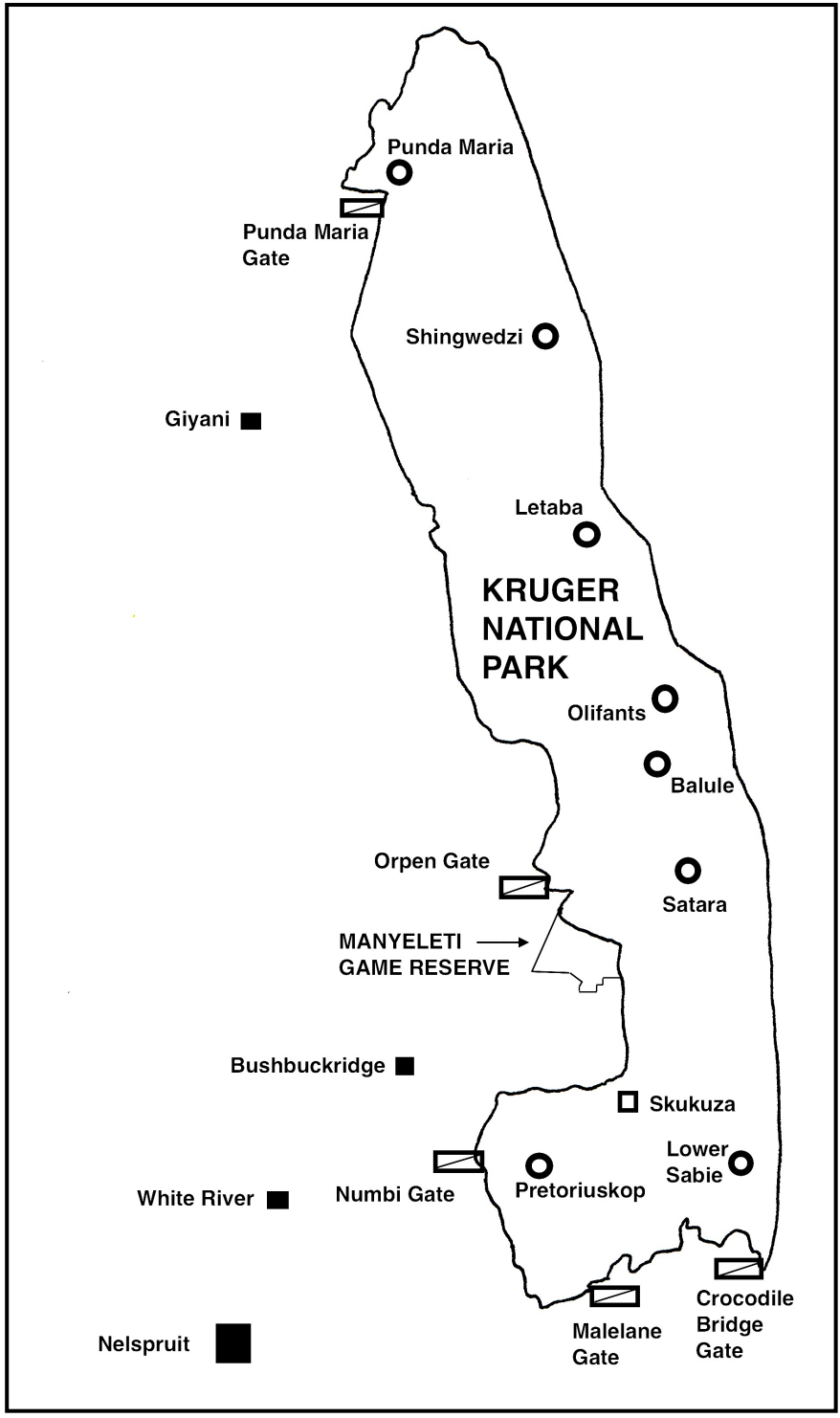
<sup>5</sup> See J. Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History*, (Pietermaritzburg, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> D. Bunn, 'An Unnatural State: Tourism, Water and Wildlife Photography in the Early Kruger National Park,' in W. Beinart and J. McGregor (eds.), *Social History and African Environments*, (Oxford, 2003), pp.199-218.

all became constituent parts of a heterogeneous construction, and ways by which people could discriminate. In a similar way protagonists of Manyeleti attempted to construct ideas of nature for an exclusively black audience, however its unique conditions brought about variations that make it an important contrasting case study. Ultimately, both the Kruger Park and Manyeleti were tracts of land onto which meanings were placed. The story of meaning in this context is not simply the story of the imposition of ideology. It is a story of confrontation between dominant and alternative understandings. It is a story of fluidity and mutability. My thesis interrogates this complex construction that has for so many been the predominant lens through which people have understood 'nature' itself.



*Fig 0.1 Map showing the location of the Kruger National Park*



*Fig 0.2 Map showing Kruger National Park with the main rest camps, entry gates, and surrounding towns*

## The Historiography of Nature and Culture

The complex relationship between national parks, nature and culture has attracted much scholarship in recent decades. This section provides an overview of this literature, beginning with a summary of key texts that have explored the history of the Kruger National Park. From there I evaluate the historiography surrounding nature, national parks and wildernesses that has developed in recent decades. The section concludes with a summary of gaps in the literature that this thesis addresses.

The scholarship on the eastern Transvaal and the Kruger National Park in particular is both pioneering and limited. Some highly innovative studies have emerged from work conducted in the Kruger Park archives, yet the park has also not produced as many scholarly works of history as it perhaps deserves. Works of zoological and ecological significance have been the mainstay of the academic output about Kruger. Some of this material has been generated by the park administration itself, which, aside from publishing an academic journal, has also released collections of essays as well as histories of the park written by former senior staff members.<sup>7</sup>

The preeminent critical discussion of the Kruger National Park has been the social and political history by Jane Carruthers. She offered a dissection of the political machinations required to both establish a reserve in the region, and later to have it transformed into the country's first national park. The main cultural thrust of her thesis was that the national park needed to be imagined and subsequently incorporated into white identity and, more specifically, Afrikaner nationalism.<sup>8</sup> In such a way the Kruger Park became a significant unifying factor in the creation of a white South Africa. The park has been a fruitful source for many of her other works. She has argued that Kruger saw a fairly rapid transformation into a scientific and biological entity during the 1940s and particularly the 1950s when the park became a part of the patronage network available to the National Party.<sup>9</sup> Elsewhere she has provided a

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, J. DuToit, K. Rogers and H. Biggs (eds.), *The Kruger Experience: Ecology and Management of Savanna Heterogeneity*, (London, 2003), and S. Joubert, *The Kruger National Park: A History*, 3 vols., (Johannesburg, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p.48.

<sup>9</sup> J. Carruthers, 'Conservation and Wildlife Management in South African National Parks 1930s-1960s,' *Journal of the History of Biology*, Vol. 41, No. 2, Summer 2008, pp. 203-236.

brief history on early tourism in the park, as well as a detailed biography of the first warden of the park, James Stevenson-Hamilton.<sup>10</sup>

Elaborating on Carruthers' work, David Bunn explored the act of 'seeing' in the Kruger National Park. By examining photographs and news articles he unraveled what visitors to the park presumed to see and what they expected to encounter on their trip, thereby establishing how white political support for the Park manifested itself through particular visuals and via the actual experience of a visit.<sup>11</sup> Recent work by the archaeologist Lynne Meskell has also explored the complex relationship between nature and culture in the Kruger context.<sup>12</sup> Concentrating upon the role of heritage in the park, Meskell argues that the rise in importance of heritage in the park has come within certain constraints, most notably the power of conservationism and a neoliberal agenda that has required heritage to show its ability to fund itself. To help contextualize this process, Meskell has painted Kruger's history as composite. She describes several tangential histories of the park, including African, colonial, social and military, among others. This multiplicity of Kruger's past is something this thesis shares with Meskell's work.

Other significant studies of the area have looked at the process of proletarianisation and the impact that that has had on particular communities. Patrick Harries has explored how the Makuleke community coped with a dominant Kruger Park and its accompanying restrictions upon natural resource use.<sup>13</sup> Stanley Trapido similarly examined the game reserves in the Transvaal as a source for labour, as well as the limits that they placed upon African land use.<sup>14</sup>

This thesis draws on the more cultural aspects of work by Carruthers and Bunn in particular, rather than the more materialist investigations of Trapido and others. The thesis fits more broadly into a longer history of nature as culture. Indeed, the concept of nature as a cultural constituent of society shares its history with that of

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<sup>10</sup> J. Carruthers, 'Full of Rubberneck Waggon and Tourists': The Development of Tourism in South Africa's National Parks and Protected Areas,' in W. Frost and C. Michael Hall (eds.), *Tourism and National Parks: International Perspectives on Development, Histories and Change*, (London, 2009), and J. Carruthers, *Wildlife and Warfare: The Life of James Stevenson-Hamilton*, (Pietermaritzburg, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> D. Bunn, 'An Unnatural State.'

<sup>12</sup> L. Meskell, *The Nature of Heritage: The New South Africa*, (Chichester, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> P. Harries, 'A Forgotten Corner of the Transvaal': Reconstructing the History of a Relocated Community through Oral Testimony and Song', in B. Bozzoli (ed.), *Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives*, (Johannesburg, 1987).

<sup>14</sup> S. Trapido, 'Poachers, proletarians and gentry in the Early Twentieth-Century Transvaal,' unpublished seminar paper, 1983.

the field of environmental history itself. Clarence Glacken's seminal work on the history of the idea of nature, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore*, was the first to detail the debt owed to past understandings of nature, reaching back to Ancient Greek philosophers for foundations, and tracking those seeds through history into Romantic notions of nature in the eighteenth century.<sup>15</sup> Glacken's work inspired other historians to trace the origins of modern conceptions of nature at the macro-level, stimulating a major trend in environmental history.<sup>16</sup> Keith Thomas' study of animals in early modern English society, for example, placed the genesis of modern attitudes to animals and nature at the point that people began to urbanise and remove themselves from the wild.<sup>17</sup>

This longer-term lens was, in part, a reaction to the alternative strand in the historiography of nature and culture that emphasized the developments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Roderick Nash, publishing in the same year as Glacken, produced an equally classic work of environmental history that interrogated the evolution of the concept of 'wilderness' in American culture since the mid-1800s. For Nash, urbanization and the resultant feelings of overcrowding, alongside the concomitant occurrence of technological development, caused a 'wild nature' to gradually make 'economic and intellectual sense'.<sup>18</sup> Nash's study stressed the impact and influence of cultural forms in the creation of ideas about wilderness. Writing twelve years later, Alfred Runte both challenged and extended Nash's argument. Runte argued that initial discourses of nature stemmed around a 'monumentalist' outlook, that conceived of natural phenomena as quasi-cultural spectacles on par with European architectural marvels. However, for Runte this trend gave way to an increasing pressure from ecological thinking, and the rise of a scientific accent to concepts of nature from the 1930s.<sup>19</sup> The subject underpinning both Nash and Runte's works was the national park, which epitomized for both scholars the ideas of nature and wilderness that were held in the American imagination.

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<sup>15</sup> C. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, (Los Angeles, 1967).

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, P. Coates, *Nature: Western Attitudes since Ancient Times*, (Oxford, 1995).

<sup>17</sup> K. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800*, (London, 1983).

<sup>18</sup> R. Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (New Haven, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn., 1982), p.343. Originally published in 1967.

<sup>19</sup> A. Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, (London, 1979), p.188.

In the historiography of African parks and nature, much of the early literature interrogated the trajectory of conservationist thinking on the continent. The initial position was the concept of the conservationist as ‘penitent butcher’.<sup>20</sup> This progressivist stance viewed wealthy Europeans paying penance for previous malpractice by becoming protagonists in the story of preservation and conservation. More nuanced versions of this argument were developed in the 1980s by historians such as John MacKenzie, David Anderson and Richard Grove, who saw conservation very much as a European legacy, imposed from the imperial metropole.<sup>21</sup> More recent overviews of conservation history in Africa have made space for organisations and their strategies for engaging with the public.<sup>22</sup> This top down approach can be seen in the parallel literature on tourism, while film studies have also tended to emphasize the European centre.<sup>23</sup> More recently, historians have begun to unravel many of the influences inbuilt within the European conservationist viewpoint to expose a more nuanced complexity at work. For example, Helen Tilley has shown that no consensus existed within the colonial scientific community regarding indigenous knowledge, and as a result colonial science was never as unitary or unified as previously thought.<sup>24</sup>

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Since the work of Nash and Runte, there have been two channels to access past conceptions of nature: cultural and ecological. This dichotomy has tended to flavor much environmental history over the last few decades, with historians often electing for either a cultural analysis examining poetry and landscape painting, or a more systematic appraisal concentrating on conservationist science. More recently, however, the literature has begun to make use of blended interpretations of nature and

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<sup>20</sup> R. Fitter and P. Scott, *The Penitent Butchers: 75 Years of Wildlife Conservation*, (London, 1978).

<sup>21</sup> J. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism*, (Manchester, 1988), and D. Anderson and R. Grove, ‘The Scramble for Eden: Past, Present and Future in African Conservation’, in D. Anderson and R. Grove, *Conservation in Africa: People, Policies and Practice*, (Cambridge, 1987), p.3.

<sup>22</sup> W. Adams, *Against Extinction: The Story of Conservation*, (London, 2004).

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, T. Selwyn, ‘Introduction,’ in T. Selwyn (ed.), *The Tourist Image: Myths and Myth Making in Tourism*, (Chichester, 1996), p.2, and K. Dunn, ‘Lights... Camera... Africa: Images of Africa and Africans in Western Popular Films of the 1930s’, *African Studies Review*, Vol. 39, No. 1, April 1996, p.149.

<sup>24</sup> H. Tilley, ‘African Environments and Environmental Sciences: The African Research Survey, Ecological Paradigms and British Colonial Development, 1920-1940,’ in W. Beinart and J. McGregor (eds.), *Social History and African Environments*, (Oxford, 2003), p.127.

culture, conceiving of eco-cultures, eco-literacies, and ‘anthropocentric natures’.<sup>25</sup> Such conceptions fuse cultural and scientific forces, and reinsert people back into nature as actors and agents within it, rather than commentators on it speaking from an imagined ‘outside’. Various tools and methods of engaging with nature, from photography to farming practice, became used synchronically to understand man’s complex history with the natural world.

A significant strain within the cultural scholarship on nature and, to a lesser extent, national parks, has been the role of social construction in forming and developing ideas. In an overview of the term ‘park’, Karen Jones and John Wills gave an excellent illustration of the range of constructions relating to green spaces in existence.<sup>26</sup> One of the most vociferous proponents of social constructionism in relation to the environment, and particularly the concept of wilderness, has been William Cronon. For him, nature was a ‘quite profoundly human creation’ and the ‘creation of very particular human cultures at very particular moments in human history.’<sup>27</sup> For Cronon, the formation of particular constructions, such as the ‘sublime’ or ‘the frontier,’ were results of the needs of particular groups to critique modern society, rather than any objective viewpoint. Jonathan Adams and Thomas McShane adopted this angle in their thesis of the ‘myth of wild Africa’, in which they argued that aristocratic conceptions of nature dominated the ways in which wildlife in Africa was viewed, with detrimental impacts upon perceptions of African environmental responsibility.<sup>28</sup>

Neil Smith interrogated the needs of capitalism in modern society to explain the relationship of conceptions of nature to class interests. His ‘production of nature’ thesis described how ‘capital transforms the shape of the entire world’ and by necessity separated the natural world from the world of capitalism in order to prevent social relations within nature.<sup>29</sup> Smith’s thesis has been influential in the field of environmental history and has led to many fascinating studies of nature’s relationship

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<sup>25</sup> S. Pilgrim and J. Pretty, ‘Nature and Culture: An Introduction,’ in S. Pilgrim and J. Pretty (eds.), *Nature and Culture: Rebuilding Lost Connections*, (London, 2010), p.4.

<sup>26</sup> K. Jones and J. Wills, *The Invention of the Park: From the Garden of Eden to Disney’s Magic Kingdom*, (Cambridge, 2005).

<sup>27</sup> W. Cronon, ‘The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,’ in W. Cronon (ed.), *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, (New York, 1995), p.69.

<sup>28</sup> J. Adams and T. McShane, *The Myth of Wild Africa: Conservation Without Illusions*, (London, 1996), p.60.

<sup>29</sup> N. Smith, *Uneven Development : Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, (New York, 1984), p.xiv.

to class, production and consumption. A particular trend has focused upon the increase in the interest in national parks, and its relationship to the dramatic changes taking place within the American economy during the twentieth century. For example, Lawrence Lipin saw the rise of new consumer relations within west coast society lead to a shift in the way people were encouraged to engage with nature. The environment was transformed from something to be made productive through labour into something to consume as product.<sup>30</sup> Hal Rothman's study of the expansion of tourism in the American west argued that because tourism followed the model set by industrial capital, growth and profit became the prime motors behind development, leading to highly influential but destructive pressures at the tourist centres.<sup>31</sup>

Where Smith's Marxist analysis of space was inherently economic, more recent work on nature and national parks in America has begun to conceive of nature as tied up with broader ideological structures. For Richard Grusin, in a work of eco-critical cultural historicism, the history of national parks was tied up in the utilization of ideas of nature to advance the interests of dominant groups within society. The national park, for Grusin, was a 'complex technology' that played an active role in the 'establishing of modernity' and all its associated racial, gender and class dynamics.<sup>32</sup> Karl Jacoby's study of local actors in and around conservation hotspots and national parks, has served to highlight the rearranging of power structures that occur on the local level once conservationists enter an area and shape local conditions.<sup>33</sup> Other studies have focused upon particular dynamics. For example, the relationship between national parks and ideas of race, nation, nationality and nationhood have been a fruitful area for discussion.<sup>34</sup> This approach was led in the African context by Carruthers and her study of the Kruger Park.<sup>35</sup> The role of wildlife has also been inserted into this vein of the literature. For example, Glen Elder, Jennifer Wolch, and Jody Emel have argued persuasively for the use of animals in the production of

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<sup>30</sup> L. Lipin, *Workers and the Wild: Conservation, Consumerism, and Labor in the Oregon, 1910-30*, (Urbana, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> H. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth Century American West*, (Lawrence, 1998).

<sup>32</sup> R. Grusin, *Culture, Technology, and the Creation of America's National Parks*, (Cambridge, 2004), p.13.

<sup>33</sup> K. Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation*, (London, 2001).

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, I. Whyte, *Landscape and History Since 1500*, (London, 2002), p.173.

<sup>35</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*.

American identity and the ‘production of cultural difference’ through the distinguishing of acceptable and unacceptable practices that involve animals.<sup>36</sup>

William Beinart has highlighted the longevity of conservationist propaganda that informed public opinion in South Africa on issues regarding certain species.<sup>37</sup> For some historians the depictions and understandings of wildlife had a materialist basis that in a sense echoes colonial perceptions that saw cultivation and wildlife as incompatible.<sup>38</sup> In this scholarship, the profit motive is presented as a principal determinant in how a particular species was seen.<sup>39</sup> Technologies and the requirements of imperialism have also been viewed as key contributing factors in the depiction of wildlife.<sup>40</sup> More recent scholarship has begun to look at the imagery itself. Much work has tended to follow the mould set by Adams and McShane and their ‘myth of wild Africa’ thesis. However, other work is interrogating the imagery as imagery, and highlighting themes and motifs that show an empathy with the landscape and wildlife itself.<sup>41</sup> There are equally other works that are challenging scholars to reconsider how we connect with wildlife imagery completely, by taking a more activist perspective that incorporates emotional connections with the wildlife being portrayed.<sup>42</sup>

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Critical in the process of the construction of meaning are the channels through which meaning was communicated. Recent scholarship has begun to examine these channels and interrogate some of the influences driving them in particular directions. These

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<sup>36</sup> G. Elder, J. Wolch and J. Emel, ‘Le Practique Sauvage: Race, Place, and the Human-Animal Divide,’ in J. Wolch and J. Emel (eds.), *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics, and Identity in the Nature-Culture Borderlands*, (London, 1998), p.72.

<sup>37</sup> W. Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa: Settlers, Livestock, and the Environment, 1770-1950*, (Oxford, 2003), p.249.

<sup>38</sup> R. Hingston, ‘Proposed British National Parks for Africa’, *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 77, No. 5, May 1931, p.401.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, L. van Sittert, ‘Bringing in the Wild: The Commodification of Wild Animals in the Cape Colony/Province c.1850-1950,’ *Journal of African History*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 2005, p.269.

<sup>40</sup> H. Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*, (London, 1990).

<sup>41</sup> W. Beinart and D. Schafer, ‘Hollywood in Africa 1947-62: imaginative construction and landscape realism,’ paper presented at ‘Wild Things: Nature and the Social Imagination,’ Environmental History Symposium, Oxford, September 16 2011.

<sup>42</sup> J. Zammit-Lucia, ‘Visual culture and our understanding of the environment,’ paper presented at ‘Wild Things: Nature and the Social Imagination,’ Environmental History Symposium, Oxford, September 16 2011.

studies have explored advertisements, pamphlets and architecture to establish some of the dynamics at work in the construction of the idea of national parks or wilderness.<sup>43</sup> Photography and its role in the creation of meaning around the environment was the basis for a study by Finis Dunaway. For Dunaway, the photograph ‘fused religious concepts with scientific knowledge’ to create imagery with ‘transcendent significance’ and was, as a result, crucial in the fostering of popular support for the national park project.<sup>44</sup>

Another recent area of fertile research has centred on the relationship between roads, cars and national parks. Initial scholarship had acknowledged the role of roads and cars in making national parks accessible, and their significance ended there. For Paul Sutter, this conception of the road was insufficient, as was the literature that dichotomized wilderness into either ethnocentric histories of dispossession or overtly cultural constructions dedicated to consumerism. Such studies did an injustice to the wilderness idea by depicting it solely as something brimming with weaknesses. Instead, Sutter reimagined wilderness as a relative term for contemporary actors, which should not be so concretely applied. There was instead a ‘collective uneasiness with the enormity of change’, and the car was a key agent in that change.<sup>45</sup> David Louter has developed this line of thinking, arguing that for most Americans nature was inseparable from its national parks, and that roads were central to this point of view. The cars made it possible for people to enter nature and thereby fulfill the democratic purpose of the national park.<sup>46</sup>

The impact of these constructions of nature has also attracted much discussion. At its heart, much of the debate revolves around the relationship between cultural and physical constructions of nature. The concept of wilderness, and the manner in which it has been created, has again formed a convenient fulcrum. Both Daniel Brockington and Roderick Neumann regard conservation as the imposition of

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<sup>43</sup> See, for example, R. Pavlik, ‘In harmony with the landscape: Yosemite’s built environment, 1913-40,’ in A. Runte, R. Orsi and M. Smith-Boranzini (eds.), *Yosemite and Sequoia: A Century of California National Parks*, (London, 1993), p.104, and G. Zezulka-Mailloux, ‘Laying the Tracks for Tourism: Paradoxical Promotion and the Development of Jasper National Park,’ in I. S. Maclaren (ed.), *Culturing Wilderness in Jasper National Park: Studies in Two Centuries of Human History in the Upper Athabasca River Watershed*, (Edmonton, 2007).

<sup>44</sup> F. Dunaway, *Natural Visions: The Power of Images in American Environmental Reform*, (Chicago, 2005), p.xviii.

<sup>45</sup> P. Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement*, (Seattle, 2002), p.14.

<sup>46</sup> D. Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington’s National Parks*, (London, 2006).

conservation ideals that originated at a distance.<sup>47</sup> The resulting clash between European ideas of wildlife generated through centuries of art and literature, and local conceptions formulated by centuries of particular practices, caused immense disruption. In this reckoning, national parks appear as socio-political forces working to particular, colonially-derived agendas.<sup>48</sup> In the southern African context Maano Ramutsindela has argued that a similarly hegemonic view from Europe and America has determined modern patterns of conservation in the region. This dominance, he has maintained, has preferred the continuation of ‘hierarchical’ structures within local communities around national parks, despite rhetoric that lauds the rights and roles of park neighbours. This, coupled with a neoliberal agenda that has stemmed from states retreating from conservation, has meant profit and conservation ideals have constrained social opportunities around national parks in southern Africa.<sup>49</sup>

In the American context, Mark Spence has argued that in order to create a romantic wilderness for public consumption, Native American inhabitants had to be removed. Wilderness therefore came into direct opposition to local land claims and usages.<sup>50</sup> Others have seen pragmatic or materialist reasons behind removals, rather than purely ideational. The national park in such models became a tool to assist the development of sport hunting, game conservation or assimilation.<sup>51</sup> Theodore Catton complicated the debate by arguing that the idea of habitation, rather than being simply anathema to the national park ideal, must be included in certain examples, such as parks in Alaska, and this inclusion muddies any attempt to write people as ‘residents’ out of national park histories.<sup>52</sup>

Local agency in the national park story is a recent area of growth within the historiography. In the African context this arguably began with Terence Ranger’s studies of the conflict between African nationalists and the Rhodesian Parks Board over the meanings behind the Matopos Hills. In his study, Ranger illuminated the

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<sup>47</sup> D. Brockington, *Fortress Conservation: The Preservation of the Mkomazi Game Reserve, Tanzania*, (Oxford, 2002), p.4.

<sup>48</sup> R. Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles Over Livelihood and Nature Preservation*, (London, 1998), p.9.

<sup>49</sup> M. Ramutsindela, *Parks and People in Postcolonial Societies: Experiences in Southern Africa*, (Boston, 20014), p.143.

<sup>50</sup> M. Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Park*, (Oxford, 1999).

<sup>51</sup> T. Binnema and M. Niemi, “‘Let the Line be Drawn Now’: Wilderness, Conservation, and the Exclusion of Aboriginal People from Banff National Park in Canada,” *Environmental History*, Vol. 11, No. 4, October 2006, p.724.

<sup>52</sup> T. Catton, *Inhabited Wilderness: Indians, Eskimos, and National Parks in Alaska*, (Albuquerque, 1997).

ways in which a politically engaged population could challenge official interpretations of topography and man's space within it.<sup>53</sup> Hunting has provided another useful nexus point to consider divergent meanings. For example, Edward Steinhart has highlighted moments of interaction and friction between white and African hunters in their claims to wildlife resources.<sup>54</sup> In the Kruger example, Lynne Meskell's histories acknowledge the park's use by Africans as a thoroughfare in the struggle against apartheid.<sup>55</sup>

In the history of national park creation, which has so often been dominated by Eurocentric lenses, Maitseo Bolaane's study of the formation of Moremi game reserve in Botswana offers a fresh perspective, and inserts key chiefs as agents in the foundation of the reserve.<sup>56</sup> This mirrors work done in other colonized spaces, where the creation of a national park was a strategic move to maintain access to traditional lands, as happened with the Ngati Tuwharehou Maori in New Zealand.<sup>57</sup> Recent work on Kenya and Uganda has revealed the African experience as clients of the national park project, when before they had appeared almost exclusively as victims.<sup>58</sup> These histories place conservation concerns alongside the process of decolonization during the 1950s that saw survival of the national park project as dependent upon local users.

My thesis develops some of the strands in this scholarship while also investigating new avenues of enquiry previously overlooked. The influence of significant conservationists has featured heavily in the literature, and their ideas are assumed to seep down into the public at large.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, the public is largely absent from many academic studies of ideas of nature and national parks. When the public does feature, it often tends to be as a great mass rather than a nuanced, variegated group of interests, positions and inconsistencies. Similarly, it is not assumed that these

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<sup>53</sup> Terence Ranger, 'Whose Heritage? The Case of The Matobo National Park,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 1989.

<sup>54</sup> E. Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters: a Social History of Hunting in Colonial Kenya*, (Oxford, 2001).

<sup>55</sup> Meskell, *The Nature of Heritage*, p.75.

<sup>56</sup> M. Bolaane, 'Wildlife Conservation and Local management: The establishment of Moremi Park, Okavango, Botswana in the 1950s-60s,' unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2004, p.viii.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, K. Booth and D. Simmons, 'Tourism and the establishment of national parks in New Zealand,' in R. Butler and S. Boyd (eds.), *Tourism and National Parks: Issues and Implications*, (Chichester, 2000).

<sup>58</sup> See R. Matheka, 'Antecedents to the Community Wildlife Conservation Programme in Kenya, 1946-1964', *Environment and History*, Vol. 11, 2005, p.239, and A. Browne, 'Conservation Converts?: Africanising Wildlife Conservation, Uganda National Parks c.1950-1973,' unpublished MSc Thesis, University of Oxford, 2010.

<sup>59</sup> See, for example, W. Adams, 'Nature and the Colonial Mind,' in W. Adams and M. Mulligan (eds.), *Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Post-colonial Era*, (London, 2003), p.18.

outlooks have any bearing upon wider conservationist thinking. The reader and the receiver have generally been overlooked in favour of the author and the producer.

Looking at the literature from the eastern Transvaal more specifically, I argue that Carruthers' analysis is too rigidly ideological, in that it does not allow for much fluidity and reciprocity in the generation of ideas around the Kruger Park. Too much weight is placed on key actors such as James Stevenson-Hamilton and Piet Grobler, the Minister of Lands in 1926, to the detriment of positions formulated at more communal or individual levels. Because of this lens, for Carruthers 'the process which culminated in entrenching the present ideals of the Kruger National Park... was a long one, and probably peaked only in the 1970s.'<sup>60</sup> The process she describes is too teleological, and restricts the view of so many alternative processes at play that ran concurrently. Also absent is the African experience of the region as customers. Because of the timeframe she adopts, Carruthers shows African engagement with the park as a story of contests over land use and of proletarianisation. By incorporating Manyeleti game reserve into my thesis I am able to include the African experience of the region as consumers. Lastly, the history of tourism in South Africa more generally has been an overlooked aspect of recent scholarship. Despite its importance in the modern economy, few studies have been done to understand the history of the experience. Besides one or two short historical pieces, the majority of work on tourism in South Africa has a contemporary timeframe.<sup>61</sup>

This thesis engages with these omissions in the literature as a work of cultural history. It concentrates on the production and consumption of materials created to forge popular ideas about the Kruger National Park and the Manyeleti game reserve. Rather than focusing upon key actors, space is made for the public as both receivers and generators of ideas. Where scholars of the radical critique, such as Brockington or Ramutsindela, concentrated upon ideological impact on local societies and economies, I provide a case for a more variegated hegemony that includes groups previously considered outsiders. In order to formulate this position I have been reliant upon the work of cultural theorists, and the following section explains how I have theoretically framed my investigation, and what benefits such a method bequeaths.

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<sup>60</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p.68.

<sup>61</sup> See, for example, J. Carruthers, "'Full of Rubberneck Waggon and Tourists'", and R. George, *Marketing South African Tourism*, (Oxford, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2004,).

## Nature, History and Cultural Theory

My thesis interrogates the Kruger National Park, and the Manyeleti game reserve, as discursive places: through representations and perceptions meanings became attached to the spaces. Without meanings, the areas would have sat epistemologically fallow, in a neutral continuance, existing merely as space amongst surrounding space. Only by attributing meaning to them could they take on significance for people. The moment they took on significance, social and cultural effects began to implement themselves. People gained and people lost from the meanings, depending on various factors. My thesis unravels those meanings, and argues that the representational material generated about the Kruger National Park and the Manyeleti game reserve channeled images and ideas that provided the means for groups to socially distinguish themselves.

My approach borrows from cultural theory a framework of how culture is produced, communicated and received. Most significantly, I make use of the work on discourse by Michel Foucault; the concept of cultural hegemony as described by Antonio Gramsci; the understanding of the mechanics of distinction by Pierre Bourdieu and subsequent critiques by Michel de Certeau; and the interpretation of reception posited by Stuart Hall. This section outlines the elements of theory that I have utilized to help make sense of cultural production and consumption, explores the techniques required for discursive analysis, and addresses many of the repercussions of such an enquiry. By using such a foundation I have been able to reveal greater complexity in the ways in which national parks have been conceived and used. The section will conclude with an account of how this approach and framework builds upon current historical scholarship.

For Foucault, discourse was a key to understanding historical process. Many historians in the field of the history of ideas looked to the concept of ideology to make sense of ideational systems: Friedrich Engels, for example, wrote that ideology was inflicted upon the proletariat as ‘false consciousness’.<sup>62</sup> For Foucault this was insufficient, as ideology implied the imposition of a structure of thinking by one group upon another, which ignored multiple other effects at work. In contrast, discourse is the very process of other effects at work. It is a wider net than ideology

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<sup>62</sup> Letter from F. Engels to F. Mahering, July 14 1893, at [www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1893/letters/93\\_07\\_14](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1893/letters/93_07_14)

and sits at the very crux of our epistemological abilities. As Sara Mills has concisely explained, ‘discourse determines the reality that we perceive.’<sup>63</sup> Ian Parker provided a similarly workable definition of discourse, as ‘a system of statements which constructs an object.’<sup>64</sup> Essentially, discourse is the vessel that contains all representations and perceptions on a subject.

The history of discourse therefore distinguished itself from the history of thought, Foucault argued, because it did not seek to uncover the ‘intention of the speaking subject’ as an individual, conscious activity, as the history of thought attempted to do.<sup>65</sup> Instead the horizon of thinking in general was the subject of discourse. For Foucault, people’s thoughts, much like novels, political speeches, or scientific knowledge, indeed all language, was part of ‘a population of events in the space of discourse more general.’<sup>66</sup> One therefore has to ‘search for the unities’ inherent within any particular discourse, in order to uncover knowledge. Such an approach was anti-essentialist, in that it was against any stable concepts but for a more mutable and fluid network of ideas.

Social constructionism borrowed Foucault’s idea of discourse, and similarly relied upon the belief that language is an essential prerequisite for thought, as well as a precondition for social action.<sup>67</sup> They shared his anti-essentialism: for social constructionists, anything that contains meaning is a socially constructed entity, in that people have had to agree on that meaning. Once accepted, that meaning could become part of the fabric of social knowledge. Historical specificity is important to a social constructionist, as discourse flows through the various forms of communication available at any one moment in time. Understanding the historical context and location is therefore essential in mapping the development of a discourse.<sup>68</sup> The historical context, however, can be vast, as Foucault acknowledged, as it includes ‘the totality of all effective statements (whether spoken or written), in their dispersion as events and in the occurrence that is proper to them.’<sup>69</sup> Not all ‘effective statements’ can be discovered by the historian, but that is not to mean that it is not possible to get

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<sup>63</sup> S. Mills, *Michel Foucault*, (Abingdon, 2003), p.4.

<sup>64</sup> I. Parker, *Discourse Dynamics: Critical Analysis for Social and Individual Psychology*, (London, 1992), p.5.

<sup>65</sup> M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, (Abingdon, 2002), p.30.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, p.31.

<sup>67</sup> V. Burr, *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*, (London, 1995), p.5.

<sup>68</sup> Parker, *Discourse Dynamics*, p.15.

<sup>69</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p.29.

an impression of the discursive world at any particular time. This thesis tries to capture an impression of the discursive world of the Kruger National Park and the Manyeleti game reserve.

The formulation and allocation of meaning, and consequently the creation and development of discourse, relies upon some form of production. There is an author and a reader, a speaker and a receiver, an encoder and a decoder. In that relationship there is a power dynamic, and so power flows through discourse. For Foucault, power was a 'strategy' with individuals as 'vehicles of power'.<sup>70</sup> Likewise, for social constructionists and other theorists, discourses have 'ideological effects' and 'reproduce power relations'.<sup>71</sup> The control, manipulation, and direction of a discourse allows for the application of power. Discourses on class, race and gender are obvious channels through which highly effective and damaging power relations have been formed and managed. However, social constructionists, along with Foucault, have been keen to highlight the variety of discourses that can conduct power from one group or source over another. For example, Foucault traced the power contained within the discourses on madness, sexuality, discipline and scientific knowledge. The national park idea constructed itself from discourse, and similarly contained subtle power dynamics within it, hidden behind frequent protestations of objectivity and 'truth'.

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The question of where power stems from and how it flows is important to this debate, and also to understanding how ideas of the national park both carried and were informed by ideological effects. The traditional Marxist position argued that culture (and other components of the superstructure) was determined by the economic means of production. Gramsci found this position too simple, but still acknowledged the influence of the economic base upon the role of the superstructure. For him the state inculcated a moral and cultural sense into its populace that corresponded to its productive needs. Generally, this was to the benefit of the ruling classes.<sup>72</sup> The state was always looking for 'consent' from its population, but it also 'educated' this

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<sup>70</sup> Mills, *Michel Foucault*, p.35.

<sup>71</sup> Parker, *Discourse Dynamics*, p.18.

<sup>72</sup> A. Gramsci, (Q. Hoare and G. Smith, eds. and trans.), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, (London, 1971), p.258.

consent into people through political and ‘syndical associations’. The state, for Gramsci, was a careful synthesis of political society and civil society, where civil society was the ‘ensemble of organisms called “private”’.<sup>73</sup> This included the cultural world of knowledge, behaviours, relationships and personal experiences, that Gramsci termed ‘common sense’. For him, ‘common sense’ was ‘not something rigid and immobile, but is continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life.’<sup>74</sup> This Gramscian interpretation of culture and its relationship to the economic base was far more dynamic than the traditional Marxist explanations, and allows for more ideational readings of history.

Some have taken Gramsci’s ideas to mean that ideas generated at the periphery could dictate and determine the economic base. However, it is more helpful to see the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure as more of a circuit. Ideas formulated at the periphery can inform the centre, but the centre keeps up a discursive mission to dictate culture. Hence for Gramsci it was more worthwhile to talk of hegemony than domination. Gramsci also distinguished between two types of hegemony: an ‘expansive hegemony’ which included the masses within it; and a ‘limited hegemony’ that restricted access. The ‘expansive hegemony’ tied people in closer to the economic base, whilst ‘limited hegemony’ distinguished groups and limited entry by various means.<sup>75</sup> The national park ideal, I argue in this thesis, operated both in an ‘expansive’ and a ‘limited’ way: it tried to channel particular social ideas through its representations and associations, whilst it also turned itself into a means of differentiating groups through familiarity with specific knowledge and practices.

Bourdieu is helpful in understanding this process of differentiation as he explored how hegemony maintained itself through cultural choice. In his seminal study of class distinction through taste, Bourdieu argued that groups make ‘explicit aesthetic choices’ to distinguish themselves from those of another group. The ‘eye’ that is able to make those choices is not objective, but is historically produced and then reproduced through education.<sup>76</sup> Cultural appreciation and knowledge, he

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, p.12.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, p.326.

<sup>75</sup> S. Jones, *Antonio Gramsci*, (Abingdon, 2006), p.53.

<sup>76</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, (Abingdon, 2010), p.xxvi. First published in 1984.

argued, was taught in educational establishments, through family practice, and other avenues, to ensure the youth of elite classes acquired what Bourdieu termed ‘cultural capital’. This type of capital bought access to other modes of capital: particularly social and economic forms. Inequalities in society could be maintained or reinforced by limiting access to cultural capital.

Bourdieu also argued that particular forms of cultural appreciation became attached to particular ‘fields’, in which individuals operated and which contained certain cultural expectations. Within fields certain cultural practices acquired particularly high cultural capital. I argue that knowledge about nature and engagement with national parks became important cultural coordinates in South Africa for various groups and fields. At the more individual level, below the field, is the habitus. For Bourdieu, it was at the point of the habitus that there was the ability to improvise, albeit with certain strictures.<sup>77</sup>

Bourdieu argued that particular institutions have been created to help control this process. Those ‘institutes of legitimisation’ included museums, art galleries and universities, and acted as guides to those that were encouraged to use them. Bourdieu argued that it was the bourgeoisie and their children who were the ones most encouraged to use them, and were taught how to access them and profit most by them. To further help distinguish between high and low cultural practices a perceptual lexicon was established made up of oppositional terms. For example, ‘high’ culture tended to attract words such as ‘sublime, elevated, pure’ whilst ‘low’ culture invited words such as ‘vulgar’ or ‘modest’.<sup>78</sup> This opposition Bourdieu described as ‘symbolic violence’. A discourse was therefore created around cultural practice that distinguished one group from another, and effected choice and taste.

This thesis contends that the Kruger National Park became a means of social distinction, because the park operated much like a museum, art gallery, or any other ‘institute of legitimisation’. Museums have been a particularly fruitful area of study by scholars in this field. The museum’s ability to select and control knowledge, and to disseminate and assist in decoding, has been explored in great depth. For Henrietta Lidchi, nature as the home of the ‘muses’ is ‘a museum in its most literal sense’.<sup>79</sup> Yet

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<sup>77</sup> M. Postone, E. Lipuma and C. Calhoun, ‘Introduction: Bourdieu and Social Theory,’ in C. Calhoun, E. Lipuma and M. Postone, *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, (Chicago, 1993), p.4.

<sup>78</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p.470.

<sup>79</sup> See, for example, H. Lidchi, ‘The poetics and the politics of exhibiting other cultures,’ in S. Hall (ed.), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, (London, 1997), p.155.

the national park did far more than be the mere repository of the muses. By arranging a road network it organized where people could travel and what they could see, much as a museum arranges its material around a preferred route, thereby organizing its knowledge. The national park used guides, guidebooks, and maps to instruct people on how to see and make sense of the world within the national park, just as the museum has its attendants and labels to aid understanding. The national park, from the 1950s, had lectures, film shows and various activities to instruct and educate its visitors. None of this was a neutral process. It was all part of the systematization of knowledge. It all channeled discourse.

This thesis argues that the park was part of the production and exchange of cultural capital and made use of a form of symbolic violence catered specifically to the natural world and the park that presented it. With the various ways to engage with the park came the ability to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, between 'high' and 'low'. This distinction happened both inside and outside the park. The park was frequently compared to other cultural institutions to place it within a barometer of cultural importance. The thesis will also show that the park itself became divided up figuratively and geographically into spaces that were 'high' and 'low'. The distinctions were policed through language, architecture, codes of conduct and modes of behaviour. It provided people with what Bourdieu would call a 'secondary stratum of meaning': a meaning that transcended the 'primary' meaning one got from 'ordinary experience' and through which social distinction could operate. Through its guidebooks and film shows, a secondary meaning that gave the landscape and the wildlife further significance was built onto the way of seeing during this period.

The park therefore existed within the wider world of cultural institutions that included museums, opera houses, cinemas or art galleries. Like them, the national park welcomed visitors and provided both an educative and recreational experience, and the tools to distinguish one group from another. The use of environmental education and experiences provided a form of cultural capital similar to that which could be gained through other institutes of legitimization. Knowledge about, and experience of, wilderness and nature gained great currency from the 1930s onwards. Appreciation of it, and the desire to preserve it became cultural indicators. Particular ways of thinking about nature became trends. The acquisition of this capital relied upon related paraphernalia, such as cameras, cars and clothing. Each of those served

as cultural identifiers, but also helped to mediate the senses in particular ways to create particular ways of seeing and engaging with nature. To the elite way of thinking about nature, alternative experiences of nature could become irrelevant at best, and illegal at worst, and were dealt with through the use of symbolic violence.

This thesis therefore unpacks how the Kruger National Park functioned as an institute of legitimisation. I argue that within those spaces cultural capital could be acquired via experience and knowledge about the park and its wildlife. The park became an ingredient in South African civil society that helped to maintain inequalities and reinforce power structures. This was achieved through the discourse and the practice surrounding the park. The Manyeleti game reserve was an attempt to incorporate select Africans into a parallel process in particular ways and to a limited extent. I therefore look at some of the key differences in the discourse and the practice surrounding Manyeleti in comparison to the Kruger Park.

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The extent of discursive reach and impact raises the question of individual agency in the face of such seemingly all-pervasive structural influences. For Bourdieu, the process of distinction operated upon a bedrock of material determinants. He argued that underlying ‘historical schemes of perception and appreciation... are the product of the objective division into classes (age groups, genders, social classes) and which function below the level of consciousness and discourse’.<sup>80</sup> He argued that class roles helped inform cultural choices, leaving little room for individual agency. This position, I argue, is too deterministic, and space should be made for alternative positions to interplay with dominant structures in order to account for the variety of interactions at work in and around the national park.

Michel de Certeau, the sociologist and historian, tempered Bourdieu’s theory by arguing that people were able to manipulate cultural objects that they received in various ways.<sup>81</sup> By looking at the manipulation of cultural entities by the receivers, and not just the production process as controlled by social ‘elites’, a circuit-like picture emerged more akin to Gramsci’s model. In this way hegemony becomes not static, but adaptive and evolutionary. This interpretation helps explain much of the

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> M. de Certeau, (Trans. S. Rendall), *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (London, 1988), p.xiii.

variant behaviour in existence in the Kruger Park and in the Manyeleti game reserve. As will be shown, there was never a singular understanding of the national park and its mission. The public was frequently at variance with messages created at the centres of production, such as the National Parks Board. This can partly be explained by the fact that there were numerous centres of production in operation at any one time, from official parks board material to newspapers, lobby groups, or community organizations. Yet it can also be understood by means of de Certeau and the notion that individuals experience the terrain (in both the physical and textual sense) in a multitude of ways and can use the opportunity of navigating the environment or the image as an occasion for resistance, however small.

The idea of perception as a space for opposition and resistance has also been examined by Stuart Hall. Representation, argued Hall, is encoded at the point of production, and decoded at the point of reception. Yet these two sides of the process 'may not be perfectly symmetrical.' One must allow for 'distortions' or 'misunderstandings' generated at the point of reception.<sup>82</sup> Hall identified three positions in the encoding/decoding system: the dominant or hegemonic position whereby the recipient decodes the message in the way intended by the encoder, thereby 'operating inside the dominant code'; the 'negotiated position' which allows for 'a more negotiated application to local conditions' whilst still understanding the hegemonic position; and the 'global position' which interprets the meaning behind a text 'in a globally contrary way', such as construing 'national interest' to mean 'class interest'.<sup>83</sup> Hall's theory therefore acknowledged the predominance of the hegemonic discourse, but at the same time allowed for some variance. However, because the producer is also the recipient of representation, there is feedback, and a circuit is created. Generally the circuit reproduces hegemonic patterns, due to the predominance of that position, but it can allow for 'negotiated' and sometimes even 'global' positions into the circuit. This model, therefore, does not lead to a pluralistic conclusion. Instead, it allows for 'preferred readings' created by hegemonic social forces.<sup>84</sup>

Criticism of Hall's theory has added further complexity to the process of representation and reception. David Morley's study of audiences of the *Nationwide*

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<sup>82</sup> S. Hall, 'Encoding/Decoding,' in M. Durham and D. Kellner (eds.), *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*, (London, Revised Edition, 2006), p.166.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, p.171.

<sup>84</sup> J. Procter, *Stuart Hall*, (Abingdon, 2004), p.67.

television programme in the 1970s found that people were influenced by multiple positions in their readings of the programme.<sup>85</sup> Race, gender, age and class could all help determine a reading. What this suggests, and even amplifies, is the idea that meanings are not guaranteed, and that there is room for manoeuvre. In reference to Foucault, Hall described the hegemonic system of representation around a particular subject, such as race or gender, as a 'regime of representation'.<sup>86</sup> It is through this regime that power flows. Yet it is not a uni-directional current: there is space for alternative positions. Valentin Volosinov argued that the same phrase could function in disparate discourses in a process he called multi-accentuality. For Volosinov, signs were not the property of a single class with a single, immutable meaning.<sup>87</sup> Signs and meanings could be manipulated by various groups once out in the world. This is important for the construction of meaning around the national park, as various bodies attempted to influence ideas of the park and its wildlife. The park became a central coordinate in the generation of ideas about it, yet there was never just one ideological throughput controlled from a single source. Nor was perception ever completely unified. This thesis therefore maps the power dynamics at work around the ideas of nature and wildlife contained within the national park ideal, yet it does so in cognizance of alternative positions and perceptions. Essentially, the process was not a linear transmission of ideology but instead a fluid and complex network and circuit of meaning, loosely controlled by hegemonic positions but in constant adjustment and conflict, both at societal and individual levels.

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Two common criticisms with much of this theoretical method need to be faced. The first is that such an approach is too relativist, and does not allow for any ontological reality. Social constructionists critique ontological facts, upon which epistemological knowledge rests, because they 'pretend to represent the real... when they actually merely represent items constructed in a political rhetoric.'<sup>88</sup> Yet this is not to deny the existence of a physical reality. It is possible to take up a critical realist position and

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<sup>85</sup> Cited in J. McGuigan, *Cultural Populism*, (London, 1992), p.133.

<sup>86</sup> S. Hall, 'The spectacle of the "other"', in S. Hall (ed.), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, (London, 1997), p.232.

<sup>87</sup> Procter, *Stuart Hall*, p.28.

<sup>88</sup> Parker, *Discourse Analysis*, p.31.

still maintain a social constructionist approach. The critical realist holds that existent connections and positions influence particular behaviours and beliefs.<sup>89</sup> In other words, material conditions make certain actions possible. The landscape of the Kruger Park, therefore, allows for certain readings and accounts, as does the social climate of South Africa during this period. The realm of discourse generated meaning on top of this material reality. Social construction does not therefore negate the existence of the flora and the fauna in the park.

The second charge against this theoretical method is that it does not account for change. This critique applies more to ideology, but is also pertinent in the case of Bourdieu's ideas that classes determine particular 'historical schemes of perception and appreciation.' In such a model it can seem that change is difficult. Yet I have attempted to show in this section that discourse is an adaptive and elastic system, which by its nature should be conducive to change. For Foucault, 'discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance, and a starting point for an opposing strategy.'<sup>90</sup> The presence of power indicates the presence of resistance, and it is through this relationship that change is possible, even continuous. Alternative discourses were able to challenge the hegemonic position. Gramsci is also helpful in allowing for change. For Gramsci, the concept of hegemony was not a clean division between dominance and resistance, but instead an arena in which cultural challenges were taking place. Drastic change could arise in what Gramsci called periods of 'crisis', that stemmed from this arena.<sup>91</sup>

A third issue in relation to this theoretical approach is more localized. It has been argued by Belinda Bozzoli, among others, that in the South African example it is difficult to talk of a homogenous elite, and as such there was no proper entrenchment of hegemony within South African society. In this critique, society was reliant upon coercion rather than the softer forms of power as described by Bourdieu and others.<sup>92</sup> However, as the cultural theorist Tony Bennett has contended, to ask whether cultural hegemony exists is the wrong question, as 'the concept refers rather to an always active and continuing process, the struggle between contending social forces for

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, p.36.

<sup>90</sup> M. Foucault, quoted in Mills, *Michel Foucault*, p.54.

<sup>91</sup> See Jones, *Antonio Gramsci*, p.82.

<sup>92</sup> B. Bozzoli, 'History, experience and culture,' in B. Bozzoli (ed.), *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal: Capitalist Penetration and Popular Response*, (Braamfontein, 1983), p.19.

cultural and political leadership.<sup>93</sup> In South Africa this struggle was happening via various cultural channels. While particular societies, less connected to the circulation of knowledge at work in the media, had hierarchies and knowledge systems to supplement their own social and economic structures, a hegemony that spoke nationally was very much at work. The national park was one such idea that attracted national debate and cross-provincial communication of ideas. While more regional systems are of equal value and interest, it is sadly not in the sphere of this study to explore that knowledge. This thesis focuses on that hegemony that spoke more nationally. The hegemony may not be clearly demarcated, and it may shift and bend, expand and contract, yet it was present, and was not totally reliant upon coercive measures to guarantee its existence, relying instead upon certain patterns of representation that were repeated within the brochures and the photographs and the films, to create a climate of meaning dominated by particular images and signs that indicated and encouraged specific ways of thinking, being, using, or seeing. Gramsci's concept of 'civil society', therefore, and the idea of 'common sense', were productive forces in South Africa that enabled a hegemony to sustain itself.

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This framework of cultural theory provides the lens through which I am able to explore the cultural production and consumption surrounding the Kruger National Park and Manyeleti game reserve. This thesis is not a critique of such cultural theory. Instead it uses their conclusions to help piece together how, and to what purpose, representations and perceptions were generated about parks and wildlife. The production of cultural materials around Kruger and Manyeleti is understood as a cultural arena in which a hegemonic position is maintained and contested to greater or lesser degrees at various stages. With this conception of culture I am able to present the process as less uni-directional as some studies have suggested.

The principal work in the historiography of the Kruger Park is Carruthers' social and political history of Kruger. One of her central arguments links the creation and early popularization of the park into broader political demands surrounding the creation of white identity in South Africa. In her reckoning, Kruger became a 'new

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<sup>93</sup> T. Bennett, quoted in J. McGuigan, *Cultural Populism*, p.67.

and more universal symbol' for the 'white public'. This symbol became disaggregated as it was gradually brought into the Afrikaner corpus of iconography, a process that reached its apogee after the National Party's victory in the 1948 elections.<sup>94</sup> During the 1950s the myth-making around the idea of the Kruger Park spoke straight to the Afrikaner moral and political compass.<sup>95</sup> She makes good use of certain cultural productions to highlight strong links between the park and nationalist Afrikaner identity.<sup>96</sup>

By employing theories of culture my thesis critiques Carruthers' position. I agree with her assertion of the importance of white and Afrikaner identity in the logic behind the park's production of meaning. However, by widening the hegemonic net to incorporate class, further processes of distinction and affiliation are revealed. In such a way Kruger becomes not only a vehicle for national consciousness formation, but also, critically, an instrument of class distinction. At times, gender is also a crucial component in the creation of meaning around the park. This process of distinction is executed via both 'expansive' and 'limited' hegemonies. Sometimes, as in the case of literature that linked aristocracy with certain species (see chapter two), an 'expansive' objective was being served. At other times, as when elites used symbolic violence to discredit behaviours of particular groups in the park (see chapter five), a more 'limited' purpose was displayed. Through this approach my thesis exposes an even more disaggregated picture than has previously been painted.

Carruthers' analysis also portrays the production of meaning around the park as a uni-directional flow of ideology from the producers to the receivers. While the momentum behind the representation came from particular individuals, to whom could be attributed the title 'intellectuals', this thesis takes up Gramsci's position that 'all men [and women] are intellectuals'.<sup>97</sup> Letter writers, honorary rangers, or even regular visitors could all have some impact upon the direction of meaning around the national park, and as such they are included in the remit of this thesis. This thesis therefore envisages the production and consumption of meaning as a circuitous and contested arena. As such there is less uniformity to the process of meaning creation. Instead I argue that class, race and gender feature in different capacities at different times throughout the history of the park. For example, Carruthers suggests that the

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<sup>94</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p.80.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, p.88.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, p.81.

<sup>97</sup> A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p.9.

story of Afrikaner linkage with the park was one of increasing consolidation.<sup>98</sup> I show in chapter five, however, that there were moments of crisis, such as during the creation of the homelands, when it became pertinent to increase the conceptual association between the park and white South Africa. The ideational history of the Kruger National Park in my thesis is therefore not such a steady story.

Finally, for Carruthers the role of Africans in the history of the Kruger National Park is essentially that of victim.<sup>99</sup> By including the Manyeleti game reserve in the discussion a new clientele is revealed, and alternative processes and parallel representations are integrated. Manyeleti incorporates race, gender and class into discussions of nature and wildlife in different ways to those being broadcast around the Kruger Park. Furthermore, by involving communities and audiences at different distances from the park or reserve, the thesis is able to demonstrate the multi-faceted ways in which ideas of the national park were transmitted. Neighbouring communities had very dissimilar experiences and ideas of the park from those living in Johannesburg or New Zealand. Such variance needs inclusion in the discussion.

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<sup>98</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p.87.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, p.89.

## Deconstructing Kruger

John Hannigan has identified several requirements for modern environmental ‘claims-making’ to be successful. He argues that, to be effective, an environmental claim needs, among several factors: ‘popularisers’ who can communicate environmental messages; the media to clearly frame the issue; and the dramatization of the issue in symbolic terms.<sup>100</sup> The Kruger National Park was an environmental ‘claim’ in that it posed as a solution to an environmental problem. To make that claim it relied upon ‘popularisers’, the external media, and the creation and proliferation of a message for public consumption, and the result was a discourse around the park. Often this process of popularization would take on an evangelical flavour, and many conservationists comprehended the conversion procedure in such religious terms.<sup>101</sup>

This thesis adopts two approaches to deconstruct the discursive patterns at work in the construction of the Kruger National Park and the Manyeleti game reserve: firstly a more traditional historical approach to fully establish the context in which representation and reception took place; and secondly a discourse analysis of the various communications about the national park and game reserve. Using this approach I am able to properly relate the culture and the history. The resulting cultural history is thus firmly historicized and sufficiently cultural, making the study of discursive change possible.

Most cultural studies of conservationism have used a select group of key actors, for example photographers in the case of Finis Dunaway’s *Natural Visions*. My approach shifts the focus towards the discursive practice, and examines the works themselves, rather than the authors, in greater detail. The regime of representation is the focus, rather than the mouthpieces for that regime. This allows for a greater overall sense of the range of discourse at work. I have included several means of communication not typically considered cultural products, such as fences or police pickets, because they are important components in the production of meaning around the national park and to exclude them would be to ignore significant elements of the representational system.

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<sup>100</sup> J. Hannigan, *Environmental Sociology*, (London, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2006.), p.63.

<sup>101</sup> See, for example, *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, No. 48, 1943, p.19.

Similarly, most studies of national parks have assumed a singular audience of national park messages. The usual constituents include middle class city dwellers with disposable income to afford a vacation. While this group is a predominant component of the 'public' that the Kruger Park was targeting, it was by no means the only component. My thesis incorporates various groups alongside the well-established receivers of the national park message. Particularly important in this study are the African middle class visitors to the Manyeleti game reserve, as well as the communities neighbouring the Kruger Park, who found themselves the recipients of more aggressive forms of representation than those at a greater distance. To exclude these groups would be to ignore the multiple ways in which the park represented itself, and the various ways that it was received.

By unpacking meanings, historians can shed light upon past ways of understanding. For Susan Crane, it is 'through language, silence, cooperation and contestation' that 'the complexities of multiple layers of social interaction are exposed.'<sup>102</sup> A social constructionist analysis therefore works best in conjunction with rigorous historical method. Texts need to be read carefully and in context. There is something both subjective and intuitive about the process, as social constructionists will openly admit.<sup>103</sup> To confront this, it is worthwhile to explore the thinking that takes place behind the finished texts: the decision-making processes that resulted in the finished texts can be equally as illuminating as the texts themselves. Minutes of meetings can be just as indicative of discourse and discursive practice as the park brochure, gateway, or educational programme. The intentions of key actors, therefore, are not irrelevant to this type of cultural history, but they are put on a more level footing with the texts, as well as less celebrated members of the public, who are equally involved in the circuitry of meaning.

To facilitate this approach, therefore, I have used a broad range of source material. I conducted archival work in London, Pretoria, and in the Kruger Park, in order to build up an administrative picture and ascertain the positions of those officials at the forefront of discourse production. This work has been essential in historically locating the representational fields. The Kruger archive was also a rich repository of photograph albums, diaries, drafts of articles, shooting scripts for films,

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<sup>102</sup> S. Crane, 'Language, Literary Studies and Historical Thought,' in L. Kramer and S. Maza (eds.), *A Companion to Western Historical Thought*, (Oxford, 2002), p.330.

<sup>103</sup> Burr, *An Introduction to Social Construction*, p.170.

letters, commentaries, and reports. Outside the archive I have consulted numerous collections of newspapers, magazines, supplements, journals and books, focusing particularly on those with greater subscriptions or higher sales volumes, in order to favour those with the greatest impact.

During June and July 2012 I attended several community forum meetings taking place within the Kruger Park. These were a helpful illustration of more contemporary means of communication being adopted by the park. The forums also offered me the opportunity to conduct interviews with members of the surrounding communities. These were selected community leaders who were in bi-monthly contact with the Kruger Park through the forums, but more regular contact with the people living around the park's perimeters. The interviews that I conducted were qualitative, loosely following a list of predetermined questions, with some allowance for digression. During the same period I used the opportunity to conduct interviews with key park staff. Most of these were resident at the Skukuza head office, but one or two were met at other centres around the park. Those interviews frequently took place in official locations, such as offices, and always on park property.

In an important article on the challenges facing cultural historians, Peter Mandler encouraged practitioners to 'map the entire field of representation.'<sup>104</sup> By incorporating a broad range of material, I have aimed to build as full a picture of that field as possible. Yet I have also attempted to include the production and dissemination of the cultural material in the analysis, to account for more than merely the visible representations. In acquiring and interrogating the data, I have tried to take into consideration the 'throw' of the text, that is to say its influence within society. Despite these precautions, there is an inevitable element of subjectivity that exists within such an approach. As many social constructionists can testify, there is little by way of an objective yardstick by which to judge this type of work. An objective truth is the first point of denial for a social constructionist, so that cannot be the aim of this type of analysis. Instead, so Vivien Burr argues, we must look for something useful: a new way of understanding a particular social phenomenon.<sup>105</sup> This thesis endeavors to open up new understanding of the way that a seminal African national park has been utilized within discourse to establish, develop and sustain an 'expansive' and a

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<sup>104</sup> P. Mandler, 'The Problem with Cultural History,' in *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 2004, p.97.

<sup>105</sup> Burr, *An Introduction to Social Construction*, p.162.

‘limited’ hegemony. Yet it also highlights how groups and individuals have contested that hegemony, and used the park, as well as the Manyeleti game reserve, as sites of resistance.

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The thesis is made up of three principal parts, divided chronologically. Each part is further divided into chapters that address the historical context and the discursive content separately. The first part deals with the period from the park’s foundation in 1926, when it was converted from the Sabi and Shinwedzi game reserves into the Kruger National Park, until 1950, the year after the final publication of the National Parks Board’s brochure ‘Unspoilt Africa’, after which the part is named. Chapter one contextualizes the production of meaning surrounding the park through an analysis of attitudes within the park administration to various means of communication, whether external, internal, or around the perimeter. The chapter argues that the park administrators were quickly attuned to the variety of possibilities available to them and were not afraid of modern means of representation such as film. Chapter two addresses the substance of the representation under several themes: race, nationalism, gender, class and wildlife. It argues that this period saw the foundations laid of the linkages between the national park and other cultural forms that would locate the park as a site of cultural distinction.

The second part begins with the Hoek report of 1951 that transformed the administrative constitution of the National Parks Board, and ends in 1989 before the beginning of the democratization of South Africa. The title of the part is taken from the parks board’s publication ‘Our National Parks,’ which introduced South Africans to the possibilities of a visit to a national park and established the parks as cornerstones in a South African national identity. Chapter three examines the conditions at play within the park administration and other interested bodies in relation to park representation. It is argued that the increasing role of science had a dramatic impact upon the representational output of the park. Chapter four is devoted to the creation and development of the Manyeleti game reserve and the structures that were put in place to communicate messages about nature, wildlife and conservation to an exclusively African public. The chapter argues that insufficient funding coupled with the growing influence of the homeland project forced the game reserve into

particular decisions that had unforeseen ramifications on its representational output. Chapter five looks to the discursive content of material generated both for Kruger and Manyeleti. By adopting a comparative structure, the chapter is able to highlight significant similarities and differences at work in the production of meaning. The role of class, gender and race, and their impact upon ways of seeing and ways of being in nature, alongside the reimagining of wildlife as the sum of scientific data, are all important currents during this period.

The third part acts as both an epilogue as well as an indicator of present and future developments in the field of representation at the Kruger Park. Running from 1990 until 2012, the sole chapter that makes up this part concentrates upon the complete reconfiguration of park communication strategy. The predominant motif throughout this chapter is the increasing role of the neighbouring communities in the way that the park conceptualizes itself and its mission. This period therefore saw the development of more as well as less meanings: more meanings as the number of potential stakeholders was expanded and their usage needs taken into consideration; yet also less meanings because tighter controls were put in place around ways of making sense of the park and its wildlife for visitors from further afield.

This thesis is a cultural history more than it is a traditional social, political or environmental history; yet society, politics and the environment are all important components of the cultural map. By looking at the Kruger National Park, and the Manyeleti game reserve, through its discursive production, rather than via its conservationist programme or its political experience, a unique perspective is added to the history of one of Africa's oldest and most famous national parks. Ever since its inception, the park has been communicating with the public. Through advertising, education, architecture, law, and the environment itself, it has sent messages to those within and without, to the devotee and the disinterested alike. It has attempted to change the way that people think, the way that they behave, and the way that they see the natural world. Several key conservationists throughout history have acknowledged the almost religious intent that has flavoured this pursuit.<sup>106</sup> This thesis explores those layers of meaning that have enveloped the national park idea. The inauguration of the park itself was very much part of that process.

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<sup>106</sup> See, for example, *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, No. 48, 1943, and *African Wild Life*, Vol.6, No.4, 1952.

# **PART ONE**

***UNSPOILT AFRICA: THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK, 1926-1950***



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE REPRESENTATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK, 1926-1950

#### Introduction

Up to about the commencement of the present century few in South Africa took much interest in wild animals except in so far as they provided biltong, leather, and targets for the hunter's rifle. Within the past twenty years, largely I believe through the influence of the Kruger National Park, a new sentiment has grown up. The public generally enjoy looking at and hearing about live rather than dead animals, and the Kruger National Park has come to be recognised as a national asset.<sup>1</sup>

Writing for an audience of fellow preservationists on the cusp of his retirement as warden of the Kruger National Park, James Stevenson-Hamilton was in the right company for some self-congratulation. There had been a transformation of public ideas regarding nature and wildlife, and the concept of a national park had become sacrosanct among certain constituencies. Visitor numbers had swelled, and were set to mushroom further after 1950.

It was during these formative years that the park had to create a successful discourse for itself to ensure survival. As such a large space on the South African

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<sup>1</sup> J. Stevenson-Hamilton, 'A Game Warden Reflects,' *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, No. 54, December 1946, p.17.

map, public support was essential for its political continuance. This was a fact not lost on the first warden and a growing cohort of Kruger Park champions, and led to ongoing concern about public knowledge and sympathy for the project. For example, in his annual report for the National Parks Board in 1935 Stevenson-Hamilton had cause to bemoan that ‘of the actual conditions governing this wildlife there is not a very wide knowledge... nor is it perhaps always completely realised what a national park stands for.’<sup>2</sup> This sentiment would haunt national park advocates throughout this period and beyond.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the historical context in which the park’s representational material functioned by reconstructing and interrogating the system of ‘popularisers’ and media channels that transmitted the national park messages. My focus is on the attitude and approach of the National Parks Board towards the media landscape in South Africa. By looking at the mechanisms that were in place for representational practice, the structural means of distinction become apparent. For example, certain networks of exchange around wildlife imagery developed during the 1920s and 1930s that created connections and excluded those on the outside.

