

**RE-CREATING HOME**  
**BRITISH COLONIALISM, CULTURE AND THE ZUURVELD**  
**ENVIRONMENT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

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To my partner, Adrian Flint, thank you for everything.

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## PREFACE

It is difficult to refer to different racial groups in a historical context without causing offence. When using quotes, it becomes necessary to use terminology that reflects the attitudes of a different age. It must be said that names referring to Africans which are considered highly derogatory today did not always have the same pejorative associations in the nineteenth century.

While it would have been preferable to have avoided racial labels altogether, the nature of the study made this impossible. The previously approved terms "San" and "Khoisan" have recently been found to have negative associations. Consequently, the early South African hunting society has been referred to as the "Bushman" society - a term now back in favour. Early herding societies have been referred to as "Khoena," a term Julia Wells finds preferable to "Khoikhoi" due to its non-gender specificity.<sup>1</sup>

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1. J Wells, "The Story of Eva and Pieter: Transcultural Marriage on the Road to Success in Van Riebeck's Colonial Outpost," paper presented at the Conference on Gender and Colonialism, University of the Western Cape, January 1997, p.1 n. 2. To be published as "Eva's Men: Gender and Power in the Establishment of the Cape of Good Hope," *Journal of African History*, 39, 3, December 1998.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis centres on the environmental impact of British colonialism in the Zuurveld during the nineteenth century. Within this context, it addresses the extent to which human-engineered environmental change is dictated by cultural mindset. Consideration of the links between culture and landscape transformation illuminates a little-considered aspect of the colonial experience in the Zuurveld.

The British worldview at the turn of the eighteenth century is examined, with special reference to attitudes towards the environment. The changes which occurred in this attitude while the colonists adjusted to a foreign environment are traced. Precolonial societies manipulated the environment to a certain extent, but it was the British colonists who were to have the most profound effect on the ecosystem. The colonists impacted on the Zuurveld in a variety of ways. Much of the environmental change they induced resulted from their attempts to construct a familiar world from the alien landscape surrounding them.

Attempts to "re-create home" in the Zuurveld were closely linked to the desire to exert control over what was to the colonists an "untamed wilderness." To this end land was cleared and new land use methods put into practice. Wildlife species threatening productivity were eliminated or forced through loss of habitat to retreat to the peripheries of the settlement. Exotic flora and fauna took the place of indigenes. The introduction of a capitalist economy meant that greater demands were made on the carrying capacity of the land. Conservation legislation introduced to limit increasing environmental

degradation and protect commercial productivity simultaneously limited African access to the environment. Control of the land was closely linked to control of Africans: their labour was needed to facilitate the subjugation of the environment.

Only through an appreciation of the British colonial mentality can changes to the Zuurveld environment during the nineteenth century be fully understood. Consequently, this study indicates that cultural mindset can play a pivotal role in shaping the environment.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The opening passages of Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* paint a picture of land degeneration in the valleys of the Umzimkulu River. Paton portrays a diseased South African society in terms of land that is sick and dying:

The great red hills stand desolate, and the earth has torn away like flesh. The lightning flashes over them, the clouds pour down upon them, the dead streams come to life, full of the red blood of the earth. Down in the valleys women scratch the soil that is left, and the maize hardly reaches the height of a man. They are valleys of old men and old women, of mothers and children. The men are away, the young men and the girls are away. The soil cannot keep them any more.<sup>1</sup>

Real landscapes are often as symbolic as the literary. The ecological state of the land vividly reflects the demands of its occupants. Environmental history assesses past human interaction with nature<sup>2</sup> and relates the impact of activities that transform the environment. As it does so, it adds a further dimension to the human story.<sup>3</sup> When human-generated changes to the environment are traced, pictures of the environment at different stages of human intervention emerge. Once factors influencing environmental change are isolated, it is possible to use this historical knowledge to illuminate current

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1. A Paton, *Cry, The Beloved Country: A Story of Comfort in Desolation*, (London, 1948), pp. 1-2. Paton makes further references to the state of the land reflecting the state of society. *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 70.
  2. DR Edgecombe, "Environmental History at UNP: An Answer to Relevant Curriculum Development," paper presented at the Fifteenth Biennial Conference of the South African Historical Society, Rhodes University, July 1995, p. 3.
  3. W Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, (Toronto, 1984), pp. vii-ix; S Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, (Bath, 1995), p. 18.

environmental issues.<sup>4</sup>

The environment, like the human societies which form part of it, is in a constant state of flux. The human relationship with the environment is constantly changing.<sup>5</sup> Hoskins' seminal work, *The Making of the English Landscape*, demonstrates how each period in British history has left its mark on the country's landscape.<sup>6</sup> In the same way, the British colonial era was a period that had a unique impact, but not the ultimate impact, on the Zuurveld and other environments.<sup>7</sup> The Zuurveld was home to hunters, herders and Xhosa for many centuries.<sup>8</sup> By the nineteenth century these societies had evolved various ways of adapting their needs to the environment and adapting the environment to their needs. The British settlement of the Zuurveld, however, is a good example of how environmental impact can be linked to cultural perspectives: sharp contrasts existed between the British mindset and African landscape. These contrasts are not as visible in a society long-established within the confines of its environment.

Significant changes occurred when the colonists attempted to re-create Britain

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4. S Dovers, "Australian Environmental History: introduction, review and principles," in S Dovers (ed.), *Australian Environmental History: Essays and Cases*, (Oxford, 1995), p. 4. See also the introduction to Arnold and Guha (eds.), *Nature, Culture, Imperialism: Essays on the Environmental History of South Asia*, (Oxford, 1995), p. 1.
  5. S Dovers, "Still discovering Monaro: perceptions of landscape," in Dovers (ed.), *Australian Environmental History*, p. 138.
  6. W Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, (London, 1965).
  7. T Griffiths, "Ecology and Empire: Towards an Australian history of the world," in T Griffiths and L Robin (eds.), *Ecology and Empire: Environmental History of Settler Societies*, (Edinburgh, 1997) p. 6.
  8. C Crais, "The Vacant Land: The Mythology of British Expansion in the Eastern Cape, South Africa," *Journal of Social History*, 25, 1991, p. 257; C Crais, *The Making of the Colonial Order: White Supremacy and Black Resistance in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865*, (Cambridge, 1992), p. 14.

in the Zuurveld during the nineteenth century. This is not to imply that the precolonial era was characterised by harmonious human interaction with the environment. Precolonial communities engaged in active manipulation of the environment. The Zuurveld was not an untouched "wilderness" prior to British intervention. British colonists can no more be blamed for having violated that wilderness than Africans can be dismissed as having had no impact on it. Rather than a treatise on the European desecration of the African wilderness, this thesis is an endeavour to explore the extent to which cultural mindset dictates human-engineered environmental change.

Colonialism's impact on the Zuurveld environment is not as immediately obvious as it is in other parts of South Africa. Beinart and Coates explain that the sugar plantations covering much of the Kwazulu-Natal coastal region have encroached upon the indigenous vegetation. Here the contrast between bland undulations of sugarcane and the dense indigenous subtropical forest is striking.<sup>9</sup> The inroads made by European agriculture in the Zuurveld are less noticeable. Stock farming in particular does not generate landscape change on the same scale. Dovers points out that even a visibly unchanged landscape may still have experienced profound environmental changes in the way of, for instance, soil erosion.<sup>10</sup> The observations of hunters, travellers, government and military officials who passed through the Zuurveld prior to full-scale European settlement in the region are conclusive. Records of their travels leave readers with no doubt that the environment has changed rapidly within the last two centuries. Early Europeans were witness to extravagant displays of flora and fauna. Compared with comments made towards the close of the nineteenth century, these records verify that incidents during the century were responsible for much of the transformation.

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9. W Beinart and P Coates, *Environment and History: The Taming of Nature in the USA and South Africa*, (London, 1995), p. 56.

10. Dovers, "Still discovering Monaro," p. 130.

The environmental history of South Africa is closely bound up with the country's political, economic and social history. Ecological control of the Zuurveld was also political control. The situation in the Zuurveld reinforces the social ecology theory that argues for a direct association between the domination of nature and the domination of people.<sup>11</sup> This link becomes a key issue when the present attitude of many South Africans towards environmentalism is considered.<sup>12</sup> Environmental efforts have been viewed as thinly-veiled neo-colonial discrimination in which the welfare of flora and fauna is placed above that of people. Africans who made a living from hunting, trapping, selling wood for timber or fuel and associated trades were adversely affected by nineteenth century environmental controls.<sup>13</sup> That wealthy landowning Europeans were often exempt from these same controls emphasised the discrimination. The adverse affects increased as the nineteenth century became the twentieth, so much so that Farieda Khan has termed conservation "the handmaiden of the apartheid state."<sup>14</sup> One result is a belief that placing moratoriums on capital-generating ventures because they are environmentally unsound is a way of inhibiting African participation in the global economy. Remarks made by the South African Minister of Environmental Affairs, Dr Pallo Jordan, in March 1998 are a case in point. Jordan spoke of disregarding the recommendations of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) carried out on the proposed Coega development at Port Elizabeth if they conflicted with engineering plans. Admitting there was "no reason to doubt the findings made in the SEA," (the strategic

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11. R Braidotti, E Charkiewicz and S Häusler, *Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development: Towards a Theoretical Synthesis*, (London, 1994), p. 155.

12. *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, 7 to 13 November 1997.

13. R Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860*, (Cambridge, 1995), p. 12.

14. *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, 7 to 13 November 1997, p. 37. See also J Carruthers, "Nationhood and national parks: comparative examples from the post-imperial experience," in Griffiths and Robin (eds.), *Ecology and Empire*.

environmental assessment that considered the potential environmental impact on the area), Jordan nonetheless stated that the developers "may have to go with what the engineers are doing." Engineers are contemplating encroaching on the one-kilometre restriction on development surrounding the ecologically sensitive Jahleel Island. Jordan's reasons are clear. The Coega project will go some way towards combatting poverty:

In a country such as ours the greatest threat to sound environmental management is poverty... . If people have to rely on wood for fuel they chop down the trees that are the lungs of planet earth. If we do not address poverty we will be threatened by the sulphurous fumes of coal, wood and kerosene fires.<sup>15</sup>

The future implications of ignoring the EIA must however be taken into consideration. As the developed world becomes still more developed, people will increasingly choose to holiday in less-developed locales. Unaffected by development, areas boasting sites like Jahleel Island may yet hold the key to terminating the region's poverty.

The environmental movement has experienced considerable growth in the latter half of the twentieth century. As Richard Grove and others have shown, it has far from recent origins.<sup>16</sup> Much has been written about the importance of environmental history as a school of thought. Simmons has provided an excellent introduction to the genre.<sup>17</sup> An expanding body of international historical writing has been devoted to environmental issues. Seminal works

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15. *Eastern Province Herald*, 10 March 1998.

16. Grove, *Green Imperialism*. See also C Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to The End of the Eighteenth Century*, (London, 1967); Oelshlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*, (New York, 1991) and K Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800*, (London, 1983).

17. I Simmons, *Environmental History: A Concise Introduction*, (Oxford, 1993).

by Crosby,<sup>18</sup> MacKenzie<sup>19</sup> and Grove<sup>20</sup> have done much to stimulate debate surrounding the environmental impact of European expansion with regard to the invasion of exotic species, hunting and vegetation.

Studies examining the impact of settler societies on their new environments are increasing. Cronon,<sup>21</sup> Cowdrey<sup>22</sup> and Silver<sup>23</sup> have produced work on European colonists in America. Bolton<sup>24</sup> and Lines<sup>25</sup> have researched the colonial impact on the Australian environment. Compendiums edited by Dovers,<sup>26</sup> Guha and Arnold,<sup>27</sup> Anderson and Grove,<sup>28</sup> Maddox, Giblin and Kimambo<sup>29</sup> and Griffiths and Robin,<sup>30</sup> have added to understanding in this field.

Some work has been done in the field of South African environmental history.

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18. A Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Invasion of Europe 900-1900*, (Cambridge, 1986).
  19. J MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism*, (New York, 1988).
  20. Grove, *Green Imperialism*.
  21. W Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, (Toronto, 1983).
  22. A Cowdrey, *This Land, This South*, (Kentucky, 1983).
  23. T Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, colonists and slaves in the South Atlantic forests 1500-1800*, (Cambridge, 1990).
  24. G Bolton, *Spoils and Spoilers*, (St Leonards, 1992).
  25. W Lines, *Taming the Great South Land: A History of the Conquest of Nature in Australia*, (London, 1992).
  26. Dovers (ed.), *Australian Environmental History*.
  27. Guha and Arnold (eds.), *Nature, Culture, Imperialism*.
  28. D Anderson and R Grove (eds.), *Conservation in Africa: People, Policies and Practice*, (Cambridge, 1987).
  29. G Maddox, J Giblin and I Kimambo (eds.), *Custodians of the Land: Ecology and Culture in the History of Tanzania*, (London, 1996).
  30. Griffiths and Robin (eds.), *Ecology and Empire*.

Carruthers, for instance, has worked on the creation of national parks in South Africa and their implications for race relations.<sup>31</sup> She was among the first South African historians to place early conservation measures within a political and economic context. Brooks' MA thesis investigates the motivations behind the move towards game preservation in early twentieth century Zululand.<sup>32</sup> She illustrates the need to locate human activities impacting on the environment within their specific historical contexts. Beinart and Coates have published a comparative study of environmental degradation in South Africa and in the United States of America.<sup>33</sup> They focus on the effects of hunting, deforestation and agriculture on the North American and South African environment. The study provides an excellent although necessarily generalised account of the influence of colonialism in these spheres. A study of the colonial impact on the Kwazulu-Natal environment has been undertaken by Ellis, who has brought the issue of colonialism and the environment down to a local level.<sup>34</sup>

Little environmental history has been written in a specifically eastern Cape context. Way-Jones has produced a broad overview of the general human impact on the eastern Cape environment.<sup>35</sup> Cosser explores colonial and pre-

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31. J Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History*, (Pietermaritzburg, 1992). See also Carruthers, "Nationhood and national parks."
  32. S Brooks, "Playing the Game: The Struggle for Wildlife Protection in Zululand, 1910-1930," (unpublished MA thesis, Queen's University, 1990).
  33. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*.
  34. B Ellis, "The Impact of the White Settlers on the Environment of the Durban Area, 1845-1870," paper presented at the Conference for the Environment and Development, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1992.
  35. M Way-Jones, "An attempt to show by means of known available historical documents the human impact on the environment of the eastern Cape," in R De Jong (ed.), *Museums and the Environment*, (Pretoria, 1993).

colonial attitudes towards the land in her survey of eastern Cape art.<sup>36</sup> She argues that the work of various eastern Cape artists was directly influenced by the worldview of their particular society. Skead's meticulously researched historical review of the Cape's fluctuating mammal population is vital to an appreciation of the environmental changes engendered by colonialism.<sup>37</sup> Winer and Deetz have studied material culture in the settler village of Salem between 1820 and 1860. They have found that aspects of colonial life - architecture, ceramics and gravestones - reflect the efforts of members of an industrialised society to come to terms with the more agrarian eastern Cape lifestyle. Rather than reproducing British culture as they had left it, the colonists borrowed from earlier British styles which better answered their current needs.<sup>38</sup> In a similar study, Scott and Deetz assert that changes in building styles and furnishings in early Victorian Grahamstown point to the development of "...a distinctive English frontier culture, superficially English in form, but very African in underlying structure and cognitive organisation."<sup>39</sup> The conclusions of Winer, Scott and Deetz reflect the cosmetic adaptations of British colonists to their new surroundings. In spite of these adaptations, the Zuurveld settlement remained fundamentally British in terms of economy and attitude.

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36. M Cosser, "Images of a Changing Frontier: Worldview in Eastern Cape Art from Bushman Rock Art to 1875," (unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, 1992).
  37. S Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence in the Cape Province, Vol II - The eastern half of the Cape Province, including the Ciskei, Transkei and East Griqualand*, (Cape Town, 1982).
  38. M Winer and J Deetz, "The Transformation of British Culture in the Eastern Cape, 1820-1860," *Social Dynamics*, 16(1), 1990.
  39. P Scott and J Deetz, "Building, Furnishings and Social Change in Early Victorian Grahamstown," *Social Dynamics*, 16(1), 1990.

Stephen Morton argues that: "In understanding environmental change, it is important not simply to know *what* has happened, but also to ascertain *why*. Knowing this, we may then seek lessons for present-day management."<sup>40</sup> The British colonial attitude towards the environment provides an explanation for the environmental changes which took place in the Zuurveld during the nineteenth century. It is important to study the cultural dimension of environmental change, because nature and culture are so inextricably linked. Culture is not something that stands apart from the environment. Just as human beings are an integral part of the ecosystem, so is their cultural world. Simmons illustrates this with the idea of people existing in two interlinked spheres: as a part of nature and in a cultural world of their own making. Culture influences environmental development, and the environment influences cultural development.<sup>41</sup> When the two are studied in conjunction, a fuller picture emerges of both the environmental history and the cultural history of a region. If the links between culture and the environment are accepted, it follows that neither is complete without the other. Changes in culture affect the environment and vice versa. The British colonists themselves related the stability of their culture to their position regarding the land. When Thomas Philipps related his farming problems to his sister, he added that: "...our culture is still very precarious...".<sup>42</sup>

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40. S Morton, "European settlement and the mammals of arid Australia," in Dovers (ed.), *Australian Environmental History*, p. 141.

41. Simmons, *Environmental History*, p. 48. See also Silver, *New Face on the Countryside*, p. 33; Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 9 and Griffiths, "Ecology and Empire: Towards an Australian history of the world," in Griffiths and Robin (eds.), *Ecology and Empire*, p. 3.

42. Thomas Philipps to Catherine Richardson, Glendower, 16 August 1828, Cory MS 7612, p. 14.

The Zuurveld lies between the Bushman's and Great Fish rivers, bounded by the Indian Ocean in the south and the westward curve of the Great Fish in the north. The name *Zuurveld*, or *Zuureveld*, is from the Dutch and refers to the sourgrass pastureland which covers a large proportion of the region. Although formally baptised by the British as "Albany" in January 1814,<sup>43</sup> the name Zuurveld will be retained for the purposes of this study. The district of Albany underwent extensions and contractions, and in time was subdivided to form the districts of Albany and Bathurst. Central to this thesis is the land itself, rather than any administrative jurisdiction.

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43. "Government Advertisement," 7 January 1814, in *Proclamations, Advertisements, and other Official Notices, published by the Government of the Cape of Good Hope, from the 10th January, 1806, to the 2d [sic] May, 1825*, (Cape of Good Hope, 1827), p. 274.

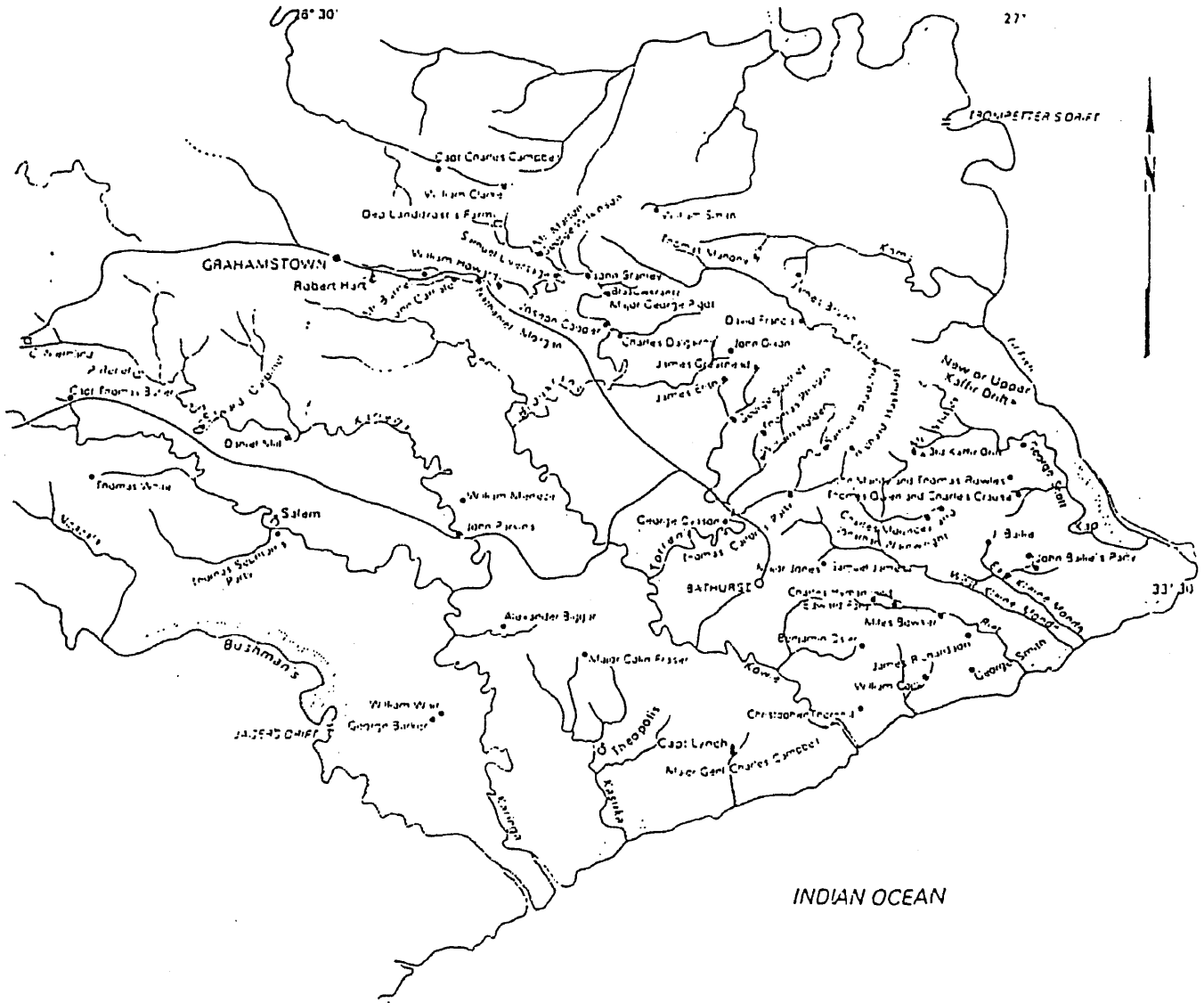


Figure 1. Map of the Zuurveld (J Bergh and J Visagie, *The Eastern Cape Frontier Zone 1660-1980: A Cartographic Guide for Historical Research*, (Durban, 1985), p. 25.

Environmental history includes many other aspects of social science.<sup>44</sup> The Zuurveld is a case in point: the political and socio-economic upheavals of the nineteenth century can be traced back to conflicts over grazing rights. Grazing rights resulted in the first major instances of friction between the British, Dutch and Xhosa. To the Xhosa, grazing land was communal property, making it difficult for them to comprehend the British insistence on upholding private property rights, and vice versa.<sup>45</sup> Different attitudes to property make it easier to understand the acceleration in environmental change heralded by the arrival of the British in the Zuurveld. Conflict over resources like pasturage can be regarded as environmental in origin, emphasising the importance of focusing on the environment as an aspect of historical study. The British gained permanent control of the Cape Colony in 1806. Their influence began to extend over the Zuurveld region in 1812, following a drawn-out period of conflict with the Xhosa that culminated in the expulsion of the latter from the area.<sup>46</sup> By the end of February 1812 an estimated 20 000 Xhosa had been driven out of the Zuurveld, leaving 5877 square kilometres of land lying unoccupied.<sup>47</sup>

In early nineteenth century Britain, wide-scale land clearance was also taking

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44. T Spear, "Struggles for the Land: The Political and Moral Economics of Land on Mount Meru," in Maddox, Giblin and Kimambo (eds.), *Custodians of the Land*, p. 213.

45. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 54.

46. For an account of the conflict between the Xhosa and the Cape Colony over the rights to the Zuurveld, dating back to the mid-1770s, see R Collins, "Journal of a Tour to the North-Eastern Boundary, the Orange River, and the Storm Mountains," in D Moodie (ed.), *The Record or a Series of Official Papers relative to the Condition and Treatment of the Native Tribes of South Africa*, (Amsterdam/Cape Town, 1960), Part V, pp. 9-16. See also J Peires, *House of Phalo*, (Johannesburg, 1987), pp. 54-60 and H Giliomee, "The Eastern Frontier, 1770-1812," in R Elphick and H Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840*, (Cape Town, 1989), pp. 421-61.

47. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 82.

place. British landowners were reclaiming land previously worked by their tenants to facilitate expansion of lucrative wool production. Erstwhile tenants became homeless and landless, and one solution to the situation was to repopulate a proportion of these people in the Zuurveld. This meant an expansion of the British population in the Colony and the creation of a protective barrier between the colonists and the Xhosa to the east. Prospective immigrants were canvassed in Britain in 1819 and some four thousand eventually sailed for the Cape in early 1820.<sup>48</sup>

The British colonists shared a common desire to live as they had in Britain, while hoping to free themselves from the problems which they had experienced there. They did not leave their homeland in order to found a new culture in a new country. Rather, they were intent on re-creating British conditions in the eastern Cape.<sup>49</sup> From the outset they tried to adapt the eastern Cape environment to meet their needs, rather than adapt their needs to the environment. Surveying the land through which he was travelling to reach his allocated plot, Thomas Philipps wrote confidently that he had no doubt that the few "problems" (such as the lack of iron agricultural implements) he had encountered in the new country would soon be solved by the application of "British industry."<sup>50</sup> It seems that the colonists were determined to reconstruct another Britain in the Zuurveld. Many accounts of the settlement include the idea in one form or another. As late as 1974 Guy Butler commented on how the motherland was to be transported to the colony.<sup>51</sup> To

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48. G Butler, *The 1820 Settlers: An Illustrated Commentary* (Cape Town, 1988), p. 66.

49. This was an ideal shared by many British colonial societies. S Pyne, "Frontiers of fire," in Griffiths and Robin (eds.), *Ecology and Empire*, p. 33. See also S Milton, "The Transvaal Beef Frontier: environment, markets and the ideology of development, 1902-1904," in *Ibid.*, p. 201, n. 7.

50. A Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler: His Letters*, (Pietermaritzburg, 1960), p.69.

51. Butler, *The 1820 Settlers*, pp. 5-6.

a certain extent their life away from Britain appears to have reinforced the colonists' self-image as Britons. Their endeavours to convey their cultural heritage to the Zuurveld, and the degree to which their approach to the environment was dependent on this will be examined.

The British had an individualist attitude towards the land which was very different to the attitude of earlier inhabitants of the Zuurveld. The British worldview will be evaluated to ascertain the connections between the colonists' perceived place within the environment and the impact of their activities on that environment. The colonists lost no time in attempting to control the Zuurveld. Control involved efforts to shape the land according to aesthetic and economic perceptions of what their surroundings should look like. Initially control was attempted regardless of its feasibility. The colonial need for a productive landscape in the British sense was stimulated largely by the ideology of capital accumulation. The focus will be on those aspects of the British worldview which have influenced the colonial approach to and impact on the land. These aspects will be considered in conjunction with colonial environmental control. Colonialism engendered wide-scale land clearance. Wildlife was hunted out or displaced. Colonists introduced new landuse techniques and exotic flora and fauna. The desire to control the land can be linked to a corresponding desire to control the people who previously controlled the land.<sup>52</sup> Conservation legislation designed to curtail environmental degradation denied Africans access to the land while promoting colonial land-owning and commercial interests.

The events occurring in the Zuurveld during the nineteenth century make for a significant chapter in South African history. This study will attempt to add a new dimension to the body of information already established. It is an

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52. Grove, *Green Imperialism*, p. 266.

overview of the changes to the land initiated by the British colonists during the course of the nineteenth century. The links between the British colonial mindset and environmental change will be considered in the light of this. Anderson and Grove refer to "...the importance of an historical perspective in understanding the origins and evolution and present attitudes and approaches towards conservation in Africa...".<sup>53</sup> Some aspects of environmentalism which jar so discordantly with the present South African situation - the prioritisation of wildlife interests over those of poor people, for instance - are colonial in origin. In colonial situations people acted in accordance with the dominant paradigms of the period.<sup>54</sup> Once this point is accepted, it can be used as a starting point from which to foster a new form of environmentalism conditioned to meet the needs of South Africa today.

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53. D Anderson and R Grove, "The scramble for Eden: past, present and future in African conservation," in Anderson and Grove (eds.), *Conservation in Africa*, pp. 7-8.

54. Dovers, "Australian environmental history," p. 15.

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## CHAPTER II

### ***ROMANCE, REALITY AND THE COLONIAL LANDSCAPE***

...viewers shape the landscape with their knowledge, background, character and hopes.<sup>1</sup>

The British colonists arrived in the Zuurveld laden with "cultural baggage."<sup>2</sup> This was revealed in their attitude towards the environment. This attitude would play an important role in the transformation of the landscape and would shape the way in which this transformation took place. From a modern environmentalist point of view the transformation was largely negative, as was the attitude which generated it. However, the issue needs to be analysed in terms of the values and norms of the period. This makes it necessary to examine the attitude towards the environment most prevalent in Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Within any collective consciousness there are cultural affiliations which have been passed down through the ages. Schama refers to the "social memory"<sup>3</sup> which can directly influence landscape manipulation: a society may inherit "a long memory" of what a certain landscape stands for, or what it is thought that it should stand for.<sup>4</sup> That a landscape ideal can be linked to a collective social

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1. Dovers, "Still discovering Monaro," in Dovers (ed.), *Australian Environmental History*, p. 134.
  2. A term used by Cosser, "Images," p. 61.
  3. The term "sozialen Gedächtnisses" was first used by Aby Warburg. Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, p. 17.
  4. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

memory of what was, or even only what might have been, means that landscape manipulation may be undertaken for idealistic as well as practical reasons. The main objective of this thesis will be to argue that an inherently British cultural perspective transported by the colonists to the Zuurveld - their "social memory" - was what ultimately shaped the way in which their activities impacted on the environment. As human culture shapes the environment, though, so the environment shapes the future development of culture, and the two-way process continues.<sup>5</sup>

At no stage is it possible to pinpoint an attitude to the environment common to all levels of British society. It is possible, however, to outline the factors influencing a dominant British view of the environment in the early nineteenth century. The cumulative experiences of over two thousand years all came to bear on the attitude of this time.<sup>6</sup> The religious, economic, artistic and scientific maturation period that has come to be known as "early modern" created a British worldview in no way ambivalent regarding the place of humans within the natural world. Newtonian physics led to a belief in the existence of rules and laws which governed the natural world. If the rules were found, nature could be governed, just as the working of a machine had only to be learnt before it became entirely governable. This view of nature-as-a-machine [sic]<sup>7</sup> had a profound impact on attitudes towards the land: one did not have to cajole it to produce - as a machine it could be worked endlessly without it becoming exhausted. The pagan idea of the earth as a life-giving mother in need of nurture was becoming displaced from social memory.

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5. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, p. 13.

6. For extensive coverage of this point, see Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* and Oelshlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*.

7. Oelshlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*, pp. 96-98.

Newtonian physics also lent to philosophy the idea of atoms as the building blocks of matter. The building blocks of society were the individuals of which it was composed - an idea later to be entrenched by John Stuart Mill. Middle class ascendancy, emerging as it did in the wake of the industrial revolution, meant a move away from the feudal system of common property. It became the ideal of every individual to own land, and this translated itself into a widespread desire for private property. The rise of the Protestant work ethic, too, meant a new way of looking at the world for its adherents. Humans were the stewards of the earth - theirs was the responsibility to utilise the creation in the most profitable way for humankind. Human reason and science, order and regularity, could be made to prevail over the waywardness and irregularity of wild nature. The most practical way of ordering nature was to cultivate the land and stock it with domestic animals. This, together with the emergence of a capitalist economy and the rising demand for consumer commodities, meant that the reclamation of land from the wild began to be carried out on an ever more intensive scale.

With capitalism, the idea of accumulation as the measure of quality of life became entrenched. The ecological ramifications were extensive: the earth was seen as a resource, there to be converted into commodities and to stimulate the production of wealth. This saw a move away from traditional farming methods towards the introduction of monoculture, cash cropping, and mining for capitalist production. The change in land utilisation meant that more pressure was put on the land to yield as much as possible, rather than just what was needed for survival. The industrial revolution facilitated the development of the technological, economic and entrepreneurial spirit necessary for this to take place, creating a situation in which land was placed under more pressure to be productive than ever before. The idea that the land, and the environment in

general, could be worked for economic benefit was combined with the idea that it could be made to conform to certain aesthetic standards. The landscape painting of the time tended towards the veneration of idyllic rural European scenes, and it was against these painted scenes that the aesthetic appeal of real scenes was measured. A certain landscape was beautiful if it looked like a painting - "picturesque" in the literal sense of the word.<sup>8</sup> European landscapes, intensively worked by humans for centuries and shaped by European cultural norms, were the aesthetic ideal against which all scenery was appraised.<sup>9</sup> Highly regarded were regulated vineyards and olive groves, neat hedgerows - the orderly patchwork of fields and woods that dominated the European landscape. The idea that clearing and tilling the land amounted to improving the land, aesthetically as well as economically, was firmly entrenched.<sup>10</sup>

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, a less anthropocentric perspective was taking its place alongside the dominant stance. While the dominant opinion which prevailed so strongly in earlier times was unchanged, it was now being challenged from various quarters. Artists, philosophers and scientists reacted against the idea of nature-as-a-machine [sic], and began to identify with the idea of nature-as-an-organism [sic].<sup>11</sup> "Wild nature" in all her rugged glory was eulogised by a succession of Romantic poets and writers. This perspective caught on in upper-class circles and to a certain extent was transmitted to the Cape Colony. One of the more influential of the 1820 settlers, Thomas Pringle, himself a poet, was a correspondent of Sir Walter Scott. Sophia Pigot read

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8. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, p. 265.

9. Simmons, *Environmental History*, p. 111.

10. Grove, *Green Imperialism*, p. 65.

11. Oelshlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*, pp. 96-98.

Scott's "Marmion" in September 1821. Scott's influence is apparent in her description of a "... a very beautiful Valley, Rocks and Waterfalls..." at the "Cap"[Kap?] River which she visited that same week.<sup>12</sup> Although a significant departure from the earlier cavalier attitude that allowed for the total subjugation of nature to human whim, this viewpoint was not yet widespread in Britain. Thomas has been criticised for over-emphasising the "new sensibility" of the nineteenth century elite at a time when upper-class blood sports scaled new heights of gory excess.<sup>13</sup> The idea that nature was there to be utilised still prevailed at all levels of society among those engaged in the struggle to wrest a living from the land. Although a less anthropocentric ethos was beginning to materialise, the desire to tame the environment was still very much inherent in the cultural mindset. The dominant attitude at the turn of the century tended towards a desire for private property where nature could be manipulated to advance one's material accumulation and moulded to conform to one's aesthetic sensibilities. The environment could be endlessly worked, solely for the benefit of the owner.

Between 1815 and the 1880's, over twelve million Britons emigrated to the various British colonies.<sup>14</sup> European colonisation has been described as "...a journey...out of the constraints of European economic and mental constriction."<sup>15</sup> Pertinent as this point is, it will be argued that aspects of this "mental constriction"

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12. M Rainier (ed.), *The Journals of Sophia Pigot, 1819-1821*, p. 89. See Scott's "Marmion: A Tale of Flodden Field" in *The Romantic Poems of Sir Walter Scott*, (London, 1905) pp. 95-269, but especially the "Introduction to Canto First," pp. 97-106.
  13. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, pp. 26-27, 98.
  14. R Robinson, J Gallagher and A Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism*, (London, 1961), p. 1.
  15. Anderson and Grove, "The scramble for Eden," in Anderson and Grove (eds.), *Conservation in Africa*, p. 4.

proved impossible to eradicate. However, when the British colonists landed on the shores of the eastern Cape in 1820, they did do so with a somewhat different perspective to those who remained in Britain. Their mindset was shaped by their decision to start new lives away from Britain. The drive to emigrate stemmed from both the situation in Britain and in the Cape Colony. The end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 had resulted in vast numbers of British soldiers becoming unemployed. At the same time, the Enclosures Act was being enforced, and many erstwhile tenants were being forced off the land and into the urban areas to make way for their landlords' sheep.<sup>16</sup> For the colonial authorities, however, the need to stabilise the eastern Cape frontier was far more acute than any wish to alleviate the plight of the British poor.<sup>17</sup> By 1819 Xhosa resistance in the eastern region of the Cape Colony was escalating. The Fifth Frontier War of 1818-1819 culminated in the Battle of Grahamstown in which some 10 000 Xhosa warriors, commanded by the prophet Nxele, challenged the British garrison. The British emerged victorious, but clearly only because the Xhosa committed a number of errors in this their first pitched battle fought along more British lines.<sup>18</sup> The Dutch stock farmers in the region were too nomadic to secure the frontier.<sup>19</sup> A fixed settlement of British agriculturalists would, it was hoped, provide a much

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16. DR Edgecombe, "The Letters of Hannah Dennison, 1820 Settler, 1820-1847," (unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, 1968), pp. 1, 6; U Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain: Albany Settler of 1820*, Vol I (1819-1836), (Cape Town, 1946), pp. x-xii; Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, pp. 88-89.

17. Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 87.

18. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, (Johannesburg, 1987) pp. 74, 143-144.

