

**Custodians of the Cape Peninsula:
A historical and contemporary ethnography of urban conservation
in Cape Town**

by

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Declaration

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ABSTRACT

The official custodian of the Cape Peninsula mountain chain, located at the centre of Cape Town, is the Table Mountain National Park (TMNP). This park is South Africa's only urban open-access park and has been declared a World Heritage Site. This thesis is an anthropological and historical examination of the past and present conservation of the Cape Peninsula. I provide an overview of the relationship between the urban environment and the Cape Peninsula aiming to illustrate the produced character of the mountains and its mediation in power relations. This study of custodianship reveals that protecting and conserving the Cape Peninsula is shaped by the politics of the urban and natural environment as well as by the experience of living in the city. As such, official and unofficial custodianship is informed by class and race differentiations, embedded in the politics of identity, responsive to the local and national political transformations in governance and connected to the urban struggles of the marginalised Capetonians. Furthermore, inherent in the notion of custodianship is the social appropriation of the Cape Peninsula which was shown to produce specific ideological representations of nature.

The thesis presents an ethnographic study of Hangberg, a poor neighbourhood situated at the border of the TMNP. There, the encroachments and poaching within the park boundaries is addressed by focussing on the competing discourses between biodiversity, entitlement and heritage. The engagements between the TMNP, the state and Hangberg on the issues of conservation reveal the distinct complexities of running a national park in a city beset with inequalities. My focus on these engagements also illustrates that the manifestation of 'community' is a construction contingent upon circumstances which reflect a meaningful and political relationship between identity, citizenship and place, rather than a homogeneous group of people.

I conclude with the idea that in attempting to make the park socially and racially equitable, urban conservation ought to begin to recognise its distinct urban character in the larger socio-environmental framework of the city.

OPSOMMING

Die offisiële beskermheer van die Kaapse Skiereiland Bergreeks, geleë in die sentrum van Kaapstad, is die Tafelberg Nasionale Park (TNP). Die park is Suid-Afrika se enigste stedelike en oop-toegangspark en is verklaar as 'n Wêreld Erfenis Gebied. Hierdie tesis is 'n antropologiese en historiese studie van die huidige en geskiedkundige beskerming van die Kaapse Skiereiland. 'n Oorsig van die verhouding tussen die stedelike omgewing en die Kaapse Skiereiland ontbloot die geproduseerde karakter van die bergreeks en die bemiddeling daarvan in magsverhoudinge. 'n Studie van die beskermheerders van die Kaapse Skiereiland toon aan dat die beskerming en bewaring van die bergreeks (of dele daarvan) afhanklik is van die stedelike en nasionale politieke klimaat en die ervaring van 'n stedelike lewe. Sodoende word offisiële en nie-offisiële kuratorskap as klas- en ras-onderskeibaar, ingebed in identiteitspolitiek, verwant aan die plaaslike en nasionale politieke transformasies in die regering, en verbonde aan die stryd van armes in Kaapstad gedefinieer. Verder, inherent aan kuratorskap is die sosiale toe-eiening van die Kaapse Skiereiland wat spesifieke ideologiese voorstellings van die natuur in die stad produseer.

Die tesis bied 'n etnografiese studie van Hangberg aan, 'n arm woonbuurt geleë op die grens van die TNP. Ek bespreek die onwettige behuising en stropery binne die park se grense deur te fokus op die kompeterende diskoerse tussen biodiversiteit, regte en erfenis. Die onderhandelinge tussen die TNP, die staat, en Hangberg in verband met die kwessies rondom bewaring ontbloot die spesifieke kompleksiteit daarvan om 'n nasionale park in 'n stad geteister deur ongelykhede te bestuur. Hierdie fokus illustreer dat 'gemeenskap' manifesteer as 'n konstruksie wat afhanklik is van omstandighede en dui op 'n betekenisvolle en politieke verhouding tussen identiteit, burgerskap en plek, eerder as 'n homogene groep.

Ek sluit af met die idee dat in 'n poging om die TNP meer sosiaal- en ras-inklusief te maak, behoort stedelike bewaring die spesifieke stedelike karakter daarvan te erken in die groter sosialeomgewingsraamwerk van die stad.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- ANC – African National Congress
BEEP – Beyond Environmental Expectations Programme
CBCM – Community-based conservation management
CFR – Cape Floristic Region
CCT –City of Cape Town
CPPNE – Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment
CPNP – Cape Peninsula National Park
CTSDF – Cape Town Spatial Development Framework
DA – Democratic Alliance
DAFF – Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DEAT – Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DEIC – Dutch East India Company
ESNR – Edith Stephens Nature Reserve
GEF – Global Environment Fund
HPMF – Hangberg Peace and Mediation Forum
IY – Imizamo Yetho (or Mandela Park)
KGNP – Kalahari Gemsbok National Park
KNP- Kruger National Park

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation
MCSA – Mountain Club of South Africa
PCAA – Priority Conservation Action Area
PCD – People and Conservation Department
PMF – Peninsula Mountain Forum
PMA – Peace and Mediation Accord
RAHB – Residents Association of Hout Bay
RSA – Republic of South Africa
SANParks – South African National Parks
TMNP – Table Mountain National Park
TGPA – Transvaal Game Protection Association
TRA – Temporary Relocation Area
UE – Urban Edge
UCT – University of Cape Town
UCT MA – University of Cape Town Manuscripts and Archive
US – United States
WFPS – Wild Flowers Protection Society
WSCB – Wildlife Society’s Cape Branch
UWC – University of Western Cape

INTRODUCTION

Most people are familiar with Cape Town's natural features: its mountains and its ocean. This thesis is about Cape Town's mountains, known as the Cape Peninsula Mountain Chain. It develops an ethnographic and historical approach to the conservation of the Cape Peninsula. Geographically the Cape Peninsula refers to the mountain range that forms an approximately 52 kilometre long granite and sandstone spine that runs through the city. These mountains are part of what biologists call the Cape Floristic Region (CFR), a biome exceptionally rich in endemic plant diversity most characteristically represented by the protea family. It is famous for its grand topographical features and, in particular, for Table Mountain, which has become the quintessential icon of Cape Town. In 1998 the Cape Peninsula Mountains became South Africa's first open-access urban national park, named Table Mountain National Park (TMNP, see figure 1).¹ As a result 80% of the mountain chain is now under the protection of the parastatal South African National Parks (SANParks) (Helme & Trinder-Smith 2006: 205). The term 'Cape Peninsula' also encompasses the regions surrounding the mountains in the metropolitan area. For the purposes of this thesis, the Cape Peninsula is defined as the mountain chain that extends from Signal Hill in the north to Cape Point in the south.

In this thesis I engage with the history of urban conservation of the Cape Peninsula by analysing some of the intersecting socio-ecological encounters that helped shape the relationship between the Cape Peninsula and the Cape Town metropole. I continue to explore the complexities of this relationship through an ethnographically-informed perspective. During 2011 and 2012 I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Hangberg, a low-income and poor residential area situated in a coastal suburb called Hout Bay which is situated about 20 kilometres from the economic hub of Cape Town. This residential area, whose cultural landscape is characterized for the most part by Afrikaans-speaking 'coloured' inhabitants, is bordered by the ocean and the mountain range, environments protected by the TMNP.² In the last decade the TMNP has continuously been engaging with Hangberg on issues of illegal fishing practices and housing encroachments. These issues were further complicated when it emerged that Hangberg's claim to the natural environment was more than just a livelihood strategy. The mountains and ocean protected by the TMNP adjacent to Hangberg became sites for expressing belonging, identity and heritage.

¹ The TMNP is of 265 km² in size and is fragmented by urban development and privately owned land.

² Throughout this thesis I employ the terms 'black', 'coloured' and 'white' understood as categories inherited and produced by the colonial and apartheid systems. Their use in my thesis underscores not their objective significance but the resilience of these social classifications in shaping contemporary South Africa.

The Hangberg story speaks to the broader aim of this thesis which is to draw attention to the power relations involved in what seems to be a self-evidential and uncomplicated task, i.e. to protect the Cape Peninsula from biodiversity extinction and preserve its ‘natural’ landscape. Firstly, I provide a critical exploration of the historical relations between the city and the mountain. This reveals that the Cape Peninsula is deeply integrated into the political, cultural and material fabric of the city. This may seem obvious, however, because the mountain chain is under the custodianship of a national park, its connections, contestations, integrations and shared heritage with the city environments and its people are easily obscured. The implication of this oversight is political since the urbanised nature of the Cape Peninsula influences the relation between the mountains and the social environment in which it is embedded.

Secondly, I consider the concept of custodianship as a useful way of thinking through the implications involved when different and multiple claims are made on a particular environment or ‘urban nature’. In defining ‘urban nature’ I am taking my cue from the recent intervention in urban political ecology that emphasises the *produced* character of nature in the city (materially and socially) and its mediation by power relations (Heynen, Kaika & Swyngedouw 2006; Swyngedouw 2009: 603). Gandy writes that ‘[the] production of urban nature not only involves the transformation of capital but simultaneously intersects with the changing role of the state, emerging metropolitan cultures of nature, and wider shifts in the social and political complexion of city life’ (2002: 5). In the broadest sense, I define the notion of custodian as an institution, community or individual assuming the responsibility (official or unofficial) of taking care of the Cape Peninsula or some part of it.

I came to the notion of custodianship of the Cape Peninsula by examining the archival material of Cape Town’s first mountain club. The Mountain Club of South Africa (MCSA) sometimes referred to as the Cape Town Mountain Club, or simply the Mountain Club, was started by a group of white male colonial mountaineering enthusiasts. By the turn of the 20th century, these mountaineers considered themselves the custodians of Table Mountain and championed their rights to what they considered as the ‘playground’ of the city. As I will show in chapter two, this right of access is one of the legacies in the current management of the Cape Peninsula. As was the case more than a 100 years ago, it is believed that citizens should have free access to the mountains for the pleasure of urban recreation. Custodians of the Cape Peninsula are thus also ‘active shapers’ of the conceptual and ideological role of nature in the city (Harris 1997: 133).

I consider both the broader structures *of* the city – such as race, class and the broader political economy – as well as the experience of living *in* the urban environment as informing custodianship. The former involves a focus on the broader historical and political economic context and the economies of

distribution whilst the latter is an emic perspective concerned with how meanings manifest materially and discursively at an everyday level. The social worlds from which custodianship emerge are thus also reflective of the broader circulations of power in the urban environment. This is the theoretical orientation that informs this anthropological study (Choy 2011: 161; Ross 2010: 9).

As I will show in this thesis, custodianship of the Cape Peninsula is not only locally differentiated (race and class) but also vertically (local, national and global). SANParks considers itself the national custodian of South Africa's biodiversity in national parks. Since the TMNP is the only urban national park, its custodianship is central in revealing how and why conservation in the city is urban specific. Custodianship also manifests locally and organically as a form of political action, or as a way of endorsing identities rooted in the politics of belonging to the urban landscape. This kind of custodianship emerged from my research in Hangberg and in the history of urban conservation.

The notion of custodianship of urban nature, as nature integrated into the city, reoccurs at various points throughout the thesis and, viewed collectively, it presupposes a way of thinking about the interfaces and encounters between the city and the mountain and of thinking about urban nature in a fast and yet unevenly developing city. It also allows me to avoid the dualistic forms of thinking prevalent in earlier theory concerned with the relationship between the environment and humans as well as city and nature. This thesis is thus a tentative exploration of the past and present politics embodied in the relationship between the Cape Peninsula and the urban environment in which it has become enmeshed. This enquiry is concerned with illustrating that urban nature is a broader compositional structure produced by humans and nonhumans and that the diversity of this hybrid is often undermined by the distinction between the urban and the natural world.



Figure 1: The Cape Peninsula at a distance. This photograph was taken from the False Bay Nature Reserve. The Cape Peninsula is seen at the back and the Cape Flats is foregrounded where the poorest of Cape Town lives (Source: author's photograph).

Rationale

Probably more than ever, the increasing urbanisation on a planetary scale compels us to reconsider the importance of conserving the remaining green spaces in cities. Green spaces in urban areas have been proven to make particular groups of people happier, to have a cooling effect on the city and to reduce the levels of carbon dioxide in the air (Alcock, Benedict, Depledge, Wheeler & White 2013). Added to this list is the ethical responsibility of protecting the planet and the educational role that green areas can play in biodiversity and conservation (Dearborn & Kark 2010; Ferreira 2012). The Cape Peninsula is also inhabited by plant and animal species found nowhere else in the world. This extraordinary biological richness of the Cape Peninsula – perhaps even the richest in the world in terms of terrestrial endemic diversity in relation to space (Helme & Trinder-Smith 2006) – makes this an important mountain chain to protect.

The Cape Peninsula landscape faces typical urban threats such as air and water pollution, urbanisation, the prevalence of threatening alien-invasive species, climate change, illegal plant harvesting and the poaching of marine and terrestrial animals (Brill 2012; Collins, Hockings, Moll & Petersen 2012; Dorse, Holmes, Rebelo & Wood 2011: 32). Furthermore, '[for] the last two decades it has been recognized that species might move into, or out of, parks and reserves as climate changes' (Bomhard, Hannah, Hughes & Midgley 2005). Yet, the resilience of the Peninsula's biological integrity has also been noted and apparently is 'perhaps somewhat miraculously, some 99%' extant (Cowling, Macdonald & Simmons 1996: 547). This includes the 3250 plant species situated in the higher and smaller terrains, of which '319 are threatened according to the IUCN Red List: this is 18% of the threatened Red List species in South Africa' (Dorse *et al.* 2011: 20).

The exceptional diversity of the Cape Peninsula has been explained as a result of it offering the variation in habitats and the different gradients of landscape which is the right kind of environment to facilitate diversity in plant species (Cowling, Proches & Partridge 2009). Cilliers and Siebert suggest that because Cape Town forms part of the CFR, it had taken the lead in relation to other cities when it comes to planning conservation for urban nature (2005: 33). This applies to the global South as well: the TMNP has become the model for other national parks in developing cities such as the Tijuca National Park in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. However, because of the unique biodiversity status of Cape Town, the emphasis in urban conservation management has been on species extinction and habitat preservation and less on environmental justice issues.