The chapter is divided into two halves. The first examines the external means of representation, outlining where energies were spent in the production of texts intended for distant audiences. The second half explores the internal means of representation available to the park, such as architecture and road-building, and the ways in which space was recognized for its ability to manipulate meaning. It also investigates the relationship between representation and the communities on the periphery of the park. At this perimetrical level, people became active victims of representational needs, as well as the recipients of unique messages about the park transmitted only to those peripheral audiences. Inclusion of those groups is essential in a study of representation as the park was intended to face the public and serve public needs. By incorporating such groups, from the Native Trust areas to small farming communities, a more diverse public is considered, that goes beyond merely the white, middle class consumer on the Rand.

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<sup>2</sup> National Parks Board (hereafter NPB) Annual Report, 1935.

## Context

The conversion of the Sabi and Shingwedsi game reserves into the Kruger National Park was not inevitable in 1925. As Carruthers has argued, other game reserves in the region were being decommissioned in the 1920s rather than enlarging or fortifying their position.<sup>3</sup> For example, Pongola had been delisted in 1921, and Gordonia-Kuruman followed in 1924. There was an influential strain of thinking within government at that time that state land could be put to better use. However, in 1926 campaigners saw the successful passing of the National Parks Act, which brought into existence the National Parks Board and the first of the country's national parks, the Kruger National Park.

Kruger survived where Pongola fell, Carruthers has argued, because it was able to weather critiques of land usage in the area after World War One, including from powerful constituents such as farmers and the Department of Mines.<sup>4</sup> Credit is also due to a cohort of interested preservationists and conservationists who rallied around Sabi and Shingwedsi as the potential site for the country's primary park. Men such as Stevenson-Hamilton, as well as organisations such as the Wildlife Protection Society of South Africa, were able to generate sufficient interest and political sponsorship around the Kruger National Park project. As Carruthers has shown, the support by key politicians, such as the Minister of Lands Piet Grobler, ensured the necessary parliamentary muscle.<sup>5</sup> Fuelling this political effort was a broader public mood that began to understand wildlife in more sentimental terms than it had previously, although this shift was still nascent and potentially fragile.<sup>6</sup> The role of representation and perception has therefore been significant from Kruger's very beginnings.

The park was formed by the fusion of the Sabi and Shingwedsi game reserves, which themselves had been created out of affixing farms in the eastern Transvaal in stages, beginning in 1898. Extensive representational work was undertaken during the early 1920s to secure public backing for the national park project.<sup>7</sup> One does not need to look far into the pages of the leading Afrikaans magazine *Die Huisgenoot* or the

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<sup>3</sup> Carruthers, *Wildlife and Warfare*, p.149.

<sup>4</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p.51.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p.60.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p.52.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p.63.

leading English language newspaper *The Star* to find articles lauding the national park ideal. In the years before the park's creation, much focus was placed on promotional work targeted at the ministerial level. For example, in 1926 Alwin Haagner, the president of the Wildlife Protection Society of South Africa, drafted a brochure on game conservation that was distributed to all MPs. Meanwhile, photographers sent wildlife posters to parliament, to be hung in the corridors of power.<sup>8</sup> A. A. Pienaar's *The Adventures of a Lion Family*, one of the biggest selling books in the Afrikaans language at that time, was read by several leading Afrikaner politicians and provoked Piet Grobler, the Minister of Lands, to support the Bill.

The National Parks Act of 1926 borrowed many of its objectives from the American model. As will be shown later in part one, the American paradigm was a powerful exemplar when it came to representational strategy, however it also played a key role in the genesis of the Kruger Park. Yellowstone, as a commercially successful park, was of particular interest to the South African Treasury, who had the major hand in ensuring Kruger's financial survival. Yellowstone was also important to the South African national park movement ideologically. As Nash and others have argued, Yellowstone was the product of an ideological shift in public consciousness in America: with the closing of the frontier and the rapid growth of urban centres, a mindset arose that sought refuge from these developments in cordoned off regions of 'wilderness'.<sup>9</sup> South Africa by the 1910s and 1920s was experiencing similar shifts in its geographical constitution: the nation's borders were firmly established with no room for frontier-type expansion, and Johannesburg had evolved into a sizable conurbation with various industrial trappings. The park idea therefore fitted into the new psycho-geographical context.

Yet Yellowstone was not the only archetype. Grove and Anderson have argued convincingly for the importance of the imperial network of ideas in developing national parks across the British Empire.<sup>10</sup> In South Africa, those imperial networks were significant, and were perhaps most visible in the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire. Key conservationists such as James Stevenson-Hamilton assertively exploited these avenues, in order to acquire international support for the national park project.

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<sup>8</sup> A brief history of the early initiatives undertaken by the Wildlife Protection Society of South Africa appeared in an article in *African Wild Life*, Vol. 30, No. 5, 1976, p.22.

<sup>9</sup> Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, p.343.

<sup>10</sup> Anderson and Grove, 'The Scramble for Eden,' p.3.

Where American parks such as Yellowstone sought to protect dramatic landscapes, the driving force behind South Africa's National Parks Act was the protection of the nation's dwindling wildlife. As Mackenzie and others have argued, the Victorian and Edwardian passion for hunting among men from the social elite had destroyed populations of wildlife across the continent.<sup>11</sup> Many of those most responsible for the slaughter became what has been termed 'penitent butchers': guilty hunters who turned preservationists in order to save the remaining herds, initially to ensure future hunting but later as a proto-environmental position.<sup>12</sup> Their support had been a significant driving force behind the establishment and survival of the Sabi and Shingwedzi game reserves that preceded Kruger. Carruthers and others have argued that this shift to preservationism among the hunting community was a continuation of the desire to control legitimate wildlife usage and to further ostracize market-led hunting practices.<sup>13</sup>

The national park movement was able to draw on that base of support. Societies that lent their backing to the idea during the 1920s, such as the Transvaal Game Protection Association and the Transvaal Land Owner's Association, had 'penitent butchers' in their ranks. Many were farm owners on the periphery of the game reserves, particularly along the Crocodile River, who benefitted from the replenishment of game inside the reserve. While some were ardent preservationists, others appreciated the opportunity the game reserve presented them: stray wildlife could legitimately be shot on their farms. A national park would therefore guarantee future quarries. Stevenson-Hamilton himself maintained strong ties to this peripheral hunting community until his death. The Wildlife Protection Society of South Africa, which was to become a significant communicator of messages about the national park, was formed from the dissolution of various game protection societies across the country and reconstituted as a national body to press for a national park. The Transvaal members were some of the more vocal constituents.

These ranks of early supporters also contained men with naturalist credentials. For example, Alwin Haagner, the first representative of the Wildlife Protection Society on the National Parks Board, ran the National Zoological Gardens in Pretoria. During the earliest years there was much support of naturalism as a discipline among

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<sup>11</sup> Mackenzie, *The Empire of Nature*, p.112.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p.210.

<sup>13</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p.107.

the corps of penitent butchers, although this grew into a wary skepticism of science by the end of the 1930s. As Carruthers has argued, scientists (made up predominantly of veterinarians during this period) generally spoke out against the park idea in the 1920s, for fear of the spread of disease.<sup>14</sup>

By May 1926 an ideology was fashioned for a national park and a bill was proposed to parliament. The inspiration for its content came from the Parks Act in America as well as existent game reserve legislation that had guided practice up to that point in South Africa. Hence, a central tenet was that species that had been hunted to near extinction were identified for special protection. The purpose of the National Parks Act was therefore preservationist, but it also had at its heart a desire for public engagement:

The area defined in the Schedule is hereby constituted a national park, to be known as the Kruger National Park, for the propagation, protection and preservation therein of wild animal life, wild vegetation and objects of geological, ethnological, historical or other scientific interest for the benefit, advantage and enjoyment of the inhabitants of the Union.<sup>15</sup>

This element differentiated Kruger from its previous incarnation as a game reserve. Before 1926 there had been very few visitors to the region. Those that came were almost exclusively by private invitation from the warden. The game reserves were not designed for public infiltration, and aside from a handful of roads used to transport workers from Portuguese East Africa to the mines there was little in the way of infrastructure. Ideas of wildlife at this moment may have begun to shift towards a more preservationist stance, but as will be shown in chapter two the Kruger Park had much to do to transform public conceptions about the region as a whole, as well as the wildlife within it. Neither the Treasury nor even the administration of the new national park knew exactly how the public would take to the reconfiguration of the eastern Transvaal.

The Act brought about a structure of administration that saw a warden, as head of the day to day running of the Kruger Park, answerable to the National Parks Board, made up of representatives from government and the world of conservation. As a thank you for their lobbying work that had helped smooth the process of nationalization, the Wildlife Protection Society of South Africa were rewarded with a permanent seat on the board. One of the society's primary objectives was the

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p.63.

<sup>15</sup> Article 1, National Parks Act, 1926.

proliferation of protectionist ideas, and publicity was a cornerstone of their function. From 1926, therefore, the parks board always had at least one board member motivated by public engagement. In reality, several of the early board members recognized the imperative of public engagement. Herbert Papenfus, for example, acknowledged the need to attract visitors and often voted for schemes that might improve the visitor experience and endear the public to the park, such as swimming pools or lifetime memberships.<sup>16</sup> Others on the board were against excessive public involvement, and found themselves more on the side of preservationism when it came to park priorities. Generally during this period, however, there was appreciation of the fact that tourist numbers and revenue needed to increase in order for the park to survive financially. Furthermore, it was accepted that the park needed public support to survive politically.

Despite the importance of propaganda to this end, there was never a department within the National Parks Board, nor within the Kruger Park itself, that was explicitly responsible for it during this period. Instead, the warden was expected to take much of the strain, with the assistance of the South African Railways and Harbours (SARH), who were responsible for tourism in South Africa. Generally, carefully selected champions were chosen to produce promotional material: for example, in 1926 Stratford Caldecott was asked to continue writing ‘descriptive articles on the park’ for publicity purposes, which he did until his death in 1929.<sup>17</sup> During the 1930s a system was developed of contracted tourist officers who worked during the seasons at the various rest camps and operated as interfaces between the public and the park. However, their role was more to help visitors rather than to provide any real educational input.

The number of people responsible for the official production of meaning about the Kruger Park was therefore small, yet they worked within a wider network of agencies aiming to communicate conservationist messages to the South African public. In the Transvaal Game Commissions of 1918 and 1945, public engagement and propaganda were important components of the investigations, and the Wildlife

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<sup>16</sup> See Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, July 8 1931, and Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, April 4 1934, Kruger National Park Archive (hereafter KNP).

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, September 16 1926, KNP.

Protection Society of South Africa believed the production of publicity and propaganda to be their preeminent mission.<sup>18</sup>

An audience for the parks board's messages was beginning to take shape in South Africa from 1926. Historians have identified this period as a time of growth of public interest in environmentally related messages. According to Peder Anker, ecology was beginning to gain traction during this period and expand out among ordinary people as a way of thinking about the world.<sup>19</sup> This built upon foundations begun by preservationists such as Jan Smuts, whose holism brought knowledge of nature out into a more public realm. Conservationist material was acquiring a wider audience: for example, the *South African Agricultural Journal* circulated among nearly 30,000 people during this period, and the Drought Commission report found a sizable readership between 1923 and 1934.<sup>20</sup> There was thus the beginnings of a culture of conservationist interest in the South African public that could be built upon by the new 'popularisers' of the Kruger Park.

James Stevenson-Hamilton, a Scottish landowner, had taken up the position of warden of the Sabi Game reserve after the end of the South African War. He served as warden of the new national park from 1926 until his retirement in 1946, when he was replaced by another military man, Colonel J. Sandenburgh. From 1926 until 1950 communications within the park were unreliable and the warden retained much control over the region despite relinquishing powers to the parks board in 1926. Stevenson-Hamilton's reputation, as the man on the ground and an expert on wildlife behaviour, gave him great influence over park policy, and his attitudes to various developments are therefore significant when trying to ascertain the official position. His role in the hegemony was therefore crucial, but it was always running in parallel with the input from various board members.

Until his retirement, Stevenson-Hamilton had an uneasy relationship with the public as consumers of the national park. This relationship is perhaps best summarized by a quotation from later editions of his biography of the Park, *South African Eden*, in which he wrote how, by the 1940s, 'I could hardly recognise my beloved and once battered Cinderella in her new garb and surroundings and, truth to

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<sup>18</sup> Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Game Preservation, Transvaal Provincial Administration, 1945, in NTS 7618 27/329, National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria (hereafter NASA).

<sup>19</sup> P. Anker, *Imperial Ecology: Environmental order in the British Empire, 1895-1945*, (Cambridge, 2001), p.237.

<sup>20</sup> Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa*, p.249.

tell, I did not admire her nearly so much in them.’<sup>21</sup> For him, public involvement and presence was an inevitability, and he feared for the extent of interference that they would bring. Despite these concerns, he was responsible for the development of road networks and rest camps in the reserve, as well as much of the publicity material used to attract visitors to the park. The rapid rise in visitor numbers, to around 37,000 in the year of his retirement, shows that his input was productive.

Starting in the mid-1930s some on the parks board were beginning to fear the rise in tourist numbers, either in relation to the wildlife or in reference to the carrying capacity of the park, which struggled at particular times of the year with the influx of visitors. Rather than increase the carrying capacity, some preferred to back away from any publicity-gaining events or enterprises, such as films, publications, or even participation at the 1936 Empire Exhibition in London.<sup>22</sup> However, throughout the period 1926 to 1950 the predominant position on the board was to encourage public involvement in the park as tourists, and this was reflected in the steady rise of visitor numbers, which had broken 50,000 by the end of the 1940s.

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<sup>21</sup> J. Stevenson-Hamilton, *South African Eden*, (Penguin, London, 2008), p.291. First published in 1937.

<sup>22</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Executive Sub-Committee Meeting, October 15 1935, KNP.

## External Representation

Stevenson-Hamilton had been actively publishing books and articles on the Sabi game reserve since his posting there in 1902, and it was decided in 1926 that this work should continue and form the foundation of the propaganda campaign. The warden was the foremost intellectual of the new park (in terms of output and influence). He published in journals, newspapers, and magazines in South Africa and abroad, as well as performing lectures on wildlife at institutions around the world. His productivity was remarkable, and was assisted by the modification of annual reports into articles for publication in journals such as the *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, a particular favourite of Stevenson-Hamilton. In 1935 an information bureau was mooted for the first time to provide some institutional support for these activities, but the scheme was soon abandoned.<sup>23</sup>

Outside, particular media outlets generated strong relationships with the national park, often through personal contact with one of the key propagandists. For example, Stevenson-Hamilton was a member of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire, which made him a natural contributor to the society's journal. Through this channel the warden was able to maintain contact and influence with the elites of international conservationism. In South Africa certain news outlets became early bedfellows with the park, including *Die Huisgenoot*, *The Star*, *The Rand Daily Mail* and the *Pretoria News*, although this was by no means an exclusive relationship, and other newspapers and magazines would often publish stories relating to the park and its wildlife. By the 1940s this relationship had tightened to the extent that one of the rangers on the park staff became a correspondent for *The Star*, responsible for forwarding any suitable copy.<sup>24</sup>

These newspapers were keen to see the national park project succeed, and would offer advice on handling media and public relations. For example, the manager of *The Star* often advised the park on its story management, recommending that news should be released 'with a bang' across all outlets at once rather than in 'bits and pieces', particularly when dealing with an important story such as the 'Water for Game' programme which began in the 1930s to build boreholes for animals in the

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<sup>23</sup> S. Joubert, *The Kruger National Park*, p.96.

<sup>24</sup> Letter from the Assistant Manager, *The Star*, to H. van der Veen, June 19 1947, in NK/17/1, KNP. For a more detailed investigation of the Water for Game Programme, see Bunn, 'An Unnatural State'.

park.<sup>25</sup> The National Parks Board gradually learned how to control news stories, and soon recognized the value of suppressing certain stories. For example, in 1946 a railway-worker was killed by lions in the park after heading several miles away from his camp, presumably to set a snare. The parks board was keen for this story to remain buried rather than exploit it to emphasise the need for appropriate behaviour in the park.<sup>26</sup>

Text was the predominant form of communication during this period. Alongside the newspapers, journals and magazines, Stevenson-Hamilton was also the author of several books on both the Lowveld region as well as its wildlife.<sup>27</sup> An offshoot of this type of publication, the game ranger memoir, became a popular medium in the 1940s and 1950s, when others recorded their accounts of working with Africa's fauna both in South Africa and across the rest of the continent.<sup>28</sup> Of similar importance to the National Parks Board was the material produced in-house for distribution and sale to members of the public. These involved regular publication and included maps, which became available from 1929 and were revised every few years, as well as the booklet entitled *Unspoilt Africa*, which gave various details about the park for the visitor and was a popular brochure in the 1930s.<sup>29</sup> Alongside these official publications were alternative versions produced by interested parties, such as the Automobile Association of South Africa or the Wildlife Protection Society, who both created maps and booklets of their own for sale to park visitors, always with the permission of the National Parks Board and often with a foreword by the warden.

The brochures and booklets included various sketches, paintings and, most commonly, photographs, and the visual was seen as a particularly potent means of communication with the public. The Wildlife Protection Society of South Africa distributed a photograph to each of its members once a year throughout this period, before it began to publish its journal *African Wild Life* in 1946, and this custom

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<sup>25</sup> Letter from the Manager, *The Star*, to The Warden, Kruger National Park, September 15 1947, NK/17/1/1, KNP.

<sup>26</sup> Memorandum, NK/2/1, KNP.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, J. Stevenson-Hamilton, *Animal Life in Africa* (London, 1912), J. Stevenson-Hamilton, *The Low-veld: Its Wild Life and Its People*, (London, 1929), J. Stevenson-Hamilton, *South African Eden: From Sabi Game reserve to Kruger National Park*, (London, 1937), and J. Stevenson-Hamilton, *Wild Life in South Africa*, (London, 1947).

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, H. Wolhuter, *Memories of a Game Ranger*, (Johannesburg, 1948).

<sup>29</sup> Maps were revised very regularly during the early years of the park as new roads and rest camps were built and needed marking for tourists.

proved highly popular.<sup>30</sup> In this way wildlife photography became a form of contact between key conservationists, and between conservationists and the public. The receipt and appreciation of these images became, in turn, a social indicator. With photography still an expensive pastime, a culture emerged whereby visitors could buy official photographs from rest camp stores that could then be placed within official commemorative albums. Several of these albums, containing photographs by Paul Selby or Dick Wolff, have been donated to the Kruger Park and can be found in the Stevenson-Hamilton library. Through this system of exchange certain photographers gained high status in the 1930s. One admirer of the work of P.W. Willis, for example, argued that a dam should be named in his honour in the park because of the influence his work had had on the history of the park.<sup>31</sup>

The milieu of textual communication was broader than merely straightforward publications. Another high impact promotional activity was the provincial school essay competition. This placed the Kruger Park at the heart of schoolchildren's consciousness immediately after the Second World War, and served to legitimate the park and place it alongside other institutions highlighted in schools such as the UN, the Royal Empire Society, the Navy and the Astronomical Society.<sup>32</sup> The Transvaal Education Department was wary of companies wanting promotion, but they were very positive about the Kruger Park essay idea, and helped circulate the competition details around all the schools in the province.<sup>33</sup> The range of means speaks to the general openness of park officials to various media. This approach allowed for some failure: for example, a scheme to produce books of commemorative stamps proved unpopular, although no one was sure if this was due to the idea itself, or the inadhesiveness of the end product.<sup>34</sup>

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While the various textual forms of representation were undoubtedly the most significant in terms of output and impression, the Kruger Park's relationship with film

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<sup>30</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 30, No. 5, 1976, p.48.

<sup>31</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1952, p.167.

<sup>32</sup> Letter from the Secretary of the Transvaal Education Department to the Secretary of the Department of Education, Arts and Science, March 13 1950, in TOD 1780 E4/50, NASA.

<sup>33</sup> Letter from the Secretary of the Transvaal Education Department to the Secretary of the National Parks Board, August 12 1947, in TOD 1781 E4/50, NASA.

<sup>34</sup> Letter from the Warden, KNP, to the Secretary, NPB, September 8 1938, in NK/17/3, KNP.

offers up some intriguing insights into the thinking behind park publicity. Film was the new medium of the age, and its representational capabilities were only just becoming apparent. Because the medium was so new, it presented challenges to the board that required resolution, and so by looking in closer detail at the ways in which the parks board tried to manage its relationship with film, the board's attitudes to representation are revealed. Film was also the medium most recommended by other conservationists. When the board wrote to influential figures around the world asking for assistance in marketing the park, the respondents were unanimous about the powers of film.<sup>35</sup> This emphasis on film as the best possible medium for marketing national parks makes it necessary to examine the South African National Parks Board's strategy on this front in greater depth.

Stevenson-Hamilton has been presented as wary of the encroachment of modernity upon the Kruger Park, and an unwilling host to the tourists that came to visit.<sup>36</sup> While there are plenty of curmudgeonly quotations that can be attributed to him, his attitudes to film and wildlife proffers a new perspective. During 1926 arrangements were being made for a film about the Kruger Park to be made by African Film Productions. Stevenson-Hamilton was approached in that year about his permission, to which he replied that only the new parks board could sanction a film inside the park. In a postscript he was keen to express his thoughts that the plan to make a film inside the park was 'an excellent one'.<sup>37</sup> In 1929, only two years after welcoming the first visitors into the park, the first films of Kruger were being mooted. Stevenson-Hamilton, after watching Ratcliffe Holmes' *Interviewing Wild Animals* during a screening at the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire, had made his own independent enquiries about the possibility of Holmes making a Kruger Park film.<sup>38</sup> He particularly admired Holmes' rejection of the 'fakes' and 'stunts' that, in the warden's opinion, 'disfigure nearly all wildlife pictures.' In Stevenson-Hamilton's opinion Holmes was a 'rare combination of expert camera man with that of naturalist and bushman' and would give the right sort of publicity to the Kruger Park.

Stevenson-Hamilton saw film's potential as an educative tool and a fruitful media channel to run alongside his list of publications. During the 1920s, however,

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<sup>35</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Executive Sub-Committee Meeting, October 15 1926, KNP.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p.64.

<sup>37</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Executive Sub-Committee Meeting, October 15 1926, KNP.

<sup>38</sup> Letter from J. Stevenson-Hamilton, to The Secretary, NPB, February 26 1929, in NK/17/2, KNP.

the depictions of wildlife tended towards the sensationalist, and in his mind this approach required correction. As places for filmmakers to capture footage of wild animals began to diminish or centralize around nationalized, reserved areas, it could be argued that the input of the authorities at those reserved areas increased as they realized the power they had. During the course of this period the more sensationalized pictures of animals began to give way to more sober portrayals.

The National Parks Board saw the potential for film early on, although some on the board believed there to be ‘no market for cinema films of wild animals.’<sup>39</sup> Others saw the potential of film projects as a means to advertise the park internationally. However, there had been difficulties getting cinemas in Britain and America to showcase promotional newsreel footage of South Africa, and a producer was required who could gain access to those valuable markets to make the venture worthwhile.<sup>40</sup> A deal was struck with Metro Goldwyn Mayer (MGM) in 1928 for a series of newsreels to be shot in South Africa and shown in movie theatres across America.<sup>41</sup> For MGM, the major attraction of the project was the Kruger National Park and the prospect of filming wild animals. Although the filming took place, the downturn in the American economy put a halt on the film’s distribution. The attempt at a film, however, indicates an initial eagerness by the board to welcome the powerful new medium into the park. Later occurrences, however, would sour this initially friendly attitude to film. In 1931 a German financed trans-African expedition filmed inside the park for one month, making much use of park staff. They reneged on promises to donate to the National Parks Board to thank them for their assistance.<sup>42</sup> Following this event a fee was introduced to levy on any production company entering the park in order to cover costs. After these experiences it seems the Kruger Park shied away from fully sanctioning films of the park. They collected fees from various companies making wildlife films, but seem to have had little impact upon the making of those films, nor any desire to actively encourage their production.

Part of the reason for this was because the board saw films purely in promotional terms. Their usefulness, therefore, depended on the board’s need for extra publicity. During the 1930s, as the board struggled to cope with the influx of

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<sup>39</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, January 20 1927, KNP.

<sup>40</sup> Letter from the General Manager of SAR & Harbours to C. Birney, General Manager of Beira and Mashonaland and Rhodesia Railways, May 29 1928, in SAS 585 G45/11, NASA.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> ‘Previous Overseas Professional Profit Earning Concerns Granted Facilities in the Kruger National Park,’ undated report, in NK/17/2, KNP.

visitors that grew every year, film was not viewed as a necessity. One report claimed that ‘the Park had already enough publicity, [and] that it could not deal with a rush of overseas traffic being not in a position to deal adequately even with that provided by the South African public.’<sup>43</sup> The result of this thinking was that representation was limited so as not to attract too many visitors, who might put too much pressure upon the park’s nascent and limited infrastructure.

Film was seen by almost all on the board as a medium that could show life as it was. For this reason it needed to be tightly controlled, and for some completely discouraged. A handwritten note reveals that some within the Kruger hierarchy believed that films of the park would be a national embarrassment as the roads and accommodation were inadequate.<sup>44</sup> Others were keen to limit the sightline of the camera to reflect only those views available to the tourist, and some even argued that films should be made only during the tourist season and shot only from the park roads. It was otherwise feared that the public could be ‘led astray by being shown animals and views which they would not be in a position to see in nature should they visit the Park (E.g. Pafuri in January!)’.<sup>45</sup>

This cautious attitude changed after the war when visitors needed to be encouraged back to the park. When the Fox Film Corporation sent a filmmaker to South Africa in 1945 to make five travelogues about the country, the Minister of Transport considered ‘the filming of the Park so important that in spite of the time of year, everything possible must be done to ensure the success of the filming mission.’<sup>46</sup> The Fox Corporation had the fee waived and all facilities and petrol paid for by the parks board. However, there were still limits: the 1948 Afrimerica project, produced by the Americans Edward Lowe and Earle Frank, planned to use helicopters and various moving shots to make ‘an exciting, authentic presentation of “Unspoilt Africa”’.<sup>47</sup> The idea was to build a sizable camp inside the park to accommodate a large crew for twenty weeks filming. Some on the board rejected it as an ‘American money-making scheme with some publicity thrown in’ and were wary of attracting

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> SAS 585 G45/11, NASA.

<sup>45</sup> ‘Previous Overseas Professional Profit Earning Concerns Granted Facilities in the Kruger National Park,’ undated report, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from H. van Graan to J. Stevenson-Hamilton, October 16 1945, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>47</sup> Letter from E. Lowe to A. Trollip, November 29 1948, in NK/17/2, KNP.

too much publicity for fear of swamping the park with tourists.<sup>48</sup> Several on the board feared the type of visitor that a mass-market medium such as film might attract.

What these examples illustrate, however, is that the board viewed film as a purely promotional tool, to entice visitors into the park (or, for some, to put them off). The idea of film as educational was not yet realized by the board as a whole, although, as has been shown above, Stevenson-Hamilton saw a need to show animals in particular ways that he believed to be more honest representations. Other bodies had recognized the potential of film to be an educative tool, particularly in the field of wildlife. For example, the SPCA acquired filming rights in the park in order to shoot material for a film on animal cruelty that they showed on mobile projectors to people outside.<sup>49</sup> The Wildlife Protection Society similarly wanted rights to make a film to show in schools about the need for preservation.<sup>50</sup> There was thus a recognition by bodies outside of the parks board of the power of film to change attitudes, yet the board itself tended to see its usefulness in terms of its ability to attract visitors to the park, and certain types of visitor at that.

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Before concluding this section it is worthwhile taking into consideration the networks of distribution at work. Newspapers and journals were read and shared with colleagues, friends or family, while films required specific locations or equipment. Ratcliffe Holmes explained to Stevenson-Hamilton that wildlife films found their audience in three ways: through lectures held by the filmmaker which accompanied a longer showing of material; via shorter ‘titled’ pictures for show in cinemas; and through a ‘miniature’ version that could be projected at home.<sup>51</sup> Access to much wildlife imagery therefore required access to particular social networks and sometimes intimate, domestic spaces. As has been mentioned above, projectors were taken out by particular groups to showcase educational films to local communities during this period, and promotional newsreels were screened at theatres in South Africa and abroad, but the distribution of wildlife film was still heavily reliant upon personal contacts and social networks.

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<sup>48</sup> Letter from J. Orpen to H. van Graan, December 12 1948, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>49</sup> Letter from W. Pitchford to J. Stevenson-Hamilton, July 11 1939, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>50</sup> Letter from D. Gilfillan to The Secretary, NPB, July 17 1939, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>51</sup> Letter from R. Holmes to J. Stevenson-Hamilton, February 23 1929, in NK/17/2, KNP.

Books by Stevenson-Hamilton enjoyed a wide circulation, with new stocks being required after the war to satisfy demand from visitors to the park.<sup>52</sup> His books were equally popular with conservationists in parks services around the world, so had a professional as well as a public ‘throw’.<sup>53</sup> As for the brochures and booklets published by the parks board for sale in the Kruger Park itself, by the late-1930s the circulation of *Unspoilt Africa* was around 25,000 per annum, with 18,000 copies in English and 7,000 copies in Afrikaans.<sup>54</sup>

The target market for much of this material on the Kruger National Park, as has been noted by Carruthers, was white South Africans and overseas tourists. Potential opponents, most notably comprised of farmers and other landowners on the fringes of the park, were generally communicated with via news articles.<sup>55</sup> There was some intent to deliver a conservationist message to an African audience, although there is little evidence of this from the perspective of the National Parks Board. At the National Zoo in Pretoria there were educational programmes in place directed at African school children, and some organizations, such as the SPCA, included African audiences in their plan to alert South Africans to the dangers of animal cruelty. In 1943 the National Zoo welcomed 5,057 white children and 6,420 non-white children to receive instruction.<sup>56</sup> However, the Transvaal Game Commission of 1945 was indifferent to promotional energies being directed towards non-white South Africans.

These largely managed channels of communication do not tell the story of other representations, out of the control of authorities, and it is worth noting a few examples of those less typical paths. The imperial system was one such structure that served as a useful network for the exchange and spread of the Kruger Park idea. For example, a veteran in Canada wrote to Stevenson-Hamilton to request a brochure on the Kruger Park, as he had lived in the Transvaal for a short while before moving to Canada. Such migrations took the Kruger Park to distant corners.<sup>57</sup> Friends at a British school swapped cigarette cards with pictures of animals from the Kruger Park, while pen pals forwarded on copies of Stevenson-Hamilton’s book *South African*

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<sup>52</sup> Letter from J. Stevenson-Hamilton to the Secretary, NPB, July 15 1947, in NK/38/2, KNP.

<sup>53</sup> Letter from V. Calahane to H. van Graan, January 7 1939, in NK/38/2, KNP.

<sup>54</sup> Circular Letter from NPB to Potential Advertisers in ‘Unspoilt Africa,’ in NK/38/2, KNP.

<sup>55</sup> Transvaal Provincial Administration, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Game Preservation*, 1945, in NTS 7618 27/329, NASA.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Letter from C. Taylor to J. Stevenson-Hamilton, November 5 1942, in NK/38/2, KNP.

*Eden* to unmet companions in America.<sup>58</sup> Through these alternative, uncontrollable avenues, representations of the Kruger Park spread, and it is necessary to keep in mind that channels of representation existed as expansive networks of discussion and exchange.

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<sup>58</sup> Letter from J. Gripper to J. Stevenson-Hamilton, October 25 1942, in NK/38/2, KNP, and letter from G. Walker to J. Stevenson-Hamilton, February 20 1943, in NK/38/2, KNP.

## Internal and Perimetrical Representation

It was hoped by many in the National Parks Board that the Kruger National Park would become South Africa's Yellowstone, attracting untold numbers of domestic and foreign visitors. Yet to ensure repeat visits, infrastructure was required that could cope with the expected influx of visitors. For Stratford Caldecott it was a national shame in 1927 that the facilities were insufficient, and due to pressure from Caldecott and other propagandists, as well as from the National Parks Board, funds were soon forthcoming for expansion.<sup>59</sup> The park saw a steady increase in visitor numbers as table 1.1, below, indicates.

Year	Number of cars	Number of visitors
1927	3	
1928	180	
1929	850	
1930	1700	
1931	2500	
1932	3023	
1933	4017	
1934	5431	19740
1935	6722	28405
1936	7936	29334
1937	9058	33849
1938	9891	38014
1939	8533	32603
1940	5978	22525
1941	8729	34168
1946	9150	37166
1947	9406	36556
1948	12260	46753
1949	13280	52166

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<sup>59</sup> *Die Huisgenoot*, May 27 1927.

1950	13943	55921
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**Table 1.1** Visitor numbers to the Kruger National Park, 1926-1950<sup>60</sup>

Yet this infrastructure was not a neutral development of roads and buildings, devoid of any cultural impact. Instead, the construction of the park's physical environment, as well as the activities that took place there, helped to fabricate further ideas about the national park. For many conservationists, the experiential element of engagement with the national park was arguably the most important, with multi-sensual connections encouraging the continuation of a relationship with the park and its ideals. This next section examines the context of a visit to the park, in terms of the material structures in place that determined how people could interact with the space, and as a result where the focus of representation was directed inside the park. It explores the ideas and the attitudes of the board and other significant bodies to the building of infrastructure in and around the park. Later, the lens transfers to the residents and neighbours, who experienced alternative messages about the park, to explore the various channels of communication that linked those communities to the national park idea. The purpose of this section is to broaden the spotlight onto forms of representation other than the overtly textual, and onto audiences other than the overtly touristic.

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During this period the journey from the cities on the Rand to the park was lengthy, taking over ten hours.<sup>61</sup> Between 1927 and 1950 many visitors came to the region by train. The Kruger Park had been part of the SARH special Round-in-Nine tour, which included various scenic spots around the country, since its days as the Sabi Game Reserve. By 1939 around 100 people were on each tour.<sup>62</sup> From 1927 another option was to self-drive into the park, using either a hired car or an owned vehicle for the purpose. In the early 1930s a new means to visit was initiated, whereby SARH would outsource car travel into the park from particular hubs. For example, it was possible to

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<sup>60</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1951, p.93. These statistics show visitors numbers during the main winter season from May to October, and do not include numbers during the summer season, when visitors were allowed to visit Pretoriuskop rest camp and the surrounding area.

<sup>61</sup> SARH Tour Schedule, in NK 47/5, KNP.

<sup>62</sup> Letter from the Secretary, NPB, to the Warden, KNP, August 29 1939, in NK 47/5, KNP.

hire a Touring car or a Sedan car, both with a driver, for a trip from Leydsdorp to Nelspruit via Letaba, Satara, Reserve, Hippo Pool and Pretorius Kop. This day trip cost between £18 and £23 depending on the quality of the rental vehicle.<sup>63</sup> This became a very common way to experience the national park during the 1930s and 1940s, as vehicle ownership in the country as a whole was still low.

The National Park was seen by SARH as an extension of the urban space, where visitors would have a day or, more commonly, a weekend trip out to the Kruger Park. The cost of the rental vehicles made an extended trip an expensive prospect. Only those with greater access to funds were able to spend any great length of time in the park. However, the common view of the park was as a place for a whistle-stop tour, where animals could be seen much like in a safari park. A 1930 report argued that:

The average tourist has no desire for prolonged visits to the Reserve, being content to take the most convenient rail and road route for the purpose of seeing game and returning in the quickest possible time to the railhead. The popular trip is the Pretoriuskop and Hippo Pool drive from Nelspruit, generally completed in a day, with luncheon baskets.<sup>64</sup>

The geographical focus of trips were the waterholes where the majority of wildlife could be seen, and taking tourists on brief sojourns into the park could be lucrative: Harry Wolhuter reported in his memoirs that drivers of contracted vehicles would often be paid half a crown per lion sighting, encouraging some entrepreneurial drivers to find beguiling routes back to the same pride three or four times to increase the tip.<sup>65</sup> The opportunity to turn farmers into travel guides was a major attraction for the White River Farmers' Association, who offered their support to the parks board in order to profit from the growth in popularity of the park.<sup>66</sup>

While most visitors came via rail and roads from the Rand, Durban, or Cape Town, another route into the Kruger Park was from Lourenco Marques in Portuguese East Africa. From the early 1930s a special transit visa was available for travellers from Lourenco Marques on cruise ships. It was therefore possible to acquire a visa purely for the Kruger National Park at a fraction of the cost of a visa for the whole of

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<sup>63</sup> Letter from Henshall's Garage to The Manager, South African Railways & Harbours (SAR), June 6 1932, in SAS 2218 TTM281, NASA.

<sup>64</sup> Report by the Manager, Road Motor Services, on Proposed Road Motor Service, Kruger National Park, October 2 1930, in SAS 2209 TTM 1619, NASA.

<sup>65</sup> Wolhuter, *Memories of a Game Ranger*, p.274.

<sup>66</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee of the National Parks Board Meeting, September 30 1927, KNP.

South Africa.<sup>67</sup> In such a way, the Kruger Park acquired a quasi-independent status on the diplomatic books.

The nearby towns were aware of the benefits that the park brought to road-building schemes in the region. From the very beginning publicity associations in towns such as Lydenburg were keen for roads to be built that connected them with a park gate and made them into gateways to the Kruger Park.<sup>68</sup> The lobbyists for Nelspruit seem to have been the most successful in gaining the investment and the credentials to become a principal access point to the park. Initially the plan had been for a single route to the park, but after consultation with various development societies in the eastern Transvaal, it was settled that several routes would be introduced.<sup>69</sup> Further cooperation between the parks board and the local towns saw groups pressure for the location of entrance gates and other amenities that affected populations around the periphery. The gate at Malelane, for example, suited the people of Barberton, and their voice stopped plans of a gate being built any further east.<sup>70</sup>

In the late 1920s, descriptions by pioneering visitors show up the difficulty of a trip to the park. One journey, by an employee of SARH accompanying an early filmmaker working in the park, gives an indication of the condition of the early access roads. He describes the road from Acornhoek to Kruger as ‘rough, deeply rutted in places with several patches of sand and 4 big spruits’.<sup>71</sup> Another journalist described the road he took as:

pretty bad in parts, and very puzzling to find. We struck one camp of whites who supplemented our directions, and sent us back three or four miles. For the rest we had to depend on natives.<sup>72</sup>

Increasingly, however, a limited number of roads were the principal channels forging connections between the Kruger Park, the eastern Transvaal and the metropolitan

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<sup>67</sup> Letter from Parry, Leon and Hayhoe Travel Agents to the Secretary of the Interior, June 21 1939, in BNS 727 86/146, NASA.

<sup>68</sup> Report by Traffic Officer, SAR, on Proposed Road Motor Service in the Kruger National Park, August 29 1930, in SAS 2209 TTM 1619, NASA.

<sup>69</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, August 25 1928, KNP.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Letter from M. Hopkins to the Acting Manager of SAR & Harbours Publicity Department June 26 1928, in SAS 585 G45/11, NASA.

<sup>72</sup> *The Sphere*, April 6 1929.

centres. It is worth adding that in these early years of the park many of the routes went through farms where shooting was permissible.<sup>73</sup>

Inside the park, roads were seen as a vital means of affecting the environment. For the Treasury, road-building was a fruitful use of investment, as they believed the principal appeal of the park was the landscape and the wildlife, and roads were the means to access those attractions. Even so, the Treasury still felt that the National Parks Board should be paying for this development out of its own budget.<sup>74</sup> The parks board asked SARH to share the burden, and several reports were commissioned to examine areas for expansion. The main roads inside the park were those that had been built by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA), and they were offered to the parks board for public use. The east-west dirt roads therefore became the first main routes in the north of the park, and received generally favourable reviews, particularly in comparison to the roads immediately outside.<sup>75</sup>

In terms of routes for the roads, the purpose was to showcase as much wildlife as possible, and so focus was placed on small circuits with maximum impact. Pretoriuskop, as the area where year round access remained permissible, became the focus of many small circuits, taking in various attractions and much wildlife. The road to Lower Sabie from Skukuza, however, received much criticism for its lack of wildlife, although this would later become one of the most travelled routes in the park and a renowned area for lion sightings.<sup>76</sup> Since 1929, when a group of American visitors were caught in a summer thunderstorm and found themselves stranded in the park and in need of a late night rescue, it was decided that the park would open only during the winter months, from May until October, to avoid tourists travelling on muddy roads at peak times for malaria.

Those that did stay inside the park had to make use of an official rest camp. It is worth bearing in mind that the first rest camps in the park for the public were run by the WNLA, and catered to Mozambicans being ferried to work on the Rand. Those camps were little more than large dormitories to cater to workers in transit. The camps

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<sup>73</sup> Letter from A. Mcindoe to Chairman of the Road Board, Pilgrim's Rest, January 30 1927, in SAS 2218 TTM281, NASA.

<sup>74</sup> Letter from Secretary of Finance to the Secretary of Lands, April 29 1927, in TES 2756 10/210, NASA.

<sup>75</sup> Letter from A. Mcindoe to Chairman of the Road Board, Pilgrim's Rest, January 30 1927, in SAS 2218 TTM281, NASA.

<sup>76</sup> Natuurbewaring en Toerisme, Presentation by AM Brynard at the Conservation Conference at Skukuza, June 1962, in BAO 229 H62/13/1, NASA.

had been useful to the WNLA before 1926, but after the proclamation of the park, and the improvement of roadways and motor transport, they were abandoned in favour of speedier transfers. In 1926, therefore, there was little in the way of accommodation for a paying public, and it was from this blank canvas that the park administration worked.

Initially people either camped in tents or stayed in outhouses at ranger stations or in ranger accommodation itself. Gradually investment was forthcoming to develop several camps around the park, from Punda Maria in the north to Pretoriuskop in the south. The design of the rest huts was deemed important to the representational process inside the park. While the rondavel hut has become one of the mainstays of the Kruger experience, it was not an immediate choice. Camping quickly became the preferred accommodation for those braving a stay inside the park in its earliest years, before formal accommodation had been constructed. Oswald Pirow, board member and politician, recommended erecting ‘a safe and formidable barbed-wire and then bush fence round the camp, and inside it to provide a shelter by the erection of a long shed standing on poles and with an iron roof.’<sup>77</sup> While this plan was popular, when Paul Selby discovered a cheap method of building satisfactory rondavels, the board were supportive.<sup>78</sup> The style of the ablutions and the standards of behaviour also became significant parts of the means to maintain the correct atmosphere within the rest camps.<sup>79</sup>

The social and political climate in South Africa in the 1920s and 1930s, alongside the cost and the content of the early promotional material, meant that most visitors during this period were either white South Africans, Americans or Europeans. In the park annual report the warden described some of the earliest classes of visitor:

- (1) Well to do visitors from the larger towns of South Africa and from overseas.
- (2) Excursionists from neighbouring industrial areas who usually came in large parties at weekends or on public holidays.
- (3) Local residents whose motives in visiting were in some cases a little obscure, since some were persons who might come under the class known as “professional hunters”. These were of course only a small minority.<sup>80</sup>

A further group of visitor the warden described were lorry drivers using the better park roads to transport goods between the towns of the region. By the 1930s the

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<sup>77</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, February 23 1929, KNP.

<sup>78</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, April 12 1929, KNP.

<sup>79</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, March 8 1930, KNP.

<sup>80</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1929.

lorries had been excluded through the introduction of a fee to enter the park and a general ban on oversized vehicles.

Rest camps were also built for use by Indian visitors to the park. In 1932 a number of wealthy Indian South Africans were enquiring about rest camp accommodation. While some on the board were against having Indians in the park completely, others saw the economic potential: ‘the better class Indian born in South Africa was by no means of an undesirable type, and if well treated, would possibly be prepared to render the Park valuable financial assistance.’<sup>81</sup> One tent was put aside for use by Indians in the Skukuza rest camp, at a distance from the other accommodation. The general lack of Indian visitors constantly threatened the accommodation in the park available to them: in 1933 the warden surmised that the ‘experiment did not justify itself.’<sup>82</sup> Yet despite low take up, accommodation remained available for Indian, African and coloured visitors throughout this period, with the Olifants Pontoon camp being set aside and renamed Balule.

The presence of wildlife was a key facet of the whole representational process, in that it formed the content of the park that people were most interested in. At the opening of the park it was expected that animals such as zebra and wildebeest would be the most popular animals.<sup>83</sup> This conformed with ideas regarding the overall purpose of preservationism, which was the protection of vulnerable species that almost exclusively included herbivores. At the first meeting of the National Parks Board in 1926 it was suggested that ‘no more lions are to be shot for the time being, but that this should not be made public’.<sup>84</sup> Lions had been frequently culled since 1898 as a vermin species although the practice had become distasteful to people such as Stevenson-Hamilton by 1920.<sup>85</sup> However, the fear at that first board meeting was that the public would dislike the idea of lions in the park, most probably from a safety point of view, and as such it was inadvisable to let it become known that lions were not being significantly reduced. Contrary to expectations, a lion sighting soon became the principal objective for visitors to the park, and by 1929 the board was seeking ways of keeping their numbers up in order to attract more visitors.<sup>86</sup> By 1935 there was public concern that there were too many lions, and that this was leading to a

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<sup>81</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, June 22 1932, KNP.

<sup>82</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1933.

<sup>83</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1925.

<sup>84</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, September 16 1926, KNP.

<sup>85</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p.64.

<sup>86</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, September 21 1929, KNP.

decline in numbers of other species.<sup>87</sup> The subsequent rumour of a planned lion cull, however, led to difficulties in acquiring a grant from the government for park maintenance.<sup>88</sup>

The idea of the park as a preserve for the survival of species was generally paramount, but this had various repercussions and caused disagreements among board members. Aside from lions, the general losers were the carnivores. Wild dog suffered from a harmful reputation, and in February 1928 it was decided that in order to protect the reedbuck population the board would offer a bounty of £1 for wild dog skins shot by rangers.<sup>89</sup> One member inquired whether shooting of jackals should stop as that may turn them into a tourist attraction in the way that lions had benefitted, however Stevenson-Hamilton was adamant that jackals were a menace.<sup>90</sup> Others were eager to see more species introduced: Piet Grobler was keen to see white rhino in the park.<sup>91</sup> For other board members, the visibility of the animals was most important: Papenfus, for example, suggested including salt licks by the side of the roads to encourage the wildlife to remain in sight.<sup>92</sup> Other development schemes could have a negative effect on perceptions of wildlife: for example the borehole fund that was begun in the 1930s to help raise capital for the construction of boreholes around the park, sent a message to the people of South Africa that wildlife was scarce in the park and that there was no point in visiting.<sup>93</sup>

The behaviour of the animals themselves also impacted on the way they were perceived by people. Partly this was due to environmental factors: the park biologist in the 1960s, Andrew Brynard, argued at a tourism conference in 1962 that the period of drought in the 1930s, and particularly in the year 1933, caused animals to congregate near only a few waterholes. The result was that during this critical period of growth for the park, wildlife could be seen in abundance at several key points, which the park authorities could easily recommend to visitors, and privately contracted vehicles were aware of and could show their clients. Brynard argued that lions also learned this pattern, and stationed themselves near the waterholes in order to guarantee food. The result was that people saw much lion activity during this

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<sup>87</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, August 24 1935, KNP.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, February 3 1928, KNP.

<sup>90</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, July 5 1929, KNP.

<sup>91</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, September 16 1926, KNP.

<sup>92</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, June 22 1933, KNP.

<sup>93</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, August 31 1933, KNP.

period, including several ‘kills’. Between 1936 and 1940 the rains returned and the lions dispersed, but by then a foundation of public enthusiasm had been established.<sup>94</sup> Stevenson-Hamilton believed that the change in human activity in the park led to a shift in animal behaviour. He noticed that lions in particular were less likely to rest only in kopjes or hills, and would come out into shade anywhere in the park.<sup>95</sup> Lions therefore became a more accessible animal. The argument that shifts in animal behaviour could be responsible for the change in perception of particular species has recently been put forth by William Beinart, who has argued that wild dogs’ hunting strategies led to hostility from the farming community.<sup>96</sup> These examples from the Kruger Park showcase more positive transformations of attitudes towards certain species, and particularly lions.

Education for the public about the wildlife inside the park was generally kept very limited during this period. In 1948 the situation was starkly described : ‘there are no facilities or opportunities for tourists to receive any instruction or to acquire any knowledge of the park other than self-education from the limited information of the guide and publications largely unknown to the public.’ It was claimed that the public ‘clamour to be provided with educational facilities’ with museums, libraries and films the most requested services.<sup>97</sup> The first offer to show wildlife films inside the park had come during 1931, although the park had declined the request, finding the idea ‘not only undesirable, but also impractical.’<sup>98</sup> In 1934 an information bureau was recommended for Skukuza to help educate overnight guests, but this plan too was rejected.<sup>99</sup> Guides to the park were the principal means of imparting information, and were described by the warden in 1940 as important as petrol and bedding to the national park experience.<sup>100</sup> There were also some educational events, such as the sporadic lectures held at some of the rest camps by prominent visitors with an interest in education, including the scout leader Charles Yates. However, despite these occasional occurrences, and the handful of official publications, the educational angle inside the park was not a dominant one during this period.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Natuurbewaring en Toerisme, Presentation by AM Brynard at the Conservation Conference at Skukuza, June 1962, in BAO 229 H62/13/1, NASA.

<sup>95</sup> Stevenson-Hamilton, *South African Eden*, p.275.

<sup>96</sup> Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa*, p.199.

<sup>97</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Interim Meeting, February 26 1948, KNP.

<sup>98</sup> Minutes of the Executive Sub-Committee of the National Parks Board Meeting, May 12 1931, KNP.

<sup>99</sup> Minutes of the Executive Sub-Committee of the National Parks Board Meeting, July 28 1934, KNP.

<sup>100</sup> Letter from the Warden, KNP, to the Secretary, NPB, February 23 1940, in NK 47/5, KNP.

<sup>101</sup> Minutes of the Executive Sub-Committee of the National Parks Board Meeting, July 28 1934, KNP.

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Almost all the representational work generated inside the park was intended for an external audience present in the park on a temporary basis. While this audience was at the forefront of the minds of the park's propagandists, the people living in and around the park played an important role, both as recipients of a unique variety of representation, as well as actors in, and victims of, the representational process. The park communicated with those on its doorstep through a number of means, including the imposition of laws or the building of particular structures. Yet it also manipulated those people to assist in the wider strategies of representation.

In order to properly contextualize the external and internal representations of the park it is necessary to understand the ways that the park presented itself at various distances from its epicentre, including those people living within a few miles of the park's perimeter. At this spatial level the park saw the people around it not as potential visitors, but instead as potential menaces: either as poachers or land hungry farmers, both of whom endangered the existence of the park. This understanding of the public caused a dichotomized perception of people as either prospective threats or possible collaborators.

The warden, based at Skukuza, was also the Native Affairs Commissioner for the Kruger Park region, responsible for the people living within the park. During the 1930s they numbered several thousand before a foot and mouth scare led to the extermination of residents' cattle and a mass exodus. It is difficult to ascertain true figures as many residents were absent as migrant labourers. The communication channels with those communities were essentially uni-directional conduits, with little possibility for feedback. Poaching laws do not seem to have been clearly translated, nor the national park project lucidly explained. Communities, however, were expected to provide information on poachers and any poaching activity in their districts, although the pressure that the warden wielded over communities living inside the park was obviously significantly greater than on those outside the boundaries.<sup>102</sup> Often the authorities were keener to rely upon strategically positioned native ranger stations,

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<sup>102</sup> Letter from H. van Graan, Secretary of the National Parks Board of Trustees to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 19/11/1940, in NTS 7612 8/329, NASA.

who would patrol the park perimeter and provide information on local movements and activities.

A more sustained form of representation on the perimeter was the border itself. Parts of the park had been created out of a conglomeration of farms, and the boundaries to the farms essentially formed the perimeter of the park. Along certain stretches, such as the southern border, the perimeter was created by natural features such as the Crocodile River. Here the park had managed to gain for itself favourable legal conditions. In 1923 Stevenson-Hamilton, in an attempt to ease the process of arrest, gathered the necessary support for legislation that placed the park's boundary on the far side of any riverine boundary.<sup>103</sup> This law presented a challenge to nearby residents as river access at major water sources in the Lowveld such as the Crocodile River suddenly became an issue of trespass.

To demarcate non-riverine boundaries to the west the park relied upon the acknowledged farm borders. When a dispute arose legal assistance was sought to help decide exact boundary delineation. On the international border between South Africa and Mozambique, ranger Louis Steyn erected beacons to indicate the line of the frontier. However, without a more rigid structure, the border remained an ill defined feature, and was a constant source of disagreement. As a result, the implications for the local populations on this side of the park were never completely coherent or concrete. Around the whole park the ramifications for snaring an animal on either side of the line could not have been more stark, with the parks board often pushing for maximum punishments for poaching. However, on the eastern side, with a border line often under dispute, the courts found it difficult to prosecute to the full extent of the law.

This was not to say that those accused of poaching from the Portuguese side were not punished, for they were, but the sentences were often lighter than for those on the other side of the park, despite the machinations of the rangers and warden, who were keen to firm up this eastern perimeter.<sup>104</sup> For example, during the early 1930s Portuguese poachers from Ressano Garcia made 'Sunday excursions' into the park with servants and dogs to assist them, and a brief gun fight was required to shore up

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<sup>103</sup> Letter by J. Stevenson-Hamilton dated November 19 1935, cited in a *Report of the Riverine Boundaries of the Kruger National Park*, in NTS 28/3168 6803, NASA.

<sup>104</sup> Letter from L. Steyn to J. Stevenson-Hamilton, February 27 1936, in NK 2/1, KNP.

that south eastern corner.<sup>105</sup> One reason for the Portuguese side being often quieter and of less concern could be that animals could move easily into Portuguese territory, and so it was simple for residents in that region to hunt legitimately outside of the park.<sup>106</sup> The government and the parks board were less keen on solving the eastern problem: money that had been earmarked for plotting the true border never materialized, and the park staff were told to sort it out themselves, without the political backing to legitimise any final decisions.<sup>107</sup> Those messages ended up causing concern for neighbouring governments; in Rhodesia, there was anxiety about plans the Kruger Park had to extend north, up to the national border. The consequences of such a move worried Rhodesian officials, who wondered who would have jurisdiction over their bank of the Limpopo River.<sup>108</sup>

Gun ownership was another key representational feature around the perimeter of the Kruger Park. White rangers had always had access to firearms, but the parks board were keen from the beginning to arm the African rangers and constables in their employ.<sup>109</sup> The guns were meant for engagement with poachers rather than for any protection against wildlife. The Kruger Park intended to appear as a strong martial space to poachers, and this escalated the militarization of the region more generally. One result of this was to make the Kruger Park one of the principal focal points for hunting. As one report noted in the 1940s, ‘most of the hunting in the Transvaal takes place on land adjacent to the Kruger National Park.’<sup>110</sup> The laws and impositions put in place, combined with the success of the preservationist approach to wildlife growth, alongside representational material that highlighted the region as the flag bearer for wildlife in South Africa, all combined to create a nexus point. The Kruger Park made hunting possible, in many senses, and helped maintain the industry, as well as its appeal. Without the Kruger Park there may not have been a hunting industry, nor much poaching. Throughout the 1930s, however, it became harder for people to acquire hunting permits to shoot at the hunting lodges based along the Kruger Park boundary that were largely owned by wealthy individuals or corporations from the

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<sup>105</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1934.

<sup>106</sup> See, for example, NPB Annual Report, 1931.

<sup>107</sup> Letter from J. Stevenson-Hamilton to L. Steyn, September 11 1934, in NK 2/1, KNP.

<sup>108</sup> Minutes of the Conference of the South African Publicity Association, 9/1953, in NTS 3819 2773/308, NASA.

<sup>109</sup> Letter from the Secretary of the National Parks Board of Trustees to the Secretary of Native Affairs, August 11 1927, in NTS 2363 10/284, NASA.

<sup>110</sup> Transvaal Provincial Administration, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Game Preservation*, 1945, in NTS 7618 27/329, NASA.

Rand. During the war there was perceived to be a significant rise in hunting in and around the park, due to the absence of police patrols in the region.<sup>111</sup> After the war, a perception grew that hunting had dramatically increased in the border regions on the western side of the park, and there were calls to completely ban hunting within twenty miles of the park.<sup>112</sup>

While many farmers on the fringes supported the park and its ideals, the ways that that support manifested itself could vary, and sometimes the park ran into confrontations and misunderstandings with the local hunting community. Perhaps the most extreme example was in 1948, when it was discovered that Eileen Orpen, who had been a keen advocate of the park and donated much land to the cause, was found to have been inviting guests to her farm Kingfisherspruit to hunt lions. Kingfisherspruit formed part of the Kruger National Park, and had been given to the park by Orpen. However, she had been granted usufruct of the property during her lifetime, and was therefore allowed to hunt on the farm.<sup>113</sup> Unsurprisingly the park asked her to halt any further invitations, yet the example illustrates that the conservationist ethic in the region allowed space for special privileges that even the most ardent of conservationists made use of in ways contradictory to the ideals being circulated.

Representatives from the park, particularly the rangers, were able to make forays into local areas, ostensibly to follow up suspicions of poaching. Under the National Parks Act their jurisdiction spread for a mile outside the park boundary, which led to opportunities for conflict. The Portuguese East African government, for example, claimed that ranger Steyn was guilty of leading cattle raids on communities inside Portuguese East Africa around Nhauguanhana.<sup>114</sup> These raids, and counter raids by Africans, were used to intimidate, and were an attempt to exert control over a poorly policed region. Prisoners were captured and recaptured and several were wounded on both sides of the conflict. Many of these disputes revolved around access to resources, in particular water and wildlife. Water sources around the Lebombo mountain range attracted Africans on the Portuguese side and their cattle to

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<sup>111</sup> Letter from the Acting Additional Native Commissioner, to the Magistrate, Zoutpansberg, September 16 1940, in NTS 7612 8/129, NASA.

<sup>112</sup> A. Schoch, 'The Destruction of Game on Land Outside the Kruger National Park,' Memorandum for the *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Game Preservation*, 1945, in NTS 7618 27/329, NASA.

<sup>113</sup> Letter from J. Sandenburgh to the Chairman, NPB, September 23 1948, in NK 2/1, KNP.

<sup>114</sup> Letter from the Secretary of Lands to the Secretary, NPB, February 14 1945, in NK 2/1, KNP.

waterholes that Steyn asserted were inside park territory. The destruction of wildlife in and around African reserves also opened up space for conflict. Problem animals, such as lion, sometimes needed destroying, but the distribution of the skin and meat often caused grievances, as park rangers frequently claimed the more valuable parts of destroyed animals for themselves.<sup>115</sup>

Destruction of European owned livestock or crops by wild animals were a constant cause for concern among the authorities in the park. Responsibility for these instances, they argued, fell to the provincial government rather than the parks board, and staff were discouraged from assisting farmers in shooting particular problem animals.<sup>116</sup> There was less concern over any depletion of African livestock by predators from Kruger. In 1935 two attorneys brought a test case against the park on behalf of two African livestock owners who had suffered losses due to lion attacks. The argument was that the park was deliberately encouraging the increase in the lion population for financial gain, without proper safeguards in place to protect local communities.<sup>117</sup> The park was adamant in its denial of liability and the case appears to have been dropped.

Another common complaint by European farmers was that Africans were allowed to reside within the park, where they could keep their cattle and make use of the boreholes and waterholes, some of which had been paid for by public donations.<sup>118</sup> Convincing such petitioners of the park board's policy tended to take place either at the publicity conferences or town meetings where the grievances were raised, or in the local or national press. The park relied upon arguments that defended the African presence in the park as tax-payers, mine workers and cheap labour, as well as protectors of wildlife. The national park was presented to the farmers as working for the good of the state, and used discourses of land, labour, and preservationism to bolster their position.<sup>119</sup>

African access to the park became increasingly limited. At the outset, their presence was precarious, as the National Parks Act made their residence theoretically illegal. However the board's position from 1926 was to cautiously permit the status

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<sup>115</sup> Letter from Native Commissioner, Nelspruit, to the Warden, KNP, April 5 1949, in NK 2/1, KNP.

<sup>116</sup> Letter from J. Sandenburgh to the Secretary, NPB, January 15 1948, in NK 2/1, KNP.

<sup>117</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, August 24 1935, KNP.

<sup>118</sup> *The Star*, August 8 1931.

<sup>119</sup> *The Star*, September 3 1931.

quo and ensure that the population did ‘not increase to too great an extent.’<sup>120</sup> By 1939, their position in the park had been made untenable for reasons detailed below. Others outside the park wishing to enter the park for cultural reasons found short shrift from the parks board. A major issue for neighbours of the park was access to ancestral grave sites. In 1934 Hoyi Ngomane petitioned the Native Affairs Department to be able to visit graves and perform rituals inside the park. The application was initially approved by board members who found his request ‘reasonable’, but the warden had severe reservations about African access and demanded ‘certain stipulations’.<sup>121</sup> It was briefly considered that access could be granted for a ‘formidable fee to cover the expense for supervision,’ but in the end it was decided that the application should be refused.<sup>122</sup>

A more damaging discourse, that has been described by Carruthers and others, revolved around the status of the wildlife in the Kruger National Park as carriers of foot and mouth and tsetse, and the threat that this posed to the farming communities on the western fringes.<sup>123</sup> Such a discourse had caused havoc in Natal, and resulted in the destruction of large populations of game, and a similar fate threatened the Kruger Park. In 1939 the economy of the Kruger Park region went through a significant shift for many who lived on the fringes of the park, and particularly those who lived within its borders. Stevenson-Hamilton had overseen a small population of resident people and cattle since 1902. In 1939, in order to combat foot and mouth, 1,200 head of cattle were destroyed which saw a dramatic shift in the sustainability of communities inside the park. People became reliant upon the Kruger Park staff for handouts of condensed milk.<sup>124</sup> Foodstuffs and other essentials, that previously could have been supplied internally, had to be imported from outside the park. Two thousand people could no longer be supported in the park.<sup>125</sup> The food networks in the park went through a catastrophic restructuring that saw the departure of numerous residents who left to find better conditions outside of the park. Those deemed ‘undesirable’ were

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<sup>120</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Executive Sub-Committee Meeting, October 15 1926, KNP.

<sup>121</sup> See the Minutes of the National Parks Board Executive Sub-Committee Meeting, October 27 1934, KNP, and Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, December 8 1934, KNP.

<sup>122</sup> See the Minutes of the National Parks Board Executive Sub-Committee Meeting, February 16 1934, KNP, and Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, March 30 1935, KNP.

<sup>123</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p.114.

<sup>124</sup> Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Chief Native Commissioner, Northern Areas, April 25 1939, in NTS 28/3168 6803, NASA.

<sup>125</sup> Letter from J. Stevenson-Hamilton to the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Chief Native Commissioner, Northern Areas, April 25 1939, in NTS 28/3168 6803, NASA.

ejected leaving mostly park employees and their dependents: by 1955 there were only 515 residents, of whom 215 were adults.<sup>126</sup>

Alongside problem animals, perimeter conflicts, and restrictive laws, one of the most considerable impacts the park had on the local communities was in its dealings over land. The parks board interfered with land sales several miles from its borders, frequently maintaining its position that farms in the vicinity of the park should remain in the hands of white farmers.<sup>127</sup> Land exchanges with the Native Trust threatened the livelihoods of numerous communities. In the late 1940s discussions began over the acquisition of the Pafuri region to the north of the park, known as Makuleke's location, although it would take another twenty years before the people were removed from the region. For most on the parks board the exchange of the Pafuri region for land on the western fringes of the park represented a fantastic opportunity for conservation, although not all were in favour. The secretary of the parks board was one dissenter, as he disliked the idea of exchanging a natural boundary for a man-made one. His chief concern, however, was that by gaining land widely acknowledged as fertile, they were opening themselves up to later land claims by land-hungry farmers.<sup>128</sup> For him it was an issue of representation, as the park authorities had tried hard to maintain an image that Kruger was infertile and vulnerable to drought. The acquisition of an evidently lush region would expose the discourse and open the park up to agriculture. Those on the side of the Native Affairs Department were also very skeptical of any exchange, fully aware of the cramped conditions awaiting any introduction of people to less productive lands.<sup>129</sup>

A meeting took place in 1948, under the new Warden Sandenburgh, between around a hundred male residents of Makuleke's location and the Native Commissioner for the region, as well as a representative from the Kruger Park. During this meeting the community gave their impressions of park behaviour up to that point.<sup>130</sup> Hlambela Kombo explained that the park had a habit of hinting at removals in the past:

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<sup>126</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1956.

<sup>127</sup> Letter from H. Potgeiter to the Secretary for Native Affairs, April 28 1931, in NTS 3589 847/308, NASA.

<sup>128</sup> Letter from H. van Graan to the members of the NPB, March 31 1950, in NK 2/1, KNP.

<sup>129</sup> Internal Memorandum by the Director of Native Agriculture, June 27 1949, in NTS 3819 2773/308, NASA.

<sup>130</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of Residents of Makuleke's Location, Pafuri Drift, December 17 1948, in NTS 3819 2773/308, NASA.

You white people are not open enough and you don't say all – we feel that we will still be subject to the Park Regulations. Some years back we were told that we would have to leave this area altogether. This was later cancelled and we were told we could live here and nothing would happen here. We are being told to leave again. We don't know the new place mentioned. Our grandfathers fought for this land. We came from Portuguese Territory and conquered this land – we did not come from Mhinga's side.

The community had already given up its livestock in order to remain in the park and the lands that they had inherited. The park was seen as an antagonistic opponent:

If you don't want us any more – we don't want to live under the Park – tell us to go and we will go – if you don't like a dog you get rid of it – when we ask for trek passes you refuse... the Park has something against us – they won't tell us – we don't want to go to Mhinga's.

The warden in particular was treated with suspicion, and especially for his role as tax collector. For many in the community there was a feeling that nothing remained for them, as John Musabeni explained:

It is a bad thing if you buy yourself a shirt and the next day it is taken away from you – we are much worried that you are giving us over to another European today. We are not allowed to keep any stock and we have lived in peace – it is better to tell us to go and we can just part – we don't want to see the game officials here – when we see them our hair stands up in hate. If you tell our Nduna that we must go we will go – I shall be pleased if you will tell the Nduna the truth.

The quotations provide some suggestions as to how the park engaged and presented itself to many of the local communities living around the park during this period. These minutes offer a snapshot of an angry community, in ardent opposition to the parks board, who felt betrayed by decisions made that reversed or ignored prior agreements. The people talked of a sense of disquiet and of feeling 'unsettled'. The inconsistency from the park authorities seems to have been the principal focus of their suspicions and frustration. Such descriptions reinforce the sense of a uni-directional conduit through which the park communicated with many on its periphery.