19. The colonial administration attempted to induce the Dutch to settle the frontier by offering them land in the Zuurveld which, it was emphasised, was "unrivalled in the world for its beauty and fertility." "Government Advertisement," 18 April 1817, in *Proclamations, Advertisements, and other Official Notices*, pp. 384-86.

needed buffer zone between the Xhosa frontier and the Cape Colony proper.<sup>20</sup> In Britain, the prospective colonists were unaware that the Zuurveld settlement was intended as a buffer zone; the land lying to the west of the Bushman's River in the far-off Cape seemed to beckon with promise.<sup>21</sup> Only in 1822 did some of them begin to gain insight into the events which conspired to bring them to the eastern Cape. Wrote an indignant Thomas Philipps in 1822: "...Ministers must be called to prove that the accusations made by some writer against them in 1819, of our being intended as a Barrier force for the Colony, was a base calumny. Subsequent measures seem to warrant such an assumption...".<sup>22</sup>

Before their departure to the Cape the colonists viewed the Zuurveld as an empty space on the map, with the details to be filled in as they saw fit. They certainly came with the intention of creating another Britain, but one without Britain's flaws. Drawn from different classes, both rich and poor harboured misgivings about their economic future in Britain.<sup>23</sup> A survey of the circumstances of some five hundred of the colonists shows only 36% of them to have had any kind of agricultural background.<sup>24</sup> Even though so few had actual agricultural experience, Crais argues that many of the colonists saw a prosperous future in farming the

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20. Edgecombe, "The Letters of Hannah Dennison," pp. 10-13; Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 87.

21. See for example Long (ed.), *Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol I, p. xvii.

22. Philipps' journal, 29 November 1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 155. See also Philipps to Mary Philipps, Lampeter, 17 December 1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 164.

23. Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 88.

24. Peires points out that even this figure could be inflated: knowing it to be the key to their acceptance as emigrants, people may have exaggerated their farming experience. Peires, "The British and the Cape 1814-1834," in Elphick and Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society*, pp. 474-75. See also Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, pp. 88-89.

Zuurveld.<sup>25</sup> Their expectations would have been raised by descriptions of the new land carried by publications like *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine*. In August 1819 the *Magazine* published an article eulogising the Cape as "the finest colony in the world." "South Africa" the article promised, "has every advantage to repay the sacrifice of quitting the land of our forefathers." Prospective colonists were assured that "The farmer, with over-abundance of land, never thinks of manure or fallow. A plough of the clumsiest make scratches the ground, which is sure to yield a most plentiful crop. Excellent wheat is produced..."<sup>26</sup>

Led to believe that farming conditions would be a great deal more favourable than they really were, the first immigrants to arrive in 1820 were soon bitterly disappointed. The emigration of Hannah Dennison and her framework knitter husband, George, was precipitated by their miserable standard of living.<sup>27</sup> The same conditions prompted Jeremiah Goldswain to write "...I had got but little work to do and had no prospect of giting aney more...". For him, emigration held out "...such Good prospetes [sic] to us..."<sup>28</sup> The Zuurveld, a place where supposedly "...the labour of man, assisted by a genial and healthy climate, would produce an early and abundant return,"<sup>29</sup> must have seemed idyllic. John Mitford Bowker would have spoken for many colonists when in May 1836 he recounted that:

I therefore left my native land, with full confidence that common exertion and industry on my part would enable me, in the course of a few years, to sit down under my own vine and fig-tree, if not in affluence, yet with a sufficient competence to render my adopted

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25. Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 88.

26. "Emigration to the Cape of Good Hope," *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine*, August 1819.

27. Edgecombe, "Letters of Hannah Dennison," pp. 1-12.

28. Long (ed.), *Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol I, p. 3.

29. Quoted in Edgecombe, "Letters of Hannah Dennison," p. 12.

home a home of peace and increasing comfort.<sup>30</sup>

In 1845 John Ayliff recalled the colonists' preconceived ideas of the Zuurveld "...over which we had speculated for the previous eight or nine months, and of whose beauty and sylvan happiness we had all of us painted the most enchanting pictures." He emphasised the harsh contrast between these preconceptions and the reality that confronted the colonists on their arrival:

The whole space through which we passed from Algoa Bay to the head-quarters of Graham's Town, (a cantonment of a few houses and huts,) was a perfect wilderness; not a human resident, or a human habitation was met with in the journey of six days; but the antelope, the elephant, and beasts of a more dangerous description, had full and undisputed possession of the length and breadth of the land. Such was the state of the 'Zuurveld' in 1820.<sup>31</sup>

The colonial authorities endeavoured to re-create the British class system in the Zuurveld settlement. A number of the parties were organised with a "gentleman" and his family at the head and labourers and their families making up the body. The colonists came from all walks of life and consequently were a disparate group. The group most conscious of their actions - those with more education and more time for contemplation - was also the smallest. This group has provided the most evidence that a re-creation of Britain was attempted in the Zuurveld.<sup>32</sup> When poorer people wrote, they largely concentrated on their

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30. J Bowker, *Speeches, Letters, and Selections from Important Papers of the late John Mitford Bowker, Some Years Resident and Diplomatic Agent with certain Kaffir and Fingo Tribes*, (Grahamstown, 1864), p. 1.

31. J Ayliff, *Memorials of the British Settlers of South Africa delivered by the Rev J Ayliff, at Bathurst, on 14 May, 1845, in Commemoration of the Foundation of the Settlement, in the year, 1820*, (Grahamstown, 1845), pp. 16-17.

32. See for example Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*; Cory MS 14,264; Cory MS 7608-12; T Pringle, *Some Account of the Present State of the English Settlers in Albany, South Africa*, (London, 1824); T Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 1966) and "Diary of B.E. Bowker," Albany SMD 948.

struggle to live, and their writing often reveals a preoccupation with daily tribulations.<sup>33</sup> They seldom reflected on the wider implications of their situation. However, evidence gleaned from their observations suggests that they had a similar, if less overt, attitude towards re-creating home. This written work of course reflects both conscious and unconscious subjectivities, particularly if, like missionary journals, it was intended for publication.<sup>34</sup> Despite this, the desire to re-create home in the economic sense surfaces in the writing of most of the colonists. Conversely, Peires states that the 1820 settlement plans failed because the majority of the colonists had little intention of re-creating "their traditional lifestyle." He argues that the drive to emigrate stemmed from a desire to seek new opportunities.<sup>35</sup> Hopes for a better life were certainly inherent in the colonists' plans, but this by no means prevented the re-creation of Britain in the Zuurveld. The colonists may have seized the new opportunities that arose, but what they did with these opportunities reflected their British worldview. Peires negates his own argument when he points out that, unlike the Dutch farmers, the British were "habituated to the use of money in commercial transactions."<sup>36</sup> While many of the colonists may have consciously tried to abandon the "traditional lifestyle" they had led in Britain, they proceeded to do so within an economic framework with which they were familiar.

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33. See for example P Silva, "The Diaries of Thomas Shone, 1820 Settler, 1838-9 and 1850-9," (unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, 1982); Edgecombe, "Letters of Hannah Dennison" and Long (ed.), *Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol I and II.

34. N Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government*, (Cambridge, 1994), p. 159.

35. Peires, "The British and the Cape 1814-1834," p. 475.

36. Peires, "The British and the Cape 1814-1834," p. 475. Guelke also makes it clear that the Dutch farmers were not capitalists to the same extent as the British. L Guelke, "Freehold farmers and frontier settlers, 1657-1780" in Elphick and Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society*, p. 66.

Initial aesthetic reactions to - and plans for - the Zuurveld did reflect cosmetic differences. For the most part, only the wealthier colonists recorded aesthetic responses. This makes it difficult to establish how the poorer colonists reacted, or indeed whether their economic preoccupations did not altogether preclude an aesthetic reaction to their new surroundings. It is however apparent that people from different parts of Britain reacted differently on first seeing the Zuurveld. To many of the English, the Zuurveld could not have been more of a contrast to the green fields of the countryside to which they were accustomed. Richard Paver comments on the depressing spectacle presented by treeless, flowerless Port Elizabeth "...to one on whose retina the last landscape pictured was formed by the vernal and varied beauties of the Isle of Wight!"<sup>37</sup> Thomas Philipps, from the Welsh county of Pembrokeshire, by contrast referred to "this Paradise."<sup>38</sup> The Scottish, inured as they were to more rugged conditions, tended to be less bemused by the new landscape.<sup>39</sup> The colonists' immediate reaction to the landscape of the Zuurveld was shaped in part by their recollection of the landscapes to which they were accustomed. The Scottish were gratified to find a landscape similar to that of "home." The English were disconcerted to discover that the landscape did not embody their ideas of "home." This shows how much they had hoped be able to make a new "home" out of the Zuurveld.

In the main, however, the colonists were psychologically unprepared for the new environment in which they found themselves. Thomas Pringle gives an

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37. A Duminy and L Adcock (eds.), *The Reminiscences of Richard Paver*, (Cape Town, 1979), pp. 46-47.

38. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 69.

39. Duminy with Adcock (eds.), *The Reminiscences of Richard Paver*, pp. 46-47. See also R Grove, "Scotland in South Africa: John Croumbie Brown and the roots of settler environmentalism," in Griffiths and Robin (eds.), *Ecology and Empire*, p. 142.

impression of some of the misconceptions held by the prospective settlers when they arrived:

While encamped at Algoa Bay, waiting for waggons to convey us into the interior, I met one day with a party of *ladies and gentlemen* searching for *apricots and oranges* in the thorny jungles near the Zwartkops River, where they rather simply expected to find them growing "wild in the woods," like hips and haws in England!<sup>40</sup>

Regardless of the real situation in the Zuurveld, the colonists would have had - especially after months at sea with little to do but contemplate the new life they hoped to lead - very idealised conceptions of the Zuurveld. Their expectations and preconceived ideas of the region as a land of milk and honey would have reinforced the disillusionment they experienced on their arrival, and made them long even more for what they had not got - a productive landscape in the British sense.

The British colonists who settled in Australia initially found it difficult to come to terms with the Australian landscape because it was so far removed from their previous experience. When they introduced familiar landscape features - like fences and hedges - into the new land, the landscape became more distinctively their own: "the country became imaginatively possessed."<sup>41</sup> This is analogous to the way in which the Zuurveld colonists immediately set about re-creating what aspects of "home" they could. They cleared the indigenous vegetation, erected fences and hedges, and began to plant English flowers in their new gardens. To Geraldine Armstrong, "a neat hedge" around the army officers' quarters at Fort Peddie lent the site "quite an English appearance."<sup>42</sup> For similar reasons, Winer

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40. Pringle, *Present State of the English Settlers*, p. 7 n. +.

41. Lines, *Taming the Great South Land*, p. 49.

42. H Matthew (ed.), "Armstrong Diary, Part 2, Journal South Africa," *Grahamstown Diocese - Historical Notes*, (Grahamstown, 1957), p. 86.

finds that the architecture of Salem village between 1823 and 1834 reflects "the builders' search for architectural order, for control over nature and reality."<sup>43</sup> On their arrival, one of the most symbolic acts carried out by the colonists was the planting of oak trees. British trees, and particularly the oak tree, remained an important symbol of the might of the British Empire. Soon after their landing, Thomas Philipps recounted how he and his party "...proceeded to Capt. Moresby's garden where a British acorn was given to each Lady to plant, in hopes that the British Oak would rear its head and remain for ages in commemoration of the event of the landing."<sup>44</sup>

The English in the Cape Colony lived "like the English anywhere," observed Maria Graham in 1811.<sup>45</sup> The British settlers of 1820 were no different from their counterparts already settled in the west of the colony in their effort to maintain the "civilised" standards to which they were accustomed. In contrast, the Dutch colonists abandoned European cultural norms when they trekked to the peripheries of the Colony and beyond; their aim was to find a new land for themselves, removed from all they had left behind, and they made little effort to retain a European lifestyle.<sup>46</sup> Thomas Philipps observes that they called themselves "Africaners... distinguishing those who come from even any part of Europe as Vaderlandvolk or Fatherland people...".<sup>47</sup> The British were under no such illusions - they brought Britain with them and looked down on the Dutch for

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43. Winer and Deetz, "Transformation of British Culture in the Eastern Cape," p. 61.

44. Philipps' journal, 13 June 1820, Keppel-Jones (ed.) *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 61.

45. B MacLennan, *A Proper Degree of Terror: John Graham and the Cape's Eastern Frontier*, (Johannesburg, 1986), pp. 36-37.

46. Guelke, "Freehold farmers and frontier settlers," pp. 93-94.

47. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 57.

leading lives similar to those of the African inhabitants.<sup>48</sup> *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine* stated that "Their [the Dutch] luxurious and bountiful climate supplies with all the necessities of human life, and beyond this they have neither wish nor ambition."<sup>49</sup> Lewcock points out that placing a Cape-Dutch style "whitewashed lime-mortar ridge" on the roofs of their houses was "one of the few concessions made by the English settlers to the indigenous traditions" during the first decade of the settlement.<sup>50</sup> This desire to maintain a British lifestyle is an important factor in the drive to "re-create home."

Writing about the south Indian district of South Canara from 1800 to 1920, Pouchepadass refers to "...the dominant ecological preconceptions of the authorities, who tended to view the domestication of nature and the artificial, specialized ecosystems of settled agriculture as one of the distinguishing features of civilisation."<sup>51</sup> When the British colonists arrived in the Zuurveld, they implemented British methods of land use. In time these methods were also

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48. R Elphick and R Shell, "Intergroup relations: Khoikhoi, settlers, slaves and free blacks 1652-1795" in Elphick and Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society*, p. 227.
49. "Emigration to the Cape of Good Hope," *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine*, August 1819.
50. R Lewcock, *Nineteenth Century Architecture in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 1963), p. 155, quoted in Silva, "Diaries of Thomas Shone," p. 351 n. 78.
51. J Pouchepadass, "British Attitudes Towards Shifting Cultivation in Colonial South India: A Case Study of South Canara District 1800-1920," in Guha and Arnold (eds.), *Nature, Culture, Imperialism*, p. 149. Cronon illustrates a similar point when he notes that the American colonists could not understand the way Native Americans lived without commodities, even though they had the resources necessary to acquire them. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, p. 33. Cronon does go on to point out that the colonists were mistaken about the superabundance of resources in America: to live off the land, it was necessary to have knowledge of the land and its cycles as the native Americans did, making changes to their lifestyle as the seasons progressed. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

adopted by the Dutch and the Africans. Before 1820, the Zuurveld was largely settled by pastoralists with seasonal grazing patterns. The land was better suited to this system of land use than it was the British pattern of fixed settlement.<sup>52</sup> The wide-scale move towards fixed settlement played an important part in modifying the landscape of the Zuurveld. The colonists' visions of an ideal landscape, combined with their preconceptions of the Zuurveld, meant a vast difference between their mental picture of what the landscape could become and that which physically lay before them. Landscape is a human conception.<sup>53</sup> Accordingly, it is not unreasonable for people to attempt to reshape the land according to their conception of an ideal landscape. During the early years of the Zuurveld settlement the colonial attitude towards the environment was characterised by a certain ambivalence. On the one hand, the Zuurveld was regarded as a raw, untamed wilderness, populated by alien people and wild animals. The state of the land enabled the colonists to define themselves as "civilised" - what, to them, the land and its inhabitants were not. The colonists created a collective role for themselves as the vanguard of "civilisation," pitted against the wilderness; "civilisation" became the means by which they hoped to tame and control the "state of nature" in the midst of which they found themselves. "Civilising" the land meant controlling the land - cleansing it of "useless" and unproductive plant and animal species and replacing these with more serviceable imported species.

On the other hand, the colonists found much to admire about aspects within the Zuurveld landscape. On their arrival, surrounded by what was to them this African wilderness, the colonists enthusiastically described scenery that resembled the great parks of the British aristocracy. William Boardman wrote of

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52. Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 17.

53. Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, p. 10.

"...the delightful situation, resembling much a park..." of Clumber, near Bathurst, recently named after the Duke of Nottinghamshire's estate.<sup>54</sup> The nobleman's park as an image of scenic beauty is repeated again and again in the colonial discourse of the Zuurveld, emphasising the extent to which the attitude to landscape was shaped by this ideal.<sup>55</sup> Referring to this as the ideal of the "manor on the hill," Crais argues that the colonists who came from more privileged backgrounds began to romanticise the land they had left behind. A feudal "Merrie England" was uppermost in their minds. It was this idealised version of home, where they as the prospective upper class could expect to live in contented squiredom, that they initially hoped to re-create in the Zuurveld. The parts of the Zuurveld resembling "noblemen's parks" would have fuelled these aspirations. One party leader in particular, Wilson, aspired to all the privileges of a feudal lord of old. He demanded that the party help him assert his game, fishing and timber rights by enclosing his land and even initially cultivating it for him. Crais points out that class friction amongst the colonists often grew out of this type of situation: many of the poorer colonists also aspired to elevated social positions in the new land. These people were not inclined to play the serf to satisfy their party leaders' social ambitions.<sup>56</sup>

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54. William Boardman to Thomas Boardman in G Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony*, Vol 13, p. 246, quoted in Edgecombe, "Letters of Hannah Dennison," p. 24. See also "Conversation with Mrs Cawood," 18 July 1899, in J Berning (ed.), *The Historical "Conversations" of Sir George Cory*, (Cape Town, 1989), p. 160.

55. See for example A Gifford (ed.), *The Reminiscences of John Montgomery*, (Cape Town, 1981) p. 61; G Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony*, Vol 13, p. 356, quoted in Rainier (ed.), *Journals of Sophia Pigot, 1819-1821*, p. 16; Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, pp. 50, 58, 164-5, 168; W Irons, *The Settler's Guide to the Cape of Good Hope and Natal*, (London, 1858), p. 76; H Matthew (ed.), "Armstrong Diary, Part 2, Journal South Africa," pp. 49, 72, 75, 85.

56. Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, pp. 82-95.

The aesthetic reaction to the Zuurveld was therefore contradictory. The colonists viewed it as a "savage" land, but within this forbidding landscape they also discerned a certain romantic, "unspoilt," beauty. Reflecting on the voyage to Algoa Bay, Thomas Pringle describes his reaction to the Cape coastline:

The aspect of the whole was impressive, but sombre; beautiful, but somewhat savage. There was the grandeur and the grace of nature, majestic and untamed; and there was likewise that air of *loneliness* and dreary *wildness*, which a country unmarked by the traces of human industry or of human residence seldom fails to exhibit to the view of civilised man.<sup>57</sup>

Pringle's passage captures some of the ambivalence of the colonial attitude towards the land. Here, he is implying that even if the Cape was inhabited, it was not by "civilised" humans and therefore not inhabited in the true sense of the word. In the minds of the colonists, the precolonial inhabitants of the eastern Cape were simply part of the general landscape that confronted them: one of uncontrolled savagery and wilderness. They actively set out to control the savagery and push back the wilderness. The colonists were aware that the Xhosa often fired the land to improve grazing. This type of pasture management can represent a high level of landscape manipulation, but many of the colonists clung to the idea that the land was untouched on their arrival, referring to the "original state" of the Zuurveld.<sup>58</sup> Edward Timm wrote of the land allocated to the Nottinghamshire party: "...to look...for a hundred miles around was to see it just as nature had left it...".<sup>59</sup>

In the decade following the 1820 settlement and as the colonists became more acquainted with the conditions of the Zuurveld, they found the environment less

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57. Pringle, *Narrative*, p. 7.

58. Philipps to Robert Harries, Lampeter, 7 October 1821, Cory MS 14,264, p. 91.

59. Edward Timm, *Nottingham Journal*, 20 June 1861, quoted in Edgecombe, "Letters of Hannah Dennison," p. 23.

conducive to their expectations and ideals. It was only, wrote Thomas Pringle "...to persons passing hastily [sic] through it, who had no acquaintance with agriculture or the peculiarities of the soils and climate, [that] it could scarcely fail, in favourable seasons, to display a very alluring aspect ...".<sup>60</sup> First impressions of the Zuurveld may also have been deceptive because rain had recently fallen. Thomas Stubbs remembered that: "There must have been very heavy rains before we arrived, for the whole country was running with water and the grass was knee high".<sup>61</sup> John Ayliff also recalled that "grass and water were in abundance; the earth...softened by rains."<sup>62</sup> Such observations highlight the difficulties of obtaining a clear picture of the actual conditions faced by the colonists.

There were those who did find the South African landscape appealing: the botanist William Burchell may have been one of the earliest European travellers to point out the many varieties of landscape aesthetics, understanding as he did that a landscape like that of the eastern Cape did not necessarily have to conform to the European picturesque genre in order to be beautiful. Travelling in South Africa between 1810 and 1815, he wrote of the scenery:

...though it differed entirely from the species known by the term "picturesque"...it was not the less beautiful: nor the less deserving of being studied by the artist: it was that kind of harmonious beauty which belongs to the extensive plains of Southern Africa.<sup>63</sup>

Among the colonists, however, there was the feeling that they had been duped

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60. Pringle, *Present State of the English Settlers*, pp. 5-6; See also Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 102.

61. W Maxwell and R McGeogh (eds.), *The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, (Cape Town, 1978), p. 67.

62. Ayliff, *Memorials of the British Settlers*, p. 17.

63. W Burchell, *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa*, Vol II, (London, 1824), p. 194, in Cosser, "Images," p. 61.

by the authorities. The wilderness of the Zuurveld was a frightening contrast to the gentle land of milk and honey that was described to them in Britain.<sup>64</sup> They reacted to the unfamiliar wilderness by finding comfort in the familiar trappings of life. It had become fashionable for the well-to-do in Britain to surround their homes with landscaped parks that gave the appearance of being natural. The diarist and traveller John Evelyn, for instance, advised that a residence should be planted

... with the taller and lowest sort of Ever-greens even for some miles about so that he might, even in winter, imagine himself transported to one of the legendary tropical islands in the West Indies, in Ethiopia, or to one of the Fortunate Islands...<sup>65</sup>

Referring to the advent of British colonists in America, Cowdrey emphasises the "upending of values" which faced them on their arrival. Instead of too little land and too many people as in Britain, the colonists were faced with an abundance of land and very few people to work it. Rather than too much farm land and too little wilderness, there was very little cultivated land and an excess of wilderness.<sup>66</sup> In the Zuurveld the desire for productive land was paramount. Frawley, writing on the British settlement in Australia, refers to the colonial idea of the "inexhaustibility" of the new land: in Britain, one was not presented with vistas of people-less land or forest stretching as far as the eye can see. By making this vast wilderness productive, the colonists hoped to establish some

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64. The colonists blamed the governing authorities for not gleaning information as to the true state of affairs from those already living there. It was felt that it would have been beneficial if "practical information collected from the experience even of boors and Hottentots had been more carefully provided by Government." Pringle, *Present State of the English Settlers*, p. 6.

65. J Evelyn "Elysium Britannicum", Vol II, pp. 259-60, (Christchurch College Library, unpublished manuscript) quoted in Grove, *Green Imperialism*, p. 41.

66. Cowdrey, *This Land, This South*, p. 45.

degree of order in their new lives.<sup>67</sup> It must have been thoughts along these lines that led Thomas Philipps to explain to his sister, Catherine Richardson, the reasons for his not surrounding his homestead with a landscaped park, as was the fashion in Britain:

...we are in an *uninclosed* [sic] country, the eye is therefore delighted at the sight of a bank or a hedge, it is perfectly animating and at the same moment satisfies you of the security and industry of the Owner in a Country where he has to dread the trespasses of his own and his Neighbours lands or some of his wild animals - it is therefore almost incumbent to have every thing [sic] in view - In the *artificial* Country you live in you are delighted with *Nature* where you can find it - We are directly the reverse, we have so much of the latter that we are enchanted at the least appearance of the former...<sup>68</sup>

The "state of nature" was frighteningly alien and alarmingly close in the Zuurveld. Enclosing the land was a practical option, in so far as it afforded protection for farming operations, but it also meant fencing off nature in the ideological sense. Enclosure for ideological reasons can be linked to the concept of private property which the colonists introduced: private property gave people the opportunity to parcel themselves off from the rest of the world, human and non-human. The precolonial system of living in community of property allowed for a much greater exchange between humans and the rest of the natural world. Lines emphasises the case of the Australian Aborigines who, not having private property, placed no barriers between themselves and the rest of nature.<sup>69</sup>

The colonists tried to take charge of a foreign land that they hoped to reclaim from a "state of nature" and reorder along more developed British lines. As

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67. K Frawley, "Evolving visions: environmental management and nature conservation in Australia," in Dovers (ed.), *Australian Environmental History*, p. 63.

68. Thomas Philipps to Catherine Richardson, Glendower, 8 October 1826, Cory MS 7611, pp. 198-199.

69. Lines, *Taming the Great South Land*, p. 50.

Thomas Philipps observed:

The general complaint against this Country is that it presents such a sameness, and it is true to a certain extent, but this must always be the case with a country in the state of Nature, it is Art after all that enriches, the Mansion, the modest cottage, the ruined Castle, all add to the beauty of rustic scenery - here there is nothing of the kind to arrest the eye and without striking objects you *may* tire on looking over bold mountains, undulating hills & Nature's Parks & Shrubberies. The superficial observer must reflect that this is a country in progress, Nature has drawn the outline and Art must finish the picture.<sup>70</sup>

There was a clearly defined intent, on the part of the colonists, to elevate the country above what they saw as its base origins. They viewed this as part of their duty as colonists and as Britons:

We are in fact gone back to primitive times, the plough is crude, like what we have seen in old prints, the threshing floor is enclosed with a mud floor only, in the field, & the grain trodden out by cattle as recalled in Scripture - we have no coin, everything is done by barter.<sup>71</sup>

By comparing his situation to that of Robinson Crusoe, Philipps provides further evidence of the idea of starting from scratch and building something from nothing: "You have also a rough sketch of our estate as just measured. Mr H will recognise a similar plan to the French Robinson Crusoe. We feel, without intending it, that we are acting the same...<sup>72</sup>

The Protestant work ethic had much to do with the way in which the colonists viewed the Zuurveld. It was strongly felt that God smiled upon those who worked hard, were productive and industrious. There was the firm belief that productivity

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70. Thomas Philipps to Lady Louisa Anson, Lampeter, 25 December 1821, Cory MS 14,264, p. 103.

71. Thomas Philipps to Reverend James Williams, Lampeter, 1 August 1822, *ibid.*, p. 139.

72. Philipps to Catherine Richardson, Lampeter, 19 Aug 1822, *ibid.*, p. 129.

and industriousness strengthened the character.<sup>73</sup> The colonists linked developed land to industriousness and character-building.<sup>74</sup> Grove makes a reference to Pierre Poivre, an influential proto-conservationist who as early as 1770 "applaud[ed] the Huguenots...noting that 'they have enriched their adopted mother by their industry.'"<sup>75</sup>

The colonists felt that the history of the Zuurveld began with their arrival; prior to this was nothingness. To Thomas Philipps - borrowing from Thomas Grey - the Zuurveld was: "... a Country in the state of Nature which has hitherto breathed its sweetness to the desert air & has not a Tale of "Olden Times" to recount...".<sup>76</sup> They treated their arrival as the arrival of the first humans: "Being amongst the first arrivals in this Country I viewed it in its original state. There are two beautiful Valleys I used to admire when before a few deer were the only inhabitants, now they are filled with the busy hum of men."<sup>77</sup> Cronon refers to a Kansas colonist who saw his new land as the "raw materials" with which to work towards the

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73. See, for example, Robert Godlonton's statement in favour of the proposed Vagrancy Law: "Only let us have some law which shall protect property against the thefts of [the Khoena], which shall encourage industry and repress idleness...". Godlonton to Southey, 8 May 1849, in B Le Cordeur (ed.), "Robert Godlonton as Architect of Frontier Opinion," *Archives Year Book for South African History*, (1959), (Cape Town, 1960), ii, p. 21, quoted in T Kirk, "The Cape Economy and the Expropriation of the Kat River Settlement, 1846-53" in S Marks and A Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, (London, 1980), p. 233.

74. Simmons, *Environmental History*, pp. 179-80.

75. P. Poivre, *Travels of a Philosopher*, (Dublin, 1770), pp. 6-7, quoted in Grove, *Green Imperialism*, pp. 194-5.

76. Thomas Philipps to Mary Phillipps, Lampeter, 7 February 1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 106.

77. *Ibid.* That is, the valleys of Beaufort Vale and Clumber.

establishment of a thriving white settlement.<sup>78</sup> Silver observes that the British colonists in the South Atlantic forest region aimed to re-create home; their new land would only be civilised when "cultivated"<sup>79</sup> and "converted into a mirror image of the European countryside."<sup>80</sup>

It appears that the collective ideal of British colonists from north America to south Australia was to shape the land in which they found themselves along lines to which they were accustomed. In June 1820 Reverend William Shaw of the Wesleyan Missionary Society expressed delight in what he saw as the potential productivity of the western reaches of the Zuurveld:

...many of the valleys would certainly be very productive of every kind if cultivated, while the adjoining hills would be well adapted for vineyards and grazing: in short the country appeared to me so beautiful, that I could not help regretting it should have remained so long without a population to cultivate it and, by their comforts, conveniences and luxuries, prove its capabilities.<sup>81</sup>

In this the colonists showed indifference to the unique aspects of each colony's ecosystem. Rather, they were gratified when they observed the attempts of other colonists to anglicise the landscape. For instance, Thomas Pringle wrote with pleasure about the outwardly Scottish appearance of the Bethelsdorp mission station he visited in 1820 which "...recall[ed] to my recollection all the pastoral associations of a Scottish glen...".<sup>82</sup> John Montgomery congratulated Pringle's

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78. W Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History and Narrative," *Journal of American History*, March 1992, 78, 4, p. 1353.

79. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, pp. 254-5, quoted in Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside*, p. 138.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

81. W Hammond-Tooke (ed.), *The Journal of William Shaw*, (Cape Town, 1972), p. 36; See also Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 63.

82. Pringle, *Narrative*, p. 14.

brother John for having "...transformed a wild glen into a beautiful farm...".<sup>83</sup> Reverend Kayser thought the same way, noting that the Butterworth mission station's "...beauty [was] enhanced by a [recently planted] clump of sturdy trees."<sup>84</sup>

However, the land did not easily lend itself to being re-created in the image of Britain. Bolton points out that the British colonial perspective which gave precedence to the idea of humans as the rulers of the earth, private ownership, and the idealised "typical English countryside" landscape, proved difficult to imprint in landscapes as distinct as the Australian bush.<sup>85</sup> In the unfamiliar territory in which the colonists found themselves, the transformation of the landscape into English rural picturesque was no simple matter. The colonists came from a country in which they were able to see themselves as undisputed rulers of nature, but in the African colonies, the environment often threatened to overwhelm them. Parker explains the colonists' need to justify to themselves: "... the active disciplining process by which not only physical space, but especially peoples, are shaped into conformity in the aftermath of British victory in the shared colonial space."<sup>86</sup> Colonialism was often justified by the British on the grounds that it brought about an improvement of the land and the people. "Civilising" the land through cultivation and settlement was seen as a form of improvement. In 1833 Thomas Philipps wrote to Henry Francis Fynn regarding the purchase of some of Fynn's land in Natal:

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83. Gifford (ed.), *Reminiscences of John Montgomery*, p. 52.

84. C Hummel (ed.), *Rev FG Kayser: Journal and Letters*, (Cape Town, 1990), p. 60.

85. Bolton, *Spoils and Spoilers*, pp. 11-13.

86. K Parker, "Fertile Land, Romantic Spaces, Uncivilized Peoples: English Travel-Writing at the Cape of Good Hope, 1800-50," in B Schwartz (ed.), *The Expansion of England: Race, ethnicity and cultural history*, (London/New York, 1996), p. 213.

... I shall be glad to know your sentiments on the subjects of your transfer of such parts as you do not occupy. It is needless for me to point out to you how greatly the value of a few hundred acres would increase by such colonisation & immediately surpass in profit the thousands you now have in a state of nature and uninhabited.<sup>87</sup>

The colonists also tended to idealise what Parker refers to as the "harmonious social relations" in Britain, and compare this idealised situation with the one they faced in the colony. According to Parker, "That difference...developed as justification for intervention in those foreign spaces in order to institute 'harmony.'"<sup>88</sup> The idea of harmony is important: if "home" was made to signify harmony and foreign lands to represent discord, the colonists could better justify their capacity as invaders - by conceptualising their role as being one of "harmonising" the land.

Genesis 1.28 contains an instruction to make the most of the land. Taming the wilderness - applying the finishing touches to the creation - was looked upon as a duty.<sup>89</sup> If the colonists felt they had a God-given right to the land, they felt it was on the understanding that they would perform a duty by bringing "civilisation" to the land through cultivating the earth, and making it productive. Grove refers to "the obligation to cultivate the earth."<sup>90</sup> In 1845 John Ayliff reminded his listeners that "The purposes of the Almighty are answered when man dilligently [sic]

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87. Thomas Philipps to Henry Francis Fynn, Grahamstown, 13 September 1833. Copied from the original document in the possession of the Durban lawyer who acted for the last living daughter of Fynn, c.1966, Cory MS 14,264, p. 246.

88. Parker, "Fertile Land," p. 201.

89. Simmons, *Environmental History*, pp. 162-3. See also Silver, *New Face on the Countryside*, pp. 189-90.

90. Grove, *Green Imperialism*, p. 285. Not all of the colonists necessarily felt this way: Thomas Pringle writes of "...a creation where nothing - not even the sterile desert or naked rock - is placed without design, or left utterly unproductive." Pringle, *Narrative*, p. 80. In general, however, there are few references suggesting a wish to maintain the Zuurveld as it was in 1820.

cultivates the soil."<sup>91</sup> If humans had a duty to cultivate and make the most of the earth, then societies which did not do this were considered guilty of neglect.<sup>92</sup> This factor influenced the dispossession of native Americans.<sup>93</sup> According to Lines, "Defiance of this new order equalled rebellion against the creator of the universe."<sup>94</sup> This was underlined by the Lockean principle which implied that if people who held the land were not primarily agriculturalists and thus not "civilised," then their right to the land had to give way to "civilised" people who would be able to utilise it in the correct manner.<sup>95</sup> It followed that African societies were not considered to have any claim to the land and "European perceptions of what constituted a proper use of the environment thus reinforced what became a European ideology of conquest."<sup>96</sup> Since precolonial communities were obviously failing in their responsibility, the colonists felt justified in taking land from them and making it more productive. In August 1844 John Mitford Bowker declared:

The day was when our plains were covered with tens of thousands of springboks; They are gone now, and who regrets it? Their place is occupied with tens of thousands of merino sheep, whose fleeces find employment to tens of thousands of industrious men: are they not better than the springbok? Yet I must own that when I see two or three of them on the wide plains, and know they are the last of their race, my heart yearns towards them, and I regret that so much innocent beauty, elegance and agility must needs be swept from the earth. My feelings towards the Kaffir are not of that stamp... . It is just that a few thousands of ruthless, worthless savages are to sit like a nightmare upon a land that would support millions of civilised

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91. Ayliff, *Memorials of the British Settlers*, p. 10.

92. Grove, *Green Imperialism*, p. 286.

93. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, p. 69.

94. Lines, *Taming the Great South Land*, pp. 73-74.

95. Parker, "Fertile Land," pp. 201, 205. See also J Locke, *Of Civil Government: Second Treatise*, (Chicago, 1955), pp. 21-40.

96. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, pp. 53, 56-7.

men happily? Nay, Heaven forbids it...<sup>97</sup>

Part of an impassioned speech denouncing the rise in Britain of "mis-directed philanthropy"<sup>98</sup> towards Africans, this passage retains a modicum of sympathy for the plight of the Zuurveld's disappearing wildlife. This contrasts with the lack of concern for the Africans ousted from their land. The colonists' tendency to be more concerned with the effects of their activities on animals than on Africans can be directly linked to the present perception of environmentalism as another form of discrimination. Bowker's attitude towards Africans is clear: "civilised men" have the blessing of "Heaven" when they exert their moral right to claim land previously occupied by "worthless savages."

There was an opinion that both colonised land and colonised people were in need of control and direction.<sup>99</sup> For conquest to be finalised, both African society and the African environment needed to be subjugated. This subjugation could take place simultaneously, because control of the land essentially encompasses control of the people who inhabit it - control in this case manifesting itself as expulsion from the land. The rationalisation of conquest ultimately took the form of "othering":

In mapping the significant features of these worlds and finding them variously attractive or threatening in qualitatively distinct ways, the Irish, Indian, and African imaginaries provided the cultural forms that enabled British people to inhabit them and to know themselves in

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97. Bowker, *Speeches, Letters, and Selections from Important Papers*, (Grahamstown, 1864) p. 125.

98. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

99. J MacKenzie, "Empire and the ecological apocalypse: the historiography of the imperial environment" in Griffiths and Robin (eds.), *Ecology and Empire*, pp. 216-217. For the "othering" of colonised societies see Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 133 and K Butzer, "The Indian legacy in the American Landscape" in M Conzen (ed.), *The Making of the American Landscape*, (New York/London, 1990), p. 27.

relation to their other inhabitants.<sup>100</sup>

"Othering" was often a justification of the need for new land, rather than a result of it. Simmons writes that when soil exhaustion forced the American settlers to push westwards, "...the wooded 'wilderness' to the west had to be conceptualised as a place of savagery, natural and human, so that it could be 'civilized'...".<sup>101</sup> Depending on "othering" to explain frontier situations can lead to generalisation.<sup>102</sup> Sources do point, however, to a distinct element of colonial disdain for the "other" that was clearly developed in the nineteenth century Zuurveld amongst all levels of British colonial society.