Scholars agree that the success of conservation planning depends on how cities and its people regard urban nature (Dearborn & Kark 2010: 436). Understanding the relation between the city and its people in relation to urban conservation is thus imperative (Ferreira 2012: 277). Such a study can benefit from

ethnographically informed research, since too big a study tends to brush over the complex and subtle (and not so subtle) differences among citizens. An attempt to gauge the degree to which people actually care for the Cape Peninsula in ecological or spiritual terms is, however, not sufficient. Nor is it enough to trace the negative effects of cities on urban nature. Rather, it should also be about developing a perspective that sees humans as being part of socio-ecological urban processes (Gandy 2002; Swyngedouw 2009). These are historically and materially situated and politically mediated by circulations of power and capital (Heynen *et al.* 2006). This means acknowledging the full extent to which the Cape Peninsula is urbanised in the sense that it's past and future predicament is situated relationally with what is going on in the city – politically, economically and socially. Studying urban nature is therefore a crucial reflection on human-nature relationships and, if the city is taken to be humanity's hub of innovation and creativity, it might determine our future on a planetary scale (Sassen 2010: 3).

Furthermore, following Escobar, we also need to be asking 'what nature, and for whom' (1998)? This approach foregrounds the ideological orientation of urban nature: it questions the social discourse around biodiversity protection and situates it within a social justice framework. This is particularly relevant for Cape Town, since one of the most troubling realities of living in this city involves the contrast between the magnificent beauty embodied in the natural features of the city and the impoverished conditions in which most urban citizens live. Indeed, the urban geographer David McDonald '[finds] it impossible to see the natural splendour through the city's social ugliness' (2008: 317).³ Cape Town is one of the most uneven and spatially segregated cities in the world (McDonald 2008). Surrounding the Cape Peninsula are the lush green suburbs of the white and wealthy, whereas the poor black and coloured citizens live in the peripheral areas of the city with little or no green space (Green 2007, See figure 1). These are legacies of class and racial discrimination that also manifest in the social dynamics of the city and fabricate, or contest, the value and purpose of urban nature (Green 2007; Heynen, Perkins & Roy 2006). It is thus important to situate the ideological and cultural framing of an urban national park within a perspective that recognises these legacies (Low, Taplin & Scheld 2005; Ramutsindela 2004). South Africa's progress in transformation is reflected in the progress by which the TMNP becomes a socially and racially inclusive park.

Lastly, in South Africa urban nature is largely an understudied subject, not only in the social sciences but also in the natural sciences (Cilliers, Drewes & Müller 2004; Cilliers & Siebert 2012). There is however a wealth of studies on rural conservation, especially anthropological studies. These ethnographies have tended to focus on the relations between national parks (or protected areas) and rural communities. This

³ The page numbers of this citation do not reflect the hard copy of this book it refers to the Kindle version, see bibliography.

literature brings forth a number of important analyses around power differences, environmental injustices (Adams & Hutton 2007; Anderson & Berglund 2003; Little 1999) and, especially highlight the ways in which ‘natural realms are transformed through and for capital accumulation’ (Büsher, Brockington, Igoe, Neves & Sullivan 2012: 4). While these processes also occur in the city, the point I wish to bring across in this thesis is that it manifests differently. Rural areas are arguably much more enabling environments to make the separation between humans and nature that facilitate the commodification of nature and the eviction of local people (Adams & Hutton 2007). Placed in the urban environment, these processes become more complicated. As Appadurai and Holston argue in the volume on *Cities and Citizenship*, ‘[cities] have always been stages for politics of a different sort than their hinterlands’ (1999: 3).

Studies of urban nature in South African cities have nonetheless recently started to emerge. Olwage’s (2013) ethnographic study illustrates the social power involved in the making of urban natures and also critically explores the ‘situatedness’ of political ecology on the Cape Flats. Ernstson (2011) is interested in the ‘bottom-up’ mobilisations around urban nature that are emerging concomitantly with addressing the injustices of the past amongst people disadvantaged in apartheid Cape Town. Scholars have also paid attention to the recent emphasis on indigenous plants and the war against alien species in urban eco-estates and have analysed it as a condition of the post-apartheid experience in urban centres (Ballard & Jones 2011).

Preliminary investigations on the TMNP were done in 2010 by a research team from the Institute of Political Studies, Paris (Cabera, Chen, Galloway & Noviana 2010). It was led by a member of the UNPEC team (see acknowledgments). The team’s findings were useful in laying out the urban/nature tensions located along the borders of the TMNP. Ferreira’s work on the TMNP involves the tensions and opportunities embedded in the possibility of a symbiotic relationship between the TMNP and Cape Town (2011). Ferreira briefly considers the notion of custodianship in which she stresses the importance of the role of stewardship in sustainable conservation (2011). She also addresses the environmental education value of the TMNP by arguing that ‘spreading’ the environmental message may nurture ‘environmental stewardship among citizens of metropolitan areas bordering urban national parks’ (Ferreira 2012: 252). Fuller’s socio-cultural constructivist reading of Table Mountain also provided information in regards to ways in which the iconic mountain was represented through time (1999). I am indebted to the work of Van Sittert who provided critical reflections on the discourses and meanings of urban nature in the colonial period. His two articles – ‘The bourgeoisie eye aloft’ (2003a) and ‘From ‘mere weeds’ and ‘bosjes’ to the Cape floral Kingdom’ (2002) – guided the historical part of this thesis and also alerted me to the social discourse of nature in the city. To my knowledge, besides Ferreira’s two published articles

on the TMNP, no other study of this kind has been conducted on the Cape Peninsula . I hope that this thesis will stimulate further thought and research on this important subject.

Outside of South Africa, studies on urban nature are more prevalent, especially in regards to urban parks. From this wealth of literature, I have fruitfully engaged with the book *Rethinking urban parks: public space and cultural diversity* (Low, Taplin & Scheld 2005). These authors draw our attention to the subtle strategies that are involved in designing and managing parks that minimise cultural diversity and inclusivity (Low *et al.* 2005). The conclusions of the book are drawn from anthropological research in multiple parks in New York and show that heritage, culture difference, social interaction and access are important nodal points that can widen the cultural diversity in the usage of parks (Low *et al.* 2005). Yet it can also severely limit it, even to the point of fostering racism (Low *et al.* 2005).

A similar argument is made by Byrne whose research on Los Angeles urban parks illustrates ‘*how meanings of nature have ... shaped park planners’ and managers’ conceptions of what parks are, where they should be built, and who they are intended to serve*’ (2012: 598, author’s emphasis). These studies present a shift from the conventional focus on the visitors’ profile, typically adopted in tourism and leisure studies, to a critical reflection on the custodians and designers of parks. The book *In the of nature cities: urban political ecology and the politics of urban metabolism* is also instructive in which urban political ecology is perceived through the notion of metabolic cities that politicises socio-environmental processes (Heynen *et al.* 2006).

Urban versus rural nature

Scholars have illustrated the powerful forms of mythmaking that underpinned the establishment of parks by deconstructing concepts such as ‘wilderness’, ‘nature’, ‘wildlife’ and ‘rural’. For instance, Cronon’s reading of ‘wilderness’ in the American context suggests that it is a discourse embedded in the establishment of pristine parks as a symbol of the nation’s cultural heritage (1996). He suggests that with the establishment of these parks, the ‘wilderness’ discourse conceals the socio-political injustices experienced by the Native American population (Cronon 1996). Similarly, Wolmer argues that ‘wilderness’ is a vision (a way of seeing) inherited from the colonial period that renders the colonial landscape both as a place of adventure and of national heritage and erases the local histories that transpired there (Wolmer 2007). This colonial construction of the Zimbabwean lowveld imagined as a space of wilderness divorced from local attachments to the landscape ‘deepened antagonism over land and led to further coercive regulations on resource use at odds with people’s livelihood strategies’ (Wolmer 2007: 2).

The culture of national parks has also perpetuated this idea of nature as set in the rural. For instance, according to Child, the history of conservation in southern Africa is rooted in a ‘socio-cultural vision [that] ... has been driven by a rural, rather than an urban, economy and political constituency ... [and is] associated with an obsession with soil erosion and environmental health’ (2009: 7).⁴ However, Child’s optimism that the latter ‘obsession’ transformed into a ‘home-grown conservation narrative’ and influenced South African conservation in general is largely unconvincing (2009:7). His link between the historical, more holistic ideology for protecting the environment (instead of only large game) and for contemporary conservation, that has come to consider ‘society’ in its framework requires some scrutiny.

Firstly, Grove illustrates that from 1866 the conservation ideology in the Cape Colony proposed by Child failed to gain mainstream currency because it posed a direct threat to colonial capitalism (1989a). Grove’s study of the Cape’s first comprehensive conservation interventions during the mid-19th century demonstrates that it is true that a handful of individual scientific inspired experts lobbied for protective measures that were more holistic in nature (1989a). However, he also argues that their proposals only influenced state interventions in so far as it proved favourable to the colonial administration (Grove 1989a: 35).⁵ Thus soon this early conservation ideology was abandoned and conservation in the Cape was limited to the conservation of large game and forests that remained ‘politically palatable’ for the state and the empire (Grove 1989a: 36). Furthermore, the boundaries and fences that demarcate the zones for the protection of fauna and flora from human interference have polarized – more imaginatively than real – the spatialities between human and non-human life forms. This geographical and political imaginary that is both without humans and mostly rural, and establishes the nature of rural conservation, calls into being:

[a] special place in the imagined empires of human civilization, as that which lies outside its historical and geographical reach (however defined) (White 1978); a place without ‘us’, populated by creatures (including surreptitiously, ‘uncivilized’ humans) at once monstrous and wonderful, whose strangeness gives shape to whatever ‘we’ are claimed to be (Thorne & Whatmore 1998: 435).

The idea that the history of (and place for) conservation is in the rural is especially evident when we consider the lack of attention on conservation practices *of* and *in* the city (Brown 2002). Yet Braun reminds us that

... sites that appeared far removed from cities, such as national parks and wilderness areas, were fully ‘metropolitan’ natures, constructed within global flows of commodities, capital and ideas that linked metropole and nature together in tight political-economic and cultural circuits (2005: 636).

⁴ A similar claim is made by Beinart in his book *The rise of conservation in South Africa: Settlers, livestock, and the environment 1770-1950* (2003). See Van Sittert (2004a) for a critique of this work.

⁵ The ideology was inspired by the conservation practices that developed on the colonial islands, as well as by the empirical observations and practical experiences in the Cape environment. The discourse on conservation in the colony was part of a transnational, which according to Tsing contributed to the development of the concept of a singular ‘nature’ that could travel across cultures and across empires’ (2005: 202).

Conservation in the African context

Many different places, natures, animals and people produced the flows of conservation ideologies but the colonial creation of *reserves* augmented the culture of borders for wildlife conservation on the continent (Beinart 1989a: 150). Brown argues that at the turn of the 19th century, the massive number of game decreased by extensive colonial hunting practices brought about a colonial ‘cultural transformation’ in relation to wildlife (2002: 75). This transformation resulted in a wave of conservation practices initiated by the colonial authorities to protect game (Brown 2002: 76). Thus, ironically, the African landscape experienced a superimposition of boundaries that entailed symbolic and economic ownership by ‘the same social group of travellers, settlers and officials [that] a generation earlier had produced some of the most bloodthirsty hunters’ (Beinart 1989b: 17). Initially the protection of wildlife was more about sustaining hunting practices for the colonial urban elite than a scientific rationale to preserve the animals from extinction (Beinart 1989a: 149).

Van Sittert suggests that this history and its associated ‘cultural transformation’ occurred differently in the Cape Colony (2005a). The advanced urban and rural connections in the colony meant that the ‘Cape did not give way to the ‘the Hunt’ and its associated sentimental conservation ethos in linear evolutionary fashion, instead the two forms co-existed and were simultaneously commodified over the period’ (Van Sittert 2005a: 272). This meant that conservation acts and reserves were strategies conducive to the privatization of game animals that facilitated its commercialisation (Van Sittert 2005a: 291). The animals ‘preserved’ were also selected according to a specific hierarchy of hunting value: the 1886 Cape protectionist game laws were restricted to the royal game favoured by elite hunters (Beinart & Coates 1995: 75; Brown 2002). In this ‘scramble’ for power over nature, wildlife was regarded as private property by colonialists to be claimed and controlled. These colonial hunting practices and the creation of reserves are salient markers for connoting conservation to *rural* places despite the fact that the advocates for game reserves were mainly urbanites (Grove 1989a: 27).

Colonial conservation in Africa cannot be considered without its connection to the empire. Colonial conservation was subject to the same set of western principles that justified colonial domination. In fact, in many parts of colonial Africa, the early conservation ideology mirrored the colonial spatial strategies for bordering and governing space. The 1933 London Convention that permanently determined the colonial borders for protected areas was similar to what was discussed at the 1884 Berlin Conference (Ramutsindela 2012). The outcome of the convention was a scheme to extend colonial power through wildlife protection which in turn had fundamental effects on the social and natural landscape of the colony. It re-ordered ecological patterns, displaced indigenous people, criminalised traditional hunting practices and alienated local socio-ecological relations (Anderson & Grove 1989: 7; Brown 2002; Khan

2002: 17-18; Ramutsindela 2004). Indigenous people practiced protective measures in their own locally adapted ways but they could not participate in the formulations of colonial conservation that permanently altered local human and nonhuman ecological patterns with the geographical superimposition of protected areas.

Spiro writes about how one of America's greatest conservationists – Madison Grant – conceived of protecting the environment and 'defending the master race' (i.e. Caucasian race) as 'two sides of the same coin' (2009: 125).⁶ Spiro argues that Grant's earnest readings of ethnographies of the world, alongside his studies of the waning numbers in wildlife, was a joint excursion disciplined by the unquestionable truths represented by 'rational' sciences. These readings informed Grant's mission to safeguard what he thought was the true American race and environment (Spiro 2009). In particular, as a eugenicist and conservationist he 'took the concepts he was developing in wildlife management and applied them to the human population' (Spiro 2009: 3108). Spiro writes that

once [Grant] made the philosophical and moral decision that it was acceptable to eliminate 'surplus' members of the wildlife population, it was not difficult for him to decide that such measures could and should be practiced on the expendable members of the human race (2009: 3108).

The history of protected areas is also marked with racism predicated on treating nature as a domain of rationality (Adams & Hutton 2007: 153). Although the fences, gates, rangers and guns that identified and protected the boundaries of wildlife were thoroughly political, conservation was seen as a purely technical and apolitical science. This is a legacy deeply embedded in the western ontology by which nature and society was purified and disciplined as separate domains (Latour 2004: 131). The fact that colonial parks were established by means of the removal of local populations – an issue that continues to be contentious – is rooted within this ontology (Ohl-Schacherer, Rummenhoeller, Shepard & Yu 2010). The dichotomy between humanity and nature, as it was inscribed in the borders of protected areas, was thus also a precursor to the forms of colonial racism that justified the proclamation of parks (Adams & Hutton 2007: 154; De la Cadena 2010: 345).