Before concluding this section it is worth noting how the Kruger Park was utilized in productive and creative ways by those on its periphery. For many living around the eastern Transvaal or western Mozambique, the Kruger Park offered access to resources and networks that had not been there before, as well as new challenges to older patterns of existence. For the white landowners and towns people of the various villages en route from the Rand, the opening of the park unlocked new sources of revenue and new industries. Garages offered tours of the park to train passengers

stopping at Nelspruit or Komatipoort. Barberton and Pilgrim's Rest took on new lives as tourist hot spots that brought considerable wealth to those best placed to offer services to the influx of visitors to the region. Anticipating the success of the national park, Machadodorp, Lydenburg, Pilgrim's Rest, Graskop, Sabie and the Drakensberg Farmer's Association joined forces to conduct a publicity campaign for the area in April 1927.<sup>131</sup>

For Africans on the periphery there were also some opportunities. Although more patrolled than before, the Kruger Park still offered possibilities for smugglers to transport goods from the Union to Portuguese East Africa and vice versa. This route was of particular concern to the Department of Customs and Excise, who thought the park should be doing more to monitor African movement across the border.<sup>132</sup> One man arrested in the park had 529 animal skins confiscated that he had acquired on the Portuguese side.<sup>133</sup> Rather than merely being a destination for the illicit acquisition of animal products, the park was also perceived by people as a locus through which the trade of animal products could operate. The park also continued during this period as a route available to people to connect with family groups either side of the border. Passes cost ten shillings and these allowed access through the park. During the war the Satara rest camp became a useful place for people to buy particular goods, and there were concerns about women from Portuguese East Africa entering the country without a permit to buy mealie meal from Satara.<sup>134</sup> People from the region were therefore able to engage with the park in creative ways, and fitted it with their personal and communal needs.

Aside from these few examples, on the perimetrical front the park authorities tried to maintain a strict control over its representational tools, which were generally utilized to emphasise the park's authority over the landscape. Whether actively through police, or more passively through tightly managed communication structures that shut out most alternative opinions, the park was able to command its hegemony in the region. However, there were also plenty of attempts to mollify and appease the white farming community. From as early as 1930 life fellowships and an honorary ranger system were both suggested as schemes that might benefit local white

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<sup>131</sup> Letter from H. MacDougall to The Manager, SARH, April 2 1927, in SAS 2218 TTM281, NASA.

<sup>132</sup> Letter from the Department of Customs and Excise to J. Sandenburgh, April 11 1950, in NK 2/1, KNP.

<sup>133</sup> Letter from Native Affairs Department, Sibasa, to the Sub Native Commissioner, Louis Trichardt, November 30 1926, in NTS 95/400 9491, NASA.

<sup>134</sup> Letter from L. Steyn to the Warden, KNP, October 18 1945, in NK 2/1, KNP.

communities and tie them in closer to the management of the park and thereby increase support of the park among the farming community.<sup>135</sup> Much of this representational style was in place to serve the broader representational mechanisms at play. The park had to control poaching and the African presence in the park, for example, to satisfy idealized visions and the perceived marketable facets of the park. People living on the periphery therefore frequently found themselves manipulated to match representations of the park to the outside world, just as much as any conservationist intention.

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<sup>135</sup> Minutes of the Executive Sub-Committee of the National Parks Board Meeting, January 4 1930, KNP.

## **Conclusion**

The Kruger National Park made use of a wide range of representational tools throughout the period 1926 to 1950. Generally each medium operated at a particular spatial level. For example, books and films tended to communicate with an external and geographically more distant audience, while park architecture and roads spoke to a closer clientele. On the perimeter of the park, other forms of representation portrayed an alternative view of the park. These spheres were not entirely discrete – textual or visual examples of representational material were available inside the park and became a significant feature of the park experience. As the different spatial levels attracted different forms of representation, the function and form of that representation operated differently at each of those levels. The external material attempted to reach a broader church, and attract members of the public to the cause of conservationism and the national park movement. Internally, the park attempted to create an atmosphere via its architecture and the control of movement through the space. On the perimeters, the park authorities imposed itself on weaker communities, mollified powerful critics, and set about restructuring the region to suit its own conception of society and economy.

This chapter has argued that the Kruger National Park made use of a range of material in order to force its agenda into public conceptions. It did not shy away from both modern and older forms of communication and persuasion. Without an appreciation of this range any attempt to comprehend a national park's representational scope would be hampered by artificial limits. Photographs or guide books alone would be insufficient to tell the story of the means by which ideas of nature and the national park were communicated to the public. Yet it has also been argued that many of the transmission channels contained an inherent bias towards particular socio-economic groups, and people with access to specific networks. The following chapter draws more on this argument as it shifts the focus away from the variety of channels to look at the variety of content, and the way in which the park became a piece of apparatus to assist with social distinction.

## CHAPTER TWO

### DISTINCTION AND THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK, 1926-1950

#### Introduction

While the American national parks are rightly known as ‘playgrounds of the people’, the Kruger National Park may more fitly be designated as ‘a sanctuary for the fauna to which the public is admitted’.<sup>1</sup>

James Stevenson-Hamilton clearly saw a distinction between the purpose behind the parks in America and the Kruger National Park. Where the former was a public concern, with the public at the forefront of its justification, the latter was validated by its preservationist principles. Yet the above quotation indicates further readings that illuminate the Kruger Park’s role in social signification. In his juxtaposition of the definitions, he implied a scorn for the concept of a people’s ‘playground’. There is also an insinuation that ‘the public’ was a better sort of visitor than ‘the people’. What is clear, however, is that a process of selection was built into the Kruger Park from the outset. Although he did not say it explicitly, someone was deciding on who could and who could not be admitted into the park.

Selection started at the point of distribution. This determined that particular groups were more likely to visit the national park than others. The previous chapter looked at the variety of channels available to the park administration and the values

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<sup>1</sup> Stevenson-Hamilton, *South African Eden*, (2008), p.295.

and targets that they put upon those channels. This chapter moves into the material itself, and argues that the process of distinction took place within the content by and about the park. Numerous discourses worked to create a regime of representation that helped to interlace the park and its wildlife with various social and political ideas. The chapter is divided thematically to explore those ideas in turn. The first section interrogates the relationship between race, nationalism and the Kruger Park. Here, a closer reading of the representational material offers fresh perspectives to augment the work already carried out by Carruthers and Bunn. The second section examines the infiltration of class and status in the portrayals of the national park, and the way that messages about Kruger incorporated messages about social status.

A common strain in the scholarship surrounding this period of Kruger's history is the centrality of the 'Edenic' aspects of the landscape and the wildlife within it.<sup>2</sup> As Carruthers has argued, Kruger was described by numerous chroniclers as a region that encapsulated the landscape that the voortrekkers first saw.<sup>3</sup> This localized analysis fits in with broader developments in the contemporary literature that depicted reserves and parks as examples of primeval landscapes.<sup>4</sup> This chapter does not deny the representation of wildernesses in such terms, however it presents a more variegated picture than previous enquiries have allowed. Through the incorporation of class, gender, race and nationalism, as well as the role of modern iconography in much of the representation from this period, I argue that the 'Edenic' was not as primordial in its content as some have suggested. The presence of crucial modern icons, such as the motorcar, became critical in the production of much material around the park. Kruger thus appears more tuned into the frequency of modernity, rather than a distant vessel for conservative conceptions of the nation's prehistory.

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Bunn, 'An Unnatural State,' p.214.

<sup>3</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p.60.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Anderson and Grove, 'The Scramble for Eden', p.3, and MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature*, p.265.

## Race and Nationalism

The Kruger Park operated from its inception as a synecdoche, representing South Africa to the world. It was seen as a principal point of contact for foreign visitors to the country (either coming to visit South Africa as a whole, or on a short visit from Mozambique). Global interest in the park was also a key part of internal propaganda. The admiration and respect of ‘eminent travellers’, as well as the revenue that they brought to the country, were seen as benefits brought by the park. American interest in particular was used as a defence of the project as a whole. Kruger was also a domestic advertisement for national values, as Carruthers has argued, to suture British and Afrikaner loyalties to a united white South Africa.<sup>5</sup> Yet this was not a consistent process, and some of the connections made to associate white South Africans with the region’s wildlife are worth closer investigation.

In several articles written around 1926 the nationalist emphasis played a great part in trying to persuade the population of the merits of the Kruger Park idea. This effect was achieved in numerous ways. For example, in an article for *Die Huisgenoot* in 1927, Stratford Caldecott described the new Kruger Park as a ‘volkswildtuin,’ or people’s park. He berated the government for failing to provide adequate finances for proper development, which he painted as a national betrayal.<sup>6</sup> In *The Star*, aimed at an English speaking audience, the park was equally tied up with the ‘Voortrekker forebears of our South African race, impelled by an inherent desire for independence’.<sup>7</sup> Rudolph Bigalke, the Director of the National Zoological Gardens from 1927, likewise stressed how the way of seeing in the Lowveld should be rooted in the Voortrekker experience and the Kruger Park fostered that gaze through its landscape and its traditions of camp life.<sup>8</sup> In the opening lines of the first chapter of *South African Eden*, Stevenson-Hamilton describes himself arriving in the Lowveld by ox-wagon. This follows a long description in his introduction of the Voortrekker arrivals in the nineteenth century, thereby linking his entrance to that of the Voortrekkers.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*.

<sup>6</sup> *Die Huisgenoot*, May 27 1927.

<sup>7</sup> *The Star*, July 27 1927.

<sup>8</sup> *Die Huisgenoot*, October 5 1927.

<sup>9</sup> Stevenson-Hamilton, *South African Eden*, (2008), p.3.

Further links between Europe and Southern African wildlife were made in other, more subtle ways. In 1925, an article by ‘Sabie,’ described how animals came down from Europe and Asia into southern Africa during the last ice age.<sup>10</sup> The veracity of such a claim was questionable, but by inventing a historical association between Europeans and African wildlife, the author reinforced the linkage between the white population of South Africa and the fauna of the region. Through separate migrations they had become parted, yet in the Kruger National Park there was the possibility for an amicable reunion. Furthermore, the rescue of southern African wildlife became akin to salvaging something antequely European.

In many representations, the Kruger Park was used to epitomize and reflect specific elements of the ‘national character’. Particular traits could be cherry-picked and then superimposed onto the space: for example, ‘the glories of national simplicity’ was the best quality about the area for one journalist.<sup>11</sup> To allow it to properly function in this way, time was spent forging an image of trustworthiness around the idea of the park.<sup>12</sup> Modesty was a common claim to be made regarding the park’s character, and it was a trait commonly used to describe the park’s staff.<sup>13</sup> Travellers to Kruger were also represented as honest, and likely to speak the truth about South Africa to their fellow countrymen. For example, stories of gold and diamonds, it was argued, tended to generate wild fabrications and exaggerations about the country, whilst tales of the Kruger Park ‘attracted the attention of eminent travellers and writers, who had given to the world first-hand impressions of the famous sanctuary.’<sup>14</sup> The park was candid and truthful, and somehow revealed the ‘real’ South Africa to its visitors which channeled a respect for a rural ethos which valued simple virtues over high cultural forms.

The discourse of white nationalism, very evident in the earliest publicity material, suffered challenges as alternative demands on people’s loyalties gained strength. As the park evolved, and Afrikaner nationalism gained strength in the 1940s, factions began to appear within the administration between disgruntled rangers and the leadership. The splintering was sometimes down ‘national’ lines. For example Louis Steyn, a ranger and future warden, believed that the Kruger National Park was a

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<sup>10</sup> *Die Huisgenoot*, July 10 1925. Sabie was most likely James Stevenson-Hamilton. However, as a government employee he was meant to remain publicly impartial on the national park issue.

<sup>11</sup> Special supplement on the Kruger National Park, *Rand Daily Mail*, 25 May 1936.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Stevenson-Hamilton, *South African Eden*, (2008), p.259.

<sup>13</sup> Letter from H. van der Veen to G. Reyburn, June 11 1949, in NK/17/1/1, KNP.

<sup>14</sup> Special supplement on the Kruger National Park, *Rand Daily Mail*, 25 May 1936.

cultural creed bequeathed to the Afrikaner people from their ancestors. For him, the British had hijacked what was an Afrikaner tradition and tried to paint Afrikaners as destroyers of wildlife.<sup>15</sup> His appointment in 1954 as warden would signal the realization of the Afrikanerisation of the National Parks Board that began with these divisive representations.

Segregation as a political tool gained approval during the 1930s as the Kruger Park grew in popularity. As discussed in the previous chapter, segregated camps were first introduced in the early 1930s, and it remained important for the park to be seen to be maintaining racial separation. When the Kruger Park made a misstep, certain papers were eager to note the fault. For example, when an Indian ‘personality’ arrived on a visit in 1938 and was offered accommodation in Satara, *Die Transvaler* was quick to accuse the national park of having no ‘colour line’, despite protestations by the park that the ‘personality’ had been given special dispensation.<sup>16</sup> The ranger responsible for Satara had tried to put the Indian visitors in three huts set back from the rest of the camp, but after complaints that they were little more than storage huts, he had been obliged to secure for them more central residences.<sup>17</sup> The National Parks Act did not mention racial separation in its ordinances, and the issue was never clearly resolved throughout this period. As previously discussed, the building of alternative accommodation for groups classed other than white was sporadic, inadequate, and ultimately unappealing. However, the park was sensitive to racial policy, and all too aware of the visibility of race. Public support was essential and white public support for segregation needed to be accommodated. In the early 1930s African gatekeepers were replaced by white attendants at the entrances to the park, ostensibly to stop people entering the park without paying, but also to instill in white visitors a sense of the park as a white space. The fact of these white attendants was often advertised in the promotional material.<sup>18</sup> The complex role of Africans in the visual system around the park is discussed later in this chapter.

In order to act as a nationalizing beacon, the Kruger Park authorities had to present their prize asset as exemplary. In doing so, they forged an image of the park as a territory with an identity all of its own. There was something of the separatist about Stevenson-Hamilton, who had enjoyed his previous autonomy and after 1926

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<sup>15</sup> *Die Transvaler*, December 29 1941.

<sup>16</sup> *Die Transvaler*, July 19 1938.

<sup>17</sup> Letter from L. Ledeboer to the Warden, KNP, July 29 1938, in NK/25/1, KNP.

<sup>18</sup> J. Stevenson-Hamilton, *The Kruger National Park*, (Johannesburg, 1932).

liked to present the park as though it was surrounded by a corrupt and dangerous edge, while inside a well-behaved and productive space was maintained.<sup>19</sup> As an area of land with a need to defend itself against other land uses or claims, the Kruger Park resorted to the language of nationalism to create its own brand of eco-nationalism that served to forge popular support. By making claims to specific ideals it could appeal to prospective ‘citizens’. Representations were used to create an ‘imagined community’ of Kruger Park users, that portrayed people as temporary residents with a personal stake in the project. The maps of the Kruger National Park drawn from the mid-1930s onwards reflected this process. On official maps the Kruger Park was coloured differently to surrounding areas. The word ‘Transvaal’ never overlapped into it, and with thick lines its borders mimicked national boundaries. The rest camps were marked as towns and the symbols for an aerodrome, a network of roads and a railway line, as well as commemorative tablets venerating central figures in the Park’s history, all graced the map’s key making it seem, cartographically at least, as a successful modern country.<sup>20</sup>

The park was also a useful tool to help other communities forge identities. This was true of particular companies, who liked to create a sense of themselves as nature lovers, and to craft a communal identity around nature appreciation. The parastatal steel company ISCOR was particularly adept at associating its employees during this period with the Kruger Park:

Most Iscorians are veld lovers; they know the wilds; their forefathers grew up in them and many of the men in our works know almost as much of wild game as the professional hunters... Many of us take every opportunity to get back into the real Africa and there drink the water of Life itself.<sup>21</sup>

This ability to link steel production with nature and nationality was possible because of the philosophical prism that was the Kruger National Park, which enabled seemingly disparate factors to coalesce into a coherent identity.

Yet this process was not merely a conservative device to maintain and strengthen bonds of nationalism. The Kruger Park also offered up alternative social opportunities and allowed people to forge more progressive identities. For example, women played an important role in the representation of the park and were the authors

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, No. 23, 1934, p.50.

<sup>20</sup> *Nasionale Kruger-Wildtuin Map*, 1933.

<sup>21</sup> *Iscor News*, July 1949.

of several articles and books that were published almost immediately after the park opened.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, it was a space in which women could legitimately exhibit an adventurous spirit, despite concerns by members of the parks board when all-female groups visited the park.<sup>23</sup> The park became a space to justifiably present new representations of women. These new representations were often created by adventurous women, who were able to use the Kruger Park as a space to exercise autonomy and exhibit traits not typically associated with women in the 1930s. For example, in 1930 four Dutch women travelled through the park over several weeks and recorded their various close encounters for an interested audience in *Die Volkstem*.<sup>24</sup> One should be careful not to overstate the output of female authors: despite travelogues by people such as Edith Prance, or children's books by Rita Manne, writing on the Kruger Park remained a predominantly male preserve. Yet equally the park provided an opportunity for female writers to present alternative images of women in a new and dynamic setting.

Working below, or alongside, the national and the communal, was the familial. The Kruger Park, from its earliest days, was heavily marketed as a family space, and this served multiple purposes in relation to processes of distinction. For some journalists, a visit was a family duty: 'all parents who can reasonably afford it should endeavour to take their children on this tour.'<sup>25</sup> The implication was that the park was a luxury that had to be afforded, but also a necessity for any self-respecting mother and father. Bringing children inside the park continued the cultural practice and would ensure its survival on the South African cultural landscape. There were several visual portrayals of the close linkage between family and the Kruger experience. For example, plenty of photographs celebrated family mealtimes in the park, often depicting multi-generational get-togethers in a relaxed atmosphere. That concept of community was an important feature of the discourse. The idea of Kruger as a private but communal space evolved early on: for example it was recommended, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, to travel in two cars to ensure safety, but also 'the party should not be too big.'<sup>26</sup> Helpfulness in directing fellow visitors to sightings of species was acknowledged in the 1930s as a typical trait of the well-behaved visitor,

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<sup>22</sup> See, for example, an article by E. Lewis in *The Star*, November 16 1929.

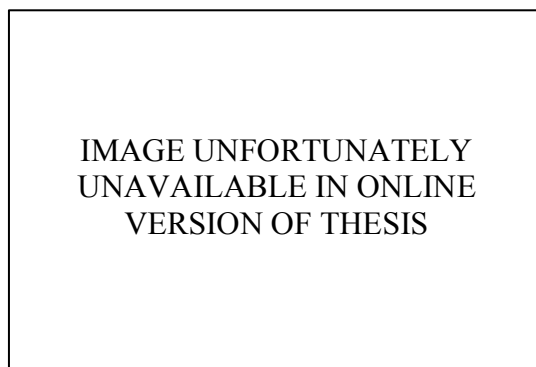
<sup>23</sup> Letter from the Secretary, NPB, to the Warden, KNP, July 29 1939, in NK/47/5, KNP.

<sup>24</sup> *Die Volkstem*, August 7 1930.

<sup>25</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, September 24 1930.

<sup>26</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, September 24 1930.

and the stopping of this practice was one of the principal laments after the Second World War.



*Fig. 2.1 Photo of family at Letaba rest camp, taken by Dick Wolff<sup>27</sup>*

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As Carruthers and Bunn have both argued, a fundamental aspect of the nationalist myth-making was the need to create an alternative role for Africans. This could be oppositional, in the form of poachers, or ancillary, in the guise of subservient camp staff or gatekeepers. Across the region, but particularly from the Mozambican side, Africans were commonly presented as hungry hunters preying on the last vestige of wildlife in South Africa. This was a strong theme in ‘Sabie’s’ article in *Die Huisgenoot*. With the historical link made in that article between Europe and this wildlife, African poachers were portrayed as attacking something fragile, something historical, and something ultimately European. Africans were presented as being an ill fit with the environment, and the ‘ranger’ became the principle harbinger of new codes of behaviour.<sup>28</sup> This could be metaphorically presented: for example, where African paths in the region were represented by ‘Sabie’ as zig-zagged, the ranger was portrayed as taking a straighter path through the bush, taking control of his natural surroundings.

The problem of poaching was frequently distilled into a simple state of affairs that ignored broader contexts. The dichotomy of ‘bad’ poacher up against the ‘good’ ranger provided an easy discourse. Harry Wolhuter, a long-serving ranger in the Kruger Park, wrote in his memoirs of the native reserve formed on the western fringes

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<sup>27</sup> Reproduced in C. Stokes, *South African Wild Life in Pictures*, (Johannesburg, 1954).

<sup>28</sup> *Die Huisgenoot*, July 10 1925.

of the park, that ‘needless to say, once the area was removed from the park the game rapidly began to disappear, as natives and game do not make congenial neighbours.’<sup>29</sup> Yet Africans living on the periphery of the Park were also integral to the discursive positions that were evolving around the national park. Without their presence much of the contemporary literature would have lost its chief antagonists, which would have damaged the narratives, as well as the urgency behind the environmentalist claim. Both Wolhuter and Stevenson-Hamilton, for example, relied upon encounters with poachers for colourful anecdotes in their respective memoirs, which often included prestige-boosting tales of heroism on behalf of park rangers.<sup>30</sup> In addition, the poachers made a conveniently cut enemy for the environmental movement. By the 1940s the national park was being successfully defined by its relationship with poachers, and relied upon them for their meanings.

Of great concern to many early conservationists was the manner in which ‘poaching’ had found friends within public discourse as an anti-establishment crime that caused little harm. One journalist described how,

Robin Hood and his men in green were against authority, but they somehow appealed to the imagination of the reader, and I have always had a soft spot for the fellow who snared a hare on the fat old squire’s head.<sup>31</sup>

Poaching in the new national park, combined with factors at play in society outside of the perimeter, created a representational exigency. From 1926 onwards poachers wrought ‘havoc’ on the national park. They operated in ‘organised clans’, and their weapon of choice, the wire snare, was both ‘noiseless’ and ‘deadly’.<sup>32</sup> The journalist from the *Rand Daily Mail*, a popular English language newspaper from Johannesburg, described the new breed of poacher as ‘more desperadoes than hunters, and, armed and courageous, they were a positive danger to the people whose duty it was to protect the fauna in the Kruger Park.’<sup>33</sup> Stevenson-Hamilton described how African poachers carried a ‘large stock of modern rifles and ammunition, and great numbers of dogs’, in a ‘thoroughly sophisticated’ set up.<sup>34</sup> His description, however, could equally have applied to those European hunters operating on the periphery of the park, within the privately owned farms that abutted the park and were used by

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<sup>29</sup> Wolhuter, *Memories of a Game Ranger*, p.265.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, *ibid*, p.267, or Stevenson-Hamilton, *South African Eden*, (2008), p.316.

<sup>31</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, September 10 1930.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, *The Star*, May 24 1947.

<sup>33</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, September 10 1930.

<sup>34</sup> *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, No. 23, 1934.

‘sportsmen’ for weekend hunting. In fact, he was also describing the working tools of the ranger. Representations of poaching were therefore not about the specific tools of the trade, which could either be seen as a modern means to enjoy nature, or an invasive piece of modernity to destroy nature. The gun was not a sign of anything in itself, but only became meaningful when it was placed within a particular discourse. In this case, guns, ammunition and dogs, as well as the idea of ‘sophistication’, were threatening because they were set within a discourse of African presence on the land. The ‘Robin Hood’ style of poacher, who attracted sympathy from city inhabitants, was invariably more tied in with white poachers than African ones.

Alternatively, Africans could inhabit the representational space surrounding the national park as representatives of a traditional way of life. The relationship between the national parks and modernity has attracted the work of various scholars, and much of the work highlights the construction of the national park as a space outside of modernity. The emphasis is on the park’s curative capabilities, from the ills of industrialisation and urbanisation.<sup>35</sup> The African wilderness, it is argued, became a symbol of a place where Europeans believed an antediluvian version of themselves existed. Writers and artists helped to create and develop this symbol, promoting the African countryside as the locale for a rediscovery of what Anderson and Grove have more recently called a ‘lost harmony with nature.’<sup>36</sup>

The African presence in this idea caused difficulties. Both Bunn and Carruthers have explored the relationship between the park and its occupants, whose residential status was constantly threatened throughout this period, and ultimately damaged forever with the 1939 removal of livestock. Bunn has argued that there were frequent quarrels over the definition of the African presence in the park, especially as the ‘visual system’ took shape. Africans were allowed in the park as long as they were ‘visually pleasing’ and were not so economically productive that they became independent of the park system. Their presence could not impinge upon the image the park liked to project of itself, of a ‘bushveld wilderness’ in stark comparison to external processes of modernization.<sup>37</sup> Hence the presence of scattered communities of ‘squatters’, who informed the authorities about movement of game or the whereabouts of poachers, were initially acceptable to the parks board, but any

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<sup>35</sup> See, for example, MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature*, p.265.

<sup>36</sup> Anderson and Grove, ‘The Scramble for Eden’, p.3.

<sup>37</sup> Bunn, ‘An Unnatural State,’ p.214.

intimation of population expansion was unwelcome.<sup>38</sup> The demands and expectations placed upon park residents were severe, including the refusal to issue trekkpasses or outright eviction.

African residents of the park therefore had to take on certain roles. Bunn has argued that in the rest camps this took on a theatrical appearance, with parts being played by staff that met visitor expectations.<sup>39</sup> It should be remembered, however, that their work was very real, as they prepared the campfires, cooked and cleaned for the visitors, preparing the stage for the Kruger experience. Beyond the official camp employees the parks board had difficulty with the idea of African people being visible in the park. At the Transvaal Publicity Conference in December 1933 it was decided that 'native life' in South Africa was a potentially lucrative tourist attraction, and they suggested to the parks board that they should create a 'special Native kraal' on the park's border to introduce visitors to 'the Native in his natural home and habits.'<sup>40</sup> The board replied that they had no jurisdiction outside the park, however they were not averse to the idea of presenting and preserving people. In the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park (which had been proclaimed in 1931), it was decided to try and entice 'pure-bred bushmen' to take up residence in the park with offers of tobacco and mealie meal (by 1935 13 people had been persuaded to stay, and their potential as a tourist attraction was acknowledged, although the Kalahari Gemsbok Park was not yet opened to visitors).<sup>41</sup>

In Kruger, the theatricality extended beyond the rest camp gate. Many aspects of daily life were affected by being inside the new national park. For example, special pedestrian paths for African workers were created in 1932 that kept its users out of direct view from the road, and preferably away from any possible interaction with the public at all.<sup>42</sup> The park became, in many respects, like a manor house with its back alleys and secret stairwells for use by the park staff. However, some on the board thought that Africans walking about the park were an asset and a tourist attraction, and were against plans to force residents to move around on pathways away from the public roads.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p.98.

<sup>39</sup> Bunn, 'An Unnatural State,' p.213.

<sup>40</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Executive Sub-Committee Meeting, February 7 1934, KNP.

<sup>41</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Executive Sub-Committee Meeting, September 18 1935, KNP.

<sup>42</sup> Memorandum, in NK/9/6, KNP.

<sup>43</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Executive Sub-Committee Meeting, October 15 1935, KNP.

The belief in nature as an antidote to civilization's ills took on an almost religious flavor. The warden dedicated one of his books to the 'Guardian Spirit of the Low-Veld'<sup>44</sup> and titled his recollections *South African Eden*. This holistic component would affect other proponents of the park, perhaps infected with Stevenson-Hamilton's ardour. For the amateur photographer Yates, the Kruger National Park was a 'Mecca of lovers of the wild.'<sup>45</sup> The idea of the park as a place of the imagination was reflected in the title of Englishwoman Edith Prance's memoirs of her visit to the park *Three Weeks in Wonderland*.<sup>46</sup> The notion of the park as psychologically (emotionally or spiritually) inspirational would be regularly supported by articles in the South African press, which frequently extolled the 'primeval beauty' or the 'ancient stillness' of the park. This sentiment also came to be discursively associated with the idea of 'Africa proper'.<sup>47</sup>

This sentiment has been discussed by scholars such as Jonathan Adams and Thomas McShane as typical of the ingredients in building up the 'myth of wild Africa.' In the Kruger example, there is plenty to reinforce this position: white visitors who wished to extricate themselves, for a moment, from the hustle and bustle of the modern world and enjoy the perceived serenity of the distant past were welcomed inside, while the African inhabitants could inhabit those 'primordial' spaces as representatives of that imagined distant past. There is certainly much validity in this position. People were acceptable within promotional material of the park during this period as long as they abided by a set of visual rules. Deneys Reitz, the Minister of Lands, promoted the park in such a fashion:

Not only are Africa's animals there, but Africa's natives, unspoilt by the civilising process, who live in their huts and till the soil for a mere bellyful as they have always done – and as, indeed, our own first forefathers did in the obscure dawn of man's history.<sup>48</sup>

For the travel writer Edith Prance, the receding of civilization was important to the sense of adventure in the opening of her account of her visit to the Kruger Park.<sup>49</sup> As the state industrialised, the presence of a pre-proletarian, pre-industrial past both appealed and reinforced national strategies. These contradictory practices would be

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, frontispiece.

<sup>45</sup> C.A. Yates, *The Kruger National Park*, (London, 1935), p.26.

<sup>46</sup> E. Prance, *Three Weeks in Wonderland*, (Cape Town, 1935).

<sup>47</sup> *The Star*, November 16 1929 and *Pretoria News*, October 16 1934.

<sup>48</sup> *Pretoria News*, October 16 1934.

<sup>49</sup> Prance, *Three Weeks in Wonderland*, p.7.

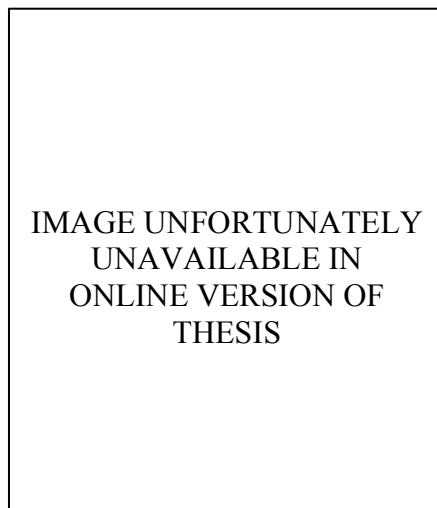
echoed in the contemporary literature and particularly the maps produced for public consumption. By depicting 'Native Kraals', the official maps both highlighted the African presence to tourists wishing to see a 'pre-industrial Africa', and also acknowledged their legitimacy within the Park.<sup>50</sup>

Yet the position of Adams and McShane and others, that view the representational history of Africa as a gradual process of depopulation in the imagery, ignores the tight connection between preserved spaces and modern symbols. The idea of the Kruger National Park representing a distant past, however prolifically it appears in much of the literature from this period, conceals more significant dynamics at work linking the park to the idea of modernity. On those same early maps, for example, the WNLA posts were also depicted, alongside the 'Native kraals', reassuring the visitor of the extensive network that capitalism had constructed for itself across the southern tip of the continent. Presenting the park as modern was important to various interest groups, including members of the parks board. The significance of the modern features of the park is evident in many of the photographs of the period. Plenty of images showed a car beside an animal, usually a lion. This was equally true with film, where the presence of cars in a shot were just as important as the wildlife for the various interested parties: a Twentieth Century Fox production in 1945 was under explicit instructions to 'obtain scenes of animals in association with a car or cars on the roads' while filming in the Pafuri and Letaba regions.<sup>51</sup> A 'sedan touring car' was used for the purpose, to show 'how close the visitor may get to the game', while the cameraman, J.F. Painter, used an army staff car to film from. Twenty years later the jeep-styled vehicle would become closely associated with game viewing and find itself in front of the camera rather than behind it.

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<sup>50</sup> *Kruger National Park Map*, 1933.

<sup>51</sup> Letter from The Manager, Publicity and Travel Department, SAR&H, to The Secretary, NPB, October 3 1945, in NK/17/2, KNP.



*Fig. 2.2 Front cover of Kruger National Park map, c.1950*

William Beinart and Katie McKeown have argued for more complexity in the images of the wild.<sup>52</sup> While their study focuses on a later period, the Kruger Park in the 1930s also became tied up with modern ways of seeing. Jack Lieb's travelogue piece for MGM in 1929 placed the Kruger Park in amongst some novel ways of looking. Lieb was a sensationalist cameraman, who utilized innovative means of filming to capture exciting shots of his subject. He used cars for moving shots of the oceanfront in Cape Town, and requested a smokescreen be put over the whole of Johannesburg to create more atmosphere for a swooping aerial shot of the city.<sup>53</sup> His was a modern approach, making use of modern equipment and also modern ways of seeing, and the Kruger Park was a key part of this. The very act of looking at wildlife was linked to the urban, the exciting, and the contemporary. Ultimately, the modern human association with the surrounding landscape and wildlife was crucial during this period in constructing the national park.

Yet it was not just the imagery that reinforced this linkage between modernity and the park. In the early curio shops run by men such as Wilfred Cooper at the larger rest camps, various goods became popular, and further complicated the sense of wildlife as separated from people. Many on the board were wary of selling too many wildlife products, and the warden was concerned that 'it was not desired the public should be allowed to conceive the idea that a lot of killing for profit was going on in the park.' A careful balance needed to be struck, and it was decided that 'small articles

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<sup>52</sup> W. Beinart and K. McKeown, 'Wildlife Media and Representations of Africa, 1950s to the 1970s,' *Environmental History*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 2009, p.433.

<sup>53</sup> *Johannesburg Star*, May 22 1928.

made up of skins has always been permitted as being less suggestive.<sup>54</sup> As a result of this attitude Stevenson-Hamilton took issue with the sale of hides, even though many of these were imported from Bechuanaland, but handbags made from lion skins were generally thought to be suitable.<sup>55</sup> The relationship between fashion, curios and wildlife would always be complicated and one that some saw as potentially damaging to public ideas of wildlife conservation.<sup>56</sup> Seeing and even handling wildlife therefore evolved during the 1930s to create a more complex correlation between people and animals than some scholars have suggested.

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Kruger's relationship with nationalism was complicated. While Stevenson-Hamilton in particular tried to establish a semi-independent status for the park, it was also being brought from the periphery into the urbanised centre. Indeed, the park needed to be brought into the centre to survive. Part of this revision involved the alteration of already existent opinions about the eastern Transvaal region as distant. Representation and media portrayals were crucial in this process, as of course were the new roads and railways that could take people to that far corner of the Transvaal.

A common discourse in the early literature on the park revolved around the unhealthiness of the region. It was an unlivable space, racked by malaria, with barren soil and lack of water. Essentially, the region was depicted as lacking the basic ingredients for modern agriculture to prosper. This discourse had been propagated by people such as Stevenson-Hamilton since 1902 to counter claims by farmers, or other interested parties, that the park lay on usable or habitable land. However, such a depiction did not fit well with the need to attract tourists, and this became particularly problematic when the parks board desired for a year-round opening of the park after the war. A new discourse that attempted to present the park as a sanitized space began to emerge in the 1940s. This was a direct attempt to have more of the park remain open during the course of the year, to spread out visitors and to earn more revenue. By 1950 the Ministry of Health had been persuaded to allow the park to remain open throughout the year south of the river Sabie. The park's 'clean bill of health' became

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<sup>54</sup> Letter from the Warden, KNP, to the Secretary, NPB, April 29 1938, in NK/47/5, KNP.

<sup>55</sup> Letter from the Magistrate, Nelspruit, to the Warden, KNP, July 6 1939, in NK/47/5, KNP.

<sup>56</sup> Minutes of an Interim Meeting of the National Parks Board, February 26 1948, KNP.

an important refrain, but would become a more contested discourse in the 1950s.<sup>57</sup> Such cleansing mirrors the history of the Hluhluwe and Umfolozi game reserves in Natal which eradicated trypanomiasis during the 1940s.<sup>58</sup>

A second key discourse that helped to reconfigure the Kruger Park in the public imagination was to do with safety. This had been a region associated with ‘border bushrangers’ before the South African war, who, according to the journalist and MP Arthur Barlow, were ‘white desperadoes [who] made a living by robbing, holding up, and often murdering Portuguese natives returning to Mozambique from their work in the Witwatersrand mines.’<sup>59</sup> The depiction of those white criminals was with some affection, yet this did not extend to other outlaws. The association of the region with banditry needed to be revised in order to turn the Kruger Park into a cultural destination that could draw tourists. The mapping of the park, and the insertion of modern amenities into the visual lexicon associated with the region, all helped to highlight the knowledge about, and subsequent control of, the eastern Transvaal.

Race and nationalism were therefore both crucial components of the representational system, and were two key ingredients in the popularization of the park. Yet they were not the only ingredients. The following section explores how class and status became enmeshed with representations of the park in order to create an attractive proposition, as well as a crucial locus for social distinction.

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<sup>57</sup> *Pretoria News*, September 8 1950.

<sup>58</sup> S. Brooks, ‘Re-reading the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve: Constructions of a ‘Natural’ Space,’ in *Transformation*, Vol. 44, 2000, p.76.

<sup>59</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, September 10 1930.

## Class and Status

Bunn has argued that the Kruger National Park encapsulated two ‘temporal orders’: the sophistication of the modern world with the ‘best remnant traces of the pre-industrial past.’<sup>60</sup> Through this duality people could vent their frustrations with the ambiguities of South African society. In this model, Kruger became an amusement park in which simpler social structures existed. However, this thesis argues that rather than simplifying society, the park actually became a locus for the complex working out of social structures within society as a whole, but particularly within social groups with varying relations to the economic engines of South Africa, and particularly the cities on the Rand. The Kruger National Park was a significant site for the practice of distinction.

The decision to visit the Kruger National Park, as a new space on the cultural map of South Africa, impacted upon social status, and the way that the park was represented did much to directly fuel this process. The previous section showed how ideas about race, the nation state and modernity combined to assist in the promotion of the Kruger Park to white South Africans. While this goes some way to explaining the popularity of the park with people, and with white South Africans in particular, it ignores many other nuances at work. This section explores the Kruger Park as a means of exercising social distinction. It examines the representations made about the park and the various forms of capital that could be acquired.

A powerful discourse during this period linked the conservationist idea with particular echelons of society. For ranger Steyn, class was a crucial component: he argued that as society moved from monarchy to democracy, ‘the upholders of the protection idea [were] always amongst the reigning or governing classes as opposed to the ignorance and brutality of the less cultured classes.’<sup>61</sup> The journal *African Wild Life*, which was established in 1946 to cater to the members of the Wildlife Protection Society of South Africa, played a key role in emphasizing celebrity and status in its reports of the Kruger Park. Figures such as Stevenson-Hamilton and Harry Wolhuter were valorized, while royal visits to the park were celebrated as crucial moments for conservation: ‘among the good things to be expected from the visit of their Majesties

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<sup>60</sup> Bunn, ‘An Unnatural State,’ p.207.

<sup>61</sup> Letter from L. Steyn to the secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 9 December 1936, in NK/17/1/1, KNP.

is a mental attitude on the part of the (as yet) unregenerate.<sup>62</sup> The king, however, was a cause of great potential embarrassment for the conservationists. Before the visit to the Kruger Park King George VI requested for himself and one of the princesses to shoot a lion during their visit; a wish that was not made public.<sup>63</sup>

Early on, wildlife protection was represented as a mark of status, and the people responsible for the promotion of the park utilized this to the full, constantly emphasizing the role of important individuals or the linkages between particular groups and wildlife. At times this involved the park representing itself as in a symbiotic relationship with the hunting community. Stevenson-Hamilton frequently expressed his desire for more ‘sportsmen to own farms on the outskirts of the park’, and this was a view shared by various journalists:

That the animals in the Park are increasing rapidly there can be no doubt, and the lucky people who own farms adjoining the Park are in this way being provided with the finest shooting boxes in the whole world. It is hoped that in time all these farms will be owned by men who love the game and will thus protect them.<sup>64</sup>

The wildlife around the park also began to take on class-related roles. One pamphlet on the *Lions of the Kruger National Park*, by the photographer Bertram Jeary, gave names to the subjects and created an elaborate romantic story out of the photographs taken, with one lion, whom he had named Bubbles, ‘the hero of an intriguing romance’ with a lioness named Iris. Bubbles was described as ‘invested by Nature with great dignity of carriage and a noble beauty of form, he inspires both man and beasts with awe.’ Another photo-story saw a lion looking for a mate accompanied by the caption ‘[a]nd he thought to take unto himself a wife,’ giving the narrative an epic, biblical thrust. Via such works, lions became like Hollywood icons, embroiled in classic plot lines of love and revenge.<sup>65</sup>

Particular species, and especially lions, began to take on the status of celebrity. In 1947 *The Star* referred to lions and elephants as the park’s ‘star performers’.<sup>66</sup> By emphasizing a sense of majesty and high station within the animal kingdom, they were made to share many traits with the celebrities of the 1930s and 1940s: Bubbles was very much portrayed as the leading man in Jeary’s piece. Through the reiteration

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<sup>62</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 1, No.3, 1947, p.4.

<sup>63</sup> Minutes of National Parks Board Informal Meeting, March 25 1947, KNP.

<sup>64</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, September 24 1930.

<sup>65</sup> B. Jeary (photographer), *Lions in the Kruger National Park*, (Cape Town, 1934).

<sup>66</sup> *The Star*, July 18 1947.

of such a trope in other works, and in combination with other celebrities and notable social figures, lions acquired celebrity status. Visitors to the park reinforced this status by seeking out those particular species and taking photographs of them themselves, or buying photographs from the rest camp shops. Lions became suitable photographic subjects because they were continually represented as iconic stars of the Kruger Park stage.

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Academic capital began a relationship with wildlife during this period too, as knowledge about wildlife became a marker of status. For Stevenson-Hamilton, thinking about 'nature' was what 'educated' people did in the 'civilized world'.<sup>67</sup> He encouraged a brand of academic capital that revolved around the observation of wildlife accompanied by personal reflection. He put across his own findings and discoveries in several books, which he envisaged visitors using on their trips to the park as an aid to understanding the natural world around them. One of Stevenson-Hamilton's greatest concerns from the 1930s onwards was the encroaching influence of ecological ways of approaching wildlife management. Such an approach was an alternative source of academic capital. In order to defend his position, Stevenson-Hamilton published several articles in defence of the experience of the man in the field, and many others in criticism of scientific methods.

As part of the support of the man in the field, in the mid-1930s newspapers attempted to encourage visitors to the park to start writing in with their observations of animal behaviour in the park in an attempt to 'kill off' many 'popular fallacies'.<sup>68</sup> A sense of a practice and a vocabulary began to develop. The press emphasised the distinct lexicon that had evolved in the park, sharing with its readers the particular words that regular visitors to the park used, such as 'troop' of lions instead of 'pride'.<sup>69</sup> Knowledge of wildlife therefore became a space to ostracise or include. Furthermore, officials with vested interests in the approaches to wildlife management and zoological knowledge used public interaction and information-gathering to gain support and make social links with types of thinking.

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<sup>67</sup> Stevenson-Hamilton, *Wild Life in South Africa*, p.8.

<sup>68</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, 25 May 1936.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

Formal education itself was not a priority during this period, and was not an important part of the representational system. While many supporters of the park recognized its educational capability, and its ability to ‘cultivate a spirit of sympathy,’ there were no designs to inculcate an official programme of instruction.<sup>70</sup> The emphasis was on individual observation and understanding, with guidance coming from books by accomplished naturalists such as Stevenson-Hamilton. This laissez-faire approach helped make the acquisition of academic capital harder to come by, and knowledge about nature therefore became an elite procurement. The ability to name particular species began to gain a currency inside the park, and according to one newspaper they were ‘worn’ like badges of honour.<sup>71</sup> Campfires became marketplaces to exchange knowledge and stories.

This informal and detached attitude to nature education shifted during this period as the role of science and the influence of ecological ways of thinking increased. In a report by the South African Association for the Advancement of Science, written in 1944, the role of more formal education in national parks was recognized and championed. It was the American example that provided the prototype, with the system of campfire talks, lectures, museums and literature highlighted as a means to indoctrinate the public on the good of the national parks and the work done inside them.<sup>72</sup> National parks were also identified as significant vehicles to educate the public about science more generally. As shall be seen in the following chapter, education in the park would initially be encouraged for its use as a propaganda tool, but the spread of knowledge and experience to white school children would also create a cultural and academic capital that was not shared by other groups in society. However, before 1950 there was very little educational provision in the Kruger Park at all.

It was not only knowledge about the wildlife, but also knowledge about behaving in nature that helped to indicate and assert social positions. Judging by the annual reports, tourist behaviour was generally good, although certain provocative actions such as ‘joy riding’ at night, damaging park property, drunkenness, and the leaving of vehicles, as well as more minor infringements such as speeding were all

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<sup>70</sup> See, for example, Stevenson-Hamilton, *South African Eden*, (2008), p.296.

<sup>71</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, August 30 1932.

<sup>72</sup> Report on the National Parks, Game Reserves and Botanical Reserves of the Union for the SA Association for the Advancement of Science, May 5 1944, in NTS 7618 27/329, NASA.

common enough in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>73</sup> The press was a useful medium for the arbitration of human behaviour within the park, although during this period newspapers and magazines were not consistent in their representations of what was deemed ‘good’ behaviour. In part this was because modes of behaviour were still being worked out, but it was also because modes of behaviour differed between different social groups, many of whom read the same newspaper. This situation allowed for *The Star*, for example, to publish articles celebrating a ‘neck and neck race’ through the park, alongside letters condemning the actions of ‘thrillers’ who disturb the wildlife and other visitors with their exploits.<sup>74</sup> Elsewhere some argued for the banning of photography by visitors on the grounds that it encouraged reckless behaviour.<sup>75</sup> The correct behaviour in the park was important to several different groups and individuals, principally because such a large area was difficult to police. Those whose behaviour ran counter to the common consensus were frequently berated in the press or in letters to the parks board.<sup>76</sup>

To help manage behaviour in the park, attempts were made to encourage a self-regulating system that relied upon visitors monitoring and policing themselves. Tony Bennett has argued how museums have operated a self-policing methodology, an ‘exhibitionary complex’, reliant upon the potential for discovery by other members of the public.<sup>77</sup> The Kruger Park functioned in a similar manner. In a ‘Hints for Our Visitors’ brochure, the public was informed that ‘the public are the real curators and protectionists of its amenities’ and that ‘you owe it to yourself and to your fellow visitors to report any infringement which you may happen to notice’.<sup>78</sup> Visitors did begin to report on each other’s behaviour, however convictions were made difficult by rules that required the accuser’s presence at court hearings.

In 1939 this informal system almost gained some structure after a suggestion from a regular visitor to the park for the introduction of a Common Sense League. The idea was for visitors to join the League at the gate, where they would sign up to a code of conduct that they would then have the power to enforce in the park throughout the duration of their visit.<sup>79</sup> This would have given more concrete powers

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<sup>73</sup> See, for example, NPB Annual Report, 1934, KNP.

<sup>74</sup> See *The Star*, July 14 1933, and *The Star*, July 17 1933.

<sup>75</sup> *The Star*, September 4 1937.

<sup>76</sup> See, for example, *The Star*, July 18 1947.

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in S. Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory*, (Edinburgh, 2006), p.95.

<sup>78</sup> *The Kruger National Park Hints for Our Visitors*, brochure, in BNS 727 86/146, NASA.

<sup>79</sup> Letter from J. Dunn to the Secretary, NPB, August 10 1939, in NK/25/1, KNP.

to the public to impose park regulations and codes of conduct upon each other, however due to the war it never had a chance to be implemented. Despite never being created, such an intrusive and coercive approach found disfavor with many of the visitors, who referred to the climate in the Kruger Park as early as 1938 as akin to an ‘espionage system’.<sup>80</sup> This control was strongly linked in some people’s minds with an idea of privilege. For example, it was noted by one relation of a Kruger ranger during a visit to Yosemite, that:

The great part of the place is that you are made to feel that the park is there for you to enjoy and the rangers go out of their way to see that you enjoy it. This is very sadly lacking in the Kruger Park where one is made to feel that it is only by privilege that you enter it... Here the parks belong to the people and those working in them are the servants of the people.<sup>81</sup>

That sense of privilege was not misplaced. The scheme of honorary rangers was first mooted in 1929 when a local farmer working with the WNLA offered to operate as the eyes and ears of the warden during his visits to the WNLA camps inside the park. As discussed in the previous chapter, such a scheme was recognized for its ability to tie influential and respected local white residents closer to the park.<sup>82</sup> Around the same time it was suggested to create a system of ‘fellows’ to bring about ‘a more personal touch with our national parks’ among the wealthier citizens of South Africa. The system was created although it was short lived, but it served to link up predominantly wealthy, land-owning Transvaal residents with the Kruger Park.<sup>83</sup> Via these types of links a relationship between access to nature and economic wealth was gradually being fostered.

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The Kruger Park, as a space on the cultural map of South Africa, had coordinates that placed it in relation to other cultural experiences. Through these cultural relationships the park slowly charted a place for itself within the pecking order of cultural practices. This process was a critical element in the relationship between the park and class distinction. The most obvious point of comparison was with the city zoo. A National Zoological Gardens was established near the centre of Pretoria in 1899 and

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<sup>80</sup> Letter from W. Goodbody to the Warden, KNP, October 5 1938, in NK/25/1, KNP.

<sup>81</sup> Extract from Letter Addressed to W. Campbell from P. Campbell, June 19 1946, NK/25/1, KNP.

<sup>82</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, December 7 1929, KNP.

<sup>83</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Executive Sub-Committee Meeting, August 6 1931, KNP.

Johannesburg also boasted a spacious and substantial zoo from 1904 amidst the wealthy northern suburbs. Both were more spacious than many European urban zoos.

The national park idea wrestled with its relationship to its more urban version. The zoo began as a simple point of comparison, and the association was frequently made between the two forms of encountering wildlife. Personnel helped foster this linkage: Bigalke, a prominent author of several articles and guides to the Kruger Park, was also the director of the National Zoological Gardens. This would remain a common analogy throughout this period, with newspapers in the late 1940s describing the Kruger Park as ‘the World’s largest zoo’.<sup>84</sup>

An alternative line of thinking emerged quickly as a counter to this relationship between the park and the city zoo. In those discourses, the national park put the zoo to shame, exposing its artificiality and accusing it of savouring ‘a form of cruelty at which all decent people must shudder.’<sup>85</sup> The purpose here was to show the zoo up as a more proletarian form of engagement with nature. It was more accessible, cheaper, and less ‘real’. The national park became the truer reflection of wildlife and nature more generally. However, the zoo also remained like the sword of Damocles as a point of comparison. When people wished to make a particular criticism about the popularization of the park, the zoo was the favoured simile. It was possible to dismiss the way that many people engaged with nature by comparing them to others who visit the park ‘in the spirit of Sunday afternoon visitors to the zoo’.<sup>86</sup>

Yet there were other cultural forms that the Kruger park interconnected with to develop the discourse. The journalist and MP from the United Party Arthur Barlow wrote a series of weekly articles in 1930 for the *Rand Daily Mail*, in part to entice visitors but also to share his thoughts and experiences of the region with his readership. It is clear in Barlow’s articles that certain cultural activities were conducive to the bush, while others were improper. Cultural taste was therefore being applied to cultural behaviours within a natural setting. People’s experience of the national park accompanied contemporary cultural tastes and decisions, and that the very act of being in the park was a cultural decision in itself. In one of his articles, Barlow was clear which cultural practices had a place in the bush, and which did not, as he and several companions listened to a radio at a rest camp:

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<sup>84</sup> ‘South Africa’s Garden of Eden,’ article first proof, in NK/17/1/1, KNP.

<sup>85</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, August 5 1930.

<sup>86</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, May 25 1936.

It was a queer feeling that came over all of us as we were seated around the big log fire. We had all been discussing “Shakespeare and the musical glasses” and someone had talked of Banjo Patterson’s poem. It was cold and clear, and the Southern Cross hung low in the veld. The sounds of the night were wafted across the low-lying bush. The heat of the day was over, and we had seen nature droop... These things strike down into the very depths of nature. A fellow at my right arm was slipping down into the abyss and quoted Spengler. Who on earth wants Spengler in the bush? Leave him to the dismal cities. A law student from SACS [the University of Cape Town] near to him cried “Shut up,” and sank the story of “Banjo” and his “Snowy River”... From “the loud speaker” softly, like a whisper from heaven, came Solveig’s Song from the Peer Gynt Suite. It was the Durban Orchestra at their best. The lions roared their applause. Western civilization and the savage beast had come together, and someone had just said that, like the East and the West, never “the twain would meet”. But it was not to be for long. We had forgotten the eerie spirit which broods over the Lowveld. It did not want musicians sending their potted notes to compete with the tuneful singing of the bushveld lark: and crack! Crack!! Crack!! Went the wireless. Like the old Grandfather’s Clock in the Victorian song, “it stopped dead, never to go again.” There was a sneering laugh from a hyena, a wailing cry from a bush baby, and the owls screeched at us with contempt. The Spirit had triumphed again.<sup>87</sup>

Nature itself was presented as a cultural critic with particular tastes, as were lions, who appear to have been fans of *Peer Gynt*.

This passage performed multiple functions. On one level it linked the national park experience in with other ‘high’ art forms, such as Banjo Patterson, Shakespeare, and *Peer Gynt*. For Barlow and his companions, to enjoy and discuss nature was like enjoying and discussing poetry or music. However, on another level, the passage intimates that ‘Nature’, with its own sounds, sights and rhythms, generated its own culture that negated the urban tastes of the travellers. This does not suggest, however, that ‘Nature’ is therefore acultural. Instead, Barlow was communicating to his readers that one needed to appreciate ‘Nature’ as a cultural experience on its own terms, with its own rules and means to appreciate it. In such a way ‘Nature’ became a distinct cultural form in and of itself, on a par with Shakespeare, Patterson and *Peer Gynt*, and just as one requires particular skills to unlock Shakespearan language, the tools to enjoy nature were something to be learned, or at the very least acquired.

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<sup>87</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, September 17 1930.

Particular authors quickly became associated with the park in several articles. For Barlow, Shakespeare was a helpful muse.<sup>88</sup> In 1927 *The Star* extolled the virtues of the national park project by borrowing lines of poetry from Walt Whitman.<sup>89</sup> The association of poetry and national parks would continue throughout this period into the 1970s. It was common for poetic expressions or quotations from Shakespeare plays to accompany photographs of wildlife. The purpose of this practice was to lend gravitas to the park and its denizens, yet by making wildlife into highly cultured creatures they were further being enlisted into the realm of class distinction. By being represented as well educated figures of the establishment, interest in them and knowledge about them became part of class identification. The hegemonic groups put their stamp upon the park with their cultural references, which defined the hegemonic discourse and forced particular readings and interpretations, which both included and alienated various groups in South African society.

Kruger and its wildlife fitted more broadly into the global exchange of culture, and people attempted to place it amongst other cultural experiences. Writing of Yosemite, Alfred Runte described how the dramatic natural architecture of the Californian park worked as a focus for American national pride and identity, in imitation of European pride and identity that centred around the grand Gothic architecture of more ancient cities.<sup>90</sup> There were attempts to valorize the Lowveld landscape. For example, the critics against the building of hotels in the park, which began in the 1930s and counted Denys Reitz, the Minister of Lands, within its cohort, saw the danger of ‘the Coney Island or Blackpool touch’.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, Coney Island was a common bogey-resort for the parks board and speaks to their suspicion of working class engagement with the park. For the opponents of the Coney Island model, the Kruger Park was very much a cultural cathedral, which in much of the contemporary literature was called ‘Old Africa’. This ‘oldness’ was what made it ‘valuable and interesting’.

Yet it was not the landscape that was the primary enviro-cultural entity at South Africa’s disposal. The country could claim some cultural equivalence with America or Europe through the presence of the region’s wildlife, and it could be argued that it was very much this attraction that became South Africa’s version of the

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<sup>88</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, August 12 1930.

<sup>89</sup> *The Star*, July 27 1927.

<sup>90</sup> Runte, *Yosemite*, p.15.

<sup>91</sup> *Pretoria News*, October 16 1934.

Gothic cathedral or the theatrical landscape. As has been mentioned above, there were various attempts to make the wildlife into celebrated figures in an echoing of the culture developing around cinema. By transforming various species into celebrities, and the general idea of 'wildlife' into a cultural entity to be seen, photographed, and appreciated, animals in South Africa during this period became the high value cultural commodity that could compete with the landscape of North America or the cathedrals and museums of Europe.

Through various connections and constructions the Kruger Park and its wildlife was distinguished as a cultural activity, with markers that placed it against other cultural activities. Initially the park was presented simply, but this soon evolved into a more complex matrix of cultural reference that gave visitors and supporters the tools to assist social distinction. Partly this was to increase the relevance of the park for South Africans, but it was also to establish the park amidst the increasing number of cultural pursuits becoming available as the country modernized. As South Africa was opening itself up as a destination to visit, both for foreign as well as domestic tourists, the park had to be differentiated from other holiday destinations such as beach resorts. The idea of the park becoming a 'Coney Island' was anathema to many of the park's champions, and a cultural identity was developed that placed the Kruger Park amongst more sophisticated cultural pursuits. The park was therefore gradually differentiated from zoos and other resorts, and linked up with Shakespeare, poetry and a carefully managed photographic practice that increased the status of the country's wildlife into international icons.

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Edward Steinhart argued that preservationism's ultimate goal was the reclassification of animals into objects held in trust for future generations.<sup>92</sup> This Burkean reconstitution required much representational vigour and for scholars such as Adams and McShane the purpose was to make them 'wild'. However, during the 1930s until the late 1940s, and even into the 1950s, it was tameness that was commonly disseminated rather than wildness, and this had further representational repercussions. In the 1920s the link between human and animal was strong. In Caldecott's article in

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<sup>92</sup> Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters*, p.213.

*Die Huisgenoot*, the author was shown holding two lion cubs to emphasize the safety of the new sanctuary.<sup>93</sup> For Rudolph Bigalke the major selling point of the park was the docility of its fauna.<sup>94</sup> For Stevenson-Hamilton, the public would be most attracted to the park because of ‘the unsuspecting tameness of all the animals.’<sup>95</sup>

Together with tameness, shyness was another characteristic attributed to South Africa’s wildlife in the year’s immediately after the park’s proclamation.<sup>96</sup> This trait was shared, in public representations at least, by many of the park staff. Stevenson-Hamilton, for example, was always keen to assert his modesty and put the park forward as an entity able to speak for itself. For him, the Kruger Park was a Cinderella character, belatedly recognized by everyone as the true beauty.<sup>97</sup> Managers and representatives of the park would frequently assert their modesty and insist on anonymity in promotional material related to the park.<sup>98</sup>

The travel industry liked to use the two images together and exaggerate a symbiotic relationship between modernity and wildlife. One travel magazine wrote how,

for some decades the animals have roamed unmolested and practically undisturbed through their great domain, and consequently have come to disregard the presence of human beings... In fact, so accustomed have most of the animals become to the sound of a motor car that today they seem to look upon it merely as some new form of their own species.<sup>99</sup>

This discourse ran alongside more official positions that emphasized the tameness of animals in the park. In the 1925 Annual Report of the Transvaal Game Reserve, Stevenson-Hamilton predicted that zebra and blue wildebeest would be the most attractive animals to the public. In the case of the wildebeest, he believed that ‘the extreme tameness of these animals, also their quaint appearance and manners, must always form a considerable attraction for the ordinary visitor, who is enabled to look at them from close quarters with little more effort than is required to view animals in a zoo.’ Indeed, he explained that the aim of the park was ‘to show large quantities of very tame creatures, close to hand, displaying little or no fear at the presence of large

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<sup>93</sup> *Die Huisgenoot*, May 27 1927.

<sup>94</sup> *Die Huisgenoot*, October 5 1934.

<sup>95</sup> *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, No. 10, 1930, p.17.

<sup>96</sup> See, for example, Speech by J. Smuts at Oxford Rhodes Memorial Lectures, 1929, quoted in the *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, No. 16, 1931.

<sup>97</sup> Stevenson-Hamilton, *South African Eden*, (2008), p.259.

<sup>98</sup> Letter from H. Van der Veen to G. Reyburn, June 11 1949, in NK/17/1/1, KNP.

<sup>99</sup> *The Almanac and African Travel Magazine*, Vol. 5, No. 14, 1938.

numbers of human beings, and which need not be sought for painfully and with difficulty, but may be readily observed by the most inexperienced persons at any point of the area which they may choose to visit.’<sup>100</sup>

‘Tameness’ as an attraction was an American export. Alfred Runte has written on the relationship between bears and people in Yosemite, which included shows within the park. The ability to be close, oftentimes close enough to feed the bears, was a major attraction for visitors to Yosemite, and became a problem for the authorities in the 1930s as bears became overfamiliar with park guests and injuries became common.<sup>101</sup> With the American model so predominant in the minds of the parks board, it is unsurprising that ‘tameness’ was seen by the warden and others as a major selling point of the park. Yet this stance also led to particular behaviours deemed dangerous by the rangers, with many anecdotes involving lions. Stories of men running towards lions, or throwing oranges at them, often to impress girlfriends, stem from this culture of familiarity that was encouraged in the Kruger Park during this period, on top of what was deemed the ‘thrill’ of such actions.<sup>102</sup>

Yet representations of this modesty and shyness concealed an underlying power contained within the landscape and the wildlife. The Lowveld was frequently described as ‘brooding’: as containing an unseen power. In this ‘brooding’ environment particular animals were portrayed as patient but powerful. Phrases such as the ‘mighty’ elephant or the ‘regal’ lion were utilized throughout much of the discourse. Equally as common was to present those same animals as tame and gentle. For example, Edith Prance compared a pride of lions to ‘a nineteenth century English family party, redolent of respectability, strolling back from morning service at the village church.’<sup>103</sup> In her metaphor, Prance made a link between an aristocratic family and a pride of lions. This contradiction in the discourse served to reinforce ideas of class power. Wildlife, the contradiction suggests, is docile and friendly, but if crossed can be dangerous. By linking certain powerful species with particular social groups, the discourse carried an underlying suggestion of hegemonic power hidden behind civility and gentility.

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<sup>100</sup> Quoted in the *Journal Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, No. 7, 1927, p.63.

<sup>101</sup> Runte, *Yosemite*, p.136.

<sup>102</sup> See, for example, *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, No. 23, 1934, p.57.

<sup>103</sup> Prance, *Three Weeks in Wonderland*, p.33.

This message was made more explicit in the official park brochure, *Unspoilt Africa*, which began with an imaginary epitaph by a lioness declaring to her cubs: ‘my dear children, in our history there is no more important date than 1926, the year that brought unexpected safety and peace to the animal kingdom.’ Later in the brochure a plea from the animals goes out to users of the park:

We, the wild animals of the Kruger National Park, appeal for your sympathy and friendship. You have been our bitter enemies for so long that it takes time to make us understand that a new and happier era has begun for us; do not betray our trust in you.<sup>104</sup>

The threat suggests that cohabitation was possible and desirable, but any deceit would be met by the wrath of the animal kingdom, which included the ‘mighty’ elephant and the ‘regal’ lion. Yet the link had also been made between those animals and high status positions in society, through metaphors as well as direct designators such as ‘regal’. The discourse therefore warned its readers not to provoke the otherwise docile and gentle establishment.

Attitudes to the idea of ‘tameness’ in animals had begun to change by the late 1940s. The parks board was becoming alarmed by the interactions between people and particular species within the park. For example, in an article in *African Wild Life*, the warden was quoted as saying that ‘some baboons are becoming so tame that they are feeding out of the hands of tourists – who do not appear to realise that the baboon is a most dangerous animal if roused.’<sup>105</sup> This transformation was fortified by concomitant moves in guides and brochures. These moves, led by the biologist Rudolph Bigalke, were underpinned by shifts in the parks board’s philosophy that gave more credence to scientific ideas. This more scientific approach divorced certain species from the human sphere, and represented animals as separate entities living outside of the human experience. In many respects, this attitude was underpinned by the idea of the national park as Edenic or primordial and encompassing the natural world before the coming of mankind. This separation was a major theme in the representational material after 1950 and is discussed fully in chapter five.

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<sup>104</sup> *Unspoilt Africa: A brief description of the Union’s national parks and a guide for visitors to the Kruger National Park*, (Pretoria, 1934), p.6.

<sup>105</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1948, p.32.

The way that the park was used also aided distinction. As Stevenson-Hamilton argued, what most of the public wanted was ‘comfort at night with good catering and camp arrangements.’ To want a more rustic experience, he believed, was only for ‘a very small minority of artistic and highly cultured people.’<sup>106</sup> The equation of high culture and basic living in the bush was a strong discourse during this period. Being, listening, and experiencing an ‘unadulterated’ nature was believed by many to have equivalence with other cultural encounters. The more rustic the conditions, therefore, the more cultured the experience. This, in many senses, put a stop to the over-development to the park during this period, as complainants often bemoaned the introduction of luxuries or amenities beyond hurricane lamps, camp fires, or a small mirror.<sup>107</sup>

When people visited the Kruger Park, therefore, the rest huts may have been equated with a distant, traditional past, but they were also a means of exercising cultural choice, and establishing oneself as a cultured citizen. In this way, the rest camps of the Kruger Park were less about representing the past, but more about living the present, with the ‘traditional’ rondavel style huts at Pretoriuskop an expression of ‘high’ culture. The rondavel was, after all, similar to a thatched African wattle and daub hut, which had replaced the beehive structures early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and also echoed earlier settler structures. Inside the park it took on new meanings that turned this familiar structure into an expression of cultural distinction. All aspects of the rest camp were seen as potentially distancing the visitor from the natural world, further separating people from a ‘pure’ experience of nature. The rondavel came to be seen as the least distancing in that respect, and it acquired a discourse that reinforced this perspective. By this process people made the conditions that were present in the rest camps, which had been cheap and local, into a cultural indicator. The added narratives of traditionalism, for example, merely added the gloss.

A major difference between the American national parks and Kruger (among other South African national parks) has always been the need for a vehicle in the latter. In many respects, it could be argued that throughout this period the public engaged with the Kruger National Park primarily through its road network. The park could therefore be separated into the publically visible part of the park, made up of roads and rest camps, and the invisible part of the park, accessed only by limited

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<sup>106</sup> Quoted in Joubert, *The Kruger National Park*, Vol. 1, p.85.

<sup>107</sup> Letter from A. Anderson to the Warden, KNP, August 21 1939, in NK/25/1, KNP.

groups, including residents, rangers and labourers. The publically visible part of the park was made up of modern developments, and was closely tied in with urban leisure demands. When the public discussed or critiqued the park, it was often this aspect they meant.

