

## **ESEH Notepad**

## **Introduction by the President of ESEH**

The European Society for Environmental History (ESEH) has members in every part of the world speaking roughly 20 different languages. Many of our members are organised in regional groups, especially those located in Europe. These include, for example, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Britain and Ireland, France and the German-speaking countries. At the 2011 biannual meeting in Turku four new European regions (or rather countries, with distinct languages) – Croatia, Greece, Poland and Serbia – and two non-European regions – Australasia and South Africa – were added to the ESEH. While environmental historians in the individual regions often know each other well and meet regularly, other members of the ESEH are barely aware of academic developments elsewhere. In the case of South Africa – even though it is mostly South Africans who write about South Africa – there are both scholarly networks and themes, including colonialism, that connect South Africa and its scholars with Europe and also with the rest of Africa, and indeed the emerging world: dimensions that requires further investigation.

In this notepad the first and newly elected regional representative for South Africa, Sandra Swart, introduces us to some recent work that South African environmental historians working on southern African themes are doing, as well as providing context from older relevant literature. Sandra Swart received her PhD from Oxford University in 2001 while simultaneously obtaining an MS in environmental change and management. Swart is a professor of history at Stellenbosch University who works on social and environmental topics; she serves currently as Vice-President of the Southern African Historical Society. As Swart indicates, the group of formally named 'environmental historians' in southern Africa is small, and thus it is pleasing to see that both Sandra and, before her Jane Carruthers, a past-president of the SAHS and currently President of ICEHO, are contributors to the disciplinary organisational structures in their region and beyond.

CHRISTOF MAUCH

# **Environmental History in South Africa**

It is a truth ruefully acknowledged that one could put all the historians of South Africa who specifically refer to themselves as 'environmental historians' into a station wagon. <sup>1</sup> Internationally, with mounting momentum, historical interest

Many consider it merely one of various research interests or simply one of their professional 'hats'.

in environmental issues has found expression in the publication of numerous dedicated environmental history monographs, collections and journals, and in the founding of regional environmental history societies.<sup>2</sup> While much of this activity is not yet true of South – or even southern Africa, nevertheless, as this report will show, a number of scholars are engaging actively with environmental themes and imbuing historical studies with vitality and interest

As a disciplinarily discrete and self-designated trajectory within the corpus of South African history writing, 'environmental history' is of fairly recent provenance. But, although studies self-labelled as 'environmental history' have appeared only in the past two or three decades, the birth happened almost three generations ago through historical geography and frontier studies,<sup>3</sup> and the themes have matured into historiographical adulthood. Environmental history, or history that incorporates environmental themes, has addressed the reciprocal influences of a mutable nature and a shifting society, exposing reductionist ideas about environmental determinism, and using the environment as a lens through which to view the power dynamics of human society. Thoughtful, thorough historiographical discussions have been made – indeed, one was published in this journal in 2004 that paid tribute to the role of Environment and History in the development of southern African and African environmental history<sup>4</sup> – but new up-to-date literature surveys are needed. Good syntheses do exist (although updated ones and ones from various perspectives are necessitated), but are often constrained by the borders of the nation-state. 6 This is a characteristic of South African historiography generally and one not limited to environmental history.

R. White, 'American environmental history: the development of a new historical field', *Pacific Historical Review* 54, 3, 1985, pp. 297-335.

<sup>3.</sup> For example, the role of nature was incorporated by P. J. van der Merwe in his Afrikaans *Trekboer* trilogy in the 1930s.

J. Carruthers, 'Africa: Histories, ecologies and societies', Environment and History 10, 4 (2004): 379–406.

<sup>5.</sup> See the forthcoming Blackwell publication *A Companion to Global Environmental History*, which contains a chapter on 'Environmental history in Africa'.

