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Jacob S. T. Dlamini. *Safari Nation: A Social History of the Kruger National Park.* New African Histories Series. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2020. Illustrations. 350 pp. $80.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8214-2408-7.

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Environmental History as Intellectual History

Jacob S. T. Dlamini bills his book as a "social history" of the Kruger National Park in South Africa. In doing so, he shortchanges the breadth of the work. He examines the place of Kruger National Park and wildlife conservation in black South African thought. He reviews the history of black communities in and around the park. He includes an overview of black environmental thought both in South Africa and in other parts of the continent. He explores the history of black travel and leisure in twentieth-century South Africa. He reviews the literature on hunting and poaching in and around the park. The work is not a straightforward environmental history of the park. Rather it complements the work of Jane Carruthers's *Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History* (1995) and others by exploring the ways that blacks in South Africa from all the communities under that designation negotiated their relationships in, around, and outside the park under white rule.

Dlamini's first target is the notion that Kruger was exclusively a white playground. He builds on Carruthers's work to show that African communities continued to live in Kruger long after it became a reserved area and of course provided the labor necessary to create the space. Residents, labor migrants, hunters, and workers traversed the park. The park was never just a white space. Whites in South Africa sought to define the park as part of a distinctive part of white nationalism and "modern" blacks sought to claim their place in the park, and hence their right to be part of the nation.

Dlamini divides the book into two sections labeled "Movements" and "Homelands." In the first, he addresses both the labor the park got from residents within and just outside the park and the movement of black migrants through the park. Migrant routes to the mining region of South Africa helped pioneer the roads that would become the infrastructure of tourism in the park. WNLA (Wenela) ran regular migrant convoys from Portuguese East Africa to the Witwatersrand and the park itself eventually used "clandestine" migrants as unpaid labor with migrants working to pay off the fee charged for park entry to both visitors and migrants under Wenela's authority.

A thread on black and white mobility through the park serves as the bridge between the two sections. Dlamini weaves discussions of African environmental thought from across the continent with those of black South African leisure studies and even gun ownership into his analysis of the place of the park in South African history. He emphasizes that people in South Africa's black communities

throughout the twentieth century sought to claim the right to use the park. Asians and Coloureds as well as African leaders and intellectuals, such as Sol Plaatje, Herbert Dhlomo, and John Dube, sought engagement with and travel to the park. Dube, for example, eventually claimed the right to own and use hunting firearms as an "exempted native" in South Africa (p. 99). This he connects to the literature on African hunting and poaching both before and after the transition to majority rule.

Dlamini also examines the historiography and literature on African land claims within and outside the park. He links the politics of African homelands under apartheid with conservation efforts and with ongoing struggles over land claims in South Africa. He uses the concept of insurgent citizenship to connect these struggles with the park as a process in neoliberal South Africa.

He begins the book with a review of African environmental thought that connects both African environmental history with its attempt to deconstruct conservationists' narratives and circles back to Nelson Mandela's use of "ecological citizenship" to create a new, non-racial definition of South African identity. Dlamini contends that Mandela "used nature to assert a common South Africanness." He plays on the irony of Mandela's use of the imported jacaranda trees as part of his assertion of such a citizenship, noting that "the jacaranda tree did not need to be indigenous to serve as one of the symbols of a new South Africa" (p. 241).

Dlamini's themes read more like a work of intellectual rather than social history, illuminating the importance of ideas in the construction of African nationalism in South Africa. This review barely hints at the complexity of the book. He has constructed a powerful and thought-provoking work.

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