The way of moving in the park was linked to the way of seeing, and of course was closely tied in with the motor car, which Bunn has referred to as a ‘mobile viewing platform.’<sup>108</sup> Owning a vehicle, and the way that the vehicle was driven, were obvious cultural indicators of status, however the car provided further means for people to culturally distinguish themselves. The view from the car window was more than merely a privileged position from which to explore the landscape. The window framed the landscape, and in doing so it made the practice cultural. The roads were designed to take the visitor to spots where action was most likely, and this action was then watched by the audience through the car window. The method of watching game became a cultural exercise, akin and comparable to other cultural choices available to certain South Africans during this period. In this way the new way of seeing fitted into the other ways of seeing that had developed within western culture, and was reinforced and assisted by photographic and cinematic ways of seeing that were made available in cultural spaces outside of the park. One of the best illustrations of the cultural value behind the view from the car window can be seen in a supplement of the *Iscor News* company journal, which described how,

To go through the National Park is an unforgettable experience: to travel slowly along about 10 to 15 miles an hour, to gaze carefully into the undergrowth; to pause at the sight of movement, to sit and watch God’s creatures in their safety; to see their perfect harmony with their surrounding; and to breathe in the free air of this piece of free country – that is what gives one that sense of complete relaxation, that oneness with the natural rhythm of life that is breathed into us by the Kruger National Park.<sup>109</sup>

Stevenson-Hamilton was almost explicit in his linkage between the car and the act of consumption that took place within the Kruger Park, when he wrote in his memoirs that ‘without its aid, it is hard to see how our wares could have been adequately displayed.’<sup>110</sup> When the view was impaired this was a cause for complaint and was spoken about like an act of iconoclasm. For example, burned out areas were

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<sup>108</sup> Bunn, ‘An Unnatural State,’ p.206.

<sup>109</sup> Supplement to *Iscor News*, October 1948.

<sup>110</sup> Stevenson-Hamilton, *South African Eden*, (2008), p.306.

‘most disheartening’ for visitors who had travelled long distances to see game.<sup>111</sup> In such instances it was common to lay the blame at the feet of the park’s African neighbours or residents, and particularly their use of the land, to make a negative connection between aesthetic value and the African presence.

Kruger authorities were aware that they needed to control the aesthetic experience. Through its road design the park brought people to places it deemed suitable for people to see, and by locating facilities at certain places it encouraged particular means of looking. Maps, guides and other aids helped visitors to choose their routes, by highlighting particularly attractive viewpoints, or marking out where certain species were more likely to be seen. Inside the car the driver, as the one in control of the vehicle and therefore ultimately the route, could exercise much power within the group dynamic. The driver had final control of the speed, the route, and to a large extent the time spent at particular spots. A family visitation during this period, usually with the father behind the wheel, was an opportunity to reinforce patriarchal structures and power balances.

The types of vehicle added a further means for distinction. Fellows could enjoy free access for life for £25, or £3 annually. However, the fellow had to be the ‘owner of the car in which his visits are made’, or the wife, who could enter using her husband’s card.<sup>112</sup> Car ownership in the 1930s therefore was imperative to acquire the highest visitor status. Buses were contentious almost from the park’s opening. Some of the arguments centred on practicalities, arguing that the ponies could not cope with their weight.<sup>113</sup> Others argued that allowing buses into the park would damage the trade for the private contractors working out of the garages at Nelspruit or Lydenburg.<sup>114</sup> Many on the parks board who feared the commercialization of the park liked the idea of ‘light motor cars only’ being allowed access. Buses, along with lorries and other large vehicles, were deemed to be ‘monstrosities of modern transport’ and an eyesore in the park.<sup>115</sup> Their presence ruined the experience for other visitors.

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<sup>111</sup> Letter from J. Stegmann to D. Gilfillan, October 1 1941, in NK/25/1, KNP.

<sup>112</sup> *Unspoilt Africa*, p.17.

<sup>113</sup> National Parks Board Report on the South African Railways Motor Service to Kruger Park Proposal, in SAS 2209 TTM 1619, NASA.

<sup>114</sup> Report by Traffic Officer, SAR, on Proposed Road Motor Service in the Kruger National Park, August 29 1930, in SAS 2209 TTM 1619, NASA.

<sup>115</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, February 11 1939, KNP.

The appearance of the bus itself was not the only cause of complaint. Buses allowed access to the park for less wealthy citizens. Indeed, when the park tried to make certain restrictions on school buses in 1939, The Transvaal Education Department argued that school visits in buses were usually made by poorer students, and a ban would limit their ability to visit the park. Despite such protestations, large buses carrying over ten persons continued to be banned in the park, with discounts for scholars coming in cars the only concession.<sup>116</sup> Non-car owning South Africans found it difficult to access the park without bus transport, which reinforced a wealth-based dynamic around the park. It should also be appreciated that engaging with the Kruger via a bus could be a disempowering experience, as the route, time and gaze were completely controlled by the organizers of the trip. A bus visit to the park therefore contained very different power dynamics to a visit in a private vehicle. Access for buses would remain a contentious issue throughout the park's history.

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<sup>116</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, August 17 1939, KNP.

## **Conclusion**

At the opening of the park in 1926, there was uncertainty over how the public might react. In their endeavours to popularize the idea of the national park, and the concept of viewing wildlife as a cultural pastime, those responsible for the production of meaning had to develop a representational strategy to attract public attention. Within that representational strategy certain discourses arose that spoke to various issues at work in South Africa during the same period. Race, gender, class and nationalism were all imbued within the discursive landscape that began to build around the Kruger Park.

Two very strong themes were quickly developed, that tied the park into ideas of nation and of class. Through its representations the park spoke to a particular public, principally an urban white middle and upper class, but the park also became a space for the creation of discourses that assisted processes of social distinction. Certain conservationists, journalists and members of the public began to collaborate to use the park as a tool of distinction. Visiting the park was made physically difficult for certain groups, such as working class South Africans or non-whites, but it was also made psychologically difficult to access for many groups too. From 1950 the park administration inherited an institution with a representationally powerful structure, laced with potent motifs and images that would take time to change. However, the 1950s was to be one of the most dynamic periods in the park's history.

## **PART TWO**

***OUR NATIONAL PARKS: THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK AND THE  
MANYELETI GAME RESERVE, 1951-1989***



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE STRUCTURES OF REPRESENTATION IN THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK, 1951-1989

#### Introduction

The slumbering awareness in men's hearts of the variety and beauty of nature's gifts will assuredly be reawakened, and, we believe, a new sense of urgency given to the paramount need for preserving these good things for posterity.<sup>1</sup>

A preliminary onslaught has already been made... Will the people of South Africa stand firm? I believe that they will.<sup>2</sup>

The Kruger National Park was gradually developed in the public consciousness between 1926 and 1950. Any anxieties that the war may have disturbed this new interest were soon assuaged, as visitor numbers increased rapidly: in 1955 the park was welcoming over 100,000 visitors in a calendar year for the first time, and by the early 1960s there were over 200,000 visitors a year. This was a significant increase from the 40,000 before the war.

The spread of interest in the national park ideal during this period has been attributed to the growth in car ownership and the rise of a consumptive culture.<sup>3</sup> While those are certainly relevant material foundations for this expansion, it does not

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<sup>1</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1946, p.3.

<sup>2</sup> R. Bigalke, *Let's Visit the Kruger Park*, (Johannesburg, 1961), p.103.

<sup>3</sup> Carruthers, "Full of Rubberneck Waggon and Tourists", p.243.

explain why the Kruger National Park specifically became so popular. The second part of the thesis explores the representation of the park as a crucial ingredient in the growth of that support. It also interrogates the material aimed at a new 'public' to enter the conservationists' radar – the African middle class. By the end of the period the park was beginning to look around itself, and it began to consider a broader definition of the South African public (although the Kruger Park itself remained an almost exclusively white destination throughout this period). Yet while access steadily expanded, the park maintained its function as a tool of distinction for its users. Visitor numbers approached half a million by the 1980s, but groups were still able to manipulate the idea of the park, and particular parts of the park, to assist in the process of differentiation. This period saw the growth of the white middle class based around suburban living around the principle cities of the Rand, alongside Cape Town and Durban. Afrikaners in particular benefitted from government schemes that enabled their bourgeoisification. The Kruger Park became a space to assist in the nuanced work of differentiation as society aimed to adapt to these dramatic social shifts.

This chapter is concerned with the mechanisms and structures that developed in and around the park to communicate with the public, in order to gain a firm foundation before any examination of the content of the material that was produced. Its main argument revolves around the primacy of the urban middle class consumer as the audience for park related material, and the increasingly systematic means by which the park spoke to that group. Before 1950 the representation of the park had been far less methodical and heavily reliant upon a select few of individuals who generated much of the material, both inside and outside the park. The following few decades saw a dramatic shift in the control that the authorities had over how people engaged with nature. Education, interpretation and regulation became key components in the parks board's battle for public opinion. After considerable restructuring during the 1950s, new liaison positions became the interfaces for national park communications. The park's position was therefore able to concretize around centrally agreed messages conveyed by chosen spokespeople in departments established for the purpose, rather than being so reliant upon only a handful of enthusiastic individuals.

However, a range of new media accompanied this administrative and ideological centralization, through which the public could be connected. The number

and distribution of magazines, newspapers, films, and television programmes rapidly increased during this period, giving propagandists for the national parks ample options. Yet this increase in media outlets brought with it the opening up of channels for public engagement with the national park message. Before the war the letters pages of newspapers were one of the only public forums for discussion. The post-war period saw the proliferation of magazines and journals dedicated to environmental matters and actively desirous of public debate. The public suddenly had more scope to contest or champion the hegemonic position, and alternative opinions and readings became possible. Importantly for the cultural historian, the contestation became more visible, which sparked flashpoints, when hegemonic meaning clashed with alternative understandings and discourses.

The chapter begins with a socio-political overview of South Africa, the National Parks Board, and the Kruger Park, in order to contextualize the production of meaning around the park. The chapter then moves to consider the various means of representation generated by the park and other interested bodies. The section on external representation considers the relationship between the park and communication channels between it and the world outside the park. It examines the attitudes within the National Parks Board to the production of meanings created for outward projection, as well as the relationships with various media companies and opportunities. The final section investigates the means of representation at the internal and perimetrical level. On those stages the park engaged with a geographically immediate public, and the impact of representational efforts could be more directly felt than those generated for a more distant audience. The purpose of this chapter, and the following one on the Manyeleti game reserve, is to fully historicize the regime of representation in order to allow for the proper placement of the discursive content, which will be the focus of analysis in chapter five.

## Context

The National Party won the 1948 election and ruled for over four decades. In pursuit of apartheid, the allocation and organization of space became a crucial component of the National Party's ideology. The Kruger Park, as a large expanse of land lying on a foreign border and surrounded by various African communal areas and Native Trust land, had an important role to play, both physically and psychologically. As described in the previous chapter, the park had developed strong ties to the idea of the Voortrekker, and to a white, racial connection with wildlife. As a result the National Party formed a close bond with the park, with politicians from the party visiting the park several times. Hendrik Verwoerd boasted that he had visited all the national parks in South Africa.<sup>4</sup> As a national entity responsible to various ministries during the period (from the Ministry of Lands to the Ministry of Environmental Affairs) the National Parks Board was used rigorously by the government as an instrument of social change. Carruthers has argued that the National Party restructured the parks board in a way that followed wider trends that saw the civil service in South Africa become a patronage tool to place dependable Afrikaners.<sup>5</sup>

By 1951 the Kruger National Park had become a central feature of broader conservationist debates, and conservation became interlocked in many respects to the national park idea. With employees' jobs dependent upon the existence and power of the national parks, many within the structure argued that national parks were the best possible vehicle for conservationist pursuits. The importance of the national park idea within conservationism in South Africa began to attract political attention. Between February and September 1952, a Commission of Inquiry led by Professor P. Hoek investigated the administrative malpractice that had afflicted the National Parks Board in the years after the war. In addition to its impact on wildlife management, the commission's findings also stimulated fresh approaches in the field of representation.<sup>6</sup> The newly appointed park biologist, Theophilus Nel, was frequently overlooked by the rangers on the staff, and the influence of science generally was reported as minimal. Rudolph Bigalke, on the board as a representative of the Wildlife Protection Society of South Africa, and others were calling for a structure based more closely

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<sup>4</sup> R. Labuschagne, *The Kruger Park and Other National Parks*, (Johannesburg, 1968), p.27.

<sup>5</sup> Carruthers, 'Conservation and Wildlife Management in South African National Parks 1930s-1960s,' p. 221.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p.219.

upon the American National Parks Service, which was divided into separate divisions, run by department heads who reported to a central director.<sup>7</sup> Hoek followed this model, and recommended that the National Parks Board be divided into three principal departments that would each report to a director: scientific research; administration; and development and tourism.

All these departments ultimately deferred to the new position of the Director of the National Parks Board. From 1952 until 1979 Rocco Knobel, an apposite choice for the National Party, fulfilled this role. Knobel's attitude to national parks was pragmatic but also sentimental. He did not come from a conservationist background but had been a municipal welfare official in Johannesburg. He knew the parks had economic value, and that their capability to earn foreign currency and 'lure' tourists to South Africa was invaluable. He once declared in a speech that 'I can definitely state that the scientific value of a National Park is not its most important value.'<sup>8</sup> For Knobel the psychological and cultural capacities of the park were arguably paramount. A national park was where 'a balanced personality and character may be formed.' He believed, along with many in the National Party, that leaders came from rural areas, and that the national parks 'give us the opportunity to escape from ourselves and from the artificial and sophisticated surroundings so that we can react normally to the stimulation of creation.' The most significant value of a national park, therefore, was its 'recreational value, not in the narrow sense of physical recreation but in the true sense of the word which includes spiritual, intellectual and physical renewal.'<sup>9</sup>

The warden of the Kruger National Park, Colonel J. Sandenbergh, soon found himself at variance with this new landscape, and he was replaced by the ranger Louis Steyn, who remained as head of the Kruger Park under the title of Chief Nature Conservator until 1961. A dedicated department was established to oversee tourist facilities and operations. The park biologist, Nel, remained on the staff as head of the research section, and his department was expanded by the appointment of two botanists. In 1952 this was augmented by the addition of Rudolf Labuschagne as information officer. Labuschagne's remit was to communicate the findings of the research division as well as connect more broadly with the public to help them

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.221.

<sup>8</sup> Funksie en Rol van die Nasionale Parkeraad in Samewerking met Ander Outoriteite, Presentation by R. Knobel at the Conservation Conference at Skukuza, June 1962, in BAO 229 H62/13/1, NASA.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

understand the activities happening in the national parks. Furthermore, he was to investigate and implement educational strategies to assist in the instruction of the public in ideas of conservation.

Labuschagne explained his role in a paper entitled ‘educational propaganda and publicity of wildlife conservation’: while the ‘principles of conservation should be emphasised’ throughout, ‘the information should indicate the significance of the term “National Park” and the duty of the peoples of the country to protect their heritage.’ They needed to use the whole gamut of media available at the time, including ‘publications, films, slides, lectures, exhibitions, excursions, public relation with clubs and societies and also the creation of small game sanctuaries’ in order to achieve this goal. The belief was that ‘legislation and the establishment of Parks and reserves in themselves are not sufficient unless accompanied by a proper educational campaign,’ the aim of which was to reach ‘the child in the school, the college student and the university graduate’ as well as the public at large.<sup>10</sup>

By 1957 Labuschagne had his own Educational Information Division, part of the new Department of Nature Conservation, and an assistant information officer to help with film shows and talks in the various national parks across the country.<sup>11</sup> This educational division continued, in assorted guises, for the rest of the period under discussion, and remained the main channel through which the Kruger Park organised its communication with the South African public. From 1952, therefore, education had an acknowledged place within the structure and responsibility of the National Parks Board. Prior to this date the educative potential of the Kruger Park had been seen as inherent in the landscape. The assumption had been that observation could provide answers, supplemented by the works of certain authors such as Stevenson-Hamilton. While education in the park did not gain a particularly coherent strategy overnight, from 1952 it was a recognised part of the national park mission. Education and information also had, from its earliest years, a close association with the scientific research division. Founded at similar times, and with numerous points of crossover, science fed directly into much of the informational output from an early stage.

Science as a framework for park management was instilled from the very top from 1961 after the resignation of Steyn. From then the Kruger Park was run by appointments from within the park structure, and particularly by people with

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted in *African Wild Life*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1956, p.74.

<sup>11</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1957.

backgrounds in scientific training and wildlife management: Andrew Brynard, U. de V. Pienaar and Salomon Joubert, who all ran the Kruger Park as chief Nature Conservator or as warden (when the role was retitled in 1978). During the late 1970s the parks structure was redesigned again, with the emphasis placed on decentralization and a shift of responsibility from the National Parks Board back to the park officers themselves. From 1979 the Kruger Park acquired its own Research and Information division, answerable to the new post of warden, while in Pretoria a new public relations appointment was responsible for broader publicity objectives for the parks board.

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By the 1950s the National Parks Board were responsible for several parks around South Africa. The network of national parks was added to during the 1960s with the proclamation of the Augrabies Falls, Golden Gate Highlands, and Tsitsikamma National Parks. Only the province of Natal kept control of all its reserves and had none declared a national park. The provinces were responsible for game reserves and other nature conservation spaces, which created a disparate hierarchy of management. In 1963 the Nature Conservation Coordinating Committee (NACOR) was founded to open direct channels of communication between the various bodies responsible for conservation around South Africa. The aim was to pool resources, and ensure efficiency of action.

The Kruger Park afforded itself a little congratulation in the year 1962. Andrew Brynard, the park biologist, said at a conference held at Skukuza that a good equilibrium had been attained. Poaching and threats to the land on which Kruger stood had been contained. Moves only needed to be made in terms of educating the public further about conservation.<sup>12</sup> The rise of environmentalism on the global stage in the 1960s and particularly the 1970s put a stop to this complacent attitude. By the mid-1970s concerns about global (and national) population increases and agricultural needs led to a reinvigorated environmental movement in South Africa.<sup>13</sup> People bemoaned conservation's inability to have become a significant political issue in the

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<sup>12</sup> 'Natuurbeewaring en Toerisme,' Presentation by A. Brynard at the Conservation Conference at Skukuza, June 1962, in BAO 229 H62/13/1, NASA.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, D. Hey, *Wildlife Heritage of South Africa*, (Cape Town, 1966), p.242.

post war years, and for them the conversion of the Kruger Park into agricultural land seemed inevitable as future population estimates predicted outlandish and impossible numbers that had no place for unfarmed land.<sup>14</sup> The issue also began to extend beyond the perimeter fence of the major national parks: Creina Bond, the editor of *African Wild Life* in 1976, wrote in an editorial that,

We would hate to see conservation become a football for the politicians. However the environment is no longer something that can be tucked out of sight in national parks, a holiday thing for once a year. It must take its place as a priority in Southern Africa.<sup>15</sup>

The very borders of the parks began to be questioned, not by the land hungry, but by a significant branch of the conservation movement who believed that national parks could no longer exist as islands, encompassing and confining species into impracticable spaces.<sup>16</sup> This new political edge to environmentalism, and the impact that it had on the representation of national parks generally, was regretted by many readers, who yearned for the days of successful conservation stories rather than article after article on the relationship between people and the environment.<sup>17</sup>

The independence of African states in the 1960s and the effect on national parks on the continent was a troubling concern for several practitioners. At the World Forestry Congress in Seattle in 1960, Mervyn Cowie, the director of the Royal National Parks of Kenya, put the argument succinctly that the major problem facing African conservation was the ‘surge of millions of indigenous primitive people, emerging from an era of mystery and ignorance into a new world of power, wealth and possessions, but without the experience to carry the responsibilities of emancipation, or to assess the damage to natural resources caused by expanding agriculture and populations.’<sup>18</sup>

The impact of external factors upon Kruger perhaps was most evident during the 1970s, when two significant developments brought uncertainty to the eastern Transvaal region. The first of these was the homeland project that pushed for greater independence for self-governed African states within South Africa. Fears for reserves that fell inside homelands, such as Ndumu in Zululand, as well as concern that conservation may be abandoned in the homelands, created anxieties for the future of

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<sup>14</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 29, No. 4, 1975, p.4.

<sup>15</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 1976, p.6.

<sup>16</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 30, No. 5, 1976, p.54.

<sup>17</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 1976, p.8.

<sup>18</sup> ‘National Parks and Reserves in Africa, their Significance, and Problems Affecting their Future,’ Lecture by M. Cowie, at the Fifth World Forestry Congress, Seattle, USA, August 29-September 10 1960, in NK/38/5, KNP.

conservation more generally in the region. By 1979, the park bordered three significant homelands, with one asserting full independence, and the need to develop friendly relations with these political bodies, and particularly the populations living within, became more critical.<sup>19</sup> Throughout the 1970s and especially during the 1980s, the Kruger Park developed a relationship with conservation departments in the homelands that involved guidance via a Kruger presence on advisory boards, as well as the sharing of knowledge, equipment and wildlife (via transportation rather than the opening up of fences). The second development to threaten the park was the departure of the Portuguese from Mozambique. On the eastern frontier the Kruger Park became a frontline between Frelimo and Renamo as civil war engulfed Mozambique. Several hundred refugees used the Kruger Park as a route into South Africa, while increased poaching, believed to be from Mozambique, was decimating the elephant population. Similarly, the instability allowed ANC fighters in exile in Mozambique to use the park as an access route into the country, which led to the South African military increasing its presence in the north of the park during the 1980s.

Thus by the mid to late 1980s the periphery of the park began to gain in importance. An additional stimulus was the movement within conservationism that acknowledged the need for increased community involvement in the preservation of natural resources. While increased military activity was one such means of engaging with many of these problems, the park also began exploring ways of appealing to the neighbouring communities to assist it in wildlife conservation, rather than merely relying upon force to impose its will as it so often had in the past. By the late 1980s this concern began to realign to focus on the Kruger Park itself. Attempts to include various groups previously unwelcome became paramount, and the authorities began worrying for the political survival of the park and the future role of conservation in South Africa. Popular protest and insurrection within the country affected visitor patterns, while political isolation led to the park seeking out new markets in east Asia, with adverts for South Africa in which wildlife and the prospect of a visit to the Kruger National Park featured prominently.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Memorandum on Conservation in the Bantu Homelands, November 30 1970, in BAO 20/224 H62/13, NASA.

<sup>20</sup> See *Shin Sheng Daily News*, August 15 1980, and *Ta-Hua Evening News*, August 7 1984.

In 1950 the Kruger Park administration had no dedicated publicity division, and no particularly deliberate publicity strategy. By 1989 there was an identifiable department with a measurable output of material. The public that the park acknowledged and was attempting to engage with had expanded to include new constituents at closer quarters. With this framework in place, the chapter can now consider the nuances of park approaches to particular forms of publicity, beginning with those aimed at a more distant audience, whom the park saw as potential political advocates and financial supporters: the voters and the visitors.

## External Representations

The Educational Information Division was, in its rhetoric at least, eager to adopt and make use of as many types of media as possible in order to get its message out to the public, including television from 1976. Of particular influence was the publication of a new journal for the Wildlife Protection Society of Southern Africa, named *African Wild Life*. The relationship between the society and the park had always been close: before the war the society had been instrumental in helping to establish the Kruger National Park, and had been rewarded with a permanent seat on the National Parks Board. When the journal was being launched in 1946, the parks board was approached about making it the official journal of the board. The offer was declined but the board agreed to offer its moral support and ‘heartily cooperate’.<sup>21</sup>

In 1946 the Wildlife Protection Society backed and part funded the Transvaal Game Commission. The bulk of this survey was to establish the situation regarding game conservation in the Transvaal province after the war, but another motive was to acquire official support for a propaganda drive led by the society. The commission, however, did not agree, and determined that conservationist education and propaganda should remain at the provincial level throughout South Africa, rather than through national channels such as the Wildlife Protection Society.<sup>22</sup> Partly because of this setback, the Society established its journal, which was intended to both inform its readers as well as attract new members and converts to the conservationist cause.

First published in October 1946, several issues of the new journal were distributed to the 220 members as ‘propaganda’, while another 3,500 copies were sold via the principle stationers in South Africa, the Central News Agency.<sup>23</sup> Membership of the society rose to 1,240 in the first two years, and to around 20,000 in the next thirty years. Its readers were made up of the interested public from South Africa and abroad: as one article from 1976 declared, ‘we’re a VIP society and we’re 18,000 strong,’ including judges, bankers, yachtsmen, and popstars. ‘Merely by being one of us,’ it continued, ‘you are a Very Important Person – one step ahead of the times with a clear view of the world we want tomorrow.’<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, May 13 1946, KNP.

<sup>22</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1946, p.35.

<sup>23</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1967, p.273.

<sup>24</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 30, No. 5, 1976, p.48.

Journals such as *African Wild Life* helped to extend interest in wildlife, but they also assisted in maintaining conservationism as a form of club with associates from the upper echelons of South African society. The society boasted the British monarch as its patron, and later the state president. The vice-presidents in 1967 were a roll call of government ministers, including the Minister of the Interior Pieter le Roux.<sup>25</sup> While the titular roles were generally Afrikaners after the formation of the Republic in 1960, those on the council were generally English-speakers. Such a distribution illustrates the cohesion as well as the division within conservationism in South Africa during this period. While Afrikaans-speakers tended to gain employment in the parks themselves, it was English-speakers who controlled many of the principal propaganda channels. An Afrikaans version of *African Wild Life*, entitled *Ons Wild*, was mooted several times during the 1950s, however it never emerged, and Afrikaans articles only began appearing in the journal in the 1970s.

The purpose of the society was always to champion preservation and conservation in the region. In 1957 the Society changed its name to the Wildlife Conservation Society in order to reflect adjustments in philosophy and approach, as well as wider shifts within the international conservation community. As they explained to their readers, ‘the principles of wild life conservation are twofold, firstly, the preservation of the fauna and flora for future generations, and, secondly, for the cultural education of the public.’<sup>26</sup> This privileged position of education remained at the heart of the Society’s mission. In the 1970s they were key backers of wilderness schools aimed at both white and black South Africans.

For the first twenty-five years of the journal’s existence the Kruger National Park provided a key reference point and focus of discussion. Almost all articles referenced animals or events in the park, with many written by rangers or other members of park staff. During the 1970s the attention of the Society and its journal began to move towards Natal, although there were still pieces written on the flagship national park. Running alongside *African Wild Life* the parks board had begun their own publications. In 1958 an academic journal was launched, entitled *Koedoe*, which brought scientific research within the park to the wider academic community. The more publically focused *Custos*, released in 1971, contained accounts of visitor experiences and photographs, as well as articles by various members of the park staff.

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<sup>25</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1967, p.1.

<sup>26</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1956, p.301.

Aside from *Koedoe*, these new publications encouraged public involvement through letters pages, photography competitions and the submission of articles. Alongside the letters pages of the provincial and national newspapers, these were the new forums for public engagement, and the spaces for people to feed meaning back into the production cycle. *African Wild Life*'s letters page was initially called 'Round Our Laager', which made a distinct link between Voortrekker experience and that of the national park visitor by including a picture of Voortrekkers round a campfire beside their wagon. In those spaces the hegemonic position on national park thinking was challenged and reinforced by the public, who either reproduced familiar discourses or introduced alternative understandings. The reactions to those alternative positions could be defensive, and were frequently fierce, yet through those discursive clashes meaning shifted. This public engagement was generally policed and controlled by the editors or competition judges who were able to decide what responses could be published, displayed or rewarded.

The magazines and journals contained text, images and advertisements in a blend of representational bearing, and were arguably the most influential tools of propaganda during this period. However, the media that had existed before the war resumed their pursuit of the public after it. Photographs, films, books, maps, guides, and postcards all continued to make up the representational culture of the Kruger National Park. The growth of colour film was seen as a particularly useful benefit to conservation propagandists due to its realistic qualities and popularity with audiences.<sup>27</sup> From 1976 the South African Broadcasting Corporation began the transmission of television in the country, with one of the first documentaries a celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the National Parks Act. Public manipulation of the material was limited. However, as the period progressed, public access to the means of production of images increased, and more and more people could afford cameras and, by the 1980s, video cameras, to record their own experiences of the park and its wildlife.

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<sup>27</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1949, p.4.

Labuschagne, his assistants, and his successors, made much use of the journals and newspapers at their disposal. Throughout this period there were various strategies used to make the press work for the park. Firstly, as David Bunn has argued, the Afrikanerisation of the park after 1948 led to the breaking up of the patronage system that allowed certain photographers particular access rights.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, from the 1950s the international market for wildlife films grew, and series for the large networks in America and Europe began to require reliable destinations and diverse and interesting subject matter. Whereas East Africa had initially been the major focus for filming, film companies were increasingly drawn to the Kruger National Park as, in the words of one filmmaker, ‘the best conservation work is in South Africa.’<sup>29</sup>

The board liked to try and control representations of the park by external bodies as much as they could: in 1950 the board put an end to *The Star* newspaper’s employment of a Kruger Park ranger as a correspondent, and instead insisted on releasing all information related to the park through the South African Press Association.<sup>30</sup> The need to manage public ideas was important for the park to maintain public support and so press coverage of all issues needed careful handling. In 1965 a symposium was held on culling and public attitudes, and how both culling could be done so as not to antagonise public opinion, but also how public opinion could be managed so as not to obstruct the need to cull.<sup>31</sup>

The board had their favourite journalists, and generally did not like publically engaging with those they considered errant. Writers of articles that the warden found disagreeable often found themselves with an invitation to the park to see for themselves how things were done. For example, James Clarke, who wrote for several years for *The Star* on environmental issues, published an article on lion culling that caused anger in the Kruger hierarchy.<sup>32</sup> Clarke had to write carefully in his subsequent piece, after a full tour of the park, so as to keep the public’s trust and ensure that ‘there is no chance of the public getting the feeling that I have been brainwashed by the Park’s authorities.’<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> D. Bunn, ‘An Unnatural State,’ p.203.

<sup>29</sup> Letter from W. Garst to U. de V. Pienaar, January 4 1980, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>30</sup> Letter from the Tourist Manager, KNP, to The Manager, *The Star*, August 22 1950, in NK/17/1/1, KNP.

<sup>31</sup> Minutes of Symposium, November 30 1965, in BAO 20/224 H62/13, NASA.

<sup>32</sup> Letter from U. de V. Pienaar to J. Clarke, February 5 1975, in NK/17/1, KNP.

<sup>33</sup> Letter from J. Clarke, *The Star*, to S. Joubert, November 14 1975, in NK/17/1, KNP.

Conservation was a useful conduit to open discussions with international bodies, and this channel became more important as South Africa became increasingly isolated. Wildlife films and photographs were a particularly choice medium for opening links with foreign partners and enabled other stories about South Africa to be smuggled alongside. For example, the Hamilton Wright Organisation was able to place stories on the Kruger Park in the *New York Times* during the 1960s. ‘Animal pictures,’ Wright argued, were ‘a soothing antidote and door-opener to understanding, recognition and eventually more direct information about industrial achievement, agricultural accomplishments, etc.’<sup>34</sup> Scientific study and publication was more broadly deemed a useful means of maintaining or establishing links with international bodies, and this was one of the motivations behind the founding of *Koedoe*.

In the film world, new relationships were formed that suited the parks board: for example a select few companies gained the rights to operate within the park, such as Don Meier Productions and Sven Persson Films. Norma Vorster, who took the name Foster in America, was a particular favourite of the parks board and the South African government. Her work, including the series *Wildlife in Crisis* for Viacom, showcased the best of South African conservation work to audiences in the United States. She wrote to the park in 1977 to explain that,

At present there seems to be very negative reactions from television networks and distributors with regard to putting too much South African content into films. Thank goodness, I know how to beat them at their own game by presenting the shows in such an exciting and professional manner that their policy won’t affect me. The political climate and attitude towards South Africa from Washington, pressure groups and unions has deteriorated greatly since I was here last.<sup>35</sup>

Comfortable with this arrangement, the parks board was often stand-offish with fresh approaches from unfamiliar production companies, particularly from America.

More extensive permissions were granted to projects deemed more useful to the parks board’s more general mission. The most worthwhile projects by established production companies acquired permissions to drive off the tourist roads, while projects judged less useful could be stuck to both the tourist roads and to the park opening times.<sup>36</sup> With new contacts in place the park was able to invoke outside assistance for parks board projects, such as the making of a film to laud the

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<sup>34</sup> Letter from H. Wright to A. Brynard, April 19 1962, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>35</sup> Letter from N. Foster to R. Knobel, September 3 1977, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>36</sup> Compare, for example, Letter from the Director, NPB, to the Director, SA Tourist Corporation, August 18 1954, to Letter from G. Noble to the Director, NPB, May 8 1956, in NK/17/2, KNP.

‘wilderness’ credentials of Pafuri after the threat of mining in the region in the late 1970s.<sup>37</sup>

During the 1970s and 1980s South Africa became increasingly excluded from the international arena and some companies were averse to filming there. From the parks board’s perspective film offered the opportunity to open up access and dialogue with new markets: for example, a Japanese production company in the Kruger Park put South Africa onto Japanese screens.<sup>38</sup> The park administration were also able to keep contact with important media streams in the UK and the USA, despite the unpopularity of apartheid: the BBC filmed many of their frog sequences for *Life on Earth* in the park, for example, and often contacted the park with specific filming needs.<sup>39</sup>

The experience of watching wildlife films was important in the representational process. Television only arrived in South Africa in 1976, and so the initial range of productions available to British television viewers in the 1950s and 1960s could not be experienced by South Africans in the same way. The new liaison office of the parks board toured the country to deliver lectures and show films to audiences it deemed suitable recipients for propaganda work, such as schools and colleges. For example, between February and April 1963 the educational officer for the parks board visited 17 towns across South Africa, showing 56 films with an accompanying lecture.<sup>40</sup> The Wildlife Protection Society provided similar events. For many, the wildlife documentary film continued to be watched at shows in auditoriums in the larger cities. Audiences of around 700 would watch films of between 10 and 30 minutes in length, such as *Study in Slaughter*, about the ‘problems of snaring’, *Heritage of the Wild*, *Shingwedzi*, or *Kruger National Park*. Many of these films were silent and relied upon commentary by someone provided by the society or a member of the parks board liaison office. However, such accompaniments to the moving images were frequently underwhelming and could cause annoyance among viewers. One critic of an event complained that ‘background music and a few occasional remarks such as “Buffalo”, “Lion”, “Sable”, or nothing at all when the commentator does not know what he is looking at, are not sufficient.’<sup>41</sup> Sometimes the scheduled

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<sup>37</sup> Letter from U. de V. Pienaar to D. Hughes, January 28 1983, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>38</sup> Letter from P. van Wyk to Y. Kudara, December 9 1981, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>39</sup> Letter from A. Brynard to R. Brock, December 12 1976, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>40</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, June 26 1963, KNP.

<sup>41</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1955, p.165.

films communicated messages that sat uncomfortably with the audience, such as the idea that captivity was as beneficial for wildlife as the wild. A further complaint was that the wildlife programmes were often accompanied by advertorial pieces, such as holiday tours to Europe.<sup>42</sup>

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The park also tried to be pragmatic regarding audiences. The variance in the messages indicates how the information office was never singular in its transmission, but instead formed numerous relationships with various bodies. For example, in communication with local farmers, or indeed most audiences in South Africa, the message had been for several years that the Kruger Park was agriculturally unproductive land. The purpose of this discourse was to protect the park from land requests. However, internationally the message was often reversed. In an interview on New Zealand radio, Steyn told Bryan O'Brien that the Kruger Park was a 'large tract of fertile and well watered country' that could be so productive that 'the return in tourist revenue cannot compare with the economic returns which would result from turning it into an agricultural or industrial area.'<sup>43</sup> By presenting the park as a vulnerable institution with legitimate demands being placed on it by farmers, the authorities were hoping to gather international support to the Kruger cause. Such a message in South Africa, however, had the potential to be highly destructive for the parks board. Similarly, in American newspapers and articles the rest camps were frequently described as like a "'motel' colony' to appeal to American audiences, a description that would have been anathema to many readers of *African Wild Life*.<sup>44</sup>

The external methods of communication that were utilized by the park, and that transmitted ideas of the national park, tended to focus most of their efforts on channels that linked the park to urban, middle class consumers. In 1973 *African Wild Life* would be one of the first journals to ask the question 'is wildlife only for the rich?'<sup>45</sup> Many of the sources required literacy, while wildlife films, in the 1950s and 1960s, required access to particular venues. Radio was made use of sporadically, usually in collaboration with SABC on particular projects. In a report on the

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

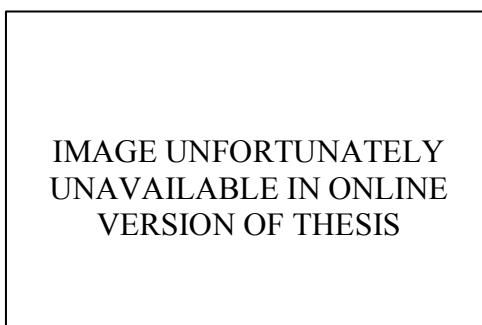
<sup>43</sup> Transcript of Interview on New Zealand Broadcasting Service, January 25 1960, in NK/38/5, KNP.

<sup>44</sup> See the 'News of the World in Pictures,' Hamilton Wright Organization, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>45</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 1973, p.149.

usefulness of communication channels to the parks board by a PR firm, radio was described as ‘a more selective medium able to be directed at specific target groups’ such as local farmers. Television, meanwhile, was deemed to be ‘very effective with broad coverage but expensive.’ The press, however, was the ‘ideal medium’ to get across ideas of the national park. One of the reasons for this attitude was because close relationships with environmental journalists could be forged, that could then lead to forewarnings about any negative upcoming coverage.<sup>46</sup> As has been argued in this section, the ability to control the message was paramount to the parks board in this period, and its media preferences reflected this stance.

While national parks made use of established channels to communicate with specific groups, attempts were also made to normalize wildlife in the public consciousness: to make it something that, while everyone may not have been able to enjoy it as a product, all would have respected it as a valuable commodity. For example, from 1954 photographs of animals taken in the Kruger Park were used on the new postage stamps, making use of a tactic employed by monarchs the world over to establish ties between themselves and their subjects.<sup>47</sup> Through such techniques wildlife became regularized as a cultural worth and the need to protect them, as one might protect a head of state, became subtly ingrained.



*Fig 3.1 Stamp from the 1954 series*

While the white community were the main focus and principal recipients of this representational material, the idea that certain African groups should be included in the mission emerged at the beginning of this period. The interest in African attitudes to national parks was stimulated by Selope Thema, who said at the Native Representative Council in Pretoria in 1950 that ‘the animals in the Kruger Park have

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<sup>46</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, November 16 1984, KNP.

<sup>47</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, March 27 1954, KNP.

more land than I have.’ Those in the Wildlife Protection Society conceptualised this statement as a shift in African concerns, from wildlife as a food resource to national parks as a land resource.<sup>48</sup> While the talk was more of ‘vigilance’ against this new attitude, there was also recognition of a need to ‘counteract a narrow political view’. It was argued that,

The Native mind needs to be instilled with knowledge of the mutual benefits to be derived from a striving to preserve instead of destroy nature, even if this means setting aside land in which settled encroachment by white or black is debarred. They must be taught that wild life preservation is a long-term policy undertaken in the interests, ultimately, of all.<sup>49</sup>

However, there was no real urge to involve Africans in the propaganda process at that time.

Aside from a minor campaign to assist a schoolteacher from Naboomspruit with photographs of wildlife, little effort was placed upon the African target market throughout the 1950s. When the Manyeleti game reserve opened in 1967 it took on much of the responsibility for African environmental education. Despite this, some members of the public felt that the National Parks Board should be encouraging conservation awareness among the non-white population.<sup>50</sup> In the 1970s, as the homeland project began to formally carve up the country and new governments took on responsibility for conservation, fresh panic emerged within the conservationist community regarding African environmental education. Sewgun Singh, chairman of the Sastri College Wildlife Society and an attendee at the Pretoria Wildlife Symposium in 1973, described how people were doing ‘almost nothing’ to educate non-white citizens of South Africa in conservation. Raymond Dasmann, from the IUCN, confirmed that getting local communities interested in nature conservation was one of the ‘major international challenges today.’<sup>51</sup> The attempt by delegates at the Wildlife Symposium to list some of the activities in place was described by the writer for *African Wild Life* as ‘a little defensive.’<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1951, 67.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Letter from N. Mullett to the Director, NPB, January 11 1978, in NK/25/1, KNP.

<sup>51</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 1973, p.93.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

## Internal and Perimetrical Representations

The period 1952 to 1989 saw the park authorities increase their control over public usage of the park. They wished to instill in people a specific way of using the park, which included ways of being, seeing, and moving. The rapid rise in visitor numbers was one of the spurs behind the need to control knowledge, and it is worthwhile to outline some of the dynamics and patterns within visitor usage of the park. Table 3.1 below details visitor numbers to the Kruger Park between 1951 and 1985.

Year	Visitor Numbers
1951	82,761
1952	89,393
1953	85,723
1954	91,107
1955	10,1058
1956	105,183
1957	117,324
1958	122,227
1959	135,740
1960	137,113
1961	152,463
1962	153,897
1963	175,289
1964	216,680
1965	247,969
1966	259,336
1967	270,419
1968	258,936
1969	306,347
1970	349,710
1971	341,232
1972	330,565

1973	359,632
1974	363,482
1975	374,892
1976	357,473
1977	372,988
1978	391,512
1979	396,653
1980	428,840
1981	463,853
1982	445,661
1983	451,780
1984	509,173
1985	462,657

*Table 3.1 Visitor Numbers to the Kruger National Park, 1951-1985<sup>53</sup>*

In 1955 the number of visitors to the Kruger Park reached 100,000 for the first time. Almost all were white, with 668 classed as ‘Asiatic’ and 85 ‘Native and coloured visitors’.<sup>54</sup> Over eight thousand had come from outside the Union. By the mid 1960s those classed as ‘Asiatics’ still numbered around 600, whilst ‘Bantu and coloured visitors’ had risen tenfold to around 900.<sup>55</sup> Ten years later the park saw ‘non-white’ visitors to the park total 9,000, again a tenfold increase on the decade before, but probably due to the presence of Manyeleti.<sup>56</sup> By 1982 visitor numbers had approached 500,000. A questionnaire in 1983 attempted to ascertain the sociological profile of the Kruger visitor. Such breakdowns of visitors to the park are rare in the archive, so this questionnaire provides an illuminating insight. Of the 793 respondents 80% were South African born, 55% spoke English as their first language, and 39% spoke Afrikaans, while 21% classed themselves as blue-collar workers, 30% as white collar workers, and 29% as professional.<sup>57</sup>

As more people visited the park pressure built for more areas to become accessible to the public for longer periods of the year. Overseas guests, a lucrative

<sup>53</sup> Sourced from various NPB Annual Reports, KNP.

<sup>54</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1957.

<sup>55</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1963.

<sup>56</sup> NPB Annual Report 1973, and NPB Annual Report 1974.

<sup>57</sup> Nasionale Parkeraad Vraelys, August 18 1983, in NK/47/5, KNP.

market for the parks board, were particularly vociferous in asking for more of the park to open up in the summer months.<sup>58</sup> As road and health provisions improved, more camps and zones were able to be made available to the public throughout the 1960s. Yet the impact of visitor numbers on conservationist and aesthetic needs was a constant balancing act. With numbers of tourists reaching 100,000 in 1955, the parks board responded with various studies and investigations into the impact of tourism on the park's wildlife.<sup>59</sup> The head of the Kruger Park in the 1950s, Louis Steyn, would have preferred to control the “‘sort’ of tourist’ that was allowed into the park, in order to keep out those that were helping to turn the park into another ‘Coney Island’”.<sup>60</sup>

Instead, in 1956 a limit was placed on 3,000 visitors inside the park per night, in order to preserve the ‘atmosphere’ of the park. This number was increased in 1981 to 4,000, as more and better facilities enlarged the park's carrying capacity. However, limiting the number of visitors was a significant representational move, and helped to create the conditions that the park wished to promote as ‘natural’. Yet the park was only completely full at particularly popular times of the year, such as the July holidays. Below is a table highlighting park usage throughout the financial year 1972-3:

Month	Number of visitors (To nearest 1000)
April 1972	25,000
May	24,000
June	32,000
July	52,000
August	31,000
September	41,000
October	25,000
November	14,000
December	29,000
January 1973	18,000

<sup>58</sup> NPB Agenda, October 20 1958, in NK/41/2, KNP.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Tourism in Relation to Game,’ Memorandum by M. Rowland-Jones, September 29 1955, in NK/47/5, KNP.

<sup>60</sup> ‘Control of Tourism in the Kruger National Park,’ Memorandum by L. Steyn, in NK/47/5, KNP.

February	14,000
March	23,000

*Table 3.2 Visitor numbers during the year 1972-3<sup>61</sup>*

The park ran at around an average of 80% occupancy over the course of the entire year. The restrictions on occupancy within the park forced visitors to stay elsewhere: in 1975 35% of visitors came only for the day, staying in accommodation outside the park or returning to nearby towns.

The sheer volume of visitors needed controlling, both physically and psychologically, to ensure the survival of the park environmentally and politically. An important means to direct behaviour was through the roads and architecture around the park. During the 1950s the need to keep people in their cars became more dominant in park thinking. For example, the parks board decided against building parking spots at ‘selected places such as drinking pools and grazing grounds from which unobstructed views could be obtained’ as they found that ‘whenever cars are allowed to park at points of advantage, visitors cannot withstand the temptation to leave their cars and walk about, or open picnic baskets.’ The end result, they argued, was that ‘the game is scared away, and a lot of litter is left behind defacing the park.’<sup>62</sup> In a sense, this attitude indicates the lack of faith that the park had in the power of ideology as communicated through text. They had greater confidence in the physical manipulation of people and command over the environment. It was argued that main roads should no longer run past areas with high populations of game, such as Leeupan, but instead be diverted away from these hotspots, and grade winding dirt roads to these locales instead, with the intention being to decrease the numbers of tourists congregating at such sensitive spaces.<sup>63</sup> This compares starkly to the initiatives in the 1930s that tried to expand public access. The 1960s saw attempts to constrict and closely direct public access.

The design of rest camps continued to be divisive on the board, with those either for or against the building of bigger and better facilities for tourists. The building of a swimming pool at Pretoriuskop was only agreed to by the majority of the board because it incorporated a rock formation to give the impression of the pool

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<sup>61</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1973.

<sup>62</sup> Minutes of Meeting of National Parks Board of Trustees, March 26-7 1954, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>63</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, September 29 1955, KNP.

as a natural feature.<sup>64</sup> A second development to cause controversy was the building of luxury accommodation at Nwanedzi, which some on the board saw as a provision of a service for the ‘benefit of so small a number of visitors’.<sup>65</sup> Maintaining the ‘atmosphere’ had to be balanced with the economic needs and the financial potential of the park. By 1981 expansion and building was more broadly accepted, resulting in several new camps around the park, including large camps of the Berg-en-Daal type, as well as caravan camps, bushveld camps, and private concessions.

Perhaps the biggest development in terms of accommodation in the park, and for its representational qualities, was the desegregation of the park in the early 1980s. Intriguingly, Kruger was never completely segregated in the apartheid era. At the beginning of this period, in 1950, there were around 750 non-white visitors to the park. The accommodation policy for non-white visitors was generally unclear and haphazard, with the use of Balule rest camp and tented areas in the larger camps such as Skukuza set aside for non-white use. Such a situation caused ‘much averse criticism’ according to the warden in 1950.<sup>66</sup> In 1959 an Indian visitor informed the board that non-European camps in the Kruger Park were in a ‘very undignified and disgusting state with no toilet and very poor sanitary facilities... the Kruger National Park is a national place and a holiday resort belonging to the nation.’ The tour operator Hamba Holidays took matters into their own hands and funded their own accommodation for African school children in Pretoriuskop, which the parks board tried to make use of for other guests.

As the number of black VIP guests in particular began to rise in the 1960s, the issue of accommodation became more acute. Meals had to be taken out in the open to bypass segregation laws, and accommodation allocation could be taxing. However, the Kruger Park was often chosen as a venue for such VIP trips as ‘accommodation problems outside the park are insurmountable.’<sup>67</sup> There was a request for a VIP, mixed-race area to be built in 1968, but this plan was put on hold. Six years later the Department of Indian Affairs wrote to say that conditions in national parks needed to improve and as the Kruger Park ‘is about the only national park frequented by Indians’ it was best that the focus be laid solely there.<sup>68</sup> Another nine huts and a

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<sup>64</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, September 22 1954, KNP.

<sup>65</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, December 4 1961, KNP.

<sup>66</sup> Annual Report of the Warden, KNP, 1950.

<sup>67</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, June 17 1968, KNP.

<sup>68</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, September 20 1974, KNP.

picnic spot were constructed for use by Indian guests, while the Balule camp, which had been unpopular with non-white visitors because of its isolation, was recommissioned as a wilderness camp for caravans.<sup>69</sup>

In 1979 Skukuza had hosted 4,770 African and Indian visitors, Satara 542, Lower Sabie 1,193, and Pretoriuskop 221 out of a total of 7,371 non-white overnight visitors to the park (the total number of black visitors, including day visitors, amounted to 18,967).<sup>70</sup> Some visitors were booking under English names and then demanding the accommodation they had reserved. At a meeting of the parks board in 1980 it was acknowledged that the national parks should be for the enjoyment of other racial groups, and that conservation did not belong 'in the political arena'.<sup>71</sup> It was requested that the larger camps with adequate facilities, such as Skukuza, Satara, Lower Sabie, Letaba, Olifants, Shingwedzi and Punda Maria, be reclassified as 'international camps'. It was recommended, however, that tables in restaurants be reserved 'in a discrete way' for non-white diners. Those camps without the range of facilities, however, were to remain for white use only.

In such a way, the more isolated camps that accentuated the wilderness experience in comparison to the larger camps were retained by white visitors as places with a particular cultural experience for means of distinction. The wealthier black population were therefore included, from 1981, in the Kruger experience, albeit in a 'discrete way' and in the larger camps. Stricter controls were, however, placed upon the less wealthy non-white visitor, as tighter restrictions were placed upon day visitors to the park, whose numbers were made to relate to 'their percentage contribution to the overall tourist traffic.'<sup>72</sup> Because African visitors made up such a small percentage of overnight visitors, the number of African day visitors allowed into the park was correspondingly curtailed.

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Alongside roads and rest camps, another important feature to manipulate was the wildlife inside the park. Victor Calahane, the chief biologist with the American National Park Service, described in his 1952 report on South African National Parks

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<sup>69</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, November 26 1976, KNP.

<sup>70</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, November 1980, KNP.

<sup>71</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, June 29 1980, KNP.

<sup>72</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, June 29 1980, KNP.

how wildlife management as a field was still only ‘feeling its way’.<sup>73</sup> Carruthers has detailed the rise in the influence of science in the park’s management techniques, and the adjustment of the park’s catchphrase to ‘management through intervention’ in 1957.<sup>74</sup> The focus became more on maintaining the ‘balance of nature’ through careful manipulation, and scientific techniques and instruments enabled that means of supervision. ‘Carrying capacity’ became a guiding principle, and culling, block burning, and water boreholing were the tools to maximise Kruger’s capabilities on this front. Comparisons have been made between the parks board’s approaches and with agricultural methodologies and philosophies.<sup>75</sup> The population of species became crucial in this system, as the balance of animals were considered an indicator of ecological health. There was the added desire among parks board members to see as many animals from the region’s history represented within the park. White rhinoceros, after decades of being sought after by various board members, finally arrived in the park as permanent residents in October 1961.<sup>76</sup> Black rhino and oribi were introduced in the 1970s. Sometimes the reconfiguration was a solely internal affair, for example red duiker were moved from one part of the park to another. Predators could still lose out in areas where they posed a threat to particularly vulnerable species: in the 1950s cheetah, for example, were thinned in numbers in regions of the park where tsetsebe were known to be calving.<sup>77</sup> The communication of these scientific strategies proved contentious and attracted much discursive vigour and public ire, which will be discussed further in chapter five.

In the late 1960s the park began to be divided into zones that related to the amount or style of development inside them.<sup>78</sup> ‘Developed areas’ and ‘proposed wilderness areas’ were designated to focus tourist development in areas that had already suffered from tourist concentrations. Action in the ‘wilderness areas’ needed to be ‘conservative’, it was argued, while further construction could take place in areas deemed ‘underdeveloped areas’ which could handle an increase in the number of facilities, aimed both at the tourist and the wildlife.

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<sup>73</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, February 13 1952, KNP.

<sup>74</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p.115, quoting KNP Annual Report, 1957.

<sup>75</sup> Carruthers, ‘Conservation and Wildlife Management in South African National Parks 1930s-1960s,’ p.219.

<sup>76</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, December 4 1961, KNP.

<sup>77</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, March 25 1955, KNP.

<sup>78</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, November 28 1966, KNP.

Aside from the physical manipulation of the environment, a strategic element in maintaining the requisite standards of behaviour was the need to police. Misdemeanours in the park ranged from speeding to getting out of the vehicle, as well as drunkenness, noisiness and littering. Sometimes members of the public believed they could be of assistance to the parks board by providing conservationist services of their own, such as lighting veld fires, and such actions needed to be actively discouraged.<sup>79</sup> From 1926 until the 1960s the park relied upon a combination of strategies to ensure particular ways of being in nature, which included: a catalogue of regulation that covered various behavioural possibilities; the repetition of those regulations through various media; the physical policing of the park by rangers; and the threat of discovery and judgement by other visitors. By 1953 more tourists were taking the time to follow miscreants to the next rest camp in order to report an offence.<sup>80</sup> Despite this increased public involvement, during the 1950s behaviour was seen to be degenerating and so in 1957 two temporary rangers were appointed during the winter tourist season to ‘exercise supervision over the roads and at watering places for game.’<sup>81</sup> In 1959 this was followed by the appointment of certain parks board employees as ‘honorary rangers’ to help with policing the public, in an act similar to the honorary ranger system suggested in the 1930s.<sup>82</sup>

Yet the park was too large and the distribution of visitors too widespread for these additions to have much of an impact. In 1964 the park expanded its power through the creation of the honorary ranger scheme.<sup>83</sup> Knobel, in his announcement of the scheme, described how those with a love for wildlife also acted most correctly in the national park. As such, he believed wildlife lovers were the most apposite law enforcers.<sup>84</sup> The scheme began with 260 honorary rangers, exclusively white, middle-aged and male.<sup>85</sup> In the first year there were complaints by visitors about the ‘attitude of certain honorary rangers,’ while two had to be removed from office after being found guilty of offences themselves. In total, during the first year the honorary rangers brought 40 successful cases against other visitors.<sup>86</sup> Some members of the

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<sup>79</sup> J. Sandenburgh, Draft Speech ‘The Greatest Handicap to Game Conservation in the Kruger National Park,’ August 29 1950, in NK/38/5, KNP.

<sup>80</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, March 2 1953, KNP.

<sup>81</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1957.

<sup>82</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, June 26 1963, KNP.

<sup>83</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, March 15 1963, KNP.

<sup>84</sup> ‘Die Kruger Wildtuin – en ‘n Veranderende wereld,’ draft speech by R. Knobel, in NK/38/5, KNP.

<sup>85</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1964.

<sup>86</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1965.

public rejected the overbearing control at work in the Kruger Park. It led one critic to argue that private reserves were a better way to conserve nature than nationally administered parks, on the grounds that private reserves did not rely upon ‘petty bureaucracies’ to function, and that ‘they openly share information and not only have to get on with their neighbours, they depend on converting them, by example, to join in.’<sup>87</sup>

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In the late 1940s there was a growing sense among the public as well as the park authorities that more promotional work needed to be done inside the park. Before the war the visitors had been left to themselves, with the assistance of a booklet or early field guide to aid their learning about the environment through which they drove. This became seen as insufficient by 1948, as one letter writer to *African Wild Life* wrote:

Apart from the guide book, which could be improved, very little is done to satisfy the visitor’s thirst for information. A nightly film show, confined to scenes of the wild life in the Park, coupled with talks, would be welcomed.<sup>88</sup>

Members of the public saw the need for educational provision partly to occupy visitors after the camp gate had closed, and partly to increase people’s interest in animals beside lions.<sup>89</sup> The parks board, spurred by this public attitude and conscious of developments in America in the field of education and interpretation in the parks service, created its own education division in 1952 to control when and how the public learned about nature in the Kruger Park.<sup>90</sup>

The potential influence of the education division on perceptions in the park was understood early on:

The Park administrator has... one major tool at his disposal to minimise the evil effects tourism might have and at the same time to enhance and increase the recreational value of a visit to a Park – this tool is the educational information or interpretive service.<sup>91</sup>

Pressure for educational facilities to become an official facet of the national park project had begun in the 1930s when Bigalke and others began to put pressure on the

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<sup>87</sup> Letter from P. Johnson to R. Robinson, December 27 1988, in NK/25/1, KNP.

<sup>88</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1948, p.80.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, February 13 1952, KNP.

<sup>91</sup> Funksie en Rol van die Nasionale Parkeraad in Samewerking met Ander Outoriteite, Presentation by R Knobel at the Conservation Conference at Skukuza, June 1962, in BAO 229 H62/13/1, NASA.

parks board to introduce formal structures for the instruction of visitors.<sup>92</sup> This pressure was reapplied after the war. The argument for its inclusion in the park was that aesthetic values would only be appreciated by idealists, and as such rejected by materialists. Those materialists, it was argued, needed to be taught how to value the aesthetic beauty of nature.<sup>93</sup> Aesthetic appreciation was therefore a key component of the early thinking on wildlife education.

Education was an explicit propaganda tool for the parks board. The main purpose of the education service was to ensure survival for the national park project. In a report on the information service in 1957, it was declared that ‘the main object of the Board’s Educational Information Service is the propagation of the continued existence of the National Parks in South Africa – not only within the Parks themselves, but also outside amongst select bodies... and authorities in so far as it concerns the broader conception of nature conservation and National Parks.’<sup>94</sup> It was believed that through knowledge about the natural world people would want to protect it, and the national park was the preeminent apparatus to protect the natural world. This new attitude to education affected attitudes to other services in the park: for example curio-selling came to be questioned regarding its educational value.<sup>95</sup>

Although education became a feature in the park strategy after 1952, it would never quite gain as much of an influence in the Kruger Park as in Natal. At its launch in July 1952, the service was funded initially by a £2,500 government grant and a further share from the price of every ticket sold to the park. This paid for a liaison officer, an assistant, a photographer and a typist. Profits from the sale of photographs and publications also went to fund the education service. It was decided that the geographic remit of the education service should be limited: ‘the main field for the activities of the Information Service lies within the National Parks, where the individual can be reached personally, whilst the individual outside should be reached through the agency of existing organised bodies and authorities.’ Only around the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park and the Addo Elephant National Park, which were both in need of local support, were films and lectures given around the perimeter of the park boundary in the initial years of the education division.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> *The Star*, June 9 1938.

<sup>93</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1946, p.9.

<sup>94</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1957.

<sup>95</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, March 23 1956, KNP.

<sup>96</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1957.

At Kruger, the division initially relied upon film shows and lectures to introduce visitors to conservationist ideas, which were delivered at key urban centres as well as increasingly inside the park. In 1963 the Stevenson-Hamilton library was opened, funded by donations from members of the Wildlife Conservation Society, and became the focal point of education at Skukuza. Yet educational provision was something that grew slowly in the Kruger Park and met with mixed success. For example, the park administration trialed educational tours in 1972 but they were unpopular and were cancelled after six months.<sup>97</sup>

In the rhetoric at least, the parks board and conservationists around South Africa could agree on the importance of education. The director of the parks board admired the American model, where, he argued, national parks acted as ‘high schools of patriotism’.<sup>98</sup> In 1973 a poll conducted by *African Wild Life* found that of its readers, a significant majority of 53% believed that donations to the society should be spent on education above anything else.<sup>99</sup> The youth were a particularly important target, however life was not made particularly easy for school groups inside the park. When the Kruger Park would not relinquish the fees earned from schools, the Transvaal Education Department stepped in to subsidise school visits and discount accommodation.<sup>100</sup> The park’s uneasy relationship with large vehicles meant that only those school buses with a carrying capacity of ten or less were allowed into the park from 1947. Rest camp accommodation was either unavailable or very limited for school parties, and camping was often the only option.<sup>101</sup> It was the Transvaal Education Department who financed the construction of two accommodation blocks at Skukuza and Pretoriuskop, which could hold 130 children at a time. However, a study in 1968 into the accommodation and dining facilities at Kruger for school groups and other learners found them to be ‘truly poor.’<sup>102</sup>

During the 1970s and 1980s the importance of education escalated and support for it increased. Outdoor education attracted much attention and various studies were commissioned to investigate the optimum means to transform attitudes and

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<sup>97</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, June 1973, KNP.

<sup>98</sup> Funksie en Rol van die Nasionale Parkeraad in Samewerking met Ander Outoriteite, Presentation by R Knobel at the Conservation Conference at Skukuza, June 1962, in BAO 229 H62/13/1, NASA.

<sup>99</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 1974, p.43.

<sup>100</sup> Letter from Director of the National Parks Board to the Secretary of the Transvaal Education Department, November 24 1955, in TOD 1510 E15/40/4, NASA.

<sup>101</sup> Letter from the Secretary of the Transvaal Education Department to the Director of the National Parks Board, June 15 1946, in TOD 1510 E15/40/4, NASA.

<sup>102</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, June 17 1968, KNP.

behaviour.<sup>103</sup> Organisations such as the Directory of Southern African Environmental Education Resources were set up to coordinate research into conservation and human behaviour, and task groups were established to look into public awareness of conservation, the role of conservation in education, and how to measure attitudes to conservation.<sup>104</sup> When the wilderness trails programme was launched in the Kruger Park a key aim was to accumulate support for a particular way of seeing the wild and to create a ‘constituency of people who will make a determined stand for wilderness values in conservation.’<sup>105</sup>

However, the provision of educational facilities and programmes in the park itself was still limited. It was often up to schools to take more of the lead. The early 1980s saw the construction of more information centres in various rest camps, as well as the improvement of existing facilities, but they remained inadequately staffed.<sup>106</sup> As will be argued in the following chapter, the engagement with school children was seen as a far more vital strand to Manyeleti’s operation than it was in the Kruger Park.

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The fringes of the Kruger National Park continued to be a frontline in the creation of meaning that saw forceful action by the national park. Direct policing of the region through patrols was the most explicit and openly violent means of control and representation. The Transvaal Game Ordinance of 1949, working under the recommendation of the 1946 Transvaal Game Commission, tightened up many provincial game laws. It was decided not to limit rangers’ powers in and around the park as the South African police had little experience dealing with poachers and wildlife concerns. Rangers therefore had an effective monopoly of violence in the park and around its periphery on wildlife issues. This arrangement brought the park into disagreement with the local Native Affairs commissioners, and the extent to which rangers could freely patrol Native Trust land was always contentious.<sup>107</sup> After the establishment of the homelands on the border ranger access to areas outside the

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<sup>103</sup> See, for example, ‘Draft terms of reference for the task group for conservation behaviour for the National Programme for Environmental Sciences,’ in BAO 20/238 H62/13/10, NASA.

<sup>104</sup> ‘Task Group on Human Behaviour,’ in BAO 20/238 H62/13/10, NASA.

<sup>105</sup> Letter from I. Player to S. Joubert, September 30 1988, in NK/25/1, KNP.

<sup>106</sup> Department of Research and Information, Half Yearly Report, September 1982, KNP.

<sup>107</sup> Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Native Commissioner, Sibasa, May 22 1946, in NTS 7618 27/329, NASA.

park was severely restricted, as governments wished to establish their independence or at least assert their sovereignty.

The park maintained several pickets staffed by African rangers near particular flashpoints. That, combined with rangers based at ranger stations as well as policemen and customs guards who had some ranger responsibilities, made up the park's armed force during much of this period. In 1963, for example, there were a total of 178 African rangers, combined with ten customs guards. Internally, nightwatchmen were hired to keep guard over the rest camps, while four African rangers were maintained at Skukuza to monitor the behaviour of the African staff, and to keep a particular eye on African female visitors to the camp. Those stationed at distant pickets could find themselves with a certain amount of freedom, and some used the opportunity to build relationships with people beyond the park border, or even to hunt and sell game meat.<sup>108</sup> Although the parks board usually dismissed the perpetrators, such instances highlight the fluidity of the park boundary, particularly in areas separated from ranger stations by distance and insufficient communications. As a result, meanings of the park and people's connection to it could vary from position to position around it as different relationships were formed between neighbours and particular employees.

The building of a fence was one of the most evident physical representation of tighter boundaries during this period. The first fence was constructed to demarcate the national park from recently exchanged land with the Native Land Trust, with the costs for the project shared between the parks board and the Native Affairs department.<sup>109</sup> In 1959, after the discovery of foot and mouth in a population of impala, it was decided to fence the entirety of the southern boundary.<sup>110</sup> The following year, a deal was struck with Sabi-Sands, Timbavati and some of the other private reserves on the western boundary to keep the borders between the reserves and the national park open, but to fence the western portion of the private reserves where they abutted Native Trust land.<sup>111</sup>

In 1976 the final portion of the park was fenced in the east after civil unrest in Mozambique from the early 1970s urged the building of a game proof fence to keep

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<sup>108</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1963.

<sup>109</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1957.

<sup>110</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1959.

<sup>111</sup> Letter from the Chairman of the Foot and Mouth Disease Committee of Investigation to the Chairmen of Sabi-Sand Game Reserve and Timbavati Private Reserve, April 1 1960, in NTS 6803 2/8/3168, NASA.

the elephant population inside.<sup>112</sup> Its completion created an enclosed environment and perhaps the moment that best typified the ‘fortress conservation’ approach. The fence was intended to satisfy white farmers that foot and mouth wouldn’t reach them, and please conservationists who saw poaching and illegal hunting as major infringements on the park. It reduced the vulnerability of animals by keeping them inside the park, and firmed up relationships with neighbouring private reserves. The fence was also intended to mollify the Native Affairs department, who were arguing at the time that veterinary measures for African cattle were difficult to impose when game was allowed free reign.<sup>113</sup> In an interview, Elmon Mthombothi, the chairperson of the Lubambiswano forum, described how the erection of a fence changed people’s expectations on the other side, as they expected damage causing animals to be contained within the park and for livestock losses to be significantly reduced. However, when predators did kill livestock after getting through the fences, people were dismayed to learn that the fence did not bring any contractual agreement by the park to compensate people for their losses.<sup>114</sup>

The Kruger Park’s role as an employer in the region was significant in its representation and its attempts to control the local population. However, the park’s employment requirements varied seasonally. Before the year-round opening of the entire park in the 1960s around 250 extra people were required during the tourist season compared to the summer months.<sup>115</sup> Due in part to a long relationship that stretched back to the beginning of the century, before 1976 the park relied upon Mozambican migrants to fill many of its unskilled posts, particularly in positions inside the rest camps where, as Bunn has argued, tourists had forged relationships with people they labeled as ‘Shangaan’.<sup>116</sup> However, after the departure of Portugal from the region, a policy was begun to recruit solely from inside South Africa as mistrust grew around the loyalties of Mozambicans affected by an expanding civil war.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Joubert, *History of the Kruger National Park*, vol. 2, p.32.