For historiographical overviews – and bold attempts to transgress national borders – see W. 6. Beinart, 'African history and environmental history', African Affairs 99 (2000); W. Beinart and J. Macgregor, 'Introduction', Social History and African Environments (Oxford: James Currey, 2003); Karen Brown, 'Trees, forests and communities: some historiographical approaches to environmental history on Africa', Area 35, 4 (2003): 343-356; Jane Carruthers, 'Environmental history in southern Africa: An overview' in S. Dovers, R. Edgecombe and B. Guest (eds.), South Africa's Environmental History (Cape Town and Athens: David Philip and Ohio University Press, 2003), pp. 3-15. For assessments more focused on South Africa itself, see Dawn Nell, 'An historiographical overview of environmental history in South Africa', History Compass 2, 1 (2005); P. Steyn, 'A greener past? An assessment of South African environmental historiography', New Contree 46 (1999): 7–27 and Albert Grundlingh, Christopher Saunders, Sandra Swart and Howard Philips, 'Environment, heritage, resistance and health: newer historiographical directions', in Robert Ross, Anne Mager and Bill Nasson (eds.), The Cambridge History Of South Africa, 2, (Cambridge University Press, 2011). For an interesting regional account, see Nancy Jacobs, 'Latitudes and longitudes: comparative perspectives on Cape environmental history', Kronos 29 (2003): 7–29.

This is so because, like scholars elsewhere, southern Africans have a strong sense of their own *locatedness* and they are, naturally, deeply rooted in the specific concerns of the region. Sometimes this sensible sense of locatedness becomes a trifle overwhelming and South Africanists are guilty of subscribing too much to the notion of their own exceptionalism. While environmental history can be a useful instrument of liberation from the parochialism of the nation-state, this transnational turn gaining currency in South Africa, with its particular focus on the 'Indian Ocean world' or the 'Atlantic World', has yet to engage fully with the environment. In a welcome development – now many years old, however - Griffiths. Robin and Carruthers initiated comparative work on the interaction with the environment by settler societies in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, while Rajan compared southern Africa and South Asia. <sup>9</sup> There are some historians who work on cross-national themes: Phia Steyn, for example, who is based at the University of Stirling, is currently working on how South Africa 'exported' environmental destruction by way of diseases – to Namibia (mostly Northern), Angola and Mozambique. <sup>10</sup> Another illustration is fresh work that uncovers South Africa's involvement in the Antarctic as environmental history that is not only concerned with the interrelationships between humans and this extreme environment, but also with the negotiation of long-distance power relationships through various proxies, such as oceans, sea-beds and the atmosphere.11

Older works that reflected the role of the environment in shaping the country's social, political and economic history did so using the manifestation of power struggles over land, water and other natural resources. While not specifically 'environmental' in focus, this trajectory is clear in the strong agrarian social history dating to the early 1980s of, among others, Beinart, Keegan, Trapido

N. Lazarus, 'The South African ideology: the myth of exceptionalism, the idea of renaissance', The South Atlantic Quarterly 103, 4 (2004): 607–28.

<sup>8.</sup> For an attempt focusing on animals, see Greg Bankoff and Sandra Swart, *Breeds of Empire: The 'invention' of the horse in the Philippines and Southern Africa, 1500-1950* (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2007). For an intervention drawing different social threads together see Fernando Rosa Riberio, 'Fornicatie and Hoerendom or the Long Shadow of the Portuguese: Connected Histories, Languages, and Gender in the Indian Ocean and Beyond', *Social Dynamics* 33, 2, December 2007.

T. Griffiths and L. Robin (eds.), Ecology and Empire: Environmental History of Settler Societies (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); Ravi Rajan, 'The colonial ecodrama: Resonant themes in the environmental history of southern Africa and South Asia', in Dovers, Edgecombe and Guest (eds.), South Africa's Environmental History, pp. 259–67.

Phia Steyn, pers. comm. For Namibian environmental history see E. Kreike, Re-Creating Eden: Land Use, Environment, and Society in Southern Angola and Northern Namibia (New York: Heinemann, 2004) and Deforestation and Reforestation in Namibia: The Global Consequences of Local Contradictions (Princeton: Brill and Markus Wiener, 2010)

<sup>11.</sup> See Lize Marie (Susanna Maria Elizabeth) van der Watt, 'Out in the Cold: Science and the Environment in South Africa's Involvement in the sub-Antarctic and Antarctic in the Twentieth Century', PhD, March 2012.

and Van Onselen.<sup>12</sup> Environmental history (although often also called agrarian history, rural studies or peasant studies, in this context) has run in tandem with radical social history, because they both offered a corrective perspective that emphasised African agency in the face of European conquest and capitalist exploitation.<sup>13</sup> Beinart emphasised this in his 2000 article in *African Affairs*.<sup>14</sup>