Crais points out that contempt for Africans as "other" was absent from colonial discourse in the early nineteenth century.<sup>103</sup> The tendency at this stage was to view Africans as "noble savages," an attitude analogous to the idea of the natural beauty of a raw, untamed landscape." Crais explains this tendency as: "...a psychological desire for order centred around the search for a common humanity. In their visual cognition of a new world, British colonists imagined themselves - or more precisely the positive part of themselves and their culture - in the African person and in the African landscape."<sup>104</sup> This attitude changed during the 1820's along with the attitude towards the environment. Above all, it became apparent that the Zuurveld needed considerable reworking before it could become anything

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100. G Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British adventure, empire and the imagining of masculinities*, (London/New York, 1994), p. 48. Lines suggests that: "[The Aborigines] disdain for European habits marked them as barbarians and supplied the Europeans with an antithesis - civilisation versus barbarianism - highly useful as a rationalisation for aggression." Lines, *Taming the Great South Land*, p. 78.

101. Simmons, *Environmental History*, p. 29.

102. Grove, "Scotland in South Africa," p. 141.

103. Crais, "The Vacant Land," p. 258.

104. *Ibid.*, p. 260.

like the "land of plenty" it was originally envisioned as. African labour was vital to this undertaking.<sup>105</sup> It became practical for colonists to see Africans as "barbarians" because this gave the former the excuse to bring the latter into contact with "civilisation"<sup>106</sup> - in the form of wage labour. Africans were constantly compared to "wild beasts" - part of the land that needed to be controlled. Thomas Philipps declared that "the Caffres ... are exactly like the wild Beasts - dreading Moonlight."<sup>107</sup> Pringle stated that while Europeans could be endangered by a charging buffalo if not mounted, "the Hottentot, who is light and agile, and dextrous in plunging like an antelope through the intricacies of an entangled forest, generally prefers following this game on foot."<sup>108</sup>

The wilderness the colonists confronted was composed of both people and landscape. The colonists "othered" the environment as a way of explaining their creation of a "civilised" landscape out of a "savage" wilderness.<sup>109</sup> The word "savage" is derived from "silva" meaning "wood," emphasising the connection

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105. *Ibid.*, p. 261.

106. H Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History: The Case of Tanganyika, 1850-1950*, (London, 1977), p. 10. See also Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 126.

107. Philipps to Robert Harries, Lampeter, 9 December c.1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 154. According to Thomas Pringle, the "frontier boors ... have been trained from childhood to regard Bushmen and Caffers with nearly the same feelings as they regard beasts of prey - only with far more rancorous animosity." Pringle, *Narrative*, p. 302. It can be argued that this was a feeling shared to some degree by most of the colonists. Pringle goes on to say that English colonists are also responsible for this attitude. Earlier on in his *Narrative*, he himself lumps "savage" people together with "savage" beasts: "... we were jesting as we rode along about wild beasts and Caffers." Pringle, *Narrative*, p. 126. For a discussion on way in which colonists arrived at this opinion of Africans, see Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, pp. 128-129, 133.

108. Pringle, *Narrative*, p. 139.

109. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, p. 6.

between societies deemed by the colonists to be "savage" and land similarly designated.<sup>110</sup> people of the wood, or wilderness, were in need of liberation, just like their surroundings. Wilderness and "civilisation" are very much linked, because it is only through the definition of what "civilised" society is not (that is, wild) - or what it thinks it is not - that it defines what it is - or what it thinks it is - (that is, "civilised").<sup>111</sup> 'Civilisation' became the antidote for wilderness. Attempts were made to recast the land, like the people, into forms more congruent with civilisation. In the same way that Africans were encouraged to conform to European standards of dress, the land was divested of much of its indigenous vegetation and wildlife and restocked with exotic flora and fauna. Changing the way in which Africans made use of the land was, as noted above, considered an important means to civilisation. The colonial attitude to precolonial African societies can be directly linked to the impact of the colonial mindset on the environment. Gilmartin notes the difficulties of generalising on this point due to the complexities of colonialism as a subject.<sup>112</sup> He goes on to refer, however, to the way in which British colonial authorities in India allowed local communities little say in the development of irrigation schemes. Instead, the communities were treated as part of the environment needing to be managed.<sup>113</sup> Clearly, the desire to control the environment overlaps with the domination of the African people during the nineteenth century.

Colonial activities instigated many of the environmental changes that took place

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110. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, p. 194.

111. Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*, pp. 8-9.

112. D Gilmartin, "Models of the Hydraulic Environment: Colonial Irrigation, State Power and Community in the Indus Basin," in Guha and Arnold (eds.), *Nature, Culture, Imperialism*, pp. 210-211.

113. *Ibid.*, pp. 226-227.

in the Zuurveld in the nineteenth century. These activities were influenced by the particular way in which the colonists viewed the environment. The inference, then, is that prior to the colonial era, the dominant African worldview resulted in activities which had a different impact. There has though been a tendency for a certain sector within the modern environmental movement to stress that precolonial societies lived in harmony with the natural world.<sup>114</sup> The maxims of, among others, the native American Suquamish leader, Chief Seattle, have been used to illustrate the accord in which the Native Americans lived with nature:

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark wood, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people.

We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes whatever he needs... . He treats his mother, the earth, and his brother, the sky as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads.<sup>115</sup>

Pertinent as this "proto environmentalist" adage might be, it was anonymously translated from Seattle's Suquamish speech. A third or fourth hand account was eventually codified - and at the same time reworked to hone its environmental message. As a result, it is not necessarily a true reflection of what Seattle said or felt.<sup>116</sup> In reality, even before the industrial revolution, there were few places left on earth that humans had not had a hand in changing.<sup>117</sup> As Cronon points out, "The choice is not between two landscapes, one with and one without a human influence; it is between two human ways of living, two ways of belonging

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114. See, for example, M Brown and J May (eds.), *The Greenpeace Story: the inside story of the world's most dynamic environmental pressure group*, (London, 1991), pp. 12-13.

115. Quoted in C Merchant, *Radical Ecology: the search for a liveable world*, (New York/London, 1992), p. 121.

116. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

117. Simmons, *Environmental History*, p. 121.

to an ecosystem."<sup>118</sup> The assumption that "harmony with nature" was an integral part of life within every precolonial society means that the hand many societies had in dramatically changing their environment has been ignored.<sup>119</sup> Since decolonisation, some research - for instance, a number of the chapters in *Custodians of the Land* - has underlined the ways in which many African societies manipulated their environment. These accounts stress the links between environmental manipulation and economic development during the precolonial era.<sup>120</sup> This emphasis offsets the western stereotype of the "childlike savage." The reality is somewhere in between. Wagner's study makes it apparent that precolonial Africans seem in many ways to have been more in touch with their environments.<sup>121</sup> This is perhaps because of rather than in spite of their manipulation of it; before modern technology, control of the environment could only be achieved through familiarity and understanding. Silver explains that in the case of the Cherokee: "...many scholars would agree that men and other living things were 'not as sharply separated' as they were in the cosmology of western Europeans."<sup>122</sup>

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118. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, pp. 12-13.

119. *Ibid.* Cronon points out that the native Americans in New England had the tendency to overstep the mark when they were burning forests with problematic consequences: in no way did their activities unconsciously reflect a calculated desire to live in harmony with the world around them.

120. See for example I Kimambo, "Environmental Control and Hunger in the Mountains and Plains of Nineteenth-Century Northeastern Tanzania," pp. 71-95; J Giblin, "The Precolonial Politics of Disease Control in the Lowlands of Northeastern Tanzania," pp. 127-151 and Spear, "Struggles for the Land," pp. 213-240 in Maddox, Giblin and Kimambo (eds.), *Custodians of the Land*.

121. M Wagner, "Environment, Community and History: 'Nature in the Mind' in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Buha, Tanzania," in *Ibid.*, pp. 175-199.

122. C Hudson, "The Cherokee Concept of Natural Balance," *The Indian Historian*, (1970), pp. 51-54, quoted in Silver, *New Face on the Countryside*, p. 40. Silver enlarges on this point on p. 41. For a discussion of the differences in attitude between Australian Aborigines and colonists, see B Gammage, "Sustainable

The colonial idea of human supremacy over the rest of nature remained largely unchanged throughout the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, by the end of the nineteenth century the colonists' attitude towards the environment had been forced to undergo a distinct transformation. Initial conceptions and preconceptions were adjusted as a result of practicalities which altered their demands on the land. The later decades of the nineteenth century reflect a loosening of some ties with Britain; people were less intent on recreating in the Zuurveld the exact surroundings they had left behind in Britain. While the region was made to resemble Britain in many ways, it was a "little England" with a difference.<sup>123</sup> Out of both choice and necessity, lifestyle was not dictated by current British modes.<sup>124</sup> Initial farming plans were adapted to accommodate Zuurveld climatic conditions. The bountiful land eulogised by promoters of the 1820 settlement plans turned out to be an illusion; it would not be possible, as some had hoped, to drop seeds in the ground and wait until harvest time. Cultivation of the desired crops, such as wheat, could not take place without irrigation<sup>125</sup> and fertilisation.<sup>126</sup> People who had planned to become agriculturalists were eventually forced to concede that stock-keeping was a more viable alternative. Consequently, the landscape took on a different appearance, the environmental impact of commercial stock-keeping being different to that of cultivation.

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damage: the environment and the future," in Dovers (ed.), *Australian Environmental History*, p. 266.

123. Scott and Deetz, "Buildings, Furnishings and Social Change," p. 87.

124. Winer and Deetz, "The Transformation of British Culture," p. 87.

125. Thomas Philipps to Lady Louisa Anson, Lampeter, 25 December 1821, Cory MS 14,264, p. 103.

126. Thomas Philipps to Robert Harries, Lampeter, 7 October 1821, *ibid.*, p. 89.

Over time culture both shapes and is shaped by the environment. Beinart and Coates refer to the "reciprocal impacts" that occur "between people and the rest of nature."<sup>127</sup> While humans have changed the environment, they have also been changed by it and forced to adapt to it. The colonists initially had no sense of place within the Zuurveld environment but they gradually began to relate to their surroundings. The introduction of capitalism meant, however, that their newfound understanding of the landscape merely allowed them to maximise what they saw to be its latent productivity.

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127. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 1.

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## CHAPTER III

### ***LAND USE AND LANDSCAPE CHANGE***

During the colonial era, land use methods in the Zuurveld were transformed. An examination of land usage during the precolonial era underlines the extent of the transformation. The nineteenth century ushered in a significant change in the way both Europeans and Africans made use of the land. The result was a significantly altered environment. This can be directly attributed to the British colonists' desire to tailor the Zuurveld to their own specifications. In turn, this aspiration is linked to the values the colonists held as a result of their cultural mindset. The Zuurveld environment was so different to that which had shaped the colonial mindset that within a few years the colonists were forced to abandon or at least adapt a number of their original plans. Capitalism, however, ensured that even as these adaptations were undertaken, they underwent further modification to enable the land to be worked for profit, rather than subsistence. Ultimately, the foundation for the human-engineered impact on the Zuurveld environment during the nineteenth century rested on the introduction of a capitalist economy. The colonists instituted land use changes in the Zuurveld on the understanding that they were improving the productivity of the region. Hindsight, however, makes it possible to reflect on the environmental costs of the drive for productivity.

The Zuurveld is a region of hills and plains regularly interspersed with rocky ravines and cliffs once covered in a lush tangle of trees and bushes - euphorbia, plumbago and *spekboom* to name only three. However, climate, vegetation and soils vary considerably throughout any given area, and it is

sometimes difficult to portray this diversity accurately.<sup>1</sup> Skead divides the Zuurveld into two distinct zones, dry in the north, and more moist in the south. To the north, the vegetation consists mainly of valley bushveld and karroid broken veld. To the south, it is made up of sour grassveld and bushclumpveld interspersed with valley bushveld which traces the river valleys.<sup>2</sup> A detailed description of every alteration made to this landscape between 1800 and 1900 would be an impractical undertaking. There is a danger in drawing specific conclusions about environmental change in even a contained area like the Zuurveld on the basis of only one or two observations. Thomas Philipps illustrates some of the extremes within the region: "...We have had continual favourable rains ever since we sowed whilst those...only 14 miles north of us have been parched up... Cattle are dying of starvation, ours are fat... ."3 Furthermore, as Beinart and Coates point out, desertification and other aspects of environmental degradation cannot always be solely attributed to human activity. Naturally occurring fires, as well as "drought, geological forces and animal burrowing" must also be taken into account.<sup>4</sup> This chapter, then, will identify general changes in the way the land was used during the nineteenth century. These changes will convey an overall impression of how colonialism impacted on the Zuurveld landscape.

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1. Dovers, "Still Discovering Monaro," p. 135. See also Silver, *New Face on the Countryside*, pp. x, 7.
  2. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 82.
  3. Thomas Philipps to Catherine Richardson, Glendower, 20 October 1828, Cory MS 7612, p. 24. Philipps' coastal farm Glendower has "grass in abundance and water, whilst [in Grahamstown] they cannot dig their Gardens nor plough, not a single vestige of green, fruit gone, dropped off the trees. Higher up Sheep and Cattle dying in their thousands, one man lost 4000 sheep from hunger...". See also Thomas Philipps to Catherine Richardson, 19 December 1828, in Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 347.
  4. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 52.

In all parts of the inhabited world, humans have played a significant role in accelerating and re-directing changes to their environment.<sup>5</sup> Since early times, the Zuurveld has been manipulated, shaped, and in some instances transformed by human action. Simmons divides possible human impact on the environment into six categories:

- i. "deflection," through fire for example
- ii. "simplification," through predator control for example
- iii. "obliteration," through erosion for example
- iv. "domestication," through hybridisation for example
- v. "diversification," through the importation of exotic plants, animals and diseases for example
- vi. "conservation."<sup>6</sup>

As this study will show, the Zuurveld landscape was subjected, in varying degrees, to all six forms of impact in both precolonial and colonial times.

In 1820 many colonists commented on the pristine and untouched appearance of the landscape. They failed to appreciate the extent to which indigenous societies were responsible for creating this landscape. This was so in a number of British colonies. The "pastoral-looking" and picturesque Yosemite Valley in the Sierra Nevada mountains of North America was likened to a New World arcadia by the first Europeans to see it. No natural wilderness, this landscape was already extensively shaped by humans. The vegetation had been periodically fired by the Ahwahneechee native Americans, expelled from

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5. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 3; Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, Chapter 1.

6. Simmons, *Environmental History*, pp. 56-68. See also Gouldie, who lists the degrees of human impact in four groups: natural; subnatural; semi natural and cultural. A Gouldie, *The Human Impact on the Natural Environment*, (Oxford, 1986) pp. 26-27.

the valley by Europeans in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> It is possible that colonists failed to recognise the signs of pasture management through fire because to them it was an unfamiliar technique. Griffiths points out that land was not fired to any great extent in Europe, making the continent "very much the exception in terms of fire practices."<sup>8</sup> The appearance of the Zuurveld encouraged the colonists to believe they had arrived in a natural paradise ready to be shaped to their needs. In reality, however, this very scenery was already significantly shaped by the activities of other societies, particularly through the use of fire.

Fire has long been used by humans as a means of environmental deflection. It was used to clear bush and create better grazing for domestic stock and wildlife. (Wildlife is attracted to the new growth springing up on fired land, making it easier to hunt.) Fire also facilitated hunting because it destroyed hunted animals' places of refuge. It was also employed to eradicate predators and discourage insects. The "scorched earth" tactic often served as a defence against enemies. In many instances, societies utilised the "slash and burn," also called *citemene*, method of agriculture.<sup>9</sup> Deliberate firing may have caused widespread destruction of forest cover over much of what is now termed the African savannah. The characteristic savannah landscape of rolling grassland dotted with clumps of trees could therefore be considered a human construction.<sup>10</sup> Ironically, savannah regions like Kenya's Serengeti sustain a burgeoning ecotourism industry on the grounds that they are "natural"

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7. Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, pp. 7-9; Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 85; Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside*, p. 61; Simmons, *Environmental History*, p. 93. In southern New England, too, the land was fired extensively by native Americans. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, p. 49.

8. S Pyne, *Burning Bush: A Fire History of Australia*, (New York, 1991) referred to in Griffiths, "Ecology and Empire," p. 7.

9. Gouldie, *The Human Impact*, pp. 27-28.

10. S Eyre, *Vegetation and Soils: A World Picture*, (London, 1963), pp. 241-44.

wilderness areas.<sup>11</sup>

In South Africa, burning the land is a centuries old practice.<sup>12</sup> The navigator Vasco de Gama, rounding the tip of Africa in 1497, called the land *Terra de Fume* on account of the fires he could see from his ship.<sup>13</sup> While sailing back from a trip to the South Pole in March 1775, Anders Sparrman recounts seeing fires within the borders of the Cape Colony which he attributed to land clearance.<sup>14</sup> The Bushmen used fire to drive the wildlife they were hunting.<sup>15</sup> Describing the Xhosa method of "force" hunting,<sup>16</sup> Alberti related how the Xhosa would fire the land to recover the weapons they had thrown and lost in the long grass.<sup>17</sup> Although they also hunted, the Khoena and Xhosa were primarily stock farmers. They utilised fire as a form of pasture management, employing it to clear vegetation from new grazing ground and to encourage new grass growth. According to Alberti, the Xhosa periodically burnt the "sour" grassland to the east of the Keiskamma River "so as to cause young growth to come on."<sup>18</sup> The Xhosa were also known to fire the land as a defensive tactic: during the Seventh Frontier War, much of the land between the Keiskamma and Kei rivers was burnt to prevent fodder being available for the

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11. An idea sustained by travel brochures advertising African safari tours - see for example the Jambo Safari Tours brochure for Zimbabwe.
  12. Grove, *Green Imperialism*, p. 134.
  13. T Sim, *The Forests and Forest Flora of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope*, (Aberdeen, 1907), p. 43.
  14. V Forbes (ed.), *A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope toward the Antarctic Polar Circle Round the World and to the Country of the Hottentots and the Caffres from the year 1772-1776, by Anders Sparrman*, Vol II, (Cape Town, 1975), pp. 241-42.
  15. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, p. 791.
  16. See Chapter IV.
  17. W Fehr (ed.), *Ludwig Alberti's Account of the Tribal Life and Customs of the Xhosa in 1807: From the original manuscript in German of "The Kaffirs of the South Coast of Africa,"* (Cape Town, 1968), p. 75.
  18. *Ibid*, p. 17. See also Hummel (ed.), *Rev FG Kayser*, p. 83.

horses and oxen of the colonial forces.<sup>19</sup>

As stockkeepers, the Khoena<sup>20</sup> and Xhosa practised selective grazing. There is evidence that the Xhosa nursed their grazing lands in order to obtain the most out of them. They knew that the "sour" grass on the plains of the Zuurveld could only be safely eaten by cattle for about four months from the beginning of summer, after which its nutritive value deteriorated. Consequently, they tended to use these areas for summer grazing only. During this time the more delicate "sweet" grass to the north was left to recover from the inroads made into it during the winter when the sour grass was unpalatable.<sup>21</sup> The Zuurveld vegetation was, during the era of Xhosa occupation, only grazed intensively for less than half of the year and had the rest of the year to recover. The Xhosa grazed their cattle communally, and the subsequent lack of enclosed land facilitated this method of stockkeeping so suited to the Zuurveld environment.<sup>22</sup> In the nineteenth century, when the region was divided up into private properties, the system collapsed. Farmers were expected to farm and graze stock on their own land, which was bordered with permanent boundaries. It was still possible for the system to work within private properties if they were large and herds were kept small. All too often, however, the drive towards capital accumulation meant that overstocking was rampant.

Although precolonial stockkeeping impacted less on the environment than

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19. Peires, *House of Phalo*, pp. 151, 153.

20. Maclennan, *A Proper Degree of Terror*, p. 26.

21. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 9; Giliomee, "The Eastern Frontier," p. 422.

22. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 5. Guy notes the necessity of Kwazulu-Natal herders being able to move stock to take advantage of sweeter pasture in the winter, when zuurveld pasture was unpalatable and non-nutritious. J Guy, "Ecological factors in the rise of Shaka and the Zulu kingdom," in Marks and Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society*, p. 111.

colonial stockkeeping, Simmons points out that "...vegetation will change under anything but the lightest pastoralism." Precolonial herders were responsible for introducing sheep and cattle, "alien fauna" into the Zuurveld<sup>23</sup> - perhaps the first instance of the diversification of Zuurveld fauna. Precolonial stockkeeping would have caused vegetation change in the Zuurveld. The Xhosa were known to deliberately overstock their pastures in an attempt, where it was not feasible to move stock, to promote the growth of new grass.<sup>24</sup> This was very different to the overstocking which began to take place involuntarily when the colonists relegated African farmers to tiny plots of land in overcrowded areas. Nonetheless, if stock is not moved often, plants that the animals avoid eating will begin to predominate. If there is not enough "net amount of vegetation per unit area the *biomass* will decline." These factors can lead to soil erosion and all the problems that accompany it, not least of which is the silting up of waterways.<sup>25</sup> Precolonial stockkeeping activities were interventionist and would certainly have affected the Zuurveld environment to some degree.

The Xhosa were also agriculturalists, although agriculture was never as significant a part of their lifestyle as stockkeeping. Lichtenstein commented that the Xhosa "grow very little corn: a sort of millet...is their only sort. Milk is the principal article of food with them."<sup>26</sup> He noted that apart from millet, buckwheat and a species of watermelon were cultivated.<sup>27</sup> Other crops were maize, pumpkins and sweetcane.<sup>28</sup> These crops are not indigenous to the

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23. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 794.

24. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 9.

25. Simmons, *Environmental History*, p. 14.

26. H Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa in the years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806*, (Cape Town, 1928), Vol II, p. 300.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 334.

28. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 7.

Zuurveld, and as such their cultivation could be termed a diversification of the existing vegetation.<sup>29</sup> Wells *et al* agree that iron age mixed farming (a combination of pastoralism and agriculture) carried out over a protracted period induced "substantial disturbance of natural communities."<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, African agricultural methods were well adapted to the Zuurveld environment. Africans did not plough their land to any great extent. Tiyo Soga mentions how "our f[ore]fathers dug [their gardens] with wooden spades... ." <sup>31</sup> Jeremiah Goldswain was quite disparaging when he noted in 1835 that: "...what is caled plowing is now more then pecking up the ground about three Inches deep and ...before the settlers came hear they women had nothing more then wooden spades to plow up the ground with."<sup>32</sup> Less educated colonists like Goldswain often made no conscious reference to a wish to re-create Britain in the Zuurveld. Nonetheless, comments regarding the need to establish British methods of land use suggest this intention. In 1832 FG Kayser also referred to the "imperfect way" in which Xhosa women cultivated the land: "The wooden spades which the women use when sewing do no more than loosen the soil to the depth of one hand." He noted with satisfaction that people were starting to borrow "our iron hoes to loosen the ground to a greater depth."<sup>33</sup> Africans also practised intercropping, a system of cultivation now

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29. A Jacot Guillarmod, "Exotic Plant Invasion, Man's Activities and Exotic Plant Invasion," in M Bruton and F Gess (eds.), *Towards an Environmental Plan for the Eastern Cape*, (Grahamstown, 1988), p. 89; M Wells, R Poynton, A Balsinhas, H Joffe, E van Hoepen and S Abbott, "The History of the Introduction of Invasive Alien Plants to Southern Africa," annotated draft paper, Botanical Research Institute, Pretoria, 15 May 1986.

30. Wells, Poynton, Balsinhas *et al* "Introduction of Invasive Alien Plants," p. 6.

31. D Williams (ed.), *The Journal and Selected Writings of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, (Cape Town, 1983), p. 37.

32. Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol I, p. 102. See also Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol I, p. 334.

33. Hummel (ed.), *Rev FG Kayser*, p. 88.

widely recognised as extremely beneficial to the soil.<sup>34</sup> Different crops are grown together, ensuring that the soil is not exhausted by the demands of one species. This was what Lieutenant CT Baillie must have seen when he described "luxuriant" Xhosa fields "...filled with pumpkins + watermelons interspersed or rather concealed amongst the caffer corn and mealies...".<sup>35</sup> In contrast to the colonial method of constantly weeding,<sup>36</sup> Lichtenstein notes that the Xhosa left their gardens weedy until their crops were well advanced, and that the presence of the weeds prevented the earth from drying out.<sup>37</sup> When the Xhosa did practice cultivation, it was along lines well suited to Zuurveld conditions.

In 1778, an alleged agreement between the governor of the Cape Colony, Joachim Van Plettenberg, and some Xhosa leaders saw the boundaries of the Cape Colony extended to include the Zuurveld.<sup>38</sup> A report by Richard Collins suggests that the Dutch had already been farming west of the Bushman's River for several years.<sup>39</sup> The 1778 "agreement" however, meant the beginning of legitimate European farming in the area. This contact between African and Dutch communities did not lead to extensive adjustments in the

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34. Intercropping was practiced in precolonial East Africa. Kjekshus, *Ecology, Control and Economic Development*, p. 46. The method was also utilised by native Americans. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, pp. 43-44.

35. Lt CT Baillie to Alexander Jardine, Butterworth, 18 April 1835, quoted in Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol I, p. 133.

36. See for example diary entries for 17 October; 18 October; 19 October 1838 in Silva, "The Diaries of Thomas Shone," pp. 60-61.

37. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol I, p. 334.

38. This agreement was later the cause of much dispute, becoming an underlying cause of the early frontier wars. The colonists claimed the Zuurveld was theirs by right of purchase, and Xhosa leaders like the Gqunukhwebe chief Chungwa claimed that the chiefs who had undertaken to sell it did not have the authority to do so. For a fuller explanation, see Collins, "Journal of a Tour," pp. 9-10.

39. *Ibid.*

way the land was used. In the Zuurveld, the Dutch continued a pastoral way of life similar to that of the Xhosa.<sup>40</sup> Their arrival meant that the hunting methods of the Xhosa and Khoena changed forever,<sup>41</sup> but few significant changes in land use were implemented. The Dutch adopted the indigenous sheep bred by the Khoena,<sup>42</sup> moved their stock from place to place in search of pasture, and burned the grass to improve it.<sup>43</sup> Nonetheless, their impact on the environment may have been somewhat greater than that of the Khoena and Xhosa. MacLennan describes how the early Dutch at the Cape allowed overgrazing to take place, in contrast to the selective grazing patterns of Khoena societies. When the Dutch destroyed one area of pasture, they moved on to the next.<sup>44</sup> They did practice capitalism to an extent and would have been grazing stock superfluous to their own needs.<sup>45</sup>

The colonial era, then, was by no means the first time that the Zuurveld landscape underwent change as a result of human intervention. Precolonial Africans and colonial Dutch shaped the Zuurveld landscape by firing the land, grazing their animals on it and cultivating it. However, its essential components were not drastically altered. This meant that at the time of the

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40. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 53; Forbes (ed.), *Anders Sparrman*, Vol II, p. 136.

41. See Chapter IV.

42. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 15; T Southey, *Rise, Progress and Present State of Colonial Wools*, (London, 1848), pp. 191-92. Barrow described the Cape sheep as...long-legged, small in the body, remarkably thin in the fore quarters and across the ribs: [they] have very little intestine or net fat; the whole of this animal substance being collected upon the hind part of the thigh, but particularly on the tail, which is short, broad, flat, naked on the underside, and seldom less in weight than five or six pounds: sometimes more than a dozen pounds... . J Barrow, *Travels into the Interior of South Africa*, Vol I, (London, 1806) p. 67. See also W McKee, *South African Sheep and Wool*, (Cape Town, 1913), pp. 6-7.

43. Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup relations," p. 228.

44. MacLennan, *A Proper Degree of Terror*, p. 26.

45. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 122.

arrival of the colonists, despite the fact that it had been manipulated by humans, the Zuurveld was still to all intents and purposes an indigenous environment.

Kjekshus notes that "the basis for economic development is an ecological system (ecosystem) controlled by man."<sup>46</sup> The precolonial Zuurveld economy did not strain the ecosystem. With colonialism came the basis for a very different economy, one which could only be sustained by intense environmental manipulation. Particularly in its initial stage of development, the new economy was in no way adapted to the Zuurveld ecosystem. While there is no doubt that precolonial land use activities did have an impact on the environment, the impact of the colonial era was to be far greater. After the Xhosa were expelled from the Zuurveld in 1812, their return was as landless refugees forced to labour for the colonists in order to survive. From the time that the colonists arrived in the Zuurveld in 1820, precolonial land use methods were destined to fall away. In the face of new methods imported from Britain, the Zuurveld was fated to assume a different appearance.

The colonists believed they had the means to change the Zuurveld. As one colonist put it, "...the country...with all its defects, is yet capable of very great improvement...".<sup>47</sup> The Zuurveld was better suited to keeping cattle, as the Xhosa did, than it was to the intensive agriculture that the colonists hoped to undertake there.<sup>48</sup> In the early years of settlement they viewed the traditional Khoena, Xhosa, and Dutch pastoral lifestyle with disdain, dismissing it as indolent and "uncivilised". Describing the Xhosa as "semi-nomades [sic],"

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46. Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development*, p. 3.

47. Letter published in the "Morning Chronicle," 12 July 1823, dated Cape of Good Hope, 1 May 1823, signed "JHR," republished in Pringle, *Present State of the English Settlers*, p. 106.

48. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 1.

Lichtenstein wrote that the degree of cultivation practised by a society reflected its "advance[ment] in civilisation" which was in turn linked to a "less frequent change of place." He felt prompted to add that the Xhosa were more "developed" than the Khoena because the latter were "without any distinction of property."<sup>49</sup>

Initially, the British colonists were often given no alternative but to adopt some African and Dutch methods of land use. Once introduced to the idea, they soon saw the advantages of firing the land.<sup>50</sup> Pyne writes that "the torch was a transitional device handed from indigene to colonist."<sup>51</sup> In 1821 Thomas Philipps related how he successfully regenerated his pastures by following the African example:

In the midst of summer [the grass] began to look brown and in Autumn the cattle would scarcely eat it, although by no means high in rank [?]. In Winter we tried the Savages' method of burning... . The first rain after burning instantaneously brings up the grass & all looks as inviting as ever.<sup>52</sup>

It is possible that the colonists were ultimately responsible for the burning of more grass than was burnt during the precolonial era, due to their need for more pasture to support more stock. Cypress Messer, the bailiff of General Campbell's property at Lynch's Post in about 1821, maintained that he had "...set fire to more than 500 acres of grass to burn it off the land for the young to spring up...".<sup>53</sup> The colonists also began to farm fat-tailed sheep, as well

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49. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol I, pp. 300-302.

50. J Croumie Brown, *Management of Crown Forests at the Cape of Good Hope Under the Old Regime and the New*, (London, 1887), p. 324.

51. S Pyne, "Frontiers of Fire," *Ecology and Empire*, p. 33.

52. Thomas Philipps to Robert Harries, Lampeter, 7 October 1821, Cory MS 14,264, pp. 88-89.

53. Quoted in J Collett, *A Time to Plant: Biography of James Lynford Collett, Settler*, (published by J Collett, 1990) p. 9. Not in the least unfamiliar to the British was the idea of firing the land as a means of defence. They employed the tactic in the eastern Cape, burning Xhosa homesteads and gardens during the Frontier Wars. J Peires, *Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle*

as grow sorghum; Beinart and Coates see these as important examples of "settlers' [adoption of] indigenous techniques and knowledge."<sup>54</sup> Philipps found that the "Bechuana" servants in his employ

...put in Indian corn, Beans and Millet with their Hoe in their own Country,...[consequently] - we use the Plough & the Hoe now more than we do the Spade...from the difficulty of getting Labourers we are now making our Gardens and planting our Fruit trees in Rows of sufficient breadth to let the Plough go between...

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Despite their desire to remain aloof from the Dutch,<sup>56</sup> the British colonists also supported the introduction of "Agricultural and Horticultural societies": "The intention of these Societies was chiefly to gather information as to the culture of the corn, grapes etc from the Dutch, who from a long residence must know the Seasons better than we do..."<sup>57</sup> These adaptations are the antithesis of the colonial desire to "re-create home." However, while they adopted the land use methods of the Xhosa, Khoena and Dutch to a certain degree, ultimately these gave way almost completely to colonial methods.

The onslaught on the Zuurveld vegetation that began during the nineteenth century was unprecedented. After a lapse of 178 years, it is not easy to determine the exact state of the Zuurveld vegetation at the time of the colonists' arrival in 1820. It is therefore difficult to gauge the amount of land cleared by 1900. However, the degree of clearance can be estimated by considering the extent to which the colonial economy demanded cut wood and

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*Killing Movement of 1856-7*, (Johannesburg, 1989), p. 21.

- 54. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 54.
- 55. Thomas Philipps' journal, 16 August 1828, Cory MS 7612, p. 16.
- 56. See Chapter II.
- 57. Edward Philipps to William Harries, Lampeter, 12 February 1821, Cory MS 14 264, p. 60.

cleared land. Aesthetically, the Zuurveld's densely wooded river valleys made a great impression on the colonists. The thickets presented a striking contrast to the parklike aspect of the more open areas. Pringle referred to "The forest-jungle, which clothes the ravines that border the rivers of Albany."<sup>58</sup> He found that in some areas the growth was so luxuriant that "...but for the services of the elephant as pioneer, these dense and thorny forests, choked up with underwood, and interlaced with rope-like creepers, would be almost utterly impenetrable...".<sup>59</sup> Philipps described the Kowie bush as: "...that immensity of bush which for miles together so entirely covers its precipitous banks that there is no access to it except down an Elephant or Buffalo path or other large Animal...".<sup>60</sup> Abounding with the traces of large and threatening animals, the bush represented the antithesis of the colonial landscape ideal. Economic and aesthetic objectives converged, then, to motivate the colonists to clear the thickets. Wood harvested from the undergrowth was used as a construction material to reshape the landscape.

The colonists were initially delighted with the supply of wood on their land. However, few of the trees indigenous to the Zuurveld were suitable for their needs, centred as these were around the construction of buildings and household implements. Thomas Philipps described how

Our timber which we thought at first so fine proves either too hard or too soft for all purposes, indeed a tree of the latter description, the beautiful corallodendron [calodendron or wild chestnut<sup>61</sup>], which grows as tall as the finest Oak is fit for *nothing* and my woods are full of them. The Yellow-wood tree, which is like the yew tree is the only one fit for house purposes, to be used like

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58. Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence*, p. 104.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

60. Philipps to "our dear Nephews and Nieces & Cousins of St Brides Hill," Glendower, 23 November 1828, Cory MS 7612, p. 50.

61. Sim, *Forests and Forest Flora*, p. 4.

deal.<sup>62</sup>

Seven years later, in 1828, Philipps was still bemoaning the lack of suitable trees: "...there is not a tree fit for building at least for flooring amongst [all the trees on his land] & that is the area of an estate of 5000 acres...".<sup>63</sup>

As Philipps noted, yellowwood timber was greatly sought after as a building material. Ironwood was used in the making of wagons, as was assegai wood. Sneezewood, was the one wood hard enough for fencing.<sup>64</sup> During the Frontier Wars, the British army used wooden enclosures to fortify their military encampments.<sup>65</sup> Two sawyers could cut some two hundred feet of wood a day, and working together could produce a waggon load of wood in four days.<sup>66</sup> Many of the trees indigenous to the eastern Cape are slow-growing.<sup>67</sup> As a result, yellowwood, sneezewood and other species in demand rapidly became scarce - modifying the vegetation of forest areas like the Kowie Bush.<sup>68</sup> The demand for wood also impacted on forest areas outside the boundaries of the Zuurveld. According to Sim, "vast quantities of timber" from the Amatola forests "went to Grahamstown during the years of its first

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62. Thomas Philipps to Robert Harries, Lampeter, 7 October 1821, Cory MS 14,264, p. 89.

63. Thomas Philipps to "our dear Nephews and Nieces & Cousins of St Brides Hill," Glendower, 23 November 1828, Cory MS 7612, p. 53.

64. R Wallace, *Farming Industries of the Cape Colony*, (London, 1896) p. 123; J Garner, "Jim's Journal: The Diary of James Butler - A Critical Edition," (unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, 1983), p. 129.

65. "Conversation with Mr Watson at Grahamstown, April 15 & 21 and June 2, 1897," in Berning (ed.), *Historical "Conversations,"* pp. 183-84.

66. "Report by Hayward, 16 August 1824, in G Cory, MS notes on documents in the Cape Archives," quoted in Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol I, p. 36, n. 99.

67. Sim, *Forests and Forest Flora*, p. 3.

68. Personal communication with Dr Tony Palmer, Albany Museum, Grahamstown, 3 February 1998.

expansion."<sup>69</sup> An exchange in the *Graham's Town Journal* of January 1833 illustrates how the commercial mindset dictated the course of vegetation decline. Yellowwood tended to decay more rapidly than sneezewood. With this in mind, "A Resident in Grahamstown" suggested that sneezewood replace yellowwood in the construction of important buildings in Grahamstown. "A Sawyer" responded that carpenters were happy to use yellowwood because sneezewood's "everlasting" properties would reduce their business.<sup>70</sup> Even though its hardness excused it from being utilised for building purposes, by the 1870's, the lack of sneezewood for posts was severely inhibiting fencing operations.<sup>71</sup>

The Xhosa enclosed their gardens and cattle-compounds with thorn fences and hedges,<sup>72</sup> but their communal lifestyle meant that this tended to be the extent of their property enclosure. Colonial fencing only took place in real earnest in the second half of the century,<sup>73</sup> but some measure of land enclosure began almost immediately. In 1823 George Thompson described numerous enclosed fields around Salem.<sup>74</sup> Commenting on the appearance of the enclosed land in 1858, Irons reassured potential immigrants that one "...may even fancy [oneself] in rural England."<sup>75</sup> The lack of enclosed land had made the colonists very uneasy right from the start. They were unaccustomed to pasturing their stock in unenclosed land. In October 1820 William Shaw bemoaned the situation: "Having no enclosed pastures or grazing grounds, our

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69. Sim, *Forests and Forest Flora*, p. 4.