<sup>113</sup> Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Secretary of the National Parks Board of Trustees, October 1 1946, in NTS 7618 27/329, NASA.

<sup>114</sup> Interview with E. Mthombothi, Skukuza, Kruger National Park, July 10 2012, (recording in possession of the author).

<sup>115</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1957.

<sup>116</sup> Bunn, ‘An Unnatural State,’ p.214.

<sup>117</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1976.

The park's representational requirements impacted upon the treatment of those in its employ. For example, the park's desire to maintain a 'clean bill of health' with the Ministry of Health had an effect upon staff, depending on their proximity to visitors. Employees in close contact to tourists found themselves the recipients of anti-malarial prophylactics to ensure they could not harbor malaria in their blood, while 'pickets, squatters and the like,' who remained distant from the rest camps, were ignored.

Land exchanges and removals were another key feature in the strategy of control around the park, with perhaps the most notable removal exacted upon the Makuleke. The northern section of the park where the Makuleke lived, around Pafuri, had been a coveted region for many years, with many aborted attempts to acquire it for the parks board. The Pafuri region had been declared a conservation area in 1933, and the people had continued to reside there under certain strictures and with an ever-decreasing voice. In 1952, when told of their removal:

The people were advised on the spot of the terms and conditions under which they will fall as residents in the future of the Park. No comments or questions were asked and they appear to be reconciled to the fact that they will in due course pass to and under the control of the Board.<sup>118</sup>

However it was not until 1969 that around 1,500 people were finally removed to land to the south around Gazankulu.<sup>119</sup> While the principal intention of the removal was so that the park administration could utilize the region for conservationist purposes, they also performed many representational functions: as a show of force over local communities and as a show of strength for conservationism in South Africa.

While communities with little power were forced into impossible positions, the park tried to generate workable relations with more influential bodies whose local significance they acknowledged. Cooperation was sought from local chieftaincies to assist in the control of poaching, and Frelimo was engaged with immediately after 1975 to help maintain order on the border with Mozambique.<sup>120</sup> Yet it was the new homeland states around the park that caused the greatest concern. Homeland control of water resources was top of the agenda, with the Limpopo and Levubu rivers in

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<sup>118</sup> Letter from Native Commissioner, Sibasa to the Chief Native Commissioner, October 18 1952, in NTS 3819 2773/308, NASA.

<sup>119</sup> For a full analysis of the Makuleke removal see Harries, 'A forgotten corner of the Transvaal'.

<sup>120</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1976.

Gazankulu a grave concern.<sup>121</sup> The park authorities dreaded the development of casinos in KaNgwane as the guests, it was presumed, would wish to visit the Kruger Park, and facilities for black visitors were insufficient. The suspected impact on white visitors also caused alarm, as extra passport controls and ‘possible serious intimidation’ could cause great harm to the tourist traffic to the park, especially in the busy routes to the south of the park. Finally, the thought that expanded homelands would lead to a rise in immigration, and the subsequent impact that would have on resource requirements in the region, was also considered a significant threat.<sup>122</sup>

During the 1970s and 1980s the park began to make tentative moves to engage with the local populations although this was often merely old-fashioned preservationism disguised as inclusion. For example, in exchange for surpluses gained from nature management at the Kruger Park, Gazankulu promised to assist the park in controlling poaching in the local population.<sup>123</sup> However, other more interactive ventures were attempted, including the showing of wildlife and conservation films in local villages, although the ranger at Shangoni cancelled his tour in 1988 ‘due to intimidation’ from local audiences.<sup>124</sup> The development of this type of engagement along the perimeter really expanded after 1990, and is the focus of chapter six.

As with the external forms of communication, much of the representational work at the internal or perimetrical levels sought to proactively target the urban, middle class consumer. Consequently, for much of this period the work that was conducted along the perimeter and in the neighbouring communities tended to focus on ensuring that the internal mechanisms could operate to their fullest extent. For example, fences aimed to keep wildlife contained within as well as restricting the spread of disease, which would have had very harmful effects on the longevity of the national park project. Policing was intended to keep down poaching levels to ensure centralized control over animal population levels, which had become a cornerstone of park management practice. Perhaps the most devastating act by the park in this regard was the removal of whole communities from the park edge. A military presence spoke

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<sup>121</sup> See, U. de V. Pienaar, Report into land in the Gazankulu homeland and the problems that this homeland poses to KNP, in NK/2/1, KNP.

<sup>122</sup> Memorandum, ‘Implikasies vir die bestuur en voorbestaan van die Krugerwildtuin van die inlywing van die Nsikazi gebied van KaNgwane by Swaziland of enige ander onafhanlike swart staat,’ in NK/2/11, KNP.

<sup>123</sup> Minutes of the Meeting between Gazankulu and the Kruger National Park, September 28 1987, in KGG 185 7/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>124</sup> Minutes of the Meeting between Gazankulu and the Kruger National Park, July 13 1988, in KGG 185 7/2/2/1, NASA.

to the lengths that the park, as well as the state, were willing to go to enforce an image of the park to more distant audiences.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined many of the ways in which discourse around the Kruger National Park was transmitted. By looking at attitudes by park board members to the various means of communication available, as well as the ways in which the park engaged with those means, the contextual foundations have been laid through which the discourse flowed. Chapter five will explore the discursive content of the material that was produced, but it is important to account for the extensive and diverse range of representational means that carried that content to the publics it was intended for.

I have argued that this period was both a time of centralization and democratization of information regarding the Kruger Park. The Hoek Commission transformed the administrative structures of the park, and paved the way for a more centralised and bureaucratic park system that included in it the beginnings of a liaison division. From that point on, this period saw the growth of a more systematic control of propaganda undertaken by the park authorities, yet this developed alongside a more democratic engagement by the interested public through the plethora of journals, magazines, and letters pages. With the creation of an information service inside the park, combined with conservationist forums outside, new platforms were developed that channelled more material to the public. The public, in turn, found themselves with more conduits to express their opinion.

The park did not only rely upon text and image to control meanings around the park. Access, movement and general behaviour were all considered important influences on perceptions of the park. On the periphery, the park staff continued to attempt to forge specific patterns of behaviour on the neighbouring communities in order to assist the park's image. Where tourists were communicated with and encouraged to act in a certain fashion, the neighbouring communities were likewise targeted and persuaded to behave in particular ways.

The representational requirements of the park never reached a state of maturity from where it maintained a static position. While some on the park staff complacently believed everything was under control in 1962, new developments in ecological thinking, as well as political shifts, transformed the national park during the 1970s and 1980s. A major change in environmental communication occurred in 1967 with the opening of the new Manyeleti game reserve for Africans. Where the Kruger Park had generally focused its propagandist efforts upon the white population of South

Africa, Manyeleti's remit was to encourage and foster a new breed of conservationists among the black population. Just as the Kruger Park messages were not universalist, neither were those transmitted from Manyeleti. The following chapter explores the establishment of Manyeleti and the representational strategies available to their advisory board to encourage, attract, and ultimately convert a section of black South African society to the cause of conservationism and the national park movement.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE STRUCTURES OF REPRESENTATION IN THE MANYELETI GAME RESERVE, 1962-1989

#### Introduction

There was an old lady of Harrow,  
Whose views were exceedingly narrow.  
At the end of her paths  
She built two bird baths  
For the different sexes of sparrow.<sup>1</sup>

This limerick is taken from a letter by a dismayed conservationist to a British wildlife magazine. It was an atypical reaction to the creation of a game reserve exclusively for black Africans. It was atypical in 1964 because an air of secrecy surrounded the building of the reserve to such an extent that the Department of Bantu Administration and Development, who were responsible for the idea, denied the plans to any who might inquire about the rumours they had heard. To this day, Manyeleti has attracted very little public or academic attention.

Yet when exploring the cultural construction of nature and the national park idea in South Africa, Manyeleti presents interesting counterpoints to the focus around European interests. The Kruger National Park, from its inception in 1926 through to the 1980s, did not pay too much attention to the African game viewer. From 1967

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from M. Ormond Brown to the Secretary of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development, April 20 1964, in BAO 4333 D45/9/1279, NASA.

onwards it could afford this indifference because it had a game reserve designed exclusively for Africans on its western doorstep. Through Manyeleti all ideas of nature, conservation or wildlife appreciation could be channeled to the African population, leaving the Kruger Park to focus its efforts on the white population. However, the messages directed through Manyeleti were not the same messages communicated in the educational programmes, promotional materials and wilderness experiences in the Kruger Park. They were not merely repackaged ideas and approaches. Manyeleti was constructed differently to its more famous neighbour. It had its own regime of representation that was generated to propagandise various ideas of nature and conservation to very specific users. As such, for the cultural historian, it forms a crucial part of the overall representational regime of nature and national parks that was being assembled during the apartheid era.

The literature on African involvement in national parks and game reserves on the continent has generally taken one of two stances. The first is the radical critique of the 1980s and 1990s, as epitomized by the work of Daniel Brockington and Roderick Neumann, which described national parks as alien ideologies imposed onto the landscape and African victims.<sup>2</sup> In this work the conservationist became the aggressor rather than the progressive environmental protagonist. The second stance has made the case for African involvement in the conservationist process as agents. Whether as hunters in contestation over wildlife resources, as nationalists claiming alternative meanings for preserved spaces, or as actors in the creation and operation of parks and reserves, this strand of the literature has argued for a more complex social backdrop to conservation than mere dichotomy.<sup>3</sup> Maitseo Bolaane's study of the formation of Moremi game reserve in Botswana has inserted key chiefs as agents in the foundation of the reserve, while recent work on Kenya and Uganda has revealed the African experience as clients of the national park project.<sup>4</sup>

Measuring no more than 15 miles from north to south, Manyeleti was a conservationist project, a holiday resort and an educational establishment for the exclusive use of Africans, and its history adds a new dimension to the current literature. While Moremi was created for a foreign client base, Manyeleti focused on a

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Brockington, *Fortress Conservation*, Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness*, and Adams and McShane, *The Myth of Wild Africa*.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Ranger, 'Whose Heritage? The Case of The Matobo National Park,' and Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters*.

<sup>4</sup> Bolaane, 'Wildlife Conservation and Local management,' Matheka, 'Antecedents to the Community Wildlife Conservation Programme in Kenya, 1946-1964,' and Browne, 'Conservation Converts?'

domestic market. The Kenyan and Ugandan examples explore African involvement in conservation during the process of decolonisation, however Manyeleti was intended as a parallel conservation project for Africans in the apartheid era. It was intended as a vehicle to channel conservationist messages with an African flavour to African visitors. Africans became consumers of a tailored nature experience different to that found in American, European or indeed other African examples. This and the following chapter argues that yet more layers of meaning must be added to the already polysemous ideas of ‘national park’ or ‘wilderness’, to take into account previously overlooked clients in the consumption of nature.

The literature on the African experience in the Kruger Park is viewed very much through the lens of employment and removal rather than enjoyment.<sup>5</sup> In much of the Kruger archive, the African encounter with the park is absent, with only faint traces available. Manyeleti, however, offers a catalogue of representations aimed at African visitors. Rather than a disregarded group, Africans became the focus of ideas relating to nature and conservation. Furthermore, due to the apartheid concentration on race, those ideas were tailored deliberately for Africans. The Manyeleti archive reveals the ideological foundations of a uniquely racialised conservationism.

Regarding Africans as consumers of a segregated game reserve reveals new aspects of the apartheid experience. By placing Manyeleti alongside Kruger, as well as the only other holiday resort open to black South Africans in the 1970s, the Umgababa beach resort in Natal, the representational heritage of apartheid becomes more complex. Manyeleti opens a window onto the history of African tourism that has been hitherto restricted to leisure pursuits, in particular football and boxing.<sup>6</sup> Holidaymaking by black South Africans has been a neglected space within the scholarship. By exploring Manyeleti alongside Umgababa I explore a fuller picture of the African experience of vacations during the apartheid period.

With limited finances, staff at Manyeleti struggled to implement a distinctive or effective policy of external publicity, and instead focused their efforts on the game reserve itself and its educational and recreational possibilities. Essentially, this

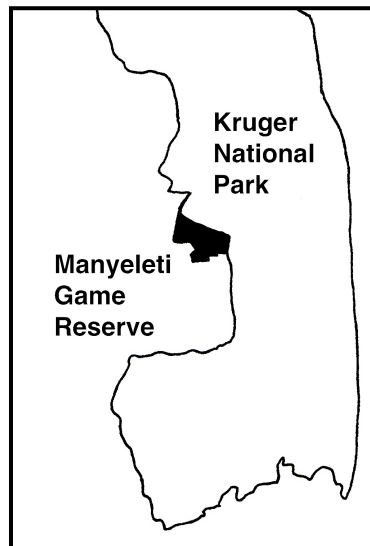
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<sup>5</sup> J. Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, P. Alegi and C. Bolsmann, *South Africa and the Global Game: Football, Apartheid and Beyond*, (London, 2010), T. Fleming, ‘Now the African Reigns Supreme’: The rise of African boxing on the Witwatersrand, 1924-59,’ in *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2011, pp.47-62, and C. Badenhorst and C. Mather, ‘Tribal Recreation and Recreating Tribalism: Culture, Leisure and Social Control on South Africa's Gold Mines, 1940-1950,’ in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 1997, pp. 473-489.

chapter analyses Manyeleti as a representational body itself, as well as an organization with representational duties for a defined audience. It argues that ideology played a role in the foundation and subsequent operation of the game reserve, yet was limited by infrastructural weaknesses. In addition, confusion over the true purpose of the reserve, and uncertainty regarding the target market, all contributed to a trepidatious approach by the advisory board. One major consequence was that the representational output was severely curtailed by those weaknesses, creating a more disjointed discursive landscape than could be found at Kruger.

The chapter is divided into two halves. The first provides a social and political context for the game reserve and explores the structures in place that determined its operational capacity. The second half explores the philosophy behind representation in the game reserve and attitudes to particular approaches. With the representational structures and mechanisms in their proper historical context, chapter five will explore in greater depth the content of the material, and in particular the way that those infrastructural weaknesses were exploited by visitors to the reserve.



*Fig 4.1 Map showing the position of the Manyeleti game reserve in relation to the Kruger National Park*

## Context

For most Africans during this period, a holiday was a luxury and a rarity. It was an opportunity to visit family, to reconnect generations, and return to familiar (frequently rural) spaces and pastimes. Yet an alternative form of holiday surfaced in the 1960s, which catered to an emergent middle class seeking time away from the stresses of city life. This type of holiday involved staying at a hotel and enjoying free time away from the usual routines. The *South African Institute for Race Relations* recognised the potential of this new trend and published two guides for prospective African tourists in South Africa during the 1960s. They listed hotels, beaches, museums and parks that could be visited by Africans in the major cities of South Africa.<sup>7</sup> The choices available were scant, and the facilities limited. For example, in 1962 there existed only two tour operators that could help organise a holiday-style trip for Africans.

In a society that was increasingly separating space, options for Africans to travel around their own country were being severely restrained. The principal checks on African tourism included a lack of accommodation, laws limiting consumption, and significant restrictions upon movement such as the Native Urban Areas Consolidation Act of 1945.<sup>8</sup> Yet an African middle class, as identified by Leo Kuper at the time, was beginning to grow and exhibit desires for particular patterns of consumption.<sup>9</sup> The potential of this new market was recognised by the South African government. In 1962 a handful of new resorts were being considered: one in the Transkei; another at Kosi Bay; and one on Fundisi lake in Northern Transvaal. Yet it wasn't until 1967 that the first resort for Africans was opened, named Manyeleti, in the eastern Transvaal.<sup>10</sup> Three years later the Umgababa beach resort in Natal opened its doors to Africans that wanted to take, and could afford, a holiday by the sea.

The creation of Manyeleti was not merely the delivery of a much-needed service to a growing market. Its foundation was both accidental and opportune. The idea for Manyeleti was the product of a land deal that hit an obstacle. In 1961 the Native Trust began purchasing farms on the border of the Kruger National Park with the intention of relieving overcrowded and overstocked farms to the north and east.

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<sup>7</sup> C. Keyter, *Holiday and Travel Facilities for Non-Whites in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1962); and *The South African Holiday Guide Especially for Africans, Indians and Coloureds*, (Johannesburg, 1968).

<sup>8</sup> C. Keyter, *Holiday and Travel Facilities for Non-Whites in South Africa*, p.58.

<sup>9</sup> L. Kuper, *An African Bourgeoisie* (London, 1965).

<sup>10</sup> Manyeleti translates from Shangaan as "Place of Stars".

The farms Hermitage, Jeukpeulhoek, and Dixie, which would prove the centrepieces of the Manyeleti game reserve, were initially deemed essential for residential purposes: Hermitage, wrote the Native Commissioner for the area, Charles Bourquin, ‘has always been considered the natural farm on which a large portion of the cattle owners on Welverdiend [to the east] would have to move in order to relieve the overstocking and settle as soon as possible.’<sup>11</sup> The intention was to settle it ‘as soon as Hermitage has been purchased and water has been provided.’<sup>12</sup>

Most of the farms had been used for keeping cattle and had been occupied ‘from time to time’ by the white landowners.<sup>13</sup> They were also used as holiday homes by their owners, who had introduced or retained populations of wildlife, generally for game watching or hunting purposes.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the Sabi-Sands game reserve conglomeration had an option to buy many of the farms in the region.<sup>15</sup> Arguably the most explicitly pro-conservation vendor amongst this community was the owner of Hermitage farm, Wilfred Cooper.

Cooper owned other land in the region, and had been involved in a land deal selling a co-owned farm to the Kruger National Park in the 1950s.<sup>16</sup> He purchased Hermitage in 1943 and transformed it into a private game reserve. He also became an honorary Transvaal Game Officer.<sup>17</sup> African residents on the land, numbering about nine, worked principally as rangers in this project.<sup>18</sup> In an attempt to continue in this venture when the Native Trust approached him in August 1962 Cooper offered to swap Hermitage for the nearby farm Middelin, which was surrounded by the Kruger National Park on three sides, and the farm Jeukpeulhoek on the other.<sup>19</sup> His plan had the support of the Nature Conservation Department of the Transvaal Provincial

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<sup>11</sup> Letter from Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Bushbuckridge, to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Pietersburg, August 27 1963, in LDE 2338 GA115/82, NASA.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Jeukpeulhoek, Dixie and Sarabank were all used for keeping cattle. See, for example, Jeukpeulhoek Declaration by Proposed Seller of Land to the South African Native Trust, February 1963, in LDE 2338 GA115/82, NASA.

<sup>14</sup> B.J.E. Human used Sarabank in this way, as did G.C.E. Crooks on Thorndale. Crooks even built a rest camp on the grounds of his farm.

<sup>15</sup> Letter from I. MacKenzie to the Department of Bantu Administration and Development, February 15 1963, in LDE 2338 GA115/82, NASA.

<sup>16</sup> Letter from W. Cooper to the Secretary for Lands, August 4 1950, in LDE 572 7748/52, NASA.

<sup>17</sup> Internal Memorandum, Department of Bantu Administration and Development, January 7 1963, in BAO 1/2556 D45/1080, NASA. See also the Affidavit of W. Cooper, in BAO 6618 N10/5/3089, NASA.

<sup>18</sup> Letter from C. Bourquin to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, October 31 1963, in BAO 1/2556 D45/1080, NASA.

<sup>19</sup> Letter from W. Cooper to the Department of Lands, August 4 1962, in LDE 8477 A11/569, NASA.

Administration, who liked the idea from a conservationist point of view, presumably because it kept a white farmer on the border with the Kruger Park rather than Native Trust land.<sup>20</sup> However, Cooper lost interest in the deal upon learning that the farm Jeukpeulhoek had been sold to the Native Trust, which would have left him completely surrounded by Native Trust land at Middelin had the deal gone ahead.<sup>21</sup> He finally consented to the sale of Hermitage, but on the condition that it would remain a game reserve.<sup>22</sup>

The idea of retaining Hermitage as a game reserve appealed to the Minister for Bantu Administration and Development, Michael de Wet Nel.<sup>23</sup> The Minister had a history of supporting wildlife in land exchanges: he had given his support to the plans to incorporate the Pafuri Game Reserve into the Kruger Park, at the expense of the Makuleke, ten years earlier.<sup>24</sup> The plan was originally to include Hermitage and the extremities of other bordering farms for the purpose, but after consultation with experts from the Kruger Park, it was deemed necessary to have a far larger area than originally scheduled in order to incorporate the migration patterns of the wildebeest and zebra.<sup>25</sup> Bourquin, the Native Commissioner, was perhaps the most vocal critic of the whole scheme. His primary concern was the severe land hunger experienced by the Shangaan Tribal Authority for whom he was responsible, and he was uneasy about the disregard of agreements made with local leaders concerning those farms.<sup>26</sup> His protestations were not completely ignored: the original plan to increase the game reserve's size to incorporate zebra and wildebeest migration routes were curtailed significantly in the face of social arguments.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Letter from T. Steyn to the Secretary of Bantu Administration and Development, August 11 1962, in BAO 1/2556 D45/1080, NASA.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from W. Cooper to the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, April 18 1963, in BAO 1/2556 D45/1080, NASA.

<sup>22</sup> Letter from the Department of Cooperation and Development to the Secretary of Lands, June 4 1963, in LDE 8477 A11/569, NASA.

<sup>23</sup> 'Geskiiedenis en Agtergrond van die Bantoe Wildtuin,' report by L. Weber presented at the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, November 1966, in BAO 20/224 H62/13, NASA.

<sup>24</sup> Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs Commission to the Secretary of Native Affairs, March 24 1949, in NTS 3819 2773/308, NASA.

<sup>25</sup> 'Geskiiedenis en Agtergrond van die Bantoe Wildtuin,' report by L. Weber presented at the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, November 1966, in BAO 20/224 H62/13, NASA.

<sup>26</sup> Letter from C. Bourquin to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, October 31 1963, in BAO 1/2556 D45/1080, NASA.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

The idea for a game reserve for the exclusive use of Africans was able to gain traction as it fitted into wider trends in conservation and politics in South Africa at this time. By the early 1960s the Kruger Park was receiving over 100,000 visitors a year, and a discourse had developed that linked conservation with civilization. To an apartheid ideologue like de Wet Nel, a game reserve set aside for Africans was an appealing prospect with the potential to serve a number of functions.

Firstly, it was recognised for its potential as a means to change attitudes to wildlife within the African population and to increase a sense of preservationism and an understanding of conservationism.<sup>28</sup> The principal means of bringing about this new way of seeing was through education, films and the use of an information centre.<sup>29</sup> The Kruger Park shared this vision. Rocco Knobel, Director of the National Parks Board, put forward Rudolf Labuschagne, the parks board's information officer, as the representative from the Kruger Park to sit on the Manyeleti advisory board.<sup>30</sup>

Secondly, Manyeleti was intended as the first of a number of game reserves for Africans.<sup>31</sup> A network of reserves were envisaged to mirror the national park system, but aimed at an exclusively African clientele (who would come and spend their leisure time and their money). By providing a range of leisure destinations for affluent and influential Africans, it could be argued that the South African government was creating the means to build a base of willing collaborators. By visiting places such as Manyeleti (and equally the beach resort of Umgababa), people would be able to distinguish themselves within their community and acquire status within society. More crudely, however, Manyeleti offered a space for people to enjoy themselves and relax, and for the state to earn money out of a growing potential customer base. Several hopeful estimates of visitor numbers were shared by board members before the opening of the reserve in 1967, and in the following few years it seemed like the idea might prove as popular as its famous neighbour.

Thirdly, the reserve was to be a beacon for the nascent homeland governments' new conservation departments, by demonstrating good ecological practice. With the new homeland system just over the political horizon there was an urgent need to develop key government departments within those areas. The

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<sup>28</sup> Memorandum on Conservation in the Bantu Game Reserve, July 4 1965, in BAO 20/224 H62/13, NASA.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Letter from R. Knobel to the Secretary of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development, September 9 1968, in BAO 20/224 H62/13, NASA.

<sup>31</sup> *Die Transvaler*, October 8 1965.

Department of Bantu Administration and Development were keen for conservation to play a crucial role in the new homelands and all of them would develop conservation departments during the 1970s.<sup>32</sup> Manyeleti was meant to provide both a physical training ground for potential nature conservation officers, as well as a model for conservationist procedure. Like the Kruger Park, therefore, Manyeleti was intended as a flagship conservation space, and had to represent the conservationist message to the African community in the new homeland governments.

Lastly, holiday resorts and recreational areas were seen as a good way to psychologically link urban Africans with their associated homeland.<sup>33</sup> It was believed that Manyeleti might be a means for people from the urban centres on the Rand to link back up with a more rural landscape. In turn, it was thought that visitors may have been enticed back to their homeland because of that experience, or at least the proposition of repatriation would be sown. In general, it was believed that anyone from the urban centres could benefit from a visit to the rural landscape of Manyeleti. In particular, it was hoped that Manyeleti would attract Shangaan visitors from the cities. Similarly, it was imagined that Umgababa might lure Zulu men and women back from Johannesburg to Zululand.

Yet there lay contradictions in these ambitions. Manyeleti was meant to speak both nationally, to Africans across South Africa, but also locally, to Africans from around the eastern Transvaal. It was established both as a national space, but also as a regional one, heavily tied up with the new homeland project. With the political climate in Pretoria firmly behind the idea of homelands, a geographical space that spoke nationally, in the same way as the Kruger National Park was meant to, sat uneasily with the new direction that apartheid was taking. This contradiction would constrict access to funds and stymie many attempts to speak to potential African consumers. It would ultimately push Manyeleti into the hands of the Gazankulu government and a more regional focus.

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<sup>32</sup> Memorandum on Conservation in the Bantu Homelands, November 30 1970, in BAO 20/224 H62/13, NASA.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

The daily decision-making during the formative period relied upon an advisory board that met monthly to decide on the look and feel of the reserve. Partly, it seems, for his local knowledge, and partly to contain his disapproval, Bourquin was included on the first ad hoc committee in May 1964 to help forge a plan for the new reserve. This original committee, which had included three engineers alongside Bourquin, was replaced by a new committee two months later which included Andrew Brynard, a senior biologist from the Kruger National Park (indicating the seriousness with which the Kruger Park took this project),<sup>34</sup> as well as Dr Harald Hamburger, the newly appointed head of Nature Conservation within the Department of Bantu Administration and Development.<sup>35</sup> Hamburger was responsible for the game reserve for the next twenty years.

From an early stage in the planning quality was important to many on the advisory board. At the meeting in November 1966 the members agreed that facilities should be on a par with the Kruger Park. The purpose was to provide an attractive proposition that would appeal to Africans, and the same architect used by the Kruger Park was employed to develop Manyeleti's infrastructure.<sup>36</sup> De Wet Nel, on the other hand, was less keen on total parity between Manyeleti and Kruger, and as a result of his influence, combined with budgetary constraints, corners were frequently cut. For example, sleeping mats had to replace beds in the dormitories for the first ten or so years of the reserve's existence.<sup>37</sup> Delays, due to slow building work as well as a desire for the reserve to be seen in its best light, meant that Manyeleti opened a year after first scheduled. Its opening ceremony was held in June 1967, attended by representatives from the department as well as local religious leaders from the Zionist churches.<sup>38</sup>

Before opening, the issue of race in Manyeleti needed to be settled. Bourquin was keen for whites to be allowed into Manyeleti and for blacks to be encouraged into the Kruger Park, in order to avoid criticism. Hamburger and, most vociferously Labuschagne, were against this proposal, with Labuschagne arguing that Balule camp was for African use only and Manyeleti should be the same. However, he was

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<sup>34</sup> 'n Geskiedkundige Oorsig Oor,' report by L. Weber, in OEO 1 734 A13/6/2/3/1, NASA.

<sup>35</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, November 1966, in BAO 20/224 H62/13, NASA.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Internal memorandum, Department of Bantu Administration and Development, April 25 1966, in BAO 4334 D45/9/1279, NASA.

supportive of the idea to allow day visitors from Manyeleti in to the Kruger Park, so long as they were not in buses.<sup>39</sup> Only those Africans who owned, or had access to, a car were encouraged to enter the Kruger Park. Of course, such a regulation limited the type and the number of visitors that could come into the Kruger Park, as many visitors to Manyeleti came in large, organized groups that required buses. Finally it was decided that only those holding a Bantu passbook would be allowed entry to the reserve.

At this November meeting the name for the reserve was also chosen. Previously the reserve had been referred to either as the 'Bantu Wildtuin' or by the name of Jeukpeulhoek, the name of the farm on which the principal rest camp was built. They were eager for an 'ethnological' sounding name to appeal to African users. It was Bourquin who suggested the name Manyeleti, translating it as 'place of stars,' and claiming that local populations referred to the area with this moniker.<sup>40</sup> Phineas Nobela, a former nature conservation officer at Manyeleti and inhabitant of the region, confirmed that Manyeleti was indeed the name given to this area by local residents.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps the support given to Bourquin's suggestion was partly to appease his frustrations with the way in which Manyeleti had come about.

The birth of Manyeleti was therefore not a carefully thought out process, borne of grand plans. Yet although the reserve arose more from compromise, there were ideological foundations in place that allowed for the idea to take root and acquire the necessary support to see the project funded and completed. Manyeleti was a consequence of wider apartheid thinking and local concessions. This blend created a vague strategy that exposed inconsistencies and contradictions. Such ambiguity would leave it open to future problems.

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Manyeleti was run by the Department of Bantu Administration and Development from 1967 until 1985.<sup>42</sup> The department appointed members to an advisory board that

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<sup>39</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, November 1966, in BAO 20/224 H62/13, NASA.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> P. Nobela, interview with the author, Skukuza, Kruger National Park, July 2 2012 (recording in the possession of the author).

<sup>42</sup> This department would go through various name changes and would later become known as the Department of Plural Relations and Development.

met to direct the management of the reserve. From an initial four members in 1964, numbers on the board gradually grew, and incorporated various interests. There were criticisms that the boards were too general in their constitution and required a more scientific basis, yet the broad mix of members remained throughout Manyeleti's existence. However, a significant component missing from the membership was anyone with any experience of tourism or marketing, an omission that would harm attempts to turn Manyeleti into a profitable attraction.

In 1980, the land on which Manyeleti stood was transferred to the government of the new homeland of Gazankulu, although the Department of Plural Relations and Development still managed and funded the reserve, renting the land from Gazankulu for a peppercorn rent. They continued to administer it until March 1985.<sup>43</sup> The transfer of freehold was accompanied by an increase in the number of Gazankulu representatives on the advisory board. In 1980, Gazankulu had only one co-opted member. By 1982 the board contained the Assistant Secretary for Justice, a legislative assembly member, and the Secretary of the Department of the Chief Minister.

In 1985 full responsibility for Manyeleti was transferred to the government of Gazankulu. It joined the ranks of other homeland game reserves, such as those founded in Boputhatswana or KwaZulu. The South African government trained nature conservation officers and every homeland government had been encouraged to set aside land as reserves. Mangosuthu Buthelezi from KwaZulu and Enos Mabuza from KaNgwane had strong conservationist sympathies, but it was perhaps the Pilanesberg game reserve in Boputhatswana that was at the forefront of homeland conservation practice. Originally designed as a showpiece game reserve in 1967, Manyeleti had become a seemingly outmoded product by the mid-1980s. It continued to have pretensions of being a national project, but it was hampered by its policy of racial exclusivity that did not affect other homeland game reserves. Even the Kruger Park had nominally desegregated all its facilities in 1981. Manyeleti was distinctly behind the times in 1985, and it was in such a state that it was handed over to the Gazankulu government to run.

While the advisory board met annually and dictated Manyeleti policy at the macro-level, the reserve was run on a daily basis by a manager and a small team. Throughout this period the manager, who was appointed by the board, was white, and

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<sup>43</sup> Memorandum, 'Voorstelle ten opstige van ooreenkoms met Gazankulu,' in BAO 13/973 J76/84, NASA.

frequently young, usually in their early to mid twenties. The manager was aided by an assistant, who was also white and of a similar age. Both the manager and assistant manager had qualifications in wildlife management. Clerical tasks and administrative needs were often fulfilled by the wives of the manager and assistant manager. Below the management team were nature conservation officers, clerks and game guards, all of whom were African. Throughout its existence Manyeleti suffered from a staff shortage, and everyone in the reserve had to be able to multi-task.<sup>44</sup> From 1980, and the increased interest in the reserve by the Gazankulu government, more nature conservation officers were seconded to the reserve. Manyeleti became a useful, though limited, source of employment for Gazankulu graduates of courses at Cwaka Agricultural College. But despite this injection of manpower Manyeleti remained understaffed.

Just as the Kruger Park had to grapple with the competing interests of tourism, conservation and education, so Manyeleti had to balance these three concerns in its operations. The board constantly questioned its function, asking itself what the purpose of a game reserve was, and particularly one with such an unusual remit as Manyeleti.<sup>45</sup> Judging by the predominance of wildlife statuses in the annual progress reports, one might be forgiven for thinking that conservation was the dominant lens through which Manyeleti was considered. While conservation was the primary concern for many board members, in many respects the conservationist aspect of Manyeleti was the least important of the three. The reports tended to focus so heavily upon wildlife partly because that was the product that was stocked and being marketed, but also because the managers of Manyeleti came from a wildlife background. Like members of the advisory board, not one came from the tourism industry.

Hamburger was explicit regarding his views on the function of Manyeleti, declaring once that ‘Manyeleti is not a research institution... tourism is its main aim.’<sup>46</sup> He was eager for the reserve to become a viable economic prospect and research findings did little to further those aims. Yet not every board member agreed with Hamburger and there was constant tension, particularly between tourism and

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<sup>44</sup> Progress report, 1982, in BAO 20/241 H62/13/1080, NASA.

<sup>45</sup> Internal memorandum, Department for Bantu Administration and Development, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>46</sup> Minutes of meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, October 1979, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

conservation. Education, generally, sat neatly with both ideals, as through education, it was believed, a new way of seeing wildlife would be engendered within the African population. This new attitude would result in a client base for Manyeleti's rondavels as well as sympathetic support for the conservationist message, thereby satisfying both the conservationists on the board as well as those wanting to promote the recreational aspects of the game reserve.

By the early 1980s, however, a more rigorous concern with Manyeleti's financial condition began to grow. With the economic pressures felt by the South African government, accompanied by the prospect of handing the reserve over to the Gazankulu government to run and, more importantly, fund, there was great anxiety over the need for Manyeleti to be able to maintain itself. The fear was that it would be dismantled and turned to pasture. As one manager of Manyeleti declared in his annual progress report,

The days when an area the size of Manyeleti could be justified as a Game Reserve purely on sentiment are long gone and it is time that Manyeleti be seen in its proper perspective – namely as a geographical as well as an economic asset of the future independent state of Gazankulu.<sup>47</sup>

The early 1980s therefore saw a series of meetings to decrease the game reserve's reliance upon government subsidies, which in 1982 stood at R200,000 per year and would have been a significant burden on the Gazankulu treasury.<sup>48</sup>

On one level, this pressure on Manyeleti's future caused a defensive reaction among board members, who began to speak more vigorously of 'ethical and scientific reasons for running conservation areas and that these reasons preclude the dominance of a profit motive.'<sup>49</sup> They asked the Gazankulu government for their help in continuing the aim of 'popularising game viewing as a form of enjoyment and recreation amongst the public' without becoming 'financially inaccessible to the ordinary citizen' as 'so easily happens with profit as the prime objective, when luxuries are provided, tariffs go up and only the wealthy have the benefits of the reserve.'<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Progress report, 1982, in BAO 20/241 H62/13/1080, NASA.

<sup>48</sup> Minutes of meeting between Gazankulu cabinet and the Manyeleti advisory board, September 29 1982, in KGG 182 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>49</sup> Draft memorandum to Gazankulu cabinet on the financial policy for Manyeleti game reserve, in KGG 182 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

On another level, however, various committees and working groups were put together to establish ways and means for Manyeleti to survive and begin to make enough money so as not to overburden its new owner's treasury.<sup>51</sup> By 1983 urgent attempts were made to complete infrastructural tasks that had been left unfinished, such as connecting Manyeleti up to the ESCOM grid.<sup>52</sup> Assessments began to be made on how to maximise profit, with the suggestion that Manyeleti should adopt multiple land uses, such as 'intensive tourism', 'sophisticated tourism' and 'hunting/photographic safaris'.<sup>53</sup>

The policy of maintaining Manyeleti as a game reserve exclusively for black Africans changed little until the late 1980s. Even in 1981, the same year that the Kruger Park desegregated its facilities, an internal memorandum declared that 'black tourists are very sensitive to the use of Manyeleti by whites,' and an access request by the chairman of the neighbouring private game reserve at Buffelshoek was rejected.<sup>54</sup> When the assistant manager suggested opening Manyeleti up to other races, a handwritten note on his progress report declared that 'this proposal is grossly unfair to black visitors who will soon be deprived of their present opportunities of visiting their own game reserve.'<sup>55</sup> The thinking was either that Africans would be aggrieved at the presence of whites in the reserve, or that, if the reserve was to open to all races, then whites would become the predominant users and Africans would be intimidated and thus avoid the reserve. One of the chief purposes, the organisers kept reminding themselves, was to instill in Africans a similar feeling towards wildlife as found in whites, and they believed the best means to achieve this goal was through a segregated reserve. It was not until 1988, under the management of the Gazankulu government, the idea of marketing the reserve as a 'tourist facility for all races' was discussed and seriously considered.<sup>56</sup> By limiting themselves to one particular racial group throughout this period the board of Manyeleti were opening themselves up to an uphill struggle in terms of attracting visitors.

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<sup>51</sup> See, for example, 'Draft Philosophy and Guidelines for Nature Conservation in Gazankulu,' a Nature Conservation Sub-Committee discussion paper, in KGG 183 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>52</sup> Working paper of the Nature Conservation Committee of the Gazankulu Planning Council, 1983, in KGG 183 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Internal memorandum, Department of Plural Relations and Development, December 8 1981, in BAO 20/247 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

<sup>55</sup> Progress report, 1980, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>56</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, February 1988, in KGG 185 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

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As a tourist concern Manyeleti found itself with numerous obstacles. The target market suffered from various restrictions, most pertinently upon their movement, wealth and time. Mangosuthu Buthelezi described in one interview that ‘for most Africans Manyeleti is almost as inaccessible as the moon.’ For him the main barriers were the cost of transport combined with the lack of accommodation en route to the reserve.<sup>57</sup> Yet despite these serious impediments, people did holiday in Manyeleti and many school and company trips made use of the rondavels and dormitories on offer at the rest camp. Part of the reason for this was the limited amount of choice available to those that did wish, and could afford, to take this type of holiday. In the 1970s the options open to an African tourist within South Africa were Manyeleti in the eastern Transvaal, Umgababa beach resort in Natal, and Boitaboloso (also known as the Ramosa Riekerk Resort) near Zeerust that comprised of chalets and a youth centre.<sup>58</sup> By the 1980s the homeland governments added to this selection, including a dam resort at Chuniespoort in Lebowa, Nwanedi Park and Segola Spa in Venda, wild coast areas in Ciskei and Transkei, and Sun City and Pilanesberg in Boputhatswana.<sup>59</sup>

The total number of beds available at the rest camp in Manyeleti by 1980 was 538.<sup>60</sup> This was constituted of 30 beds in 15 luxury rondavels (with en-suite bathrooms); 48 beds in 19 standard rondavels (with shared ablutions); and 460 beds in 6 dormitories, which included twelve beds for accompanying adults or organisers.<sup>61</sup> The total amount of beds therefore, available to families and small groups of holidaymakers, was only 78. The total number of beds available to schools or other large groups and tours was 460. Below is a table and a graph outlining the numbers of visitors to Manyeleti from 1967 to 1985 when figures are available:

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<sup>57</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol.25, No.3, 1971, p.90.

<sup>58</sup> There were, of course, options available in Swaziland, Botswana, and other surrounding countries.

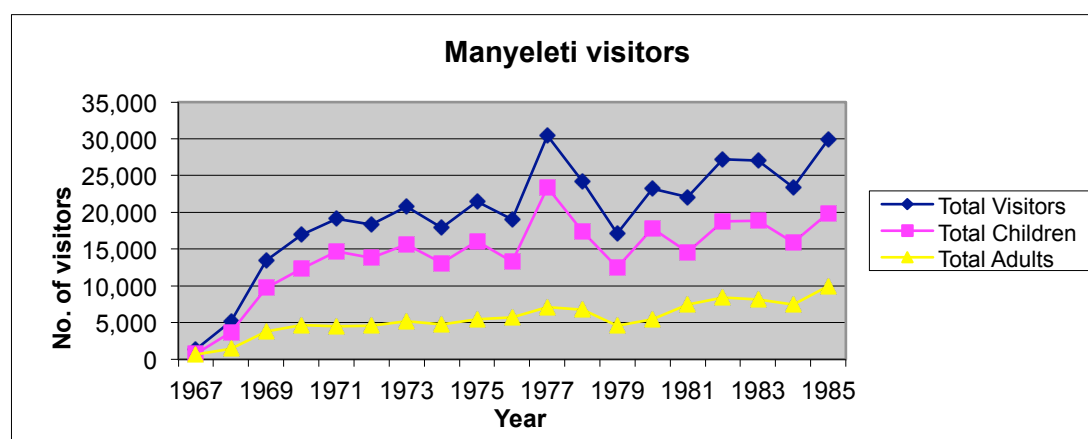
<sup>59</sup> F. Ferrario, ‘The Present Situation at Manyeleti (A Product Analysis),’ in KGG 183 7/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>60</sup> Progress report, 1980, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

Year	Total Visitors	Total Children	Total Adults	Total Revenue (Rand)
1967	1325	700	625	2270
1968	5176	3743	1433	1303
1969	13470	9716	3754	3515
1970	16985	12353	4632	6050
1971	19154	14667	4487	6540
1972	18364	13804	4560	9194
1973	20805	15615	5191	12048
1974	17880	13124	4756	11645
1975	21494	16049	5445	14922
1976	18995	13295	5700	14586
1977	30446	23374	7072	24540
1978	24132	17361	6771	19897
1979	17107	12490	4617	25631
1980	23189	17778	5411	38905
1981	22053	14603	7450	51786
1982	27216	18799	8417	77508
1983	27063	18880	8183	83286
1984	23372	15901	7471	101810
1985	29887	19939	9948	120719
<b>Total</b>	<b>378113</b>	<b>272191</b>	<b>105923</b>	<b>626155</b>

Table 4.1 Visitor Statistics for Manyeleti<sup>62</sup>



Graph 4.1 Visitor Statistics for Manyeleti

<sup>62</sup> The figures were gathered from various progress reports.

Many on the advisory board and within the Manyeleti management had hopes that Manyeleti would follow the sort of patterns of growth in visitor numbers as the Kruger Park had experienced. While many remained disappointed and often bemused by the unprofitable numbers, one must be careful not to overemphasise the failure of Manyeleti as a tourist concern. Holidays were a luxury for many Africans working on the Rand, and were usually spent reconnecting with relatives. With stringent time constraints alongside the various travel restrictions, the fact that Manyeleti was attracting over 30,000 visitors in 1977, including over 7,000 independent adult visitors, is not insignificant. The general visitor numbers were frequently affected by external events: fuel rationing put a squeeze on visitors at the end of the 1970s, while the unrest of 1976 put a block on school trips during that year. Nineteen seventy-seven, however, saw a bounce in the number of pupils, as many schools used up the budgets that had gone unused the previous year.

One of the most striking aspects of the visitor statistics is the predominance of school children by 1970. This is, however, unsurprising, as schools were required to make an annual educational trip and Manyeleti provided a suitable destination. Costs also partly explain the predominance of schoolchildren in the numbers. The dormitories were cheaper and entry tariffs for schoolchildren lower than for adults. For example, in 1976 the price for a dorm was 5c per pupil, whilst the price for an adult in a luxury hut was R1.50.<sup>63</sup> It was also easier to access schools than individuals in terms of marketing the game reserve, and relationships were formed between tour operators and particular schools across the country.

Visitors tended to book at particular times of the year. Phineas Nobela has explained that Christmas and New Year, alongside Easter, were the most booked-up periods in the Manyeleti calendar.<sup>64</sup> School groups would often book accommodation in the reserve at the same time, usually around the beginning of September, leading to many groups having to be turned away. The board were constantly trying to find ways to iron out the visitor numbers throughout the year. Some success was met once Gazankulu became involved in the reserve and they could arrange for local schools to spread their trips throughout the year.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Manyeleti brochure, in BAO 13/973 J76/84, NASA.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with P. Nobela.

<sup>65</sup> Progress report, 1982, in KGG 182 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

Prices were kept artificially low in order to encourage visitors to the reserve. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the entry price for adults remained at around 10c for adults and 5c for children. A luxury hut cost R3 for two occupants and a standard hut R1.60.<sup>66</sup> By 1987 this had risen to 60c per adult and 30c per child to enter the reserve. A luxury hut was R12.50 and the standard hut R7.50.<sup>67</sup> This led to a reputation for Manyeleti as a space set aside for lower income groups.<sup>68</sup> The year 1988 saw a dramatic rise in prices in an attempt to make Manyeleti pay: it became R20 for a luxury hut and R15 for a standard hut, and entry prices nearly doubled.<sup>69</sup> Despite the low fees, the cost of transport to and from the reserve, and the general lack of public transport links, made certain levels of wealth a necessary prerequisite for independent adult visitors.

From reports and letters, alongside interviews, it is possible to build a picture of the types of visitors who came to Manyeleti. Overwhelmingly, the typical visitor to Manyeleti throughout this period was a school pupil from the Transvaal, who would come for one or perhaps two nights, arriving early in the morning on the first day and leaving early in the morning on the day of departure. They would be part of a tour organised by a tour operator, and be among another hundred or so other pupils of various ages. The average adult overnight guest tended to be part of a couple in their twenties or early thirties, as part of 'small independent groups'.<sup>70</sup> These groups of four or more would share a car or minibus and thereby reduce the cost of transportation. Any children were usually left with grandparents before the journey to the game reserve was made.<sup>71</sup> There were also cases of businesspeople visiting with their families.<sup>72</sup> Alternatively, trips were often made by larger groups. These would have been organised by a union, or a company that provided group holidays for its employees.<sup>73</sup> Women's clubs and school faculties would also organise trips via a tour

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<sup>66</sup> Manyeleti brochure, in BAO 13/973 J76/84, NASA.

<sup>67</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, February 1987, in KGG 185 7/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>68</sup> Agenda of visit by N. Ramathodi, premier of Northern Transvaal, to KNP, September 1994, in A/20, KNP.

<sup>69</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, February 1988, in KGG 185 7/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>70</sup> P. Hancock, P. Nobela and N. Mathebula, 'Long Term Plan for the Development of the Manyeleti Information Centre', unpublished report, 1980, in BAO 20/241 H62/13/108, NASA.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with P. Nobela.

<sup>72</sup> Letter from S. Muchemenye to The Director of The National Tourist Bureau, June 18 1977 in BAO 20/241 H62/13/1080, NASA.

<sup>73</sup> Sunshine Tours Schedule for the Engineering and Allied Workers' Union of South Africa, in BAO 20/241 H62/13/1080, NASA.

operator.<sup>74</sup> The cost of a weekend trip on an organised tour would be between R24 and R35, depending on accompanying trips and the numbers on the tour. Day visitors were also a mainstay of the adult Manyeleti clientele. Most came from the surrounding areas in the eastern Transvaal and would have had access to a vehicle.

Making a booking at Manyeleti was fairly straightforward if made through a tour operator. For individuals, however, bookings could only be made by post six weeks in advance.<sup>75</sup> There was no radio contact available until the 1980s. When a telephone was installed in the late 1970s, it was described as ‘extremely unreliable, and on numerous occasions conversations are unintelligible’ which could result in ‘misunderstandings with bookings and with tourists phoning for information.’<sup>76</sup> The difficulty of booking was matched by the difficulty in traveling to the game reserve. From the Rand it was 400km to Bushbuckridge, a further 37km to Acornhoek, and then a final 48km from Acornhoek to Manyeleti’s entrance. For much of this period the latter roads were not paved. In 1969 South African Railways investigated providing bus transport from the Rand to Manyeleti but decided against it.<sup>77</sup> Plenty of time was therefore needed to get to Manyeleti: this was either done as an overnight trip, leaving Johannesburg at 7pm, or as a day journey, stopping off at other sights in the eastern Transvaal along the way, such as the MacMac Falls or Long Tom Pass.<sup>78</sup> Even once the long journey had been completed, a common complaint was that the gate was impossible to see from the main road until the last moment.<sup>79</sup> It was in this context that people arrived at Manyeleti.

An early report by the first warden of the reserve described how most adult visitors would park their cars and not leave their rooms or verandahs for the duration of their stay. References made to the findings of a sociological study into visitor attitudes in 1984 echo this earlier evaluation by the warden. Speaking about the results, one board member said there was ‘a disturbing perception among the people on nature conservation and confusion as regards the role of game reserves.’<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Sunshine Tours Schedule for the Atteridgeville Community Centre Women’s Club, in BAO 20/241 H62/13/1080, NASA.

<sup>75</sup> Manyeleti brochure, in BAO 13/973 J76/84, NASA.

<sup>76</sup> Manyeleti game reserve general memorandum, 1978, in BAO 20 243 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

<sup>77</sup> Internal memorandum, Department for Bantu Administration and Development, July 2 1969, BAO 13/973 J76/84, NASA.

<sup>78</sup> Sunshine Tours schedule for St Gemma’s Roman Catholic School, in BAO 20/241 H62/13/1080, NASA.

<sup>79</sup> Progress report, 1986, in KGG 185 7/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>80</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, February 1987, KGG 185 7/2/2/1, NASA.

Elsewhere, it was reported that the survey revealed that three-quarters of visitors to Manyeleti ‘were not interested in game’ and viewed the reserve instead more as a ‘recreation area.’<sup>81</sup> Visitors to Manyeleti therefore engaged with the space in a number of ways, with roughly a quarter coming with an interest in viewing game. For others, game was a side-show or an irrelevance. But being in nature must have had some appeal as it took a lot of effort to organise a visit.

One former teacher from Gazankulu, who later worked with one of the forums at the Kruger National Park, warmly remembered his numerous experiences at Manyeleti, both with his school groups and with his own family.<sup>82</sup> Another interviewee, who hadn’t visited Manyeleti himself, still spoke fondly of the place as a destination that children from his school had visited and returned from with numerous exciting stories. For adults, it should be remembered that anyone interested in wildlife had little choice but Manyeleti as it was the only affordable option. The Kruger Park was a possibility, where the Balule camp was set aside for the use of African guests, but the fees, logistics and accommodation costs were prohibitive in comparison to Manyeleti, and the Kruger Park was not reliant upon African visitors to generate a profit. Its income streams were secured by other means. Manyeleti, on the other hand, was utterly reliant upon African visitors. This reliance created a more welcoming atmosphere than could be expected at Kruger. Interestingly, there seems to have been a perception among African wildlife enthusiasts that the Kruger Park didn’t allow black visitors, as almost all interviewees remembered the park as being barred to them.<sup>83</sup>

Yet for many of the adult visitors coming during the school holidays or at Christmas, it was seen as a space to relax and recharge before returning to work. Manyeleti existed in a wider (though very limited) context of vacation options, so for many Manyeleti was seen more as a holiday resort located in natural surroundings, rather than a game reserve. It added facilities to appeal to that broader holiday market, with a swimming pool and soccer field built in the 1970s. The result was a positive one for many, as Phineas Nobela, a former employee of the reserve, recalls: ‘for people from Jo’burg, being from a noisy place, from fast life, from drinking, those

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<sup>81</sup> Minutes of the meeting between Gazankulu and the Kruger National Park, July 13 1988, KGG 185 7/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>82</sup> Jan Mgweni, interview with the author, Skukuza, Kruger National Park, July 10 2012 (recording in the possession of the author).

<sup>83</sup> P. Nobela, interview with the author.

kind of townships, it was fun for those kind of people to come to Manyeleti and enjoy it.<sup>84</sup> Its strength, he argues, lay in its fusion of the rural and the urban, with familiar urban facilities such as a bar and a restaurant, made available in a rural setting. He said that ‘if you think of going on holiday, going to Manyeleti, which is a bit part of Jo’burg and a bit part of your home, it is part of the two environments, so you are just going there to just enjoy yourself.’<sup>85</sup> Some even appealed to the government to open up more facilities like Manyeleti. One visitor, who wrote to report several problems after his visit, added that ‘despite the aforementioned, I was very impressed with the facilities available to the visitor and I must also mention that we enjoyed our outing to this game reserve.’ His letter, dated nearly a year after his visit, was written, he said, because he felt there needed to be more holiday options available to Africans with such ‘excellent facilities’.<sup>86</sup>

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In order to gain a better picture of the Manyeleti holiday, and to better gauge its success, it is worth comparing it with the other holiday resort open to black Africans in 1970s South Africa: the Umgababa beach resort. Like the business complex at Manyeleti, the Umgababa beach resort was run by the Bantu Investment Corporation of South Africa, whose sole shareholder was the South African Bantu Trust. The land on which Umgababa was built was leased from the Umnini Trust for a period of 21 years from 1969.<sup>87</sup> It was built on the site of a former ilmenite sand recovery plant operated by Umgababa Minerals. A predominant feature of the resort was two old silos that were transformed into dining facilities. Building work began in 1968 and the resort was completed in June 1970 for a July opening. The budget for the project was more than doubled during building to ensure impressive recreational facilities.<sup>88</sup>

The resort contained various activities, from mini golf to tennis, a swimming pool, go-kart track, trampoline and, of course, a beach. Films were screened, jazz

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Letter from S. Muchemenye to the Director of The National Tourist Bureau, June 18 1977, BAO 20/241 H62/13/1080, NASA.

<sup>87</sup> Letter from D. Macleod to Durban Town Clerk, June 21 1971, i1961n OEO 1 734 A13/6/2/1/4, NASA.1971

<sup>88</sup> ‘Umgababa Strandoord vir Bantoe’, internal memorandum, in OEO 1 734 A13/6/2/1/4, NASA.

festivals held and beauty competitions staged.<sup>89</sup> It was located 40km south of Durban and had easy access to Umgababa railway station and a main coastal road.<sup>90</sup> 30,000 visitors came to celebrate at Umgababa for New Year in 1973 and the year before 40,000 came to see a jazz band competition.<sup>91</sup> There were 300 beds in total at the resort, made up of luxury chalets, ordinary chalets, and dormitories.<sup>92</sup> It cost R12.50 per luxury chalet and R8 per chalet in 1972; far more than the equivalent prices at Manyeleti in the same period. As for the type of visitors to Umgababa, it was similar groups that visited Manyeleti, in that school visits, adult tours and small independent groups made up the bulk of holidaymakers. In an interview in the *Sunday Times*, the manager of the resort, Hans Bezuidenhout, explained that,

We normally find that people prefer to come here in families or groups and that these groups keep to themselves. People who come alone usually join some sort of group. Typical of the small groups who come here, was one of four housemaids from Pretoria.<sup>93</sup>

In order to fully contextualize Manyeleti's figures, it is worth comparing visitor numbers with those at Umgababa, as well as the number of African visitors to Kruger. Despite the difference in expense, visitor numbers to Umgababa dwarf those to Manyeleti if like for like figures are compared, even for the first few years of the beach resort's existence:

Year	Visitors
1970	5,876
1971	34,487
1972	14,0826
1973	103,789
1974	193,080

*Table 4.2 Umgababa Visitor Statistics*<sup>94</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Umgababa brochure, in OEO 1 734 A13/6/2/1/4, NASA.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Sunday Times*, August 26 1973.

<sup>92</sup> Umgababa brochure, in OEO 1 734 A13/6/2/1/4, NASA.

<sup>93</sup> *Sunday Times*, August 26 1973.

<sup>94</sup> Internal memorandum, in OEO 1 734 A13/6/2/1/4, NASA.

Below is a table showing the number of non-white visitors to the Kruger Park over the decades, including the number of African visitors in brackets where known, alongside the figures available for corresponding years at Manyeleti:

Year	Non-White Visitors KNP	Visitors Manyeleti
1951-2	490 (31)	
1961-2	1,540 (849)	
1971-2	9,315	19,194
1981-2	20,355	22,053

*Table 4.3 Comparison of non-white visitors to Kruger Park and Manyeleti*

Below are statistics comparing the usage of Kruger and Manyeleti in the early 1980s. Some surprises include Manyeleti's lower percentage of day visitors, and its lower visitor to hectare ratio:

Kruger Park 1981-2	Comparison	Manyeleti 1982-3
1,948,500	Surface (hectares)	23,000
3915	Beds	421
0.2/100ha	Bed/area ratio	1.8/100ha
463853	Visitors total	27063
4.2ha	Hectares per visitor	0.85ha
60%	Overnight visitors	73%
40%	Day Visitors	27%
3.5 nights	Average Stay	1.73 nights
80.3%	Average Bed occupancy	22.8%
R39.77	Average personal spending	R3.99
R12.60	Average daily spending	R2.30
R15.2m	Total Revenues	R117,850
R11m	Total Expenditure	R290,063
72%	% Expenditure of Revenues	246%
R4.2m	Balance	R-172,213
42%	Revenues from Visitors	27.5%

32%	Revenues from by-products	2.5%
26%	Government subsidies	70%

*Table 4.4 Visitor trend comparison Manyeleti – Kruger Park<sup>95</sup>*

Comparing Umgababa with Manyeleti may be unfair, in that the beach resort was far more accessible and able to accommodate more people inside it at any one time (Manyeleti would have struggled to host a jazz festival for more than a few hundred guests). Comparing Kruger’s numbers with the number of visitors to beach resorts around South Africa may throw up equally divided statistics. With so few holiday options open to Africans, and with a growing middle class and the ability to organise all-inclusive group tours, it is perhaps unsurprising that so many chose to visit Umgababa. It had a large city only 40km away, good transport links, and an attractive experience. Yet a comparison serves to highlight the problems facing Manyeleti, and contextualise any success. Indeed, contrasting Umgababa with Manyeleti is a worthwhile exercise when considering the representations of Manyeleti to the public.

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<sup>95</sup> Taken from F. Ferrario, ‘The Present Situation at Manyeleti (A Product Analysis),’ in KGG 183 7/2/2/1, NASA.

## Manyeleti and Representational Strategy

There was no masterplan to represent, promote, or market Manyeleti. Many ideas were put forward but there were few attempts to execute those plans. The promotion of Manyeleti at many times was piecemeal, as if relying upon a growth similar to that experienced by the Kruger Park. This unsystematic approach resulted in a distinct lack of exposure for the game reserve. For example, the total sum of press coverage in 1979 amounted to a short article in a Swazi magazine and another in the Afrikaans magazine *Vooruitgang*. Aside from some abortive attempts to get TV coverage on the nascent broadcast channels, there was little other activity that could be described as marketing.<sup>96</sup>

The limits and restrictions placed upon their target market were never acknowledged and never truly considered. This lackadaisical attitude was berated vocally by Pete Hancock, assistant manager at Manyeleti who called the occupancy rate at the reserve ‘ridiculously low’ and demanded a well funded and focused advertising campaign to correct the trend.<sup>97</sup> His exasperated report was ignored. Yet Hancock was not alone in seeing the need for a sustained advertising drive. During declines in visitor numbers, such as during the 1976-7 financial year, various voices would call for an ‘advertising campaign’ to attract tourists, though with little effect.<sup>98</sup>

Yet the board was not completely immune to these requests, and nor was it a sterile committee bereft of ideas. A persistent trait of the archival material is the preponderance of abandoned plans. For example there was an idea for Hamburger, the chairman of the advisory board, to engage with businessmen on the Rand and persuade them to send their workers on holiday to Manyeleti, as some already did to the Umgababa beach resort.<sup>99</sup> A few brief meetings in the country clubs around Johannesburg may have brought numerous visitors to the reserve, but he never pursued this angle, despite frequent reassurances to the board that it was on his agenda.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Minutes of meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, October 1979, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>97</sup> Progress report, 1980 in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>98</sup> Progress report, 1978, in BAO 20 243 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

<sup>99</sup> Minutes of meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, October 1978, in BAO 20 243 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

<sup>100</sup> Internal memorandum, Department of Plural Relations and Development, December 8 1981, in BAO 20 247 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

One problem for the board was that it found it difficult to navigate public opinion. A paper by Arthur Konigkramer on public attitudes to game and culling was read by the department, and partly explains their uncertainty. Konigkramer argued that two publics existed in Natal, where his study was centred: an ‘urban’ public, all white, which had ‘considerable influence over the Natal Provincial Administration’; and a second group consisting of a more ‘rural’ public, almost exclusively black and neighbouring the game reserves.<sup>101</sup> The first group experienced an ‘emotionalism’ for the wildlife, whilst the latter viewed wildlife only through the lens of hunger. He saw a ‘clash of interests’ that was difficult to reconcile. This racial and cultural dichotomy affected much of the thinking surrounding wildlife and public opinion. Indeed, Konigkramer’s paper, which was authored in the early 1980s, shares sentiments with much of the radical critique within African environmental history during the 1990s.<sup>102</sup> The difficulty for the board needing to communicate its message to a particular market, was that this structure shows that there was no market for the message to reach. It is therefore unsurprising to find an air of defeatism within the board on the issue of promotion. Yet it could be argued that those attempts to involve groups such as school faculties, employees at Johannesburg companies, or sports teams, showed that there was recognition at the time that a market was there to be teased out. The fact that groups such as trade unions and businesspeople visited Manyeleti of their own volition proves that markets existed and that, while the idea of a dichotomised and racialised urban-rural divide may have contained some truth, it was not the complete picture.

Generally, it seems, the board found it easier to deal with white inquisitiveness and most articles produced on Manyeleti were printed in white-read newspapers and magazines such as *Informa* and particularly *African Wild Life*, the journal of the Wildlife Conservation Society of South Africa. The message in the early years of the game reserve was frequently one of applause for the work being done by the Nationalist government to educate Africans in conservation. By the mid-1970s, however, a wider culture of environmental panic had set in, and articles tended to focus more upon the need to improve and extend environmental education to a wider African audience.

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<sup>101</sup> A.J. Konigkramer, ‘Influencing Public Attitudes – The Socio-Politics of Culling in Natal,’ KwaZulu Development Corporation, in KGG 184 7/2/2/1, NASA. Later published in R.N. Owen-Smith (ed.), *Management of Large Mammals in African Conservation Areas*, (Pretoria, 1983), pp.233-240.

<sup>102</sup> Brockington, *Fortress Conservation*, and Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness*.

When the African market was considered, the spotlight often fell on the high-end consumer. When some coverage on a television magazine programme was forthcoming, Hamburger suggested that the theme for the programme could be ‘Where does the urban black go for recreation?’ The aim was to try and encourage greater uptake of luxury rondavels, particularly after a slump in bookings for the top end accommodation during 1977-8.<sup>103</sup> This focus on the uppermost end of the market continued into the 1980s, when the economics of Manyeleti were more pressing and international tourists became a possibly lucrative market to pursue.<sup>104</sup>

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Despite this haphazard approach, however, the advisory board was able to represent the reserve through a number of channels. Third party coverage was always fairly limited, but this reflects the wider attitudes within South Africa towards Africans as potential holidaymakers. The South African Institute for Race Relations produced a guide for black domestic tourists in 1968 and it remained the only guidebook aimed at African travellers in South Africa until the end of apartheid. The guide unsurprisingly gave Manyeleti several pages of coverage. Tour operators also produced their own literature on Manyeleti, usually in the form of coloured pieces of paper with details of the trip printed on one side. These were distributed to schools, trade unions and clubs and there was very little flourish or sales language.<sup>105</sup> The circuit of local agricultural shows were seen as apposite spaces for Manyeleti to exhibit itself.<sup>106</sup> Wider afield, leaflets were distributed at other non-segregated natural leisure spaces, such as Abe Bailey nature reserve, as well as at other holiday resorts set aside for African holidaymakers, such as Umgababa.

Of greater import perhaps was the marketing material designed by Manyeleti to attract visitors, particularly the brochures, posters, and maps. These were not reproduced with great frequency, for example an update to the 1967 brochure was not

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<sup>103</sup> Minutes of meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, October 1979, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>104</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, February 1987, in KGG 185 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>105</sup> See, for example, Sunshine Tours Schedule for the Engineering and Allied Workers’ Union of South Africa, in BAO 20/241 H62/13/1080, NASA.

<sup>106</sup> Letter from B. van Rensburg to the Chief Bantu Commissioner, Northern Areas, August 5 1968, in BAO 4334 D45/9/1279, NASA.

published until 1986. The Manyeleti brochure was intended for an African audience, and was expected to entice visitors to the game reserve. Originally in English and Afrikaans, in 1980 it was translated into Zulu, Tsonga, Venda and Sotho.<sup>107</sup> The brochures were distributed to various Bantu Commissioners' offices around the country, as well as to other reserves such as Abe Bailey, Pilanesberg, and Umfolozi. Tour operators, such as Sunshine Tours, included the brochure with their other promotional material. Decision-makers within groups such as schools, trade unions and clubs, who would have been responsible for organising holidays or weekends away, would almost certainly have been given a copy, and it may have been passed around or pinned up on a noticeboard in an attempt to pique people's interest.

By the late 1970s getting coverage in the press was seen as more and more important.<sup>108</sup> In 1980 there was a plan for a monthly newsletter in the vein of the National Parks Board's *Custos*, yet a Manyeleti controlled publication of this sort never materialised.<sup>109</sup> Press days were held annually at the beginning of the tourist season, and journalists from various media outlets were invited to enjoy a weekend in the reserve. In 1982 nine journalists were invited from national newspapers, including the *Mining Sun*, and TV Channels 2 and 3.<sup>110</sup> However Manyeleti only made one brief appearance on television in 1984.<sup>111</sup> There was a greater level of success with radio, which, although seen as a hugely influential medium, was never fully exploited. By the 1980s the board was wary of becoming associated with stories of a political or contentious nature, which encumbered any subsequent approaches to the media.<sup>112</sup>

Hamburger's membership of NACOR (the Nature Conservation Coordinating Committee) allowed access to all the major conservationist leaders in South Africa, and brought certain rewards, such as promotional and educational material, yet it was felt by the board that more could have been garnered on this front from a promotional standpoint.<sup>113</sup> When Manyeleti was handed over to Gazankulu in 1980 the homeland government was seen as a potentially useful ally to try and raise the 15 per cent

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<sup>107</sup> Minutes of meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, October 1980, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>108</sup> Minutes of meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, October 1976, BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>109</sup> P. Hancock, P. Nobela and N. Mathebula, 'Long Term Plan for the Development of the Manyeleti Information Centre', unpublished report, 1980, in BAO 20/241 H62/13/108, NASA.