A growing field in southern African environmental history is the conquest, or invasion, by non-native species – animal and plant 'immigrants' that accompanied human settlers, further altering their new environments. This theme is still relatively small but gaining some traction, as work by Middleton, Bennett, Beinart, and Carruthers and Robin attest in the matter of plants. Research that uses animals as a pane into the interpretation of human society has begun by Van Sittert and Swart on the dog in South Africa, Swart on horses in southern Africa, and Jacobs on donkeys. In my own work I try to show evidence of

<sup>12.</sup> W. Beinart, P. Delius and S. Trapido (eds.), Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa 1850–1930 (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986); Timothy Keegan, Rural Transformations in Industrializing South Africa: The Southern Highveld to 1914 (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1986); Charles van Onselen, The Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, A South African Sharecropper 1894–1985 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996).

<sup>13.</sup> Indeed, some historians consciously designate their work 'socio-environmental history' rather than purely 'environmental'. As Jacobs has shown, the socio-environmental approach exposes new aspects of power, and its mobilisation. Nancy Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice A South African History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p. 16. Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice A South African History*; Sandra Swart, 'But where's the bloody horse?' – textuality and corporeality in the 'animal turn', *Journal Of Literary Studies*, 23, 3 (2007).

<sup>14.</sup> W. Beinart, 'African history and environmental history', African Affairs 99 (2000).

<sup>15.</sup> Sandra Swart, *Riding High – Horses, Humans and History in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2010).

<sup>16.</sup> K. Middleton, 'Recreating a biological invasion: Historical memory, local communities and ecologists', Environment and History 18 (2012): 61—95; L. Robin and J. Carruthers, 'National identity and international science: the case of Acacia', Historical Records of Australian Science, 23 (2012): 34–54; J. Carruthers and L. Robin, 'Taxonomic imperialism in the battles for Acacia: Identity and science in South Africa and Australia', Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa 65 (2010): 48–64; B. Bennett, 'Naturalising Australian trees in South Africa: climate, exotics and experimentation', Journal of Southern African Studies 37, 2 (2011): 265–80; B. Bennett, 'The El Dorado of forestry: The Eucalyptus in India, South Africa, and Thailand, 1850–2000', International Review of Social History 55 (2010), special issue S18, pp. 27–50; L. Wotshela and W. Beinart, Prickly Pear: A Social History of a Plant in the Eastern Cape (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2012).

<sup>17.</sup> See Bankoff and Swart, *Breeds of Empire*; Karen Brown, 'Political entomology: the insectile challenge to agricultural development in the Cape Colony 1895–1910', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, 2 (2003): 529–49; Malcolm Draper, 'Going Native? Trout and settling identity in a rainbow nation', *Historia* 48 (2003): 55–94; C. Roche, 'Ornaments of the desert: springbok treks in the Cape. Colony, 1774–1908' (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 2004); and L. Van Sittert and Sandra Swart (eds.), *Canis Familiaris – A Dog History of Southern Africa* (Brill, 2008). Widening the perspective to all Africa is instructive. Just one interesting contribution worth mentioning is B. Gissibl, 'The nature of colonialism: being an elephant in German East Africa', in D. Brandt and C. Mauch (eds.), *Animals in History: Studying the Not-So Human Past* (Köln: German Historical Institute Washington, D.C., 2005).

animal agency within the context of social history's long-time concern with agency in writing the history of the silenced, which accepts that such groups are not passive victims. Yet, rather than make grand claims about 'seeing from their perspective', I think of my own work as simply *animal sensitive history*, which may also be referred to as an aspect of environmental history.