The conservation movement that emanated from America was also an important element in shaping the idea that conservation is confined to the rural, as well as shaping the concept of wilderness as being the antithesis of the city. Given conservation's strong bond with national parks, its story often begins in 1872 in the Yellowstone Park, falsely assumed to be the first national park in the US and the world (Brockington, Duffy & Igoe 2008: 19).⁷ The park's proclamation depended upon the erasure of local

⁶ The page numbers of this citation do not reflect the hard copy of this book it refers to the Kindle version, see bibliography.

⁷ The first national park was established in Mongolia in 1778 on the 'sacred' Bogd Khan Mountain (Brockington *et al.* 2008: 19)

social histories to retrofit the landscape for the new nation state (Brockington *et al.* 2008: 19-20; Cronon 1996). Nonetheless, the ‘Yellowstone Model’ gained traction in what was to become ‘mainstream conservation’ and was replicated all over the world (Brockington *et al.* 2008: 21). For instance, during the early stages of proclaiming national parks in South Africa, the first park – the Kruger National Park – (KNP) ‘was idealized as the Yellowstone of the Transvaal’ (Kalamandeen & Gillson 2007: 168).

The neglect of urban conservation is also a result of the image of Africa in the imagination of the world. Garland argues that the conservation of wildlife in Africa was part of the larger exploration and colonization of the continent and argues that it is through this frontier probing that

Africa came to figure as an important space of nature in an emerging Western imaginary – a wild and natural backdrop against which people of European descent could define themselves as belonging to a civilized, specifically *Western*, world (2008: 51-52; author’s emphasis).

The image of Africa as the custodian (or last refuge) of nature is thus firmly rooted in the continent’s relations with the world (Beinart 1989b: 17). This game-keeping task of Africa has also inspired an influx of multinational NGOs and conservation groups seeking to aid the continent with this global responsibility (Child 2009: 26, 28; Brockington *et al.* 2008: 141). This resonates with the phenomenon in which Africa is the recipient of western aid programmes. This phenomenon has received a wealth of critique, especially in anthropological studies.⁸ Garland (2008) furthermore argues that these relations also translate Africa’s natural resources and wildlife into capital in which Africans’ economic position becomes marginal in comparison with that of the west (See also Brockington *et al.* 2008). Conservation in Africa has absorbed its stereotypes and also actively engineers the edenic nature imagined of the continent, through for instance, private game reserves. Anderson and Grove argue that Africa has become the image of ‘a special kind of ‘Eden’, for the purposes of the European psyche, rather than as a complex and changing environment in which people have actually had to live’ (1989: 4). This ideological picturing of conservation as geographically pristine informs the idea that conservation is confined to the rural areas of Africa.

Here I discussed the conflation of history with the general discourse on Africa’s wildlife which produces a rural bias in regards to conservation. The rural paradigm also inflects the city as the antithesis to nature and, especially in Africa, as an ‘emblem of irresolvable conflict’ by essentialising Africans themselves ‘as fundamentally and even essentially rural creatures’ (Mbembe & Nuttal 2004: 353). Paradoxically,

⁸ A well-known example of this literature in Southern Africa is that of the anthropologist James Ferguson who investigated development initiatives by the World Bank in Lesotho. In the “anti-politics machine” the flaws of global development initiatives emerges in stark contradiction to the local realities of Lesotho’s rural inhabitants (1990).

Williams argues that these imaginaries of the rural are a fundamental result of living in cities (Williams 1975).

Conclusion

In the first section of this chapter I introduced the subject of this thesis: i.e. the urban conservation of the Cape Peninsula. I also provided the conceptual framework of the thesis which is informed by an anthropological orientation and structured around urban nature and the notion of custodianship. I also considered the importance of studying nature in the city. This discussion highlighted the important role of people in determining the value of nature in the city and the gap in the literature on urban conservation. The latter was discussed in relation to the ideological discourse on nature as being somewhere outside of the city. This tendency was continued in the last section of this chapter that sought to contextualise it in the general tendencies of the history of conservation.

This thesis is structured in the following manner. Chapter One considers the methodological approaches adopted for this thesis. Chapter Two and Three discuss the history of urban conservation in relation to the Cape Peninsula and the processes of it becoming a national park. Chapter Four explores the difficulties of running an urban national park in a city besieged with the legacies of its divided past and present inequalities. It looks at the TMNP's current commitment to transformation in an era of eco-tourism and the commercialisation of nature. Chapter Five is dedicated to the relationship between Hangberg and the TMNP. This chapter analyses the contested engagements between the TMNP and this poor residential area. What emerges from this chapter is the agency of a poor and historically marginalised community in a larger narrative of capitalism and racial discrimination.

CHAPTER ONE: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1.1 Ethnographic fieldwork

The subject of this thesis – i.e. a nonhuman subject, the Cape Peninsula – required me to move beyond the traditional ethnographic and methodological approaches associated with anthropology (De la Cadena 2010: 358). This ‘more-than-human’ anthropological study is interested in the Cape Peninsula (Braun 2005; Whatmore 2002). I attempted to develop a perspective that is not exclusively focussed on human ideology and culture, even though the social meaning-making processes situated relationally between city and the mountains are an important dimension of this study and draws on a long tradition in ethnographic writing. This has meant adapting my methodology in order to trace the biological transformations of the mountains, learning about its interchanges with humans and reflecting on its cohabitation with the city (Kirksey & Helmreich 2010). It is, as Smith puts it, ‘a search for ways to articulate a creative politics of nature in, of and for the city’ (2006: xiv). The innovative and flexible nature of ethnographic research was an important aspect in the conduct of this kind of research framework.

Initially my research plan was designed around a multi-sited ethnography. I mapped a number of sites I intended to study. These were situated (physically and ideologically) within the city but related to the Cape Peninsula. However, I soon came to share Candea’s fieldwork experience in terms of which ‘months went by [with] a constant sense of incompleteness and arbitrariness, the obsessive feeling of missing out, of vagueness and unjustifiable indeterminacy, of never being in the right place at the right time’ (2007: 174). While these feelings are part of any fieldwork experience, they were in my situation also symptomatic of methodological inconsistency. Ethnographic fieldwork requires a certain depth and familiarity of the research site which is difficult to attain with a number of different research sites in a short period of time. The value of ethnographic research lies in its capacity to develop an understanding of broader transformations on an everyday (and often intimate) level (Ross 2010: 9). Thus, even though the knowledge accumulated through ethnographic fieldwork is highly localised and specific, it is further analysed through a systematic reflexive process into general arguments, which may be comparative or descriptive in nature (Ross 2010: 9; Blasco & Wardle 2007: 96).

I therefore decided to limit my research by focusing on Hangberg, which at time of research was at a crucial phase of grappling with a number of issues around the establishment of a national park on the Cape Peninsula. Furthermore, as Candea also found with his research, the passage from multi-sited fieldwork to a bounded field site ‘allows one to reflect on and rethink conceptual entities, to challenge their coherence and their totalizing aspirations’ (2007: 180). This was particularly true for Hangberg where the social demarcating boundaries were constantly in the process of being redefined in relation to

different places and people. This framework thus provided me with the focus to analyse the Cape Peninsula's meaning in everyday settings. It also allowed me to make broader critical analyses around urban governance, capitalism, democracy and the politics of urban conservation.

In most of my fieldwork, I was assisted by the willingness and generosity of the residents I became involved with. My fieldwork constituted open-ended interviews, informal conversations and attending local and institutional meetings, social outings, political gatherings and court proceedings. In addition to the fieldwork in Hangberg, I also interviewed city planners, residents from other townships in Hout Bay, SANParks employees and managers, environmental and non-environmental NGO representatives, nature lovers, civic and professional conservationists and recreationists.⁹ For the visual dimension of the research, I collected various pictures, drawings, newspaper clippings and video material embedded in particular cultural and social contexts that contributed to my analysis (Bryman 2001: xxvii-xxix). I also spent countless hours walking, hiking, picnicking and sport climbing in the park.

However, ethnographic research is not always easy or straightforward. My fieldwork experience in Hangberg was constantly challenged by the adverse relationships amongst residents and the mistrust directed at 'outsiders' mostly because of failed development interventions of the past. My fieldwork experience was also mediated by own personal background as a white educated young female (Bryman 2001). On the one hand, talking to me implied a risk as it was assumed I might be aligned with the police or city authorities and expose illegal practices. On the other hand, getting involved with my research could have implied attaining access to resources. Outside of Hangberg I also experienced difficulties. My involvement with the Hangberg residents often meant that I adopted a pro-poor stance and this influenced the outcome of interviews with, for instance, serious conservationists. The research space itself thus had an impact on my research (Appadurai 1998). Hansen and Verkaaik argue that because poor urban settlements are often mythologised as being intractable or dangerous, it influences the way in which outsiders are introduced to such places (2009: 9). For these authors, outsiders (such as researchers) are often guided by the figures they call 'hustlers, big men, community workers, brokers or even gangsters' (Hansen & Verkaaik 2009: 9).

These figures are supposed to be in the know, supposed to have access to resources and knowledge that are not readily available to ordinary people. The magicity of these connections derives from the extra-local connections to centres of power – a gangster king, powerful elite figures, high-level politicians, high-ranking bureaucrats, powerful religious institutions – sites and figures of an outside and radically different order, suffused with both benevolent and dangerous powers (Hansen & Verkaaik 2009: 9).

⁹ I conducted roughly 50 open-ended interviews which were mostly transcribed from my own personal notes. Research was carried out intermittently during the period between July 2011 to January 2013.

My introduction to Hangberg was certainly guided by the figures that fit this profile: the pastor-activist-politician, the community leader (and worker), the ex-liberation fighter and the ex-gangster, all guided my research experience. Their social and political connections gave them the ‘tools’ to represent and speak for Hangberg. Yet it was also through figures like these that I learned of the political capacity within Hangberg that enabled people to assert their identities in extremely fraught and fragile ways. I acknowledge the limitations of these factors and recognize the influence my own subjectivity has on the data, observations and concluding arguments presented in this thesis.

In all cases of contact in the research field I made sure that people were fully informed of my interests and the consequences and dissemination process of the research in which they participated. Research without informed consent was never considered. I further italicised the speech directly quoted from interviews and conversations to emphasise the shift of the speaker in contrast to the author and written text. I personally translated the interviews originally conducted in Afrikaans. Informants’ identities which have been kept anonymous are indicated with an asterisk (*). Given the contentious issues around poaching in Hangberg and the conflict amongst residents, I believe it is necessary to use pseudonyms for most informants. I also upheld the codes of conduct and guidelines endorsed for researchers by the University of Stellenbosch, as well as the code of ethics set out by the professional association: Anthropology Southern Africa. At all times I strived to protect the rights of my research participants and ensured to the best of my abilities that this thesis poses no risk to my research participants.

1.2 Environmental history

My fieldwork experience prompted questions about the history of the Cape Peninsula and, in particular, how ideas of urban conservation gained purchase in relation to urban transformations. Similar to other anthropological studies on national parks, I was interested in the power relations embedded in the history of protecting or exploiting the Cape Peninsula in order to contextualise my contemporary data (Anderson & Berglund 2003; Brockington *et al.* 2008; Tsing 2005). This interest in history also emerged from my engagement with interlocutors from other disciplines such as the geographic analyses of Whatmore on the ‘topologies of wildlife’ (2002: 12), Cronon’s discourse analysis on wilderness in North America (1992; 1996) and William’s literary criticism of the imaginary and real passage between the country and the city (1975).

Like the studies referred to above, I suggest that understanding the history of a subject makes it possible to understand how the past ‘leaks’ into the present, as well as the historical amnesia involved with pristine

protected areas. My historical data collection also complemented my ethnographic fieldwork in terms of widening the scope of analysis and deepening the arguments presented here.

The chapters devoted to history that make up the first part of this thesis cover roughly the period between the mid-1700s and 1998. In this part of the thesis, I employ the Cape Peninsula as a focal point in navigating through a history complicated by its contingent relationship with the city. This is done by exploring the legacies of the past in contemporary custodianship politics. Most of the historical data presented here derive from secondary sources (books, journals and articles) and archival materials but some also come from personal interviews. I attempted to keep in focus the purpose and place of the ‘historical data’ I stumbled across randomly scattered in archives, autobiographies, images and personal letters.

The University of Cape Town Manuscripts and Archive (UCT MA) and the Wildlife Society of South Africa (WESSA) Cape Branch archive were most helpful in terms of accessing collections on the history of urban conservation in the Cape. They also provided first-hand observations of the transformations on the Cape Peninsula. However, archives do not speak for themselves. If they contain some fractured version of the past, it is only through the voice of the interpreter (in this case myself) that archival material forms a very particular reality (Harris 1997: 135). I also wish to caution the reader that my discussions concerning each historical period are not intended to provide an account of Cape Town’s urban history. It is rather a very specific interpretation of the history of urban conservation of the Cape Peninsula. The specificities include attention to the mapping of the changes of the Cape Peninsula landscape and the culture of urban recreation as key elements of the development of conservation in the city.

Traditionally, anthropological historiography positioned social change at the heart of its enquiry: the shift from traditional societies to so-called modern subjects, from pre-colonial to colonial societies and from colonial to postcolonial societies. Yet studies such as these are mostly limited to political and cultural interpretations and do not provide the right kind of register needed to accommodate a nonhuman subject. I therefore turned to environmental historians whose unique analytical contribution lies in the practice of writing a history that is not exclusively ‘sociocentric’ (Descola 1996: 86-87 as cited in Novell 1998: 7).¹⁰ Nature, in this sub-discipline, is ‘a co-creator of histories’ (Asdal 2003: 61). Because of this environmental historians offer a valuable interpretation of the role of nature in the shaping and making of Cape Town.

¹⁰‘Sociocentric models’ apply ‘when social categories are used as a kind of template for the ordering of the cosmos or to a dualistic universe, as in the case of western cosmologies where nature is defined negatively as that ordered part of reality which exists independently of human action’ (Descola 1996: 86-87 as cited in Novell 1998: 7).

However, environmental historians, following broader theoretical shifts in the social sciences and humanities, are reconceptualising the place of nature in its disciplinary framework. This change places emphasis on the agency of the nonhuman subjects with which we share our world.¹¹ For instance, Asdal (2003) criticizes environmental historians' tendency to present themselves at the 'interface between nature and culture', as the South African environmental historian, Jane Carruthers maintains (2009a: 100). This framework, Asdal argues, entrenches the ontological human/nature dichotomy that reduces nature to a unified domain – albeit autonomous – only penetrable by a 'natural-scientific method' (2003: 60). Demeritt explains:

Nature naturalizes because the word itself connotes both the nonhuman, the sense of principal interests to environmental historians, and those fundamental, unalterable qualities that inhere in the essence of a thing itself – the facts of nature, the nature of a thing, etc. (1994: 178).