<sup>110</sup> *Mining Sun*, March 11 1982.

<sup>111</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, March 1984, in KGG 183 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>112</sup> Minutes of meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, March 1982, in KGG 182 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>113</sup> Minutes of meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, March 1982, in KGG 182 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

occupancy rates.<sup>114</sup> Neighbours also provided a potentially useful channel: Leslie Frankel, the chairman of the neighbouring private game reserve at Buffelshoek, offered to introduce Hamburger to his acquaintances in the city. Another important network was the association between the surrounding private game reserves, such as Timbavati, Londolozi and Sabi-Sands. Alongside the Kruger National Park, these collections of shared properties would frequently offer assistance and advice. In 1983 it was even suggested that Manyeleti should pass its promotional activities over to Sabi-Sands in order to increase exposure.<sup>115</sup>

The neighbouring African communities gradually grew in significance for Manyeleti as the homeland project developed. Initially, when Manyeleti was considered more of a national project, the focus was placed upon visitors from the Rand, following the model that had served the Kruger Park so well since the 1930s. Of course, there were always day visitors that would have come from the local area, but their number increased as Gazankulu became more involved in the management of the reserve. In 1981, for example, of the 22,051 visitors to Manyeleti, 5,734 came for the day. With the transfer of the freehold, local obligations began to have weight, yet it would not be until 1980, and more noticeably 1985, that local communities would be actively engaged in educational and promotional drives.

Where the Kruger Park, from 1958, utilized its scientific research as a means of presenting the park in a certain light, Manyeleti generally shied away from scientific discoveries, leaving the more established national parks to gather praise for zoological breakthroughs. Hamburger had made it clear from an early stage that Manyeleti was not a research driven institution, and this was reflected in the percentage of projects that were begun but never completed. Even those research projects headed by members of the Manyeleti staff were often abandoned: for example, Pete Hancock gave up his research into herbivore habitats in Manyeleti after a year on the job.<sup>116</sup>

This general attitude changed in 1985 when Gazankulu took over the management of the reserve. For them, scientific research was a means to internationally distinguish Gazankulu. A particular focus was on ‘pioneer research on

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<sup>114</sup> Report on Manyeleti advisory board meeting, October 1980, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>115</sup> Working paper of the Nature Conservation Committee of the Gazankulu Planning Council, 1983, in KGG 183 7/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>116</sup> Letter from P. Hancock to Secretary, Department of Plural Relations and Development, May 4 1979, in BAO 20/241 H62/13/1080, NASA.

reptiles' in order to 'improve the public and conservation image of Gazankulu,' and a special research centre was built for the purpose in Manyeleti.<sup>117</sup> Reptiles, and particularly snakes, were selected as they were an under-researched field of study, and this gave Gazankulu an opportunity to provide original scientific findings and gain international recognition. Sadly, however, the research centre was destroyed by a fire in 1989 shortly after its completion, and many of the specimens perished with it.

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The press and publicity generated for Manyeleti, being low in volume and slight in impact, was therefore not a major representative force. The epicentre of the construction of Manyeleti's image was much closer to home, as it focused its representational efforts to those areas that were most under its control. The interior of the reserve was always viewed as an important representational space. The look of the buildings and the nature of the experience were all seen to be meaningful aspects of an encounter with Manyeleti. For some on the board, the architecture was the most significant element, while to others, the appearance of the natural environment and the game-viewing experience needed to be the point of focus.

To ensure money was directed efficiently, the board commissioned numerous reports and studies into best practice. Short on manpower within the administration, the board was following a strategy adopted by various homeland governments during this period, who paid consultants considerable sums to provide recommendations. In Manyeleti's case, the impact arising from these studies was frequently negligible. For example, a sociological study into the needs of visitors was deemed essential in order to know exactly where funds should be spent on improving the facilities. In 1978 this idea was first mooted, but it would not be until 1984 that the questionnaire was issued to the visiting public.<sup>118</sup> Sadly the results do not seem to have survived. Perhaps the study with the most impact was the product analysis conducted by the academic consultant Franco Ferrario. In it he described how African tourism was a new and growing market, which would be worth several million Rand by the turn of the

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<sup>117</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, June 1986, in KGG 185 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>118</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, March 1984, in KGG 183 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

millennium. As such, he argued that Manyeleti should beautify itself in preparation for the forthcoming stream of tourists.<sup>119</sup>

A key aspect to the representational value of Manyeleti was its wildlife, and this played to the strengths of the reserve's managers. Right from its birth the numbers and ratios of animals within the reserve was a principal concern. Helicopter counts, organised by the Kruger National Park, became the evidence upon which conservation strategy was based, and the example of Kruger was always followed and their advice sought; a process that began with the enlargement of the reserve in the 1960s to incorporate migratory routes of particular ungulates. Boreholes and waterholes, that were inherited from the original farms, were added to in the 1960s to ensure water provision was sufficient and evenly spread across the reserve.

The objective from an early period was to have a large variety of animals, including some flagship species. For example, expensive imports of white rhinoceros and sable antelope were sought in 1968 and 1979 respectively, and costly introduction programmes were executed to ensure their survival.<sup>120</sup> A hierarchy of species was constructed and these were communicated to visitors.

Species	Estimated Number in 1984
Impala	5,740
Wildebeest	405
Zebra	374
Kudu	355
Giraffe	229
Waterbuck	210
Buffalo	203
White Rhino	34
Warthog	184
Elephant	23
Steenbok	10

<sup>119</sup> F. Ferrario, 'The Present Situation at Manyeleti (A Product Analysis),' in KGG 183 7/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>120</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Manyeleti Advisory Board, October 1979, in KGG 182 7/2/2/1, NASA.

Hippo	8
Reedbuck	4
Bushbuck	4
Nyala	3
Duiker	2
Eland	1
Lion	40-60
Hyena	80-120
Leopard	Observed
Cheetah	Observed

Table 4.5 Wildlife populations in Manyeleti in 1984<sup>121</sup>

Manyeleti shared a management objective with Kruger ‘to maintain as wide a diversity of wildlife species as possible.’<sup>122</sup> Yet there was a problem with such an objective for a game reserve the size of Manyeleti, and that was that such diversity required diversity of habitat, and this Manyeleti was lacking. To get around this obstacle, the managers were willing to tweak nature in order to accommodate new species. As Johannes Venter explained, ‘if a further management objective is to re-introduce species that occurred in the area historically, then, if necessary the habitat must be manipulated to re-create conditions which no longer exist.’<sup>123</sup>

Yet a broad and diverse population was of no use if people could not see them. In Ferrario’s product analysis he criticised the reserve as ‘it takes a lot of patience and a lot of time to spot any game.’<sup>124</sup> John Varty from Londolozi argued that a policy of conservationist best practice and a balance of species, tied in with a programme of bush clearance to allow for the animals to be seen, would create the right climate for enjoyable experiences in the game reserve, which would attract more visitors.<sup>125</sup> There were reports that people visiting Manyeleti would see little more than impala and giraffe. Professor Hudson Ntsanwisi, at the advisory board meeting in 1986,

<sup>121</sup> F. Ferrario, ‘The Present Situation at Manyeleti (A Product Analysis),’ in KGG 183 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>122</sup> Manyeleti game reserve general memorandum, 1978, in BAO 20 243 H62/13/1080/5 NASA.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> F. Ferrario, ‘The Present Situation at Manyeleti (A Product Analysis),’ in KGG 183 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>125</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, June 1986, in KGG 185 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

urged haste with a bush-clearing scheme 'because people visiting the Reserve see no game.'<sup>126</sup>

As in the Kruger Park, visitors to Manyeleti were not allowed out of their cars except at designated spots. Manyeleti did the best with what it had. There was only one raised point in the reserve, on the farm Dixie, and a 30km or so loop took people to this point and back, via a nearby dam. Altogether, by 1979 there were 190km of roads, which compared favourably with the 150km in Umfolozi at the same time.<sup>127</sup> Yet these 190km took in few features. Aside from the dam near the Dixie koppie there was the main dam beside the rest camp, but otherwise no large watering holes. Boreholes provided the only other water sources, and these were placed beside the road around the park, with the majority on the farm Jeukpeulhoek to maximise game concentrations in the vicinity of the rest camp.<sup>128</sup>

The roads were generally of a poor quality. A representative from the government claimed that 'since Manyeleti's inception we did not build roads but only scraped them.'<sup>129</sup> They were deemed unsuitable after an inspection by an engineer from the Kruger Park, and a three year rebuilding project of the road network in the reserve began in 1981 at a total cost of R270,000.<sup>130</sup> At the end of the rebuilding process the roads were deemed to be in a 'reasonable condition' but were dogged by 'unsightly quarries which are situated at the road edges visible to all.'<sup>131</sup> Immediately following the road regeneration, Ferrario's product analysis, and the takeover of the management of Manyeleti by Gazankulu, a bush clearing programme was undertaken to clear 65 hectares of bush, both for biological reasons but also to provide more 'open areas for better game viewing'.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, October 1979, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>128</sup> Manyeleti game reserve map, in OEO 1/734 A13/6/2/3/1, NASA.

<sup>129</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, March 1982, in KGG 182 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>130</sup> See the letter from J. Venter to H. Hamburger, May 7 1980, in BAO 20/245 H62/13/1080/5, NASA; and Minutes of meeting between Gazankulu cabinet and the Manyeleti advisory board, annexure A, September 29 1982, in KGG 182 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>131</sup> Progress report 1986, in KGG 185 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>132</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, February 1987, in KGG 185 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

Throughout Manyeleti's existence, the greatest emphasis was placed upon education and interpretation. From its inception, Manyeleti was deemed to be a significant tool to transform African attitudes to nature by educating young people in conservationist ideology. During the 1960s, Manyeleti had perhaps been at the forefront of South African attempts to provide nature experiences explicitly for Africans. The journal *African Wild Life* was full of praise for Manyeleti and covered the opening of the reserve in 1967 as well as other events in its early history.<sup>133</sup> By the 1970s, however, the work being done by others in the field, such as Sue Hart in the eastern Transvaal and John Geddes-Page in Natal, had shown Manyeleti up as retrograde. Supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society of South Africa, those schemes began to provide wilderness experiences and conservation training to groups of African students. While one should be careful not to exaggerate the extent and impact of these efforts, they were more proactive than the endeavours underway at Manyeleti.

With the planned transfer of the reserve to Gazankulu approaching, by the latter half of the 1970s, and through the 1980s, Manyeleti would attempt to catch up, with various schemes planned to promote African environmental education. Another driving influence behind Manyeleti's new determination in the field of education was a sense of an oncoming environmental crisis. Much of the content revolved around the impact of over-population on the resources available in South Africa.<sup>134</sup> The focus of efforts were more on man's role in the environment, as one report proclaimed, 'and his dependence on basic natural resources and natural cycles, rather than the aesthetic appreciation of nature which is less meaningful to Blacks.'<sup>135</sup>

The educational focus was placed, generally, more on children than adults, as it was deemed that adults were unreceptive to educational attempts as 'they have their own preconceived plan of how to spend their time here.'<sup>136</sup> By 1971 Manyeleti was receiving around 15,000 annual school visitors, mainly from the Transvaal. The school groups were often made up of a mixture of ages: essentially those that could afford to pay the entry fees. The visits were often part of a wider tour organised by one of the few operators that arranged trips for Africans, such as Sunshine Tours or Ebonaire Tours.

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<sup>133</sup> *African Wild Life*, vol. 21, no. 4, 1967, p.331, and *African Wild Life* vol. 22, no. 4, 1968, p.341.

<sup>134</sup> *African Wild Life*, vol. 30, no. 4, 1976, p.29.

<sup>135</sup> P. Hancock, P. Nobela and N. Mathebula, 'Long Term Plan for the Development of the Manyeleti Information Centre', unpublished report, 1980, in BAO 20/241 H62/13/108, NASA.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

The main focal point of education within Manyeleti was the Information Centre. It operated on a very tight budget, but by 1979 contained stuffed animals donated by the Transvaal Museum, a library of books, and an outdoor screen for film shows. Yet the facility was generally considered to be underwhelming, particularly by the early 1980s. Combined with the wider concerns in South Africa about the lack of environmental education, much effort was spent assessing the quality of the educational product at Manyeleti: in 1984 alone there were four reports on educational provision at the game reserve.<sup>137</sup> These reports denounced the use of stuffed animals, and one stated that displays should look ‘expensive’ in order to impress the viewer. The dusty donations from museums were not going to excite young visitors, however funds were never forthcoming for any substantial overhaul of the educational materials.<sup>138</sup>

Away from the somewhat unimpressive information centre the reserve used films, lectures, and tours of the reserve to regularly communicate with the educational groups that visited. Nature conservation officers accompanied school trips to provide professional knowledge. Educational provision for adults was also considered, and while most visitors were generally left to enjoy their time in the reserve, others deemed ‘decision makers’ were chosen to partake in activities that aimed to impart environmental interest and knowledge to influential Africans. Chapter five takes a closer look at the plans, including courses and wilderness trails, that targeted those select groups.

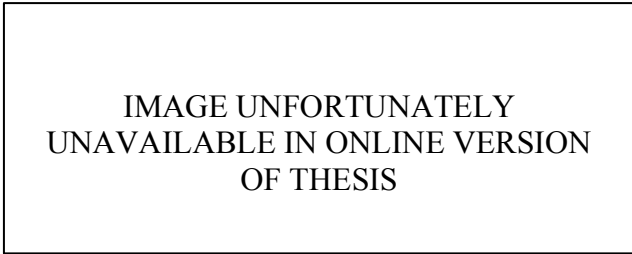


IMAGE UNFORTUNATELY  
UNAVAILABLE IN ONLINE VERSION  
OF THESIS

*Fig. 4.2 Manyeleti Auditorium in 1981*<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> ‘Report on Education Facilities at Manyeleti,’ Department of Plural Relations and Development, Nature Conservation Branch, March 1984, KGG 183 7/2/2/2/1; ‘Report on General Recommendations for Education/Interpretation Centres,’ Department of Plural Relations and Development, Nature Conservation Branch, 1984, in KGG 183 7/2/2/2/1; ‘Report on Broad Recommendations for Handling Schools,’ 1984, in KGG 183 7/2/2/2/1, all NASA.

<sup>138</sup> Report on Education Facilities at Manyeleti by the Department of Cooperation and Development Nature Conservation Branch, March 1984, in KGG 183 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>139</sup> *Informa*, May 1981.

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The perimetrical space was also of importance to Manyeleti, far more so than in the Kruger National Park during the same period. Principally, this was because Manyeleti relied more heavily on good relations with the neighbouring communities as they were one of the principal pools of potential visitors. As Manyeleti became an increasingly localised venture, it focused its efforts on the Gazankulu area as failures to gain national support became apparent and the homeland mission began to dominate the agenda. Through this process of localisation Manyeleti became more reliant on local schools and local relationships than it had done before, when its focus had been to cater to the African population at large.

The greatest, earliest, and most direct form of representation in this sense was the formation of the game reserve itself out of farms that had been promised to communities under great pressure as they battled with an overpopulated and overstocked territory. Bourquin, the Bantu Affairs Commissioner for the area, insisted that those who had intended to move to Hermitage farm were now ‘far from happy.’<sup>140</sup> As a representation of wildlife and its place within society, the very creation of Manyeleti was a demonstrative act of ideological imposition.

The proclamation of a game reserve brought with it various extra regulatory practices that each maintained a representational function. In particular, a game reserve demanded that neighbours reconsidered their relationships with space, nature, food, fire, conservation, employment and behaviour. The impact was intensified as the boundary of the game reserve’s influence did not stop with the veterinary fence along the perimeter. As in the Kruger Park, the game fence was not, in fact, a boundary between one ideological practice and another. Yet nor was it comparable with other permeable borders, such as national boundaries, over which various cultural practices and beliefs cross and exchange. As around Kruger, the jurisdiction of the game reserve extended outside the perimeter for one mile, and allowed for extensive powers of search and arrest.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Letter from C. Bourquin to the Chief Bantu Commissioner, Northern Areas, November 3 1965, in BAO 4334 D45/9/1279, NASA.

<sup>141</sup> Government Gazette R339, 1967, in BAO 13/973 J76/84, NASA.

The policing of the broader areas, however, could not simply be a heavy-handed process. Manyeleti was viewed as a potential flashpoint from an early stage by the Bantu Affairs Commissioner for the region, as it shared 9 miles of border with Native Trust areas and there was a young and inexperienced manager at the helm.<sup>142</sup> It was further complicated by the fact that it was never made clear exactly where jurisdictions began and ended, as there was no distinct line or marker to highlight who controlled particular zones. In order to help shore up his authority and his credentials, the Transvaal Provincial Administration made Leon Weber, the first warden of Manyeleti, an honorary Nature Conservation Officer of the province to give him extra powers of arrest.<sup>143</sup>

A key strategy in the maintenance of control in and around the perimeter of the reserve was gaining the cooperation of neighbouring communities. Stock and crop damage were frequent complaints, and one of the warden's first acts, before the opening of the reserve, was to cull several lions around the edge of Manyeleti.<sup>144</sup> Good relationships were also sought with local leaders in order to discourage acts of poaching or arson by neighbouring communities. Chief Mnisi's opinion was sought, for example, regarding a replacement for the owner of the business complex. This enabled Mnisi to exert an element of patronage.<sup>145</sup> In return, he was expected to restrain his people from entering the reserve illegally.

The rules and obligations of the game reserve provided some areas of ambiguity that could be exploited. For example, communities living around game reserves could benefit from complaining about animals causing crop damage, as the animals concerned were frequently shot and the meat subsequently distributed among the local people.<sup>146</sup> This created a way for local communities to tolerate and benefit from game reserves, although the authorities became aware of this ambiguity, leading to mistrust over accusations of crop damage. Similarly ambiguous, zebra carcasses were left as bait outside the game reserve in order to coax the lions out beyond the boundary, creating a legally equivocal situation.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Letter from C. Bourquin to V. Leibbrandt, October 6 1964, in BAO 4333 D45/9/1279, NASA.

<sup>143</sup> Letter from C. Bourquin to L. Weber, August 28 1964, in BAO 4333 D45/9/1279, NASA.

<sup>144</sup> Letter from C. Bourquin to the Chief Bantu Affairs Officer, April 27 1966, in BAO 20/224 H62/13, NASA.

<sup>145</sup> Letter from J. Venter to H. Hamburger, March 20 1980, in BAO 20/245 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

<sup>146</sup> Letter from the Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Ubombo, to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Pietermaritzburg, January 16 1969, in BAO 20/224 H62/13, NASA.

<sup>147</sup> Letter from L. Weber to C. Bourquin, April 18 1966, in BAO 20/224 H62/13, NASA.

The relationship between Manyeleti and the neighbouring communities altered with the creation of the new Gazankulu homeland. The reconfiguration of rights over land led to policing outside the game reserve becoming restricted. Gazankulu was a quasi-independent state, and so the laws allowing rangers to search and prosecute a mile outside the game reserve's border were annulled. Manyeleti put in a request for its manager and assistant managers to become nature conservation officers in Gazankulu.<sup>148</sup> With the secondment of nature conservation officers Phineas Nobela and Norman Mathebula in 1976, both from Gazankulu, the relations between the homeland and Manyeleti smoothed.<sup>149</sup> Yet even after the inclusion of the game reserve fully into the Gazankulu jurisdiction in 1985 there were still moments when the reserve could cause friction beyond its borders, particularly when cattle were shot for straying into Manyeleti territory.<sup>150</sup>

Enforcement of poaching and hunting laws against the white neighbours from Buffelshoek private game reserve also proved problematic, but the authorities were unwilling to place too much pressure on what was a conglomerate of well connected white businessmen. There were frequently accusations leveled at the private reserve regarding the shooting of animals in Manyeleti and their subsequent removal to the other side of the fence. Generally the responses to such actions were little more than polite objections. On one such occasion a request was merely sent asking for permission to be sought the next time they wanted to shoot in Manyeleti.<sup>151</sup> The game guards whose job it was to enforce many of the poaching laws found themselves, like in the Kruger Park, under-equipped in the face of better armed adversaries.<sup>152</sup>

By the 1980s a more inclusive programme of community involvement was being considered, and plans were discussed to create a more interactive relationship between Manyeleti and its immediate neighbours. In 1982 plans were suggested to diversify Manyeleti. This included the adoption of a mixture of intense tourism (heavily developed facilities servicing large groups of tourists) and sophisticated

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<sup>148</sup> Letter from P. Hancock to M. de Beer, Secretary of the Department for Plural Relations and Development, December 12 1977, in BAO 20/245 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

<sup>149</sup> Minutes of meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, October 1979, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>150</sup> Letter from Deputy Chief, Sidjama Tribal Authority, to the Commissioner General, Gazankulu Government, January 4 1991, in KGG 185 7/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>151</sup> Minutes of meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, October 1979, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>152</sup> Letter from J. Venter to the Secretary of the Department of Plural Relations and Development, August 21 1978, in BAO 20 243 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

tourism (less developed facilities servicing a smaller, and wealthier clientele), alongside a scheme of authorised hunting under the authority of the local population, as well as a system of resource exchange whereby people were allowed in to the game reserve to collect firewood or medicinal plants.<sup>153</sup> By 1987 such schemes were properly discussed at the advisory board level, yet nothing materialised in any concrete state.

Attempts to extend environmental education into the local schools and communities met with some success. The leader in the region on this front was the Pilanesberg game reserve and the Boputhatswana Parks Board more generally. Phineas Nobela, after leaving Manyeleti in 1982, found himself working on community conservation education in Boputhatswana. His advice was sought in 1986 by Sam Mashale, a nature conservation officer at Manyeleti, who was in charge of developing a new network of conservation clubs in Gazankulu.<sup>154</sup> Several clubs were established and a newsletter was published to share environmental news with the members. Before 1986 very few attempts had been made by the management at Manyeleti to take education into Gazankulu.

The business complex also played a key role in the community. Although the complex was frequently denounced as ill-run or unsatisfactory for the needs of the rest camp and the reserve at large, it did serve a purpose for the local community. Firstly, the complex was able to sell liquor at its bar, to guests and, as frequently happened, people from the local area. Because of the need for the reserve to generate profits, alongside the fact that the complex was run by a businessman unattached to the reserve, control over the distribution of liquor could be lax. Secondly, the business complex was a legal source of game meat and would prove a major attraction to many visitors as well as local residents. The ability to buy and braai certain species was appealing. Thirdly, the reserve had access to various game products that it could distribute. For example, in 1980 Manyeleti began to sell skins at a preferential rate to African businessmen in the local area.<sup>155</sup> The complex played a role in how the reserve functioned and how people came to see and understand game reserves. As will be argued in greater detail in chapter five, the reserve's business complex created

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<sup>153</sup> Letter from J. Varty, Londolozi Game Reserve, to J. Jordaan, July 19 1982, in KGG 184 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>154</sup> M. Mashele, 'Report on Nature Conservation Clubs,' unpublished report, June 1986, in KGG 185 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>155</sup> Letter from P. Hancock to H. Pople, Department for Cooperation and Development, June 13 1980, in BAO 20/245 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

a space for people to escape from restrictions they may have felt outside of the reserve.

Since the mid-1970s Manyeleti was more aware of the communities around its perimeter than the Kruger Park, in the sense that they became increasingly important to the survival of the project. With the handover of the reserve to Gazankulu, and the fears within the advisory board that the homeland would merely abandon the game reserve and parcel out the land, local support became increasingly important. Not long after the Kruger Park would start to realize that it too faced a battle for survival that required a restructuring of its relationships with the populations around its perimeter. On this front, and perhaps for the first time, Manyeleti was ahead of its more influential neighbor, although there are no signs that Kruger attempted to learn from Manyeleti in this regard.

## Conclusion

This chapter has argued the reserve was the product of both ideology and accident. Social and political circumstances paved a way for Manyeleti's birth, and it was injected with ideological purpose throughout its existence. However, the financial needs of the reserve impeded its ability to truly infiltrate its users with propaganda and ideology. The reserve was far more at the mercy of its users than the Kruger Park ever was. These financial restrictions, alongside the keen environmental purpose of the project, meant that Manyeleti occupied a unique socio-geographic dimension that caused it to function differently to the Kruger National Park or the Umgababa beach resort. This difference created a divergence in the representational requirements. For example, the perimetrical became more significant to Manyeleti at an earlier date than it did at Kruger.

The strategy behind representation was not a continuous or uniform one. Different bodies felt that money and focus should be spent on particular areas. For people such as Varty, in accordance with other conservationists on the board, the environmental means of representation were the most significant and impactful. Others felt that advertising via magazines, TV, radio or newspapers was a more productive channel to pursue. Education was a means of representation almost everyone associated with Manyeleti believed to be absolutely crucial to the propagation of the reserve's core values, and the school visitor was always welcome. The Manyeleti board had to balance these various views and interests. The result was a variety of means of representing the park, through the environment, education, and the press among others. As can be seen above, the external means of promotion and representation were perhaps the least understood and the most inadequately applied, with focus placed instead closer to home.

Despite the low figures, it would be unwise to dismiss the game reserve as an apartheid whimsey. In Manyeleti Africans were pursued as tourists and became direct consumers of the natural world. This makes the reserve unique, and offers an insight into strands of apartheid ideology that would otherwise be invisible. For this reason the example of Manyeleti has much to contribute to the literature on the environment, conservation, leisure and apartheid in South Africa. Manyeleti was an important component in the story of how people have represented nature. It provides a counter to a history that has generally been dominated by North American examples. Equally,

however, it provides a unique example of a government sanctioned segregated game reserve, which was a claim no other place could explicitly make. Manyeleti allows for the inclusion of Africans as consumers and learners in a system of information exchange about nature and wildlife that they were mostly excluded from. With the Kruger Park offering so little in the way of representation towards the African population in South Africa during this period, Manyeleti takes on greater importance. It is of particular significance because several employees of Manyeleti would later have important roles in SANParks and other conservationist organisations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### KRUGER, MANYELETI, AND THE DISCURSIVE LANDSCAPE, 1951-1989

#### Introduction

Our national parks give us the opportunity to escape from ourselves and from the artificial and sophisticated surroundings so that we can react normally to the stimulation of creation.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis contests Rocco Knobel's view that national parks were an unadulterated space that allowed recuperation and regeneration; an objective zone for people to create their own meanings. I argue instead for a series of 'artificial and sophisticated' keystones underpinning the national park's discursive landscape. In the period from 1962 this landscape was given extra flavour with the arrival of the Manyeleti game reserve, creating two beacons of iconography and meaning production in the eastern Transvaal, each transmitting to different audiences.

The previous two chapters have contextualized the construction of meaning by interrogating the mechanisms in place to create the regime of representation. The following chapter explores the texture of that regime by examining the content. Throughout the chapter, a fundamental objective is to set the Kruger Park alongside Manyeleti to properly historicize the representational process in South Africa during this period, as it was directed towards various members of society.

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<sup>1</sup> Funksie en Rol van die Nasionale Parkeraad in Samewerking met Ander Outoriteite, Presentation by R Knobel at the Conservation Conference at Skukuza, June 1962, in BAO 229 H62/13/1, NASA.

In the 1950s the discourse surrounding the Kruger Park inherited a legacy from the previous administration that lived on despite changes in the park structure. Throughout that decade the scientific influence over park management increased, until by 1961, with a biologist as warden, the park's approach was committed to ecological methodologies, and this was reproduced in the representational material about the park. This chapter begins by exploring how that development was reflected within the films, brochures and, perhaps most importantly this thesis asserts, the field guides to wildlife that enjoyed huge popularity in this period.

The second section returns to the central theme of this thesis, distinction, to argue that via the architecture, regulations, and rhetoric the park evolved as a tool for people to differentiate. Alongside this Kruger experience is placed the developments at play in Manyeleti, where variations on services (such as wilderness trails, which this thesis focuses on) led to differences in the way that distinction was intended to map out. Another significant influence on the park during this period was the Afrikanerisation of the hierarchy and the close relationship that was extended with the National Party. This relationship is explored, as are the more community focused discourses within the representational material. The party's relationship to Kruger informed its relationship to Manyeleti. Manyeleti's history runs parallel to, and in complete conjunction with, the story of the homelands in South Africa, and it is an unusual and neglected component in the story of that project. Furthermore, it is argued that while there was an ideological force behind Manyeleti's operations, the circumstances of the reserve allowed for visitors to create alternative experiences of nature as a form of what de Certeau calls 'tactics'. With limited levels of control, and a remit to attract more people so as to expand both visitor numbers as well as the number of new converts to conservationism, the reserve became a space that enabled a certain level of freedom of action. Although a broad range of discursive outlets are investigated, certain avenues are interrogated in greater depth, such as field guides, wilderness trails, wildlife journals and promotional films, either because they had the greatest influence over the public or because they reveal significant themes and tensions within the discursive landscape.

## Science and Modernity

In the first ever edition of the *African Wild Life* journal, it was openly acknowledged that ‘no one has a greater interest in wildlife than the biologist.’<sup>2</sup> The Wildlife Protection Society had been instrumental in promoting science as a dominant approach for management of the country’s national parks. The fruits of this influence began to show in 1950 with the appointment of the park’s first biologist, Theophilus Nel. When Andrew Brynard became chief Nature Conservator in 1961, the Kruger Park entered a period of constant management by men with an educational background in the sciences, including U. de V. Pienaar and Salomon Joubert. Just as science entered the structures of power within the parks board, it also increasingly appeared within the imagery surrounding the park. At its most explicit level, the importance of science to the national park mission was stressed over other objectives.<sup>3</sup>

The journal also became the primary vehicle for the park to communicate its policies to the interested public, and these were frequently defences of scientific methods in the field, such as culling or veld burning, which became heavily controversial conservation practices.<sup>4</sup> One tactic was to present the particular practice as performing a wider social good. The culling of animals, it was argued by Brynard, provided a solution to world hunger, a revenue stream for the national park, as well as a corrective to the imbalance of species.<sup>5</sup> This was an example of conservationists presenting themselves as altruistic actors in modern society, using conservationist procedure to remedy social ills.

The representational direction of the previous half-century had been to persuade the general public not to shoot animals. The discourse had been against certain forms of hunting, particularly those for economic gain or physical survival.<sup>6</sup> The 1950s saw a change in popular thought and a shift in the dominant discourse towards a more protectionist form of conservation. One discursive flashpoint that highlights this modification occurred in the pages of *African Wild Life*, when a letter by an anonymous amateur naturalist from New Zealand, calling themselves ‘Animal

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<sup>2</sup> *African Wild Life*, vol. 1, No. 1, 1946, p.6.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, *African Wild Life*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1961, p.34.

<sup>4</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 1968, p.61.

<sup>5</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1967, p.97.

<sup>6</sup> Many scholars have examined the ways in which particular types of hunting were culturally protected in the discourse, while others were denigrated and outlawed. See, for example, Mackenzie, *The Empire of Nature*, p.10.

Lover', wrote to complain about a series of articles being published in the journal valorising nineteenth century hunters as fathers of conservation. They wrote that 'I would like to record my disapproval, and am sure hundreds of your subscribers feel the same way... It is men like Selous who have helped to almost wipe out the wild game in Africa.'<sup>7</sup>

This attack on the pillars of preservationism was stoutly defended by the establishment in the Wildlife Protection Society, including C.T. Asteley Maberley and P.W. Willis, who read the letter 'with astonishment and disgust.' Animal Lover's 'spiteful remarks' were condemned in a volley of letters as 'narrow and bigoted,' with no understanding of the different types of hunting. Selous and others were pointed to as either providers of employment for the local community or as honest collectors acting in the public good, and even culling was put forward as one of their functions: 'Nature herself arranges that one species preys on another to keep the balance.'<sup>8</sup> The attacks on Animal Lover read like a defence of a dying discursive position. Animal Lover's opinion piece sprung in part from the very journal that now vilified it. *African Wild Life* was a conservationist journal saturated in anti-hunting rhetoric and full of worship for modern scientific approaches to wildlife management. While the journal finished its series on the hunters, such a deferential promotion of unauthorised hunting was not seen again in its pages for the rest of this period. Animal Lover's position won out in the end, but it had to contend with the death throes of the older discursive position held by the earlier generation of preservationists, which had included Stevenson-Hamilton. It was a good example of the turning point when the hegemonic position shifted to incorporate new discourses within it.

A more scientific imagery was evident in much of the literature pushed out from the park administration from the mid-1960s onwards. The park was comfortable with the theatricality of science, and the magazines and journals now included articles on emergency caesarean operations on hyenas or hippo transportations.<sup>9</sup> Images accompanying articles showed oribi being winched onto trucks or biologists armed with tranquillizer guns standing over a doped elephant.<sup>10</sup> The park became associated with the imagery of computers and software modelling.<sup>11</sup> The Kruger Park, with its

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<sup>7</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1955, p.256.

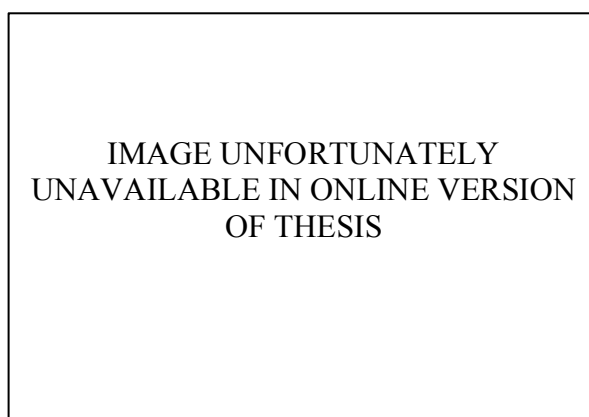
<sup>8</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1956, p.79.

<sup>9</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1967, p.168.

<sup>10</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1968, p.217.

<sup>11</sup> Shooting Script 'African Ark,' by Neil Curry, Insight Films, 1984, in NK 17/2, KNP.

increasingly biological approach to park management, was behind much of this material, and found many allies in the Wildlife Conservation Society.



*Fig. 5.1 Detail from front cover of the Sunday Times, August 22 1971*

William Beinart has written on the rise of science's impact upon imagery within much Hollywood cinema on African wildlife, particularly the rise of game-capture sequences during the 1950s.<sup>12</sup> From the perspective of the Kruger National Park, the role of ecological techniques in public media needed careful management, but it was not something they shied away from. In a new book on the national parks of South Africa, it was determined that 'controversial matters such as culling, translocation, tarred roads, poaching, the battle with exotic vegetation, and threats of mining, should all be mentioned where relevant' but that 'discussion about accommodation and other public facilities does not have a place in this book.'<sup>13</sup> The debate on the human presence in the park needed to be carefully channeled at all times.

This 'sciencing' of the discourse did not go uncontested, and led to discursive flashpoints over particularly controversial scientific methods. Those that opposed the overly-scientific management of the park were labelled sentimentalists by the park authorities. But the park authorities too, including U. de V. Pienaar, Salomon Joubert, and Rocco Knobel, would make claims to sentimentalism when it suited them.<sup>14</sup> The sentimentalists meanwhile accused the park authorities of being overly rational and

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<sup>12</sup> W. Beinart and D. Schafer, 'Hollywood in Africa 1947–62: Imaginative Construction and Landscape Realism', in W. Beinart, K. Middleton and S. Pooley (eds.), *Wild Things: Nature and the Social Imagination*, (London, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> 'The National Parks of South Africa', book announcement, A. Bannister, June 9 1981, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>14</sup> *The Star*, February 26 1972.

material in their approaches. One of the leading voices of the sentimentalists in the 1970s was James Clarke, the environmental correspondent for *The Star* and contributor to *African Wild Life*, who insinuated that the Kruger Park had become little more than ‘a barbed wire test tube.’<sup>15</sup> He criticised the park for pursuing means of management contrary to the advice of several biologists, and presented the issue as far more contested within the scientific community than the parks board liked to make out. The debate, however, revolved around the aesthetic impact of scientific method rather than the methodology itself. For example, Clarke opposed ear tagging for its visual impact rather than due to any criticism of the science:

Imagine some excited overseas visitor seeing his first pride of lion emerging from the bush, each wearing brightly-coloured ear-tags. I wonder how many slides are going to be spoiled and I wonder when these slides of the great South African outdoors are flashed onto the walls of overseas living rooms what impression people will get of the so-called wilds? These are serious considerations.<sup>16</sup>

The rise of science was therefore an assault on an established way of seeing in the park. The influence of either lobby was not inconsiderable, and as such the hegemonic position had to balance the two approaches to acquire acceptance. Science was being made increasingly palatable, but it had to be careful.

The issues that most galvanized the public during the 1960s undoubtedly were those that had to do with animal death. Culling, and the associated issue of the canning factory that was built within the park both caused a discursive furore from the late 1960s onwards. As has been argued, the focus of much representational material in the previous half century had been to convert people away from hunting towards protection. By the 1960s this had generally been achieved in the hegemony at large, and so the reaction to the overt manipulation of animal populations by destruction sat uneasily in the literature for many. The rhetoric revolved around Kruger losing its status as a sanctuary and becoming a place of fear for the wildlife inside, with articles often reinforcing their position by using pictures of mother and calf to stress the attack of science upon the notion of family.<sup>17</sup> In order to combat such a discourse, the park liaison office was eager to put across the idea that ‘lone’ males who had outlived their usefulness to the reproductive cycle were the targets of culling missions.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 1975, p.7.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p.8.

<sup>17</sup> *The Cape Times*, August 31 1968.

<sup>18</sup> *Sunday Express*, January 12 1969.

The discourse emanating from the park on culling and canning attempted to deflect blame away from the parks board onto less powerful groups in society. When the promotional film *African Ark* was being scripted, the voice over stated that culling ‘must be neither coy on the one hand nor excessively bloody on the other, overly sentimental or overly clinical.’ It was insisted that Africans working in the park took the meat home with them, ‘as is the tradition,’ which was an oft-repeated claim.<sup>19</sup> Through such techniques, the idea of the need for an abattoir in the park became linked to the African workers. As with other suggestions that culling provided food for the local populations around the park, the blame for culling was redirected towards Africans on the periphery, whose inability to acquire food had various causes.

In the 1980s, as South Africa reached its apogee as pariah state, the Kruger Park’s management style became a suitable target. In this discourse the Kruger Park was presented as an ‘antiseptic park’, a view heightened by the inclusion of pictures of culled elephants, computer screens, solar panels and cars with baboons begging beside it. Computers and syringes were the new rifles. The theme was very much that ‘when a park becomes a fenced off island in a crowded continent, people must manipulate the natural forces.’ As at other moments in its history, the park became used as a metaphor for the country at large. Attacks on Kruger management echoed the critiques of apartheid. In this discourse, the park was presented as inhumane and over-managed, and the park hierarchy battled this position in the media. For example, amendments made to one text by P. Youngusband and N. Myers that was eventually published in *International Wildlife*, showcases some of the particular words and phrases that the park administrators had concerns about in this discourse. The idea that the park managers had ‘usurped many of the laws of biology’ with ‘shock troops’ to create a region that ‘seems wild’ were all underlined. They disliked any representations of the staff as nonchalant, or in any way resembling policemen.<sup>20</sup> The idea that it was a ‘fiction’ and a manipulated space seems to have caused offence.

Such counter-narratives that ran against the grain of the discourse emanating from the Kruger Park are good examples of the oppositional positions in existence as this period drew to a close. Science could act as an advert for the park, emphasizing

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<sup>19</sup> Shooting Script ‘African Ark,’ by Neil Curry, Insight Films, 1984, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Playing God With Nature,’ article by P. Youngusband and N. Myers, in NK/17/3, KNP. For the published version see P. Youngusband and N. Myers, ‘Playing God with Nature,’ *International Wildlife*, vol.16, no.4, 1986, pp.4-13.

its place at the cutting edge of conservation. Indeed, the Kruger Park liked to cultivate an image for itself of being at the forefront of conservationist practice, to maintain a reputation in the world that could serve political objectives. It found it uncomfortable, however, when that discourse was thrust back at it. Kruger officials, while adhering to scientific approaches as a chief ingredient of their hegemony, recognized they needed balancing with other more aesthetic concerns and their discourse was plastic enough to weather the criticism.

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The relationship of science to wildlife in the public imagination was most demonstrably contested through the use of the humble field guide. Via this small book, the public that entered the park were taught most explicitly how to see and understand wildlife and its relation to humanity. As intermediaries between the viewer and the viewed, field guides played a significant role in the way that people learned about the wildlife outside their car window. Despite this influence, the field guide to mammals has attracted very little scholarly investigation. What little work has been conducted has tended to concentrate upon ornithology.<sup>21</sup> However, the importance of the guidebook, whether for museums or foreign countries, has recently begun to attract the interest of scholars.<sup>22</sup> Before considering the dramatic changes that took place in the South African field guide to mammals, it is worth briefly outlining the genre's history before 1950.

The field guide had several predecessors and has gone through several manifestations. Antecedents of the field guide could include medieval bestiaries, but more recent examples comprise of hunting manuals and travel guides, which both produced lists of animals to be seen in the region. Many of the early guides to African wildlife acted as a structure to hang more exhilarating tales of hunting exploits. One of the best examples of this was Lord Cornwallis Harris' *Wild Animals of Southern Africa*. In Bryden's *The Great and Small Game of Africa*, published in 1899, some of

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<sup>21</sup> See, for example, T. Dunlap, *In the Field, Among the Feathered: A History of Birders and Their Guides*, (Oxford, 2011), and J. Carruthers, "'Our Beautiful and Useful Allies": Aspects of Ornithology in Twentieth Century South Africa,' *Historia*, vol. 49, no. 1, May 2004, pp.89-109.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, I. Grewal, 'Constructing national subjects: The British Museum and its guidebooks,' in L. Bloom (ed.), *With Other Eyes: Looking at Race and Gender in Visual Culture*, (London, 1999).

the first photographs of wildlife were included to help illustrate the different species.<sup>23</sup> The purpose of these books was to assist other hunters or, more commonly, to entertain readers. Another significant feature of early hunting guides was how easy animals were to domesticate, with entries on the cheetah, for example, being completely dominated by this angle. By 1914 there was a far more defensive ring to this type of work, and the wildlife guide was becoming an over-used excuse as the reason for undertaking a hunting safari.

Shortly before the proclamation of the Kruger Park in 1926, two field guides for South African mammals were produced by F. Fitzsimons and Alwin Haagner. Within the pages of both books, the relationship between the human and the animal was emphasized. For example, photographs showed people, and often children, in close quarters with the animals being described: such as a girl holding cheetah cubs, or a baboon on a chain.<sup>24</sup> Each species received a different sized entry, and much of the content came from personal experience, either in the field or through work at the zoo. The animals were hierarchized in importance either through their position in the book or via the length of the entry, and they were each given personalities: for example the lion was ‘less treacherous than most felines’ and the hyena ‘cowardly... as well as greedy’.<sup>25</sup>

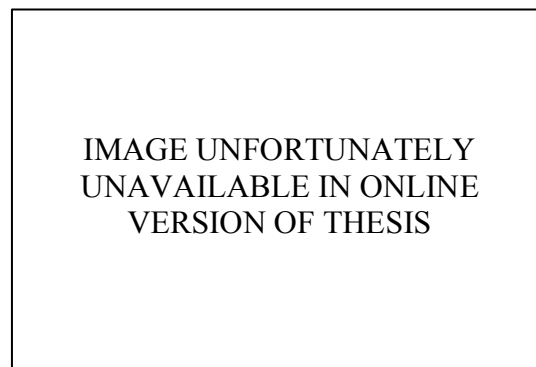


Fig. 5.2 Page from Haagner's South African Mammals<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> H. Bryden (ed.), *The Great and Small Game of Africa: An account of the distribution, habits, and natural history of the sporting mammals, with personal hunting experiences*, (London, 1899).

<sup>24</sup> F. Fitzsimons, *The Natural History of South Africa: Mammals, Vol. I*, (London, 1919), and A. Haagner, *South African Mammals: A short manual for the use of field naturalists, sportsmen and travellers*, (London, 1920).

<sup>25</sup> Haagner, *South African Mammals*, p.70.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p.67.

The layout of these books were not aimed at the casual user. In a sense, the field guide in this period tried to be many things, and did not have a clear reader in mind. Haagner admitted as much, writing in his introduction that,

To my critics I would point out: firstly, to the zoologist, that while I could have made the work much more “scientific,” I would, in so doing, have defeated my main object; and to the literary critic, that I have purposely adopted a more or less “note-book” style, considering this quite adequate for a work of this nature, and the saving of space being to-day a big consideration.<sup>27</sup>

This tradition, of anecdotal and personal recordings, could be found in wildlife guides into the late 1940s.

The founding of the Kruger National Park in 1926 created a new readership for books on wildlife and a new opportunity for guides. These came in the form of inexpensive photographic brochures, which were produced by companies or organisations including the parks board. They were picture heavy with limited text and very little information on the animals themselves: *A Souvenir of Wild Life*, for example, was produced for members of the Wild Life Protection Society of South Africa, and contained pictures by renowned photographers.<sup>28</sup> Another popular pamphlet, produced by *The Almanac and African Travel Magazine*, and published with the approval of the National Parks Board, showcased many of the animals of the Kruger Park in its first thirty pages, before displaying a series of photographs showing wildlife and people juxtaposed, sometimes in unusual situations. For example, images included a baby sharing a wicker chair with a leopard cub, a crocodile chasing a man up a riverbank, as well as several hunting commemorations.<sup>29</sup> Other brochures focused on a single species. The photographer Bertram Jeary produced a souvenir of lion photographs, which gave the subjects names and heavily invested them with human emotions and motivations. Alongside these more visual guides were more text heavy volumes that followed on from the work by people such as Fitzsimons and Haagner. Stevenson-Hamilton produced several guides to the wildlife of South Africa between 1912 and 1947. These guides were anecdotal in style and recounted various human interactions with the numerous species. In his 1947 *Wild Life in South Africa*, he included a long section on how to shoot a lion.<sup>30</sup>

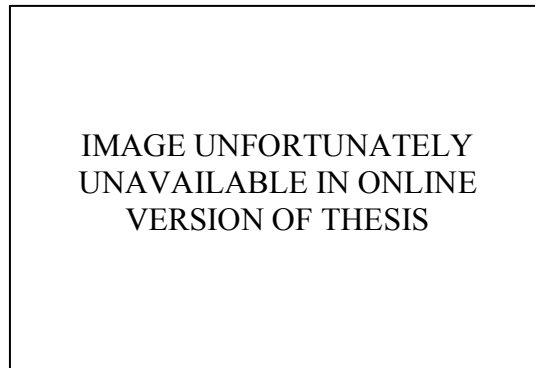
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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p.xix.

<sup>28</sup> *A Souvenir of Wild Life*, Wild Life Protection Society of South Africa, Johannesburg, 1936.

<sup>29</sup> *In Leo's Kingdom: The Kruger National Park – Greatest Wildlife Sanctuary in the World*, published by *The Almanac and African Travel Magazine*, c.1935.

<sup>30</sup> Stevenson-Hamilton, *Wild Life in South Africa*.



*Fig. 5.3 Page from In Leo's Kingdom*<sup>31</sup>

Linking wildlife with the human experience opened up a discursive space for social commentary, with stories or histories of animals providing a means to make social observations. For example, in a section on the Cape Buffalo in William Fehr's *Caldwell's Animals*, published around 1961, the author described how they had not been domesticated on the African continent, which compared unfavourably with developments in India and Egypt with the water buffalo. This accusation served to define the buffalo in relation to people, and by doing so it related it to other discourses at play in society in general. In this case, the description served to belittle African pastoralists, whom the piece suggested were incapable of domesticating the buffalo.

These books highlight a predominant attitude towards wildlife that was represented in these nascent guidebooks until the early 1960s, namely the juxtaposition of man and animal. Wildlife was understood principally through its cultural role. Many have looked at the battle against hunting as the predominant challenge facing conservationists during this period. However, it could be argued that it was the close relationship between people and animals that was more entrenched. That closeness would be the focus of attempts to divorce the animal from the human altogether. This process of separation began with a field guide written in 1939 by Rudolph Bigalke entitled *A Guide to Some Common Animals of the Kruger National Park*, which attempted to categorise and separate out the species, whilst giving equal coverage to each animal. He had first intended to write the guide in 1934, when he argued in an article that current guides were insufficient and failed to educate people

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<sup>31</sup> *In Leo's Kingdom.*

properly about the nation's wildlife.<sup>32</sup> Yet even Bigalke included various personal reflections and anecdotes about human-animal relations, such as vervet monkey behaviour in Natal, and he also made editorial decisions about which animals were worthwhile to include in such a book, favouring the most recognizable and omitting the 'lower or invertebrate animals' as they were 'principally of interest to the professional zoologist' only.<sup>33</sup> Because of the outbreak of war his guide did not attract significant attention.

In 1954 Bigalke re-released his guide with the title *What Animal Is It?* Following much the same format as its predecessor, this prompted a range of similar books with a similar approach, including the *South African Animal Guide* and *Mammals of the Kruger and Other National Parks*, co-authored by Rudolf Labuschagne, the information officer at the time.<sup>34</sup> These guides divided up the animal kingdom into separate species and gave over equitable column inches, ending the preferential treatment that had benefitted particular signature species before. By the 1960s and 1970s these guides were far more data heavy, detailing gestation periods, average weights, top speeds and lifespan. Text was drier and tended to follow the same structure from species to species. In this new, more scientific, quantifiable world, animals with particular records gained more attention, such as the cheetah, which had previously been overlooked in many guidebooks. In the 1939 version of Bigalke's guide, humans had featured in some photographs, however by 1954 the images selected for inclusion didn't include a single picture that suggested a human relationship with wildlife.

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<sup>32</sup> *Die Huisgenoot*, October 5 1934.

<sup>33</sup> R. Bigalke, *A Guide to Some Common Animals of the Kruger National Park*, (Pretoria, 1939), p.13.

<sup>34</sup> R. Labuschagne and N. van der Merwe, *Mammals of the Kruger and other National Parks*, (Pretoria, 1963).

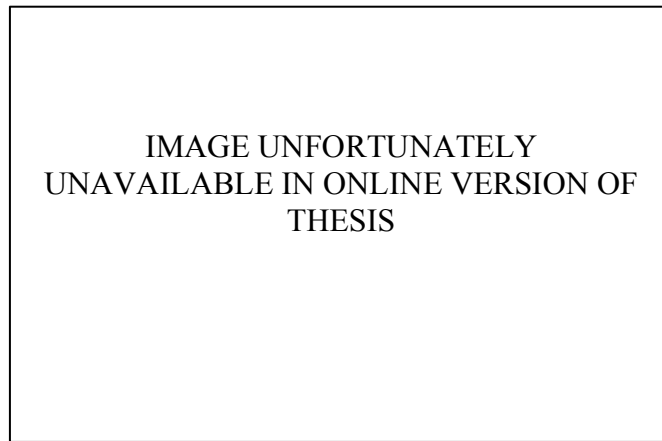


Fig. 5.4 Page from South African Animal Guide<sup>35</sup>

The influence of these guides should not be underestimated. One of the best selling park publications was the *South African Animal Guide*, which frequently sold tens of thousands of copies during the late 1950s and 1960s, and was described as ‘undoubtedly the best book ever to be published by the Board.’<sup>36</sup> Within a year of the original print run 8,000 copies of the 10,000 printed had been sold, while in 1960 the two guides to mammals published by the parks board sold a combined total of 20,000 copies, compared to only 4,100 bird guides.<sup>37</sup> The publication of field guides became recognized as a lucrative business, and a crucial means of communicating ideas about wildlife to the public.

It is worthwhile comparing the entry for the Cape buffalo in William Fehr’s *Caldwell’s Animals* with the entry for the same animal in the *South African Animal Guide*, which was published at the same time. The entry in the latter was far more clinical, defining the animal in terms of statistical information and geographical mapping. Pictures showcased the horn shape of buffaloes of different ages, as well as a principal picture for simple identification. This is not to say that the more scientific guide was devoid of discursive power. Wildlife was now something understood through measurement, analysis, and constant control. Animals became the sum of their height, weight, speeds and gestation periods. They now lived in depopulated regions of the country that had been specifically marked out for the purpose. This was how South Africans were now being taught to understand the natural world. It is

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<sup>35</sup> *South African Animal Guide*, (Pretoria, 1959), p.9.

<sup>36</sup> NPB, Annual Report 1959.

<sup>37</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board Meeting, November 26 1962, KNP.

worth noting that this boom period for the field guide ran concurrently with the high water mark of apartheid.

Through these means wildlife was made 'wild': the removal of the human element of a species' story dissociated it from the human world, and in so doing wildlife was philosophically separated and a specific niche carved for it within animal life more generally. Certain species were deemed suitable for inclusion in such guides, while others were disregarded: even the more regional guides of the 1970s and 1980s never included cattle in their list of species to be found in South Africa. The animals were all itemised and reconstructed into statistics, with descriptions giving details on habitat, reproduction, aggression, and other categorisations that were deemed necessary for public knowledge about the region's wildlife. The aim was a seemingly objective, enumerated catalogue of wild animals. Of course, this type of discourse was anything but objective, and demanded that people reimagined wildlife in those terms. People's engagement with wildlife therefore moved into discussions of the details about the animals, rather than stories or histories as could have been found in guide books thirty years earlier. People were given certain parameters by which they could discuss wildlife: they were not given the tools to think about wildlife as something humans had interacted with throughout time.

Labuschagne's *Mammals of the Kruger and Other National Parks*, published in 1968, signaled that the takeover of the field guide by science was complete. Subsequent guides from that date onwards followed a very similar structure, and the animal's cultural history, or at least its history in relation to mankind, was absent. This process of de-culturation was echoed in other media. Before the 1960s, it was common for grandiose poetic lines to accompany illustrations of wildlife. Frequently thoughts were imagined for the animals pictured. In a caption below an image of an impala at a waterhole, in the *African Wild Life* journal, its musings were described: 'my mirrored self, in these pellucid waters,/ Looks up a stranger – calmer he than I.'<sup>38</sup> Elsewhere, a photograph of a male lion trapped in a cage was accompanied by a short poem: 'If you should see dawn, or sunset, and be free to meet life or death,/ It is not time to charge my glance with exultation,/ Or mistake my fear for gratitude,/ For this is not joy.'<sup>39</sup> This form of representation had its heritage in the 1930s, in the type of journalism practiced by writers such as Arthur Barlow, as was discussed in chapter

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<sup>38</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 5 No. 2, 1951, p.92.

<sup>39</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1951, p.352.

two. It helped link wildlife imagery with other media to help construct a cultural value to national parks and their wildlife.

During this same period there was even some appreciation for African knowledge of nature, but this was limited to particular subjects. In a series of articles on Basotho beliefs in *African Wild Life* in the 1950s, an attempt was made to show that folklore revealed protectionist ideals regarding wildlife.<sup>40</sup> However, almost all the ‘beliefs’ described were about smaller animals, such as beetles and grasshoppers, rather than the larger mammals, which were reserved for western, scientific knowledge, save for one or two pieces on the crocodile. Similarly, the knowledge that was described was frequently presented as magical in its content, such as the properties of frogs to cure cracked cow udders.<sup>41</sup>

By the 1960s the captions below photographs had changed dramatically to include often only the barest of details. In one article in *African Wild Life* a photograph of three impala was accompanied by the caption that read: ‘the grace of leaping impala photographed by Roy Smith in the Kruger National Park.’<sup>42</sup> In the same year another article in the journal accompanied a photograph of a cheetah, which read: ‘Cheetah photographed by Dr M. de Lange on the Nahpe Road in the Kruger National Park. The photograph is a black and white from a 35mm. colour transparency taken at 6am on an overcast morning.’<sup>43</sup> There were no more ‘pellucid waters’ or ‘mirrored selves’, but instead a mechanical, technical listing, linking wildlife with technological reproduction methods, and more scientific ways of seeing and interacting with nature. African knowledge, meanwhile, was denied in this new hyper-scientific climate.

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As the park administration began to associate the park with technological and scientific developments in many of the images and reports, this was accompanied by an increasing discussion of the park’s relationship to other forms of modernity. In much of the literature throughout this period the park was described in relation to what was made into its antithesis: the modern city. The park was almost never

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<sup>40</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1947, p.68.

<sup>41</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 1, No. 5, 1948, p.62.

<sup>42</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 15, No. 4, 1961, p.4.

<sup>43</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1961, p.28.

compared to villages or towns, only the metropole, creating a dichotomy that relied entirely on ideas of extreme urbanity. The park therefore became defined by its urban-ness, either through its lack, or through its infection. For some the Kruger Park had been ruined by its popularity and no longer inverted the urban sprawl. For example, the fact that 'lions have even learnt to use exhaust fumes to mask their scent when ambushing prey' reflected the spread of modernity and the degeneration of Kruger as a natural venue.<sup>44</sup> The representational material throughout this period generally spoke with the reference points of the city. As such, it is unsurprising that the idea spoke so succinctly to those living in cities, and helps explain the popularity of the park with those from the metropolitan centres around South Africa.

Film was a key medium to get across this dichotomous relationship. In 1968 the South African Tourist Board, in conjunction with the National Parks Board, made *The Peace Game*, a promotional film to highlight the attractions of the bushveld. The film began with a representation of the cityscape using, according to the shooting script, 'an overemphasized psychedelic look at the world' and 'distorted overpowering shots'. The city became a deliberately exaggerated version of itself and, according to the script, latensified prints were utilised to emphasise the effect. Mouths were depicted 'talking at high speed' while 'a distorted view of another city, superimposed over this would be figures gyrating in dance... or strikers or rioters.' Sound reinforced the distortion, with 'high level noise, voices and music on the same psychedelic level'.<sup>45</sup>

This was then contrasted with the 'dawn sequence' filmed in the bush, that made use of 'NATURAL SOUNDS of peace and tranquillity (sic)'. Speed of movement was distorted in the other direction, using a slow motion effect, in order to capture the 'joy and beauty' of a herd of zebra. Slow motion was used to see the animals as people do not and cannot see them: as slow and still even when in flight. Slow motion was a common trick to contain nature into the discourse of 'peace' and as the antithesis of the modern world. Yet it was a synthetic procedure: a synthetic, unnatural speed of seeing. Then 'the world changes... a lion and his lioness prowl... suddenly the pace changes and animals run for their lives, the law of the wild takes over.'

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<sup>44</sup> *Traveller's Guide to Southern Africa*, Thornton Cox, (Newman Neame, London, 1967), p.49.

<sup>45</sup> 'The Peace Game' Proposal, c.1968, in NK/17/2, KNP.

Yet the ‘very stillness’ that the film tried to emphasise was contradicted by ‘the ears or noses that never relax’. The filmmakers attempted to illustrate how hypersensitised the natural world was to its environment, despite its stillness. This contrasted with the desensitised city dweller in an uninterrupted, hyperactive environment. The message was that nature was about pace and sound, and about the interpretation of that speed and volume. The cine-camera enabled the exaggeration of those speeds and volumes. The deception was then explained away as a means to emphasise the grace, beauty, or joy of the natural world.

Silence, stillness, or ‘deep soundlessness’ were all key features in the Kruger Park representational material. ‘Natural’ sounds were often classified as silence by many in their descriptions of the aural landscape.<sup>46</sup> The attitude to sounds changed dramatically after sunset. Kruger Park for much of this period was a place that existed in the public consciousness in a state of daylight. The representations of it as a place of relaxation and recuperation relied upon daylight. The night, however, was presented as a time of death.<sup>47</sup> In *The Peace Game*, the ‘night sequence’ gained short attention, and was a space populated by ‘night birds and prowlers’.<sup>48</sup> The gait of animals shifted from graceful canters to threatening prowls. Part of this was technologically determined, as cameras were incapable of filming in the night until the 1980s. Game drives at night were also the preserve of the very wealthy guests at the private reserves around the park’s perimeter. When Carol and David Hughes began filming the lions at the waterhole at night for the BBC and National Geographic in 1983, the world of the Kruger National Park was opened up to the general public for the first time, and the bushveld became a 24 hour space.<sup>49</sup>

The park’s relationship with technology, science and modernity was therefore not a simple one. Modern techniques and attributes were both celebrated and denigrated through park imagery. It was a constant negotiation and balancing act, where synthetic processes could be applauded in one discourse and reprimanded in another. This contest had begun in the 1920s, but had acquired far more layers of complexity and contradiction by the 1980s.

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<sup>46</sup> See, for example, H. Kloppers, *Game Ranger*, (Cape Town, 1968), p.108.

<sup>47</sup> Script for “The Game Trail”, David Millin Productions, 1956, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>48</sup> ‘The Peace Game’ Proposal, c.1968, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>49</sup> Letter from C. Hide to A. Brynard, July 22 1983, in NK/17/2, KNP.

## Class and Status

In the 1970s, *African Wild Life* ran an alarmed feature concerning national parks being only for the wealthy in the country. In a survey by the landscape architect Willem van Riet it was found that nearly two-thirds of respondents were members of the professional classes and earned between R6,000 and R9,000 per year, placing them in the top echelons of earners in the country.<sup>50</sup> The link between the north-eastern Transvaal, wildlife and the wealthy of South Africa had become entrenched. Through the construction of meaning the Kruger Park had become a marker of status. One advert for a plot of land highlights the socio-cultural quality of knowledge about nature:

Suitable partner wanted for the development of a really magnificent Northern Transvaal Nature Reserve/Game ranch/Cattle Farm/Irrigation farm/fish farm. Setting and potentialities are probably unique in the country. Applicants must be nature loving, wealthy and possess the right personality.<sup>51</sup>

Certain areas therefore became socially selective, and knowledge of nature, and a 'love' for nature became qualities on which applicants to the new social worlds could be judged. In the late 1940s the fees were raised at Kruger because there was a threat that too many people would flood the park, so 'the board is determined to put a stop to people making use of the park as a cheap holiday resort – and the raising of the fees is the only way of doing this – short of limiting the number of visitors, or the length of their stay.'<sup>52</sup> Moves such as this assisted the sense of the park as a space for the wealthier citizens. In the 1950s, the warden (or Nature Conservator as the position was known at that time) Louis Steyn was of the opinion that 'even the "sort" of tourist should be controlled as well if possible.'<sup>53</sup>

The wrong 'sort' of visitor was accompanied in certain parts of the park by the wrong 'sort' of wildlife. Measures were being taken to try and instill particular traits among the wildlife population in general. Where tameness had been a selling point in the early days of the park, by the 1950s excessive docility was being labeled as unnatural. The park administrators disliked criticism in the wildlife magazines that described lions in the park as 'tame' and habituated to man's presence. The lions on

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<sup>50</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 1973, p.41.

<sup>51</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 1974, p.48.

<sup>52</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1947, p.103.

<sup>53</sup> 'Control of Tourism in the Kruger National Park,' Memorandum by L. Steyn, in NK/47/5, KNP.

the Sabie Road near Skukuza were seen as particularly contentious, as they were deemed to have learned how to use cars as decoys to assist them in their hunts.<sup>54</sup> Such behaviour led to debates around whether the animals should be culled or encouraged, as they attracted tourists but were ‘unnatural’ and tainted by the city in doing so, in a manner discussed in the previous section.

Other species began to be seen to behave unnaturally. Baboons being ‘domesticated’ because they were fed ‘all kinds of victual by tourists’ became a pressing concern, and there became a dread of animals behaving like ‘beggars’ around visitors.<sup>55</sup> Hornbills were a worry around the waterhole at Leeupan, and hyenas and jackals along the Skukuza-Tshokwane road were deemed to also have ‘joined the ranks of “beggars”’.<sup>56</sup> Photographers in particular were blamed for handing out food to get a closer picture of the animals. The relationship between begging animals and the public was seen to have detrimental effects on the park as a whole, both from a conservationist as well as a representational perspective. In the same way that human beggars were discouraged from park gate areas, the park was equally anxious about ensuring that wildlife did not repeat such behaviour inside the park.

The park administration read the behaviour of these animals as ‘unnatural’ and wished to see a reduction of interaction, outside of viewing, between wildlife and humans in the park. This process echoes what was going on at the same time in the field guides as discussed in the previous section, but it also speaks to other, more deliberately class-focused concerns. Species were not condemned as vagrants across the entire park. What is interesting about the accusations is that they centred around particular hotspots, that coincided with some of the most visited sections of the park. This localisation aided a sense of Kruger as constituted of two different parks: the over-populated south with ‘domesticated’ vagrant animals, and the quieter, more wild north, which attracted truer nature lovers rather than ‘thrillers’ merely visiting the park as a holiday. Leeupan and the roads around Skukuza were the worst offenders in this discourse, while the Pafuri region was seen as the ultimate destination for proper wildlife lovers. A letter writer to *African Wild Life* described how ‘the further north one travels, of course, the further one leaves civilisation behind, and the purists surely

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<sup>54</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1956, p.167.

<sup>55</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1957.

<sup>56</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1959.

could have no quarrel with the naturalness and wildness of the Kruger National Park from Shingwedzi to Pafuri.<sup>57</sup> Willem van Riet wanted the separation formalised:

It is not possible for the Reserve to cater for these two conflicting aims. Could the reserve not be divided into two parts? In the South all the possible comforts and luxuries could be had. There the tarred roads could run straight to the horizon; there would be the speed traps and the thousands of tourists cluttering the roads. This could be the part that brings in the revenue and where the commercial interest has got the upper hand. This part could become lost to the real lover of Africa... Let us then take the part to the North of the Olifants River and keep that for our children of the future; where the roads are narrow and winding, where the mystique of Africa can be tasted in years to come, where the visitor is greeted by a man who has knowledge of the wild, where he is allowed to stay for the night in small camping sites, where he can leave his car and follow a wilderness trail. This is the dream of many, I assure you.<sup>58</sup>

The northern regions became the most intensive form of nature, the part of the park set aside for the 'true nature-lover', and also the part presented as most under threat. The northern 'wilderness' was often described as 'fragile', and it was not uncommon for the area to be presented as on its deathbed.<sup>59</sup> The linkage between class and particular regions of the park highlights an anxiety within certain social groups about future social prospects that was supplanted onto representations of nature and the Kruger Park. Fear for Pafuri matched racial and class based fears for the future. The park took a view, too, that the north of the park attracted a finer breed of tourist whose behaviour was generally significantly better than the visitors in the south of the park.

The idea that there were 'types' of visitors to the Kruger Park began to gain currency during the 1970s. In comical representations of 'wildlife types' cartoonists such as Glynne Uys depicted the various ways of being in nature, including the 'great white hunter type' and 'the pedantic type'.<sup>60</sup> One humorous article attempted to educate its readers in how to bluff knowledge of nature, including dress advice, and tips such as feigning temporary deafness when asked to identify a bird call.<sup>61</sup> The joke points to something more serious, namely the establishment of a system of knowledge, behaviour, and way of seeing that needed to be learned in order to ingratiate oneself into the group. Knowledge of nature was being joked about in the

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<sup>57</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 1967, p.259.