Animal diseases and the development of veterinary science as part of the region's environmental history received attention in the 1990s and early 2000s. <sup>18</sup> Various studies have revealed state veterinary measures and conservation policy as means of oblique, or even overt, colonial control over the environment. <sup>19</sup> Indeed, more generally, there is a large historiography on the state's use of environmental policy, showing how environmental and social control have been intimately linked, with ostensibly neutral 'science' shaped by socio-political agendas. <sup>20</sup> In addition, the myths about unspoiled pre-settler Africa and the hagiographical conservation efforts of whites have been critiqued, and the history of southern Africa's national parks and protected areas has been fairly well recorded. <sup>21</sup> Recently, in contrast to the highly critical approach to state intervention in Africa, Beinart, Brown and Gilfoyle have intriguingly challenged the notion that the colonial state was only malevolent: finding embryonic environmental awareness and developing ecological knowledge of Africa, occasionally taking seriously the vernacular knowledge of Africans. <sup>22</sup>

What environmental history in southern Africa has been able to achieve is to overturn crude declensionist meta-narratives about natural resource misuse

<sup>18.</sup> W. Beinart, 'Vets, viruses and environmentalism at the Cape', in Griffths and Robin (eds.), Ecology and Empire, pp. 87–101; S. Blendulf, 'Rabies in Natal', Natalia 20 (1990): 43–49; S. Brooks, "'Ropes of sand'": soldier-settlers and nagana in Zululand', in A. Jeeves and J. Crush (eds.), White Farms, Black Labour: The State and Agrarian Change in Southern Africa, 1910–1950 (Portmouth, 1997), pp. 243–64; A. de V. Minnaar, 'The locust invasion of Zululand 1933-1937', Natalia 20 (1990): 30–42.

William Beinart, 'The Night of the Jackal: Sheep, pastures and predators in the Cape', *Past and Present* 158 (1998): 172–206; L. van Sittert, 'From mere weeds and bosjes to a Cape floral kingdom: the re-imagining of indigenous flora at the Cape c. 1890–1939', *Kronos* 28 (2002): 102–26; K. Brown, 'Political entomology: the insectile challenge to agricultural development in the Cape Colony, 1895 to 1910', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29 (2003): 529–49.

For an erudite discussion see L. Van Sittert, 'The Supernatural State: water divining and the Cape underground water rush, 1891–1910', *Journal of Social History* 37, 4 (2004): 915–37 and Saul Dubow (ed.), *Science and Society in Southern Africa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Saul Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science Sensibility* and White South Africa 1820–2000 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>21.</sup> J. Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1995); A.E. Cubbin, 'An outline of game legislation in Natal, 1866–1912', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 14, 1992, pp. 37-47; Shirley Brooks, 'Changing Nature: a critical history of the Umfolozi and Hluhluwe game reserves, Zululand, 1887–1947', PhD thesis, Kingston, 2001; Stephen Ellis, 'Of elephants and men: politics and nature conservation in South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20, 1 (1994): 53–69.

William Beinart, Karen Brown and Daniel Gilfoyle, 'Experts and expertise in colonial Africa reconsidered: Science and the interpenetration of knowledge', *African Affairs* 108, (2009): 413–33.

by African communities and to replace them with complex analyses of social and environmental dynamics – researches by Jacobs and Tropp are particularly relevant in this regard.<sup>23</sup> There is also evidence that vigorous African resistance to colonial rule often surfaced at environmental crisis points, although these have not yet been fully explored.<sup>24</sup> Beinart has analysed settler ideas and farming practices, particularly amongst white English-speaking 'progressive' farmers have been analysed,<sup>25</sup> as have efforts by settlers to control the landscape ideologically to assert the 'natural right' to belong.<sup>26</sup> In another exposé of ideology many years ago, Khan shattered the propaganda of a lack of 'conservation ethic' among black societies, while Steyn has reflected on the environmental dimension of African National Congress policy and the Environmental Movement itself.<sup>27</sup> What has been a particular contribution therefore of an environmental dimension to southern African history has been to show how, in the shadow of the Liberation Struggle lay the everyday struggle between Africans and their environments.<sup>28</sup>

It is pleasing to record a recent trend in the collaboration between environmental historians and natural scientists, a particularly rich field in the southern African context. For example, Lize Marie Van der Watt and I collaborated with

Nancy Jacobs, Environment, Power and Injustice: A South African Environmental History (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003): Jacob Tropp, Natures of Colonial Change: Environmental Relations in the Making of the Transkei (Athens, University Press 2006).