Decomposing this dichotomy has been the central task of a body of scholarship with a more radical approach. Grouped together by Asdal as post-constructivists (or by others as post-humanists), these scholars makes theory the starting point in thinking through the connections between humans and nonhumans (2003). Nature is not the exclusive domain of objective sciences, instead natures (in the plural form) are equal to humans in their abilities to make history and social life (Asdal 2003:66). Such an intervention seeks to overcome the separations between culture and nature that seems to plague our understanding of the world (Heynen *et al.* 2006; Latour 2004). Led by scholars such as Donna Haraway and Bruno Latour (each with their own distinctive style), this is a promising project that avoids subjecting nature to the realm of ideological social construction or to that of autonomous scientific truth (Asdal 2003; Demeritt 1994; Haraway 1991; Latour 2004: 237).¹²

Although being most advanced in actor-network theories (ANT), the methodological application of this theoretical intervention has not been explored to its full extent.¹³ Critics have pointed out that the 'metaphor of nature as actor [also] tends to preclude the consideration of the ways in which particular formulations of nature are imbricated in relations of power' (Demeritt 1994: 179; see also Thorne &

¹¹ A second re-evaluation of environmental history concerns the difference between geological and human time. Chakrabarty argues that humans themselves have not been granted the right kind of agency in the thinking of environmental history, since it is now generally accepted that humans are a geological force in climate change, and no longer just a biological agent (Chakrabarty 2009: 206). This neglect, Chakrabarty argues, is explained by environmental history's preoccupation with biology and geography – and not, geology (2009: 206). Thus, the practice in environmental history to observe only humanity's chronology (thousands of years) is now being challenged by the fact that we as humans are now playing a role in geological time scales (millions of years). Yet this question of scale runs the danger of extrapolating humanity into a homogenous category where there is no space for power relations and differences within societies – a critique Chakrabarty is well aware of.

¹² Haraway's work derives from a feminist background and Latour's from science and technology studies (STS). Although often grouped together, their ideas are significantly different but are also complementary (Demeritt 1994).

¹³ The proliferation of studies using ANT attests to the value of this theoretical turn. Although this thesis does not adopt this ANT, it is very much embedded in the thinking around ANT as a useful way of conceptualizing social life and urban nature.

Whatmore 1998). Nonetheless, the theoretical tools offered by post-constructivist theorists are invaluable and, while treading on unfamiliar grounds, I attempt to avoid a historical interpretation of the conservation of the Cape Peninsula that is dis-embedded from its physical context.

A further challenge of writing history concerns deterministic and static explanatory frameworks that privilege time, text and space.¹⁴ Postcolonial literature has been particularly critical of reductionist or functionalist interpretations of history that subjects the marginalised colonised (Other) to a space that denies her/him any agency (Bhabha 1992: 49). This critique has been directed at the canonization of knowledge within the discourse of modernity that universalises culture, language and power relations. Thus, in colonial Cape Town, the Western discourse of nature was as much an ideological construct from the empire, as it was a hybrid reaction and compilation of the heterogenic character of the colonial city. Nonetheless, my ethnographic and historical approach to the Cape Peninsula draws together different sources to narrate the political, biological and mundane trajectories that constitute the intertwining story of the Cape Peninsula in the city.

¹⁴ See also footnote 11.

CHAPTER TWO: URBANISING THE CAPE PENINSULA

2.1 Edging the wilderness: the Cape's first circumference

What relation is possible for man to have with rock and sun (Coetzee 2007: 7)?

From what we know, in the pre-colonial period of the areas surrounding the Cape Peninsula, the indigenous pastoralists utilised the environment for extensive seasonal grazing routes (Sadr 1998). Their transhumance patterns adapted to the harsh Renosterveld and they used fire as a method to burn the grass to ensure softer and greener grass for the next season. Archaeological records of the coast reveal the presence of the Strandlopers whose shelters and fish traps suggest a nomadic existence derived from harvesting food from the ocean. These livelihoods were seriously disrupted with the settlement of the Europeans (Beinart 1989b; Lückhoff 1951: 17). Plagued by disease brought over by the colonialists and with the devastation caused by the wars with Van Riebeeck's company, the indigenous populations eventually assimilated into the lowest ranks of the colonial society and their hybridization with colonialist, indigenous and the slave populations produced a creolised under-class. Nonetheless as we shall see later on, in Hangberg these indigenous identities are resurfacing in their 'essential' forms to claim the right to the Cape Peninsula as an act of restitution in the postcolonial moment. Re-imaginings of early Khoi relations with the Cape Peninsula are thus configuring custodianship of the Cape Peninsula as something connected to this early history of dispossession. But before considering this revitalisation of history, let us first consider the relations between the Cape Peninsula and the colonial settlers.

With the arrival of the first colonialists the place that would become Cape Town was perceived as a 'wilderness' the meaning of which did not confer the qualities it embodies today (Van Riebeeck's diary 1654 as cited in Fagan 1989). For these early settlers, the African environment lay beyond the borders of civility and was feared (Argyrou 2005; Coetzee 2007; Voss 2003). 17th Century Cape Town was limited to a vegetable garden surrounded by an administrative centre, a few estates and hamlets (Bickford-Smith 1995: 13). Enclosing this settlement was the Cape Peninsula's towering topographical features (which also acted as a fortress), flat lowlands and the unpredictable ocean; which together appeared to the colonial mind as profoundly foreign in nature. Therefore, when Wouter Schouten wanted to ascend Table Mountain in 1665, he struggled to find a partner to join him on the journey. Eventually, after a long strenuous and perilous climb, he wrote:

[We] got into trouble again, getting into a deep morass ... we disturbed sundry big birds, which occasioned such a din, in their flight, that my companion, who was ahead, gave a fearful yell, fancying himself to be attacked by a lion, or tiger. We arrived at last at the Dutch fort ... We had discovered no other animals in this trip but a few snakes and those birds that gave us such a fright. We stayed the night over in the village,

returning on board in the morning almost destitute of shoes and stockings, and our clothes destroyed in the ascent and descent of this mountain (L.C.: 1892).¹⁵

For these adventurous men the experience of this strange new world enabled a re-imagining of preconceived ideas of the frontier. Schouten and his party expected the wild animals that roamed the colonial imagination described by men such as Augustin de Beaulieu. In 1620 De Beaulieu imaginatively described the Cape as:

Forests of tall trees, as thick as apple-trees with no fruit on them and of a very hard wood, all along the mountains there was an infinity of game, and on the mountains are great numbers of monkeys, marmots, lions, lynxes, foxes, porcupines, ostriches, elephants and other beasts unknown to me (Raven-Hart 1971: 394 as cited in Fuller 1999: 53).

The captured wild animals that travelled from the colony to the empire also inspired this colonial imagination (Thorne & Whatmore 1998). For instance, the Cape Lion – said to be an extinct species with longer hair below the abdomen was staged at a very prestigious gentlemen’s club in London long before the 19th century (The extinct Cape Lion 1950: 125). Fuller (1999) furthermore suggests that even before the Cape became a familiar destination it existed in a fabled version of the Otherworld and the legacies of these mythical stories – both good and evil – continued to circulate amongst the European voyagers who experienced and perceived the Cape as both a place of Storms and of Good Hope. Ships travelled a long and dangerous journey before they reached the refreshment station in Cape Town and stories – mythical, fantastical and fearful – entertained the travelling imagination.

Yet, if the Cape was ever imagined to be a paradise across the sea, this was soon questioned after a while of living in the colony. Reading Van Riebeeck’s diary one realises the tremendous effort invested in domesticating the Cape nutrient-poor soil to produce crops for the vegetable-hungry DEIC (Dutch East India Company). The effort was often undermined by the blazing sun in the summer or simply pulled from the ground by the strong Southeaster wind (Fagan 1989). Van Riebeeck also described the Cape as a ‘lonesome and melancholy place, where there was little to be done but to barter for sheep and cattle with the stupid, filthy lazy Hottentots’ (as cited in Fuller 1999: 52). Coetzee writes that for many Europeans the experience of the Cape was like that of an ‘anti-Garden, a garden ruled over by the serpent, where the wilderness takes root once again in men’s hearts’ (2007: 3). The settlers could find sanctuary in the familiar built environment of the DEIC. But beyond the boundaries of the settlement, was a place of wild animals, with inclinations of a primordial kind, drosters and escaped slaves – a place beyond human reason (Fuller 1999: 63).

¹⁵ From the article published in the *Cape Times*, “Wouter Schouten’s Reistogt: Naar en door Oost Indien” (University of Cape Town Manuscripts and Archive, Mountain Club of South Africa, G1.24, hereafter UCT MA MCSA).

[Beyond] the borders of settlement ... the Peninsula's mountain massif remained a wilderness outside of DEIC control reputedly haunted by 'noxious and destructive animals that shun the light' and 'a kind of enemy still more dangerous ... fugitive slaves.' (Van Sittert 2003a: 162).

Creating a garden within this feared wilderness was also about domesticating the environment which, according to Beinart, was 'an intrinsic part of the process of conquest' (1989a: 147). From the late 17th century onwards, the DEIC settlers distributed and planted an extraordinary amount of exotic trees and plants (Van Sittert 2003a). Governor Simon van der Stel himself introduced to the Cape alone 16 000 oak trees (Beinart & Coates 1995: 43). In part, this ecological transformation was about domesticating the foreign landscape for the colonial sensibility. Yet the planting of pines, firs and oak trees was also about compensating for the massive deforestation of local indigenous trees.

The entire establishment of the DEIC was built on the supply of wood harvested by slaves and by 1772 it was reported that there was virtually no wood left in the vicinity of the settlement (Fagan 1989; Hey 1978: 5). By 1790 the streets of the growing settlement were lined by pine trees and on the lower slopes of the Cape Peninsula clusters of trees formed canopy-plantations (Todeschini 1992: 39). The ecological transformation that transpired on the Cape Peninsula illustrates that the mountains did not witness the rise of Cape Town at a distance, as is often phrased in common accounts of Table Mountain, but were an integral part of the transformation of the urban environment. During the colonial period the replacement of indigenous trees with exotic trees was certainly the most dramatic transformation of the Cape Peninsula (Lückhoff 1951; Hey 1978; Moll 1989).

Furthermore, as the settlement's boundaries expanded it came increasingly into conflict with local human and nonhuman livelihood patterns. For instance, already in 1656 the Governor introduced a 'bounty system ... offering rewards for the killing of a large variety of animals, particular lions, 'wolves' and leopards' (Hey 1995: 160). The threat posed by these predators and the clashes with the 'marauding Hottentots' who defended their grazing land and animals, resulted in what was probably one of the first borders in the Cape. Van Riebeeck's 'circumference of the Cape' was a sturdy wild almond hedge built around the settlement (Lückhoff 1951: 17).¹⁶ The hedge was unsuccessful in guarding against theft and the seeping in of indigenous nonhumans (Lückhoff 1951: 15; Fagan 1989). However, it could translate into a social border that allowed settlers to imagine that it was possible to define anything outside the border as heathen and wild. The hedge was unable to insulate Dutch civilisation but it nevertheless symbolised what colonists desired to conceive of as existing outside of the DEIC settlement. Thus, although the hedge demarcated the colonial boundary proper, its demarcation did not necessarily affect authority (Mbembe 2000: 262).

¹⁶The almond hedge's remnants are still visible today and have been declared a national monument.

In *The Logic of Environmentalism*, Argyrou (2005) situates the colonial encounter and its relation with the colonial natural environment in the context of religion. He suggests that Christianity operated on the logic of God-given truths with which the colonialists made sense of their domination of the African landscape and its people (or rather ‘heathens’) through a moral discourse (Argyrou 2005). The believed universal truths embodied by Christianity thus legitimised colonial expansion, superiority and mastery over humans and non-humans (Coetzee 2007; White 1967).¹⁷ Paraphrasing a 1677 colonial encounter with the indigenous people, Fuller elaborates on this point:

Many who encountered the Hottentots invoked God as a means of subjugating them. Their apparent sloth was castigated as sinful, and their lack of dress and practice of smearing themselves with animal fat, was taken as further proof that they were divorced from mankind, ‘in the darkness of a heathen atheism’ (Raven-Hart 1971: 394 as cited in 1999: 53).

The work of Comaroff and Comaroff on the colonial encounter between missionaries and native South Africans remind us that this process was never without its contradictions (1997). These authors suggest that colonisation was a ‘dialectical complex’ of appropriation and contestation (Comaroff & Comaroff 1997: 28). A process in which indigenous practices were also assimilated into colonial culture, such as the practice of burning grass adopted by the Dutch from the Khoi until the fires became a risk for the settlement and ‘a special ‘placaat’ [a regulation] was issued in 1687 prohibiting setting fire to the veld’ (Hey 1978: 3).

Argyrou furthermore points out that within this colonial encounter ideas of nature were also entrenched within the ontological dichotomy between nature and humanity (2005). Christianity equated nature to a clock that functions on its own outside of humanity establishing *faithfully* separated borders between humanity and nature (Argyrou 2005: 2). While Christianity was part of the colonial mission, nature was already adorned with God’s making. Grand imposing mountains ‘were those rare places on earth where one had more chance than elsewhere to glimpse the face of God’ (Cronon 1996: 73). The anthropocentric (male) character of Christianity imagined nature as an external given, solidifying nature’s place and functionality outside of the operations of the colonial settlement. There are many descriptions saturated with praise for God’s gift at the first sight of the Cape mountains. If the weather permitted, ‘Table Mountain was seen by many as one of the dramatic beauties of God’s creation’ (Fuller 1999: 55). Analysing colonial writings about Table Mountain in relation to power and religion Voss notes that:

Table Mountain ... as a place on top of which people felt themselves closer to God, and where sensations associated with the sublime could be aroused, allowed Europeans ... the opportunity not only to preach sentiments of dominance over the Cape in general, but over its people specifically (2003: 44).

¹⁷White argues that it might be possible to view the current ecological predicament as a product of the confluence of Christianity and science that together enabled humanity’s exploitation of nature (1967).

Voss further writes that for Lady Anne Barnard, ‘Table Mountain became ‘a symbol of God’s presence on earth’’ (2003: 42). The hike of Lady Anne and her party up Table Mountain at the end of the 18th century is a popular historical account. Writing about this event, Voss notes that as they ascended the mountain, Lady Anne was

... gazing down on one of the Empire’s latest ‘toys’. This image of the Cape as plaything of the Empire is expounded by both Barrow [her companion on the excursion] and Lady Anne, the latter, as she reached Table Mountain’s ‘flat’ top ‘looking down on the town (almost out of sight below) with much conscious superiority – and smiling at the formal meanness of its appearance, which would have led us to suppose it built by children out of half a dozen packs of cards (2003: 42).