70. *Graham's Town Journal*, 17 and 31 January 1833.

71. J de Mosenthal and J Harting, *Ostriches and Ostrich Farming*, (London, 1877), p. 212.

72. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 3.

73. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 92; Collett, *A Time To Plant*, p. 211.

74. Forbes (ed.), *Anders Sparrman*, Vol I, p. 16.

75. Irons, *Settlers' Guide*, (London, 1858), p. 84.

horses & cattle are frequently wandering, and are missing for days together."<sup>76</sup> He was echoed by Thomas Philipps in 1822: "Our sheep & cattle suffer much, we keep them in folds at night the former on account of the Wolves [hyenas], Jackalls & Leopards the latter for fear of straying in our unenclosed country."<sup>77</sup> Fences also represented a familiar way of life. Philipps felt that his unenclosed land signified the strangeness of his surroundings: "...on my farm we have nothing to make us think we are in Africa but the want of hedges & growth on them."<sup>78</sup> In the same way, George Thompson felt that the presence of hedges, ditches and fences presented "home-looking pictures of neatness and industry."<sup>79</sup> Important as fences were as enclosures and property markers, they also aided in a physical and ideological re-creation of Britain.

Before the introduction of wire, much of the Zuurveld's fencing was constructed of wood.<sup>80</sup> Charlotte Philipps wrote of a "large [natural] plantation through which we have lately had a road cut, by clearing away the underwood for hedges & firewood."<sup>81</sup> The alternative was to build drystone walls, an operation both onerous and expensive, because it called for skilled labour.<sup>82</sup> For the most part, the colonial demand for wood as a fencing material generated a negative impact on the vegetation of the Zuurveld. Some fencing

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76. Hammond-Tooke (ed.), *The Journal of William Shaw*, p. 41.

77. Thomas Philipps to Mr Currie, Lampeter, 1 August 1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 136.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 138. Thomas Philipps to Rev James Williams, Lampeter, 1 August 1822.

79. Forbes (ed.), *Anders Sparrman*, Vol I, p. 20.

80. Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, pp. 123, 336; Personal communication with Dr Tony Palmer, Albany Museum, Grahamstown, 3 February 1998.

81. Charlotte Philipps to ?, Grahamstown, c. May 1821, Cory MS 14,264, p. 66.

82. A Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, (London, 1881), p. 38.

alternatives, however, created a positive impact. When finances were low and good quality wood scarce, chopped bush was dragged into piles to serve as "bush-fencing."<sup>83</sup> Bush-fencing was a cheap and therefore popular method which encouraged vegetation growth along the enclosure lines.<sup>84</sup>

The colonial view of vegetation reflects the way in which the environment was valued according to its use to humans. Trees were seen as a resource, as "timber,"<sup>85</sup> just as animals were seen as "game" or "vermin," and land was seen as "good for sheep."<sup>86</sup> Trees unsuited to use as timber were, apart from their fuel properties, considered almost valueless. Consequently, for colonists like John Montgomery, a good timber tree left standing was a waste. He recounted how "Sometimes, for lack of anything else to do, I proceeded to a kloof near Salem and felled large yellowwood trees which, for aught I know to the contrary, were allowed to rot."<sup>87</sup> That live trees performed vital ecological functions in terms of facilitating moisture retention, preventing soil erosion and the like, was not yet properly understood. Even towards the end of the century, when most of the Cape's forests were protected under the Forest Acts,<sup>88</sup> Wallace could dismiss what he called "scrub forests" like the Addo Bush as being "of little value except as fuel copses."<sup>89</sup>

"Useful" as timber or not, vegetation was often cleared wholesale in the search for fuel and in order to make way for cultivation. As entries in Thomas Shone's

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83. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

84. Personal communication with Dr Tony Palmer, Albany Museum, Grahamstown, 3 February 1998.

85. Thomas Philipps to Nathaniel Phillips, no place or date, Cory MS 14,264, p. 34.

86. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 163.

87. Gifford (ed.), *The Reminiscences of John Montgomery*, p. 63.

88. See Chapter V.

89. Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 123.

diaries reflect, the need for fuel must have contributed significantly to vegetation decline. In the cold winter months of 1858 Shone was constantly engaged in collecting and cutting wood for his fire.<sup>90</sup> According to Beinart and Coates, "Clearing woodland for pasture and cultivation has been the most fundamental and widespread agent of human-induced environmental transformation in world history."<sup>91</sup> Up to the eighteenth century the dominant British view towards plants was distinctly hierarchical: cultivated plants at the top, uncultivated at the bottom. This idea lingered on in the minds of farmers, who saw food and money in crops, but wasted space in the field flowers that grew amongst them.<sup>92</sup> In the Zuurveld, the colonists saw a huge difference between their ideal of productive land that would make them prosperous, and the reality of the vast uncultivated land that faced them. During this period, only botanists and naturalists were showing any interest in indigenous South African plants for their aesthetic qualities and possible economic and medicinal value.<sup>93</sup>

The impact of land clearance in the Zuurveld soon became apparent. In October 1823 a spate of violent storms and floods followed in the wake of a long dry season, washing away crops, gardens and houses.<sup>94</sup> It is clear that the damage was in many cases exacerbated by the clearance of vegetation. One James Thomas, a hard-working "marine pensioner," had his house "...at

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90. See for example diary entries for 24 June; 6 July; 9 July; 24 July; 26 July; 31 July; 9 August and 21 August, in Silva, "Diaries of Thomas Shone," pp. 303-07.

91. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, pp. 35-36.

92. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, pp. 269-70.

93. One of the first Europeans to show an interest in this field was Anders Sparrman. Forbes (ed.), *Anders Sparrman*, Vol II, p. 27.

94. See for example W Maxwell and R McGeogh (eds.), *The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, (Cape Town, 1978), p. 69; P Hinchliff (ed.), *The Journal of John Ayliff, Vol I: 1821-1830*, (Cape Town, 1972), pp. 22-23.

the foot of a little wood, through which a path had been cleared, and this circumstance was the cause of its ruin by the rain-water accumulating from the higher grounds, and rushing in a torrent through this channel upon the cottage."<sup>95</sup> In addition to the dangers of soil erosion, land denuded of cover also becomes easy prey to invader species, which might be indigenous to the region at large, but alien to a specific area.<sup>96</sup>

In the 1820's colonists had to confront stretches of almost impenetrable vegetation as they went about their daily lives. In 1876 James Butler had to go a little further out of his way to find the same luxuriant growth. He described how he and two companions walked six and a half kilometres out of Grahamstown

...and descended what is here called a Kloof..... Some 300 feet down we entered the bush with a stream running down the bottom. Here we received our first real idea of what "the bush" means..... Trees grow thickly up each side of the ravine, tremendous ferns grow profusely and many smaller ones where they find room. "Monkey ropes" of various sizes averaging about an inch in diameter [were] stretching across the trees and up into their higher branches. Huge boulders [were] lying in the bed of the stream and in parts the rocks forming one side of the Kloof form cliffs and caves and holes for the bats, monkeys and many other animals [which] inhabit the bush... .<sup>97</sup>

The colonists felt that the agricultural methods the Xhosa had used to cultivate the Zuurveld could be much improved on. It was initially hoped that the

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95. "Mr Philips [sic], to a Friend in Cape Town," Lampeter, 15 October 1823, published in Pringle, *Present State of the English Settlers*, pp. 58-9. For the effects of clearing the mallee scrub in Australia, see Lines, *Taming the Great South Land*, pp. 100-102.

96. For a good example of this occurrence in Australia, see E Rolls, "The Nature of Australia," in Griffiths and Robin (eds.), *Ecology and Empire*, p. 40.

97. Garner, "Jim's Journal," p. 128.

productivity of the Zuurveld could be increased through the application of land use methods that brought high returns in Britain. The Zuurveld soil appeared to promise much in the way of fertility. On his arrival, William Shaw commented on its "remarkably good & rich" qualities.<sup>98</sup> Africans were seen to produce healthy crops even though, wrote Thomas Philipps, "They had not learnt the benefits of irrigation...".<sup>99</sup> Soil capable of producing so well, it was thought, would surely yield even more with irrigation.<sup>100</sup> Irrigation was seen as one of the keys to transforming the colonial vision of an agricultural haven into reality.

Xhosa<sup>101</sup> and Dutch<sup>102</sup> cattle could often only be milked if they were allowed to suckle their calves first. Even then, the animals were far from tractable. For the colonists, the lower milk yield was unacceptable. Thomas Pringle declared that:

The breed & the treatment must be our own before we can hope to reap any advantage from a dairy, beyond a very middling supply of butter & milk for our own use. We are obliged to tie the legs of some before the man can approach to milk the women cannot attempt it.<sup>103</sup>

Pringle's comment illustrates the way in which traditional farming methods employed in the Zuurveld often seemed to the colonists to contradict the natural order. For many of these people, the eastern frontier was a world turned upside down; the seasons seemed the wrong way around, and men were relegated to doing "womens' work" like milking cattle. In Xhosa society,

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98. Hammond-Tooke (ed.), *The Journal of William Shaw*, p. 36.

99. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, pp. 280-281.

100. *Ibid.*, p. 281.

101. Forbes (ed.), *Anders Sparrman*, Vol II, pp. 35-36; Hummel (ed.), *Rev FG Kayser*, p. 83. In the case of the Khoena, however, both men and women milked cows. R Elphick and V Malherbe, "The Khoisan to 1828," in Elphick and Giliomee (ed.), *The Shaping of South African Society*, p. 28.

102. Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence*, p. 59.

103. Thomas Philipps to ?, Grahamstown, 8 May 1821, Cory MS 7608, p. 358.

milking cattle was considered men's work, but for the colonists, this was a most unsatisfactory state of affairs. They attempted to instil the sort of system to which they were accustomed: even gender roles had to be changed to fit their idea of natural order. Cattle had to be sufficiently tamed to allow women to milk them. This inclination to re-establish "order" often translated itself into indignation that Xhosa women bore the brunt of the agricultural work. As Jeremiah Goldswain commented, "The man thinks to do nothing but hunt and look after the Cattle and milk them: the wife must do all the rest."<sup>104</sup> Of course, in poorer colonial families women were often expected to undertake heavy manual labour. For instance, Thomas Shone makes numerous references to his young daughters digging potatoes.<sup>105</sup>

Colonists did not just employ familiar land use methods in the Zuurveld. They also put pressure on Africans to turn away from their traditional lifestyle. Missionaries endeavoured to convince Africans to change both their land use methods and their religious beliefs. Introducing Africans to European methods of agriculture was seen as a direct route to "industriousness" and "civilisation." William Shaw was asked by the 1837 Committee of the House of Commons on Aborigines: "Did you, or other missionaries, give the Caffres any information upon the subject of the arts applicable to their improvement in civilisation?" His answer: "Yes, we introduced the plough in all our stations."<sup>106</sup> Preaching Christianity to Africans often entailed discussion of the advantages of colonial land use methods. Geraldine Armstrong's husband John, first Bishop of Grahamstown, explained to a Mfengu chief and his counsellors that

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104. Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol I, p. 102.

105. Silva, "The Diaries of Thomas Shone," for example, pp. 76-77.

106. D Coates, J Beecham and W Ellis, *Christianity the Means of Civilisation: Shown in the Evidence Given Before a Committee of the House of Commons, on Aborigines, to which is added Selections from the Evidence of other Witnesses Bearing on the Subject*, (London, 1838), p. 323.

"he wished to teach them his religion and also to plough and dig and till their land."<sup>107</sup> The pressure to cultivate may have had far reaching implications for the Xhosa psyche. The prophetess Nongqawuse, whose revelations sparked the 1856 Xhosa cattle-killing movement, ordered believers to refrain from cultivation. For Peires, this was because "Cultivation had long been considered a human interference with the earth and the believers felt that it would 'disturb' the ground."<sup>108</sup> It is possible that this aspect of the cattle-killing was a reaction to the colonial emphasis on cultivation. A comment by Jeremiah Goldswain would seem to reinforce this point. Repeating an account of the cattle-killing told to his daughter, Jane McArthur, Goldswain related how "...the Girl [Nongqawuse] told them they were not to eat any of the corn or Pumpkins that the white men had sown...".<sup>109</sup>

Unlike the missionaries, colonial farmers required Africans to forego their traditional independent lifestyle because without their labour, colonial land could not be worked. Despite attempts by the colonial administration to keep labouring class colonists on the land, the latter had begun to leave their allocated plots.<sup>110</sup> Disillusioned by the problems that began to beset them in their role as farmers, members of the labouring class took up trades in Grahamstown and other emergent centres.<sup>111</sup> Their departure from the agricultural scene made for a gap in the labour market. So long as Africans'

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107. H Matthew (ed.), "Armstrong Diary, Part 2, Journal South Africa," p. 74.

108. Peires, *Dead Will Arise*, p. 133.

109. Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol II, p. 192.

110. For example, colonists were required to obtain passes before they were allowed to leave their locations. Gifford (ed.), *The Reminiscences of John Montgomery*, p. 79; "Conversation with Mrs Gravett at the Bushman's River Mouth, July 1901" in Berning (ed.), *Historical "Conversations,"* p. 166; Maxwell and McGeogh (eds.), *The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, p. 70; "Proclamation By His Excellency Major-General Sir Rufane Shawe Donkin," 14 May 1820, in *Proclamations, Advertisements, and other Official Documents*, pp. 475-476 and 1 June 1821, p. 511.

111. See for example Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol I, pp. 23-35 and Edgecombe, "The Letters of Hannah Dennison," pp. 24-27.

pastoral lifestyle allowed them to be self-sufficient, they had no inclination to voluntarily fill the void. Viewing the African lifestyle as "idle" allowed the colonists to justify their need for labour on the grounds that this labour would 'improve' them.<sup>112</sup> After the War of the Axe, Sir Harry Smith told the defeated Xhosa chiefs:

You may no longer be naked and wicked barbarians, which you will ever be unless you labour and become industrious...You must learn that it is money that makes people rich by work, and help me to make roads. I will pay you. You tell me many of your youths desire to go into the colony as servants, they shall be allowed to do so.<sup>113</sup>

Many colonial farmers viewed the existence of mission stations with disgust. To them, places like Bethelsdorp and Theopolis deprived the Zuurveld settlement of much-needed labourers. Thomas Philipps commented acidly on the state of affairs at the Theopolis mission station:

The Missionaries are...inclined to think they do good but unless Industry & all the moral virtues are incalculated as the foundation, what is the use of raising the superstructure Religion How can [the African converts] understand it, they are called to church daily, but they retire from thence to their huts or to the bushes to sleep, they have flocks of cattle & live upon the milk. Scarce a garden to be seen. If ever they were of use, they are no longer so, we would gladly hire them. I am sure living in an English man's family would prove of more solid utility than preaching for ten years.<sup>114</sup>

John Ayliff, however, was one missionary who fully supported the colonists on the labour issue. He clearly connected the "civilisation" of Africans with distinct economic gains: "...when the native tribes on your borders are civilized...then *Albany will be at the door of one of the best and cheapest labor* [sic]

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112. Giliomee, "The Eastern Frontier," p. 451.

113. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 166.

114. Thomas Philipps to Mary Phillips, Lampeter, 7 February 1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 110. Philipps went on to refer to the Theopolis mission as "a wretched collection of filth, illness & vice in every shape." Thomas Philipps to Rev James Williams, Lampeter, 1 August 1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 141.

*markets in the world.*"<sup>115</sup>

The Dutch farmers in the Zuurveld did not escape colonial efforts to bring about "civilisation" through cultivation.<sup>116</sup> The Dutch pastoral lifestyle was also considered insufficiently industrious.<sup>117</sup> In addition, it made for scattered settlements rather than close communities in the English, more "civilised," style.<sup>118</sup> It is possible that close communities were preferred by the colonial administration because they were easier to govern. Certainly, settled farms made for a better bulwark with which to secure the eastern frontier. In January 1814, Governor Cradock introduced perpetual quitrent in the Zuurveld, by which farms eventually became the property of the leaseholders. Anxious to settle the region with Europeans in the wake of the Xhosa expulsion, Cradock felt the Dutch would be more inclined to stay settled on their land if it belonged to them. The quitrent system initially required that "the land should be brought into such a state of cultivation as it was capable of," although this requirement

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115. Ayliff, *Memorials of the British Settlers*, p. 35.

116. In some instances, the Dutch changed their lifestyle voluntarily. A Dutch farmer apprenticed his son to the head of Jeremiah Goldswain's party "...to learn the English way of farming." Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, p. 20.

117. A further example can be found in Pouchepadass' study of the South Canara district of Madras Presidency in the nineteenth century: shifting cultivators were slated as indolent - their practice seen as inferior to that of fixed cultivation, which was more "civilised." Pouchepadass, "British Attitudes Towards Shifting Cultivation," pp. 134-135. Bhattacharya also pays attention to the theme of cultivation and civilisation versus pastoralism and idleness. Writing on the pressure placed on pastoralists to conform to colonial ideas of cultivation in the colonial Punjab, Bhattacharya maintains that new ideas of the wilderness as romantic did not "throw overboard the official ideology of improvement: rather, they were wedded to this ideology." N Bhattacharya, "Pastoralist in a Colonial World," in Guha and Arnold (eds.), *Nature, Culture, Imperialism*, p. 74.

118. MacLennan, *A Proper Degree of Terror*, p. 143.

inevitably fell away.<sup>119</sup> This is another instance linking control of the people to control of the land. As Gilmartin sees it, "the definition of the environment as a natural field to be dominated for productive use, and the definition of the British as a distinctive colonial ruling class over alien peoples, went hand in hand."<sup>120</sup> Forcing Africans and Dutch to adopt their way of life enabled the colonists to control the land, and consequently overcome the "state of nature."

It was soon found, however, that British land use techniques were not altogether successful when employed in the Zuurveld. As Thomas Philipps remarked, "The *Proprietor* of 6000 acres in Africa has not as many comforts as the *Renter* of 200 acres in England... ." <sup>121</sup> John Montgomery described the farming errors committed by the colonists in Salem "...for want of knowledge of the climate and country... ." <sup>122</sup> The colonists' inexperience was exacerbated by the propaganda put out in Britain to the effect that the Zuurveld could be farmed with little effort. In December 1820 Philipps was "...sorry to say our crops are looking very bad, owing to the ground not being sufficiently worked before the seed was sown, had we followed our own methods we should have all done better, but we were told we had only to 'sow and to reap'." <sup>123</sup> Some of the less agriculturally experienced colonists initially took the latter assurance seriously. One of the men working for Thomas Stubbs' father, when told to plant potatoes "...had merely dug some large turfs, and had put

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119. Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, pp. 191-192. See also the "Proclamation By His Excellency Lieutenant-General Sir John Francis," 29 January 1814, in *Proclamations, Advertisements, and other Official Notices*, p. 278.

120. Gilmartin, "Models of the Hydraulic Environment" in *Nature, Culture, Imperialism*, p. 211.

121. Thomas Philipps' journal, 15 August 1823, Cory MS 14,264, p. 208.

122. Gifford (ed.), *The Reminiscences of John Montgomery*, p. 62.

123. Thomas Philipps to Nathaniel Phillips, Lampeter, c. Dec 1820, Cory MS 14,264, p. 50.

in a potato under each."<sup>124</sup> Henry Dugmore remembered how one man planted corn kernels still attached to the cob.<sup>125</sup>

A lack of water restricted the efficacy of the new land use methods. As Philipps explained: "The greatest objection against permanent improvement is want of water, & where so little rain falls, irrigation is extremely desirable."<sup>126</sup> Philipps' attitude reflects that of the colonists in general: they were 'improving' the land with their new farming methods, regardless of whether the new methods were in fact practical. At their location on the Baviaan's River, Pringle's party set to work straight away to bring irrigated land within reach of the new settlement. In the process, they destroyed valuable ground cover:

Trenches were cut with much labour, to lead out the water of two streamlets for irrigating the fertile ground...which was mostly overgrown with mimosa trees...it was requisite to dig them out entirely by the roots, in order to clear the soil for the plough.<sup>127</sup>

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124. Maxwell and McGeogh (eds.), *The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, p. 77.

125. F Van der Riet and L Hewson (eds.), *Reminiscences of an Albany Settler, by H Dugmore*, (Grahamstown, 1958), p. 27.

126. Thomas Philipps to Lady Louisa Anson, 25 December 1821, Lampeter, Cory MS 14,264, p. 103.

127. Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence*, p. 45.

By December 1822 colonists like Philipps concluded that much of the Zuurveld soil was insufficiently fertile for agriculture: "[the settler] finds out too late, how miserably deceived he has been on the reported fertility of the soil."<sup>128</sup> After the heavy rains of October 1823, Philipps recounted the destruction wrought by floods on drought-stricken land and thus showed an appreciation of the anti-erosion properties of groundcover:

...it is now proved, that the low places cannot be cultivated, nor the high lands either; torrents carry away the former, and drought destroys everything sown on the latter -the standing corn has literally preserved the soil in many places, from its roots binding it together. Had the flood happened when the corn was sown, I am confident six eighths of all the ploughed land would have been carried away.<sup>129</sup>

By the end of 1823 the hopes of the colonial administration and wealthier colonists for a Zuurveld completely under the plough had evaporated. The Zuurveld environment made the idea untenable.<sup>130</sup> Pringle spoke of "...the impracticable task assigned [to the colonists], of rendering the Zuurveld exclusively an agricultural settlement with a dense English population."<sup>131</sup> After an unsteady start plagued with setbacks, however, a measure of agricultural success was achieved in the southern stretches of the Zuurveld. As the century wore on, farmers began to establish what could and could not grow under Zuurveld conditions, and what would grow without irrigation. By 1834 Pringle could write that "Within a certain distance of the coast, wheat, barley, and maize, are now successfully cultivated without irrigation, and most of the European fruits, with potatoes, pumpkins, and other esculents, are raised in great abundance..."<sup>132</sup>

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128. Thomas Philipps to Mary Phillips, Lampeter, 17 December 1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 166.

129. "Mr Philips [sic], to a Friend in Cape Town, Lampeter, October 15, 1823:" letter published in Pringle, *Present State of the English Settlers*, p. 63.

130. Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, pp. 90-91.

131. Pringle, *Present State of the English Settlers*, p. 35.

132. *Ibid.*, pp. 209-10.

For some tenacious idealists, however, the decreasing importance of agriculture to the Zuurveld economy was distressing. At Bathurst in May 1845 John Ayliff addressed a gathering commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1820 settlement. Commenting positively on the advances made in wool farming, he went on to castigate his audience for their neglect of agriculture:

The Agriculture of Albany - this fine and fertile nook of Africa, blessed daily with the breezes and dews of the Indian Ocean - in what does it consist? - I am ashamed to mention the fact, - why, principally in *raising food for the horses of the mounted troops of the frontier, Oat Hay and Barley.*

For Ayliff at least, half-hearted agriculture was suited to those societies in a "state of incipient civilisation" rather than "to the intelligent British Settler," whom he directed to "commence at once *a system of improvement in Agricultural pursuits.*"<sup>133</sup>

During the nineteenth century, the Zuurveld landscape did not only change through the deflection of existing vegetation. The ecosystem diversified significantly in the face of the wide-scale introduction of exotic plant and animal species.<sup>134</sup> Jacot Guillarmod notes - rather gender insensitively - that "Wherever settlement takes place from another area, man tends to introduce elements of his former abode, bringing his domestic stock and crops as well as his favourite garden plants."<sup>135</sup> According to Beinart and Coates, "The farming of new crops and animals has arguably most altered the physical environment...as well as having produced some of the most complex

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133. Ayliff, *Memorials of the British Settlers*, p. 29.

134. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, pp. 143-144.

135. Jacot Guillarmod, "Exotic Plant Invasion," p. 89. See also Wells, Poynton, Balsinhas *et al*, "Introduction of Invasive Alien Plants," in Bruton and Gess (eds.), *Towards an Environmental Plan for the Eastern Cape*, p. 10.

regulations."<sup>136</sup> Exotic species can be introduced both inadvertently and through "systematic, commercially and scientifically informed botanic importation."<sup>137</sup>

Plants introduced accidentally invade the environment in a variety of ways. Unwanted species often "hitch a lift" in imported animal feed and seed mixes.<sup>138</sup> Along with the British seeds brought out by the colonists, came crop diseases. A grain disease known as rust which had not affected the colony for many years made a vigorous comeback in 1820. As Thomas Philipps described it, the rust all but destroyed "the crops of the whole Colony & in some places totally destroyed the Vines, a calamity before unknown...".<sup>139</sup> The effects of the disease were swift and devastating. Philipps wrote in despair "We shall not know if we can reap until the reapers are in the field, so sudden does the rust act on the ear."<sup>140</sup> The rust did not just affect wheat but also ravaged "the crops of barley and other grain; and even potatoes, pumpkins, tobacco, vines, and fruit trees, have been greatly injured by it."<sup>141</sup>

Although rust had occurred in the colony before, it appears to have been absent for many decades. The colonists themselves felt that the post-1820

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136. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 51.

137. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

138. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, p. 166; Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 40; Wells, Poynton, Balsinhas *et al*, "Introduction of Invasive Alien Plants," p. 13.

139. Thomas Philipps to William Harries, 11 February 1821, Lampeter, Cory MS 14,264, p. 59. See also Hammond-Tooke (ed.), *The Journal of William Shaw*, p. 61.

140. Thomas Philipps to Miss Harries, Grahamstown, 15 July 1821, Cory MS 14,264, p. 68.

141. Letter published in the "Morning Chronicle," 12 July 1823, dated Cape of Good Hope, May 1 1823, signed "JHR," republished in Pringle, *Present State of the English Settlers*, p. 98.

outbreak was a strain identical to one they had experienced in Britain. Assuming this was so, the chances of it having been imported into the Zuurveld along with British seed grains are high. According to John Montgomery, "The Dutch Boors had it that the English brought the rust into the corn and the lice in the cabbage."<sup>142</sup> Thomas Pringle enlarged on this theory:

It is remarkable and, at the same time, peculiarly unfortunate, that the vegetable distemper called *rust* first began to prevail extensively and virulently throughout the colony, in 1820, the very year the English colonists arrived. Though previously not altogether unknown at the Cape, it had never (at least within the memory of man) affected the crops to any great or alarming extent ... So far as I can ascertain, the *rust* of this colony is precisely the same disease as the one known in England by the same appellation, or by that of *red robin*...<sup>143</sup>

A letter published in the "Morning Chronicle" provides evidence to suggest that the rust epidemic of previous years could possibly be linked to the arrival of the first Dutch settlers in the Zuurveld:

Although not quite unknown in the colony, it had scarcely been heard of for more than fifty years, and was never known to prevail to any considerable extent, or for so long a period. Commencing, as it has recently done, with the arrival of the English settlers, and prevailing with peculiar virulence throughout their locations...<sup>144</sup>

Even if the connection between the arrival of the colonists and the arrival of the blight was made, the knowledge of the time only allowed for a treatment of the symptoms, rather than actual prevention. Strains of blight-resistant wheat were imported<sup>145</sup> (although even some of these were not immune).<sup>146</sup>

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142. Gifford (ed.), *The Reminiscences of John Montgomery*, p. 62.

143. Pringle, *Present State of the English Settlers*, p. 22 n. \*.

144. Letter published in the "Morning Chronicle", 12 July 1823, dated Cape of Good Hope, 1 May 1823, signed "JHR," republished in Pringle, *Present State of the English Settlers*, p. 98.

145. Thomas Philipps to Robert Harries, Glendower, 9 October 1826, Cory MS 7611, pp. 201-202. Silver notes that rust affected the wheat crops of the South Atlantic region in the eighteenth century: it was a collective name for "several imported Old World fungus parasites." In New England, it was found that "stem rust" was able to survive the winter with the aid of the

The first measures to actually curb the introduction of potentially disease-ridden plants into the Cape Colony were only implemented in July 1880: the vine-destroying insect *Phylloxera vastatrix* had devastated the vineyards of Europe and America and to prevent a similar fate befalling Cape vineyards, the Vineyards Protection Act was introduced. The terms of the act regulated any imports providing a possible vehicle for the introduction of *Phylloxera vastatrix*.<sup>147</sup>

The plants deliberately introduced during the course of the nineteenth century had as great an environmental impact as the species introduced accidentally. "Improving" the land through irrigation meant it became possible to cultivate crops otherwise unable to survive Zuurveld conditions. In this situation a region prone to drought like the Zuurveld is liable to sustain huge losses when drought conditions preclude irrigation: introduced crops die where indigenes would have survived. Droughts are an inherent element of the Zuurveld environment, and the colonists were regularly obliged to confront situations in which it was impossible for them to irrigate their crops. On 19 January 1837,

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barberry, "an imported ornamental shrub." In the South Atlantic region, rust did not need a host bush during winter as the weather was warm enough for it to survive on its own. Silver, *New Face on the Countryside*, pp. 154-155. Here, as in the eastern Cape, the disease was able to occupy an ecological niche in which, with no natural constraints like the cold weather that checked it in the northern hemisphere, it flourished unchecked.

146. Thomas Philipps to Catherine Richardson, no place, no date, received by Richardson December 1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 144.
147. "Vineyards Protection Act," E Jackson (ed.), *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1906, Vol II, 1880-1893*, (Cape Town, 1906), pp. 1722-1733. In spite of this measure, *Phylloxera* found its way into the Colony in 1885, causing untold damage to the wine industry. Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, pp. 148-49. Other unintentional "importations" occurred, if on a slightly lesser scale. Thomas Pringle related how he lost his wooden furniture "...on account of one of our neighbours having unluckily imported a colony of bugs from London, which in a single season overran the whole hamlet, and occasioned us to destroy by fire most of the huts...". Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence*, pp. 112-13.

a despondent Thomas Shone commented that: "The crops looks very bad for the want of rain: some is lost altogether." Four days later, he related that: "...the rivers are all of them nearly empty and what water thier [sic] is in them is very salt."<sup>148</sup> In the same month, the *Graham's Town Journal* emphasised the extent of the problem: "In Lower Albany the springs are in general so weak, as to occasion great fear that many tracts of the country must be abandoned for want of sufficient water...".<sup>149</sup> Furthermore, the introduced crops were easy prey for parasites like locusts and weevils. Jeremiah Goldswain graphically describes the damage done by locusts to his crops in 1827: "...you mite see a hundred Lockes on one stalk and they eat until they and they stalk fell to the ground and of the two acers of Inden Corn we only gathered one bucket of Corn."<sup>150</sup> However, the introduction of European crops into an environment unsuited to their cultivation meant more than just poor agricultural returns. Whereas the Xhosa had practiced the intercropping technique already referred to, the colonists introduced monoculture, which, if not practiced most judiciously, can quickly exhaust the soil. Even more importantly, European ploughing, carried out to a much deeper level than Xhosa digging, significantly disrupted the land. This takes place to the extent that, once ploughed, an area is rarely able to return to its previous state.<sup>151</sup>

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148. Silva, "The Diaries of Thomas Shone," p. 77.

149. *Graham's Town Journal*, 10 January 1837, quoted in Silva, "The Diaries of Thomas Shone," p. 351 n. 79.

150. Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol I, p. 61. See also *ibid.*, Vol II, p. 127 and Hinchliff (ed.), *The Journal of John Ayliff*, pp. 79-80. Thomas Philipps described how he "... rode yesterday for 15 miles surrounded by them, for not liking grass, and where there is no corn, they alight in incredible numbers on the roadside, in places where the grass has been manured and sweetened by the washings of the rain." Thomas Philipps to Catherine Richardson, 16 July to 19 August 1827, in Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 319. For comments on weevils, see Thomas Philipps to Mrs Harries, Glendower, 25 March 1829, Cory MS 7612, p. 73.

151. Personal communication with Dr Tony Palmer, Albany Museum, Grahamstown, 3 February 1998. For the effects of ploughing in New England, see Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, pp. 146-47.

Many colonists brought fruit tree cuttings with them, or else obtained them from other residents, and proceeded to start orchards.<sup>152</sup> In many cases, the fruit trees thrived in their new settings. Thomas Philipps refers to the luxuriance of many sorts of fruit trees, and "...as to our Lemons they are of a size beyond what we have before seen & are constantly blossoming & ripening at the same time, so that we can gather every day in the year."<sup>153</sup> The fruit of imported species was, Philipps felt, far superior to the "tasteless wild fruit" of the Zuurveld.<sup>154</sup> When indigenous plants could not be used as hedges, exotic plants like quince and pomegranate were introduced.<sup>155</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, new arrivals in the Zuurveld often lost no time in planting gardens. The seeds they brought with them from Britain were augmented by instalments from the friends and relatives they had left behind. In 1837 Thomas Grant sent a box of seeds to Ann Atherstone of Table Farm, Grahamstown, writing "...it is a pleasure for me to fancy that I can be the means of improving your garden."<sup>156</sup> In January 1877, James Butler described the garden of John Woods, a prominent Grahamstown citizen and an ardent horticulturalist.<sup>157</sup>

Many curious and rare plants are grown in the garden, including the india-rubber tree...beef wood [either *Casuarina cunninghamiana* or *Casuarina equisetifolia*], black wood [*Acacia melanoxylon*], various pines etc. In one hot house was a magnificent collection of tropical plants with variegated foliage, some from India, Jamaica, S. America, Australia, Mauritius etc., the colours of many were splendid, rich and rare. Also an insectivorous plant, and a glorious yellow creeper from the Amazon. A very fine fernery has

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152. Pringle lists these and the vegetables he planted. Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence*, p. 46.
153. Philipps to Catherine Richardson, Glendower, 25 August 1829, Cory MS 7612, p. 109.
154. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, pp. 284-5.
155. Silva, "The Diaries of Thomas Shone," 30 July 1839, p. 103.
156. Thomas Grant to Ann Atherstone, Sutton Valence, 20 March 1837, "miscellaneous papers," Cory MS 14 786 (a).
157. Garner, "Jim's Journal," p. 496.

been built under cover of another greenhouse...<sup>158</sup>

Exotic fruit and ornamental trees and plants support exotic insect communities. As a result, even if confined to the orchard and garden, they can initiate environmental change.<sup>159</sup> A number of exotic introductions, some of them ornamental, thrived in the Zuurveld to the extent that they became pests. Pine trees were growing in the Grahamstown Botanical Gardens from 1848. By at least 1863, eucalypts (*Eucalyptus*) were also flourishing there.<sup>160</sup> Arriving in the Zuurveld in 1876, James Butler noted how the road to Grahamstown was "lined with tall blue gum trees [eucalypts] which at a distance look not unlike poplars."<sup>161</sup> He also mentioned the presence of "the weeping willow [*Salix babylonica*] which is abundant by all the streams...".<sup>162</sup> The long-leaved wattle (*Acacia longifolia*), along with its relations the Port Jackson willow (*Acacia saligna*) and the rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*), as well as the Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*), were used to reclaim the Port Elizabeth dunelands between 1893 and 1897.<sup>163</sup> In 1913 wattles, eucalypts and pines were recommended as a matter of course to farmers needing to plant hardy trees able to withstand South African conditions and provide good shelter for stock.<sup>164</sup> Other species were introduced for different reasons: the prickly pear (*Opuntia ficus-indica*) was imported as a rapid-growing hedge and as animal fodder.<sup>165</sup> It proved popular

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158. *Ibid*, pp. 154, 195 n. 6, 7.

159. Personal communication with Dr Tony Palmer, Albany Museum, Grahamstown, 3 February 1998.

160. Jacot Guillarmod, "Exotic Plant Invasion," p. 90.

161. Garner, "Jim's Journal," p. 121.

162. *Ibid*, pp. 121, 141 n. 12.