<sup>24.</sup> C. Bundy, 'We don't want your rain, we won't dip: popular opposition, collaboration and social control in the anti-dipping movement, 1908–16', in W. Beinart and C. Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa: Politics and Popular Movements in the Transkei and Eastern Cape 1890–1930* (Johannesburg, 1987), pp. 191–221; J. Tropp, 'Displaced people, replaced narratives: forest conflicts and historical perspectives in the Tsolo District, Transkei', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29 (2003): 207–33.

<sup>25.</sup> William Beinart, The Rise of Conservation in South Africa: Settlers, Livestock and the Environment, 1770–1950 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>26.</sup> S. Swart, 'The ant of the white soul: popular natural history, the politics of Afrikaner Identity and the entomological writings of Eugène Marais', in W. Beinart and J. McGregor (eds) Social History and African Environments (Oxford: James Currey; Athens: Ohio University Press; Cape Town: David Phillip, 2003) p. 226.

<sup>27.</sup> F. Khan, 'Rewriting South Africa's conservation history: the role of the Native Farmers' Association', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20, 4 (1994): 499–516; F. Khan, 'Soil wars: the role of the African National Soil Conservation Association in South Africa, 1953-1959', *Environmental History* 2, 4 (1997): 439-459; Phia Steyn, 'Environmental management in South Africa: Twenty years of governmental response to the global challenge', *Historia* 46 (2002): 25–53; Phia Steyn, 'The lingering environmental impact of repressive governance: the environmental legacy of the apartheid-era for the new South Africa', *Globalizations* 2, 3, (2005): 391-403; Phia Steyn, 'Popular environmental struggles in South Africa, 1972–1992', *Historia* 47 (2002): 125–58.

<sup>28.</sup> Maserole Christina Kgari-Masondo, 'A superstitious respect for the soil?' Environmental history, social identity and land ownership – a case study of forced removals from Lady Selborne and their ramifications, c. 1905 to 1977, DPhil, University of Stellenbosch, 2008; Jacklyn Cock and Eddie Koch, Going Green: People, Politics and the Environment in South Africa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

invasion biologists in the Antarctic Legacy Project. Similarly, Simon Pooley is applying historical analysis to conservation science (particularly fire), to find interdisciplinary strategies for managing human-animal conflict. His current research is on the history of the conservation of crocodiles since the mid-twentieth century, which relates to work done by his father as a founder member of the IUCN Crocodile Specialist Group. Likewise, Jane Carruthers combines natural science and the humanities in her research, having joined forces with scientists in a scientific assessment of elephant management in South Africa<sup>29</sup> and in her analysis of the early career in South Africa of a renowned international ecologist.<sup>30</sup> The area of science-environmental history collaboration holds out a good deal of promise for environmental history in the region, creating the possibility of using different disciplinary methods. For example, historians can locate and interpret accounts of environmental change in sources that scientists do not often encounter, while natural scientists may provide a better understanding of the physical processes of these changes. Indeed, I studied a MS in Environmental Change after my doctorate in history for precisely that reason, and environmental historian Kobus Du Pisani has registered for a second PhD in the field of environmental management. One of his research questions is to ask whether it is feasible to accommodate heritage conservation within the broader environmental management regime in South Africa. 31 Clapperton Mavhunga, a Zimbabwean currently at MIT, is a significant participant in the regional environmental history/natural science endeavour, with a number of articles already published and a proposed book on the science of the tsetse fly (and other vectors of disease). Another of his research fields relates to national parks in the region.<sup>32</sup>

I will close this rather long report with a brief survey of a few idiosyncratic and eclectic samples of historians and their recent work on environmental themes in South Africa in order to give a sense of the variation within recent develop-

<sup>29.</sup> R. Scholes and K. Mennell (eds.), Elephant Management: A Scientific Assessment for South Africa (Witwatersand University Press, 2008). Similarly, see C.L. Griffiths, L. van Sittert, P.B. Best, A.C. Brown, P.A. Cook, R.J.M. Crawford, J.H.M. David, B.R., Davies, M.H. Griffiths, K. Hutchings, A. Jerardino, N. Kruger, S. Lamberth, R. Leslie, R. Melville-Smith, R. Tarr and C.D. van der Lingen, 'Impacts of human activities on marine animal life in the Benguela – An historical overview', Oceanography and Marine Biology Annual Review 42 (2005): 303–92.