Lady Anne’s sense of superiority, confirmed by the heightening experience from being on the top of Table Mountain, was firmly rooted in her social status. She was wedded to the colonial secretary of the Cape of Good Hope that was at that time under British control. Lady Anne’s journals (mostly intended for her close friends and family) and paintings of the early settlement are well known and capture some of the domestic details of everyday life that often escaped male colonial writers. This is what intrigued the poet Antjie Krog to rework Lady Anne’s journals into a collection of poems that contemplates the positionality of woman in a turbulent political climate (Van der Merwe 1990). One of Krog’s poems titled, ‘I think I am the first – Lady Anne on Table Mountain’ (2013), suggests a similar analysis to that of Voss in regards to the superior gaze offered by conquering the mountain on foot. Here is an extract of the poem:

from above you can really sketch everything
 corruption seems only malicious injustice temporary
 and at its worst the village below merely shoddy
 see how cute the stonepoint Castel (my pretty abode!)
 oh my God do we have to? yes, we sing: save George our King (Krog 2013)¹⁸

In the rest of the poem the writer relates the experience of being on Table Mountain with a being a writer. True to her raw poetic style, Krog explores the juxtaposition of being subjugated by her gender and yet uplifted (literally ascending the mountain) by her race and social class.

Nonetheless, the moral discourse on the Cape Peninsula, defined as being related to colonial power and supremacy, worked to inscribe a border between an imagined (uncivilised) human and nonhuman wilderness geographically set apart from the fort where in Schouten’s words:¹⁹

¹⁸ The collection of poems were originally written in Afrikaans and first published in 1989, the translation was done by the author herself.

¹⁹ However, the moralising discourse also overlapped with the faculties of reason that the British brought with them later on. Furthermore, within the hegemonic colonial regimes, different temporalities perennially challenged the dominant Christian order. For instance, already from the 18th century, Muslim communities saw a spiritual passage through the Cape Peninsula that linked the topographical shapes of the city’s mountains with their own transnational

We found it delightful everywhere, and much more pleasant than when we were there during the first voyage in 1658; the Dutch fort was visibly improved, enlarged and strengthened and provided with conveniently built dwellings, after European style ... (L.C. 1892).²⁰

Schouten's description of the fort also captures the cultural enclave of the early Dutch settlement 'as the core of civilisation in the wilderness' (Comaroff & Comaroff 1997: 288). His experience of the fort as one of familiarity and approval is placed against his experience on Table Mountain, which:

... was sometimes so beset with stones and [bush growth] that we were compelled to make part of the journey in the valley below, and having proceeded some distance in this manner to climb out again; we had to climb over many rocks and stones which made this little trip extremely difficult; also the mate completely lost courage to go any higher when we had proceeded scarcely half the way.²¹

At the time, Schouten and his party attempted a rare climb (Lourens 2011). The few paths on the Cape Peninsula were mostly trodden by slaves collecting wood. This labour must have been difficult given the stout character of the Cape vegetation and topography. The thick vegetation – the protea trees and Kreupelhout – as well as the ravines and mountain massifs, made an experience on the mountains a difficult or adventurous one. But despite Schouten's exploration there was a general disinterest in exploring the Cape Peninsula during the DEIC period, save for harvesting wood (Lückhoff 1951). The growth of the settlement was also relatively slow in comparison to the period in which the British colony was established. For instance, the first farms behind the almond hedge were only allocated at the end of the 18th century in the fertile valley today known as Constantia.²² Furthermore, '[it] took until the latter half of the eighteenth century for the scientific and botanical interest of Table Mountain to truly interest and entice knowledge-thirsty visitors to the Cape' (Fuller 1999: 71). In the DEIC period, urban conservation was limited to minimizing water pollution and early laws pertaining to the forests such as the starting of fires (which were largely unenforced) (Juuti, Mäki & Wall 2007: 166). A sense of environmental concern or protection was limited to a few individuals (Grove 1989b: 165).

2.2 Taming the wilderness: governance and forestry

By the late 19th century, in contrast to the early settlement period described above, the modernisation process had largely 'tamed' the Cape Peninsula wilderness. These processes gained ground during the mineral revolution in the 1880s (Bickford-Smith 1995: 39). The revolution energised Cape Town's emerging capitalist economy, extending and expanding its dependence on the Peninsula's resource capacity to fuel the city's seemingly insatiable appetite. During this period most of the Cape Peninsula

labour journeys (Fuller 1999: 96). Swart also wrote an excellent critique on the conventional take on Calvinism amongst rural Afrikaners and their relations with the African people and environment (2004).

²⁰ From the article published in the *Cape Times* by LC in 1892, "Wouter Schouten's Reistogt: Naar en door Oost Indien" (UCT MA MCSA G1.24).

²¹ See previous footnote.

²² Today Constantia is an upper-class neighbourhood, mostly inhabited by white residents due to apartheid's spatial development policies. It is also a legacy of this colonial expansion.

was under the jurisdiction of British administration and was appropriated for the development of the colony and the imperial metropole for the purposes of agriculture, waterworks, mineral explorations, waste dumping, military operations and forestry (Todeschini 1992: 5).

The introduction of alien trees and the destruction of indigenous trees were but one of the many processes involved in the urbanisation of nature within and around Cape Town. The city's demand for water was entirely satisfied from the streams running from the Cape Peninsula and protecting this valuable resource was a high priority. In 1840 the city's colonial administration was made responsible for providing water to the city. In order to secure this provision, the government built four additional reservoirs on the back of Table Mountain, as well the Woodhead-tunnel for funnelling the water to the city (Juuti *et al.* 2007: 168-170). The government took charge of this responsibility to secure a constant supply of water for trade and commerce (Juuti *et al.* 2007). Water provisioning was one the city's earliest dependencies on the Peninsula and was strictly controlled by the government because of its value.

Yet it was the commencement of modern forestry that really altered the face of the Cape Peninsula. It was a development in which timber production shifted from being a relatively small-scale process to becoming large-scale, and intimately intertwined with the exhilaration of global capitalism (Anderson & O'Farrell 2012). Lückhoff describes the development of modern forestry in three phases. During the first 50 years of European occupation most of the indigenous trees were exhausted (1951: 114). This was followed by the second period in which the continuous demand for wood led to the introduction of a tremendous amount of alien trees (Lückhoff 1951: 114). This extensive introduction of alien trees matured into the third phase with the establishment of modern forestry plantations on the lower slopes of the Cape Peninsula (Lückhoff 1951: 114). Stone pines were especially suited to the Cape climate and remain a familiar (and for some a sentimental) site on the Peninsula (Todeschini 1992: 2).²³ The introduction of alien trees also coincided with the early urban conservation practices. In 1884 the appointed forest warden – Paul Shiekerdanz – was assigned with the tasks of planting pine trees on the eroded areas and to promote the planting of alien trees through the establishment of a nursery close to the area known today as Kirstenbosch (Moll 1989: 8). Schiekerdanz's task in reforestation was influenced by soil conservationists who believed that the colony's deforestation resulted in severe droughts (Grove 1989b: 182).²⁴

²³ For the last 80 years, urban conservation on the Cape Peninsula has involved the eradication of the alien trees (Early eradication of alien plants and trees, 1916-1945, UCT MA MCSA C3.9.1). Later on, the preferred taste for European trees transformed into indigenous trees and plants when Cape Town gained independence from the British Empire and civilians rooted their identities within the African soil thus reflecting a process of decolonisation of both humans and nonhumans (Comaroff & Comaroff 2001).

²⁴ Grove illustrates the ambiguous development of these conservationists' ideas by focussing on Reverend Moffat and on Mr Brown who was the official Colonial Botanist in the Cape Colony until 1866 (1989a: 16). He describes

The Department of Forestry was established in 1880 and was the first of its kind in the country (Brown 2003: 344; 346). The forest plantations on the Peninsula developed in two stages. It first implied the nationalisation of the land and second its regulation (Brown 2002: 347). Brown writes that by ‘the twentieth century, there were about ten plantations located on Table Mountain and along the Cape Peninsula and several others in the eastern conservancies’ (2003: 350). This development contributed significantly to the population of alien trees and the ecological transformation of the Cape Peninsula . As Van Sittert writes:

[In] the period 1882-1893, the Forestry Department dispensed more than 300 million Australian acacia seeds and 50 million Australian myrtle and cluster pine seeds in Cape Town ... and actively encouraged the ploughing up of indigenous flora on the Cape Flats to facilitate their planting (2000: 660).

And furthermore:

... foresters and engineers radically transformed the mountain environment firing, ploughing, scarifying, blasting and drowning thousands of hectares of ‘wild bush’ to impose the rational order of the arboreal grid and hydraulic wall on this uncultivated wilderness (Van Sittert 2003a: 170).

Scott argues that the development of modern forestry in Germany depended on a specific vision of nature in order to make timber production successful (1998: 18-19). This implied the simplification of nature, or reducing trees to a single species and forcing growth patterns into straight lines and blocks (what Van Sittert refers to as the ‘arboreal grid’). It also implied the zonation of space inscribing ideological boundaries on the Cape Peninsula and thus rendering it political and politicized (Peluso & Vandergeest 2011: 588). This means that the transformations brought about by modern forestry were ‘not simply ecological configurations but ... territories that have been legislated, zoned, mapped, and classified as permanent forest and managed by professional, ‘scientific’ government agencies’ (Peluso & Vandergeest 2011: 588). Therefore, beside this ecological manipulation, the development of modern forestry also introduced new social and political organisations on the Cape Peninsula. For instance, in the Cape Colony forest managers were appointed to supervise the plantations and control the access and activities in and around the plantations and catchment areas.²⁵ In particular, they were instructed to be on the lookout for civilians poaching animals or making fires.

For Argyrou the manipulation of nature during the colonial period was a configuration of the Enlightenment discourse of the 20th century (2005: 9). It enshrined reason as the mode to progress, governance and modernity (Argyrou 2005: 15). And, ‘reason, of course, was best articulated by the colonizer’ (Tsing 2005: 9). This discourse also subsequently imagined a hierarchy that differentiates

how the practices of science were deeply intertwined with the practitioners’ own journeys, experiences and virtues in the colony (1989a).

²⁵ Letter sent to by the town clerk to the president of the MCSA, 1905 (UCT MA MCSA C3.4).

between the underdeveloped humans and the developed humans (Agrawal 1997; Argyrou 2005: 11). Man's ranking in this humanity equation depended thus on 'man's mastery of nature' which was also

... man's mastery of humanity, which is to say, not only attainment of what this 'man' posited as the essence of humanity but also mastery of all those Other men in the world ... who had not yet actualised this essence (Argyrou 2005: 12,15).

Scott goes further with his analysis to suggest that the rationalisations and simplification involved with modern forestry production also reflected the way in which governments commenced in organising their populations. For Scott the practices, techniques and knowledge gained from a panoptic view of, for instance, the blocks and rows of one species of trees, was also applicable to the state's attempts in making 'society legible, to arrange the population in ways that simplified the classic state functions' (1998: 2, 23). Scott's analysis reinforces the point that, by looking at a state intervention such as modern forestry, it illustrates the configurations of nature in the political world and the configurations of politics in the natural world. For instance, the initiation of cadastral mapping practices and the standardisation of measuring units were directly linked to state purposes such as taxation (Scott 1998: 12). Scott thus proposes that by looking at how the state reconfigures and governs the natural environment we can also conclude something about the governance of the modern city.

The Cape Colony's independence in 1872 introduced new forms of governance that differed radically from that of the DEIC period (Bickford-Smith 1995: 10). Following Scott, I suggest that the state's control of the Cape Peninsula corresponded with the techniques used by the British when they governed colonial Cape Town which, to the minds of the state representatives, was increasingly becoming a disorderly creolised society (Bickford-Smith 1995: 73). Governing a complex social phenomenon such as the settler city occurred through simplifying social categories such as race. Racial categories sought to create the labour and moral orders to which the state envisaged society ought to subscribe (Bickford-Smith 1995: 85).

Under British rule colonialism insinuated itself into almost every aspect of Cape Town's everyday life and depended on maintaining a form of moral and social superiority to the disadvantage of many urban dwellers, in particular, those categorised as black or coloured (Bickford-Smith 1995: 127).²⁶ Bickford-Smith writes '[the] 'colonisation' of those [latter] 'others', the imposition of English values, became part and parcel of the achievement of English hegemony in the city, where English hegemony also meant, of course, bourgeois hegemony' (1995: 39-40). The original Dutch word *Tafelberg* became Table Mountain while *Kaap Stad* became Cape Town and *Leeuwen Kop* Lion's Head. This illustrates the profound Anglicising of the colonial city. The British also transformed the urban fabric of Cape Town. The built

²⁶ Comaroff and Comaroff note that understanding colonialism begins in the everyday where it changed fundamentally one's sense of orientation in daily life (1997: 34).

environment was sugar coated with broekie lace and British designs while its social structures were reordered by Anglican ideals and virtues (Bickford-Smith 1995: 134-136).²⁷

This is not to suggest that British interventions were necessarily successful. Indeed the main point Scott attempts to convey is that so many state interventions failed because they did not take account of the complexities involved in the socio-ecological worlds it sought to control (1998). For instance, since modern forestry depended to some degree on the simplification of nature, it

... typically ignored the vast, complex, and negotiated social uses of the forest for hunting and gathering, pasturage, fishing, charcoal making, trapping, and collecting food and valuable minerals as well as the forest's significance for magic, worship, refuge, and so on (Scott 1998: 13).

Failing to comprehend the complexity involved with the natural environments in cities seems to be a perennial issue. In particular, during the colonial period the state omitted to recognise the forms of local civilian custodianship of the Cape Peninsula that developed from the practice of mountaineering and urban conservation. As we shall see in the following section, while this custodianship was in conflict with the modernisation of the Cape Peninsula, it also owed its formation to the very processes of modernity.

2.3 Nature and mountaineering in the colonial city

The term 'ecological imperialism' was originally coined by Alfred Crosby and refers to ecological collapse and the colonization of an indigenous environment with the introduction of alien species under a colonial regime. It thus attempts to explain the relationship between settlers and the colonial environment. However, Van Sittert argues that the 'Crosby model' does not substantially explain the situation in the Cape Colony (2002). His attention to the local demographic circumstances of Cape Town leads him to conclude that:

[The] sliver of temperate zone on the southwest corner of the African continent was too small to enable the creation of a dominant 'neo-Europe' along the lines of North American or Australasian colonies. Instead the creolized southwestern Cape became an anachronistic appendage to a much a larger region in which indigenous peoples greatly outnumbered settlers and the European cultural portmanteau was Africanized (Van Sittert 2002: 103).