<sup>58</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 23 No. 1, 1969, p.83.

<sup>59</sup> For example, see the Progress Report on Filming in the Kruger National Park, J. and T. Jozefowicz, Tauana films, February 1993, in NK/17/1, KNP.

<sup>60</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 29, No. 4, 1975, p.20.

<sup>61</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 30, No. 6, 1976, p.39.

same way as people joked about other social markers, such as wine. The private camps at Timbavati and Sabi-Sands, which charged significantly more per night than the Kruger Park, helped reinforce this image.

These acts of demarcation helped to establish imagined zones in which social distinction took place, yet in the park as a whole ideas around the correct look and feel continued to configure the Kruger Park as an institute of legitimization. Part of that process involved the eschewing of luxury. A staple view among the management of the park held that Kruger ‘should not be developed into a commercialised holiday resort, but a restful bushveld atmosphere for spiritual meditation should be retained.’<sup>62</sup> The defence of an intangible ‘atmosphere’ became paramount. The ‘atmosphere’ was constructed using particular ways of behaving. To develop and maintain it, rules needed to be ‘strictly applied’, and those found in violation of the ‘restful atmosphere’ would be asked to leave. As many features of the park as possible needed to match this atmosphere, which for the authorities meant ‘plain but neat and efficient’ accommodation, while meals ‘should be plain and should be prepared in the real South African manner.’ This idea of the ‘restful atmosphere’ impacted all reaches of life in the park, including the times that electric light was available. The representational power of all aspects of life in the park was recognised.

The same report described how ‘anything bordering on pomp and splendour and the luxurious, must be kept from the Park.’ At a publicity meeting in 1954 it was decided that ‘the use of the expression “luxury” in describing accommodation is to be discontinued forthwith.’ Accommodation was from then on to be described as ‘rondavels’, ‘family cottages’ or ‘bungalows’.<sup>63</sup> Suggestions that foreign visitors may want ‘luxury’ in their accommodation were rebuffed by interviews with Americans in *African Wild Life* saying how rusticity was the hallmark of national park accommodation, and how the rondavel exemplified this ideal for the American visitor to South Africa.<sup>64</sup> However, for some users of the park the new architecture and arrangement was anything but ‘restful’. One of the most vociferous critics was James Clarke in *The Star*. Skukuza had become for him a ‘sprawling town’ whilst Satara had

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<sup>62</sup> NPB Annual Report, 1958.

<sup>63</sup> Minutes of Meeting of the Publicity Advisory Committee, Cape Town, April 14 1954, in NK/17/3, KNP.

<sup>64</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1948, p.80.

‘all the charm of a Stalag.’ As for the restaurant and its ability to capture the atmosphere of the bushveld, for Clarke it was ‘about as rustic as a cooling tower’.<sup>65</sup>

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Manyeleti also struggled with the juxtaposition of luxury and nature. It was hampered by its game reserve status in providing many of the services that attracted visitors to Umgababa. Attitudes within the department against quality for African tourists also curtailed attempts to turn Manyeleti into a desirable product. Yet there was also always a concern that Manyeleti needed to attract important guests who had influence in African society. The word ‘luxury’ therefore never became taboo at Manyeleti.

The issue of status and luxury at Kruger and Manyeleti became more complicated with the beginning of wilderness trails and in the design of those trails various attitudes and beliefs were revealed. Trips into the wilderness became a privilege that allowed access to an increasingly closed off world. Access to that world to a select few created an experience that was impossible for many to achieve, and was therefore a significant means to distinguish. To be on a wilderness trail was to encounter the most ‘wild’ and ‘pristine’ aspects of the park. Words such as ‘pristine’ marked out areas that were not over-commercialised, or at least untouched by particular types of development that signified particular groups in society. The wilderness trails were therefore the ultimate event in that they brought people into the most ‘exclusive’ parts of the park that topped even the ‘wild’ north at Pafuri.

For adults it was recognised that wilderness trails were a suitable channel to circulate a particular way of thinking about the landscape. U. de V. Pienaar had made the first recommendations to the board to establish a wilderness trail in the Kruger Park. In 1972 he submitted his proposal, but it would be another five years before the plan would be approved, and even then it was only by a narrow vote of five to four.<sup>66</sup> The invisibility of the trailists to other members of the public was important, but overall the ideal of simplicity was essential: Pienaar was adamant that ‘the base camp at Stolznek will be a rustic but sturdy construction consisting of not more than three

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<sup>65</sup> Article draft by J. Clarke, in NK/17/1/1, KNP.

<sup>66</sup> Minutes of National Parks Board Meeting, June 17 1977, KNP.

rondavel-type huts built of local materials by the ranger-in-charge, an open rondavel for cooking, a veld shower-cubicle and two toilets.<sup>67</sup>

The first trail opened in July 1978 and was named after Harry Wolhuter. The ranger Mike English headed up the operation assisted by ranger Trevor Dearlove. The trail immediately proved popular, with over 97% occupancy.<sup>68</sup> By 1987 there were four trail stations in operation, each with several trails leading off them. The trails were hugely popular with white South Africans, who made up over 90% of trailers, and were fairly evenly split between male and female users, as well as English or Afrikaans speaking. Word of mouth seems to have been a key means for the wilderness trail experience to spread. The park received several positive reviews from the trailers, who booked repeat visits bringing along new people.<sup>69</sup>

In a letter from Ian Player, who had been instrumental in the establishment and success of wilderness trails in Natal, to Salomon Joubert, he praised ‘the tremendously important job that you are doing in building a Wilderness ethos and a constituency of people who will make a determined stand for wilderness values in conservation.’<sup>70</sup> Groups of eight would accompany a ranger on a route through areas of the park generally outside the usual visitor experience. Accommodation was basic and facilities simple, and the trails were priced so that students could afford the experience.<sup>71</sup> It was an opportunity for the ranger to impart knowledge, which was delivered with maximum effect in mind. Player described in a memorandum to colleagues at the Kruger Park how timing was crucial in communication regarding the value of wilderness:

The official who is in charge, he must make it clear that they are fortunate that they are in a wilderness area and that they must obey the wilderness area laws, and then he should concentrate on talking about the wilderness concept. This is usually better done at night than in the day.<sup>72</sup>

Similarly, the effect of having an African ranger accompanying the trail was important:

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<sup>67</sup> Memorandum on Wilderness Trails, U. de V. Pienaar, 1972, in Minutes of National Parks Board Meeting, December 1972, KNP.

<sup>68</sup> Wilderness Trails Six Monthly Report, October 1987, in NK/43/5, KNP.

<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Letter from M. Sonnenberg to J. Oelofse, February 14 1980, in NK/43/2, KNP.

<sup>70</sup> Letter from I. Player to S. Joubert, September 30 1988, in NK/25/1, KNP.

<sup>71</sup> Letter from R. Scialdo to the Director of Nature Conservation, KNP, July 19 1978, in NK/43/2, KNP.

<sup>72</sup> I. Player, Memorandum to KNP on Wilderness Trails in Natal, July 12 1975, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

I found too that there was a great interest in what the black game guard had to say, so I always had Magqubu Ntombela, my senior game guard, accompany me. They have far more patience than we have, and trailers like to get knowledge from these kind of people.

In Manyeleti the use of instruction through interaction took on a different guise. While the principal recipients of educational efforts in Manyeleti were children, there was also provision for select adults. Most visitors were generally left to eat, drink and socialise, however those groups identified as ‘decision makers,’ such as teachers or politicians, were actively sought out for a more engaging and educative experience.<sup>73</sup> The thinking was that by immersing decision makers in a more intensive encounter with nature, they would return to their communities and transfer the messages they had picked up during their experience. Wilderness trails were identified as a potentially productive means of communication to those groups.

In the design of the trails at Manyeleti, advice was sought from leading conservationists around South Africa. The reports sent back to Manyeleti are an interesting document of white beliefs about how Africans saw, understood, and behaved in nature. Rather than merely dismissing Africans as a community disinterested in the environment, these documents show how some within the conservationist movement in South Africa thought there were ways and means to influence and encourage particular groups to think more ecologically. Unlike in the Kruger Park, the wilderness trails in Manyeleti were not meant as an alternative experience to be offered to the public, for which income could be earned. From an early stage it was decided to keep the tariffs low.<sup>74</sup> Instead, the main participants on the trails were to be carefully selected and limited to key ‘decision makers.’ The purpose was ‘the establishment of personal contact with influential blacks in a natural environment’ to encourage conservation awareness.<sup>75</sup> It required the ‘correct psychological atmosphere,’ which, the organisers explained, ‘implies the utilisation and elaboration in a successful manner of the wilderness milieu and the acquisition of a sense of unity between man and nature.’<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Joe Venter, ‘Nature Trails: Manyeleti Game Reserve,’ unpublished report, 27 July 1980, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>74</sup> Minutes of meeting of Manyeleti advisory board, October 1979, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>75</sup> Joe Venter, ‘Nature Trails: Manyeleti Game Reserve,’ unpublished report, 27 July 1980, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>76</sup> ‘Manyeleti Wilderness Trail: Proposals’, Department of Plural Relations and Development, January 1980, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

The organisers and designers may have felt that information on the African leisure market was ‘restricted’, but this did not stop them pushing forward with their plans, aiming their venture at ‘middle and upper class Blacks.’ The stakes were seen as high: in order ‘to obtain positive results with the ecological educational process it is therefore of the utmost importance that the Black participants don’t reject this Wilderness Trail.’<sup>77</sup> The most important feature of this tailored wilderness experience was to be luxury. While wilderness in the Kruger Park was being marketed to white city-dwellers as an escape from luxury, in Manyeleti it was being sold as a means to enjoy luxury. Wilderness, for black participants, was the key to the better things in life.

For many commentators at the time, this was seen as a vital approach to attract visitors. As Mlindeli Gcumisa, from the Wildlife Conservation Society, explained,

The present form of wilderness idea will be unacceptable to most classes of the Black community... Without a somewhat luxury accommodation no or very little interest will be shown.<sup>78</sup>

For Gcumisa, this was because,

Our people’s stage of evolution is such that a thing in which they are encouraged or expected to take interest must be introduced in a form or such a way that it does not remind them of their living conditions (recent past or present) which they associate with backwardness. Admittedly, this will eventually change with time.<sup>79</sup>

One report argued that within African society ‘much importance is attached to prestige, status, relative luxury and social interaction,’ and that they yearned for what they saw white South Africans as having. Yet the full logic of this argument did not extend, in the reports thinking at least, to wilderness experiences. Instead, it was argued that it was ‘logical that recreation activities such as braais, hiking trips, etc., which reminds the Black city dweller of the primitive way of life of his ancestors, would not be viewed with much favour.’<sup>80</sup>

Instead of ‘rustic’ amenities, a word that would frequently arise in the reports to describe the facilities was ‘comfortable.’ Only in a state of comfort would African attitudes be malleable, it was argued. The ‘correct psychological atmosphere’ was

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Letter from M. Gcumisa to P. Hancock, May 18 1980, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> ‘Manyeleti Wilderness Trail: Proposals’, Department of Plural Relations and Development, January 1980, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

‘closely intertwined with the concept “comfort”.’ However, this created a fully acknowledged difficulty, in that a ‘somewhat contradicting’ scenario arose between ‘wilderness and concept.’ That contradiction needed to be overcome by the trail designer. Effectively, it was argued, the ‘black participant is thus placed in a wilderness environment but in a certain sense he still has to feel superior to the primitiveness of the wilderness.’ There was an insinuation that some psychological damage could occur, or at the very least a feeling of extreme repugnance, if this balance was not carefully struck:

He should not be brought too hard and too fast into contact with the wilderness. He should not suddenly be thrown back into the primitive state of his ancestors which he cannot tolerate.<sup>81</sup>

Numbers were limited and a luxurious, permanent camp was required, with particular design needs. For example, comfortable amenities, such as hot and cold running water, and a labourer for cooking and odd jobs, were a must.

The contradictions in the philosophy complicated some of the design decisions. Where accommodation on the Wolhuter Trail in the Kruger Park was in basic rondawels with basic amenities, in Manyeleti it was decided that accommodation should be built rectangular in shape rather than circular, as it was believed that such a design attracted greater prestige value. However the buildings also needed to be built using as many natural materials as possible, so as to reinforce the sense of being in nature. The balance between the luxurious and the primitive, or the artificial and the natural, was a precarious one. Yet the authors of one report were clear on how other South Africans would perceive these designs: ‘the average white participant will definitely rebel against all these luxury facilities on a wilderness trail.’<sup>82</sup>

The sense of luxury and comfort extended to the trails themselves, and there the contradictions also affected the end result. It was believed that physical exercise should be kept to a minimum so as not to repel potential trailers. The author of one report, the manager of the reserve at the time, Johannes Venter, was explicit that ‘no emphasis should be placed on the endurance of physical hardship.’<sup>83</sup> Instead of long walks, the emphasis needed to be on shorter, highly educational trails. A similar

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* Of course, today many of the wilderness lodges in the region that offer wilderness experience for wealthy tourists are some of the most luxuriously fitted accommodations on the continent.

<sup>83</sup> Joe Venter, ‘Nature Trails: Manyeleti Game Reserve,’ unpublished report, 27 July 1980, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

attitude was taken towards the food on the trails, where ingredients needed to reflect the outdoors whilst still being luxurious, and also affordable. They decided on bacon and eggs, cocktail sausages, raisins, stew and rice, and braai meats.<sup>84</sup>

The point to all this luxury was to equate, in the minds of the African middle and ruling class, ecology with status. One report asserted that:

A real effort must be made to present the ecology concept as the most fashionable things (sic)... In other words to be conscious of ecology is to be conscious of status.<sup>85</sup>

Exclusive badges were even suggested to give out to participants to add to that sense of elitism. This process resonates with Pierre Bourdieu's work on distinction.<sup>86</sup> For Bourdieu, cultural activities are used by groups within society to provide cultural capital that can then be exchanged for social or economic forms of capital. Knowledge of certain cultural behaviours and norms acquires certain amounts of cultural capital, and enables groups to distinguish themselves from others. Using ecology and the concept of wilderness, the managers at Manyeleti attempted to define wilderness trails as a cultural activity through which distinction could take place and cultural capital earned.

A similar process had been taking place in the Kruger Park, where many corporate customers had made use of the wilderness trails. However, in the case of the Kruger Park trails, the experience was deliberately pared down in terms of facilities and amenities. The distinction came about through the exclusivity of the experience, and the sharing of the experience that followed: having done a wilderness trail was a marker of status, and the ability to talk about it a means to acquire social and economic capital. The Manyeleti case, however, was different. There the wilderness trails were being forced into a position of status. By trying to make the trails experience luxurious, the trails organisers were attempting to create a piece of cultural capital that could later be exchanged. Yet there was less of a marketplace for this form of enviro-cultural capital. The market that did exist was dominated by white business, and had closed off access to Africans. In addition, by defining the African elite as teachers and politicians the trail designers attempted to force status through narrowly defined channels. The urban African middle class consumer, in a more

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<sup>84</sup> Letter from P. Hancock to M. de Beer, November 1 1980, in BAO 20/245 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

<sup>85</sup> 'Manyeleti Wilderness Trail: Proposals', Department of Plural Relations and Development, January 1980, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>86</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

broad and inclusive sense, was never tested to see whether the wilderness trail was something that they would consume. Where upper and middle class whites were beginning to take to the Wolhuter trail in increasing numbers, this enviro-cultural experience was blocked to the average African consumer. Instead, they were confined to an alternative trail that relied upon racial assumptions regarding how Africans saw and interacted with nature.

The idea that Africans saw nature differently was a commonly held belief, and this affected the content contained within the wilderness trails. For example, Gcumisa was clear that ‘it must be borne in mind that the majority of black people regard the aesthetic and recreational reasons of conservation as being relevant to whites only.’<sup>87</sup> Venter, the manager of Manyeleti in 1980, stated that ‘it is felt that less emphasis should be placed on... the aesthetic appreciation of nature’ on the guided walks. The focus was to be more upon messages of ecological fragility and environmental degradation, delivered in the field. This could then be juxtaposed with the experience of a luxurious rest camp that could be enjoyed in the evenings. However, by stripping the wilderness experience of the less structured elements, and leaving only the educational, the designers were alienating their potential customers.

Yet this idea that Africans had little or no interest in the aesthetic side of nature sits in contrast to the theory of looking that was in vogue among conservationists in South Africa at this time, and attempts were made to explain and understand this variance. In his research, Pete Hancock, the assistant manager at Manyeleti, was recommended, and read, Jay Appleton’s *The Experience of Landscape*. This ethological approach to environmental aesthetics argued that when people saw beauty in landscape they were actually acknowledging potential prospects or refuges. For example, places that would be good vantage points, or secure hideaways, such as mountaintops or caves, drew the eye. Similarly, spots that provided sustenance would also attract the line of sight. The theory stated that those innate urges dictate the way we see landscape.<sup>88</sup>

By linking aesthetic appreciation of nature with survival strategies, the theory suggests that everyone should be able to aesthetically appreciate nature. Of course, it could be argued that prospects and refuges might have different visual signifiers in different cultures, but even so the argument suggests that all people should see beauty

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<sup>87</sup> Letter from M. Gcumisa to P. Hancock, May 18 1980, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>88</sup> J. Appleton, *The Experience of Landscape* (London, 1975), p.67.

in nature. Yet there was a persistent assumption that Africans had no aesthetic appreciation of nature. This discrepancy needs an explanation.

Urban whites were seen to be able to aesthetically reconnect with nature because civilization had kept them separate from the natural environment for a significant amount of time. As a result, when they saw prospects and refuges, they recognised the beauty. However, it was assumed that Africans could not aesthetically appreciate the environment in a similar fashion when looking at the same landscape. It was possible to reconcile those racial assumptions with the prospect-refuge theory in many people's minds by introducing historical distance as an important agent. For some, Appleton's theory only applied to peoples living for longer periods in urban settings, or away from the landscape that was being viewed. Africans, without as long a historical distance as whites, were unable to properly recognise the aesthetic beauty of prospects and refuges. It was too much of a reminder of their previous life in that very landscape. Prospects and refuges were not beautiful, but harsh reminders of a brutal existence. Civilization therefore always needed to be near at hand. For example, Gcumisa supposed that 'young people in particular would be happier if they would come across some roads while in wilderness,' insinuating an inherent inability to enjoy wilderness in the same way as whites.<sup>89</sup>

In the case of Manyeleti it was the landscape itself that was to prove most unhelpful. After reading *Experience of Landscape* it was realised that the Albatross farm area in Manyeleti, that had been earmarked for the wilderness trail, had low aesthetic value as it had no 'properly defined edges' or high points. The weak refuge symbolism and weak prospect symbolism was seen as a big problem. Consequently it was determined in one report that 'the aesthetic value of the landscape has therefore a high potential for producing a rather monotonous and somewhat dull Wilderness Trail,' an affect that 'could be heightened by the rather hot climate.'<sup>90</sup> In the reports there is almost no mention of how animals fitted with these plans, with the emphasis always being on the general 'environment' as the focus of study.

These reports reflected the thinking of those behind constructing a wilderness experience for Africans in South Africa in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It took a long time to acquire the funding for the project, and several years passed before

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<sup>89</sup> Letter from M. Gcumisa to P. Hancock, May 18 1980, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

<sup>90</sup> 'Manyeleti Wilderness Trail: Proposals', Department of Plural Relations and Development, January 1980, in BAO 20/240 H62/13/1080/1, NASA.

completion of the rest camp and the trails. The wilderness trails did not open until after the handover of Manyeleti to Gazankulu in 1985. Only in the late 1980s was the Khokomoyo camp, as the trails rest camp had been named, beginning to accept guests. However, the impact seems to have been limited and investigations were conducted to restructure and refocus the camp to offer a luxury experience to any that could afford it, without the need to go on any wilderness trails, or to hold any particular employment. Despite this lack of impact, the reports into the wilderness trails are revealing of contemporary ideas about race, class and the aesthetics of the environment. It shows that Manyeleti was seen as a tool with which government departments could attempt to induce social as well as ideological change.

## Race, Nationalism and Gender around Kruger

The link between the Kruger National Park, conservation and Afrikaner nationalism developed and strengthened connections during this period that were played out in the representational material. Several National Party politicians held nominal titles within the Wildlife Conservation Society, and political figures often provided forewords or introductions for conservationist texts produced in South Africa.<sup>91</sup> The groundwork for this relationship had been laid in the years before the Second World War, in such works as *South African Eden* and other popular texts, as well as in the naming of the national park itself. Building on this foundation, new texts furthered the iconographic associations between the park and the National Party.

Men such as Labuschagne, Bigalke and Knobel were instrumental in this process. In the first edition of *African Wild Life*, Bigalke penned a defence of Voortrekker practice in the Lowveld in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that argued that no matter how much Paul Kruger may have hunted, 'it was always for the pot, and never just wanton destruction.'<sup>92</sup> Carruthers has shown the strong links between the park and Paul Kruger,<sup>93</sup> and the links between the president and the very landscape of the park became further enmeshed during this period. Paintings and photographs fused Kruger with the landscape, frequently presenting him as a quasi-deity in ghostly form hovering above the Lowveld, either in oil or sepia tint.<sup>94</sup> The most controversial installation of Kruger over the landscape came from the suggestion to carve his bust into the top of a kopje inside the park in the late 1960s.<sup>95</sup> The resulting furore forced the authorities to create a more humble (though still imposing) bust that can be seen today at the Paul Kruger Gate. However, arguably the most significant veneration of the former president was in the policy not to name any further national parks after individuals, even in the face of public support for a park named after Hendrik Verwoerd.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> See, for example, the introduction by D. Malan, in Stokes, *South African Wild Life in Pictures*.

<sup>92</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1946, p.278.

<sup>93</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, p.81.

<sup>94</sup> See, for example, Shooting Script 'African Ark,' by Neil Curry, Insight Films, 1984, in NK/17/2, KNP, or 'The Kruger National Park Painting,' copy of painting by G. Bottero, in NK/25/1, KNP.

<sup>95</sup> H. Kloppers, 'Report on Kruger Memorial,' in Minutes of the National Parks Board, September 23 1968, KNP.

<sup>96</sup> Minutes of the National Parks Board, June 23 1967, KNP.

During the 1960s especially, but also into the 1970s, the parks board liaison office, headed up by Labuschagne, liked to propagate the visual links between the Kruger Park and the National Party through forewords, photographs and flattery. In 1968 Labuschagne published a guide to the country's national parks in which the Kruger Park featured heavily and the link between the National Party and the park was made very explicit. He accused the pre-1948 governments of neglecting the national parks, while close personal ties between contemporary politicians and the park were broadcast: B.J. Vorster, later prime minister of South Africa, wrote in the foreword that 'I like to speak of the Kruger Park as my farm because, like all its other visitors, I feel that here, as on a farmyard, I can sit and muse and look and listen.'<sup>97</sup> While many politicians were described as 'among the most regular patrons of the national parks,' it was Hendrik Verwoerd who was 'the only member of the Cabinet thus far who visited all the parks'. The illustrations accompanying the text included one image of Verwoerd standing by a baobab tree, as well as plenty of images showing groups of politicians at leisure in the park.

Labuschagne was making a link between national park visitation and suitability for South African office, a sentiment shared by the Director of the parks board Rocco Knobel and members of the National Party cabinet. As Vorster wrote in his foreword, city dwellers 'deviated' from the idyllic state of voortrekker society because of 'competition, standardization and ambition'. As a crucible of voortrekker iconography, the Kruger Park allowed some to 'refresh themselves at the source which our forefathers discovered' and return to Pretoria, Johannesburg or Cape Town renewed with resilience. Park staff wrote and spoke frequently about the links between civilization and nature: Knobel described how industries, cities and nature made up the triptych of civilization; while Steyn asserted on New Zealand public radio how conservation was 'an inherent concept of our Western civilization... All people's of our cultural group, like you in Australia or New Zealand, share this cultural affinity with us.'<sup>98</sup>

Conservation also provided the National Party with a non-threatening conduit to the outside world through which discourses could continue to flow. The Kruger Park continued its synecdochal role: as Labuschagne acknowledged in his volume on

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<sup>97</sup> Labuschagne, *The Kruger Park and Other National Parks*, foreword.

<sup>98</sup> See Transcript of Interview on New Zealand Broadcasting Service, January 25 1960, in NK/38/5, KNP, and 'Die KrugerWildtuin – en 'n Veranderende wereld,' draft speech by R. Knobel, in NK/38/5, KNP.

the national parks of South Africa, the Kruger Park was ‘the window through which the rest of the world may regard South Africa.’<sup>99</sup> As a synecdoche of South Africa, the urban was edited out and the country condensed into that single cultural experience, in the way that the Statue of Liberty represented America or the Eiffel Tower represented France. As a window the Kruger Park therefore took on great significance and became a propaganda tool in itself for the country at large.

Wildlife films were a particularly useful means of communication in terms of informative messages about South Africa. They acted as a link to the rest of the world when many other ties with the outside world were severed. The parks board and several conservationists realised that this link was one of the safest means to communicate messages about the country. Laurens van der Post, writing to the park to thank them for their assistance on a film project, explained that,

I realized that in a sense what we were doing was only a pilot scheme but it is a wedge driven deep at last in the wall of world resistance against recognizing what is good and positive and best in our beloved country and I hope that we will have driven this wedge so deep that the wall shall be bridged and that masses more can follow. With your help we can sow the seeds of a great new beginning of a world view of South Africa.<sup>100</sup>

Norma Vorster, working in America, described how ‘I realize now that we need the exposure even more in view of what is happening in Africa and the necessity of showing the world that we are very kind, normal people and not the ogres we are made out to be... most of the American people are on our side in spite of what Kissinger says.’<sup>101</sup>

The use of modern filmmaking technology in South African parks also served to highlight South Africa’s difference from other African states. In a letter to the BBC producer at the Natural History unit in Bristol, the warden of the Kruger Park described how the idea of a live broadcast from the park could ‘stimulate tremendous interest in South Africa in general’ as it was going to include some cutting-edge infra-red night vision material.<sup>102</sup> Conservation film was also seen as a useful means of reminding the South African white population of the qualities of the country, and technological development was a common component of such messages. It was thought that as an internal propaganda tool it could reinforce how particular approaches to wildlife management had been developed in South Africa, which in

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<sup>99</sup> Labuschagne, *The Kruger Park and Other National Parks*, p.130.

<sup>100</sup> Letter from L. van der Post to U. de V. Pienaar, November 19 1974, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>101</sup> Letter from N. Foster to R. Knobel, May 26 1976, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>102</sup> Letter from U. de V. Pienaar to P. Bale, August 9 1977, in NK/17/2, KNP.

turn bolstered ideas of white scientific and moral superiority.<sup>103</sup>

Films such as *The Peace Game* (1970) and, more significantly, its successor *African Ark* (1985), communicated the message that South African conservation was the saviour of the continent's wildlife against disease, urbanization and, most significantly, poaching.<sup>104</sup> This discourse matched the discourse that the National Party was trying to propagate in Western Europe and America that it provided the only reasonable bulwark against communism on the continent. As South Africa became increasingly divorced from the international arena during the 1980s, *African Ark* was made to smuggle various messages about the country through the subject of conservationism. The film borrowed from cutting edge scientific practices in order to convey several messages: 'that South Africa is willing to accept responsibility for preserving the genetic diversity of Southern Africa, for the benefit of mankind'; 'that it is prepared to share its knowledge and expertise with its neighbours to help them raise their living standards'; and 'that the country is politically and economically stable'.<sup>105</sup> 'Man the killer has become man the conservationist' was a tagline, and one that implied that 'man the killer' was still out there in the form of rogue African states with little care for wildlife.

One of the key points in the film was that the Kruger National Park, by preserving wildlife, was preserving gene pools that held answers to life's great questions, thereby making the park a repository of knowledge that ensured humanity's survival: 'every creature is nature's solution to some survival problem of the past and the earth's gene pool has the answers – even to those questions we haven't yet realized we might have to ask.' Essentially, the Kruger Park was being represented as a library. This rhetoric fitted with broader trends surrounding global biodiversity conservation while also reiterating the role being played by the South African government for the good of international needs. Much of the language underplayed the conservationist approaches of other African countries in order to highlight and emphasise how fragile this genetic deposit was. In turn, this acted as a defence of the National Party's governance of South Africa during the 1980s, and its role within the region at large. Such texts suggested that the Kruger Park was a model for biodiversity conservation and a defence against the threat of environmental

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<sup>103</sup> Letter from Penguin Films to NPB, November 15 1988, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>104</sup> Shooting Script 'African Ark,' by Neil Curry, Insight Films, 1984, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

catastrophe. South Africa already presented itself as a bulwark against communism, and the two fears served to reinforce each other.

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While the Kruger Park fitted into a national discourse, it also continued to cultivate a para-statal discourse of its own, which attempted to forge an impression of Kruger as an autonomous region. This process had begun in the 1930s, when the park was represented through its maps as a clearly defined region, different to the countries or provinces around it, and replete with the various facilities and infrastructure one expected from a modern state, including several villages. By the 1950s the park maps had excised any suggestion of residence. This was part of the general trend that was removing the human from the wildlife experience as discussed earlier in this chapter. From 1952 the maps of the Kruger Park showed only rest camps and picnic spots as places with a human presence.<sup>106</sup> Gone too were any mention of WNLA, the South African Police, or the military. The camps were marked with symbols similar to those indicating major conurbations outside of the perimeter, thereby establishing a link between the urban centres and the micro-urban rest camps, as if to reinforce the affiliation between the two areas. Rural African settlements within the park were no longer marked, as if in denial of any African residence in the park at all. This legacy has existed to this day.

The Kruger Park maps maintained this image of virtual independence until the mid-1970s when the homeland project was being pushed through, and the various semi-independent states were being created, with three around the Kruger National Park. As if in response to this partial Africanisation of the eastern Transvaal, Afrikaner culture began to make greater claims on the Kruger Park and exaggerate their linkages. In 1975, for example, a book was published about the first white visitors to the region from the Dutch East India Company, thereby creating a historical connection with the area.<sup>107</sup> This period also saw several recollections by park staff or biographies of personalities from the history of the park.<sup>108</sup> More important, a new edition of *South African Eden* was released, with a foreword and

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<sup>106</sup> KNP Map, NPB, c.1952, in NK/38/2, KNP.

<sup>107</sup> W. Punt, *The First Europeans in the Kruger National Park*, (Pretoria, 1975).

<sup>108</sup> See, for example, Kloppers, *Game Ranger*, and D. Tattersall, *Skukuza: Die Verhaal van James Stevenson-Hamilton en die Kruger Wildtuin*, (Cape Town, 1972).

other additional material by Rocco Knobel and U. de V. Pienaar, in which the advancements of the parks board since 1946 were emphasized, and the links between the park and its long Afrikaner history were underlined.<sup>109</sup> During the homeland period the link between Kruger National Park and South Africa was reinforced and accentuated far more than at any period before.

The maps also altered during this period to help representationally include the Kruger Park into South Africa proper. There was a danger that cartographically the Kruger Park could appear one of the new homelands. An official map from around 1980 showed the park in yellow, the Transvaal in coral, and Mozambique in green. In the south of the park, where no independent homelands had been created, the word 'Transvaal', like in all maps prior to this, appeared outside of the park borders. However, on the map of the northern half of the park, where the independent state of Venda had come into existence, a small proportion of the word 'Transvaal' overlapped into the park.<sup>110</sup> This was the first map in the history of the park where the park had been explicitly included into the Transvaal symbolically in such a way. The process of cartographical inclusion increased over the course of the decade: by 1988 the 'l' of Transvaal appeared in the southern section of the park, and 'ansvaal' overlapped into the northern section.<sup>111</sup> The Kruger Park administration seem more anxious about presenting the park as semi-autonomous, and there was now no doubting which part of the eastern Transvaal belonged to a homeland government, and which was still very much part of South Africa.

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The idea of a community of visitors, and a sense that regular visitors to the park shared a culture became particularly important in the 1950s and 1960s. Books and guides indicated to visitors how to act, what to do, and how to behave. One book outlined campfire stories to tell and games to play while inside the park.<sup>112</sup> The family unit was an important component of this culture. Throughout this period images of large and small families enjoying the rest camps were mainstays in books and

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<sup>109</sup> R. Knobel and U. de V. Pienaar, 'Epilogue: From 1946 to the Present Day,' in Stevenson-Hamilton, *South African Eden*, (London, 1974).

<sup>110</sup> KNP map, NPB, c.1980, in NK/38/5, KNP.

<sup>111</sup> KNP map, NPB, 1988, in NK/38/5, KNP.

<sup>112</sup> A. Dawes, *Kruger Park Guide*, (Johannesburg, 1968).

brochures on the park.<sup>113</sup> People tended to have clearly defined roles in these scenes. The female role was presented as that of facilitator for the male family members. This was most pronounced in films on game rangers, where the ranger's wife was always pictured inside the home preparing meals or restocking first aid boxes.<sup>114</sup> The only women pictured in the bush in those films were African women.<sup>115</sup>

Crucial to this community culture was the code of behaviour, and the Kruger Park became a place with an idealised moral code of conduct that saw itself in opposition to the behaviour found in South Africa's cities. Knobel argued that it was people's law abiding-ness that typified the park visitor, rather than any class or cultural background, and he even went so far as to claim that law-breakers had little interest in wildlife.<sup>116</sup> The National Parks Board's interpretation of honesty was reflected in its representations. Any suggestion of falsification of wildlife images was strongly discouraged: for example darting scenes in films or photographs had to be authentic and done only by a biologist.<sup>117</sup> Similarly, the administration encouraged most film companies to film from the tourist roads, in order to show only what was 'readily available to the tourist.'<sup>118</sup> The park authorities too, like their predecessors, preferred to present an image of themselves as straight talking, modest individuals working for the good of the natural world, with the Kruger Park as the true celebrity.

The representational material coming out of the park played up ideas of honesty, and linked that quality with the very fabric of nature. The natural world was frequently described as 'cruel but honest' and the park administration's actions as 'cruel [in order] to be kind'.<sup>119</sup> This discourse of sincerity, however, could not halt a discursive reaction that saw the parks board as anything but open and honest. The building of the canning factory after the park had insisted such a development would never be considered was one such deceit.<sup>120</sup>

Ideas of honesty came to the fore in representations of poachers and the Kruger Park. The park was keen not to stereotype white poachers as the 'bearded type

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<sup>113</sup> See, for example, Stokes, *South African Wild Life in Pictures*.

<sup>114</sup> Outline of Proposed Film: 'A Day in the Life of a Game Ranger,' in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>115</sup> Film Synopsis for 'Savage Eden,' in NK/17/3, KNP.

<sup>116</sup> 'Die Kruger Wildtuin – en 'n Veranderende wereld,' draft speech by R. Knobel, in NK/38/5, KNP.

<sup>117</sup> See 'Approval for the making of films and taking photos in any park under the jurisdiction of the National Parks Board of Trustees in the Republic of South Africa,' Memorandum, in NK/17/2, KNP, and Letter from The Director, NPB, to S. Persson, July 7 1964, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>118</sup> Letter from Director of Tourism, South African Tourism Board, to Executive Director, NPB, April 17 1985, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>119</sup> *The Star*, February 2 1972.

<sup>120</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1967, p.97.

of biltong hunter' that some external companies liked to use, as this tended to look too much like a typical farmer.<sup>121</sup> Sometimes white poachers could be represented as Robin Hood type figures, and conservationists complained about this preferential treatment. African poachers, however, tended to attract harsher depictions. In the 1950s, damage wrought by poachers tended to be presented graphically in the pages of *African Wild Life*: common pictures included the charred remains of slaughtered creatures; rooms full of snares and traps; or animals strangled in a noose.<sup>122</sup> Some of these images could have strong religious overtones: one photograph of a skinned wildebeest with an exposed ribcage was accompanied by the caption: 'Take from my side a rib, and of what remains make for me a kindlier world.'<sup>123</sup>

On the opposite page to the excoriated wildebeest was a full page photograph of a wildebeest 'family' made up of two adults and a calf. The association with the previous photograph is clear, and the message was that poaching attacks such family scenes and thereby assaults the very idea of the nuclear family.<sup>124</sup> Elsewhere the relationship between poaching and family was more explicit: the wire snare was described in one article as surpassing 'all other methods in wanton destruction, for it kills male or female, mature or immature without discrimination.'<sup>125</sup> Another series of photographs captured poachers in the act of their business. In those stills, two men dressed in suits stood for various photographs at different moments of the crime, giving the sequence an air of incredulity.<sup>126</sup> To have them suited made links between poachers and the cities, which was reinforced by stories of wires being brought back to the eastern Transvaal by migrant workers returning home. Images of poaching in the Kruger Park were therefore coloured by views of African urbanism held more widely by the white South African population.

While Afrikaners could be described as having 'veld eyes and ears,' representations of African staff generally depicted them in tune with racial stereotypes at work outside the park. Most frequently, Africans appeared as assistants in various conservation projects, and were little more than foot soldiers in a white-run venture. Elsewhere, particularly in independently produced films, African staff were presented going about their business. However, a common depiction in those films was of the

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<sup>121</sup> Letter from the Director, NPB, to David Millin Productions, October 29 1956, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>122</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1955, p.98.

<sup>123</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 5 No. 2, 1951, p.103.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, p.104.

<sup>125</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1951, p.278.

<sup>126</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1956, p.195.

staff member climbing a tree. Ostensibly to ‘get a better look’, it was only the African staff who were represented in trees. White staff were far more commonly depicted at the wheel of a vehicle.<sup>127</sup> This closeness to nature that was attributed to many African staff was echoed by the respect accorded local knowledge and the denigration given to western education. In Hans Kloppers’ *Game Ranger*, the educated African was presented as lost in the bushveld, while the ‘natural’ knowledge of the elder was esteemed.<sup>128</sup> In a similar way, as discussed earlier, Ian Player recommended the presence of an African guide on wilderness trails to satisfy the expectations of trailists who sought African knowledge when out on a wilderness trail. Via these means the discourses of nature and African education in the country at large fused and assisted each other.

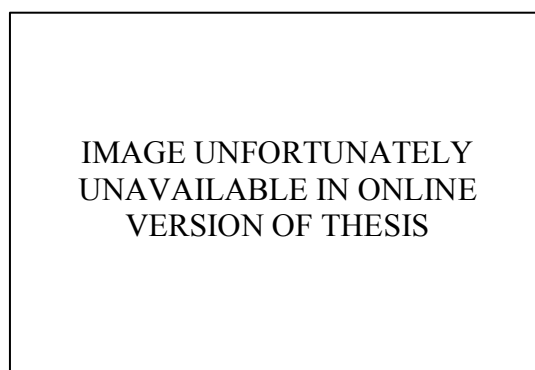
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<sup>127</sup> See, for example, Outline of Proposed Film: ‘A Day in the Life of a Game Ranger,’ in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>128</sup> Kloppers, *Game Ranger*, p.54.

## Race, Nationalism and Gender around Manyeleti

The social and cultural expectations placed upon Manyeleti as an environmental and educational enterprise interfered with its role as a holiday resort. The Manyeleti brochure was a key contact point between the game reserve and the public. The front page was perhaps the most appealing section, with its invitation to ‘see all the animals you want’ or to ‘hear the lions roar at night’. Inside, the brochure was all details, lists and regulations, with much made of the issuing and carrying of a permit. Save for the front cover there were no positive sales phrases and no real attempt to entice a visitor all the way out to Acornhoek and beyond.<sup>129</sup> The result was a brochure that presented an aura of control. Everything appeared to be monitored within the reserve, from time management (there are opening times, meal times, and closing times prescribed) to speed. Nature was presented as a tightly controlled space with strict codes of behaviour.



*Fig. 5.5 Pages from the Manyeleti brochure*<sup>130</sup>

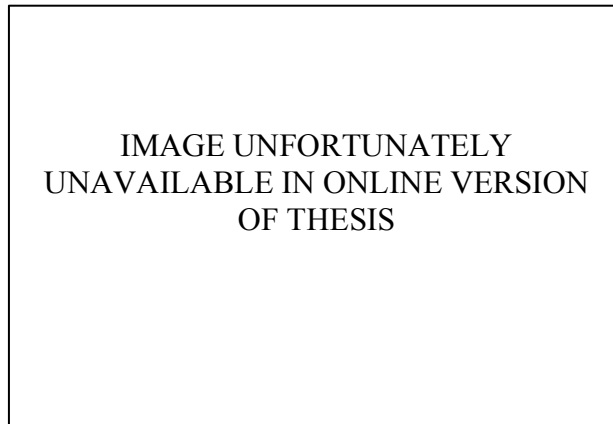
It is interesting to compare the text of the Manyeleti brochure with the text found in the Umgababa brochure. The most noticeable difference is the glossiness of the latter, which was in full colour rather than the trichromatic black, white and orange of the Manyeleti brochure. Inside, phrases beseeched the reader to visit, highlighting how easy it was to get to, or how simple it was to book. The bar was described as a space ‘where you can relax, chat and enjoy refreshments after a game of tennis or a soccer match.’ Furthermore, ‘an inter-com system from the chalets to

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<sup>129</sup> Manyeleti Brochure, in BAO 13/973 J76/84, NASA.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

the bar enables you to place orders directly.’<sup>131</sup> Every page was set aside for a different feature or activity, and glossy photographs showed people enjoying themselves and relaxing. Umgababa was presented as an aspirational space, with pictures of people getting into a Mercedes-Benz outside of a luxury chalet.



*Fig. 5.6 Pages from the Umgababa brochure*<sup>132</sup>

Umgababa was unhampered by any need to be educational, for it was meant as a purely recreational area. Manyeleti, with its educational policy and conservationist intent, struggled to represent itself. Yet the differences ran deeper than merely glossy images. Manyeleti, in having to represent conservation, found itself with difficulties representing people. It was a restraint shared by the Kruger Park, yet Manyeleti found the path between conservation and recreation more difficult to navigate. A reason for this lies in attitudes to race and the environment in South Africa at this time. Firstly, game reserves were selling themselves as lightly populated spaces where tranquillity was a buzzword, and mini-golf and trampolining were an ill fit with this discourse. Secondly, part of the conservation rhetoric delivered to Africans during this period revolved around birth rates. From a conservationist point of view, by the 1970s the birth rate was seen as a major national (and global) concern, due to its impact upon future resource distribution.<sup>133</sup> This was reinforced by the objectives of the apartheid state, where birth rates among the African population needed to be managed to ensure the state's ability to maintain the preferential treatment given to the white population.

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<sup>131</sup> Umgababa Holiday Resort Brochure, in OEO 1 734 A13/6/2/1/4, NASA.

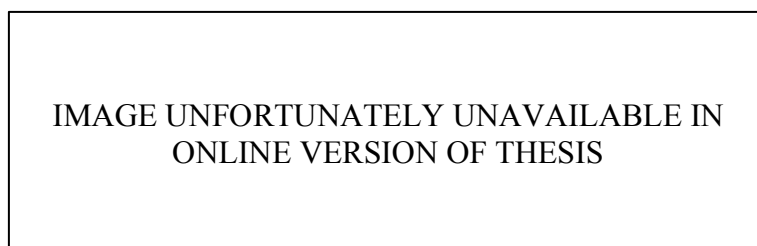
<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> B. Brown, 'Facing the 'Black Peril': The Politics of Population Control in South Africa,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1987.

This awkward relationship with birth rates was reflected in the photography of Manyeleti.

The centrally run Department of Information was responsible for many of the images that illustrated the game reserve's publicity. Manyeleti, and the natural world that it contained, was seen as a particularly good canvas for messages about the relationship between people and nature. In the promotional material for Manyeleti there were very few photographs of families, and none of a family with more than one child. The brochure, for example, used an image on its cover of a man pointing out of his car window with his daughter following his gaze. The original image contained the man's wife in the passenger seat, yet she was cropped out. This left a man, firmly in control, directing the gaze of his daughter. That was the only image of people in the whole brochure. One must be careful not to read too much into one image, so it is worthwhile considering it alongside other illustrations of Manyeleti that appeared in newspapers and magazines.

Among the numerous illustrations in a *Soweto News* article on Manyeleti in 1980, not one contained a woman. Instead, either a single man or small groups of men were represented, beneath captions such as 'a good place to relax.'<sup>134</sup> One photograph showed a man sitting alone on an iron bed in an otherwise quite bare room, accompanied by the caption 'comfortable accommodation in luxury rondavels.' These images compared starkly to the family images that supplemented the Kruger Park's promotional material. Kruger was a family concern, and its brochures frequently depicted a husband and wife with two children, or even larger groups of extended family. Manyeleti in comparison was presented as a more austere and sombre space, where a small family was a rare thing, and a larger one unheard of. It went out of its way to excise the female and the familial.



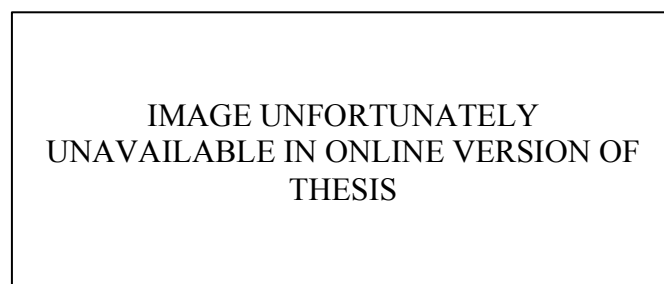
*Fig. 5.7 Photos from story in Soweto News*<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Extract from Article in *Soweto News*, 1980, BAO 20/241 H62/13/1080, NASA.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

It is instructive to compare these photographs with those representing Umgababa, where a more inclusive representation of women and children can be seen. In newspaper and magazine articles, families were a more prominent feature of the Umgababa experience, and the space was actively marketed as a place for the family. Children appear in groups, and even spaces such as bars are shown patronised by men and women together. This contrast with Manyeleti highlights the weight of influence that the conservationist discourse, informed by the parallel discourse on race, had on representations of the game reserve in comparison to the beach resort. It shows that political ideas around race are not enough to explain the absence of the family at Manyeleti, but instead it must be understood in combination with political ideas around the environment. When compared to photographs of family life in the Kruger National Park, the absence or oppressive depiction of women at Manyeleti seems starkly alienating of a group that were crucial in the popularisation of game-viewing in the white community. To have shown themselves as anti-family, and anti-women in many respects, Manyeleti severely damaged its chances of popularising game-viewing and the game reserve experience among the African population.



*Fig. 5.8 Photographs from the Umgababa brochure*<sup>136</sup>

This attitude to gender was supported and fortified by developments inside the reserve, from the accommodation arrangements to the film screenings. The size of the rondavels, with three beds in the luxury huts and five beds in the ordinary huts, suited families with one, two or three children. Umgababa, in comparison, could accommodate six in each of its ordinary chalets.<sup>137</sup> The authorities seem to have had an anxious approach to African accommodation in general, reflecting wider concerns

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<sup>136</sup> Umgababa Holiday Resort Brochure, in OEO 1 734 A13/6/2/1/4, NASA.

<sup>137</sup> *Sunday Times*, August 26 1973.

over the African presence on land outside the homeland districts. The chief architect behind Manyeleti had recommended having more than one rest camp in order to separate group visitors from individual and family visitors, but this had been deemed impractical, and the result was that all visitors stayed in the same vicinity, whether they were a class of school pupils or a casual tourist.<sup>138</sup> A campsite was also considered for use by visitors, however, after much discussion, the idea was dismissed for fear that such an allowance could encourage the formation of a 'plakkerskamp' (squatters' camp).<sup>139</sup>

Films were a popular means of interaction with school groups in particular.<sup>140</sup> For many, one former employee has suggested in an interview, Manyeleti was their first cinematic experience and therefore acquired some significance.<sup>141</sup> The management sought to use films as a way to inform African school children about impending environmental disaster, caused primarily by over population. Such a message conveniently ran parallel with other attempts to limit the African population: the apartheid government saw demographic imbalance as a very real problem for the future of South Africa. Population limitation was therefore a popular theme, and at Manyeleti family planning films were suggested for screening to children from primary levels upwards.<sup>142</sup>

School visits to Manyeleti lasted only a night or two, and the impact that such a brief visit could have on the mind-set of the visitor was questioned, and a more comprehensive and immersive experience was considered in the late 1970s. In a report by the Department of Education in 1980, outdoor education was considered to be a powerful tool to alter the attitudes of African students, and was seen as a particularly potent means of inspiring patriotism. It was argued that the environment could offer an alternative nationalism for Africans, which would help in the fight against communism. The plan was to work with carefully selected institutions so as not to lose control of the project.<sup>143</sup> Manyeleti was frequently attempting to start up an

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<sup>138</sup> Report on proposed new tourist camp at Jeukpeulhoek, in BAO 5580 H65/1080/92/1, NASA.

<sup>139</sup> Squatter's camp. Minutes of meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, October 1978, in BAO 20 243 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

<sup>140</sup> Hancock, Nobela and Mathebula, 'Long Term Plan for the Development of the Manyeleti Information Centre,' unpublished report, 1980, in BAO 20/241 H62/13/1080, NASA.

<sup>141</sup> Interview with P. Nobela.

<sup>142</sup> Hancock, Nobela and Mathebula, 'Long Term Plan for the Development of the Manyeleti Information Centre,' unpublished report, 1980, in BAO 20/241 H62/13/1080, NASA.

<sup>143</sup> 'Report on Outdoor Education and the Youth,' Department of Education, 1980, in BAO 20 234 H62/13/, NASA.

equivalent veld school with these types of objectives.<sup>144</sup> However, despite some grand plans, the scheme never gained traction, although the idea was constantly being revived even after Gazankulu took up ownership of the reserve in 1985.

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The Manyeleti rest camp was the nucleus of the reserve and the focus of many ideas in relation to how people, and particularly Africans, should spend their time in nature. The camp was built around the farm buildings at Jeukpeulhoek, and was not finished until 1969, two years after the official opening. The original brief to the architects Richardson and Bosch, at a meeting with de Wet Nel, was for the ‘camp not to be too luxurious but must make a good impression.’<sup>145</sup> A later letter to confirm these decisions added the detail that six of the rondavels should be ‘reasonably luxurious.’<sup>146</sup> After research trips to the Kruger Park, the first draft plan by Richardson, principal architect for the project, suggested a family focused camp, made up of rondavels and small dormitories for 24 to 48 pupils. He recommended a play area for games including deck quoits and table tennis, as well as an off license, ‘not so much as a source of additional income but mainly for its social value in creating a proper environment for better control of the consumption of liquor which will inevitably find its way into this Reserve as it has in those frequented by Whites.’<sup>147</sup> Richardson advised against thatched roofs due to the accompanying difficulties with their maintenance, and strongly opposed two-tier bunks in the dormitories as they were unpopular in the Kruger Park and ‘Union Health also frowns on it.’<sup>148</sup> In the original plans were plans for hamburger grills, soda dispensers, and a hot dog machine.<sup>149</sup> It was envisaged by the architect as a contemporary space to be used in a modern way, and an American influence, which was beginning to permeate South African consumption at this time, is clearly evident. Overall, Richardson’s philosophy for Manyeleti was that ‘any facilities which would tend to create the

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<sup>144</sup> Minutes of meeting on veld schools in Manyeleti, BAO 20/241 H62/13/1080, NASA.

<sup>145</sup> Minutes of meeting between Richardson & Bosch Architects and the Department of Bantu Administration and Development, September 3 1964, in BAO 5580 H65/1080/92/1, NASA.

<sup>146</sup> Letter from D. Schonegevel, Department of Bantu Administration and Development, to K. Richardson, October 29 1964, in BAO 5580 H65/1080/92/1, NASA.

<sup>147</sup> Report on proposed new tourist camp at Jeukpeulhoek, in BAO 5580 H65/1080/92/1, NASA.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> Architectural plans for kiosk, February 2 1969, in BAO 5580 H65/1080/92/1, NASA.

separation of the sexes or possibly affect the family unit (such as public bars) will be very strongly opposed.’<sup>150</sup>

Many of the plans were altered, ignored, or pared down once reviewed by the Department for Bantu Administration and Development. For example, the dormitory size rose to 60 and then to 100 per dormitory, far exceeding those in the Kruger Park. In addition, to ensure maximum capacity, double decker bunks were ordered, although their late arrival meant sleeping mats were used during the first few years of the reserve’s existence. There were no deck quoits or table tennis. Underinvestment during the lifetime of the game reserve ensured that by the early 1980s Manyeleti’s age and lack of sufficient funding began to show. Rusting gates, bat infestations and leaking roofs needed fixing, and the warden at the time complained that Manyeleti compared poorly with the rest camps in the Kruger Park, Umfolozi or Pilanesberg, which by then all accepted African tourists.<sup>151</sup>

The racial policy at the game reserve had a generally negative impact upon perceptions. Many of the white founders thought that an exclusive space would bring a sense of pride and ownership in the reserve among the African population. However, for others, that barrier was a disruptive force that unsettled the overall mission, and they were able to quote visitor reactions as evidence. A general attitude, according to one board member, was that the camp ‘has been regarded as an inferior place because it was erected for Blacks.’<sup>152</sup> This mirrors the judgement by one warden of the reserve who described the view of most visitors to be that Manyeleti was an ‘inferior place for inferior people.’<sup>153</sup>

The price of entry and accommodation were also seen to have an impact upon people’s attitudes. At its opening and generally throughout the 1970s, the prices were kept low so as to encourage as many people as possible to visit. Yet low costs were not only an attraction, they could also deter visitors in some people’s opinion. A member of the Gazankulu legislative assembly, with a seat on the Manyeleti advisory board, argued in 1982 that, ‘people view the quality of service and facilities through the price paid. The pick-and-shovel people will not visit Manyeleti even if the tariffs

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<sup>150</sup> Report on proposed new tourist camp at Jeukpeulhoek, in BAO 5580 H65/1080/92/1, NASA.

<sup>151</sup> Letter from A. Rall to M. de Beer, February 3 1981, in BAO 20 246 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

<sup>152</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, June 1986, KGG 185 7/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>153</sup> F. Ferrario, ‘The Present Situation at Manyeleti (A Product Analysis),’ in KGG 183 7/2/2/1, NASA.

are low.’<sup>154</sup> The Gazankulu Assistant-Secretary of Justice agreed, adding that ‘low tariffs give the impression that people will not be able to see enough wildlife.’<sup>155</sup> For these board members, therefore, the quality of the wildlife experience, in many people’s eyes, was correlated to the price of the entry ticket. Their argument came in the context of a real need to increase revenue for Manyeleti before 1985, when their government was scheduled to take over. A sudden price hike as soon as they had control of the reserve would have reflected badly on the Gazankulu government, so the need to price nature right before the transfer was important.

This lack of investment combined with the growing pressure to pass the game reserve over to the nascent homeland of Gazankulu. This led to fear of negative criticism, and bad experiences could lead to public relations disasters. In October 1980 some late arrivals were banned from entering the reserve and were forced to sleep outside the gate, in the bus and on the ground. It turned out that they were staff from the Gazankulu government and this led to negative publicity in the Gazankulu press, including the description of Manyeleti as the ‘yoke and city of venomous and flesh-hungry game’ where ‘complete consciousness to rules is the priority and nothing more.’<sup>156</sup> Ntsanwisi, in whose homeland the reserve was now officially located, was forced to both condemn the behaviour of the management team at Manyeleti and also assuage people’s fears about visiting the game reserve.<sup>157</sup> The result of this anxiety was that the authorities became increasingly open to various uses of the reserve. Where Kruger could afford to be fairly rigorous in its application of regulations, Manyeleti from the 1970s gradually became a space where the hegemonic position was far less engrained. Because of the increasing leniency, Manyeleti opened up as a space for people to live outside of the ideological strictures that determined their lives outside. Manyeleti provided the opportunity for people to act with some agency.

According to Nobela, the majority of adult visitors were couples in their 20s and early 30s, either newly married or dating, who would come to Manyeleti to drink, eat well, and enjoy a sexual relationship.<sup>158</sup> Due to the requirement to book so far in advance, the management found that people would make a booking at Manyeleti as a

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<sup>154</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Manyeleti advisory board, March 1982, KGG 182 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> ‘Mutual Co-operation Exists in Urban Areas,’ newspaper cutting, in KGG 182 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>157</sup> According to Phineas Nobela it was this incident that caused Pete Hancock to lose his job at Manyeleti.

<sup>158</sup> P. Nobela, interview with the author.

back up plan, in case they were unable to find a room elsewhere.<sup>159</sup> There is a sense of Manyeleti as being, for some, a ‘last resort,’ which makes sense in the context of so few holiday opportunities being available. Yet as Nobela remembers, Manyeleti was better than nothing:

You can’t have all of South Africa’s blacks going to Umgababa. Umgababa was also limited. So it was crowded in such a way as you couldn’t even see the sea. At least it was something, going to Manyeleti, instead of staying at home.<sup>160</sup>

Manyeleti’s butchery was one of the only places in the country that Africans could easily, and legitimately, buy game meat, and it was a popular aspect for visitors. Meanwhile, the provision of alcohol in the reserve was lax and the African business manager, although restricted to selling one beer with every meal, was far more generous.<sup>161</sup> Drunkenness among visitors from the neighbouring community was seen as a great problem, with particular individuals repeatedly violating the reserve’s laws. These ‘main offenders’ were ‘local people who come here specifically to buy and drink liquor at Mr Mogane’s bar.’<sup>162</sup> At times this could get out of hand and people could become unruly and abusive to staff members.<sup>163</sup> However, aside from some unruly school pupil behaviour in 1976, and the shouting of the odd political slogan, the archives give very little sense that Manyeleti was openly utilized as a political space to actively enact resistance. The assistant manager, who authored a report into drunkenness, felt that ‘the function of the store here is to serve the visitors only, and that local people who are using it as a place free of policemen where they can get drunk and let off steam, are misusing it.’<sup>164</sup>

The theory of space and resistance of de Certeau is helpful in illuminating Manyeleti’s function for its users. While Manyeleti created a hegemonic position that attempted to determine use, it was not possible for the authorities to exert enough power either physically or through the production of representation to properly enforce that position. Manyeleti appears in these sources as a space outside of peoples’ normal daily existence. It was a place that visitors and neighbours alike could come to and live outside of certain societal norms. It is a good example of what

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<sup>159</sup> Letter from P. Hancock to M. de Beer, July 4 1979, BAO 20 243 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

<sup>160</sup> P. Nobela, interview with the author.

<sup>161</sup> ‘Report on Business Undertakings: Presented by Shangaan/Tsonga Development Corporation Limited,’ in KGG 185 7/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>162</sup> Letter from P. Hancock to M. de Beer, June 6 1979, in BAO 20 243 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

de Certeau called ‘tactics’. While the ideology that made up the ‘strategy’ attempted to enforce particular types of engagement with nature and specific ways of understanding nature, in actual fact the apparatus was too weak to make too many demands on the visitors. Instead, it became a space to act in opposition to much of the ideological persuasion. In some instances, this involved marked disruptive behaviour. The archive is full of examples of high school students or university groups behaving raucously while teachers kept to themselves in the private rondavels. Such moments could get violent.<sup>165</sup>

Elsewhere, ‘tactics’ could involve creating new ways of acting in ‘nature’. The construction of the soccer field at the rest camp is a good example of alternative practices developing at Manyeleti as a result of visitors forging new forms of entertainment for themselves out of the space available. Nobela described the thinking behind its creation as being a pragmatic response to visitor needs:

The reason we built those facilities was because we wanted them to enjoy it ... We realised that we are not in a township, but we have to, because they were playing anywhere there’s an opening, so they need an empty place, so we went and built [it], because you can see there is a demand, you cannot push them to go and see animals, you cannot ... The question was, if you don’t provide activities, amenities, for these to do, particularly during the day, you cannot expect them to go for game viewing at midday. That place is hot. So what are you providing these people to do? It’s either they’ll be drinking like a hen, or having sex like a hen, right? Because there’s nothing to do. So if now there’s a soccer field or some kind of place they can sit under a tree and play music or drink.<sup>166</sup>

Nobela suggested that particular ways of being were preferable to others in the game reserve, and that people’s actions within the park encouraged development at Manyeleti that veered from the original plan, and more interestingly from common practice in other game reserves in South Africa. The building of the swimming pool was inspired by Etosha or Pretoriuskop, however no other rest camps could boast a soccer field. Where soccer fields existed in national parks they tended to be behind the scenes for the exclusive use of park staff, as was the case at Skukuza in the Kruger Park. Building the soccer field therefore gave Manyeleti a distinctive feature and a unique means of being in nature when compared to the situations at Kruger and elsewhere.

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<sup>165</sup> See, for example, ‘Long Term Plan for the Development of the Manyeleti Information Centre’, Report by P. Hancock, P. Nobela and N. Mathebula, 1980, in BAO 20/241 H62/13/1080, NASA.

<sup>166</sup> P. Nobela, interview with the author.

There is something of an otherness about Manyeleti, where alternative forms of behaviour were more tolerated. There were cases of mixed race holidays being taken in the reserve, before an official letter was signed by the secretary of the Department of Plural Relations and Development stating categorically that no whites were allowed into the reserve without a permit.<sup>167</sup> The board found it difficult to clamp down on misbehaviour because it feared any ill feeling towards the reserve and conservation in general. As handover to Gazankulu approached, it became essential to ensure that everyone was supportive of the project. The Kruger Park did not have this millstone to contend with in relation to its African customers.

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<sup>167</sup> Letter from P. Hancock to M. Swain, Secretary for the Department of Plural Relations and Development, December 9 1979, in BAO 20/245 H62/13/1080/5, NASA.

## Conclusion

Explicitly racial arguments from the 1960s and 1970s asserted that Africans were unable to aesthetically appreciate the environment. More culturally sympathetic views held that slurs linking Africans with the bush gave people an aversion to any experience in the wilderness.<sup>168</sup> Others, such as Mangosuthu Buthelezi, believed that Africans associated game viewing with being a white activity, and would consequently not have an interest.<sup>169</sup> This chapter, in connection with chapter four, has argued that in conjunction with economic and political limitations, the regime of representation assisted in alienating African support of wildlife projects. Yet it has also argued that Africans enjoyed Manyeleti on terms that were sometimes deemed incongruous by the advisory boards or managers. Those misunderstandings, which ultimately led to beliefs that Africans did not enjoy nature, should not cloud the fact that several people repeatedly visited Manyeleti. The number of visitors generally, considering the difficulties of a visit, speaks of a foundation of interest. The ways that many people enjoyed the Kruger Park could also be in conflict with the standards expected by the parks board or the park administration. The hegemonic position during this period determined who should experience nature, when that encounter took place, how, and even why. Many conformed to this position, but those that did not should not be dismissed as unreceptive or antagonistic.

This chapter has drawn together several key themes of the discursive landscape that helped to construct the hegemonic position upon which assumptions and judgements could be built. The influence of science and the relationship of modernity formed a crucial backdrop. Around this structure were added motifs that assisted in the process of social distinction, via class, race and gender in particular. In the Kruger Park the power of this discourse created greater conformity around ideas of nature and conservation, as well as ways to act within a park or game reserve setting. In Manyeleti, which had laxer controls, the entertainments and pleasures were often self-generated and adapted from the official expectations. As the 1980s drew to a close, the periphery began to take on a greater magnitude, and fears were growing for the future of the park in an uncertain South African future. Part three investigates

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<sup>168</sup> F. Ferrario, 'The Present Situation at Manyeleti (A Product Analysis),' in KGG 183 7/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>169</sup> See, for example, *African Wild Life*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 1976.

the changes in the representational system that took place to ensure that the Kruger Park survived.



# **PART THREE**

***MAKE THE MOST OF KRUGER: THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK 1990-2010***



## CHAPTER SIX

### PARKS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS: KRUGER AND THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

#### Introduction

Stand by for the invasion.<sup>1</sup>

In the years immediately after 1990 the Kruger National Park found itself having to forge new alliances. As political prisoners emerged from Victor Verster or Robben Island, the park authorities were confronted by an uncertain political climate with a new constituency. While the domestic situation created fresh challenges, South Africa's position on the global stage was also about to alter dramatically. Although the country's doors had generally been open for the previous few decades, some of those on the outside had chosen not to enter. The international caution regarding South Africa as a viable destination for either business or pleasure began to reverse, and the country prepared itself for a raft of new interest. Both domestically and internationally there was a sense, in the media, that an 'invasion' was about to take place.

This period of the history of Kruger has attracted less attention from historians. However, the post-apartheid changes in Kruger have attracted the attentions of geographers and sociologists, as well social ecologists, who have attempted to engage with the difficulties experienced by the park as it negotiated new paths in the way it interacted with a broader constituency. Much of this work has

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<sup>1</sup> *Saturday Star*, October 24 1991.

concentrated upon the social and political mechanisms established as a result of the political transition.<sup>2</sup> A major thread in this work has been the stubbornness of hegemonic European concepts of nature, as well as transformation of conservation to a more neoliberal model as the state has gradually diminished its responsibility.<sup>3</sup> These more political and economic studies have overlooked the role played by representation in post-apartheid national parks. Similarly their focus has concentrated upon a more contemporary time frame. This final part, made up of a single chapter, explores the discursive landscape surrounding the Kruger National Park as it evolved to cope with the enormous social and political changes at work in South Africa following the end of apartheid. In doing so it places this period in relation to the park's longer history.

This chapter will focus exclusively on Kruger, as the incorporation of the homelands back into a united South Africa brought about the demise of Manyeleti as a sustainable proposition. The game reserve that had served to introduce game-viewing and conservation to the African community was reinvented as a luxury private reserve owned by the Mnisi community. Since 1990 the range and number of both national parks and game reserves, including a variety of private ventures, have increased significantly. The Kruger Park, meanwhile, has maintained its centrality in the national park project and the nation's environmental identity, but as part of a far wider network. With the rise of new technologies and media outlets, the range and scope of representation on the Kruger Park was broader than ever before. This chapter focuses on two significant developments: firstly, the increasing democratization of the park in terms of the target market for representational material; and secondly, the spread of measures and means to develop new forms around which social distinction could be developed. I will argue that while the park moved onto a path of greater inclusivity in terms of its public, it nevertheless also continued to serve, in particular ways, as a tool of social distinction.

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the collection of essays under the title 'Humans and Savannas' in Biggs, du Toit, and Rogers, *The Kruger Experience*, and M. Honey, *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?* (Washington DC, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Meskell, *The Nature of Heritage*, p.10, and Ramutsindela, *Parks and People in Postcolonial Societies*, p.143.

## Context

Following the unbanning of the ANC in 1990 the transformation of South African society gathered pace. The National Parks Board made changes in order to integrate itself into this new climate. Robbie Robinson became chief executive of the parks board in March 1991, and his appointment was intended to assist in the rebranding of the national parks in South Africa and abroad. In particular, the board wished to move away from the ‘gardeners of Eden syndrome’ that had seen visitors tolerated but never particularly welcomed.<sup>4</sup> Initial searches for black National Parks Board members in 1990 stipulated that the candidates must be from the Lowveld, have an affinity for the Kruger Park, speak Afrikaans and be apolitical.<sup>5</sup> Change on this front was therefore not as dramatic as some wished although Enos Mabuza, the chief minister of the KaNgwane homeland and first black member of the National Parks Board, had good links with the ANC in exile.<sup>6</sup> One of the most significant appointments during this period was the selection of David Mabunda as the first African warden of the Kruger National Park in 1997.