<sup>30.</sup> J. Carruthers, 'G. Evelyn Hutchinson in South Africa, 1926 to 1928: "An immense part in my intellectual development", *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa* 66, 2 (2011): 87–104. See also, J. Carruthers, 'Trouble in the garden: South African botanical politics ca. 1870–1950', *South African Journal of Botany* 77, 2 (2011): 258–67; and L. Robin and J. Carruthers, 'Introduction: Environmental history and the history of biology' (Review article.) *Journal of the History of Biology* 44, 1 (201): 1–14, a special issue of the journal that they edited.

<sup>31.</sup> Kobus Du Pisani, pers. comm.

<sup>32.</sup> See, for example, C. Mavhunga and M. Spierenburg, 'A finger on the pulse of the fly: Hidden voices of colonial anti-tsetse science on the Rhodesia and Mozambique borderlands', *South African Historical Journal* 58 (2007): 117–141.

ments. Two current projects offer good examples of transnational research: The first is that of Karen Brown and William Beinart, who are writing a book about African views of animal disease and remedies.<sup>33</sup> Another example is provided by Johann Tempelhoff, head of the Research Group for the Cultural Dynamics of Water at North-West University – a transdisiplinary team that focuses on human interactions with the hydrosphere.<sup>34</sup> Elize van Eeden also works in the field of water<sup>35</sup> and theorises a transdisciplinary approach for environmental crisis research in the discipline of history.<sup>36</sup> In terms of the broader region, it is important to note the ongoing work of Muchaparara Musemwa, who is currently exploring water scarcity, the Colonial State and the emergence of a Hydraulic Bureaucracy in Southwestern Matabeleland, within a larger project on drought and climate change in southern Africa.<sup>37</sup>

Nancy Jacobs is completing a book entitled *Birders of Africa: History of a Network*, which describes how birders of different traditions worked together. With Lindy Stiebel as co-editor, Jane Carruthers has published *Thomas Baines: Exploring Tropical Australia, 1855 to 1857*,<sup>38</sup> and her latest research project is a book on the history of the natural sciences in South Africa's national parks over the course of the twentieth century.

William K. Storey, who has published a great deal on the environmental and technological history of South Africa and the Indian Ocean, is working on a biographical study of Cecil John Rhodes that will contextualise Rhodes's racial politics and his involvement in agriculture, mining, railroads and telegraphy.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>33.</sup> Karen Brown, pers. comm.

<sup>34.</sup> J.W.N. Tempelhoff, 'Environmental history and sustainable cultural dynamics', Contree 50 (November 2005): 113–33; J.W.N. Tempelhoff, 'n Historiografiese verkenning van watergeskiedenis', Koers 70,3 (2005): 473–514; J.W.N. Tempelhoff, 'Historical perspectives on pre-colonial irrigation in Southern Africa', African Historical Review 40, 1 (July 2008): 121–60; J. Haarhoff and J.W.N. Tempelhoff, 'Water supply to the Witwatersrand (Gauteng) 1924–2003', Journal for Contemporary History 32, 2 (December 2007): 95–114; T.S. Katko, P.S. Juuti and J. Tempelhoff, 'Water and the city', Environment and History 16, 2 (2010): 229–251

Elize Van Eeden, 'Weaknesses in environmental action in South Africa: A historical glance on the West Rand (Gauteng Province)', *International Journal of Water Resources Development*, 24, 3 (September 2008): 463–75.

Elize Van Eeden, 'Using a transdisciplinary approach for environmental crisis research in history', The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa 6, 1 (July 2010): 191–208.

<sup>37.</sup> The African continent, particularly East Africa, presents a rich literature that is not dealt with here. See, for instance, J.B. Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti: A History of Landscape Memory in Tanzania from Earliest Times to the Present* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007); B. Gissibl, 'The Nature of Colonialism: Hunting, Conservation and the Politics of Wildlife in the German Colonial Empire', PhD, University of Mannheim, 2009.

<sup>38.</sup> National Museum of Australia Press, Canberra, 2012.

William K. Storey, Guns, Race, and Power in Colonial South Africa (Cambridge University Press, 2008) and Science and Power in Colonial Mauritius (University of Rochester Press, 1997)..