Therefore, at the end of the 19th century, the settlers in Cape Town did not fashion an imperial garden in the colony as the Crosby model would have it. Instead, they indigenised their British gardens and taste for nature with flowers such as the Protea, Erica, Disa and Watsonia. By focussing on everyday life in colonial Cape Town, Van Sittert shows how a taste, affiliation and identification with indigenous flowers

²⁷ "Broekie lace" refers to the ornate ironwork of Victorian architecture. It got its name from the lace designs of feminine underwear. Comaroff and Comaroff argue that colonial architectural styles were intrinsic to the colonializing mission (1997: 321). Once inhabited by a colonised person, it also transformed his/her conceptualisation and culture of home (Comaroff & Comaroff 1997: 321).

emerged amongst the city's English middle-classes (Van Sittert 2002: 103). He illustrates this by pointing out the popularity of indigenous flora at flower shows and flower sales, as well as the increase in the numbers of visitors to the indigenous botanical garden shows (Van Sittert 2002). This popularity was also facilitated by the publication of lay books for identifying the regional flowers.

As Cape Town's botanical enterprises standardised and developed its register for Cape flora – through European names and categories – the city's flowers became sites of memory and belonging, of familiarity and meaning. This affiliation for the natural environment was also related to the city's political and economic transformations. In order to keep capital in the hands of the elite, an alliance between business and government was formed. It implied widening the narrow British hold on power to include Afrikaners and in particular people that were considered to be 'white' (Bickford-Smith 1995: 133-139; Wilburn 2010: 152). This political reshuffling dampened the legitimacy of English supremacy (Dubow 2004: 108). In response, finding ways to enact and secure an English identity as belonging to the city became part of colonial politics and settler self-identification (Dubow 2004; Van Sittert 2002: 126). Thus, being the gardener of indigenous plants was also a symbol of an imperial *urban* identity in the context in which Afrikaner politics challenged the hegemonic imperial order (Van Sittert 2002: 114; 180).

The Cape Peninsula offered the most impressive collection of indigenous flora and the popularity of its flower festoon coincided with a rise in urban leisure practices on the urban mountains. Mountaineering, horse riding, picnicking, camping and identifying flora on the lower slopes of the Cape Peninsula became popular leisure activities amongst the city's English middle-classes (Bickford-Smith 1999; Van Sittert 2002, 2003a). From 1898 Mr Fox, the appointed mountain ranger, kept a visitors' book on Table Mountain in which parties wrote their names and addresses on their way back from the top.²⁸ The book reveals a great deal about the socio-cultural character of mountaineering on the Peninsula. Between 1889 and 1890 Mr Fox recorded a mere 62 parties that summited Table Mountain, a number which had multiplied by a factor of ten by 1893. Van Sittert explains this rise in mountaineering as follows:

It was no coincidence that the Cape Town bourgeoisie first discovered the mountain in numbers in the 1880s. The alpine and orchid crazes in Europe lent new lustre to Cape Mountains and flora, but it was the path-making labour of the convict and 'Kafir' corvées raised by the colonial and municipal states that enable local mountaineering and botany to flourish (2003a: 171).

In other words, as the influence of industrial capital deepened it increased the growth in colonial urban leisure practices. In particular, forestry and waterworks changed the landscape irrevocably. Through these interventions the landscape was domesticated and roads were constructed making it more accessible for urban recreation. The imperial taste for forests with cleared ground and shady trees also found expression

²⁸ Visitors' book: Municipal ranger Mr Fox, 23/02/1889-22/02/1896 (UCT MA MSCA E6.1).

in the pine plantations on the lower slopes of the Peninsula such as in Tokai and Newlands.²⁹ Thus, writes one mountaineer: ‘The pine woods, where the foliage was not too dense to exclude the rays of the moon, had a peculiar fascination’.³⁰ Recreation thus developed relationally to the transformation of the Cape Peninsula landscape (Thorne & Whatmore 1998: 437).³¹

Mr Fox’s visitors’ book also reflects the import of imperial culture. Almost half of the parties recorded in the book were from Germany, Scotland, Ireland or Britain (and in two accounts the addresses read: ‘The World’ and ‘The world is my country’) as well as other overseas destinations. Thus, ascending Table Mountain in colonial Cape Town was part of a European mountaineering and travelling culture. Mountains, like the frontier, were the repositories for sublime and romantic experiences (Voss 2003; Van Sittert 2003a). The position of elevation offered by mountains was also a virtue of imperialism in which the seat of vision manifested the viewer with the sense of colonial knowledge and power (Tsing 2005: 81). Therefore, mountaineering on the Cape Peninsula was no longer about the *sight* of wilderness but was ‘a *site* of elite learning about the natural world, but more importantly about the inner self’ (Van Sittert 2002: 164, author’s emphasis). In Voss’ study on the domestication of Table Mountain she writes that:

[The] physical appropriation of Table Mountain led to ... its ideological appropriation, as displayed by [the] attitudes of superiority from the summit, which was then transferred onto the Cape, which lay strategically, and vulnerably, before their avaricious stares (2003: 42).

Therefore, for the European settler, the visitors’ book represented a testament of his physical and ideological power he envisioned for the city of potentials. It also shows that the practices of mountaineering had a class and race dimension: most of the addresses of the local parties came from the white colonial middle-class suburbs of the time.³² The practices of mountaineering were thus reserved for the European settlers in the city who occupied the higher social ranks of the city. With ascending Table Mountain they could have touched shoulders with the upper-classes of the city’s society. Amongst those that signed Mr Fox’s register was a visiting Duke staying over in the city’s castle (29/6/1890), government officials (20/7/1890), surveyors from General Office and the party of General Jan Smuts and

²⁹ Today, situated at the foot of Table Mountain, these neighbourhoods form part of the upper-class suburbs of Cape Town.

³⁰ Newspaper clipping, Dr R Marloth papers (UCT MA MSCA G1.24).

³¹ This analysis resonates with that of the ANT mentioned earlier, or that of global assemblages identified by Collier and Ong (2005). These studies emphasize the materiality in the articulation of social phenomena across local and global scales that may be altered or alter local situations.

³² The end of the 19th century was a period in which Cape Town experienced an urban reform: upper- and middle-class Capetownians relocated from the center of the city to the surrounding suburbs, a move that was facilitated by the construction of the railway to these areas (Bickford-Smith 1995). Suburbs such as these written in the visitor’s book included Wynberg, Newlands, Observatory and Rondebosch. While some recognised their new addresses in the colony, they also retained their link to the empire by writing both addresses.

Sir Herbert Baker (17/2/1893).³³ In the visitors' book, alongside their names and addresses, members of the Mountain Club (MCSA) indicated their membership with a 'MC'. Why as members would they have to indicate their affiliation with the club? What kind of presence does this signature imply? I wish to suggest that some answers to these questions are related to the urban imaginations and practices that shaped the MCSA's relation with the Cape Peninsula .

2.4 Cape Town's Mountain Club

The Mountain Club enjoys its great prestige because it is a channel through which a kind of natural grace has descended upon the City (Versfeld s.a. as cited in Lückhoff 1951: 76).

The story of Wouter Schouten discussed earlier was published in a local newspaper around 1892 on the request of the author who had translated it and thought it 'may be interesting to [a] certain class of [readers], Dutch and English alike, who care to know more of the earlier history of the Colony' (1892).³⁴ More than a hundred years later, I found Schouten's story in the MCSA archive in a file labelled 'miscellaneous' that belonged to Dr Rudolf Marloth. Dr Marloth arrived from Germany in 1883 and had trained as an analytical chemist. He soon became one of the leading figures in developing Cape botany into a taxonomic discourse accessible to the public and most probably produced one of the first hand-drawn maps of the Cape Floral Kingdom expanse (Van Sittert 2002: 106-108). Lückhoff writes that the 'flora of Table Mountain will always be associated with the name of Dr Rudolf Marloth, that famous botanist who loved and understood our mountain' (1951: 37). Here I want to speculate at the motivations for why Dr Marloth had preserved the article.

The other newspaper articles in the file were more directly linked to the MCSA, of which Dr Marloth was one of the sixty gentlemen that had established the club in 1891 (Lourens 2011; Van Sittert 2002). Of the articles preserved in the same folder some headlines included: 'How to climb a mountain, No. 4', 'The protea route - by a MCSA member' (circa 1890s), 'An interesting climb: relics on Table Mountain found in a cave' (1894).³⁵ In contrast to Schouten's story, these articles suggest that the Peninsula was frequently visited by mountaineers and that a number of hiking routes were mapped leading to the summit. Indeed, by this time, hiking up Table Mountain had become so popular that a group of serious mountaineers decided to address the safety of the visitors (Lourens 2011: 36).

³³ Visitors' book: Municipal ranger Mr Fox, 23/02/1889-22/02/1896 (UCT MA MSCA E6.1). The dates on which the visitors signed are indicated in brackets.

³⁴ From the article published in the *Cape Times*, "Wouter Schouten's Reistogt: Naar en door Oost Indien" (UCT MA MCSA G1.24).

³⁵ Dr R Marloth papers (UCT MA MSCA G1.24).

As a result of this there was talk of forming a mountain club, and on 9 October 1891 a meeting took place with 60 men in attendance. At the end of the meeting, all who were present handed their names in as members of the newly formed Mountain Club. At this stage there were only a few known walking routes on Table Mountain, but this was soon rectified (Lourens 2011: 36).

In 1894, three years after the establishment of the club, an article read:

In the vastness of Table Mountain within the rifle range of our busy city, there are places as little known and as seldom explored as any in the heart of ‘darkest Africa’, and the mountaineer, whose head is cool and who does not shrink from hard, steep climbing by the hour together can reach spots which will surprise and delight him with their wild beauty, and which few eyes besides his own have ever beheld. These remarks do not, of course, apply to the summit of the mountain ... which the larger portion of those who visit Table Mountain [take] ... A few members of the Mountain Club intend ... to make a systematic exploration of the ravines and krantzies [with] which the mountain is encircled ...³⁶

I suggest that attention to the human trodden routes on the Cape Peninsula is a story about its changing landscape (Ingold 1993: 152). It may be possible to interpret the presence of Schouten’s story in Dr Marloth’s collection as a reminder of a time when the routes summiting the Cape Peninsula were unknown and treacherous. In Schouten’s time there were no maps of routes or search parties if one were to get lost. However, as the description above suggests, in Dr Marloth’s time, the MCSA acquired extensive knowledge of the Cape Peninsula landscape. As I will show below, it was this knowledge that legitimated the club’s disposition as the first urban custodians of the Cape Peninsula .

Each year the MCSA hosted a dinner that was one of the most important events on the club calendar. The bi-weekly minutes of the club meetings reveal, months ahead before the event, preparations concerning venue and invitations. The prestigious dinner was usually occasioned with a five to six course meal that celebrated the club’s inherited European gourmet cuisine. In 1897 a hybrid colonial-indigenous soup *Clear á la Tafelberg* was served which may surreptitiously be interpreted as the literal British consumption of the DEIC-ruled landscape.³⁷ The story of the dinner on the evening of 25 November 1893 was published by a journalist in the local newspaper. At this night, the first President of the club and keen politician and industrialist, Sir James Sivewright, stated in his speech that ‘the club’:

...endeavoured to combine with the healthy amusement of mountaineering such services as exploring the beautiful mountains of the land of their adoption, *and sometimes it lay in their power to add to the knowledge of the fauna, flora, rainfall, and other scientific objects connected with those mountains.* In that connection he was glad that they had the Astronomer-Royal (Dr Gill) present with them.

But although those scientific pursuits were very useful and very desirable, the main object with them as members of the..., he was going to *say English race*, but then he thought of the Scotsmen and Irishmen among them. [A voice: ‘And Dutch.’] Yes, he would include the Dutch; in fact, he would run the whole gamut of nationalities and include them all, because as long as they were prepared to pay their subscriptions and to be *true citizens they were willing to initiate them into full burgher rights of the mountain*, after less than fifty years’ residence. (Laughter) But, as he was saying, their main object was that instinct of their

³⁶ From the article “An interesting climb” published in the *Cape Times* in Dr R Marloth papers (UCT MA MSCA G1.24).

³⁷ 1897 Annual dinner card (UCT MA MSCA G1.24).

forefathers in them, which made them derive pleasure from the simple exercise in climbing up mountains and enjoying what their *English poets* has sung of, the rapture there was in the lonely mountain.³⁸

In the above quoted speech, Sivewright's expression of 'full burgher rights' is different from the state ownership of the mountains and completely absent in the DEIC period. It suggests a form of social stewardship exclusive to the members of the club. Having the right to the Cape Peninsula, as was offered by Sivewright, was however subject to the ascription of being a 'true citizen' which in that period and context meant 'all' white nationalities from a particular class and social stature. This invitation to 'all' (including the Dutch) also reflected Sivewright's own political endeavours. He was a known influential and charismatic speaker and in his biography Wilburn describes him as:

The Scottish Imperialist Afrikaner [who] spent his telegraphic, business, and political careers trying to get well inside Boer, Afrikaner, and English camps to see life as the 'other' in order to promote compromise between antagonists. Even sportsmen thrived under his patronage. In South Africa he supported fishing, shooting, cricket, football, and Cape Town's Mountain Club (2010: 155, 498).

He was also a close business associate of Rhodes and together they represented the new capitalism in South Africa and did not hesitate to employ personal persuasion for political gain (Wilburn 2010: 155).³⁹ Sivewright thus exercised his 'highlander magic' as an appeal to address the larger urban political climate in a club largely dominated by Anglican members (Wilburn 2010). Being an influential member of the MCSA, his personal convictions also suggest that 'the club' or the 'members of the club' were not a homogeneous group of people who shared the same interests. In fact, it was exactly under the umbrella of difference that members of the club could enact and create a yearned sense of commonality. In order to become a member of the club an applicant had to be nominated by an existing member and approval was subject to the board's decision. This practice secured the elite status of the MCSA, which was what they yearned for. Therefore, the MCSA, like other cultural institutions in the city, was also a vehicle for mobilising a common 'Englishness' that created class and ethnic boundaries in the city (Bickford-Smith 1995: 39; 1999).⁴⁰ It was especially their shared interest in the Cape Peninsula and subsequently custodianship of the Cape Peninsula which led to the development of urban conservation.

³⁸ From the newspaper article "The Mountain Club Dinner: a speech by Sir James Sivewright, Two practical projects" (UCT MA MSCA G1.24). Sivewright was president of the club from its inception "4 November 1891 to probably 26 October 1900 after which he and Lady Sivewright were given life membership" (Wilburn 2010: 498).

³⁹ Both Rhodes and Sivewright fostered a special yet curiously ambiguous relationship with the Cape Peninsula (Maylam 2005; Wilburn 2010). While both imperialists' sought to subject the colonial landscape to modernist economic development virtues, they also cultivated a personal sense of appreciation for the native landscape that fostered their belonging in the land of "adoption" in which their careers had "played out" (Maylam 2005: 156).