Under Robinson new departments were created to assist in transformation. In 1995 Molefe Rammutla was appointed as director of the marketing and communications department. Rammutla came from the Bophuthatswana National Parks, where he had worked as a teacher of environmental education and within community development in the Pilanesberg National Park, finally becoming the managing director of the Bophuthatswana Parks Board. As the media release that announced his appointment stated, aside from marketing initiatives Rammutla’s responsibilities included the ‘transformation of the National Parks Board to an organization which is representative of all people of South Africa.’<sup>7</sup> To assist this process, Rammutla selected key individuals from his days working for the Bophuthatswana Parks Board, which he had restructured in the early 1990s. Phineas Nobela, who had gone to Bophuthatswana from Manyeleti, was among the handful of new recruits.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Financial Mail*, July 17 1992.

<sup>5</sup> Letter from U. de V. Pienaar to H. Monnig, Commissioner General, Gazankulu Government, in KGG 185 7/2/2/2/1, NASA.

<sup>6</sup> M. Ginindza, ‘KaNgwane: A Life in and Beyond,’ *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 1, 2012, p.145.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Director appointed at National Parks Board,’ Media release, February 13 1995, in NK/17/1, KNP.

<sup>8</sup> P. Nobela, Interview with the author.

Operation Prevail began in 2001 as an attempt to reverse the strong racial bias within the national park hierarchy by making all staff members reapply for their jobs. During the process a new structure was put in place for the conservation management of the Kruger Park. One of the major challenges, Nobela asserted, was developing a training programme to ensure that black members of staff could fast track into more senior conservationist positions without jeopardizing the standards the park was renowned for.<sup>9</sup> In 2003 Mabunda became the director of the newly branded SANParks, which took over from the National Parks Board.

While the personnel transformed, one perhaps surprising feature to remain throughout this period was the park's name. The name was brought under discussion in the early 1990s, with the idea that a name change could also fit with the park's potential regional expansion into Mozambique.<sup>10</sup> As Jacob Dlamini has shown, excuses deferred the timing of any alterations: in 1998 the park's centenary was the reason, while the following year the centenary of the South African War suspended any decision.<sup>11</sup> In 2003 it was deemed too costly and too injurious to the brand identity of the park to pursue any changes in name.<sup>12</sup> The issue has remained contentious.

A second key creation during this period was the formation of a community liaison office based in the Kruger Park with a responsibility to incorporate the neighbouring communities around the park into management strategies. Such an approach fitted with broader trends in conservationist thinking internationally, but as Martha Honey has argued, this office was born out of developments inside the park as well as from pressures and investigations undertaken outside. Journalists such as Eddie Koch as well as the NGO Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM), had been interviewing local communities throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s in order to better establish needs and issues.<sup>13</sup> It was becoming apparent that the park would not survive if they continued to rely upon more aggressive forms of control and influence, and that a more community-centric approach was necessary. Known as 'social ecology' and then 'people and conservation', this department has become a cornerstone of Kruger, and will be discussed in further detail in the following section.

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<sup>9</sup> P. Nobela, Interview with the author.

<sup>10</sup> *The Star*, October 12 1991.

<sup>11</sup> *Business Day*, August 6 2012.

<sup>12</sup> *Business Day*, August 5 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Honey, *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development*, p.348.

The more integrative approaches became more central to park management strategies. The interpretation and educational divisions of the Kruger Park took on a wider aspect than they had done previously. By 1994 the interpretation office had developed a significant practice, with a sizable number of guides and a regular system of film shows, talks and lectures.<sup>14</sup> As was argued in chapter three, before 1990 the educational side of the park had been focused on internal programmes directed at small groups sent by schools into the park. Actions around the periphery were still in their infancy, and the park had struggled to form relationships with homelands to extend their influence into those spaces. The period from 1990, and particularly after the turn of the millennium, has seen a significant expansion in educational provision, as well as interpretative services aimed at a more casual, visitor-based market.

Another key external influence upon the park during this period was the rise in international attention. Commencing in 1990, but gathering pace by 1991, South Africa began to welcome new visitors into the country. This reopening was facilitated by the reconnection of South Africa's airports to international hubs. By 2003 there were over 1.3 million visitors from Europe entering South Africa out of a total of over 6.5 million foreign arrivals.<sup>15</sup> Kruger was proving to be a major attraction: in the same year the park was welcoming over 1.3 million visitors.<sup>16</sup> The park administration had to balance the requirements of this huge source of foreign exchange with the needs of the neighbouring communities on whom the park's future was far more reliant.

During the early 1990s the National Parks Board restructured and developed a more open corporate environment than had existed before. There was a stated intention to adopt a more friendly attitude, and a less guarded operational strategy. This new position was reflected in a more professional and systematized approach to representation.

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<sup>14</sup> V. Strydom, Interview with the author, Skukuza, Kruger National Park, July 19 2012 (recording in possession of the author).

<sup>15</sup> See, [http://www.southafrica.net/uploads/legacy/1/281491/table%20a%20december%202004-%20final\\_15112005.pdf](http://www.southafrica.net/uploads/legacy/1/281491/table%20a%20december%202004-%20final_15112005.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> SANParks Annual Report, 2004, p.5.

## Strategy of Representation

As more companies, media groups, and people began to refocus their attention on South Africa, the Kruger Park became a convenient lens through which to comfortably and uncontroversially reintroduce public audiences around the world to the country. For example, the Finnish state television company YLE used a film about the Kruger Park to help reestablish links between the two countries. Kruger became an initial contact point, as if to test the waters with the publics overseas. Certain countries, such as Japan, continued to be actively sought after by the park as a lucrative market for both the national park as well as South Africa more generally.<sup>17</sup> Kruger could also be useful as a case study in environmental programming looking for new horizons, as happened with the Australian series *Beyond 2000*.<sup>18</sup>

The opening up of South Africa after the end of apartheid provided an opportunity for countries and companies to reimagine their relationship with the country. Again the Kruger Park offered a safe route: for example, the oil company Caltex realized that it had not run a story on South Africa in its magazine *Oil Progress* for several years. The point of the magazine was to put a positive spin on the work done by the company, as well as the countries in which they worked. Because of the changing perceptions of South Africa more broadly, in 1991 they believed ‘the time is ripe for a story.’<sup>19</sup> However, in order not to be too controversial, the Kruger Park was picked as the most suitable focus of that story.

While new international connections brought a fresh global market, perhaps more important to the Kruger Park in the years after 1990 were the relationships formed with new constituencies within South Africa. African, Indian and coloured communities became essential and ties were formed with particular media outlets deemed influential and open to contact. For example, twelve journalists from the *Sowetan* newspaper, a tabloid with strong ties to the internal political struggle, were invited to the Mopani Camp in 1992 where they witnessed a presentation on the benefits of the Kruger Park for South Africa’s future.<sup>20</sup> Kruger could play a symbolic role in the difficulties the country was facing. The general manager, Rory Wilson, envisaged the Kruger Park as a ‘counterpoint’ to the troubles engulfing South Africa

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<sup>17</sup> ‘Comment on the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation’s Letter,’ by G. Mills, NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Beyond 2000’ company information, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>19</sup> Fax from G. Demmer to S. Joubert, October 15 1991, in NK/17/1, KNP.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from R. Wilson to S. Joubert, September 23 1992, in NK/17/4, KNP.

at the time: ‘a refuge from the terrible destruction that is going on currently.’<sup>21</sup> The park staff also ran ecology courses for *Sowetan* readers, which inspired Musa Zondi, who became the newspaper’s conservation correspondent. Meanwhile, other media channels were pursued in order to connect with non-white audiences across South Africa. For example, the prime time programme *Prospects*, which attracted a black audience of around seven million, aired a show on how the national parks were repositioning themselves.<sup>22</sup> By 2001 2% of all overnight visitors and 14% of all day visitors to the Kruger Park were black, figures that increased to around 9% and 30% respectively by 2011.<sup>23</sup>

The early 1990s, as a period of discursive transition, saw the hegemonic position shift, and control of the representational output associated with the Kruger Park became a contested space. Perceptions of the Kruger National Park became an essential concern as South Africa moved towards democracy. Meetings were regularly held with various groups to establish ways and means to communicate new park messages to fresh audiences. Expanding the user base, increasing visitor numbers, and cementing political support were all crucial motivations. In October 1992 the Kruger Park hierarchy met with the local church community, representatives from UNISA, and members of the press including journalists from the *Weekly Mail*, *New Nation* and the *Sowetan*. A significant section of this conference was dedicated to discussing perceptions of the Kruger Park and how they could be transformed.<sup>24</sup> Key determinants of public attitudes by people living around the park were said to include over zealous rangers punishing firewood collectors or poachers; the desire of communities to move back to ancestral lands within the park after the deterioration of their current territory; the apparent collaboration between the park and the security forces against refugees and Frelimo; and the expense of a visit. The *Sowetan* journalist thought that the park management was dominated by ‘white Afrikaner bureaucrats’ who presented a significant barrier.<sup>25</sup>

Some foreign journalists found the media environment at Kruger claustrophobic and the ‘information officer’ allocated to them by the park too

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Letter from V. Modise to S. Joubert, 19 October 1993, in NK/17/4, KNP.

<sup>23</sup> Responsible Tourism in SANParks: Portfolio Committee on Tourism Presentation, August 2012, at <http://www.pmg.org.za/files/doc/2012/120821sanpark-.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Agenda: Community Development: KNP,’ October 23 1992, in NK/2/1, KNP.

<sup>25</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, December 18 1992.

uncritical.<sup>26</sup> A *Cape Times* reporter, Jilyan Pitman, caused great concern among park staff over her research into the new rest camp at Mopani. The camp manager warned Joubert, the warden at the time, that her ‘attitude was fairly negative and [it] might be advisable to insist on scanning her article before it is published.’<sup>27</sup> Journalists were seen as either with or against the parks board. Those that enquired about black visitors, the role of oil companies, issues around water provision and the relationship between the park and the homelands rang alarm bells. The park authorities tried to ensure that journalists reported on issues important to the park, and in a way that reinforced the park’s ideology. For example, during the period of drought in 1993 a circular letter from Salomon Joubert encouraged all park staff to try and get the press to report in ‘an accurate and responsible manner’ on the drought. Other discourses to do with the land on which Kruger stood were to be discouraged, and all focus was to go on drought reduction as the dominant story. This of course served to detract attention from alternative discourses regarding land and the Kruger Park that were inconvenient and highly controversial. As the hegemonic position went through its metamorphosis the park staff were acutely conscious of managing the representational output.

Part of the difficulty lay in the increasing breadth of the target audience for the parks’ marketing department. While new visitor streams were sought, other more regular users were also having to be reassured. The range of media to communicate with all these different audiences had also widened, with radio in particular taking on a particularly significant role in the proliferation of park information. Radio’s ability to speak to all echelons of society was what appealed most to William Mabasa as head of public relations at the Kruger Park.<sup>28</sup> As technologies developed, the park administration attempted to keep up, with a SANParks website and a presence on social networking sites. Each medium became a new space for meanings to generate.

From the early 1990s, while the new audiences were a primary focus for much of this type of work, the more traditional targets were also being reimagined. The public at large was being recognized as more propaganda savvy, after over twenty years of receiving environmental marketing, particularly by larger charitable

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<sup>26</sup> Fax from M. Satchell to M. Whyte, May 13 1993, in NK/17/1, KNP.

<sup>27</sup> Letter from C. Barendse to S. Joubert, October 17 1991, in NK/17/1, KNP.

<sup>28</sup> W. Mabasa, Interview with the author, Skukuza, Kruger National Park, June 27 2012 (recording in the possession of the author).

institutions who could afford advertising campaigns to encourage people to donate.<sup>29</sup> The climate for public information on national parks and environmentalism more generally had shifted over the previous twenty years to produce a more aware public, but one that received its propaganda with some skepticism. The representational output of the Kruger Park, therefore, had to professionalize to meet this more suspicious public.

In the early 1990s the National Parks Board went into partnership with Jacana Education to develop a comprehensive communication strategy for the national parks across South Africa. Jacana had a significant catalogue of non-fiction, and it was they who approached the National Parks Board over the possibility of gaining a contract to publish national park materials. The parks board were attracted by the publisher's proposal that 'every rand must work four times', meaning that every publication or promotional production should work towards education, information, marketing and community development.<sup>30</sup> The publisher saw the potential of various promotional avenues: between July 1993 and July 1994 a systematic publication and marketing policy saw the integration of numerous representational means, from flyers and books to TV appearances and tour guides.<sup>31</sup> In 1995 the strategy was revisited and the whole situation of the Kruger Park was envisaged as having representational capacity, including signs, markers and services, along with direct mail, electronic media, curios, posters and films. Schools, local communities and park staff were all now included as target audiences along with the broader public.<sup>32</sup> When a film about drought was proposed by Jacana, its educational importance was just as valuable as its worth as a 'long term marketing tool'.<sup>33</sup> Education had become a far more systematic feature of the representational process, and its objective more extensive than previous incarnations.

Jacana was not the only company with which the Kruger Park developed a relationship around its representational strategy. Individuals, community groups, and other companies were all approached as the park sought to rebrand itself. The objective was to attract not only a new set of visitors, but also to gather a fresh bulwark of political support. As has been argued throughout the thesis, public support

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<sup>29</sup> Fax from J. Daniel to S. Joubert, December 2 1992, in NK/17/1, KNP.

<sup>30</sup> 'Relationship between NPB/KNP and Jacana Education', in NK/17/5, KNP.

<sup>31</sup> Jacana Education Marketing Report, July 1993 – July 1994, in NK/17/5, KNP.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes for meeting between Jacana Education and NPB, January 16 1995, in NK/17/5, KNP.

<sup>33</sup> 'Kruger National Park – Jacana: "Drought campaign movie"', film proposal, in NK/17/2, KNP.

was necessary for the Kruger Park to ensure its survival. In the post-apartheid period, the park authorities had to manoeuvre themselves into a position to safeguard the future of the national park under new political realities. As the elections of 1994 approached, the situation became more pressing.

In May 1993 several opinion formers were invited to meet with the Kruger Park hierarchy. These included the poet and journalist Don Mattera; the general secretary of AZAPO Striney Moodley; the businessman Kehla Mthembu; and politician Aubrey Mokwape. These people had been selected for their 'lobbying efforts' on a more national scale.<sup>34</sup> The park authorities also thought on the smaller scale. In the early months of 1994 weekend trips to the Kruger Park were being organized for media and community leaders in order to 'expose prominent and influential members of the township community to NPB destinations and services' and ultimately the 'enhancement of our legitimacy at grass roots level.'<sup>35</sup> The community leaders invited on one trip were Musa Zondi, the environmental columnist on the *Sowetan*; Thaba Seekane from SABC Radio Sotho who was a known supporter of the national park idea; and Lucky Ngale, an environmental activist and community leader. On a wider scale, influential social groups who had previously been excluded from corporate involvement in the Kruger Park were encouraged inside: 45 shebeen owners were invited to join the visit to the park by the Stellenbosch Farmers Winery in February 1994.<sup>36</sup> Other groups, not usually associated with Kruger, started to choose the park as the destination for business events. For example, the National Sorghum Breweries Strategic Workshop was held at the Mopani rest camp in June 1993 at their request.<sup>37</sup>

A lobbying budget was set aside to increase the political influence of the park in Pretoria and across South Africa, as well as to market the park as a destination for visitors. Fanyana Shiburi, the manager of the new liaison services division, was responsible for organizing many of the new connections that the Kruger Park was forging. FABCOS, the Foundation for African Business and Consumer Services, which represented the informal business sector, formed a department alongside South African Airlines to help develop African owned travel agencies. The park approached this new venture, FABTRAVEL, in January 1994 to market the park through these

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<sup>34</sup> Fax from F. Shiburi to B. van der Vyver, May 27 1993, in NK/17/5, KNP.

<sup>35</sup> Fax from V. Modise to H. Botha, February 24 1994, in NK/17/5, KNP.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from F. Shiburi to G. du Preez, February 2 1994, in NK/17/5, KNP.

<sup>37</sup> Fax from F. Shiburi to S. Joubert, June 2 1993, in NK/17/5, KNP.

new agencies.<sup>38</sup> Specific economic groups were also deliberately targeted. Executives from the Black Lawyers Association enjoyed corporate hospitality at the park, as well as those working at pharmaceutical companies.<sup>39</sup> Doctors were particularly sought after as it was believed that ‘doctors are known to be among the main big spenders on holiday resorts.’<sup>40</sup> The principal efforts were placed upon gaining the political and financial support of the professional classes, and thereby reproducing patterns of class affiliation in the park that had been developing since the 1920s.

Politicians were also a noteworthy target for Shiburi, and there was some success in putting the Kruger Park onto the map as a destination for political meetings. In September 1993 the Inkhata Freedom Party visited the park, and met the warden, Salomon Joubert, at the Selati restaurant.<sup>41</sup> In May 1993 Wally Serote, the head of the ANC Arts and Culture department, chose the Kruger Park as the destination for a working holiday, accompanied by seven executives from the party, where the ANC’s cultural policy was mapped out.<sup>42</sup>

The Kruger Park’s sensitivity to political circumstances impacted upon numerous aspects of its representational strategy. From the early 1990s the park was hyper-aware of any possible mismatch that could prove awkward for the image of the park. For example, in August 1995 the parks board met with The Agency advertising company about a possible account, however their representation of firms such as Iscor, Boland Bank, and Escom among other state-linked organizations caused discomfort for some on the board. One piece of internal correspondence explained the problem:

Unless the perception out there in the market place is that these organisations are no longer leftovers from the “old era” and have been purged, so to speak, we could have a problem aligning ourselves with them. Vivo Beer did not seem to have a problem, but they were not trying to shake off some of the old perceptions, which we have to.<sup>43</sup>

The parks board, as a famous institution on the international stage, also had to be careful whom it associated with at trade shows, as various other organisations wished to share stands with the board and acquire some of the reflected interest.<sup>44</sup> There were also concerns about associating the park with particular scientific studies in case they

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<sup>38</sup> Fax from F. Shiburi to H. Botha, January 27 1994, in NK/17/5, KNP.

<sup>39</sup> Fax from F. Shiburi to H. Botha, March 18 1994, in NK/17/5, KNP.

<sup>40</sup> Fax from F. Shiburi to H. Botha, January 26 1994, in NK/17/5, KNP.

<sup>41</sup> Letter from F. Shiburi to S. Joubert, August 31 1993, in NK/17/5, KNP.

<sup>42</sup> Fax from F. Shiburi to S. Joubert, May 10 1993, in NK/17/5, KNP.

<sup>43</sup> Letter from M. Landman to M. Rammutla, August 23 1995, in NK/17/1, KNP.

<sup>44</sup> Fax from South African Airways to J. Sterk, December 7 1995, in NK/17/1, KNP.

could be damaging. For example, there were concerns about a study to discover if a new distinctive ‘race’ of cheetah existed as it was ‘questioned in scientific circles, and at this stage we are not in a position to be associated with this concept.’<sup>45</sup>

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While the external and internal forms of representation were deemed important in the attraction of new allies and advocates for the Kruger Park, the most dramatic changes to the representational practice of the park during this period took place at the perimetrical level. One of the most interactive means of engagement was through the new community forums, on the park peripheries. In a memorandum circulated in 1992 by Salomon Joubert, park staff were told that the parks board ‘regards involvement with neighbouring communities as an urgent priority.’ The future of Kruger, he argued, ‘will ultimately be largely influenced by the measure of goodwill and environmental awareness shown by leaders and inhabitants of neighbouring communities.’<sup>46</sup> At a later meeting it was decided that Kruger’s role should not be as ‘a “handout” system’ but instead as an aid to regional development.<sup>47</sup> At the same time local residents were getting advice and assistance from NGOs such as GEM about how best to gain park support in dealing with damage causing animals.

Internally, the park administration partly acknowledged its chequered history of community involvement, and it was recognized that the park ‘needed to prove that it is genuine in its efforts.’ It was decided that ‘anything that is said or discussed needs to have the full implications realized.’<sup>48</sup> Small projects were currently in operation around the perimeter, including the provision of bricks for school building; the supply of water to local communities; the training of taxi drivers to take visitors into the park; the organization of wood carvers and sewing groups into collectives to market and sell products in the park; the recognition of traditional healers and herbalists; dealing with problem animals; and the reduction of tariffs for community members and school groups. However, the bulk of these services were park led and unsystematic. A need was identified for a method to ‘incorporate the ideas of the communities and their traditional nature conservation knowledge into the official

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<sup>45</sup> Letter from S. Joubert to P. Bottriell, February 4 1993, NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>46</sup> Memorandum from the Executive Director, KNP, October 16 1992, in NK/2/1, KNP.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Community Participation – Kruger National Park,’ in NK/2/1, KNP.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

structures of the Kruger National Park.<sup>49</sup> Alongside the need ‘to create an awareness of nature,’ another important motivation behind the forums was the reorganization of regional patronage systems in order to ‘facilitate development and capacity building, together with outside companies and donors’.<sup>50</sup>

The minutes of one of the first forums between the Kruger Park and KaNgwane, which would later evolve into the Lubambiswano forum, highlights many of the difficulties facing this new form of park representation. Community leaders complained of a dearth of communication between the park and the people on issues such as fence building; the lack of compensation when livestock was killed by problem animals; and the murder of trespassers in the park, even if they had entered with the purpose of poaching.<sup>51</sup> Park officers became defensive at various moments in the discussion, and presented the park not as active law-makers but passive law enforcers, passing the blame for many of the regulations onto other government departments. However, there was a common refrain of the need to ‘find solutions’. Local leaders, such as Chief Mdluli, described the meeting as a ‘merry-go-round’, and reminded the park that it was not the first meeting between the community and the park authorities, and that previous conferences had ended with the park failing to address any of the grievances:

They claim they are keeping our land for us, but they are not solving the problems. We need to identify someone who can solve the problems.<sup>52</sup>

The ANC representative who was present at the meeting spoke of a need to ‘reformulate laws to accommodate both points of view.’ The community was eager, however, to stress that they were happy with the presence of the national park on their doorstep, and were not in any way seeking the dismantlement of the park. Two months later, at the steering committee of the new Kruger-KaNgwane forum, many of the key points of reference were outlined and a structure established to continue community involvement in park processes.<sup>53</sup>

By 2005 there were seven community forums in operation around the Kruger Park. Each increased the influence of the park in the daily lives of neighbouring people. Community liaison officers within villages engaged with people about issues

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<sup>49</sup> Action Minutes of the KNP/KaNgwane People’s Forum, November 1993, in NK/2/11, KNP.

<sup>50</sup> Constitution of the Lubambiswano Forum, March 7 1995, in NK 2/11, KNP.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Action Minutes of the KNP/KaNgwane People’s Forum, November 1993, in NK/2/11, KNP.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

relating to the Kruger Park. These representatives, chosen by the community rather than the park, were arguably doing representational work for the park. By encouraging people to think about how the park impacted upon their lives, people on the periphery were engaged in the very process of the creation of meaning. The procedures of complaint and redress became far more personal than previously, and they were also integrated into the very fabric of the local communities, with agents selected from within rather than imposed from without.

By 2012, when my research was done, the benefits gained by the communities through their relationship with the Kruger Park included free access to the park for particular celebrations; concessions on businesses inside the park, such as car washes and curio shops, have been granted to people from the local communities; jobs are advertised at community forums; and environmental education takes place in villages around the park for a radius of 50km. Generally, my interviewees were very positive about the opportunities offered by the park, although there were always hopes that further involvement would be forthcoming.<sup>54</sup> Such a sentiment corresponds to Lynne Meskell's findings in her work with local communities and many of the conclusions drawn by Maano Ramutsindela.<sup>55</sup>

In some senses, the Kruger Park could be seen as giving ground to local communities in the ecological management of the region. However, it could also be argued that this period has seen the expansion of national park influence into areas more distant from the park fence. Through the inclusion of communities in park decision-making, as well as the tighter association of Kruger's economic success with community opportunities, the power of the park began to increase throughout the Lowveld. This process became more evident once the forums gathered credence and impact from 1996, and even more so with the creation of the Park Forum in 2006.

Under a directive from the Ministry of Environmental Affairs, it was stipulated that national parks should incorporate local communities into the very fabric of their management methods. The result, in the Kruger context, was the creation of the Park Forum that met every quarter to discuss management plans. In the forum would sit representatives from the various departments in the Kruger Park, alongside representatives from the local communities. Solly Themba, a community

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<sup>54</sup> See, for example, Interview with Elphus Lukhele, Pretoriuskop Rest Camp, Kruger National Park, July 17<sup>th</sup> 2012, (recording in possession of the author).

<sup>55</sup> Meskell, *The Nature of Heritage*, and Ramutsindela, *Parks and People in Postcolonial Societies*.

facilitator at the Kruger Park and a key lynchpin in the connection between the park and the people living around it, described 2006 as a ‘breakthrough year’ for the park’s relationship with the local communities.<sup>56</sup>

The definition of ‘local’ began to concretize in the 2000s, and expand out to include quite distant communities. At the most extreme, any organized group across the country became of interest to the park. However, for the people and conservation department the geographic limit was placed at 50km from the park perimeter. Solly Themba explained that while damage by wild animals had been the driving force behind the creation of the forums, and ultimately formed the foundation of the relationship, education was a key driver from the park’s perspective. Damage causing animals were recognized to have an impact up to 20km from the park edge, but Kruger’s educational responsibility has been acknowledged as up to a 50km radius.<sup>57</sup> This distance matches with some of the backgrounds of many key Kruger staff, who grew up within that radius: for example, Solly Themba was raised 42km from the park fence, while William Mabasa was raised in Malamulele, about 30km from the Punda Maria gate in the north of the park.<sup>58</sup> This has added an extra layer of community integration. Indeed, for Themba, the community attitudes to the park were his motivation for increasing park access for neighbouring communities.<sup>59</sup>

Another key point of discursive contact between the Kruger Park and the nearby communities revolved around the issue of land claims. Through telephonic communication, questionnaires, and oral interviews, members of communities around the park were asked to engage with the idea of the Kruger Park as an agent of forced removal or of lost livestock or crops. Discussions of the Kruger Park, and the subsequent creation of meaning, came to orbit around those principal discourses. The most renowned land claim during this period was the Makuleke claim on the Pafuri region in the north of the park. In 1998, after a successful application, the land was returned to the Makuleke people’s Community Property Association by a deed of grant. An agreement was signed with SANParks for the land to be run for conservationist and commercial purposes for a term of fifty years. Three SANParks representatives and three representatives from the Community Property Association

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<sup>56</sup> S. Themba, Interview with the author, Skukuza, Kruger National Park, July 21 2012 (recording in the possession of the author).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> W. Mabasa, Interview with the author, and S. Themba, Interview with the author.

<sup>59</sup> S. Themba, Interview with the author.

sat on the new Joint Management Board, which made decisions on commercial development of the new co-managed region. This process in itself represented a new face of the national park to the communities living around it.

Maano Ramutsindela and Medupi Shabangu have argued that this resolution epitomized a ‘neoliberal moment’ in South African conservation history, which saw commercialized solutions trumping non-profitable ecological needs in land claims relating to conservation spaces. Then an inter-ministerial agreement in 2007 saw environmental protection win out as the key determining factor in future leases or concessions, leaving later land claims unable to benefit from the commercial gains made by the Makuleke.<sup>60</sup> I would argue that the role of representation also needs to be accounted for in this mix. Land usage options available to the community included mining, farming and tourism. The strength of the Kruger Park brand encouraged the community to opt for tourism, however with large wildlife species scarce in the northern reaches of the park mass tourism was deemed infeasible in the short term. Hunting seemed a more lucrative possibility in the immediate future, yet the significant role played by the media and a fear of their response to such an approach was given great weight in the planning process: ‘[t]he general public, particularly in South Africa, are extremely emotive about extractive wildlife use... a public outcry and intense negative media coverage should be anticipated’. In order to mitigate this a ‘positive media campaign’ needed to be initiated where the Makuleke project would be ‘sold as a role model that benefits both conservation and communities.’<sup>61</sup> Within three months of this decision articles appeared in the South African press condemning the idea, with the headline in the *Mail and Guardian* typical: ‘Elephants to be Hunted in Kruger?’<sup>62</sup> Ultimately it was decided that hunting did not provide adequate employment prospects for a large enough percentage of the community. With 60% of the Malamulele region unemployed, and pensions and remittances the chief sources of income, a more wider impact solution was needed.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> M. Ramutsindela and M. Shabangu, ‘Conditioned by Neo-Liberalism: A Reassessment of Land Claim Resolutions in the Kruger National Park,’ *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 2013, p.451.

<sup>61</sup> Draft Program Proposal for the Land-use of the Makuleke Area, November 2 1999, in NK/2/21, KNP.

<sup>62</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, January 21 2000.

<sup>63</sup> Statistics gathered from ‘Conservation Development and Management Plan: Makuleke Park,’ August 1999, in NK/2/21, KNP.

Education and interpretation were other fields that started to impress on both sides of the fence in a more sustainable and impactful manner after 1990. At Kruger, the distinction between education and interpretation since 1994 has lain in the formality of the former, and the relative informality of the latter. Education usually has a specific focus, with lectures a key component. Interpretation has relied more upon showing people phenomena, either in the field or using aids such as museums, information boards, or guides.<sup>64</sup>

From 1998 the park began to take education on its periphery far more seriously, and the educational element gathered force throughout the 2000s with day programmes and later more sustained courses. Kids and Parks was a major national programme that officially linked up children in local communities with nearby parks across the country. In 2005 the environment entered the national curriculum, which gave the Kruger Park a space in the school calendar to work with. Erosion, water scarcity, and issues around environmental awareness more generally became the substance of Kruger Park talks when in local communities, and the park could fill gaps in local teachers' knowledge.<sup>65</sup> At the communal level the focus has been very much upon raising awareness of the environment as an important issue, with the national park playing the role of an environmental archive and role model rather than as a space for leisure. Honorary rangers have also begun to take on a more educational role. Access to the role has democratized with South Africa, but has also evolved with the technological changes: while people of various backgrounds have been encouraged to become honorary rangers, the park now makes use of virtual honorary rangers who help with the online, social media side of park representation and information exchange.<sup>66</sup>

Particularly in the 2000s and into the 2010s, the engagement of the park has expanded to include various new groups into the orbit of the Kruger National Park. With the development of new technologies, this has taken the park into the virtual realm, and has brought a new means of interaction between the public and the park. Mabasa believes that such advances have forced the park to be even more honest

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<sup>64</sup> K. Redman, Interview with the author, Satara, Kruger National Park, July 4 2012 (recording in the possession of the author).

<sup>65</sup> K. Redman, Interview with the author.

<sup>66</sup> V. Strydom, Interview with the author.

about its activities. With smartphones and 3G signals, every one of the 1.4 million visitors annually becomes a potential journalist, who can connect something they have seen in the Kruger Park with a network of friends and acquaintances outside the park via Facebook or Twitter. More traditional journalists may follow something up that they have seen on those sites. The aim, says Mabasa, is for major stories to do with the park to have already broken from head office before anything appears on social networking sites.<sup>67</sup>

The democratization of South Africa and the increased international interest brought a wide range of challenges to the Kruger Park. From 1990 onwards representation was one of the most significant of those challenges. Ideas of nature and national parks at the level of civil society needed to shift, and various mechanisms, institutions and relationships were put in place to move the hegemonic position, and to ultimately democratize the idea of the national park. The following section explores the ways in which the content of the representational material assisted in this process.

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<sup>67</sup> W. Mabasa, Interview with the author.

## The Regime of Representation

With the legalization of the ANC and the freeing up of the South African press, new discourses emerged to challenge the hegemonic position generally maintained by the National Parks Board. The ANC brought a new voice to the debate over access to land, and the Kruger Park served as an emotive talking point. The future role of the Kruger Park gained most currency after a talk by the ANC land committee executive Derek Hanekom at the University of Pretoria, in which he insinuated that parts of national parks could be turned into cattle farms. The suggestion had been interpreted by various groups as meaning that the ANC wished to transform the Kruger Park into farmland. In a debate between Robinson, Joubert, and Hanekom on the *Agenda* programme in March 1993, the Kruger Park confronted the claims.<sup>68</sup>

Yet the suggestion by Hanekom played into conservationist hands, and the public furore over his announcement highlights conservationists canniness regarding environmental discourses. The Kruger Park versus farmland trope has a long history, as this thesis has shown, and a similar strategy was used by Cowie when he warned conservationists of the dangers of decolonization as discussed in chapter three. Frequently, attempts to gather popular support for the Kruger Park would galvanize around claims that the park was under the threat of farmers. It can be found in the rhetoric of the 1930s, and also in the language of the 1970s, when a more radical environmentalism began to raise alarms over the need to feed a rising global population. The ANC were forced to communicate to people that they took conservation seriously as a political issue, and Hanekom had to dispel rumours that the ANC wished to divide up the Kruger Park.<sup>69</sup>

A major talking point in the discourse surrounding the national park was over its relevance in the new South Africa. For the first time the park was compared to the townships, and fitted into wider debates on democracy and equal access to resources. In his column in the *Sowetan*, Musa Zondi asked whether ‘national parks mean anything to us or are they just sanctuaries for white people?’<sup>70</sup> The breadth of the distance between the Kruger Park and the daily realities for his readers was made clear: on an ecology course run by the park for opinion formers the delegates

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<sup>68</sup> Transcription, *Agenda*, March 8 1993, in NK/17/2, KNP.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Sowetan*, March 20 1992.

‘contrasted the beauty and serenity of the Kruger Park to our foul shanty towns[;]... debated the need to pick up a cold drink can and place it in a bin when you hardly had a toilet to urinate... [and] argued about the worth of the park when thousands in our land are homeless.’<sup>71</sup>

As such positions began to gain influence, more and more press reports began to contest the established hegemonic perspective. Many of these attacked the Kruger Park as a social structure, rather than an environmental one, emphasizing discriminatory access and employment strategies. This was potentially important, in that it opened scope for a transformed conservationism that acquired fresh relevance. Critiques also painted the Kruger Park as an economic success that benefited only whites while exploiting black workers. In such a way the Kruger Park was incorporated into general criticisms leveled at the South African government. A good example of this process can be found in an extract from a newspaper that caught the eye of the park authorities:

The pay of the black workers is appalling. Some of them, who have been there for as much as 10 years, are only getting R350 a month. Women and gardeners are getting less. It is a money-spinner and the salaries should match the reputation of the Kruger Park. There are very few Black guests, and the few that were there weren't very welcome. I think it's a disgrace.<sup>72</sup>

A mainstream radical discourse associated the park with right wing extremist or white establishment politics. Julienne du Toit, the journalist who took over as the environmental correspondent from James Clarke in *The Star*, openly described the park as ‘an Afrikaner establishment body’ with a ‘politburo’ that had enacted a ‘night of the long knives’ during recent reforms.<sup>73</sup> Another *Star* journalist, Anna Cox, began investigating a story that found national park staff being mistaken for AWB paramilitary soldiers because of their appearance and uniform.<sup>74</sup> An article in the *Financial Mail* described the Kruger Park as ‘SA’s own Berlin Wall.’<sup>75</sup> The Kruger Park was also inserted into the wider discourse on violence in South Africa during this period. In an article by Andre Brink in *Beeld*, for example, called ‘Under fire: elephants on the front line’, the case was made that the Kruger Park was a large

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<sup>71</sup> *Sowetan*, March 27 1992.

<sup>72</sup> Anonymous ‘Press Extract,’ October 20 1993, in NK/17/1, KNP.

<sup>73</sup> *Saturday Star*, September 25 1993.

<sup>74</sup> Fax from S. Joubert to A. Cox, July 13 1993, in NK/17/1, KNP.

<sup>75</sup> Undated extract quoted in fax from H. Formy to S. Joubert, July 2 1993, in NK/17/1, KNP.

military base, under the complete control of the military.<sup>76</sup> A principal oppositional position was therefore growing that painted the Kruger Park and the National Parks Board as far right institutions with strong representational links to other extremist institutions. Kruger's synecdochal relationship with South Africa was one of the reasons for this attack on the park by the media after 1990. International press also found the Kruger Park a helpful microcosm of South Africa, and a useful point of contact to explode apartheid practices. In a New York Times article by Jane Perlez the park was compared to Disneyland and criticized for its overly controlled environment. The critique was so scathing that even James Clarke, a common critic of park development, thought the comments 'unfair'.<sup>77</sup>

The key to conservation's future in much of this radical rhetoric became the communities living around the park's periphery. For the first time in the popular media local communities became positive agents in the national park story. Much of the discourse concentrated upon 'combining' community and conservation, in an attempt to connect development, poverty alleviation and conservation.<sup>78</sup> The idea of 'exclusivity', of separating nature from people, especially indigenous people, was increasingly seen as the ultimate betrayal of the national park mission.<sup>79</sup> The debate became refocused around ideas of inclusivity and the sharing of resources and knowledge. 'Affirmative action', 'constructive relationships', and 'corporate social responsibility' all became buzzwords.<sup>80</sup> Articles on the Makuleke and other land claims began to appear in newspapers and journals, that overtly used local African words for natural phenomena and naturally produced products, and generally emphasized the close connection between the people of those regions and the local environment.<sup>81</sup>

The park administration's response was to shift its language to mitigate the impact of such discursive assaults, and in so doing to alter the hegemonic position. By 1991 the dominant rhetoric in South Africa related to nation-building, and this was a discourse with which the Kruger Park was eager to be associated.<sup>82</sup> The language was

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<sup>76</sup> *Beeld*, February 24 1992.

<sup>77</sup> *The Star*, January 24 1990.

<sup>78</sup> See, for example, B. Njobe, 'Combining development with conservation in the new SA,' in *Farmer's Weekly*, September 10 1993.

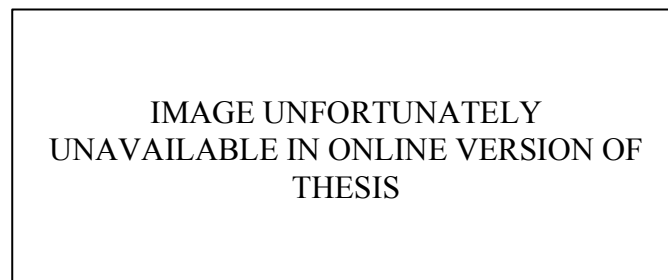
<sup>79</sup> *Pretoria News*, March 8 1993.

<sup>80</sup> See, for example, *Cape Times*, September 7 1993.

<sup>81</sup> *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, March 31 1994.

<sup>82</sup> Letter from R. Wilson to S. Joubert, April 22 1991, in NK/17/4, KNP.

now of Kruger having a ‘very real social responsibility’ and the focus of that responsibility was the ‘constructive uplift of the people who live on the Park’s border.’<sup>83</sup> In a discussion in the *Pretoria News* in November 1993 on elitism and the national parks, Salomon Joubert counteracted the claims of the Kruger Park being for the ‘privileged’ with a refrain of ‘parks belong to the people.’<sup>84</sup> One advertisement for the national parks that was released in the mid-1990s made the claim that the parks ‘had long been colourblind’ and accompanied the tagline with two pictures of rhinoceroses and asked the question of the reader: ‘white or black?’



*Fig. 6.1 Newspaper advertisement for National Parks*<sup>85</sup>

The idea of the park also became a convenient site for racial and cultural divisions to emerge around behavior in nature. Thanks to the discourses since the 1930s, a particular type of ‘respect’ for nature, that manifested itself in specific forms, had determined how one should act within spaces such as national parks. These strict codes of conduct became a means to distinguish between proper and improper behavior. In the 1990s this distinction was played out at the public level, with white groups often complaining about the way that black visitors used the park. Speeding or littering were common complaints.<sup>86</sup> Disrespect towards nature became a motif within wider social discourses on race and class. This extended to political commentary that associated racial ideas with park mismanagement and an idea that ‘standards’ were falling.<sup>87</sup>

The foreign press assisted in some of this rhetoric. A typical focus adopted by many of the news agencies or journalists approaching the Kruger Park for news after the reopening of South Africa, was the idea that Kruger represented good ecological

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<sup>83</sup> Deeds interview with S. Joubert, facsimile copy, December 1993, in NK/17/1, KNP.

<sup>84</sup> *Pretoria News*, November 26 1993.

<sup>85</sup> Facsimile of advertisement, in NK/38/5, KNP.

<sup>86</sup> W. Mabasa, Interview with the author.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

practice on an otherwise incapable continent. For example, when Caltex Oil approached the Kruger Park to act as a synecdoche for South Africa in its in-house magazine, the angle was that ‘Kruger is generally perceived as an example of a well balanced approach to wildlife management in the rather bleak context of conservation on the continent.’<sup>88</sup> In such a way outside agencies colluded with apartheid strategies of representation which had presented African conservation departments as incompetent and the future of the African environment solely in the hands of South African managers. The 14,000 readers of the Caltex Oil magazine were therefore fed rhetoric analogous to that of the apartheid era, but globalized in its reference points, in an article that was intended to reopen South Africa because apartheid had ended.

The new public relations department found ways of representing the national park to bring about more cohesion rather than differentiation. One strategy was to replay the familiar trope of nationalism. The park had a long history of representational connections between its landscape or wildlife, and perceptions of the nation. The idea of the country’s ‘natural heritage’ became a key buzzword in the 2000s in public relations material, and in the output directed at communities around the periphery. The idea that Kruger was a ‘national icon’ that was internationally recognized and admired, was stressed. It became what Mabasa described as a ‘rallying point’ for all communities.<sup>89</sup>

Particular stories and angles became important in this reconfiguration of Kruger as a national asset. Rhino poaching was an acutely potent issue that could rally cross-community support. The issue of poaching had been something that had united the conservationist community since the early days of the park. However, it had not traditionally been an issue to galvanize much interest from local populations. The groundwork had been laid in 1998 with an education programme for surrounding communities that focused on rare and invasive species. This covered both animal and plant species and focused on local responsibility to care for them. The rhino had been a key character in this programme.<sup>90</sup> By the mid-2000s various groups, from churches to traditional healers, wanted to play a part in protecting the rhino. The alliances forming around rhino protection were complex and individuals in surrounding communities were implicated. Yet the rhino-poaching rhetoric could also include a

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<sup>88</sup> Fax from G. Demmer to S. Joubert, October 15 1991, in NK/17/1, KNP.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> S. Themba, Interview with the author.

powerful xenophobic strain that placed blame on rhino depletion on east and south-east Asian cultural practices and relationships with wildlife. South Africans that assisted the ‘Vietnamese businessmen’ were portrayed as little more than national traitors.

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The park’s relationship to capitalism and class gained new complexities during this period. For example, poachers were depersonalized and were presented as operating in ‘organized syndicates’ from overseas. To combat this new, better organized quasi-corporate attack on South Africa’s wildlife required ‘dedicated anti-poaching units’ that brought to mind commando-style operations.<sup>91</sup> Other discourses linked wildlife into more capitalistic frames of reference that further developed the association between animals and social elites. The discourses on elephant culling are an interesting example. In official press releases in the mid-1990s the park repeated its claims that it adhered to ‘sound ecological principles.’ However, much of the language echoed business-speak, as phrases such as ‘limited demand’ and ‘further market[s]’ came to describe the new economic landscape of wildlife trade and transferal.<sup>92</sup> The bulls that were culled were those that were ‘problem animals’ which were defined as ‘crop raiders venturing outside the KNP, habituated fence breakers, etc.’ The message linked criminality, control and free market economics in the ‘management’ of its wildlife. The counter-discourse, developed by groups such as FALCON, tried vainly to critique this position with claims that ‘elephants are not a commodity that can be bought and sold!’<sup>93</sup>

The expansion of access to the park brought about much concern for many of the park’s supporters. The new influx of visitors expected in the early 1990s was both ‘good news and bad news,’ with many dreading that the wrong type of visitor may become the norm. Particular types of visitation became feared, such as package tours, or even visitors in too great a number.<sup>94</sup> Yet it was also the wealthier type of visitor from overseas that caused concern. An article in the Afrikaans newspaper *Beeld*,

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<sup>91</sup> *The Star*, August 21 1992.

<sup>92</sup> Press Release: ‘Elephant Culling in the Kruger National Park During 1994,’ in NK/17/1, KNP.

<sup>93</sup> FALCON Press release, May 10 1995, in NK/17/1, KNP.

<sup>94</sup> *Saturday Star*, October 24 1991.

claimed that the ‘wildtuin is net vir ryk Yanks [the park is only for rich Yanks].’<sup>95</sup> ‘Overseas tourists’ became the scapegoat for many of the faults of the parks as it transformed. Phrases such as ‘money-spinner’, ‘busloads of tourists’ and the idea that game had ‘disappeared’ became common tropes in public correspondence.<sup>96</sup> Mass tourism and ostentatious wealth became linked to an idea of wildlife depletion. This discourse played to the humble and modest image that many park supporters liked to propagate about the park, and reinforced the idea that to be a true aficionado of the national park one needed to know how to behave appropriately. With access available to any that could afford it, the park became increasingly in need of ways to further differentiate amongst its users.

Many of the traditional ways to distinguish were beginning to erode. For example, as one article claimed ‘nocturnal animals – old hat to wealthier game-lovers frequenting private game reserves – have remained pictures in books or the odd glimpse of a civet cat spotted cruising the camp perimeter.’<sup>97</sup> Driving at night, and seeing animals at night, had become a culturally exclusive activity, which required not only access to private game reserves that led night drives, but also the technology and requisite staff experience. The mid-1990s began to democratize this practice as night drives were opened up to visitors of the Kruger Park. Game walks and wilderness trails began to expand out to more users.

In response, 4x4 trails were routed to more remote reaches of the park, more exclusive and isolated private camps were advertised for a truly natural experience, and other restricted means of accessing wildlife became available to the higher end user of South Africa’s natural heritage. Elsewhere the bond between wealth and wildlife was maintained, realigned, and strengthened. For example, the park continued to develop close relationships with influential bodies in South African society, either to shape their environmental practice or to motivate particular policy. The Department of Environmental Affairs (among other politicians), large mining corporations, and water companies were all important guests at some stage and all had been treated to a campfire talk about Kruger, conservation and the future of South Africa.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> *Beeld*, June 27 1990.

<sup>96</sup> See, for example, *Saturday Star*, November 9 1991.

<sup>97</sup> *Pretoria News*, April 23 1994.

<sup>98</sup> V. Strydom, Interview with the author.

Some saw distinction in the park as a potentially positive social process that should be encouraged. Proposals from companies seeking to work with the Kruger Park in its representation highlight both attitudes at the point of reception as well as the point of production. Some suggested emphasizing the link between the park and displays of wealth in order to develop that clientele base.<sup>99</sup> For such companies the association between elitism and conservation was so self-evident that it was a marketable tool to attract the growing African middle class consumer base to the Kruger Park as visitors. Yet another common argument contended that representing the park as a site for class distinction not only benefitted the classes that wished to distinguish themselves. It was suggested that attracting wealthy visitors to the eastern Transvaal brought rewards to local communities. For example, the black-owned Lerato company, which was associated with the Gestomar Group consultancy and management company, met with the Kruger Park to suggest a joint venture to help rebrand the park as a ‘very lucrative destination to visitors that can afford to visit it’. This was not merely a means to further cement the linkage between wealth and the national park. The thinking was that ‘the park and the communities around it have to benefit from the growing tourism potential.’<sup>100</sup> Culturally distinguishing the Kruger National Park was presented as a means of improving the lives of local communities, and was therefore a keystone in the process of development of the region.

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<sup>99</sup> ‘Proposal for a joint venture between the Kruger National Park and Lerato (PTY) Ltd,’ in NK/17/5, KNP.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that the park administration became more incorporative and inclusive, as well as more active in seeking out new publics. While this has led to a broader constituency of park champions and guardians, it has also placed demands on groups that use the park to create fresh means to socially distinguish. The park has therefore become both more democratic as well as perhaps more exclusive and potentially divisive. For some, the park's reputation as a social signifier needed to be actively accentuated, while others have been keener to abate such repute.

The national park today remains environmentally and socially useful to various groups, as an ecological sanctuary, a recreational reprieve, as well as an institute of legitimization. For many of the neighbouring communities the park has become the access point to connect with wealthy foreign and domestic visitors. It therefore remains important to them that the park endures as a signifier, or a coordinate in the increasingly global cultural system. Equally, however, access to wildlife in the way that the Kruger Park allows for and encourages creates the means for hegemonic social groups to maintain positions of influence and subsequent power imbalances in society.

## CONCLUSION

The gospel of fauna protection.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the history of the Kruger National Park the communication of the national park idea has been frequently referred to as ‘spreading the “gospel”’.<sup>2</sup> From the Earl of Onslow, president of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire, to Victor Calahane, a senior biologist with the National Park Service on an official visit to South Africa, people have viewed the movements for preservationism, conservationism, and the national park project in evangelical terms. The missions have relied upon preachers such as James Stevenson-Hamilton, canonical texts such as field guides, and a range of means, from films to magazines, to attract a broad church. The aim in much of the material was to dramatically alter people’s attitudes.<sup>3</sup> In such a metaphor, the national park functioned as the cathedral of conservationism.

This thesis has interrogated the evangelism around the national park project, focusing on the Kruger National Park and the Manyeleti game reserve. It has argued that within the texts and the images and the architecture were interlaced ulterior discourses that made the national park message more than merely an environmental sermon. Those ulterior discourses assisted the practice of race, class and gender distinction in South Africa, and transformed the ways in which people thought about wildlife in the process. In many respects the Kruger Park became a synecdoche for South Africa as a whole, and as a result the communications around it carry much importance. In the case of Manyeleti, as the first and only segregated game reserve for black South Africans, it is a unique example and unveils new and distinct messages surrounding the ways that people were encouraged to think about the environment.

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<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, No. 48, 1943, p.19.

<sup>2</sup> *African Wild Life*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1952, 283.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, *African Wild Life*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1946, p.1.

The literature on national parks and game reserves has been extensive and has attracted a wide range of specialisms, and an overview of this scholarship can be found in the introductory chapter. This thesis has added to this historiography in three significant ways: methodologically, theoretically, and historically. Methodologically this thesis has developed a broader approach to the cultural history of national parks. Many studies rely upon elitist cultural productions such as poetry and novels, while others make use of key thinkers in the national park movement.<sup>4</sup> Various scholars have moved away from the more restricted material to look at more populist productions, such as brochures, photographs, or films.<sup>5</sup> The first approach ignores more public engagement with the idea, while the latter can be too limited in its range. This thesis has been an expansive study of the representational material, including various means of communication, from roads and buildings to pamphlets and photographs. It has also adopted a wide-ranging chronology, from the day the Kruger Park became a national park to the 2010s. Through such a broad outlook changes and developments over time have become visible.

It has also been important to make use of some of the most influential means of communication, such as popular newspapers and best-selling field guides, but this has been done alongside some of the less impactful forms in the production of meaning. The wilderness experience at Manyeleti, for example, was never implemented, and as such never had any actual impact upon the public. However, to ignore that history would have been to sideline a crucial component in the history of wilderness construction. Sometimes failures can shed light upon the milieu of ideas in existence at a point in history.

The theoretical developments made in this thesis extend from the methodological. The works of significant cultural theorists have provided a unique framework for this study. Bourdieu's idea of social distinction through cultural capital and his concept of the 'institute of legitimisation', alongside Foucault's association of power and discourse, has enabled this thesis to explore the representational material produced about the Kruger Park and Manyeleti game reserve as means to delineate and differentiate within society. A key focus of the thesis has been class distinction, but race, nation and gender have also been crucial influences. By incorporating the

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, Runte, *Yosemite*, and Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Dunaway, *Natural Visions*, Zezulka-Mailloux, 'Laying the Tracks for Tourism,' and Beinart and McKeown, 'Wildlife Media and Representations of Africa, 1950s to the 1970s'.

ideas of Gramsci, Hall and de Certeau, the thesis has made a case for cultural creation not being the sole preserve of those in charge of the economic base. Such a framework is new in the history of national parks and ideas of nature.

Yet by taking a historical approach to the study of ideas of nature and national parks this thesis has given greater depth to the usual social constructionist approach to ideas. By charting the movements within the ways that the park idea was reported, challenged and reinterpreted constantly, the regime of representation is given a fuller picture than a single snapshot at any one time can bring. Historical context is essential in unraveling the social construction of a subject, and so by providing as rich a context as possible, this thesis has put forward a case for the social constructionist analysis as a historical approach.

On top of the theoretical and methodological aspects, this thesis has built upon the historiography of national parks in several significant ways, using Kruger and Manyeleti as key case studies. Regarding the Kruger example, I build upon the work of the principle historians of the region, Carruthers and Bunn, who have worked on the ways that the park fitted with contemporary demands within South African nationalism.<sup>6</sup> I extend the focus out from race and nationalism to incorporate the role of class as an engine behind national park messages. My thesis also looks at the mechanics of the propaganda machine that was developed around the national park idea in South Africa. Furthermore, a broader public has been envisaged, to explore how communications happened at various geographic distances from the park. These approaches have all added greater complexity to the way that meaning was produced around the Kruger National Park.

Overall, this thesis has argued that the Kruger Park was socially constructed out of discourses on nature and national parks, from its inception through to today. There were several key themes that formed the basis of this construction. The most predominant theme was the role of distinction through cultural positioning, either by the Kruger Park as an idea, or within the park itself through interactions and exchanges. In newspapers and books, the park became a cultural entity with a cultural value, and it built up that value through association, reference, and attachment to other cultural forms. By these means the park became a place for class, race and gender to be negotiated and asserted, with knowledge of, and behavior in, nature

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<sup>6</sup> Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park*, and Bunn, 'An Unnatural State'.

becoming a key signifier of status. This theme has continued, in various guises, from the 1930s into the 2010s.

Modernity and its relationship to nature was another cornerstone to the representational material around the national park. While much of the rhetoric in the 1930s and 1940s revolved around primitivism, much of the representational activities placed symbols of modernity at the very heart of the national park. This impacted upon attitudes to wildlife, as throughout much of this period animals were understood in relation to people rather than as separate species living independently of the human experience. In the 1950s and 1960s, with the rise of science as a means of understanding the world inside national parks, wildlife was slowly divorced from the human experience and new means of compartmentalizing animals became the norm.

A third theme running throughout this thesis has been control. The Kruger Park brought knowledge of the peripheral eastern Transvaal into the centre, in terms applicable and useful to that centre. People fitted into this process in various ways, with some forms of oppression more overt than others. As a result the area became sanitized, securitized, and in many ways simplified, and the repercussions of those changes were frequently felt by those living on the periphery of the park. In order to become a distant but reachable corner of the urban landscape, the park had to enforce certain strictures on its residents and its neighbours. As a constituency of the South African public these groups mattered in different ways to those living in the urban centres. In the late 1980s and especially the 1990s, the role of the perimeter in the outlook of the park's representational philosophy changed dramatically to become more inclusive and more multi-faceted.

None of these themes functioned consistently. They operated sometimes deliberately but oftentimes subconsciously. The discourses were not clearly defined and clinically applied. They overlapped and interlaced: discourses on race could colour discourses on class. They drifted through and across much of the representational material on the Kruger National Park, to be accessed and utilized by various groups. Some of the discourses, while apparently contradictory, actually assisted in reinforcing each other. Part of the haziness around the meaning behind Kruger comes from the fact that discourses allowed for oppositional positions and alternative meanings that veered from the more hegemonic positions emanating from the parks board and other more official bodies.

My analysis of the Manyeleti game reserve forms another significant addition to the historiography. Via this segregated reserve, which has thus far received no historical critique, fresh perspectives come to light on the history of environmentalism. Africans, previously counted in the historiography primarily as victims of conservationism, became active consumers and participants. While there has been some work on this front in Ugandan and Kenyan parks, Manyeleti adds a unique dimension, in that it was the product of the apartheid state. It therefore not only adds to the environmental history of South Africa, but also to the social and cultural history of apartheid. The beaches and bars of Umgababa and the debates over ‘luxury’ at Manyeleti run counter to much of the history of segregation and the homelands.

Manyeleti came into being as the first truly segregated game reserve. In many respects, it was an ultimate expression of apartheid ideology, with the large Kruger National Park generally reserved for white South Africans and foreign visitors, and the far smaller game reserve on its periphery set aside for the exclusive use of black South Africans. It was the first time that nature had been segregated in this way, as even the national parks during this period never excluded entry to particular racial groups. The separation, however, extended not only to the physical use of the space, but also to the way that Africans were presumed to see and experience nature. These presumptions affected the way that projects were designed, offered and explained. As such, Manyeleti attempted to teach people a new way of seeing and thinking that relied upon foundational assumptions that were based upon illogical premises. The wilderness trails were perhaps the best example and expression of this.

A commonly held view since the 1960s was that Africans were culturally disinterested in game viewing. This thesis has argued that the reason behind this failure to capture the public imagination in the way that the Kruger Park did was not only for economic and political reasons, but also because the representational process surrounding the reserve created a culture of meaning that did not appeal to its public. It has also argued that the representations that were made contained various assumptions and implicit suggestions that represented nature in accordance with power structures at work in the country at large. Concurrently, however, those that did make use of Manyeleti were able to fashion for themselves an encounter that made the best of the opportunity, to create a destination outside of everyday experiences.

The Manyeleti project was further stymied by the nature of the homeland venture. At its launch there was a sense that Manyeleti would operate as an African version of the Kruger National Park. It was meant as a resort for the African population of the country as a whole, and the language of the board and management team certainly reflected this during the 1960s and into the 1970s. However, the creation of the homeland system brought about a re-imagining of space and nationalism from the state's perspective. Manyeleti's purpose became complicated by these developments. Suddenly, it became necessary to include the reserve in Gazankulu's sphere of influence. Manyeleti therefore had a confused objective that was both national and provincial at the same time. As such, it became neither, and was thus unable to gather much emotional affiliation from visitors in the way that other reserves or parks had been able to do.

Comparison between the Kruger Park and Manyeleti has thrown up interesting contrasts in the way that social distinction played out in the representational material. For example, class and status were very evident in and around the Kruger Park, with its private game reserves and game farms abutting it, and timeshares looking for a certain ilk of investor. In Manyeleti, too, the need to attach status to conservation and wilderness was seen as essential to the success of particular projects, yet Manyeleti never built up such a network or hierarchy of ways to experience nature. The wilderness camp and accompanying wilderness trails were an attempt to create an especial encounter that would distinguish particular visitors, and a cloth badge was even envisaged to mark out those who had enjoyed the privilege. Yet this process was too forced, and reliant upon an inorganic selection process that included teachers and politicians and excluded businesspeople or entertainers. It tried to define status within particularly tight parameters that was disengaged from society.

Instead, perhaps the most notable practice of class distinction at work in Manyeleti was the fact that it separated the African experience of nature from the white experience, and then made the former far inferior to the latter. By having a game reserve that looked somewhat tatty around the rest camp, that struggled to find visitors wildlife through the thick, flat bush, and that presented nature to people in a decidedly unappealing manner, Manyeleti divorced Africans from a process that was helping to distinguish class in South Africa. The eastern Transvaal was home to various ways to enjoy nature, each with an accompanying price tag, and a required way of seeing, behaving and thinking. In such a way, national parks and game

reserves became institutions whereby the act of distinction could take place, just as Pierre Bourdieu described in operas, art galleries and museums in France during the same period. As white school children were introduced and instructed in this way of being through such schemes as the *Veld and Vlei* course, the system was repeated, continued and reinforced. Manyeleti did attempt similar schemes, but they were in a segregated manner with inferior facilities, thereby disconnecting Manyeleti from the process of distinction happening beyond its borders.

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This investigation has opened up many more potential avenues for further research. The history of tourism in South Africa is an under-explored field. As one of the country's primary industries more work needs to be done to understand its beginnings and the dynamics involved. The history of non-white tourism in the country, and indeed across the African continent, is particularly sparse and needs considerable fleshing out. In a similar vein, my work on Manyeleti has thrown a light onto African middle class leisure time and the ways and means that that was spent away from the urban centres. The use of leisure as a means to resist also has much potential in the South African setting. On the more environmental front, the history of wildlife conservation and the homelands would benefit from further research, to help expand on the Manyeleti example, which was ultimately centrally run from Pretoria rather than being a homeland venture, until it was handed over to Gazankulu in 1985.

This thesis has made a start on each of those avenues. By looking at the nexus point between leisure, tourism, wildlife, class and race, new dimensions to the history of South Africa and to the history of national parks and game reserves have surfaced. Meanings generated around wildlife or the national park did not exist confidentially, enclosed within the perimeter fence of the Kruger Park. Nor did they ever stop, or stagnate and crystallize. The production of meaning kept evolving. An article in the *Rand Daily Mail*, four years after the proclamation of the national park, described a campfire scene in the nascent Kruger Park:

Before long a man who has lived on the Lowveld for many years will begin a yarn. It is taken up by another fellow, and goes on and on.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*, September 10 1930.

Before the Kruger Park the eastern Transvaal was a land of many myths and fictions. Even with the rationalization of the park through the influence of scientific management strategies, this reputation of the region as a crucible of narrative possibility has never vanished. New stories, new meanings and new discourses will continue to develop around the park, and they will continue to carry in them power dynamics and imbalances. One would expect nothing less in ‘Nature’s show ground’.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> J. Stevenson-Hamilton, ‘A Game Warden Reflects,’ *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, No. 54, 1946, p.20.



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BAO 4738 D148/2-3  
BAO 4739 D148/3  
BAO 4740 D148/11  
BAO 4741 D148/11  
BAO 5363 H62/7/13  
BAO 5398 H62/13/6  
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Consul-General, Lourenco Marques (Maputo)  
BLM 20 35/13

Secretary of Home Affairs  
BNS 440 136/74  
BNS 727 89/146

Secretary of Foreign Affairs  
BTS 22/2/3/2-26

Department of Health  
GES 2678 111/56

Governor-General  
GG 806 13/3466  
GG 1424 45/169  
GG 1426 45/179  
GG 1435 45/211  
GG 2186 76/17  
GG 2347 6/58  
GG 2391 OA11

Secretary of Justice  
JUS 432 3/1053/27

Commissioner General Gazankulu

KGG 182 7/2/2/1

KGG 183 7/2/2/1

KGG 184 7/2/2/1

KGG 185 7/2/2/1

Commissioner General Lebowa

KGL 130 N2/6/3

Commissioner-General, Mafikeng

KGM N2/8/2

Native Commissioner Hammanskraal

KHK 2/2/95 N2/6/2

Department of Lands

LDE 572 7748/54

LDE 2338 GA115/82

LDE 8477 A115/69

Head, Division Economy and Markets

LEM 316 264

National Film Board

NFR 285 18/4/203

Secretary of Native Affairs

NTS 86/362

NTS 949/95/400

NTS 1192 652/162

NTS 2363 10/284

NTS 3589 853/308

NTS 3819 2773/308

NTS 6803 28/326/8

NTS 7612 8/129

NTS 7618 31/329

NTS 7812 396/335

NTS 8075 626/337

NTS 9547 140/400

Organization of Economic Opportunity

OEO 1/734 A13/6/2/3/1

Prime Minister

PM 1/2/155 PM45/42

Department of Posts and Telegraphs

PMG 468 13274/67-13730/67

Secretary for Public Works  
PWD 2892 8439

General Manager of the South African Railways and Harbours  
SAS 585 G4/5/11  
SAS 2209 TTM17/2  
SAS 2218 TTM 28/1

Department of Co-operation and Development  
SON 810 D10/3/3/2/565  
SON 1396 D10/10/2/3058

State President  
SPT 63 1/6/403

Secretary of the Treasury  
TES 2756 10/210

Decisions of the Executive Council  
URU 5397 1861  
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A/1

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A/2

Boundaries and Local Communities

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NK/2/7  
NK/2/9  
NK/2/11  
NK/2/21

Honorary Rangers

NK/7/1  
NK/7/3

Bantu Affairs

NK/9/1  
NK/9/6-8

Roads and Bridges

NK/12/1

External Organisations

NK/13/6  
NK/13/20  
NK/13/23

Press

NK/17/1-5

Violations

NK/23/2-5

Letters

NK/25/1-2

Minutes of Ranger Meetings

NK/29/4

Regional Reports

NK/30/1-2

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Information Service

NK/39/1-9

Minutes of Committee Meetings

NK/41/2-3

Wilderness Trails

NK/43/1-3

Tourism Planning  
NK/44/3-4

Tourism  
NK/47/1-2  
NK/47/5  
NK/47/9

Anti-Poaching  
NK/54/6

National Parks  
NK/56/1  
NK/56/4

## INTERVIEWS

Elmon William Mthombothi, Chairperson, Lubambiswano Community Forum, conducted on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2012 at the Community Office, Skukuza, Kruger National Park.

Elphus Desmond Lukhele, Lubambiswano Community Forum, conducted on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012 at Pretoriuskop Rest Camp, Kruger National Park.

Kirsty Redman, Interpretation Office, Kruger National Park, conducted on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2012 at Satara Rest Camp, Kruger National Park.

Irene Happy Mathebula, Sukuswani Community Forum, conducted on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2012 at Berg-en-Daal Rest Camp, Kruger National Park.

Maseko Africa, Executive Officer, Sukumani Community Forum, conducted on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2012 at the Community Office, Skukuza, Kruger National Park.

Mathews Rodney Mnisi, Executive Officer, Mahlambandlopfu Community Forum, conducted on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2012 at the Community Office, Skukuza, Kruger National Park.

Mgwena Madala Jan, Secretary, Mahlambandlopfu Community Forum, conducted on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2012 at the Community Office, Skukuza, Kruger National Park.

Phineas Nobela, Nature Conservation, Kruger National Park, conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2012 at Phineas Nobela's office, Skukuza, Kruger National Park.

Sipho Yusi Lubisi, Sukumani Community Forum, conducted on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2012 at Berg-en-Daal Rest Camp, Kruger National Park.

Solly Themba, People and Conservation, Kruger National Park, conducted on 21<sup>st</sup> July at Solly Themba's office, Skukuza, Kruger National Park.

Vanessa Strydom, Interpretation Office, Kruger National Park, conducted on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2012 at Conference Room, Skukuza, Kruger National Park

Vusi Mathebula, Secretary, Lubambiswano Community Forum, conducted on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012 at Pretoriuskop Rest Camp, Kruger National Park.

William Mabasa, Public Relations, Kruger National Park, conducted on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2012 at William Mabasa's office, Skukuza, Kruger National Park.

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