Phia Steyn is currently focusing on environmental management in the South African Defence Force between 1977 and 1989, within the global context in terms of the development of environment as a concern for the military forces in developed nations and the environmental historiography of war that is particularly rich in the same areas.<sup>40</sup>

As mentioned above, I recently published *Riding High – Horses, Humans and History in South Africa*, exploring an inter-species relationship between horses and humans, which changed the history of transportation, trade, warfare and agriculture. I am currently working on a book on the social history of the animals closest to humans – genetically (primates), physically (dogs) and imaginatively (the myth of the feral man).

#### CONCLUSION

In terms of journals I would mention two special editions devoted to environmental history in addition to the historiographical outlines mentioned above. 41 It is rewarding to see the work of southern African environmental historians in a wide variety of international journals rather than only in journals targeting southern Africanists specifically. In this regard, *Environment and History* has played, and continues to play, an important role because it is very receptive to research articles about southern Africa and Africa generally. Local regional conferences (held annually by either of the two professional bodies, the Southern African Historical Society or the South African Historical Association) now include environmental panels as a matter of course and many more southern Africanists are to be seen at the conferences of the European Society of Environmental History, the American Society of Environmental History and even the Latin American and Caribbean Society of Environmental History. Post-graduate interest exists, as several new doctoral theses testify, and post-graduate modules at Honours level (fourth year) have been established. 42 Research continues to draw on the

<sup>40.</sup> Phia Steyn, pers. comm.

See Special Issue: African Environments Past and Present, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26 (2000); Special Issue: Environmental History, *Kronos* 29 (2003).

<sup>42.</sup> Some interesting new environmental history-orientated post-graduate theses have appeared recently, and herewith follows a very modest and subjective sample card simply to provide a sense of the heterogeneity of themes. William Beinart at Oxford University has supervised doctorates on wildlife farming; veterinary services and livestock diseases; epizootics in the nineteenth century Cape; colonial environmental sciences in Africa and a cultural history of the Kruger Park http://www.africanstudies.ox.ac.uk/resources/staff\_a-z\_directory/staff-africa/wbeinart, accessed 12 June 2012. Under his supervision, Simon Pooley produced, 'An Environmental History of Fire in South Africa in the Twentieth Century', D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2010. For a publication from it, see 'Recovering the Lost History of Fire in South Africa's Fynbos', *Environmental History* 17, 1 (2012): 55–83. At North West University, supervised by Johann Tempelhoff: V.E. Zangel 'The seething masses': housing, water and sanitation in the lives of Johannesburg's poor, 1886-1906 (MA, History, NWU,

vigorous tradition of social history, to which the usual analytical categories of 'class', 'race' and 'gender' has been added 'environment'.

It is a significant and positive development that some historians of South Africa are part of the global dialogue between environmental historians. However, I would argue that rather than a separate sub-discipline, it could be described as a recent 'turn', in which mainstream historians simply write more environmentally, adopting a more environmentally sensitive approach. Given how few historians there are in southern Africa, let alone those who refer to themselves as 'environmental', it is perhaps unnecessary (even undesirable) to balkanise the field (in institutional terms) further. I confidently expect a gradual broad acceptance of the environment as a subject (and even agent) in history writing more generally. Equally, I hope and predict that environmental historians of South Africa carry on exploring beyond their borders and remain part of a growing international environmental history conversation.

Buckle up!

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<sup>2004);</sup> M. Singer, 'Changing conceptions of South African coal-based pollution, with special reference to the Witbank coalfield, 1906-1978', M.A. University of the Witwatersrand, 2010; E.P. De Crom, 'A narrative interpretation of contemporary nature experiences in Southern African environments' (PhD, History NWU, 2005). At Stellenbosch University, I supervised Maserole Christina Kgari Masondo, "A Superstitious Respect for the Soil?" Environmental History, Social Identity and land ownership – a case study of forced removals from Lady Selborne and their ramifications, c.1905-1977', PhD, March 2008; (with A. Grundlingh) Hendrik Snyders, 'Stinky and smelly – but profitable: the Cape guano trade, c.1843–1910', December 2011; Lize Marie (Susanna Maria Elizabeth) van der Watt, 'Out in the Cold: Science and the Environment in South Africa's Involvement in the sub-Antarctic and Antarctic in the Twentieth Century', PhD, March 2012.