⁴⁰ Bickford-Smith writes that in the colonial context, "Englishness ... was ultimately about white skins, English tongues and bourgeois values" (1995: 39).



Figure 2:

Four mountaineers of the MCSA, c. 1929. At the back is the Sentinel Peak of Hout Bay. Chapter Five discusses Hangberg's relationship with this peak (Source: From the photograph collection in the UCT MA MCSA H).

2.2.1 The romantic and scientific urban mountaineer

It is worthwhile to explore the ideological background particular to the time and place of the MCSA. Following Van Sittert, I suggest that for these colonial mountain enthusiasts, the Cape Peninsula represented the romanticism associated with the pursuit of mountaineering and experiencing pristine nature while also making room for the practices of science that rendered the landscape subject to the positivistic logics of science (2003a). Both this romantic and scientific thought linked back to Europe and an emerging Alpine tradition, and despite their ontological differences, Van Sittert suggests that they 'simultaneously [elevated] mountains into legitimate subjects for scientific enquiry and sites for experiences of the sublime' (2003a: 163). While the MCSA referred to Table Mountain as their 'cathedral', they applied the scrutinizing eye of science to the mountain. These two ways of perceiving the Cape Peninsula produced both intimate and personal knowledge of the crevasses and peaks of the mountains, as well as scientific knowledge of its plants and animals (Lückhoff 1951: 70).

Sivewright's speech mentioned earlier began with the proposal that it was in the 'power' of the members of the club 'to add to the knowledge of the fauna, flora, rainfall, and other scientific objects' of the mountains.⁴¹ This endeavour was part of a larger scientific colonial engagement on the African continent where the practices of science provided an ostensibly value-free domain of knowledge that appropriated and extended colonial power (Dubow 2004). Western science did not overtly express its hegemonic potential. Instead, it was insinuated through everyday written and discursive practices and much like Romanticism, it provided a particular cultural vocabulary for decoding and defining urban nature in the city. It gave Sivewright the inspiration to extrapolate from Table Mountain an unobstructed railway to Johannesburg (Wilburn 2010: 200). Table Mountain provided for him an advantageous viewpoint that confirmed his mastery of the indigenous landscape and enabled an idealist position from where he could 'hypothesize about future imperialistic victories' (Voss 2003: 44). For instance, Voss links the physical conquest of Table Mountain with the 'political machinations of the colonial venture in Southern Africa' (2003: 40).

As described in the previous section, the government's main objective with respect to the Cape Peninsula was to protect the reservoirs and streams from pollution. In recognising this objective, the MCSA responded by suggesting that their presence was beneficial since they would be able to support the policing of polluters of the water. One of the ways in which I came to the notion of custodianship was by reading the following excerpt:

The chairman pointed out how their mountain excursions could be so arranged that no possible *impurities* could get into the water, and further that if the Council legalised their mountain climbing the members would become a sort of *custodians* of the *purity* of the water and run in any one they found desecrating the purity of the water (emphasis added).⁴²

Here, the club chairman also expressed an Anglican sensibility for purity, not only for clean water but also for retaining the practice of mountaineering as a legitimate one in which the inner-self is purified. The culture of mountaineering was imagined as distinctly pure whereas other daily activities such as fetching and washing in water became social impurities identified with the servants of the city. Citing Smuts again, he said: 'And those who, whether members of the Mountain Club or not, make it a habit of ascending her beautiful slopes in their free moments, will reap a rich reward not only in bodily health and strength but also in an inner freedom and purity in an habitual spirit of delight, which will be the crowning glory of their lives' (Lückhoff 1951: 73).

⁴¹ From the newspaper article "The Mountain Club Dinner: a speech by Sir James Sivewright, Two practical projects" (UCT MA MSCA G1.24).

⁴² See previous footnote.

The MCSA also expressed its custodianship of the Cape Peninsula in other ways. As the public's interest in recreation increased, it was the members of the MCSA who represented the public on matters of the Cape Peninsula. By the late 19th century, recreation on Table Mountain had become so popular, the state felt compelled to control it. Read, for instance, this extraction from 1911:

Municipal regulations in regards to [the Catchment Area on Table Mountain] – which embraces nearly the whole of the top of the Mountain – have just been published in the 'Government Gazette'. They include the prohibition of all picnicking within the Area, and of the use of any paths except recognised rights of way. There are only two rights of way on this top of the Mountain. The wording of the regulations is identical with that of those published in 1899 and withdrawn in response to the empathetic public protest which was then made. It is hoped that a similar expression of feeling by influential citizens may again be of use in obtaining a modification of the very stringent regulations proposed.⁴³

This is an extraction of a letter distributed to the rest of the members of the MCSA and 'other gentlemen interested in the preservation of [Table Mountain] as a piece of public resort'.⁴⁴ The letter was an invitation to interested parties to discuss and plan a public dispute against the restrictions of access to the mountain imposed by the government. This was not the first time the club and other supporting urban citizens had resisted the boundaries imposed by the government nor was it the last. At the heart of the 'disputation' was their understanding of nature and its role in the city which was very different from that of the colonial government. For the club members, nature found its expression in the mountains of the Cape Peninsula. It suffices to note that initially 'public recreation' or the notion of a 'public playground' was seen as the main reasons why the mountain should be protected against the colonial government. Conservation practices and sensibilities emerged gradually with the exposure to knowledge, observations and experiences of the environment. Nonetheless, the mountainous landscape presented the possibility to gain the mountaineering experience they yearned for in the city.

The club was also competent in negotiating and communicating with the property owners of the Cape Peninsula which was mostly represented by the government. For instance, several letters sent between the Council and the club reveal discussions concerning the hoisting of signs indicating for example pathways, matters concerning the safety of hikers, water taps and the replacement of chains. Under Sivewright's presidency the MCSA applied to the Department of Agriculture in 1900 to hoist a sign that would warn the public to avoid descending via the gorge from Table Mountain which was accepted and implemented. Their lifetime devotion to 'the safety of climbers, and for the organisation of search parties when occasion arises' as well as facilitating 'the registration of qualified mountain guides' were also testament to their authorisation as the custodians of the Cape Peninsula.⁴⁵

⁴³ Correspondence between the members of the club and the local municipality (UCT MA MCSA G3.4).

⁴⁴ See previous footnote.

⁴⁵ General Committee of Mountain Club Minute Book, Volume II, 12/4/97 – 18/9/03 (UCT MA MSCA B1.2).

Scholars have pointed out that it is not enough to simply represent the Cape Peninsula as a clean slate for, for instance, scientific or romantic inscription or to treat the social significance of nonhumans within a paradigm of symbolism or representation (Thorne & Whatmore 1998: 437). This only furthers a nature/culture dichotomy that is no longer understood as acceptable in critical theory. Therefore, in addition to the analysis provided above, I wish to suggest that there is an element of enabling the Cape Peninsula that allowed the club members to foster intimate relations with its mountains, crevasses, ravines and pathways. As the mountainous landscapes were in the process of becoming a space for mountaineering, the members of the club became mountaineers of the mountainous landscapes. The Cape Peninsula did not only confer a 'symbolic presence, but a real experiential one' (Ingold 1999: 276). The myriad of hiking routes developed by the members of the club emerged from the interface of the landscape and the boots that walked it (Ingold 2010). This is significantly different from the state interventions discussed earlier in which the delineations, actions and strategies were planned in advance. Instead the practices of mountaineering have no end destination – the path unfolded as the landscape responded.

2.2.2 Urban Conservation in practice

Scholars have pointed out, at least initially, that conservation debates and environmental regulation in South Africa derived from an urban elite constituency in Cape Town (Van Sittert 2002; Grove 1989a). As an ideology, conservation matured in 18th century Europe and derived from an Enlightenment discourse based on the belief in reason. Moreover, from the outset, conservation debates in the colonial context were not a matter of wholesale importation from the US or Europe, instead it was a confluence of colonial expansion (and consequently environmental degradation), scientific philosophies, the colonial experience, soils, weather, animal patterns and game hunting practices (Brockington *et al.* 2008; Brown 2002; Grove 1989a). Colonial conservation thus embodied a host of divergent meanings, means and ad hoc legislative or non-legislative interventions.

In his reading of the earliest conservationist debates in the Cape Colony, Grove illustrates how the first conservation ideology was developed into policy only because it suited the government of the time and was granted enough support from the settler white community (1989a: 35). These conservation policies were concerned with land, forest and water degradation and were, at times, in conflict with settler enterprises in agriculture that were resource intensive (Grove 1989a). The Forest and Herbage Preservation act was promulgated in the mid-19th century. While this act was considered to be the 'most advanced of its time' because of its holistic nature, its effectiveness was questionable (Beinart & Coates

1995: 44). Thus, the MCSA was established in a context where the British government had a history of amenability to conservation intervention and where the settler community had developed an affinity for the colonial environment.

The prime concern of the MCSA was mountaineering. However, their knowledge and observations of the ecological conditions on the mountains motivated the robust conservationist and preservationist discourse it presented throughout its existence (Goetze 2002; Van Sittert 2002: 109). What was unique about this conservationist movement and which made it particularly urban was that its mountaineering foundation advocated for human access to nature. Mountaineering made the question of physical borders for a reserve inconceivable. This was the case, notwithstanding the fact that at the time there were very few large animals left on the Cape Peninsula (these were in any case not perceived to be worthy of conservation). Secondly, the conservation practices of the members of the MCSA emerged from spending time on the mountains and observing the changes on the landscape. Therefore, if this mountaineering legacy made conservation in the city unique, it is also what made it possible.

The club developed expert knowledge on the spatial layout of the landscape which, in combination with the biological expertise of members such as Dr Marloth mentioned earlier, contributed to the club's confidence in urban conservation. Dr Marloth's expertise and passion for Cape flora also encouraged the club to become active advocates for the biological uniqueness of Cape flora. Yet, similar to the present time, at the end of the 19th century conservation had to find its place amongst a myriad of perceptions reserved for urban nature. For the colonial government the mountains symbolised economic revenue and for others it was merely a space for collecting wood or flowers and washing clothes.

The MCSA's first conservationist concern emerged from the growing importance and popularity of Cape flora in the urban psyche. As the popularity of indigenous flowers in the city matured, so did the number of flower sellers in the city, a practice that had since the 1880s grown into a rich cultural heritage of Cape Town (Rabe 2010). The MCSA soon took notice of the dwindling effect these activities had on the numbers of Cape flora. As a result, on several occasions between 1902 and 1912 – before the official formation of the Wild Flowers Protection Society (WFPS) – the point was repeatedly made by members that the club should intervene with regards to the 'amount of damage done by flower pickers of [orchids], which are becoming scarcer every year'.⁴⁶ Not only did the members of the club express their concerns to the city council, warning the officials about the threatened state of Cape flora, they also advised their members to be on the lookout for the 'excess plucking of wild flowers'.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ General Committee of Mountain Club Minute Book, Volume II, 12/4/97 – 18/9/03 (UCT MA MSCA B1.2).

⁴⁷ See previous footnote.

The club's campaign for the protection of Cape flora was influenced and strengthened by Dr Marloth (Van Sittert 2002). The principle concern of Dr Marloth was to advocate for and educate the public about the special and unique qualities of the Cape flora. This was a forerunner for the endemic and biodiversity discourse that emerged a century later. To express the urgency of this cause, a deputation was mobilised in 1911 'under the auspices' of the club for the '[better] protection of wild flowers'. The objections of this deputation were stipulated as follows:

- A. The gathering of all flowers, comprised in a certain list to be forbidden on the Cape Peninsula Mountains without a permit.
(Note) The list of flowers forbidden would comprise all those sufficiently attractive to be sought by [flower sellers]. It is intended that the permits should be for a period (say 12 months) and be freely issued to the public on the grantee undertaking:-
- (a) Not to gather flowers for sale;
 - (b) Not to gather flowers destructively, i.e. in unreasonable quantities or to the endangering of the bulbs or plants
It is proposed that the gathering on the Cape Peninsula Mountains of flowers for sale be forbidden under a penalty.

With regard to undertaking (b) it is thought this would have a moral and educational effect.⁴⁸

The deputation was followed by the formation of the WFPS (in which the club had a strong representation). The WFPS was committed to improving the 'wild flower protection legislation by closing loopholes and ensuring the effective enforcement by the police and magistracy' (Van Sittert 2002: 121). The latter took effect and the Forestry Department prohibited flower picking without an official permit altogether in 1897 (Boehi 2010: 17). At the heart of the public and official discussions in terms of the matter of protecting Cape flora was the question of entitlement. Thought to be the main source of flower pickers, the city's flower sellers were mostly coloured women and children and occupied the lower social ranks of the city (Boehi 2010: 18-19).⁴⁹ The marginal status of the flower sellers elicited pity amongst some officials who suggested that flower picking should be legalised at least to some degree (Boehi 2010: 18). Others condemned the practice as being destructive to the indigenous flowers, a sentence testament to the emergence of the patriotic sentiments associated with the indigenous flowers (Boehi 2010: 18). In this sense the conservationist interventions mobilised and practiced by the members of the club had a broader bearing on the process of redefining the meaning urban nature meant in the city.

Gabriel's historical analysis of the cultural development of Philadelphia's Fairmount Park shows how urban practices conceptualised the understandings of 'nature' and 'city' at the time (2011). He argues that the formation of these concepts as separate entities depended upon the erasure of the economic strategies embedded in the park. This kind of binary logic also 'helps to produce a knowledge of the city as wholly

⁴⁸ On 23 November 1891 a number of MCSA members wrote a letter to the Cape administrator pertaining to the "recommendations for the better protection of Wild Flowers" in General Committee of Mountain Club Minute Book, Volume II, 12/4/97 – 18/9/03 (UCT MA MSCA B1.2).

⁴⁹ Boehi argues that the complex ways in which conservation legislation with regards to the indigenous flowers "contained intrinsically a debate about race and class" (2010: 19).

capitalist (social) space through the reification of the park as non-economic (natural) space' (2011: 124). Gabriel's analysis is useful in understanding the ways in which urban conservation as practiced by the members of the club produced conceptual differences between nature and the city.

The members of the club continuously (and effectively) worked to dispose of economic-related activities on the mountains that would on the one hand diminish the number of indigenous flowers and, on the other, taint the sublime experience of nature with city overtones. In Sivewright's speech we read how the Cape Peninsula is directly linked to a colonial mountaineering tradition: a cultural practice steeped within the romantic discourses reminiscent of Byron's literary heritage. In fact, Van Sittert suggests that the MCSA was an 'imitation of the British Alpine Club,' and that their practices 'passed through the receiver filter of mountain romanticism ... and nature derived from colonial alpinism' (2005b: 160). For these mountaineers, the Cape Peninsula resembled the lonely pursuit of ascending a mountain, a journey limited to the grand features of nature imagined as 'an immaculate space not defiled by any taint of human presence' (Whatmore 2002: 13). But this imagining of the mountains as a pristine space of nature without the intrusions of the city had its roots firmly in the experience of living in colonial Cape Town (Williams 1975).