163. Jacot Guillarmod, "Exotic Plant Invasion," p. 90.

164. McKee, *South African Sheep and Wool*, p. 327.

165. Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, p. 66; Jacot Guillarmod, "Exotic Plant Invasion," p. 90.

because it could survive in drought conditions, and grew easily.<sup>166</sup> It quickly spread, taking over large stands of indigenous vegetation. Thomas Baines noticed its wide-spread presence in the vicinity of the Fish River, naturally the home of such indigenes as *spekboom*,<sup>167</sup> in 1848.<sup>168</sup> In 1851 Thomas Stubbs mentions that the area of the Fish River Bush known as Zwaartwaters Poort, was "very thickly studded with prickly pear."<sup>169</sup> Now recognised as a dangerous invader species, a glance through farming manuals of the late nineteenth century shows it was popular with farmers. Arthur Douglass even encouraged prospective ostrich farmers to "... choose a farm that has on it especially plenty of...carl [*kaal*, literally "bald" or "spineless"] prickly pear..." because it made such a good fodder standby in times of drought.<sup>170</sup> The prickled variety was, however, seen as a danger to stock which feasted on the fruit, prickles and all. Internal inflammation caused by the prickles could often be fatal.<sup>171</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, the prickly pear was so much part of the "natural" scenery that it invariably crops up in contemporary photographs that were specifically taken to convey an impression of the eastern Cape's natural scenery.<sup>172</sup> In 1896 Wallace wrote that prickly pear had "firmly established itself" to the north east of Grahamstown.<sup>173</sup> He went on to elaborate that:

...there is no doubt that the injury done by it [to stock] is so great that it would be well for the Colony to get rid of it entirely...But it

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166. McKee, *South African Sheep and Wool*, p. 323; Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, p. 40.
167. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 85.
168. R Kennedy (ed.), *Journal of a Residence in Africa 1842-1853, by Thomas Baines*, Vol I, (Cape Town, 1961), p. 37.
169. Maxwell and McGeogh (eds.), *Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, p. 165.
170. Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, pp. 66, 72.
171. Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 90.
172. Picture from a photograph, Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, facing p. 107.
173. Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 33.

has now spread so widely, and established itself so completely, that extermination would be a matter of great difficulty if not impossibility.<sup>174</sup>

Other nineteenth century invaders include Spanish Reed (*Arundo donax*). In 1839 it was already prolific enough for Thomas Shone to refer to it by name and to have a specific purpose for it: "I went to Thomas Pike's for some spanish [sic] reeds for my waggon."<sup>175</sup> By 1918, it was described as "fairly common in places along streams, but usually near towns or on farms."<sup>176</sup>

During the nineteenth century people who disapproved of exotic species tended, like Wallace, to do so for economic reasons. Mary Elizabeth Barber was a rare exception to this rule. In 1879 she journeyed by rail from Kimberley to Cape Town. Passing Paarl, she wrote of her dislike for pine trees, a reaction based largely on their appearance:

It was here that I observed for the first time, that Pine trees predominated, which they do, in the Cape district, almost to the exclusion of the indigenous trees of the country. I cannot say I looked with favour upon these interlopers - these gloomy foreigners. They may, it is true, be very useful, but our own trees are more varied and interesting, and I imagine better adapted to the uses of our country. There is a monotony about the heavy, dank foliage of these flowerless trees, which I do not admire, it reminds one of cloudy skies, and northern regions. We, of South Africa, love the sunny climate of our adopted country, and the things pertaining thereto, including its glorious and variable flora.<sup>177</sup>

Exotic species can have an extremely negative effect on the environment. Often, the new ecosystem into which they are introduced has no biological

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174. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

175. According to Silva, Shone would probably have used the reeds to make a roof for his waggon. Silva, "The Diaries of Thomas Shone," p. 93, n. 94.

176. J Bews, *Grasses and Grasslands of South Africa*, (Pietermaritzburg, 1918), p. 60, quoted in Silva, "The Diaries of Thomas Shone," p. 93 n. 94.

177. Mary Elizabeth Barber, "Wanderings in South Africa," c. 1879, Cory MS 10560 (b), p. 53.

control to limit their spread.<sup>178</sup> They have a good chance of thriving in their new surroundings because of the lack of control, and they can often encroach on indigenous plants that provide food and shelter for indigenous wildlife. Other negative effects include interference with the water system, an increased risk of fire and what Jacot Guillarmod refers to as "hidden loss of farming productivity."<sup>179</sup> Of the species mentioned, Jacot Guillarmod lists species of Australian acacia, pines and cacti, as well as the water hyacinth, as presenting a serious threat to the eastern Cape environment. Eucalypts are listed with those species "not yet forcefully invasive but...easily [able to] become dangerous."<sup>180</sup>

Along with their crop seed and tree cuttings, the colonists also brought out domestic animals. By 1821, Philipps was able to report that "Pigs are very prolific as well as all other animals...".<sup>181</sup> Horses were found to be susceptible

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178. Jacot Guillarmod, "Exotic Plant Invasion," p. 88.

179. *Ibid.*, p. 88. The spread of alien plant species can reach catastrophic dimensions. The water hyacinth (*Eichhorna crassipis*) is a fast-growing aquatic species originally introduced from South America in the 1920's as an ornamental garden plant. Finding its way into streams and rivers over much of Africa, including the Bushman's River, it has become a weed of frightening proportions, covering wide stretches of water and cutting off light from aquatic life below. Capable of doubling its surface area within three weeks, and providing a wide surface for transpiration, it increases water evaporation which drought-prone regions like the Zuurveld can ill afford. Infestations of it are themselves a signal of environmental degradation, because it flourishes in water enriched with nitrogen and phosphorus as a result of pollution. The danger it poses is illustrated by the extent to which it has invaded Lake Victoria: covering some 800 square kilometres of the lake's surface, it has jeopardised the fishing industries of Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, closed ports and been linked to epidemics of malaria, bilharzia and cholera. *Sunday Times* (South Africa), 30 November 1997, p. 17.

180. *Ibid.*

181. Thomas Philipps to Miss Harries, Grahamstown, 15 July 1821, Cory MS 14,264, pp. 70-72.

to distemper, particularly along the coast,<sup>182</sup> but in general the animals thrived in their new location. As Philipps explained, the Zuurveld provided some distinct benefits where the maintenance of domestic animals was concerned: "We had now twelve horses & 12 [sic] oxen to feed, what a consumption of oats & hay that would be in England! But nothing of the kind is required here, they are all turned out to graze which costs us nothing."<sup>183</sup> This grazing did, however, have environmental implications. Cronon points out that the hooves of domestic animals compacted the soil as they grazed and pulled ploughs.<sup>184</sup>

Colonists also lost little time in trying to convince Africans of the use of European domestic animals. Visiting Ngqika at a wedding at "Botman's" [Botamane's?] homestead, Philipps saw land that was "...admirably adapted for Sheep and Goats... ." He felt they would be "a valuable acquisition" for the Xhosa because "Small Kraals could then kill just sufficient for their Consumption as it might be wanted, instead of the present mode of inviting their Neighbours to the slaughter of a Bullock in turn, in order that the whole might be consumed before night."<sup>185</sup> Colonists like Philipps had little idea of the kinship and community ties cemented through the operation of these customs, without which the ties would be broken.<sup>186</sup> Furthermore the introduction of more goats and sheep into the ecosystem had serious implications. Goats are particularly non-selective feeders and, once introduced to a piece of land, will proceed to eat it bare. Wallace noted that:

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182. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, 23 May 1826, p. 307; W Black, *The Fish River Bush, South Africa and its wild animals*, (London, 1901), p. 34. In 1896, Wallace commented that in the Bathurst area, "horses always look unthrifty." Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 31.

183. Thomas Philipps to Mary Phillips, Lampeter, 27 March 1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 115.

184. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, pp. 145-47.

185. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 286.

186. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 5.

A natural habit of the goat is to climb, and in mixed grass and bush veld this gives the goat an immense advantage over animals like the sheep, which crop only the growth next to the ground. A goat, by standing on its hind legs and supporting itself by resting its fore-feet on the branches, can immensely extend its food supply, and bring within its reach the leaves of trees, which are of special value in times of drought.<sup>187</sup>

By 1896, goats constituted up to 15% of the Zuurveld livestock farmed north and 15 to 25% of that farmed south of Grahamstown.<sup>188</sup> At this time, agricultural experts like Wallace were aware of the ecologically destructive habits of goats:

The restless and enterprising habit of the goat is liable to lead to injury to the feeding power of the veld. It is generally acknowledged that goats are more destructive than sheep to the best varieties of bushes and other food plants, and that if a full stock of goats is regularly kept, year after year, on a certain area, it will degenerate in feeding capacity...The excessive energy of the goat is liable, under South African conditions, to lead to injury of the veld in yet another direction. Goats not only travel more than sheep, but they more frequently walk one after the other when in search of food. In so doing they trample the surface onto tracks, which readily deepen into sluits by the action of the rain-water from heavy thunder-showers. These tend to lower the quality of the vegetation by running off the natural water supply which ought to sink into the ground. Moreover, there is the uneven surface left, and the loss sustained by the washing away of the soil.<sup>189</sup>

Today, goats, along with domesticated ostriches, are blamed for much of the environmental impact farming has had in the northern areas of the Zuurveld.<sup>190</sup>

Since cattle and sheep flourished in many parts of the Zuurveld, it was inevitable that stockkeeping would take precedence over agriculture - as it had

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187. Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 323.

188. Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 325.

189. *Ibid.*, pp. 323-24.

190. Personal communication with Dr Tony Palmer, Albany Museum, Grahamstown, 3 February 1998.

done in precolonial times. In 1803, Dirk van Reenen observed that the Zuurveld was well suited to stockkeeping and suggested that one of the best ways of boosting the economy would be to farm woolled sheep on it.<sup>191</sup> Van Reenen was correct in his prediction. The colonists came to accept that the pastoral lifestyle was in fact well suited to the conditions of the Zuurveld,<sup>192</sup> particularly inland.<sup>193</sup> According to Pringle, it became "...obvious that the rearing of flocks and herds must necessarily become the chief object of attention, and that agriculture could only be prosecuted with advantage to a very limited extent."<sup>194</sup>

Wool farming was established in the Zuurveld in the 1820's,<sup>195</sup> and rapidly increased in popularity. Stockkeeping lost its taint of being "uncivilised"<sup>196</sup> when it could be utilised to promote capitalist accumulation, because this was viewed as an acceptably industrious occupation. As they embarked on the passage to the Cape, almost every colonist nurtured the dream of using the new opportunities that arose to improve their lifestyles through material accumulation.<sup>197</sup> This attitude was very different from that of the Xhosa whom

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191. J Franken and I Murray (eds.), *Die Joernaal van Dirk Gysbert van Reenen, 1803*, (Cape Town, 1937), p. 139. See also J Griffin, *The Real Facts Disclosed: or the only actual guide to the Cape; a correct statement of the advantages and disadvantages attendant on Emigration to the new Colony forming near the Cape of Good Hope...*, (London, Fifth Edition, c. 1819), p. 8.
192. Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, pp. 90-91.
193. Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence*, pp. 209-210; Southey, *Rise, Progress and Present State of Colonial Wools*, p. 170.
194. *Ibid.*, p. 50. See also Thomas Philipps to Robert Harries, Lampeter, 7 April 1823, Cory MS 14,264, p. 186.
195. Southey, *Rise, Progress and Present State of Colonial Wools*, p. 182.
196. Thomas Philipps to Catherine Richardson, no place, Cory MS 14,264, p. 38; Thomas Philipps to R[Robert?] Harries, Lampeter, 18 September 1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 145; Letter signed "JHR" published in the "Morning Chronicle," 12 July 1823, republished in Pringle, *Present State of the English Settlers*, p. 101.
197. Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol I, p. 3.

the colonists looked down upon because, as Lichtenstein said, "...they ha[d] no idea themselves but for living from day to day, without any regard to the future...".<sup>198</sup>

Woolled sheep provided a gateway through which the colonists could enter into world trade. Prior to this, the Zuurveld appeared to be a place where colonists like Philipps could live, but not prosper:

...for present maintenance and stocking a farm this Country is superior to any, but in its ultimate prospects it is deficient to every other it can never be generally commercial, no mines, or a staple commodity to [word illegible - uplift?] it like others to the scale of an independent nation...<sup>199</sup>

Many capitalist enterprises, such as silk<sup>200</sup> and cotton<sup>201</sup> production were attempted. However, it was in wool that the colonists found Philipps' "staple commodity." The Zuurveld environment dictated that silk and cotton production would fail, and wool production succeed. The growth of a wool industry placed different demands on the environment from those that a silk or cotton industry would have done: the Zuurveld environment became shaped by the culture it had itself helped to shape.

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198. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol II, p. 269. See also Thomas Philipps to "Our Dear Nephews, Nieces and Cousins at St Brides," Glendower, 23 November 1828, Cory MS 7612, p. 29.

199. Thomas Philipps to Mr H[arries], Glendower, 10 August 1826, Cory MS 7611, pp. 191-92.

200. Thomas Philipps to the Honourable Major-General King, 20 August 1837, in Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1829 Settler*, p. 323; Charlotte Philipps to ?, Glendower, 27 February 1828, Cory MS 7611, p. 308; Charlotte Philipps to Mrs Harries, Glendower, 29 March 1829, Cory MS 7612, p. 84; J Croumbie Brown, *Water Supply of South Africa and Facilities for the Storage of it*, (Edinburgh, 1877), p. 497.

201. Thomas Philipps to Catherine Richardson, Glendower, 16 July to 19 August 1827, Cory MS 7611, p. 253; Ayliff, *Memorials of the British Settlers*, p. 32. Interest in cotton farming was reignited in the 1870's and late 1880's, but endeavours met with little success. R Sellick, "A Study in Local History: Grahamstown 1883-1904," (unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, 1983), pp. 72-73.

The initial plots of land granted to the colonists in 1820 proved too small for large-scale stockfarming.<sup>202</sup> In 1897 an elderly farmer remembered how "...the 100 acres of ground, which had seemed such a tempting bait in England...was scarcely able to support one cow."<sup>203</sup> The government realised this and enlarged the grants, putting an end to the ideal of an intensively settled region. "The tendency now," wrote Wallace in 1896, "is for the farms to increase in size, and the population to become less numerous."<sup>204</sup> The situation bears a strong resemblance to the switch from tenant farming to sheep farming in Britain in the early 1800's - which partly initiated the British colonisation of the Zuurveld.

When sheep were farmed to satisfy demands for their meat only, the indigenous Khoena sheep that was hairy rather than woolly was acceptable. This sheep was well adapted to grazing in less than lush pasture,<sup>205</sup> but when the demand for wool rose, the introduction of exotic breeds of woolled sheep became necessary. Experiments were conducted to discover the best wool-producing sheep.<sup>206</sup> Despite fears regarding the ability of woolled sheep to thrive on the Zuurveld pastures, attempts at breeding them there were successful. Colonists like Thomas Philipps continued the precolonial methods of maintaining stock through burning the pasturage and moving the flocks regularly from place to place:

...I am now trying the Merino Sheep with my own kind which I brought out and they are uncommonly fine to the surprise of a great many as it was not generally thought that this rich pasture would do for them however I burn the grass of some of my hills

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202. Edgecombe, "The Letters of Hannah Dennison," p. 24.

203. "Conversation with Mr Watson at Grahamstown, April 15 & 21 and June 2 1897," in Berning (ed.), *Historical "Conversations,"* p. 181.

204. Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 31.

205. *Ibid.*, p. 331.

206. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, pp. 323-24.

alternatively and by frequent change I have *perfectly* succeeded.<sup>207</sup>

Fry emphasises the way in which capitalism as a cultural development can impact on the environment.<sup>208</sup> Instead of being used for subsistence only, the Zuurveld became used to generate profit. In 1881 Arthur Douglass stressed that: "...it is of primary importance, both to the state and to everybody in the country, that the land should be made to produce as much as possible...".<sup>209</sup> Here, the links between environment and culture are clearly illustrated: the Zuurveld environment dictated an adaptation of an agricultural colonial lifestyle to stockkeeping and therefore a change of culture for the colonists.

The colonists were jubilant to have found a profit-making industry, and entered into it wholeheartedly. They felt that the extent of their lands meant that they had room for extensive flocks. Thomas Philipps commented on how "We to the Eastward look with more prospect than ever to the Merino wool, having such extensive farms to feed some thousands."<sup>210</sup> The breeding of merino and other woolled sheep expanded quickly: in 1833 just under forty thousand pounds of wool were exported from Port Elizabeth. By 1850 the figure was closer to four and a half million.<sup>211</sup> By 1840 wool was South Africa's major export,<sup>212</sup> and by 1845 the Zuurveld was supporting over 500 000 woolled sheep.<sup>213</sup> Thus by the mid nineteenth century, the number of livestock supported by the Zuurveld had increased significantly. Around 1870 the fatal

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207. Thomas Philipps to Catherine Richardson, 8 October 1826, Cory MS 7611, p. 196.

208. K Fry, "Kiola: A History of the Environmental Impact of European Occupation 1830-1980," in Dovers (ed.), *Australian Environmental History*, p. 101.

209. Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, p. 41.

210. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 323.

211. Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol II, p. 125 n. 239.

212. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 57.

213. Southey, *Rise, Progress and Present State of Colonial Wools*, p. 170.

sheep disease which the farmers called "heart-water" struck the Zuurveld.<sup>214</sup> This, combined with fluctuating wool prices, resulted in a depressed wool industry.<sup>215</sup> Prices rose in the 1890's,<sup>216</sup> but by 1896 sheep accounted for less than 15% of the total livestock supported by the Bathurst region, although they still accounted for between 50 and 75% in Albany.<sup>217</sup>

It was an indication of the degree to which the flocks of individual farmers expanded that James Collett's 1836 flock of 2490 sheep had by 1839 expanded to 5186. By this stage his land, in the Cradock district, was already beginning to feel the pressure of this expansion. In August 1838 Collett noted that: "The whole of my flocks had been grazed at home for about one month and has fed it bare between the forest and the river... ." <sup>218</sup> Grazing large numbers of domestic animals on the soil leads, as do ploughing and monoculture, to the compaction and exhaustion of the soil. The soil becomes more vulnerable to soil degradation, deforestation, erosion and the silting up of water courses. Sheep are selective grazers and grazing them in large numbers causes growth of the vegetation that is not eaten.<sup>219</sup> As Guy points out, "Even under-stocking can lead to pasture deterioration because selective grazing favours unpalatable grasses which eventually invade the pastures."<sup>220</sup> In some areas, overgrazing has caused Karoo vegetation to encroach on the species that naturally grow there.<sup>221</sup>

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214. Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 381.

215. Sellick, "A Study in Local History," p. 57 n. 62.

216. *Ibid.*, p. 57 n. 6.

217. Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 353.

218. Collett, *A Time to Plant*, p. 71.

219. Bolton, *Spoils and Spoilers*, p. 57.

220. Guy, "Ecological factors in the rise of Shaka," p. 110.

221. Personal communication with Dr Tony Palmer, Albany Museum, Grahamstown, 3 February 1998. Lines also refers to the damage sheep can do to vegetation. Lines, *Taming the Great South Land*, p. 83.

As the century continued, other forms of farming were found to suit the Zuurveld environment, and accordingly introduced on a commercial scale. In terms of environmental impact, two of the most significant were pineapple farming and ostrich farming. Indigenous to Brazil,<sup>222</sup> the pineapple is an example of an introduced plant which was found to thrive in the Zuurveld south of Grahamstown.<sup>223</sup> The cultivation of pineapples illustrates the way in which agriculture in the Zuurveld became profitable when colonists were able to adapt their original plans to Zuurveld conditions. Pineapples are believed to have first been grown in South Africa during the early years of the Dutch settlement.<sup>224</sup> In 1863 farmer Charles Purdon from the Bathurst area noticed pineapple tops growing in water in glasses on the counter of a Grahamstown barber's establishment, where the barber was nurturing them for the interest of his customers. Purdon took some of the tops home and planted them, and the eastern Cape's pineapple industry was born.<sup>225</sup> The cultivation of pineapples has left a more lasting imprint on the Zuurveld than any other crop. Due to the acidulent quality of the plants, the soil in which they are cultivated remains affected for extended periods. Once pineapples are cultivated in an area, it may never fully recover its previous balance.<sup>226</sup>

For many years wild ostriches were hunted and killed for their plumes. It was realised, however, that the birds could be domesticated, and their feathers cut

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222. C Strauss, "Pineapples in the Eastern Cape; a study of the farm economy and marketing patterns." Occasional paper of the Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, p. 3.
223. Strauss, "Pineapples in Eastern Cape," p. 12.
224. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
225. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6. However, the industry did not really begin to flourish before the beginning of the twentieth century.
226. Personal communication with Dr Tony Palmer, Albany Museum, Grahamstown, 3 February 1998.

twice a year without harming them.<sup>227</sup> The idea of ostrich farming began to take root in the early 1860's.<sup>228</sup> "Ostrich farming," wrote John Sheddon Dobie in 1863, "is now beginning to attract attention and, it is considered, will pay better than anything else."<sup>229</sup> Arthur Douglass, who farmed outside Grahamstown, gave impetus to the infant industry when he introduced an ostrich egg incubator in 1869.<sup>230</sup> The incubator successfully hatched ostrich chicks without assistance from the parents. If eggs are removed from the nest while the ostrich hen is laying, she will continue to lay - where twelve to sixteen eggs had been laid, it was now possible to have thirty or more. In the wild, ostrich pairs share nest duties, but in the absence of these, the male is free to mate again.<sup>231</sup> As a result of these innovations, ostrich farming went from strength to strength, becoming a notable example of how Zuurveld resources were modified to facilitate capitalist expansion. Although the colonists were in this case farming an indigenous species, their methods of doing so meant that ostrich farming had a significant impact on the Zuurveld environment. When farming cattle and sheep, fencing is useful, but not indispensable. However, it is essential for farming ostriches, because they cannot be herded like other stock and, if not enclosed, tend to stray.<sup>232</sup> Although at this point wire fencing was becoming popular,<sup>233</sup> wood was still necessary for the supporting posts.<sup>234</sup> The increased need for fencing resulted

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227. Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, p. 2.

228. M Wormser, "Ostrich Farming in South Africa," (unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, 1930), p. 16.

229. A Hattersley (ed.), *John Sheddon Dobie's South African Journal 1862-1866*, (Cape Town, 1945), pp. 122-23.

230. Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 220.

231. Wormser, "Ostrich Farming," p. 17.

232. Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, p. 29; Wormser, "Ostrich Farming," p. 19; Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 223, p. 336.

233. Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, p. 32.

234. Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 336.

in a rise in the demand for wood, putting pressure on the area's already strained indigenous wood supplies, like sneezewood,<sup>235</sup> and augmenting the planting of exotic species. Ostriches enclosed in camps create a negative effect on the vegetation in that they tend to feed exclusively on one plant species at a time,<sup>236</sup> to the great detriment of species diversity. Rising ostrich numbers in the Zuurveld meant that increasing stretches of land were devoted to growing fodder crops like lucerne for them.<sup>237</sup> Wormser estimated that an average of twenty acres of lucerne, which needs irrigation, was sufficient to maintain sixty ostriches.<sup>238</sup> In addition, a new lucerne field was needed every year for the grazing of chicks, because they tended to pick up internal parasites from the soil of already farmed areas.<sup>239</sup> The ostrich industry began to decline in the late nineteenth century, and finally collapsed in 1914, when ostrich plumes went out of fashion.<sup>240</sup> In 1904, however, the Zuurveld was still supporting some thirty thousand ostriches.<sup>241</sup>

Beinart and Coates agree that precolonial societies were more "constrained" in their land use activities than colonial societies.<sup>242</sup> Colonial land use activities tended to reflect the predatory aspect of the colonial mindset. By 1900 the Zuurveld presented a rather different appearance to that which faced

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235. *Ibid.*

236. *Ibid.*, p. 222.

237. De Mosenthal and Harting, *Ostriches and Ostrich Farming*, p. 192.

238. Wormser, "Ostrich Farming," p. 19.

239. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20. Jacot Guillarmod notes that "lucerne-type species" originally introduced as crops have the potential to become ecologically disruptive. Jacot Guillarmod, "Exotic Plant Invasion," p. 89.

240. Wormser, "Ostrich Farming," p. 29; Sellick, "A Study in Local History," p. 57 n. 7.

241. Wormser, "Ostrich Farming," p. 29.

242. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, pp. 52-53.

observers in the early 1800's. Clearly, the human-engineered transformation of the land accelerated more rapidly during the nineteenth century. The changes that took place could be viewed as degradation. However, Beinart and Coates emphasise that human intervention in the environment cannot always be viewed as wholly negative. Sometimes it needs to be considered as "transformation" rather than "degradation." Out of necessity the colonists adapted their land use methods as best they could to Zuurveld environmental conditions. As a result, the wool, pineapple and ostrich farming industries rose to prominence during the nineteenth century. These industries reflect how the land was transformed as a direct result of a combination of the colonial capitalist ideal and the Zuurveld experience. Whether the colonial landowners' aesthetic ideal of the African landscape as a re-created "home county" ever died away completely is, however, questionable. Included in Wallace's 1896 survey of Cape farming is an advertisement for a self-binding reaping machine. Presumably selecting an image calculated to appeal to farmers, the advertisers chose to represent their machine at work in what can only be an English wheat field - complete with sturdy draft horses, debonair (white) farmer, winding lane, oak-like trees and dreaming spire in the distance.<sup>243</sup>

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243. Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 526.

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## CHAPTER IV

### ADVANCING SETTLEMENT, RETREATING WILDLIFE

Few regions of the world had richer and more exploitable game resources than southern Africa. Even fewer witnessed such a dramatic decline in the space of half a century.<sup>1</sup>

The game here afford amusement for every hour in the twenty-four. Wild beasts all night & winged & footed game all day. Whenever time permits we like to destroy them!!<sup>2</sup>

Between 1800 and 1900, the wildlife population of the Zuurveld declined conspicuously. Eyewitness accounts in the early years of the century reveal an abundance of wildlife. Towards the century's close onlookers were agreed that the animal life marvelled at by early European travellers was no longer so marked a feature of the Zuurveld landscape. Colonial reaction to the Zuurveld wildlife was both immediate and laced with complexities. Wildlife was admired, but admiration did not preclude its wholesale destruction. Indispensable as a mobile food supply during the early years of settlement, it became wholly dispensable once a settlement was established. In their war against predators that threatened the security of settlement, colonists in effect achieved a re-creation of Britain - where the largest predators are foxes and badgers. The colonial attitude towards wildlife was moulded by economic demands: farmland and the farming economy had to be protected from the inroads of wildlife. With the introduction of capitalism, farming activities in the Zuurveld intensified. The drive to protect farming interests from wildlife

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1. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, p. 116.

2. Edward Philipps to Catherine Richardson, Lampeter, 4 April 1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 119.

increased accordingly. The role of capitalism becomes apparent when the colonial attitude towards wildlife is considered in conjunction with the African perspective.

Most nineteenth century references to the Zuurveld wildlife concern large, visually impressive mammals. Colonists tended to describe the species that caught their attention - those that they found appealing and those that they feared. The tendency has resulted in a wealth of information concerning elephant, lion, leopard, rhinoceros and buffalo - a form of "big five" elitism. In contrast, records of the rather more humble bushpig and warthog, for instance, are limited.<sup>3</sup> Present environmental theory calls for a holistic approach to scientific arguments regarding species decline: a range of species should be studied with equal attention. This study, however, does not presume to be a complete scientific record of species decline in the Zuurveld. Rather, it provides examples of the way species distribution - and consequently the environment - can be affected by cultural attitude. The species most described in nineteenth century records are consequently the species whose disappearance is the easiest to track. This facilitates the study of the links between cultural mindset and species decline.

In the hunting world there is an important distinction between the hunt and hunting.<sup>4</sup> The former is extensively ritualised, and significance is attached to the process of pursuit, rather than the results. The latter concentrates on the end result, and the need to kill is uppermost.<sup>5</sup> Hunting for sport is a different matter to hunting for trade and sustenance.<sup>6</sup> By the nineteenth century the

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3. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 160.

4. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, pp. 8-10.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 3, 10-11

6. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

hunt was an integral part of upper-class British society. MacKenzie notes that "Fox hunting, otter hunting, hare coursing, the shooting of pheasant and grouse, deer driving and stalking all entered upon a golden age."<sup>7</sup> Hunting sustained the Bushman economy and to a degree sustained the Khoena and Xhosa economy. The Xhosa hunted mainly for hides and ivory, although wildlife did provide meat in times of need.<sup>8</sup> According to MacKenzie, the Khoena favoured hunting for pleasure, but disdained it as a necessity. His reasoning is linked to the idea of the transient status of hunters and herders. Herders became hunters if they lost their herds and were forced to rely on hunting. This was considered "the greatest misfortune." Conversely hunting was accorded high status when it augmented the herding economy. Women managed the herds, leaving men with the time to hunt. MacKenzie argues that the Xhosa could have viewed hunting in the same way, and if so, this could be compared to the European idea of hunting for sport rather than for survival.<sup>9</sup>

The hunting experiences of Bushmen and colonists were recorded in different ways. These differences reflect their dissimilar attitudes towards hunting and the wildlife they hunted. Cosser contends that researchers should be wary of using examples of eastern Cape art as historical sources. She argues that art is too suffused with the particular worldviews of the artists to stand as any kind of historical record, except in the most general sense.<sup>10</sup> This subjectivity,

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7. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

8. Fehr (ed.), *Alberti's Account*, p. 29; Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 6.

9. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, p. 59.

10. Cosser, "Images," pp. 2, 138, 150. To a similar end, Cronon warns that travellers' accounts should be used with care due to their being suffused with the worldview and generalisations of the authors. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, p. 6.

however, can be used to the historian's advantage. Art stands as an historical record of attitude, as a reflection of the prevailing mindset of the society in which the artist executed his or her work. In this instance, eastern Cape art can be used to gain an impression of the attitudes towards the environment held by the artists and, correspondingly, by their respective societies. Evidence for this can be found in the comparison between a Bushman rock painting of an elephant hunt (*figure ii*)<sup>11</sup> and a photograph of a colonial elephant hunt (*figure iii*).<sup>12</sup> The two experiences were recorded for posterity in the way that the recorders, who may or may not have participated in the hunt, wished them to be seen. Of great significance is the way that humans have been depicted in relation to the environment. The Bushman painting shows the hunt in progress. The depiction of tiny people serves to emphasise the size of the elephant. The sticks held by some of the figures appear to be shielding them from the elephant's retribution.<sup>13</sup> The elephant is powerful. He is painted in an elevated position, denoting his superiority; this is accentuated by his prominent phallus which denotes overt masculinity and, consequently, great power. The enormous physical power of the elephant demonstrates the bravery and courage of the humans engaged in hunting him. It also reveals the awe with which the quarry is regarded by the hunters. The painting is a vivid contrast to the colonial photograph, which depicts a dead elephant. The hunters stand over their trophy. One hunter is resting his boot on the animal's body. The humans' relation to their quarry changes dramatically: the elephant's inferiority to humans is reinforced. The humans are portrayed as

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11. P Vinnicombe, *People of the Eland: Rock Paintings of the Drakensberg Bushmen as a Reflection of their Life and Thought*, (Pietermaritzburg, 1976), p. 13.
  12. P Pretorius, *Jungle Man: The Autobiography of Major PJ Pretorius*, (London, 1947), p. 192.
  13. Vinnicombe, *People of the Eland*, p. 13.

being above nature rather than being a part of it.

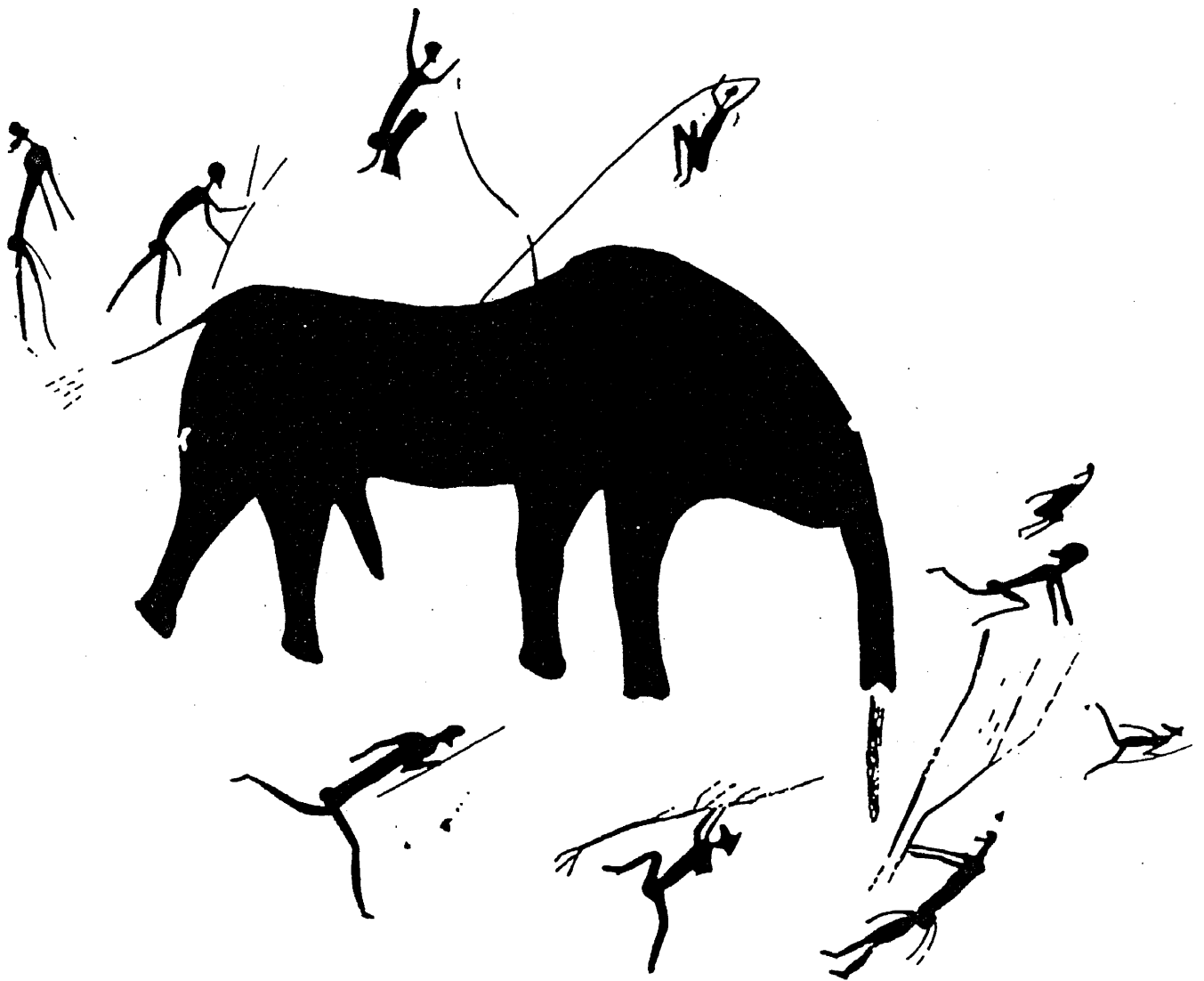


Figure ii. A representation of a Bushman elephant hunt.



*Figure iii. A representation of a colonial elephant hunt.*

A similar perspective is reflected in the work of the Victorian artist Edwin Landseer. Considering a series of his paintings embracing subjects such as foxes and stags at bay, MacKenzie comments that: "Human involvement is...glorified as an imperative of command over nature...".<sup>14</sup> Colonial discourse is peppered with statements that reflect this viewpoint, some directly. In 1864 Sub-Inspector Edward Wilson of the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police described the scene when the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Percy Douglas, shot a bushbuck ram on a hunt in the Grahamstown hills: "It was a sight which would have enraptured Landseer to see the noble animal, lying stiff and motionless, as the gallant Baronet stood gazing over it."<sup>15</sup> For Wilson and the colonial photographer, the fact that the animal has been defeated is sufficient. There is no need to give any evidence of the struggle involved in killing it. The representations are indicative of the differences between hunting and the hunt.

The lines between the hunt and hunting, however, are not always so clearly drawn. The Xhosa and Khoena attitude to hunting reflects elements of both categories. Some aspects of their attitude are analogous with the Bushman attitude. Generally for the Xhosa and the Khoena wildlife was a source of food and hide products.<sup>16</sup> When the economy of precolonial societies was exclusively sustained through hunting, checks and balances enforced sustainable hunting. The Bushmen viewed hunting in similar terms to the way that more settled societies viewed land and property. In 1868, an unnamed Zulu described the Bushman attitude to ownership of property: "Their village is where they kill game; they consume the whole of it, and go away. That is

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14. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature*, p. 33.

15. E Wilson, *Reminiscences of a Frontier Armed and Mounted Police Officer in South Africa*, (Grahamstown, 1866) p. 5, quoted in Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 97.

16. Brooks, "Playing the Game," p. 69.

their mode of life."<sup>17</sup> As essential as hunting was to Bushman life, their complex hunting ceremonies meant that they never hunted or killed wildlife indiscriminately. Vinnicombe makes it clear that strict, often species-specific, rituals surrounded hunting.<sup>18</sup> She refers to "the complex relationship which existed between hunter and victim."<sup>19</sup> Present day !Kung society belittles the achievement of hunters bringing home their kills. The !Kung believe that playing down the hunters' accomplishments prevents the hunters from thinking too much of themselves. It is possible that this belittling provides a check for hunters who would otherwise kill in excess in order to raise their status within the group.<sup>20</sup> The practice is a survival technique because if the wildlife they hunted was to disappear, with it would disappear their hopes of sustenance.

Just as Bushmen, Khoena and Xhosa shared hunting techniques, such as pit trapping,<sup>21</sup> so to an extent Khoena and Xhosa shared the Bushman attitude to the wildlife they hunted. Precolonial societies, when hunting, had to confront the environment on her own terms. Hunting with poisoned arrows and spears called for courage, ingenuity and an intimate knowledge of wildlife habits and traits.<sup>22</sup> Often, hunters came into quite close contact with their quarry and they

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17. H Callaway, *Nursery Tales, Traditions and Histories of the Zulus*, Vol I, (Springvale, 1868), pp. 353-55, quoted in Vinnicombe, *People of the Eland*, p. 11.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 151-242, 259.

19. J Marshall, "Huntsmen of the Nyae Nyae," Part II, *Natural History*, 67, pp 376-95, quoted in Vinnicombe, *People of the Eland*, pp. 300-301.

20. M Harris, *Cultural Anthropology*, (New York, 1983), p. 69, 71.

21. Vinnicombe, *People of the Eland*, p. 292; Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 20; "Second Conversation with Tanco and Somana, January 24, 1910," in Berning (ed.), *Historical "Conversations,"* p. 125.

22. The Xhosa used their knowledge of animal habits to gain the upper hand in conflicts with the British. During the struggle for the Zuurveld in 1812, Graham's forces first encountered Xhosa resistance in the Addo bush directly east of the Sunday's River. Here, the Xhosa forces made use of the numerous elephant tracks running through the Addo thickets; passageways

were compelled to retain a healthy respect for it. Hunting with firearms meant that hunters lost much of their respect for the animals they hunted. So long as their aim was true their quarry was powerless against them.

The hunting that took place in the Zuurveld in precolonial times was in no way comparable to the hunting that began to take place once colonists arrived in the area. As with the Bushmen,<sup>23</sup> Xhosa hunting called for great energy and effort. For the Xhosa, hunting was largely a communal exercise.<sup>24</sup> Hunting an animal as large and dangerous as an elephant could take several days, or longer.<sup>25</sup> A hunting party of men and a few women, complete with cattle as a portable milk supply, could remain away for several months at a time. Care of the homesteads would be left to the remaining women, the children and the elderly.<sup>26</sup> The Xhosa had an extensive repertoire of hunting methods. Different methods were used in the pursuit of different animals and sometimes a variety of methods were used for one species. Antelope could be caught in snares positioned in openings in artificial fences. They could also be brought down by what Alberti termed the "force" hunting method: hunters dispersed in a wide circle would move slowly inwards towards a central point, and kill animals trapped within the area with thrown weapons.<sup>27</sup> "Tanco," an Ngqika Xhosa interviewed by Cory explained how elephants were hunted in a similar way: "The people...formed themselves into a curved or semicircular line... .

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through the otherwise impenetrable *spekboom* and *wag 'n bietjie* that were known to them but not to the British. Maclennan, *Proper Degree of Terror*, pp. 99-100. As the years of settlement increased, colonists must have gleaned this information from the Xhosa. In his *Chronicle*, Jeremiah Goldswain talks of making use of buffalo paths in the Kowie Bush. Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol II, p. 15.

23. Vinnicombe, *People of the Eland*, p. 287.

24. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 5.

25. Fehr (ed.), *Alberti's Account*, p. 29.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-77.

Having selected one animal they attacked it with their assegais and stabbed it to death."<sup>28</sup> Sparrman recounts another method in which elephants and rhinoceros were surprised while asleep, peppered with assegai wounds and then followed until they died of their wounds or else weakened to the extent that they could be easily dispatched.<sup>29</sup> Often, a method was tailored to the specific habits of the animal to be hunted. In the case of leopards, a piece of meat incasing an upturned assegai could be hung up. The leopard would be impaled as it jumped for the meat.<sup>30</sup> A lion could be surrounded and annoyed with small jabs of weapons until goaded to attack. One hunter would act as a decoy, falling to the ground and protecting himself with his shield. Diverted, the lion could be more easily brought down by the other hunters.<sup>31</sup> Hippopotami were caught by placing stakes pointing at chest level along the river paths. The animals, which had left the rivers at night to feed, would be driven back towards the river and onto the stakes.<sup>32</sup> These different hunting techniques are significant because they reflect the amount of ingenuity that went into hunting without firearms or horses. An account by Bertram Bowker demonstrates how the possession of a gun and a horse could expedite the hunting process:

One night quite dark when we were returning to the waggon we saw a Buffalo Bull standing on a rise, Malman let his horse go after him, the horse knew what he wanted and brought him up to the Bull's side both at full gallop in the dark, Malman shot him dead and when we got up was standing by the dead bull, that was about as smart a bit of sport as ever I have seen the horse

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28. "Conversation with Somana, a Gaika headman and Tanco, a Gaika at the Court House at Kentani, January 22 and 24 1910," Berning (ed.), *Historical "Conversations,"* p. 124.
29. Forbes (ed.), *Anders Sparrman*, Vol II, p. 88. See also Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol I, p. 332-337.
30. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol I, p. 332-33.
31. *Ibid.*, Vol I, pp. 317-18.
32. Fehr (ed.), *Alberti's Account*, pp. 74-77. See also Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol I, pp. 332-33.

brought him there he had no guiding.<sup>33</sup>

The respect that precolonial Africans had for their quarry is reflected in the rituals that surrounded their hunting. Alberti observes how:

When after much effort an elephant has at length been killed one seeks simultaneously to apologise to it for having done so by pretending that the killing was merely accidental and not intentional. The elephants' trunk is then carefully buried in order thereby to eliminate the supposed powers to avenge itself for the insult. The kaffirs express this might by saying: 'the elephant is a big man and the trunk is his hand.'<sup>34</sup>

The deference imparted to elephants is reflected in the way in which they are accorded the characteristics of physically superior humans.

The Xhosa utilised the products of the hunt in different ways. Animal products were often worn as articles of dress, and the rarer and more difficult to obtain the product was the more it emphasised the distinction of the wearer. Celebrated warriors wore the tail feathers of cranes as head decoration during battle.<sup>35</sup> Xhosa leaders wore ivory armbands as a symbol of their status.<sup>36</sup> Leopard skin cloaks were worn for the same reason. In 1826 John Ayliff describes leaders like Khama as wearing leopard skin karosses as "...a mark of royalty or superiority."<sup>37</sup> Thomas Philipps met with two of Ngqika's wives, "Taté" and another unnamed woman. Both women wore "robes" of "Antelope or Otter skins" and each carried "a very small land Tortoise shell in which they

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33. "Diary of B.E. Bowker," Albany SMD 948, p. 46.

34. Fehr (ed.), *Alberti's Account*, p. 48.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

36. Hummel (ed.), *Rev FG Kayser*, p. 84; Fehr (ed.), *Alberti's Account*, p. 33.

37. Hinchliff (ed.), *Journal of John Ayliff*, p. 64. See also Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 281; Hummel (ed.), *Rev FG Kayser*, p. 54; B Le Cordeur (ed.), *The Journal of Charles Lennox Stretch*, (Cape Town, 1988), p. 120; Edward Philipps to William Harries, 11 February 1821, Cory MS 14,264, p. 63; Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol I, p. 285; Fehr (ed.), *Alberti's Account*, p. 30.

keep a perfume." These hung over their shoulders, resting on their backs.<sup>38</sup>

Wildlife products were traded between African societies. The Xhosa bartered with the Bushmen for ivory, which they obtained in return for cattle and marijuana.<sup>39</sup> Amongst the Xhosa, ivory was a precious commodity. All ivory obtained had to be handed over to the chief, who presented ivory armbands to those in his favour -wearing the armbands was a mark of great distinction.<sup>40</sup> In addition, bluebuck skins and eland and buffalo breasts were also automatically the property of the chief.<sup>41</sup> Beinart and Coates accord Xhosa hunting with further underlying significance:

For African leaders, control over hunting for the distribution of meat, and particularly trade in ivory, were mechanisms for asserting power, stamping territorial authority and defining gender roles. There is little evidence of female hunting, at least not of larger animals. Women and children were, however, engaged in guarding crops and scaring animals away.<sup>42</sup>

Xhosa hunting was also surrounded by ritual. Hunters had to undergo special rites both before,<sup>43</sup> and sometimes after, a hunt.<sup>44</sup> These ceremonies are linked to what Beinart and Coates call the "intricate symbolic-totemic world [that] was constructed around pre-colonial hunting."<sup>45</sup> Like those of Bushman society, these rituals acted as checks to prevent over-hunting.

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38. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 settler*, p. 288.

39. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 97.

40. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol I, p. 285; Fehr (ed.), *Alberti's Account*, p. 29.

41. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 38.

42. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 20. See also MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, pp. 57-8.

43. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol I, p. 332.

44. *Ibid.*, Vol I, p. 318.

45. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 19.

As pastoralists, however, Khoena and Xhosa were less dependent on hunting for sustenance than the hunter-gatherer Bushmen. Evidence suggests that both the former groups hunted with fervour<sup>46</sup> - for enjoyment as well as out of necessity. Pastoralism would also have affected the Zuurveld wildlife through the disruption of vegetation,<sup>47</sup> making the collective precolonial impact on wildlife far from passive. Nonetheless, hunting without guns and horses involved too much energy and effort for destruction to occur on the level that it did when colonial hunting methods were established. Precolonial hunting was important, and carried out on a significant scale, but only with the onset of colonialism did wildlife begin to decline significantly.<sup>48</sup>

Even before European hunting aids became available to Africans, the European demand for skins and ivory meant that Africans increased their hunting. Wildlife products were traded with the colonists for commodities. By 1752 the Dutch trade with the Xhosa in ivory was well established.<sup>49</sup> The Dutch also hunted themselves, sometimes obtaining permission from the chiefs whose land they hunted on.<sup>50</sup> Living in what were then remote regions of the colony, commodities were scarce. Venison was a vital supplement to their diet. They too hunted both out of necessity and for recreation. The British considered the former tendency to be indicative of their inferior class. In 1821 Thomas Philipps noted how "[the Dutch farmer] never shoots at small game, seldom even at Partridges or Pheasants..."<sup>51</sup>

The scale of hunting would have increased when Africans obtained firearms

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46. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 87.

47. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 791.

48. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, p. 86.

49. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 98. See also MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, p. 87.

50. *Ibid.*

51. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 101.

and began to use horses. The introduction of firearms and horses changed hunting in the Zuurveld forever. Evidence gleaned from rock art suggests that for the Bushmen, traditional hunting with bow and arrow was restricted to good weather. Firearms made all-weather hunting possible.<sup>52</sup> In 1809 Richard Collins wrote of Bushmen in the "Zuureberg" and Bamboosberg rustling horses to aid their hunting activities. As Collins saw it, horses "are indeed a much more valuable prize than cattle, as their possession insures [the Bushmen] a subsistence, enabling them to overtake the eland, and other wild animals."<sup>53</sup> According to Vinnicombe, the Bushmen used horses to transport meat once the hunt was over.<sup>54</sup> A combination of the new hunting techniques and their established skills turned many Africans into formidable hunters. Thomas Philipps commented admiringly on the "bold marks[manship]" of the Khoena: "they steal along naked and don't fire till they almost touch the animals & pride themselves on knowing the vulnerable parts...".<sup>55</sup> Black also describes a Khoena hunting method that combined African and European skills:

A common plan...in the shooting of smaller bucks of all kinds, is in discovering an open spot of ground which, from the spoor and quantity of fresh dung, he judges is a favourite feeding ground, and excavating a hollow in a close bush within range of this with his knife, wherein he conceals himself before sunrise with his gun, ready on the watch for a buck displaying himself in the open glade which he commands.<sup>56</sup>

By the 1820's the use of firearms by Africans was well established.<sup>57</sup> Ammunition, however, was often scarce. In times of shortage, it was reserved

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52. Vinnicombe, *People of the Eland*, pp. 273-304.

53. Collins, "Journal of a Tour," p 3.

54. Vinnicombe, *People of the Eland*, p. 296.

55. Philipps to Catherine Richardson, Glendower, 20 February 1826, Cory MS 7611, p. 31.

56. W Black, *The Fish River Bush South Africa and its wild animals*, (Edinburgh, 1901) p. 27.

57. Edward Philipps to Catherine Richardson, 4 April - 11 May 1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 125.

for use in conflict with the colonists rather than for hunting.<sup>58</sup>

Participation in the hunt reflects a predatory attitude towards the environment on the part of Africans and Europeans. Europeans, however, combined a predatory worldview with an advanced hunting technology. The result was a greater impact on Zuurveld wildlife after the introduction of new hunting techniques. Even before 1820 European influences contributed to an increase in hunting in the Zuurveld. The increase can be attributed to a combination of Dutch and African hunting, with Africans making good use of Dutch hunting methods.

In the early 1820's, onlookers commented on how the wildlife population had declined significantly within the past few decades. Writing about this period, Thomas Pringle noted that the wildlife of the region had been depleted within the memory of European observers: Gnu had "now become rare in most parts of the colony," and eland were "now nearly extirpated in every part of the colony."<sup>59</sup> Pringle also refers to a decline in hippopotamus, rhinoceros<sup>60</sup> and buffalo numbers.<sup>61</sup> He uses the number of place names incorporating the Dutch word *buffel*, as testimony to the past abundance of the latter. MacKenzie uses place names referring to wildlife in general to reinforce the same argument.<sup>62</sup> The Zuurveld abounded in wildlife place names, many of them in

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58. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 156. Even then, ammunition resources were sometimes stretched. Jeremiah Goldswain recounted how during the Eighth Frontier War his comrade, Benjamin Booth, was wounded by a Khoena bullet which actually turned out to be "a piece of the leg of an iron pot." Long (ed.), *Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol II, p. 144.

59. Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence*, p. 141.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 138, 140.

62. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, p. 87.

Dutch: Zeekoehoek; Koedoe Kop; Buffelsdrift.<sup>63</sup> It is possible, however, that the lesser number of English wildlife place names indicates the British colonial drive to re-create home. Names were chosen as reminders of home, and as expressions of what the colonists hoped to achieve in the Zuurveld: "Clumber," "Glendower," and "Cheviot Fells."

Other colonists listed species that had declined and were declining in the early 1820's. In about 1821 Thomas Philipps commented that: "The pride of the Plain around me is the Springbuck, but there is fear that they will much dimmish [sic] if not retire altogether." "Twenty years ago," he observed, "thousands [of springbok] were seen in a herd, 5 years ago less than 5 hundred were seen & now they are reduced to 50 or 60, often 5 or 10 together, but they are visible all over the plain at the same time." Eland and "emu," he added, had "either been destroyed or deserted the plains."<sup>64</sup> Edward Philipps noted that "The Elephants are not now numerous in this part of the Colony. A drove passed near us the other day, but they were only coming up from the sea coast where they had been disturbed and were retreating to the interior."<sup>65</sup>

Regardless of the wildlife depletion that occurred prior to their arrival, the British colonists found much to say about the amount of wildlife they did find in the Zuurveld. That many colonists rather than travellers described an abundance of wildlife is significant. As Richard Paver noted, "...what a traveller may see in a long journey but describe in a single page, the

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63. Map depicting the field cornetcies of Albany, 1825-1836, in Bergh and Visagie, *The Eastern Cape Frontier Zone*, p. 31.

64. Philipps to Nathaniel Phillips, Lampeter, c.1820-1, Cory MS 14,264, pp. 46-7.

65. Edward Philipps to William Harries, Lampeter, 11 February 1821, Cory MS 14,264, p. 63.

comparatively stationary [sic] colonist might not meet with in half a lifetime!"<sup>66</sup> The sights described by the colonists demonstrate that the Zuurveld supported a significantly higher wildlife population in the 1820's than it did in 1900. In 1820 the Zuurveld was a place where even genteel Sophia Pigot, cocooned from the harsher realities of settlement, could see the tracks of hyenas and hear leopards growling.<sup>67</sup> Thomas Philipps viewed quaggas in "droves of 70 and 80" in the vicinity of his farm.<sup>68</sup> He also saw rhinoceros, elephant, monkeys, anteaters, jackals, hyenas<sup>69</sup> and hippopotami.<sup>70</sup> Thomas Stubbs remembered herds of elephants roaming the eastern Zuurveld near the clay pits in the early 1820's.<sup>71</sup> In 1821 William Shaw saw fresh elephant tracks close to the Kowie Bush.<sup>72</sup> Around the same time, a member of his congregation slipped off to Grahamstown when he should have been attending church. Along the road, he met two lions blocking his way. Taking this as a sign from God, the recalcitrant Christian turned back home and went to church that evening.<sup>73</sup> Despite Thomas Philipps' concerns about springbok numbers, Thomas Pringle described seeing a large herd near the Little Fish River in March 1821: "so numerous were those herds that they literally *speckled* the face

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66. Duminy with Adcock (eds.), *Reminiscences of Richard Paver*, p. 46.

67. Rainier (ed.), *Journals of Sophia Pigot*, p. 68.

68. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 65; Philipps to Nathaniel Phillips, c.1820-1, Cory MS 14,264, p. 48. In colonial terminology, while the mountain zebra was known as the zebra, both the Burchell's zebra and the quagga were referred to as quaggas, often making it impossible to know which species was being referred to. However, Skead finds no records of the appearance of the Burchell's zebra south of the Orange River, and no records of the mountain zebra in Albany, making it possible to confirm that all references to the quagga in Albany refer to the true quagga, now extinct. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, pp. 563 and 576.

69. Thomas Philipps to Nathaniel Phillips, c. 1820-1, Cory MS 14,264, pp. 35-50.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

71. Maxwell and McGeogh (eds.), *Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, p. 87.

72. Hammond-Tooke (ed.), *Journal of William Shaw*, p. 48.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

of the country, as far as the eye could reach; in so much that we calculated we sometimes had within view not less than twenty thousand of these beautiful animals."<sup>74</sup> George Thompson described herds of elephants in the Zuurveld in 1823.<sup>75</sup> In a letter to friends in Britain in February 1824 Miles Bowker related that the Zuurveld abounded in "...almost every description of wild beast from the elephant and hippopotamus to the mouse."<sup>76</sup> Around late 1825, WC Sheppard of the Cape Corps discovered "...upwards of three hundred Elephants encamped on the Banks of the Koornap [sic] River...".<sup>77</sup> In the same year, John Ayliff mentioned the presence of marauding elephants at Kaywood's Fishery on the Great Fish River.<sup>78</sup> In November 1832 the *Graham's Town Journal* carried a letter in which the writer, "O.P.," reminisced about the "sport" of hunting elephant around the mouth of the Great Fish "some years since."<sup>79</sup>

The colonists arrived in the Zuurveld with the traditions of the imperial hunt behind them. Although they looked down on hunting for food and trade the frontier situation with which they were confronted sometimes forced them to hunt out of necessity. Nonetheless, even when this was the case, it was seen as a temporary expedient - until the settlement could be firmly established. Like the Xhosa colonists sometimes used snares to trap smaller antelope.<sup>80</sup> Unlike precolonial Africans, however, they had little respect for wildlife,

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74. Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence*, p. 77.

75. Forbes (ed.), *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, Vol I, p. 21.

76. I Mitford-Barberton (ed.), *The Bowkers of Tharfield*, (Oxford, 1952) p. 29.

77. WC Sheppard, Cape Corps to C Sheppard, Cape of Good Hope, c. late 1825/early 1826, Cory MS 7611, p. 13.

78. Hinchliff (ed.), *Journal of John Ayliff*, p. 46.

79. "Reminiscences of an Albany Emigrant," *Graham's Town Journal*, 1 November 1832.

80. Black, *Fish River Bush*, pp. 28-29.

because firearms allowed for relatively easy, impersonal hunting.<sup>81</sup> Often hunting took place for no reason other than that it was possible. Young men like the seventeen-year-old Edward Philipps gloried in the chase:

Quaggas are very numerous about us on our plain - When I want exercise I take my gun & go after them. They are very stupid & will suffer you to go very near them rather than move out of their road & with a horse you can catch the young ones with ease.<sup>82</sup>

In 1880 Bertram Bowker remembered how in his youth he and his companions

...generally went for a hunt every day when it rained as we could not plough or do farm work if we could it was an excuse for not working...we used to kill many wild pigs tigers and bucks the pigs were very savage and often killed our dogs bush buck rams were also very bad for killing dogs [sic]...<sup>83</sup>

Thomas Pringle, however, did have a clearer impression of what was occurring:

The quagga, whose flesh is carrion, and even whose hide is almost useless, might be permitted, one would suppose, to range unmolested on his native mountains; but Man, when he has no other motive, delights to destroy for the mere sake of pastime. Thus the poor quagga, in the absence of better game, is often pursued for sport alone.<sup>84</sup>

In 1826 Edward Philipps listed the wildlife killed by himself and his brother Frederick in a letter thanking an uncle and aunt for the guns with which they had made the kills:

6 Wolf Hyena's; 5 Leopards; 4 Red Cats; 10 Civet Cats; 11 Harte beasts; 50 Spring Bucks; 14 Oribees; 18 Griesbucks; 3 Raay

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81. For some colonists, hunting was a new experience: "Our people have several times tried to shoot some of the antelopes which appear in the distance, but without effect. We are but indifferent hunters, and should soon starve, I perceive, if we had to depend on the chase - at least without horses." Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence*, p. 42.

82. Edward Philipps to William Harries, Lampeter, 11 February 1821, Cory MS 14,264, p. 63.

83. "Diary of BE Bowker," Albany SMD 948, p. 43.

84. Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence*, p. 142.

Bucks [rhebeck<sup>85</sup>]; 6 Mouse Hounds; 1 Guana [iguana]; 1 Otter; 8 Jackalls; 12 Maned Jackalls; 100 Brace Partridges; 10 [brace] Pheasants; 8 [brace] Paus [bustards<sup>86</sup>] 11 stone 14 pounds each; 30 rabbits; 50 Hares.<sup>87</sup>

A total of four hundred and sixty five animals and birds shot by two people, not on a major hunting expedition, but as they ranged over their father's farm. Some degree of exaggeration can be taken into account, but the inventory can be used to give an idea of the amount of hunting taking place in the Zuurveld.

Organised hunts were a popular form of recreation for the colonists. Black records a method that must have been responsible for the indiscriminate killing of large numbers of wildlife:

A favourite plan of hunting bucks in Lower Albany, adopted by the English farmers, where a kloof can be found separate and surrounded by open country, is in stationing the party with their guns around it at various distances, and sending in beaters up from the bottom of the kloof to scare the game, which rush out according to their number from the edge of the bush, and afford fine practice.<sup>88</sup>

British fox hunting, adapted to colonial conditions, was already established in the Cape by 1820. Jackalls made good substitutes for foxes. Somerset described how "Our foxes here are jackal; they are exactly a Fox only larger and the brush not so fine and full, but I think the scent is still better than that of the Fox as the hounds carry a wonderful head when on a jackal."<sup>89</sup> By 1843 fox/jackal hunting was taking place in the Zuurveld.<sup>90</sup> Lieutenant Robert

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85. Skead explains that a jumble of nomenclature makes distinguishing between historical references to grey rhebeck, mountain reedbeck and true reedbeck almost impossible. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, pp. 599-602.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

87. Edward Philipps to Mrs Hunter, Glendower, 26 May 1826, Cory MS 7611, p. 158.

88. Black, *Fish River Bush*, p. 27.

89. Charles Somerset, June 1815, quoted in MacLennan, *Terror*, p. 166.

90. Cosser, "Images," p. 60.

Arkwright, who served in the British Army at the Cape during the 1840's, described hunting with the hounds in the vicinity of Fort Beaufort. Arkwright and his brother officers at the Fort Beaufort garrison imported "21 couple of hounds" from Britain. He recalled that "Great was the delight of all people; the farmers had an idea they [the foxhounds] were to free the country of jackals...and often gave us assistance when it was in their power to do so." Arkwright's hunting accounts indicate a successful re-creation of the British fox hunt in the eastern Cape:

We found, or at all events drew, at dawn & sometimes our run was over almost before the sun had shewn himself, though in this country he is [up] but a very short time after the least beginning of light is perceptible. This was our only chance of a run, for we then found our fox away from home & generally at this time there was a scent, even when the ground had not been moistened with rain for many weeks. Thanks to our grass country (we knew not what the plough was), we had many a run and saw excellent sport...Our usual manner of finding was to get on the varmint's drag near a farmhouse where he had been inspecting the settler's lambs & hunt up to him, or draw across a line of country till we hit a drag. Our usual pack out amounted to from 12 to 17 couple & to those that laugh at S. African fox hunting, I would only remark that it was not often that our runs were laughed at by even the most hard-riding cornets...<sup>91</sup>

Leopard hunting was less traditionally British, but no less favoured as a means of ridding the region of predators. Bertram Bowker provided a detailed account of "...the best tiger hunt [he] ever had...":

...away we went Holden Robert & me They had assegais I with the double gun we very soon started [the leopard] but he did not care to run far or get into a tree so we knew what we had to deal with we soon got to where he was by the dogs he ran from them and got into a strong and well covered place the dogs were barking all round just as I was on one side he bounded out on the other and caught old Turk and left him for dead...he went back into the same place I said to Holden I can see a little bit of him he said drive into it I let fly and out he came at me I said look out here he comes at the same moment I gave him the partridge

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91. E Tabler (ed.), *Sport and Service in South Africa: The Diary of Lieutenant Robert Arkwright*, (Cape Town, 1971), pp. 9-11.

[shot] in his face he still came on and would have caught me but I jumped out of his way and both his eyes were out with the shot so he could not see me, well for me he was blind...he now ran about two hundred yards down the Bush dogs after him when he fell dead close to the river, when we got up the dogs were mauling him quite dead, the Ball went in at his hip forward into his chest that killed him, both his eyes were clean out as he had the whole charge of small shot in his face.<sup>92</sup>

Although the wildlife population in the Zuurveld was declining, the amount of ivory and hides being exported from the eastern Cape continued to rise. The Zuurveld's days as a frontier were numbered, but a new hunting frontier had been established beyond the Great Fish River. Here Xhosa hunters dispatched unlimited numbers of wildlife to bolster their trade with the colonists. Prior to 1824 trading in the Cape Colony, including ivory and other animal products, between Africans and Europeans had been illegal.<sup>93</sup> This ban was not effective, particularly since it was almost impossible to enforce. Peires notes that when the colonists arrived in the Zuurveld, "The illegal cattle and ivory trade was soon in full swing."<sup>94</sup> According to Thomas Stubbs, the Xhosa had large amounts of ivory to trade when they came to collect clay from the spot where they had always collected it - the clay pits to the west of the Great Fish.<sup>95</sup> An unsubstantiated account by Stubbs has it that in June 1823 a captain in the Cape Corps, mentioned only as "Boesak," was employed by landdrost Harry Rivers to trade with the Xhosa "under the pretence of shooting

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92. "Diary of B.E. Bowker," Albany SMD 948, pp. 44-45.

93. "Proclamation By His Excellency General the Right Honourable Lord Charles Henry Somerset," 28 November 1823, *Proclamations, Advertisements, and other Official Notices*, pp. 633-34. Trade in wild animal products between Europeans and Africans was discouraged from 1677, when the Dutch administration issued a placaat prohibiting "barter of ivory and ostrich feathers with the natives for tobacco." "Abstracts of Placaats," in *Statute Law of the Cape of Good Hope*, 9 November 1677, p. xii.

94. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 99.

95. Maxwell and McGeogh (eds.), *Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, p. 82. See also *ibid.*, pp. 85, 89.

elephants."<sup>96</sup> Although trading took place, its illicit nature meant that the quantities of animal products involved were never recorded. An annual trade fair, where trading took place under controlled conditions, was however established in 1821.<sup>97</sup> In 1824, the acting governor, Sir Rufane Donkin, allowed the fairs to take place three times a week.<sup>98</sup> These were held at Fort Willshire, and continued until 1830. Various statistics are testimony to the legal trade in wildlife products over this period. The figures do not include what was still being traded illegally. In the first seven months of 1824, 50 000 lbs [about 25 000 kg] of ivory and 15 000 hides were exchanged by Africans in return for the various offerings of the colonists.<sup>99</sup> Between 1824 and 1826, 112 943 pounds sterling worth of ivory had passed into the hands of the colonists, as well as some 46 975 hides, valued at 27 620 pounds sterling.<sup>100</sup> By 1827 over 78 000 hides were being sold.<sup>101</sup> Gradually, licences allowing the colonists to trade with the Xhosa and other groups at the fairs were extended to allow for private trading, and the popularity of the fairs declined. Nonetheless, the trade in wildlife products burgeoned. By 1829 Philipps could write that "...our inter[action?] with the interior (Cafferland) brings us such quantities of Hides and Ivory that we are enabled to fill Vessels direct instead of going to Cape Town."<sup>102</sup> Five months later he was able to report that "The increase in Hides and Ivory is immense[,] Francis tells me it is this year just

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96. *Ibid.*, p. 87 n. 75(1). While the editors note there is no record of this incident in the court register, it is possible that it may never have come to court to avoid embarrassment to the authorities.

97. "Proclamation By His Excellency Major-General Sir Rufane Shawe Donkin," 20 July 1821, *Proclamations, Advertisements, and other Official Notices*, pp. 513-15.

98. H Hockly, *The Story of the British Settlers of 1820 in South Africa*, (Cape Town/Johannesburg, 1948), p. 103.

99. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

100. Maclennan, *Proper Degree of Terror*, p. 230.

101. Peires, "The British at the Cape," p. 485.

102. Thomas Philipps to William Harries, Glendower, 16 September 1829, Cory MS 7612, p. 122.

*valued* at the *Custom House* at 40 000 pounds mind *Sterling* not Rix Dollars - it was scarcely 1000 when we enterprising fellows landed here."<sup>103</sup> That a conspicuous decline in Zuurveld wildlife numbers occurred simultaneously with the arrival of the British colonists was no coincidence.

Factors other than hunting can combine to cause the disappearance of a species in a particular area.<sup>104</sup> The decline of wildlife was also influenced by encroaching settlement. The requirements of farmers were often in direct opposition to the requirements of wildlife. For Lynn Collett, biographer of the Collett family, "The greatest advance in farming...was the fencing of property...making it possible for the farmer to contain and protect his stock."<sup>105</sup> Along with habitat destruction<sup>106</sup> land clearance and land enclosure restricted the movement of wildlife,<sup>107</sup> and often limited access to sufficient food and water. Beinart and Coates note that "wildlife losses were reversible if habitat survived."<sup>108</sup> In the Zuurveld habitat did not survive. Disappearing wildlife is a sign that the environment has been affected: if the land cannot support indigenous wildlife, it must have undergone change. Noting the impact of domestic animals in Australia, Fry maintains that "Sheep and cattle change the environment for native fauna in three main ways: they compete with native fauna for available resources, they destroy the natural shelter for some species, and the fauna are exposed to predators..."<sup>109</sup> This would have taken place in the Zuurveld before the colonial era. The increase in stockkeeping

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103. Thomas Philipps to ?, Port Elizabeth, 17 February 1830, Cory MS 7612, p. 156.

104. Morton, "European Settlement," p. 148.

105. Collett, *Time to Plant*, p. 211.

106. Silver, *New Face on the Countryside*, p. 111.

107. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 94.

108. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 24.

109. K Fry "Kiola: a history of the environmental impact of European Occupation 1830-1980," in Dovers (ed.), *Australian Environmental History*, p. 105.

in the Zuurveld due to capitalist expansion was, however, significant. Rising stock numbers would have exacerbated the situation. Wild animals also contracted the diseases of domestic animals. Douglass records that domestic ostriches suffering from an outbreak of tapeworms passed the parasites on to wild birds. The Zuurveld's huge flocks of guineafowl "perhaps a hundred strong" were, Douglass explained, consequently reduced "to a few only."<sup>110</sup> The destruction of certain elements in the food chain had repercussions for some species. For instance, when farmers addressed their cattle's tick infestations with medical remedies, they deprived oxpeckers of their source of food.<sup>111</sup> As settlement in the Zuurveld progressed, the colonists, with their guns and fenced-off land, encroached not only on the animals themselves, but on their habitat, forcing them to move out of the area and into less inhabited areas.

By the early 1800's, wildlife had begun to move out of reach of European guns. In 1803 Alberti found that the vicinity of the "KeysKama" [Keiskamma] River abounded in "Elephants and Hippopotami, which one finds here in great numbers."<sup>112</sup> Elephants were seldom to be seen to the west of the river. This, he suggested, was because "they were the foremost ones exposed to pursuit...on the other side they are found in considerable numbers."<sup>113</sup>

Referring to the Ceded Territory, Thomas Pringle noted that

...the whole of this tract had been for some years abandoned to the undisputed occupation of the wild animals, which had consequently flocked to it in great numbers from the surrounding districts. In no other part of South Africa have I ever seen so

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110. Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, pp. 145-46. Tapeworms, however, were not unknown in precolonial times. The Xhosa were known to have used aloe to combat infections. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 7.

111. H Horak, "Parasites of Domestic Livestock in the Eastern Cape," in Bruton and Gess (eds.), *Towards an Environmental Plan for the Eastern Cape*, pp. 174-75.

112. Fehr (ed.), *Alberti's Account*, p. 17.

113. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

many of the larger sorts of antelope; and the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the buffalo were also to be found in the forests, though we *saw* none of these animals on this occasion.<sup>114</sup>

Towards the end of the 1820's, then, the wildlife had retreated to the margins of the Zuurveld. In 1828 Thomas Philipps referred to "...some old paths made by the Rhinoceros or Hippopotamus although neither of these animals are to be found nearer to us now than the [F]ish River about 16 miles off - they were till lately seen."<sup>115</sup> He also declared that "...not above 10 or 11 years since this place was famous for every kind of Buck, but the only kind remaining are the BushBuck, ghriesbuck & little blue buck...".<sup>116</sup> Ostriches, once reasonably common in the Zuurveld,<sup>117</sup> were hunted for their feathers.<sup>118</sup> When it was discovered that the feathers could be cut without harming them and that it was possible to farm them, none remained in the Zuurveld. Their wild presence was last recorded in the region in 1842.<sup>119</sup> The first ostriches to be farmed in the Zuurveld had to be imported from Abyssinia.<sup>120</sup> At the time Grahamstown was nonetheless the main trading centre for wild ostrich feathers,<sup>121</sup> pointing to the number of ostriches still being hunted in the interior.

Zuurveld wildlife did not disappear all at once. When James Butler arrived in the Zuurveld in 1876, leopards and hyenas were still found in the Kowie

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114. Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence*, p. 117. See also "Diary of B.E. Bowker," Albany SMD 948, p. 45.

115. Thomas Philipps to "our dear Nephews and Nieces & Cousins of St Brides Hill," Glendower, 23 November 1828, Cory MS 7612, p. 46.

116. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

117. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 179.

118. Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, p. 2.

119. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 898.

120. Personal communication with Dr Tony Palmer, Albany Museum, Grahamstown, 3 February 1998.

121. Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, pp. 1-2.

Bush.<sup>122</sup> As the century wore on, however, there were fewer and fewer comments about the abundance of wildlife in the area, and the tendency was for observers to write about Zuurveld wildlife in the past tense. In 1848 John Centlivres Chase described what once had been:

On the arrival of the settlers in 1820, the elephant, rhinoceros, and hippopotamus were common; but they have either been destroyed, or have retired on the approach of civilised man. Elephants are still met with in the jungles of the Fish and Bushman's Rivers. A straggling ostrich is sometimes observed crossing the sandy flats, and at the mouths of the large rivers the hippopotamus is occasionally perceived protruding his huge but shapeless head from the stream for a little air. The lion is rarely seen, though the district is not altogether freed from his ravages. The buffalo is still common in the woody jungle of the district. The quagga and hartebeest used formerly to browse on the flats in herds, but they are now seldom seen. Springboks are much more common; but they have been so much hunted by the youth of Albany, who are in general fine shots and daring horsemen, that they have become comparatively scarce.<sup>123</sup>

Albert-Montémont, editor of the French edition of the traveller Adulphe Delgorgue's *Travels in Southern Africa*, published in 1847, made a similar comment about the Cape Colony as a whole: "...as for the wild animals, they are retreating further and further northwards as civilization advances."<sup>124</sup> By 1877 de Mosenthal and Harting could write:

Many years ago, the ostrich and other kinds of large game, such as the giraffe, koodoo, gnu, blesbok, hartebeeste, &c., &c., were indigenous to [the eastern Cape] but the influx of settlers, and the consequent erection of numerous villages and towns, caused the game to emigrate across the Great Orange River, where they still continue to recede as the white man advances.<sup>125</sup>

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122. Garner, "Jim's Journal," p. 125.

123. J Christophers (ed.), *The Cape of Good Hope and the Eastern Province of Algoa Bay by John Centlivres Chase*, (London, 1848), pp. 50-51. See also Van der Riet and Hewson (eds.), *Reminiscences of an Albany Settler*, pp. 21-22; J Noble, *Official Handbook: History, Production and Resources of the Cape of Good Hope*, (Cape Town, 1886), p. 79.

124. F Webb (ed.), *Adulphe Delegorgue's Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol I, (Pietermaritzburg, 1990), p. viii.

125. De Mosenthal and Harting, *Ostriches and Ostrich Farming*, p. 194.

Some species were lost not only to the Zuurveld or the Cape Colony. Travelling over the "Quagga Flats" near the Bushman's River in the early 1800's, Lichtenstein saw "a great number of these animals [quaggas], in divisions of them from eighty to a hundred head each."<sup>126</sup> Common as the quagga was in the area at this time, by 1844 the Zuurveld had seen its last glimpses of the beast.<sup>127</sup> Forty years later it was extinct, leaving behind only a few skins as testimony to its abundant existence less than a century before. The last quagga died in a zoo in Amsterdam in 1883.<sup>128</sup>

The decline in wildlife may not have passed unnoticed, but it was not altogether regretted by the colonists engaged in trying to wrest a living off the Zuurveld. The distribution of permits to hunt and trade beyond the confines of the Cape Colony meant that there was still a profit to be made from animal products. The Zuurveld, however, was clear of the wildlife that threatened the development of a settled community. Africans in the precolonial era had placed priority on their cultivated lands. "Tanco" pointed out that the Xhosa set pit traps for hippopotami because "The animals were sometimes a nuisance as they would raid the mealie and corn fields near the banks of the rivers, hence pits were dug for the double purpose of protecting the fields as well as actually killing and getting the animals."<sup>129</sup> The growing areas of farmland, however, meant that land where wildlife could move unrestricted grew less and less as the nineteenth century progressed. In 1824 Thomas Pringle reported that while the river vegetation in Albany still sheltered buffalo, antelope and hyena,

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126. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol I, p. 417.

127. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 567.

128. *Ibid.*, p. 369.

129. "Conversation with Somana, a Gaika headman and Tanco, a Gaika at the Court House at Kentani, January 22 and 24 1910," Berning (ed.), *Historical "Conversations,"* pp. 125-6.

... the elephant has retreated since the arrival of the settlers to the more impenetrable and solitary forests adjoining the Fish and Bosjesman's Rivers. The countless herds of spring-boks, hartebeests, quaghas [sic], and other large game, described by former travellers, as frequenting the open pastures, and adding so much life and beauty to the lonely landscape of Albany, have also almost totally disappeared, and with them the lion ... [.] The settler is well rid of these *ferae natural*, and has had, in fact, little to complain of the wild beasts.<sup>130</sup>

Pringle conveys the ambivalence many of the colonists felt towards wildlife. On the one hand, animals are to be valued, "adding so much life and beauty to the lonely landscape of Albany." On the other hand, "the settler is well rid of these *ferae natural*," of which, significantly, the elephant - one of the most threatening animals - has retreated to the borders of the Zuurveld - the Bushman's River in the west, and the Great Fish River in the east. The passage perhaps emphasises the conflict between an emergent conservationist perspective and the prevailing attitude of "humans first."

In many ways the "humans first" mindset was still firmly entrenched in the Zuurveld. In 1828 Edward Philipps remarked on the disappearance of elephants and lions from the Zuurveld. His comment emphasises the view that the presence of these animals was not compatible with settlement: "...not that we have [elephants] in any great numbers around us and [the lion] but seldom ventures to interfere with our cultivated territory...".<sup>131</sup> As with flora, the British viewed fauna in terms of a hierarchical structure. Plants were classed according to their worth to humans. Animals were classed in terms of their use to humans and in terms of the degree to which they threatened human interests. Wildlife in the Zuurveld was divided into two main groups: those which threatened humans, and those which were useful to them. Many of those in the latter group only became useful once they were dead, however,

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130. Pringle, *Present State of the English Settlers*, pp. 12-14.

131. Edward Philipps to Mrs Hunter, Glendower, 26 May 1828, Cory MS 7611, p. 158.

so their usefulness was not a passport to longevity. The groups also often overlapped, because an animal like an elephant that threatened human lives and property when alive had tusks that became valued products once the animal was dead. In general, wildlife that provided good hunting or good eating was classed as "game." Those animals that competed with the colonists for game and or preyed on their livestock were classed as "vermin." In effect, the hierarchy served to give the colonists different reasons for exterminating different animals.

Few species of wildlife were considered more valuable to the colonists than domestic animals, however.<sup>132</sup> It appears to have been considered natural that the wildlife of Albany would eventually have to make way for domestic stock - the proper consequence of civilisation asserting itself over the "state of nature." In 1886 John Noble, a clerk of the House of Assembly, could state matter-of-factly that the wildlife of the Cape Colony had been hunted out for the benefit of sheep and agriculture.<sup>133</sup> MacKenzie notes the incompatibility of game with settlement, maintaining that "game was both an opportunity and a threat."<sup>134</sup> When the frontier was "open," game was needed for food and trade. As it became more "closed", wild animals became a threat, both physically and because they consumed the forage needed to feed domestic animals. For MacKenzie, the arrival of the merino sheep is testimony to "the closing of the Colony's frontier, the diminution of game, and the re-location of hunting enterprise deeper in the interior."<sup>135</sup> Initially, prolific wildlife that

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132. Fry notes that colonists often saw indigenous animals as having limited "use" (only for skins and horns, for example) and thus saw the need for them to be replaced by more 'useful' domestic animals from Europe. Reference to T Coghlan, "The Wealth and Progress of New South Wales, Sydney," *New South Wales Statistician*, 1900, p. 20 in Fry, "Kiola: a history," p. 108.

133. Noble, *Official Handbook*, p. 79.

134. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature*, pp. 297-300.

135. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

allowed for wide-scale hunting made the colonisation of Africa more feasible. Colonists were provided with a mobile store that provided both sustenance and articles of trade for those engaged in enlarging the boundaries of the colony.<sup>136</sup> As the settlement in the Zuurveld became more established, the opportunity posed by game was superseded by the threat. While wildlife in the Zuurveld was abundant, colonists were happy to take advantage of this, but its disappearance was not viewed in a negative light. Rather, it signalled the termination of the "state of nature" in the Zuurveld.

As the settlement grew the war against predators increased, further exacerbating wildlife decline. There was an increased drive to eradicate these species not usually hunted as "game" and labelled "vermin." Conflict between the colonists and Zuurveld predator species was initiated early on. Their "use" to humans was judged in terms of their nuisance value. Hunting lions in the interior in 1823, the traveller George Thompson lamented the evidence left behind of "game" having "fallen" to lions.<sup>137</sup> Although they threatened his "sport," lions were largely "vermin" because they threatened the livelihood of farmers. To him, farmers hunted lions in "self-defence" - to protect the threat to their property and livelihood.<sup>138</sup> For Black, an assistant surgeon in the British army, leopards were "vermin" because they preyed on sheep. He castigated leopards in spite of the fact that, as he himself admitted, they are the natural enemies of the baboons which play havoc on cultivated land.<sup>139</sup>

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136. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

137. Forbes (ed.), *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, Vol I, p. 52.

138. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

139. Black, *Fish River Bush*, pp. 37-38. See also Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 339.

Some species, like partridges, pheasants<sup>140</sup> and antelope,<sup>141</sup> were only occasionally considered "vermin," when they made inroads into colonial crops and gardens. Such was the case when Thomas Shone described how his son Henry "shot a large Bush buck in his garden, eating his 'cumpers."<sup>142</sup> Those carnivores valued for their skins were enthusiastically killed, because once dead their bodies could be a source of profit. Bertram Bowker recollected "another rather good Tigerhunt [sic]" in which his brother William killed a leopard with an assegai rather than mark its skin with bullets:

...the Tiger often came and took [a sheep] out of the Kraal, one day Father sent for us to try and kill this sheep destroyer...we followed the spoor and soon found him, after a long chase he got into a large hole of water all the dogs were in too, when we came up dogs and Tiger were all rolling about in the water, the Tiger roaring, dogs barking and howling when he got hold of them...William and Holden jumped in, I stood on the bank close by, William was going to shoot but the dogs were always in the way, I heard Holden say to William "don't shoot you will spoil his skin" so William left it to him and he managed to get the assegai into the tiger's mouth down his throat and into his Chest and Killed him without making a hole in his skin....<sup>143</sup>

Those predators and scavengers whose skins were of little value did not escape either: jackals, hyenas and wild dogs, which threatened colonial stock, as well as the smaller predators like civets, were considered to be of no use to humans while they lived. Bertram Bowker remembered how "the wolves were the torment of our lives[;] if a cow or calf was left out of the kraal it was almost sure to be killed by the wolf...".<sup>144</sup> The Xhosa, moreover, valued hyena teeth and were willing to pay well for what the colonists saw as the product of

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140. "I wish he would come and kill some of my Partridges and Pheasants which are annoying me in the Garden." Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Phillips, 1820 Settler*, p. 306.

141. *Ibid.*, p. 186. "We have had our corn eaten down by the teasing Spring Bucks and have been obliged to keep watch all night." Thomas Phillips to Catherine Richardson, c. November 1823.

142. Silva, "The Diaries of Thomas Shone," p. 313.

143. "Diary of B.E. Bowker," Albany SMD 948, p. 47.

144. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

an animal without redeeming qualities. In 1848 Jeremiah Goldswain noted that "A set of th[e] wolf's teeth was in Kaffer Land worth a Cow."<sup>145</sup> Species like the hyena were seen in terms of what they took from humans, rather than what they contributed to the ecosystem in general. Hyenas and other scavengers perform a valuable ecological task, consuming as they do the left over remains of dead animals. "We are certainly thinning obnoxious animals of all kinds..." commented Thomas Philipps on the execution by spring gun of two hyenas, both convicted of preying on his lambs.<sup>146</sup> The ratel, or honey badger, labelled by Philipps "the destroyer of Bee's nests," was killed on sight.<sup>147</sup> Reptiles like iguanas and snakes were also exterminated wherever possible. "I killed every snake I came across," recalled John Montgomery, "and in consequence the young people styled me the wild Irishman."<sup>148</sup>

As more land was claimed for stock and crops, the natural prey of these predators declined, forcing them to encroach further on to colonial property. In 1840, James Collett lost seventy-three sheep and goats to wild dogs.<sup>149</sup> Colonial assaults on the predator population, however, also increased. In 1848 Jeremiah Goldswain began farming sheep at the farm Burnt Kraal just

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145. Long (ed.), *Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol II, p. 96.

146. For further examples of the colonial attitude towards "vermin" see Thomas Philipps to Catherine Richardson, Glendower, 16 July to 19 August 1827, Cory MS 7611, p. 257; Thomas Philipps to Nathaniel Phillips, c. November 1820, Cory MS 14,264, p. 37; *ibid.*, p. 38; Catherine Philipps to ?, 9 August 1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 132; Thomas Philipps to "our dear Nephews and Nieces & Cousins of St Brides Hill," 23 November 1828, Cory MS 7612, p. 53.

147. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 276. See also Gifford (ed.), *Reminiscences of John Montgomery*, p. 64; "Diary of B.E. Bowker," Albany SMD 948, pp. 51-52. The bee population itself has been modified through the introduction of European bees into the South African gene pool. R Smith, "Europeanization of Honey Bees in South Africa," in *American Bee Journal*, 28, May 1988, p. 330.

148. Gifford (ed.), *Reminiscences of John Montgomery*, p. 64.

149. Collett, *A Time to Plant*, p. 72.

outside Grahamstown. Initially, he was disconcerted by the number of predators on his land: "We had not long taken possession when we found that the Wolf and the Jackals was so numours that we deared not to leve out at night not so much as a Cow Ox or Sheep but that it was shure to be Killed."<sup>150</sup> However, when he registered a sheep theft in 1850, the *Graham's Town Journal* asserted that the loss could not be put down to predators because after Goldswain had killed eighteen hyenas and eighty-six jackals on his farm, there were none to be seen in the area.<sup>151</sup> Methods of extermination varied from the use of spring guns, which killed only one animal at a time - although not necessarily the animal for which it was intended - to the use of poison, which killed indiscriminately and caused untold damage to the environment. In 1881, and later, poison was widely used. Arthur Douglass advocated putting poison down on ostrich farms before ostrich chicks hatched to prevent newly hatched chicks from being preyed on.<sup>152</sup> Finding it necessary to guard against leopards, jackals, "wild cats," and lynxes, he added: "the lion is only found so far in the interior now that it need not be remarked upon...".<sup>153</sup> Douglass advised that "the Ostrich-farmer should bear in mind that strychnine used *ad libitum* is one of his best friends."<sup>154</sup> By the 1880's Richard Paver felt that strychnine accounted for the fact that hyenas and jackals were "...now almost extinct in the greater part of South Africa."<sup>155</sup> In 1891 the diary of a Salem farmer, Simon Amm of the farm Lindale, notes the formation of the "Union Poisoning Club" with twenty five farmers as members. Amm himself used strychnine to exterminate the mousebirds that attacked his fruit orchards, killing one hundred and twenty on a single occasion.<sup>156</sup> Within the dominant paradigm of the time, there was little space for the idea of an ecosystem with

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150. Long (ed.), *Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol II, p. 95.

151. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

152. Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, p. 108.

153. *Ibid.*, pp. 186-88.

154. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

155. Duminy with Adcock (eds.), *Reminiscences of Richard Paver*, p. 50. See also Black, *Fish River Bush*, pp. 40-41.

156. Quoted in Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 107.

an ecological niche for every organism, including those which competed with humans. For the colonists, the environment was something they had to pit themselves against, rather than something they were naturally a part of.

In the course of a century, the wildlife population of the Zuurveld was transformed. Colonial hunting methods and, perhaps less obviously, changing patterns of land use dealt a death blow to many species. Even before 1820 the eland and the "true" reedbuck [*Redunca arundinum*<sup>157</sup>] had withdrawn from the region. By the 1850's recorded sightings of rhinoceros, elephant, hippopotamus, warthog, quagga, springbok, red hartebeest, lion and ostrich had come to an end. By 1900 the cheetah, serval, buffalo, wild dog and both brown and spotted hyena could be added to the inventory.<sup>158</sup> The list does not include the smaller and generally less visible species. In addition, many species not exterminated completely had declined dramatically in numbers. These changes can all be linked, directly or indirectly, to the rise of colonialism in the Zuurveld. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the colonists began to congratulate themselves on their accomplishment: the creation of a "tame" environment out of the "savage wilds" of the Zuurveld. Yet there was perhaps an awareness of what they had lost in the process. As an old man, John Montgomery made a final journey to Grahamstown in April 1870 to take part in the 1820 settlement Jubilee celebrations. He "...was shown the museum..." with its stuffed and glassed-in memorials to the Zuurveld's vanished wildlife. Recounting how, in the early years of settlement, his milk cow strayed from the herd and was killed by predators, he observed that "Many of the animals there exhibited [in the museum] I...encountered face to face in the veld."<sup>159</sup>

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157. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 599.

158. *Ibid.*, pp. 893-98.

159. Gifford (ed.), *Reminiscences of John Montgomery*, pp. 167-68.

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## CHAPTER V

### *CONSERVATION AND CONTROL*

Wide-scale environmental transformation took place in the Cape Colony during the nineteenth century. The colonial administration was not oblivious to these ecological changes. Throughout the century successive pieces of legislation augmented earlier Dutch laws in an attempt to curb degradation. Ecological conservation is however as much a product of cultural mindset as a response to ecological degradation. Consequently it is no less a medium of environmental change than the practices it is often designed to restrain. The Zuurveld was moulded by colonial conservationist attitudes just as it was by the introduction of colonial land use methods and hunting techniques. Legislation controlled "game" hunting and encouraged the destruction of "vermin." Accordingly wildlife populations were reshaped. A rising awareness of the need to plant trees led to the introduction of exotic species. The suppression of age-old fire practices meant that forests became susceptible to uncontrolled bush fires. As a result, both the landscape and the content of its vegetation were transformed. Promoting capitalist enterprise, conservation legislation often bolstered the rights of landowners. Simultaneously, it facilitated the reduction of independent Africans to the status of landless labourers. Legal control of the environment added a further dimension to the re-creation of Britain in the Zuurveld and further subjugated it to British control.

A protectionist attitude towards the environment tends to form when a society feels that the environment no longer poses a threat to its survival. Thomas has observed that "As the threat from wild beasts recede[s], so man's right to

eliminate wild creatures from whom he ha[s] nothing to fear [is] increasingly disputed."<sup>1</sup> Different people, however, had different ideas of what constituted a "threat from wild beasts." The hunter and traveller Henry Bryden included lions, tigers, leopards and wolves in his list of "dangerous carnivora" there was no reason to preserve. Under the appellation of "useful, rare, beautiful, and defenceless game," however, he included elephant and rhinoceros.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, a year earlier in his *Official Handbook*, John Noble described the Addo elephants as an irritation that was thankfully fast diminishing.<sup>3</sup> Farmers, and other sectors of the community who confront the environment on a daily basis, are likely to take longer to appreciate that "the threat from wild beasts" is lessening than would legislators who are further removed from it. Thomas's comment explains the ambivalence of many Zuurveld colonists towards conservation legislation. The laws of the Cape Colony prevailed in the Zuurveld after the British appropriated the region from the Xhosa in 1812. The Game Law of 1814<sup>4</sup> was in effect when the colonists arrived in 1820. On their arrival, however, colonists like Thomas Philipps felt they had left behind the restrictions of British wildlife conservation laws. In comparison to Britain, the Zuurveld seemed a hunter's paradise. This was a country where, Philipps enthused, "...the farmer can take his gun and find plenty of amusement with Partridges and Quails without fear of the Lord of the Manor."<sup>5</sup> Bolton maintains that restrictive British game laws meant that when British colonists settled in Australia "...it became a mark of Australia's standing as a democratic

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1. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, p. 287.
  2. H Bryden, *Nature and Sport in South Africa* (London, 1897), p. 281.
  3. Noble, *Official Handbook*, p. 79.
  4. "Proclamation By His Excellency General the Right Honourable Lord Charles Henry Somerset," 23 December 1814, *Proclamations, Advertisements and other Official Notices*, pp. 324-25.
  5. Thomas Philipps to Nathaniel Phillips, Lampeter, c. 1820, Cory MS 14,264, p. 37; Thomas Philipps to Charles Phillips, Lampeter, 22 November 1820, Cory MS 14,264, p. 26.

society that the poorest man had the right to kill as many animals as he liked without interference from the laws or from the power of the rich."<sup>6</sup> Although they had resented being denied access to the land in Britain, the colonists helped perpetuate discriminatory land access when they arrived in the Cape. Appropriation of land for "game reserves" like the Addo Elephant Park meant that African rights to the land were disregarded.<sup>7</sup> As settlement became established however, a concern for the future began to develop. Exactly when this concern superseded the more "predatory" attitude held by the colonists towards the environment is difficult to determine. For the most part, the contrasting perspectives evolved alongside each other. The way that the conservation ethos manifested itself at the Cape during the nineteenth century meant that it often promoted and secured capitalist development. As Grove has noted, "both development and conservation ideas have had substantially similar origins, both deriving from utilitarian concepts of improvement."<sup>8</sup>

In some cases British colonists in the Zuurveld were not blind to the depreciation of wildlife. Neither were they blind to the fact that their lifestyle was behind the depreciation. Thomas Pringle was clearly aware of his fellow humans' predatory tendencies when he observed how "...an

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6. Bolton, *Spoils and Spoilers*, p. 15.

7. See also Kjekshus, who documents how colonists in east Africa set up game reserves without regard for the needs of the human communities in the region. He subsequently refers to wildlife conservation in Africa as another "Europe-centred undertaking." Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development*, pp. 177, 185.

8. R Grove, "Early themes in African conservation: the Cape in the nineteenth century," in Anderson and Grove (eds.), *Conservation in Africa*, p. 36. See also Beinart, who comments that "Links between the ideas of environmental conservation, improvement and development were not new, nor were they specific to South Africa." W Beinart, "Vets, viruses and environmentalism at the Cape," in Griffiths and Robin (eds.), *Ecology and Empire*, p. 87. According to Griffiths, "The science of ecology itself was partly an artefact of empire...". Griffiths, "Ecology and Empire," p. 11.

antelope...stood...gazing at us in innocent amazement, as if yet unacquainted with man, the great destroyer. On this day of peace [Sunday] it was, of course, permitted to depart unmolested."<sup>9</sup> Some colonists related signs of land degradation in the Zuurveld to the introduction of new land use methods. By January 1823 Thomas Philipps was cognisant of changes brought about by the new methods. His reference to a "general rumour" shows that he was not alone in his belief:

Africa has ever been called a dry parched country, and I begin to think that in another century it may become a barren sandy desert. I am led to this conjecture from the general rumour, that the longer a farm is occupied the worse it becomes. The Cattle eat down the grass and this exposes the roots over which the sun has then such power that it ultimately consumes it,...Albany...has never been peopled but by Caffres, and they migrate as the grass gets bad, thus leaving it time to recover.<sup>10</sup>

The damage done by the storms and floods of late 1823 made Philipps acutely aware that his ploughing had made the soil more vulnerable to erosion: "...the only way of saving the remaining soil is not to plough; for a vast proportion of what we have turned up, has, with the manure, been washed away to the kloofs, and from thence conveyed to the ocean."<sup>11</sup>

As the colonists began to understand their new surroundings, they began to feel less threatened by them. They were more easily able to appreciate the part various creatures had to play in the ecosystem. Philipps notes how he felt "...a compulsion when I kill some [snakes] which are reported harmless, for by diminishing them we are the cause of increase of rats...".<sup>12</sup> The traveller Adulphe Delegorgue echoed the attitude when he noted with approval the 500

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9. Pringle, *Narrative*, p. 38.

10. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 161.

11. "Mr Philips [sic] to a Friend in Cape Town," Lampeter, 15 October 1823, in Pringle, *Present State of the Settlers*, p. 62.

12. Thomas Philipps to Fanny Harries, Lampeter, 30 September 1822, Cory MS 14,264, p. 146.

rix dollar fine in force for killing secretary birds. Secretary birds, he felt, were "good" because they killed reptiles.<sup>13</sup> In January 1860 Tiyo Soga disapprovingly recounted the Xhosa custom of drowning black cranes to bring rain. Apart from his religious reasons for decrying traditional customs, Soga felt that the cranes were "very useful and inoffensive."<sup>14</sup> Rising awareness of the need for conservation in the Zuurveld seems to have been restricted to people like Philipps, Delegorgue and Soga, whose occupations were respectively gentleman farmer, traveller and missionary. Their understanding of the environment was arguably more impartial because they did not have to struggle against it. As both a hunter and a natural scientist, Adulphe Delegorgue understood some of the reasons behind restrictions on hunting. In May 1839, he commented on how species like the hippopotamus and the ostrich were given protection because "...they were considered to contribute to the natural beauty of the Colony...". He emphasised that this was in spite of the damage hippopotami and ostriches caused to crops and noted that "To protect [them] is, in a way, to sacrifice the useful to the decorative."<sup>15</sup> In 1848 Jeremiah Goldswain was concerned about the effects that the strychnine he put down for jackals and hyenas was having on other wildlife: "We are always forst to lay the [strychnine pills] down after night or elce the birds would carrey them away and eate them: we often found the birds of pray lying dad if we are not up verey erley in th morning."<sup>16</sup> On the whole, however, conservation

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13. Webb (ed.), *Adulphe Delegorgue's Travels*, p. 43.

14. Williams (ed.), *Writings of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, pp. 24, 55.

15. Webb (ed.), *Adulphe Delegorgue's Travels*, p. 43.

16. Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol II, p. 97. Writing in 1896, Wallace was aware of both the decrease in vultures due to inadvertent poisoning and the resultant gap in the ecosystem: "The practice [of poisoning] is credited to a large extent with the reduction in recent years of the numbers of *aasvogels* (vultures), the great carrion scavengers of the country. This has upset the *balance of nature* to some extent by increasing the number of blue-bottle flies, the maggots of which now do the scavenger work. Had the climate been humid, these flies, which also lay their eggs or larvae

concerns seem to have had little direct bearing on colonists like Goldswain. Thomas Stubbs, for instance, emphasised the need for bounties to be paid for killing "vermin" due to "The country being overrun with wild beasts."<sup>17</sup> Early legislation protecting trees in the vicinity of Cape Town led to people who needed wood moving further afield in search of it. Pressure on the Cape forests was diverted, rather than terminated.<sup>18</sup> Legislation can only be expected to protect the environment once society becomes aware of the reasoning behind it and accepts that while it will benefit them, its benefits will only become evident in the long term.

Adding great impetus to the rise of a "new sensibility" were concerns that environmental degradation would retard commercial growth. Overstocking caused concern when signs of pasture degradation began to develop. Questions were raised about the lack of sufficient pasture, the overabundance of vegetation avoided by stock, and the scarcity of the vegetation they favoured.<sup>19</sup> "Mr Hellier," a Grahamstown farmer, noted that since he had stopped wool farming and begun ostrich farming, the lack of sheep on his land meant that "...the veldt [had] very much improved...".<sup>20</sup> Farmers began to understand the economic implications of environmental decline. In 1881 Douglass listed the causes and results of overstocking. He warned that ostrich farming could become problematic, particularly because ostriches

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on the wool of living sheep when moist, and give rise to the destructive and troublesome pest known as 'fly-blowing' or maggots, might have proved disastrous, but as it is this danger is confined mainly to the humid districts of the east coast and to a few centres in the Eastern Province." Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, p. 338.

17. Maxwell and McGeogh (eds.), *Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, p. 71.
18. Grove, *Green Imperialism*, p. 143.
19. McKee, *South African Sheep and Wool*, pp. 297-300.
20. Quoted in de Mosenthal and Harting, *Ostriches and Ostrich Farming*, p. 212.

tended to feed on one species of plant at a time, eradicating one species before they switched to feeding on another one.<sup>21</sup> Stock disease placed a major constraint on stock expansion. When advanced medical treatments became available in the early decades of the twentieth century, one of the last barriers to unrestricted stock expansion was breached.<sup>22</sup>

Degradation stemming from the colonial impact on the Cape environment stimulated the development of legislation intended to counteract it.<sup>23</sup> Conservation as it emerged in the nineteenth century should not be confused with a yearning for the environment of the past. Neither should it be viewed as a desire to return to a "state of nature." Preservationism in its true sense was never a concern of most colonists or the colonial authorities. The purpose of conservation legislation extended beyond stocking "game" reserves and maintaining "pristine" wilderness areas for the benefit of future generations. Conservation served various functions. For the British colonists its function was largely economic - in the sense that it protected or controlled resources in a manner that would promote economic development. Such legislation tended to result in elements within the environment being viewed according to their economic worth. Grove argues against the hypothesis that colonialism impacted negatively on the environment. He agrees that there may be superficial links between "ideologically 'imperialist' attitudes" and environmental impact. He contends, however, that these links did not result in "a purely destructive environmental imperialism." He takes the view that early conservation legislation in the colonial context facilitated the foundation of a more holistic conservation ethos.<sup>24</sup>

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21. Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, pp. 21-22.

22. Beinart, "Vets, viruses and environmentalism at the Cape," p. 99.

23. Grove, "Early themes in African conservation," p. 21.

24. Grove, *Green Imperialism*, pp. 6-7.

The British were not the first to influence environmental change in the Cape through land management, nor were they the first to initiate conservation practices designed to curtail the changes. The Dutch issued the first written conservation legislation in the Cape after their arrival in 1652. Before this, African societies too had ways of regulating their interaction with the environment. Lichtenstein notes that the Xhosa respected the life-giving importance of rivers. Capital punishment was meted out to those caught relieving themselves in rivers.<sup>25</sup> Conservation legislation was initiated by the Dutch during the governorship of Jan Van Riebeeck as early as the mid-1600's. Almost immediately the Dutch administration made an effort to protect the Cape settlement's vegetation and wildlife in what Grove refers to as a "highly regulated approach to land management."<sup>26</sup> Legislation protected some wildlife species and encouraged the elimination of others. It also controlled the use of forests and water resources. An important reason for establishing a settlement at the Cape was to provide a station where east-bound ships could take on fresh water supplies. Thus by 1655 "washing above the stream where the ships get their water [was] forbidden."<sup>27</sup> The restriction was reiterated in 1661.<sup>28</sup> In 1676 there was a "Prohibition against rendering the stream from the mountain dirty."<sup>29</sup> In September 1677 the hippopotamus became a protected species.<sup>30</sup> Over the following hundred and

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25. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol I, p. 355.

26. Grove, *Green Imperialism*, p. 133.

27. "Abstracts of Placaats," 10 April 1655, *Statute Law of the Cape of Good Hope, Comprising the Placaats, Proclamations, and Ordinances, enacted before the establishment of the Colonial Parliament and still wholly or in Part in force*, (Cape Town, 1862), p. ii.

28. "Abstracts of Placaats," 6 September 1661, p. vi.

29. *Ibid.*, 22 December 1676, p. xi.

30. *Ibid.*, 27 September 1677, p. xi.

thirty years other "game" species also became protected.<sup>31</sup> Protecting settled land from "vermin" was an early priority. In 1670, seven years before the hippopotamus was first given protection, the "premium on [the] slaughter of lions [was] raised."<sup>32</sup> The Cape administration took steps to curtail the cutting, gathering and selling of firewood.<sup>33</sup> It prohibited the use of the highly valued yellowwood for anything besides planking.<sup>34</sup> Van Riebeeck was aware of the dangers of overstocking the land. In November 1658 he noted in his journal the need for "Change of pasture, which is rendered very necessary by the great number of our cattle, that while we graze at one place, the grass may be somewhat restored in another."<sup>35</sup> Firing the land was restricted.<sup>36</sup> In 1658 the fine for firing grass during the dry season was twenty "reals."<sup>37</sup> By 1687 first offenders escaped with "a severe scourging." Second offenders were "to be punished with the cord until death do follow."<sup>38</sup> Grove argues that Dutch

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31. *Ibid.*, 8 April 1680, p. xii; 27 April 1751, p. xxxi; 25 May 1774, p. xxxiv; 15 July 1800, p. lvii. In April 1680, the ban was widened to include "large game," and mentions the need for shooting licences. *Ibid.*, 8 April 1680, p. xii. In a proclamation of April 1751, the translators use the term "game preservation" for the first time. *Ibid.*, 27 April 1751. In May 1774, a general game law was instituted. *Ibid.*, 25 May 1774, p. xxxiv. This was renewed in July 1800. *Ibid.*, 15 July 1800, p. lvii.
32. *Ibid.*, 24 June 1670, p. xi.
33. See for example "Abstracts of Placaats," 2 October 1658, p. iv; 8 October 1659, p. v; 30 July 1667, p. viii; 8 April 1680, p. xii and 2 January 1687, p. xv. In October 1658, freemen were forbidden to sell firewood to lime/brickburners or foreigners without notifying the authorities. Cutting wood at the Bush River was prohibited. *Ibid.*, 2 October 1658, p. iv. Placaaten regulating woodcutting were released on 8 October 1659, p. v; 30 July 1667, p. viii; 3 July 1671, p. ix; 10 July 1676, p. xi; 8 April 1680, p. xii and so it continued. In January 1687, it was prohibited to cut firewood without a licence. *Ibid.*, 2 January 1687, p. xv.
34. *Ibid.*, 12 October 1658, p. iv.
35. "Journal of Jan Van Riebeeck," 30 November 1658, in Moodie, *The Record*, Part I, p. 151.
36. See for example "Abstracts of Placaats," 8 April 1680, p. xii.
37. *Ibid.*, 19 November 1658, p. iv.
38. *Ibid.*, 19 February 1687, p. xv.

forestry legislation was motivated by a very real awareness of the colony's shortage of wood, and the negative economic consequences of further forest decline.<sup>39</sup> He demonstrates that interest in protecting forest resources at the Cape may have been prompted by an awareness of the deforestation taking place in Mauritius during the same time.<sup>40</sup> Forestry legislation decreased noticeably in the early eighteenth century, possibly because further forests were discovered near the Riviersonderend.<sup>41</sup> In addition, the Dutch East India Company was able to obtain quantities of timber from Java.<sup>42</sup> Even before the British took control of the Cape, then, protection of the environment was subject to the vagaries of the economy.

Manipulation of the Cape environment intensified under British rule because the British introduced a full-scale capitalist economy in the Cape. In 1812, the Zuurveld was exposed to the impact of the new economy. Dutch legislation was influenced by materialism, an influence which intensified with the commencement of British rule. The nineteenth century saw an acceleration of attempts to develop the Zuurveld along capitalist lines. Legislation protecting the environment from degradation also increased. For example, conservation concerns regarding fire and overgrazing stemmed from the threat they posed to development.<sup>43</sup> The colonial context made it possible for the convictions of the metropolitan authorities to be disseminated worldwide on an unprecedented scale.<sup>44</sup> The environment was affected by these ideas when

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39. Grove, *Green Imperialism*, pp. 133-45.

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 139-40.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

43. Beinart, "Vets, viruses and environmentalism at the Cape," p. 88.

44. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, pp. 22-23. Grove argues, for instance, that many educated Scots found employment in colonial administrations, making their ideas "disproportionately significant." Grove, "Scotland in South Africa,"

conservation legislation was enforced. Much of the legislation protected the interests of the white landowning class - ensuring that commercial development continued. At the same time, the legislation reinforced the marginalisation of the lower classes - ensuring the formation of a wage labour pool, and helping to re-create the classist society of "home."

Protecting the Cape's dwindling wildlife population became a matter of deep concern. Hunting as a sporting activity rather than a means of survival predominated amongst those in a position to take steps to ensure wildlife conservation.<sup>45</sup> According to MacKenzie:

An imperial and largely masculine elite attempted to reserve for itself access to hunting, adopted and transformed the concept of the Hunt as a ritual of prestige and dominance, and set about the separation of the human and animal worlds to promote 'preservation' (later 'conservation') as a continuing justification of its monopoly.<sup>46</sup>

As a result, animals considered good "sport" or good for hunting were protected by early nineteenth century game laws at the Cape. These species had to be protected from both human and animal predators; protection of "game" added a further dimension to the drive to eradicate "vermin" species. Recounting a confrontation between two bushbuck and a pack of wild dogs, Bertram Bowker's sympathy was clearly with the antelope although he was a passionate hunter: "...I have seen two [bushbuck] rams helping each other against a lot of wild dogs. When we came the dogs ran away and the rams were saved I think the dogs would have got the best of it had we not come their hindrance and saved the bucks."<sup>47</sup> Early wildlife conservation laws did not reinforce the ecological laws of natural selection. As MacKenzie points

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p. 139.

45. W Beinart, Introduction to "Conservation ideologies in Africa," in Anderson and Grove (eds.), *Conservation in Africa*, p. 16.

46. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, pp. 22-23.

47. "Diary of B.E. Bowker," Albany SMD 948, p. 44.

out, "The first phase of the new movement was to be game preservation for sport rather than true conservation."<sup>48</sup>

MacKenzie states that "the first major piece of colonial legislation on game was Lord Charles Somerset's proclamation of 12 July 1822 in the Cape Colony."<sup>49</sup> This proclamation was actually more of a reiteration and perhaps an enlargement of Somerset's proclamation of 23 December 1814. The 1814 proclamation noted that an earlier prohibition on hunting "game" without a licence had been rescinded in April 1801 because "the great quantity of Game which in those times was found in every part of the Settlement, and the scanty population thereof, rendered such restrictions for a time unnecessary." The 1814 proclamation observed that "great abuse has been made of the indulgence." There were fears that this "abuse" threatened to "exterminate all Game of every description from the Settlement." According to MacKenzie, it was the 1822 proclamation that "introduced the notion of a closed season."<sup>50</sup> The 1814 proclamation, however, refers to recognised open and closed seasons. It does not use the term "closed season," but it reinstates the need for an annual licence to be granted for all hunting taking place between 1 December and 30 June each year - the dates which later commenced and concluded the open season. There was to be no hunting between 1 July and 30 November - later to be called the closed season. The custom of hunting on a Sunday was banned as "a most immoral and profligate practice." In 1824, however, Thomas Pringle noted - with due disgust - the Dutch custom of hunting on Sunday, so this injunction cannot have been strictly enforced.<sup>51</sup> The wildlife defined as "game" were "Hares, Zebras, Partridges, Pheasants,

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48. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

49. As MacKenzie's footnote asserts, the real date of the proclamation was 21 March 1822. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

50. *Ibid.*

51. Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence*, p. 43.

Koorhaan, Pauws, Ostriches, and the whole Antelope species."<sup>52</sup> These "game" species bear a resemblance to the "game" birds and deer hunted for "sport" in Britain. In February 1815 it was announced that this prohibition did not extend to Field-Cornets.<sup>53</sup> In December 1816 (prior to what MacKenzie sees as the first mention of this in the 1822 proclamation) the law was amended to enable proprietors and occupiers of cultivated land to protect their land from "game" that threatened it.<sup>54</sup> Cultural mindset played a distinct role in shaping legislation: protecting cultivated land was prioritised, as were the rights of the landowning elite. Certain animals only were to be protected.

The legal status of both "game" and "vermin" fluctuated throughout the nineteenth century. These two categories, designed by humans, are closely interlinked. A species classed as "game" could become "vermin" the moment it reasserted itself in the wrong place. Ratifications made to the 1822 Game Law illustrate how conservation legislation changed with the attitudes of the moment. The law had stated that the elephant, hippopotamus and bontebok could not be killed at any time without a special licence issued by the governor.<sup>55</sup> The bontebok had been protected since 1818, when it was proclaimed that "the Licence for Game does, on no account, authorise the destruction of the species of Deer called *Bontebok*, found in the District of Swellendam; as these Animals are so scarce His Excellency entirely forbids their being destroyed."<sup>56</sup> Elephants lost their protected status in August 1822.

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52. "Proclamation by His Excellency General the Right Honourable Lord Charles Somerset," 23 December 1816, *Proclamations, Advertisements, and other Official Notices*, pp. 323-24.

53. "Government Advertisement," 17 February 1815, *Ibid.*, p. 331.

54. "Proclamation by His Excellency General the Right Honourable Lord Charles Henry Somerset," 13 December 1816, *Ibid.*, p. 375.

55. "Proclamation by His Excellency General the Right Honourable Lord Charles Somerset," 21 March 1822, *Ibid.*, p. 547.

56. "Government Advertisement," 20 November 1818, *Ibid.*, p. 431.

It was protested that a large herd were threatening the existence of their human neighbours in the Under Bosjesman's River division.<sup>57</sup> These elephants were in all likelihood the ancestors of the Addo elephants which only just escaped extermination for the same reasons a century later.

The December 1816 proclamation ended the payment of rewards for the extermination of all "noxious animals," apart from "the Mousehound, Hawk, and Wild Cat." This was because the money being paid out for this was exceeding the treasury's budget for it in the various districts of the Colony.<sup>58</sup> Somerset's Game proclamation of 1822 was more of a ratification of the preceding proclamations than an entirely new piece of legislation. A noticeable amendment, however, was that the "tiger" and wild dog were added to the list of "noxious animals." The bounty of 25 rix dollars paid for dead "tigers" was reduced in the "Frontier Districts," however, in April 1823. The "considerable numbers" of leopard in these areas meant that again the treasuries were unable to keep up. The bounty was reduced to 10 rix dollars.<sup>59</sup> By November of the same year the districts of Worcester and Swellendam had also reduced the bounty for leopards.<sup>60</sup> In March 1828 bounties "for the destruction of noxious animals, of any kind or description" were abolished. No reason was given except that the bounties were "deemed unnecessary."<sup>61</sup>

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57. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, p. 203; "Amendment of Game Law - Elephants," 23 August 1822, in Jackson (ed.), *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope*, Vol I, p. 66.

58. "Ordinance for abolishing the Rewards heretofore payable for the Destruction of noxious Animals," in Jackson (ed.), *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope*, Vol I, p. 375.

59. "Proclamation By His Excellency General the Right Honourable Lord Charles Henry Somerset," 4 April 1823, *Proclamations, Advertisements, and other Official Notices*, p. 599.

60. "Proclamation By His Excellency General the Right Honourable Lord Charles Henry Somerset," 21 November 1823, *Ibid.*, p. 633.

61. "Ordinance for abolishing the Rewards heretofore payable for the Destruction of noxious Animals," 31 March 1828, in Jackson (ed.), *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope*, Vol I, pp. 126-27.

The legislation encouraging the destruction of "vermin" through the payment of rewards was abolished in 1828,<sup>62</sup> but the attitude of farmers towards the species they perceived as a threat to their stock remained unchanged. In 1881 the prominent Grahamstown ostrich farmer Arthur Douglass remarked acidly: "A thousand years ago the then civilised world was enlightened enough to offer large rewards for the destruction of carnivora and even sixty years ago we did so at the Cape, but the ordinance has been allowed to fall into abeyance."<sup>63</sup>

The early "game" laws were not added to in any significant way until the Act for the Better Preservation of Game was passed in July 1886. This act protected a growing list of species. Singled out were guinea-fowl, grouse, dikkop, "cameloperd" [giraffe], quagga, Burchell zebra, and rabbit "not being coneys." Species given special protection in 1822 - eland, hippopotamus and bontebok - once again included elephant. Landowners and occupiers were, however, exempt from the law with regard to elephants on their property. They could also shoot buffalo, "koodoo", hartebeest, blesbok, gemsbok, reitbok, zebra, quagga, Burchell zebra and "any gnu or wildebeest of either variety." As MacKenzie points out, it is ironic that by the time the quagga gained this protection it was already extinct. While no person was allowed to hunt on private property without the permission of the owner, they could not be prosecuted for doing so "unless notice and warning shall have been given either personally or by letter, or in the *Gazette*, or in a local newspaper by the owner that he is desirous to preserve the game thereon."<sup>64</sup>

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62. "Ordinance for abolishing the rewards heretofore payable for the Destruction of noxious Animals," 31 March 1828, in *Ibid.*, pp. 126-27.

63. Douglass, *Ostrich Farming in South Africa*, p. 186.

64. "Game Law Ammendment Act," 6 July 1886, Jackson (ed.), *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope*, Vol II, pp. 2419-23.

While the Dutch laws might not have been enforced in this far-flung outpost, the creation of Grahamstown and other administrative centres gradually brought law enforcement to the region. Long points out that even in the 1830's and 1840's, the Zuurveld was still very much a frontier and conservation laws were difficult to administer.<sup>65</sup> Travelling in the vicinity of the Little Fish River in 1823, Thomas Philipps noted that "our Sportsmen overtook us with 2½ brace of Partridges, which they ventured to kill altho' the season expired on the 1st Inst."<sup>66</sup> Despite this, some measure of enforcement must have taken place. In December 1822 Thomas Philipps complained about the need to "pay a 16s licence" to shoot and trap "the numerous Hares, Bucks etc" that encroached upon his cultivated lands.<sup>67</sup> In May 1840 the "Distributer of Stamps for the District of Albany" issued Major Charles Jasper Selwyn with a licence "to shoot and kill game during the season commencing 1st December 1839 and ending 30th June 1840."<sup>68</sup> Even when laws were ostensibly in force, however, they were always open to manipulation. Bertram Bowker described prodigious hunting in the Ceded Territory even though it was illegal:

...we could always get leave to go there to shoot from the Landrost as we were his particular friends...we used to go with a waggon and stay three weeks and bring back Dried Meat, Skins, Ivory, Sea Cow skins for Sjamboks and Ostrich feathers... . I recollect one day seeing about fifty Elephants in the water all rolling and splashing, it was a sight well worth seeing...we shot nine that day... . We had to hide the Ivory & Sjamboks and Feathers as we had no licence to shoot Elephants Cows [hippopotami] or Ostriches.<sup>69</sup>

The Game Law Amendment Act of 1899 made provisions for the

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65. Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol II, p. 10 n. 34.

66. Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps, 1820 Settler*, p. 190.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

68. "Albany Specimen SM 5525," quoted in Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 947.

69. "Diary of B.E. Bowker," Albany SMD 948, p. 46.

establishment of "game preserves."<sup>70</sup> The concept of an area set apart from human occupation is an ancient one, which can be traced as far back as the Achaemenid Persians.<sup>71</sup> MacKenzie sees several strategies underlying the concept:

The idea of separating productive human settlement from areas demarcated for the use of animals and the pursuit of the hunt was admittedly an ancient one. By this technique a ruling elite could draw its revenue and human following from one while exhibiting its prestige, securing its recreation and symbolically establishing its authority over the natural world in the other.<sup>72</sup>

Sparrman briefly commented on the concept of a "game" reserve. In December 1775 he observed that springbok should be tamed and kept where they could be protected from lions for the benefit of "mankind."<sup>73</sup> The concept had scarcely changed when provisions were made for the establishment of the first "game" reserves in South Africa over a century later. The earliest "game" sanctuaries were protected places where threatened wildlife populations could regenerate. A survey of nineteenth century "game" legislation at the Cape indicates the steps in the development of "game" conservation. In part the first British laws consolidated various laws already in operation. By the end of the century the idea of "game" reserves had been introduced. MacKenzie emphasises the degree of separation that took place between human and animal habitations. Separation increased as the century progressed.<sup>74</sup> "Game" reserves have played an important role in saving endangered flora and fauna. Nonetheless the "game" reserve represents the final move towards the ultimate segregation of humans from the environment - the conclusive step in the alienation of nature from culture. The idea of creating spaces free from

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70. "Game Laws Amendment Act," 20 October 1899, Jackson (ed.), *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope*, pp. 4153-54.

71. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, p. 20.

72. *Ibid.*

73. Forbes (ed.), *Anders Sparrman*, Vol II, p. 72.

74. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, p. 201.

human interference, as with the modern-day "wildlife reserve," is coming under critical discussion. The idea behind the "wildlife reserve" has been to create spaces showing the landscape as it was prior to human - usually colonial - intervention. The idea becomes problematic when viewed in the light of present theories surrounding the precolonial environmental impact. Although wildlife reserves are often seen as slices of "true wilderness," they are very much a human construction.<sup>75</sup> There are few places on earth which have not been exposed to some degree of human manipulation.<sup>76</sup> Consequently, the state of any region prior to any human-engineered environmental change is difficult to ascertain and subject to much conjecture. This thesis has attempted to show that the idea of the Zuurveld landscape being pristine prior to the arrival of the colonists is more myth than reality. Moreover, a wildlife reserve is an artificial construction, whose barriers - even though they are there for protection - restrict the movement of wildlife. The same boundaries have led in some cases to a state of protection so successful that population management is practised. Humans are accordingly responsible for the dynamics of the reserve. Isolating the natural world from humans evocatively demonstrates how humans have come to view themselves as observers of rather than participants in the environment. Protecting one area from degradation often places pressure on another area.<sup>77</sup> In the eastern Cape, people in general and Africans in particular were forced out of "white" areas and land demarcated as nature reserves. As a result, human pressure on the

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75. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 72.

76. Simmons, *Environmental History*, p. 121.

77. Referring to the situation in the Kilombero region of Tanzania between 1920 and 1940, Monson notes that "The overall function of forest regulation has been to concentrate deforestation activities in the Kilombero, leading to soil erosion and land degradation in the valley flood plain, because forest reserves and other set-aside strategies have increased the level of timber exploitation in non-regulated areas. J Monson, "Canoe-Building under Colonialism: forestry and food policies in the Inner Kilombero Valley 1920-40," in Maddox, Giblin and Kimambo (eds.), *Custodians of the Land*, p. 210.

environment became concentrated in the erstwhile "homelands" of the Ciskei and Transkei.

The establishment of game reserves in the eastern Cape was a final step towards the colonial re-creation of Britain. True wilderness had long been relegated to the furthest reaches of Britain. The Cumbrian Lake District and the Scottish Highlands came to be greatly appreciated during the Victorian era, but their landscapes were the product of long-term human manipulation. True wilderness had no place within a "civilised" settlement. The colonial administration established conservation laws that became more comprehensive as the century progressed. Many of these practices, however, remained alien to the experience of the settlers who actually worked the land. For them, the fight to control the wilderness and its wildlife - and subsequently the legislation that sought to guard against this - continued. In May 1889, farmers gathering for a hunt on Simon Amm's farm Lindale, near Salem, were met by police officers inspecting hunting licences. "Great indignation caused [sic]" wrote Amm in his diary.<sup>78</sup> Henry Amm, Simon Amm's son, recalled that the police only just saved themselves from being assaulted by the angry farmers.<sup>79</sup>

In 1907 Sim reflected on the Cape Colony's history of forestry legislation:

The Colony of the Cape of Good Hope has during many centuries suffered, and it still continues to suffer, climatically as well as economically, through the absence of a fair proportion of forest-covered surface.

In both these respects the position went from bad to worse during

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78. Quoted in Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, p. 947.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 947. Personal communication between Skead and Henry Amm, 18 April 1977.

the first three-quarters of the past century, mostly through the malign influence of man, and it is only in recent years, and more particularly since the passing of the Forest Act (1888), that a serious endeavour, on scientific lines, to maintain and improve the quality of the Crown forests has been made, or even become possible.<sup>80</sup>

In retrospect, however, it is possible to argue that Sim's "serious endeavour...to maintain and improve the quality" of vegetation at the Cape, was as responsible for changing the vegetation content as the earlier "malign influence of man." Corresponding with the move to protect existing forests, was the move towards planting more trees. In addition to the established argument for the replenishment of timber supplies, the Cape Botanist, John Croumbie Brown, maintained that the more trees there were, the moister the climate became.<sup>81</sup> He favoured the planting of indigenous South African trees, but argued that it was preferable to plant exotic species to nothing at all. He highlighted the advantages of importing Australian trees, particularly eucalyptus.<sup>82</sup> While Brown's theories had a number of supporters, in some instances they did not meet with approval. "Mr Tuck," superintendent of the Grahamstown Botanical Gardens devised a plan to plant exotic trees around Somerset East and in 1847 "Mr Smith" wanted to forest the outskirts of Grahamstown, but these schemes subsided through lack of interest.<sup>83</sup> In some sectors within the Zuurveld settlement interest in the commercial value of exotics was already high. By 1832 the newly formed Agricultural Society was already discussing how best to get information on "valuable exotics...found under the same degree of latitude" and how they could "be most readily

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80. Sim, *Forests and Forest Flora*, p. v.

81. Croumbie Brown, *Management of Crown Forests*, p. 109.

82. R Grove, "Scottish Missionaries, Evangelical Discourses and the Origins of Conservation Thinking in Southern Africa 1820-1900," in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15 (2), January 1989, p. 184; Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 41; Croumbie Brown, *Management of Crown Forests*, p. 121.

83. Croumbie Brown, *Management of Crown Forests*, pp. 89-113.

introduced."<sup>84</sup> Exotic trees like oaks were already flourishing in towns like Grahamstown. In 1854 Geraldine Armstrong commented on the "many trees, Oaks and Kaffir bushes in front of the houses."<sup>85</sup> John Montgomery recalled that oak trees were planted in the Grahamstown market square in April 1870 as part of the 1820 settlement jubilee celebrations.<sup>86</sup> In 1876 the first of a series of laws was passed to enable divisional councils, as well as municipal and town council commissioners to put some of their finances towards "the planting of trees and the formation of plantations." Up to half of the money so spent, so long as it did not exceed 250 pounds sterling, would be refunded by the government.<sup>87</sup> Even by 1890, however, there were still feelings that the Zuurveld was not maximising its potential so far as planting exotics was concerned. The editorial of the *Graham's Town Journal* reflected a strong opinion on the matter: "It is a shameful neglect of the advantages which Providence has placed within our reach, that we make no attempt to clothe our own hills with marketable timber."<sup>88</sup> Since the need for trees in the Zuurveld and its surrounds resulted in the planting of exotic species rather than the nursing of indigenous stands, however, this resulted in further environmental damage. In the Port Elizabeth area towards the end of the nineteenth century, exotic species, including Port Jackson willow, pine, black wattle, blue gum and *rooikrantz* were planted on drifting sand dunes to stabilise them and allow the

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84. *Graham's Town Journal*, 6 December 1832.

85. Matthew (ed.), "Armstrong Diary," p. 49.

86. Gifford (ed.), *The Reminiscences of John Montgomery*, p. 169.

87. "Act to Encourage the Planting and Cultivation of Trees," 1 July 1876, in Jackson (ed.), *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope*, Vol I, pp. 1400-1401. The Municipal Act of 1882 enabled municipal councils to regulate the "planting and preserving trees and shrubs." "The Municipal Act," Section 109, 30 June 1882, *ibid.*, Vol II, p. 1948. The Divisional Councils Act of 1889 gave Divisional Councils the same powers. "The Divisional Councils Act," Part 1 of Subdivision ix, 16 August 1889, *ibid.*, Vol II, p. 2781. Act 26 of 1889 gave "Village Boards of Management, authority...to plant and cultivate Trees." "Villages Tree Planting Act," 13 August 1889, *ibid.*, Vol II, pp. 2675-76.

88. *Graham's Town Journal*, 23 January 1890.

area to be developed.<sup>89</sup> At the time, Wallace reported that

Some of the older inhabitants in Port Elizabeth remember when there was no drift sand at the place where the reclamation work is going on, and a hundred years ago the whole area was a dense bush. The sand area, which began in the west, spread eastward owing to the bakers and lime-burners, soon after the middle of this century, cutting the bush for firewood, and leaving the surface unprotected.<sup>90</sup>

The exotic species are now being removed at great effort as part of the Working for Water project. The exotic vegetation has contributed to the erosion of the beaches, has affected "biodiversity" of vegetation, and increased the risk of fires because the alien species are not fire resistant. These aliens also require large amounts of water, thus having an adverse effect on the water table.<sup>91</sup> If trees do not grow naturally in an area, this is in all probability because the ecosystem cannot support them.

Present day conservation theory dictates that if one plant species predominates in a grazing area, the danger is that without competition it may take over the area. In the past farmers were concerned if this situation developed. Their concern, however, was focused on the prevalence of an economically "useless" species: "the mere fact of stock not touching these bushes shows that they are weeds of the worst description that should be ruthlessly extirpated."<sup>92</sup> Like "vermin," plants that barred the way to productivity had little place in the colonised Zuurveld landscape.

During the nineteenth century declining wildlife populations and degraded vegetation made it apparent that utilisation of the environment in some areas

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89. Wallace, *Farming Industries of Cape Colony*, pp. 69-73.

90. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

91. *Eastern Province Herald*, 12 February 1998.

92. McKee, *South African Sheep and Wool*, pp. 298-99.

at least had to be curbed. The colonists viewed the dispossessed Khoena and Xhosa as competitors for what they saw as diminishing resources. African hunting for trade and sustenance, for instance, threatened colonial "sporting" and property interests. Jeremiah Goldswain has left a detailed description of African trapping that roused the ire of the colonists on whose land it was carried out:

...a nother thing is that the farmer complains off is the Kaffers catchen and Killing all the Game off of the farmers farmes most purticler the Bucks. I have seen thear traps set. They Kaffers cut and disstroy all the young Mimosa Bush wich they make thear hedge with them and leaves openings in the hedge for thear spring traps to be set in and I have seen theas hedges from one to two Miles Long and if you say aney thing to them for douing it they tell you that they Bucks &c. belongs to them as well as the farmer. I was riding over my farme quit late in the eveing and saw a hedge maid on my farm: I went down to it the next morning and found a hedge maid more then a quarter of a Mile Long and all the traps set. The traps consist of a long stick made fast in the Ground one end: the other end is bent doun all most to the Ground with a string about two yards Long made of the bark of the tree caled the Kanar boonb [Kannabos]. The string is laid in a smale cirkle on the ground and as the buck treads in the cirkle and tuches the shorts sticks wich is sat in the circle covered over with grass and [the] buck is shoure to be caught by the frunt lag. I tuck all the strings and disstroyd the fence; thear ware about twenty traps.<sup>93</sup>

In the 1830's and 1840's, Goldswain and other colonists were called up to patrol the Zuurveld. Africans were squatting on government and private land and part of the duty of the patrols was to control African access to the region. Destroying African "game" traps was one way of restricting their independence. Goldswain alluded to extensive African trapping during this period. In one area he patrolled, Africans "...had got thear traps set in all parts of the farm and on all Government lands near to it."<sup>94</sup> Near another homestead the patrol found "...agreate meney trap strings which we had orders to take

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93. Long (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain*, Vol II, p. 10.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

them away."<sup>95</sup> Goldswain noted that Africans "...wold never ingage to work for aney one but wold come into the Colney from Kaffer Land and scuat themselves down jest ware they thought proper."<sup>96</sup> Curbing African access to the environment meant that it could be put to "better" use by colonists. Before the colonists were able to make "better" use of the environment, they had to be able to command a large supply of labour. The conservation legislation established during the nineteenth century helped to curb Africans' free access to the environment. Consequently it played a significant role in forcing Africans to become wage labourers. Maclennan refers to Khoena being prevented from hunting and woodcutting activities in order to force them into wage labour.<sup>97</sup>

Limiting African access to the environment, however, had to be justified. Rationalisation assumed a variety of forms. The colonists rationalised African exclusion from hunting on the grounds that hunting was a bad influence. To many colonists, Africans who hunted were "idle." To kill for food [Africans] and for trade [Dutch] was "less civilized."<sup>98</sup> For Thomas Pringle, the "coloured" people of his acquaintance were "too much addicted to hunting and other idle habits of semi-civilised men...".<sup>99</sup> It was thought that they would be better off undertaking more "industrious" work - labouring for the colonists. Conversely, Africans felt that hunting merely for sport was "wasteful, and snaring was an appropriate sustainable utilization of a natural resource."<sup>100</sup> The idea that African hunting methods were cruel and wasteful reinforced the move towards restricting hunting to all but elite Europeans. Lichtenstein repeated reports of

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95. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

96. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

97. Maclennan, *Proper Degree of Terror*, p. 152.

98. Carruthers, "Nationhood and National Parks," p. 127.

99. Pringle, *Narrative*, p. 110.

100. Carruthers, "Nationhood and National Parks," p. 129.

the waste incurred through "force-hunting." Although the Xhosa were hunting for skins, so many animals were killed that many skins went unused. Lichtenstein expressed his disapproval of the practice. In his opinion, the method was depriving colonists of meat.<sup>101</sup>

Lichtenstein's objections to African hunting methods were later echoed by colonists in the Zuurveld. Colonists saw a great disparity between their own and African hunting. Writing "home" in February 1821, Edward Philipps gave a detailed account of his hunting exploits. He commented on how "...the birds lie very close and afford excellent sport...[and]... Rabbits lie under the rocks and stones, but with a good spaniel you may kill numbers in a day." He enjoyed his hunting immensely, going on to describe his Cape clothes, made from the skins of oribi and jackal. He viewed African hunting in a different light: "The Caffres...destroy great quantities of game with their kerries." "Destroy" attaches a negative connotation to African hunting that is entirely absent from Philipps' description of his own hunting exploits. The implication is that the Xhosa were wasting the wildlife that could be hunted productively by the colonists.<sup>102</sup> Anders Sparrman was one European traveller who reported how he refrained from shooting two buffalo he came upon because he was in no need of meat. He went on to rail against hunters who "merely for the pleasure of shooting, are guilty of wasting the treasures of nature in the most unjustifiable manner."<sup>103</sup> That Sparrman saw fit to point out his restraint, however, emphasises that hunting in moderation was not typical.

According to Beinart and Coates African societies were condemned from all angles. They were castigated for failing to make full use of their

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101. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, Vol I, pp. 284-85.

102. Edward Philipps to William Harries, Lampeter, 11 February 1821, Cory MS 14,264, pp. 60-62.

103. Forbes (ed.), *Anders Sparrman*, Vol II, p. 60.

environmental resources because they were not settled cultivators. When they did utilise wildlife resources, they were accused of using barbaric hunting methods.<sup>104</sup> As Carruthers points out, "much remains to be uncovered about pre-colonial use of the wild fauna of Southern Africa." She goes on to maintain that "From the outset, however, despite the abundance of fauna which they found in the African interior, people from Europe blamed Africans for ruthless extermination."<sup>105</sup> Nonetheless, despite the long period of African control, the wildlife population only began a dramatic decline once colonial influence was established in the Zuurveld.

Early conservation at the Cape was closely linked to African marginalisation. Similar instances of marginalisation can be traced back to medieval Europe, when hunting parks/forests were demarcated at the ruler's pleasure regardless of the material needs of the inhabitants of the area.<sup>106</sup> Schama constructs a picture of the English medieval forest as "a vigorous working society" with much human activity, compared to the Norman idea of a forest in which hunting was carried out only by nobility. The concept of restricted forest access, brought into Britain by the Normans after 1066, was met with disapproval from those of the lower ranks accustomed to utilising forest products.<sup>107</sup> Restricted access to the environment was no less prevalent in Britain towards the beginning of the nineteenth century. At this time, as previously mentioned, working class sports involving animals were discouraged. No such discouragement hampered the growth of what were considered the more genteel, if no less bloodthirsty, pursuits of the upper

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104. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 20.

105. Carruthers, "Nationhood and National Parks," p. 127.

106. Schama does conclude, however, that much of the evidence for conjecture is buried in myth. Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, pp. 139-40.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

classes.<sup>108</sup>

Increasing bodies of legislation were instituted to deny Africans access to resources. In 1814 Somerset introduced a law ostensibly aimed at preventing people from firing the underbrush in the woods around Cape Town. The vegetation was fired in order to dry and acquire firewood more quickly. Concerns about fire threatening future fuel supplies were compounded, however, by concerns that the sale of firewood would give fugitives and their accomplices the means to support themselves. Consequently, "all Coolies, Free-blacks, Hottentots, Slaves, or others" were prohibited from "cut[ting] any Firewood whatever upon the Public Wastes." Selling illicitly procured firewood in Cape Town was also outlawed, closing what was for some the gateway to a small measure of self-sufficiency.<sup>109</sup> The Game Law of 1822 precluded slaves from hunting and only allowed "Hottentots and other servants" to hunt for their employers on their employers land. To further this end, only "farmers and other free persons" were allowed to hunt for meat while travelling, and then only outside certain areas. In addition, hunting "by Net, Snare, Spring, or other Engine" was prohibited. This ban targeted Africans and poorer Europeans. No restrictions were placed on "Hunting with Hounds ... conducted by Hunting Clubs" - the sport of the colonial landed elite.<sup>110</sup> In 1839 Adulphe Delegorgue noted how easy it was for the elite to obtain a hunting licence: "Provided that one gives acceptable reasons to the government - that one is a naturalist or an explorer for example - a licence is rarely refused."<sup>111</sup>

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108. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, pp. 185-86.

109. "Proclamation by his Excellency General the Right Honourable Lord Charles Henry Somerset," 23 December 1814, *Proclamations, Advertisements, and other Official Notices*, pp. 322-23.

110. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, p. 203; "Proclamation by His Excellency General the Right Honourable Lord Charles Somerset," 21 March 1822, *Proclamations, Advertisements, and other Official Notices*, pp. 546-48.

111. Webb (ed.), *Adulphe Delegorgue's Travels*, p. 43.

Colonists had long thought that African utilisation of natural resources like honey was wasteful. In 1829 Thomas Philipps commented on the need to begin beekeeping because in the wild "...the Hottentots diminish [the bees'] number...".<sup>112</sup> In October 1869 both wild and domesticated bees became protected. Only landowners could exploit hives on their property.<sup>113</sup> In 1877 de Mosenthal and Harting blamed the Cape's reduced ostrich population on the African and Dutch practice of robbing ostrich nests.<sup>114</sup>

John Croumbie Brown convinced the Cape administration to prohibit veld burning after a catastrophic drought in 1862 showed the need for more extensive conservation measures.<sup>115</sup> The attitude of the colonial administrators towards firing the land impacted on both African society and the Zuurveld environment. This attitude is reflected in the 1883 report of the Conservator of Forests for the then British Kaffraria, DE Hutchins. African hunting parties and game drives in the Amatola forests were outlawed. The prohibition brought an end to the fires that accompanied African hunting and preserved the forest wildlife and vegetation. The Hutchins report notes, however, that when Africans were allowed to hunt in the Amatola forests, the forests tended not to be susceptible to wide scale fires. The small fires lit by African hunters burnt the dry underbrush and left little fuel for naturally-caused fires.<sup>116</sup> African hunting methods that included the lighting of small fires were therefore beneficial because they prevented the outbreak of extensive and far more damaging fires. By restricting this African hunting method, the colonial

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112. Thomas Philipps to Robert Harries, Glendower, 1 July 1829, Cory MS 7612, p. 87.

113. "Act for the Better Protection of Bees," 18 October 1869, Jackson (ed.), *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope*, Vol I, pp. 1128-129.

114. De Mosenthal and Harting, *Ostriches and Ostrich Farming*, pp. 239-41.

115. Grove, *Green Imperialism*, p. 468.

116. Report of DE Hutchins, Conservator of Forests, British Kaffraria, 1883, quoted in Croumbie Brown, *Management of Crown Forests*, p. 299.

administration was contributing to the outbreak of the damaging fires they were attempting to avert. Environmental scientists now concede that small fires are beneficial for the very reason that they consume dry wood and vegetation that would otherwise fuel larger fires. What is more some plant types require fire for propagation.<sup>117</sup>

The marginalisation of Africans through conservation needs to be considered in context. The Cape colonial administration was not alone in instituting conservation measures regardless of the way these would affect the landless. Conservation measures have often been unpopular with the people they directly affect. When Formosa [now Taiwan] was under Chinese rule, capital punishment was instituted for the felling of certain types of tree.<sup>118</sup> In the Cape however, the wealthy landowning class were excluded from many of the conservation laws. In the sphere of hunting in particular, an elitist hunting code served to exclude Africans, so that by 1900 African hunters had become poachers.<sup>119</sup> While these laws may have been instituted as conservation measures, this factor did not in any way detract from their other purpose: the prevention of Africans from escaping the wage labour market by remaining self sufficient through the sale of wildlife and forest products.

Alongside the nineteenth century colonial drive towards commercial development of the landscape, arose a concern for the environment. This concern can, however, be viewed as another aspect of the re-creation of Britain. Conservationist sensibilities - and therefore conservation legislation -

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117. Personal communication with Dr Tony Palmer, Albany Museum, Grahamstown, 3 February 1998.

118. Grove, *Green Imperialism*, p. 62 n. 115.

119. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, pp. 298-300.

reflected the conservation concerns prioritised by the British. The pattern of conservation legislation was specifically moulded by the ideologies and priorities of the British colonial elite. As a result the environment was no less shaped by a concern for conservation than it was by a concern for development. Conservation interests, however, came second to the commercial interests of colonial farmers and property owners. No conservation legislation was allowed to impede development. If conservation was not implemented specifically to further development interests, the latter were always put before those of conservation. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the elephant herd at Addo was one of the Cape Colony's two remaining herds. Between 1919 and 1920, the Addo elephants were almost completely exterminated. Out of a herd of some one hundred elephants, all but about sixteen were eradicated. Although elephants were protected as "Royal Game," the herd was destroyed because its presence threatened the Sundays River Development Project. In the same way, in 1948 the National Party deproclaimed the two-year-old Dongola Wild Life Sanctuary because of a conflict of interests between conservation and "white landowning interests."<sup>120</sup>

Conservation legislation can be enforced once wild nature is no longer a threat to human life or property. When this stage was reached in the Zuurveld, it meant that the colonists had reshaped the environment to the point where it was no longer a threat to them. This point paralleled the stage in Britain when people began to appreciate the aesthetic appeal of wild nature as opposed to cultivated land. The Cape legislation was, however, introduced by a colonial administration which had little intimacy with the land. For most of the nineteenth century, the colonists of the Zuurveld were still struggling with the wilderness in their day to day lives. During this period, they still viewed the

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120. Carruthers, "Nationhood and National Parks," pp. 130-31.

environment in terms of the threat it presented. By the early 1900's, Thomas's "new sensibility" had reached the Cape Colony to the extent that colonists had become enthusiastic about the conservation of species that presented no threats to them. Those that were still a threat, however, did not elicit public sympathy. Sympathy among the colonial public could be roused on behalf of birds and dogs, but not wild animals like elephants. This sensibility can be linked to the creation of a series of cruelty to animals acts. As well as protecting domesticated animals, the legislation provided a degree of protection for wild animals, but only if they were captured.<sup>121</sup>

Conservation legislation as it was enacted in the Cape Colony during the nineteenth century also contributed to environmental change in the Zuurveld. Moreover, conservation legislation was used not only to control the environment. Colonists and the colonial administration used legislative control over the environment as a means of restricting African access to it. In doing so, they further entrenched themselves and the colonial way of life in the Zuurveld. When the early Cape conservation laws are placed within an historical context their modifying effect on the environment becomes clear. All human actions touching on environmental utilisation have a bearing on environmental transformation. This factor needs to be considered when modern environmental legislation is proposed. Introducing protection for one species, or in one area, will simply divert pressure to another species or another area. To effectively re-integrate the spheres of nature and culture - to re-incorporate humans and environment - environmental legislation needs to take the wider ramifications of environmental control into consideration.

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121. "Cruelty to Animals Act," 17 August 1888, Jackson (ed.), *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope*, Vol II, p. 2573; "Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act," 9 July 1895, *ibid.*, Vol III, pp. 3451-52; "Cruelty to Animals Act," 11 June 1897, *ibid.*, Vol III, p. 3705.

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## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CONCLUSION**

The Zuurveld environment has experienced a lengthy history of human control. Over the centuries, hunters, herders, Xhosa and Dutch communities all succeeded in transforming the landscape to a certain degree. Most active in bringing about human-engineered landscape change, however, were the British colonists who arrived in the Zuurveld in the nineteenth century. The cultural mindset of the British colonists shaped their perceptions of the Zuurveld landscape. Unlike Africans, the colonists viewed the Zuurveld as an untamed wilderness that needed to be "civilized." In order to make the Zuurveld less alien and more familiar, every attempt was made to reproduce there the norms and institutions of Britain - to re-create "home." This required manipulation of the environment. The ensuing environmental impact was profound and has continued to affect the Zuurveld to the present day.

Hunters, herders and Xhosa actively reshaped the Zuurveld landscape. They fired the land and hunted the wildlife. Their herds of domestic animals diversified the Zuurveld fauna and disturbed the vegetation. Introduced crops diversified the vegetation content. During the nineteenth century this environmental change began to accelerate - primarily as a result of the increased demand placed on the land by the British colonists who settled there. The colonial attitude towards land use meant that more pressure was placed on the Zuurveld than ever before. Indigenous wildlife and vegetation decline was part of the transformation of the environment. In precolonial times, the Zuurveld supported a wealth of wildlife. Flourishing populations of elephant, ostrich, quagga and the like vanished from the region within decades

of the colonists' arrival. Some, like the quagga, became extinct.

As indigenous flora and fauna declined, exotic species were introduced to take their place. The introduction of these exotic species has left an indelible mark on the landscape. Wattle, eucalyptus, prickly pear and other cacti - to name only a few plant species - are now firmly entrenched in the region. Herds of domesticated animals expanded. Increased grazing meant that pastures became overgrazed and plant life not favoured by stock flourished.

The economic model imported by the colonists contributed significantly to the modification of the environment. The basis of the colonial economy was capitalism. The cornerstone of any capitalist economy is private property, a notion relatively alien to the precolonial inhabitants of the Zuurveld. For generations, Khoena and Xhosa used the region for seasonal grazing. Stock were moved regularly. Colonial land use methods changed this seasonal pattern. Private parcels of land were allocated to the colonists. Once commercial stock farming began in earnest, the Zuurveld pastures became permanent grazing grounds. As settlement advanced, threats to commercial enterprise in the form of remaining indigenous flora and fauna were systematically eradicated.

Conservation concerns emerging in response to growing environmental degradation also helped to remould the Zuurveld landscape. An urge to protect and increase vegetation meant the introduction of more exotic vegetation species. By classifying certain wildlife species as "game" and others as "vermin," colonial legislation shaped the fauna populations of the Zuurveld: some species were preserved, others were exterminated. Conservation legislation simultaneously protected the interests of the colonial landed elite and restricted African access to the Zuurveld environment. The way in which conservation legislation upheld and reinforced a discriminatory

*status quo* has had a significant bearing on present attitudes towards environmentalism. Conservation was forced on the majority of the eastern Cape population. Today many South Africans feel that environmentalism seeks to place the interests of plants, trees and animals above those of people. There is a need for the environmental movement to emphasise its shift away from the discriminatory colonial practices which it has until recently tended to uphold. The call for environmental reform must be considered together with the call for social justice.

Duplicating the system in Britain, the Zuurveld region had by 1900 been divided into plots of privately owned, fenced-in land. Wildlife had diminished, and in some cases been completely exterminated. The elite landed class employed the landless as labourers and monopolised land control. In many instances the 1820 colonial ideal of re-creating Britain in the Zuurveld was not realised. The colonists did, however, introduce a capitalist economy. They also prioritised settlement, combining new methods of land use with the establishment of discriminatory forms of conservation legislation. With hindsight, it is possible to argue that the environment underwent a significant degree of remodelling along British lines.

In the past human activities impacted on the environment in what can now be seen as a sometimes negative manner. Constructive use can, however, be made of past errors. The lessons of the past can be invoked as a means of managing the future. As Rolls has put it, "the future must incorporate the past."<sup>1</sup> Much controversy has arisen over the degree to which introduced species, such as exotic plants, should be removed from the landscape.<sup>2</sup> Questions of this nature need careful consideration, because the line between

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1. Rolls, "Nature of Australia," p. 45.

2. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 42.

the states of "before" and "after" are often indistinct. Much of what is accepted as the "typical" vegetation of Britain is actually introduced. Only some five of the tree species contributing to Britain's "green and pleasant land" are in fact indigenous to the British Isles. Many of the exotic species were introduced many centuries ago and for this reason are now considered indigenous. In the eastern Cape the cannabis or marijuana plant (*Cannabis sativa*) has been invoked as the eastern Cape crop of the future, set to take over as the "environmentally friendly" alternative to exotic species like the pine. Its long-established presence in the eastern Cape does not, however, make it indigenous. Africans had already introduced cannabis to the eastern Cape from other parts of Africa before the colonial era.<sup>3</sup> Lowenthal has pointed out that the "worship of biological purity," whether in relation to flora, fauna or people, is not only impossible but also not necessarily positive.<sup>4</sup> The "exotics controversy" can perhaps be resolved if Lowenthal's point is considered in conjunction with an awareness of the potential problems that may arise from the impulsive introduction of exotic flora and fauna species.

Evidence suggests that attitudes towards the Zuurveld wildlife are changing.<sup>5</sup> The Zuurveld's abundant population of leopards plagued colonial stockkeepers during the nineteenth century. By the second half of the twentieth century, only a smattering of leopard sightings were being recorded.<sup>6</sup> In 1997 however, a male leopard was glimpsed in the Kowie Bush. To ensure its survival, a fund for farmers was established, allowing farmers to claim compensation for any

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3. Jacot Guillarmod, "Exotic Plant Invasion," p. 89.
  4. D Lowenthal, "Empires and ecologies: reflections on environmental history," in Griffiths and Robin (eds.), *Ecology and Empire*, p. 235.
  5. The change is, however, slow. Forced to weigh their chances of economic success against the environment, some farmers still refer to jackals and lynxes which prey on their stock as "vermin." *Sunday Times* (South Africa), 30 November 1997.
  6. Skead, *Historical Mammal Incidence*, Vol II, pp. 169-172.

depredations made by the leopard on their stock.<sup>7</sup>

Environmental history throws light on present ecological problems. As South Africa considers her incorporation into the global economy, it is essential to consider the need for environmental policy reform. The impact of colonialism on the Zuurveld environment has been marked. Land use and land ownership patterns emphasise the extent to which the current Zuurveld environment is a product of the British colonial mindset. To understand the historical links between societies and their environments is to appreciate the degree to which culture influences environmental change. Present economic development strategies need to be evaluated accordingly: decisions made today have the potential to impact significantly on the environment of tomorrow.

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7. *Grocott's Mail*, 20 May 1997.

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