By the time the MCSA was established the city's industrial and capitalist flows had grown to a considerable size, bringing with it the grime of the working-classes which government worked to sanitize along the lines of a modern clean and orderly city (Bickford-Smith 1995: 132-143). The heart of the city raised an 'aesthetic alarm' for Cape Town's bourgeoisie who wanted to detach themselves from the urban squalor they perceived of as a melting pot of ethnicities (Van Sittert 2003a: 176). In the article 'The bourgeois eye aloft,' Van Sittert (2003a) describes an urban geographical reordering in which the upper-class residents (of which Rhodes was one) came to prefer the pastoral eastern side of the Cape Peninsula where the rusty Dutch farms recalled the imperial garden idyll and where 'neither [labour] nor violence intrudes' (Nixon 2011: 245). He links their geographical repositioning in relation to the different 'faces' of Table Mountain in which the less popularised and grandiose side of the mountain became a repository for situating English identity in the city. Members of the club shared the same social profile as these urban citizens. It is therefore no coincidence that Van Sittert observed this during the same time that the club dissociated itself from the northern face of Table Mountain (the face that watched over the centre of the city and which they found displeasing to their sensibilities) (2003a). This part of the mountain was

believed to be scarred by its popularity and stripped from the romanticism that the eastern side face of the mountain retained (Van Sittert 2003a).⁵⁰

With this assertion, Van Sittert disrupts the representation of nature in its singular unified form. In his analysis, social relations emerge in response to different topographical features of the mountains (Asdal 2003). He writes: ‘The vulgarity of the city and its determined ‘vulgarisation of the summits’ inclined the resident middle class to look increasingly east to the ‘garden of the Cape’ (Van Sittert 2003a: 177). Thus, in colonial Cape Town the notion of nature as refuge from the industrialised city inscribed a boundary between the city and the mountain and between nature and urban. The MCSA’s practices and imaginations of the Cape Peninsula were a significant exemplar of this urban sentiment. For instance, a member of the club published his experience of the Peninsula in the local newspaper in 1895 as follows:

The night was warm and it seemed much better to lie there breathing the fragrant mountain air than that in a close bedroom in Cape Town inhaling the odours from adjacent sewer trap, much better to listen to the insect music than to the discordant songs of noisy revellers, much more preferable to be disturbed by the cry of a night bird than by the clattering one of the midnight horrors of Cape Town.⁵¹

This description introduces the city as a place of squalor, filth and disorderliness and effectively also projects its antithesis, the mountaineering experience in which nature emerges as romantic, pure and pristine. Defining nature in the city was thus not only an outcome of the industrialised urban environment but also a discourse produced through the imaginative faculties of the club. After some negotiation with the City Council, Dr Marloth obtained permission to acquire the vacant hut on Table Mountain as a ‘Mountain Hut’. The humble furniture and cutlery provided for the hut held the promise of the romantic mountain experience which was only to be disrupted by the noise of their own members.⁵² In a meeting in 1907, Dr Marloth disgruntledly remarked that on two occasions they were disturbed late at night by other members and that it ‘should be stopped’.⁵³ There were also other efforts to keep urban elements at bay. For instance, the club was to suppress ‘vulgar advertisement’ and other activities such as wood collecting, rolling stones and, discouraged settlement on the mountains.⁵⁴ The Cape Peninsula was especially guarded from becoming ‘a convenient habitat for vagrants’.⁵⁵ Conservation in the city was thus

⁵⁰ Van Sittert points out that the club replaced its official badge that contained the silhouette of the northern face of Table Mountain with the orchid *Disa uniflora* and in this way “sought to signal both their elite status ... and their commitment to the preservation of the endangered indigenous flora” (2002: 111; 2003a: 174)

⁵¹ Newspaper clipping in Dr R Marloth papers (UCT MA MSCA G1.24).

⁵² With the acquisition of the hut (that also came with terms and conditions) it was proposed by the secretary that only the following items should be taken to the hut: “1 table, 6 chairs, 2 lanterns, 3 stretchers, 1 wastebucket, 3 chairs, 1 candlestick, 2 saucepans, 1 pan, 2 brooms, 1 kettle, 2 buckets” General Committee of Mountain Club Minute Book, Volume II, 12/4/97 – 18/9/03 (UCT MA MSCA B1.2).

⁵³ General Committee of Mountain Club Minute Book, Volume II, 12/4/97 – 18/9/03 (UCT MA MSCA B1.2)

⁵⁴ The Preservation of Table Mountain, Correspondence letters 1900-1944 (UCT MA MSCA C3.6.3)

⁵⁵ See previous footnote.

part of a larger story. Through these acts and practices, the Cape Peninsula was re-cast in regard to its meaning and value for a particular colonial constituency in Cape Town.

The second conservationist concern that occupied members of the club (and continues to do so) involves the eradication of alien trees. Conservation often occupies an ambivalent position between practical experience and theory (Hinchliffe 2008). This ambiguity is illustrated by the situation of alien trees in Cape Town and more specifically the position of pine trees on the mountains. After 200 years of colonial occupation, the soil erosion caused by deforestation on the slopes of Table Mountain caused a great concern for the officials and urban citizens and, in order to prevent further erosion, soil conservationists endorsed the planting of alien trees. Thus, notwithstanding the official efforts to plant alien trees, members of the club had taken it upon themselves to distribute pine seeds on the landscape during walks (Moll 1989: 3).

However, the seeds of conservation in the pockets of their hiking trousers soon filled with concern as they noticed the rapid colonisation of indigenous vegetation by alien trees. ‘Defending the indigenous’ thus called upon a range of strategies to combat the spread of alien trees (Van Sittert 2002). Early 20th century archive material illustrates the efforts made by the members of the club to control the spread of pine trees on the urban mountains.⁵⁶ For instance, in a letter with the subject heading ‘Early eradication of alien plants and trees’ dating back to 1916, the town clerk wrote to a club member that:

[Additional] tree planting operation on Signal Hill consists of the placing of clusters of five trees at various points about 150 feet apart ... this method of planting has been adopted with a view to preserving the native flora which forms a delightful feature on the hillside.⁵⁷

Maps of the Cape Peninsula dating back to the 1930s are crisscrossed by red-markings to indicate the trees earmarked for eradication, as well as those the government wanted to keep for aesthetic or practical reasons.⁵⁸ The club also printed postcards that they sent to the owners of private land on the Peninsula occupied by alien trees to educate them with regard to their removal.

Moreover, the question of alien species also reflected a deeper anxiety of settler belonging. As an urban conservation practice, alien eradication’s political context is best illustrated by its connection to General Jan Smuts. At the annual MCSA dinner in 1935 he was quoted saying:

Life is becoming more mechanised, and if we are to get back to nature we shall have to thank the Mountain Club and mountaineering for it ... In fifty years’ time Table Mountain will be a pine forest if nothing is done

⁵⁶ Early eradication of alien plants of trees, 1916-1945 (UCT MA MSCA C3.9.1)

⁵⁷ The letter was addressed to the local government by a Mr Frick, Early eradication of alien plants of trees, 1916-1945 (UCT MA MSCA C3.9.1)

⁵⁸ Early eradication of alien plants of trees, 1916-1945 (UCT MA MSCA C 3.9.1)

in the matter ... I will personally take the matter in hand. I hope to be able to lead a campaign which will result in success.⁵⁹

Firstly, Smuts was an influential statesman, nature lover and poetic speaker and his vocations about the MCSA as being the guardian of 'nature' in an industrialised period is telling. He acknowledged the role the club played on a larger urban scale which indicates its part in the process by which the mountains were appropriated culturally and physically. Smuts also captures the urban fear of losing touch with a nature not tainted by human interference as imagined by the romantics. Imagining this pristine nature fading as 'life' becomes 'more mechanised' was about contributing to the prevailing discursive and ideological production of a boundary between the city and nature. To situate nature as an 'essential principle and foundational category' also performs the task of providing a common platform to mobilise socio-political objectives. Smuts' promise to personally attend to the matter of alien invasion is more politically complicated than the simple fear of a pine forest on Table Mountain. Smuts developed a philosophy in holistic ecology which according to Anker, 'inspired the nation's ecologists to sanctify and ecologically [inform] racial policy' (2004: 303). His eco-logic was based upon evolutionist and racial principles that suggested that white people had progressed to a higher evolutionary stage, a stage which the local Africans were still in the process of achieving (Anker 2004).⁶⁰ This racial paradigm employed the conventions of natural science to introduce a sense of commonality between otherwise possibly antagonistic white communities.

In a striking article on the ideological discourse in which alien trees have been encapsulated in the postcolony (a century later), Comaroff and Comaroff suggest that the current state's intention to eradicate aliens is a strategic priority to build a common nation (2001). This analysis also finds resonance in the period under discussion when the 'nation,' as it was presaged in the apartheid era, was divided along English/Imperial and Afrikaner lines and nature (or alien nature) provided a platform to build a common 'white' nation. Therefore, eradicating pine trees and defending indigenous flora on the Cape Peninsula was a process by which the settler society was coding their white identity on the African environment. Yet while members of the club invested great effort in the eradication of trees, without comprehensive policy and government intervention, their attempts remained futile. It was only in the 1970s when ecological concerns in terms of alien vegetation reached a boiling point that the government implemented a working policy and tangible change became possible.

⁵⁹ From the newspaper article "Pine-tree menace to mountains" published in the *Cape Times*, 30 April 1935 (UCT MA MSCA C3.9.1).

⁶⁰ Anker writes that Smuts "understood race in terms of a gradual evolution from primates, bushman, blacks to the white Nordic type and distributed social and political rights accordingly" (2004: 305).

Conservation practice and mountaineering are synonymous with cartography: the delineation of the Peninsula onto a map creates the knowledge needed for accessing the mountains and talking about the experience. For members of the MCSA, identifying with the Cape Peninsula often took form in this practice and this reflected their desire to chart their local identity and experience on the landscape (Novell 1998: 9). The club traced, mapped and delineated the landscape of the Cape Peninsula by various means. They sketched and published relief maps of the contours, moulded topographical models of the landscape and published hundreds of hiking routes on the Peninsula.⁶¹ Furthermore, in 1905 at a committee meeting ‘it was proposed and seconded that the publication of the Club map of the mountain be left in abeyance until the government map was published’.⁶² This indicates that, despite the state territorialisation driven by its need for resources, members of the MCSA developed equal, if not more detailed, maps of the urban mountains. Citing Penn, Voss writes that ‘the mapper, in mapping, simultaneously exercises power of the charted terrain and gains enormous empowerment through having assimilated it as a field of knowledge’ (2003: 40). In this sense, their chartered knowledge of the Cape Peninsula gave them the credentials to act as its custodians and to determine the ways in which it should be preserved.

This knowledge also gave them the sense of authority to represent the public of the city. Public access – or right of way – to the Cape Peninsula remained a central issue for the members of the club. Between 1899 and 1940 the club repeatedly organized deputations against the restrictions and regulations imposed on access to the mountains which denied the white middle-classes their right to recreation on what was referred to as the ‘pleasure-ground of the city’. But it also gave the MCSA the authority to establish the terms and conditions of entering and utilising the urban mountains.

The club’s capacity to communicate with the colonial government made it possible that on several occasions only members of the club were allowed in particular areas of the mountains if they displayed their club badge. At the beginning of this chapter, I posed the question: why did the members of the MCSA indicate their presence in the visitors’ book? In light of the analysis provided above, I wish to suggest that through the cultural practice of mountaineering the Cape Peninsula was in a process of redefinition. The MCSA offered a cultural enclave – or a spatial opportunity – in which colonials imbued the Cape Peninsula ‘with particular meaning, by and for, human sociality and identity’ (Lovell 1998: 6). For the members of the club the Cape Peninsula was not only about mountaineering but also a marker and expression for manifesting a local urban identity that articulated particular class and race boundaries. Therefore, colonial mountaineering and conservation practices have involved so much more than merely belonging to a club and protecting the environment.

⁶¹ The club’s constitution of 1911 read“(d) Compilation of topographical, meteorological and climatological records, illustrated by description, map, photograph or model” (UCT MA MCSA G1.24).

⁶² General Committee of Mountain Club Minute Book, Volume II, 12/4/97 – 18/9/03 (UCT MA MSCA B1.2)

2.5. The colonial roots of urban nature

[How] ... does the naturalisation of nationality relate to the construction of older identities framed in terms of history, culture, race [and] ethnicity? (Comaroff & Comaroff 2001: 631).

My intention of narrating the history of mountaineering and the emergence of urban conservation was twofold: Firstly, it illustrated that the (natural) history of the Cape Peninsula and the (social) history of colonial Cape Town are integrated and they 'opened' a gap for the burgeoning English urban recreational culture and the development of urban conservation. My interpretation of the romantic and conservationist mountaineers also illustrate that urban conservation was a process situated both materially and ideologically in relation to a changing natural environment. In this sense, the 'making' of conservation 'is always a more than human endeavour' and furthermore, 'nature' does not 'sit mutely outside an evolving society' such as Cape Town (Hinchliffe 2008: 89, 94). Secondly, urban conservation and urban mountaineering emerged from a particular class and race constituency.

[The Mountain Club members] continually and consistently made their views known, and championed the rights of passage up, and public access on, Table Mountain. The point that needs to be made however is that the elite image that the club projected over the years was enhanced by its earlier Anglo-Saxon, predominantly male, and also colonial heritage (Goetze 2002: 463).

The point Goetze raises above concerns the relevance of the history of colonialism. He seems to suggest that the MCSA's relation to Table Mountain cannot be understood without the context from which the club emerged, i.e. its elitist, male, colonial and English background. It illustrates the historical roots of recreation and the ideological production of nature in Cape Town. The stories of members of the MCSA tell of socio-spatial relations through which a particular meaning of nature emerged. This meaning was mediated through the physical experience of being a mountain lover, the process of finding an identity on the African continent and, finally the inherited and learned knowledge filters that authorised these processes. These mediations and meanings remained largely confined to the colonial middle- and upper-classes of the city.

The MCSA, like other cultural institutions in the city, was a vehicle for establishing and sustaining race, class and gender boundaries in the circles of society. Appropriating the Cape Peninsula in terms of specific mountaineering and botanical scientists' vocabularies denied the possibility of other ways of engaging with the nature-city interface. This is not to say that people of colour did not participate in the culture of mountaineering. In fact, adjacent to the club's hut mention was made of the 'native mountain

hut'.⁶³ But it is to suggest that if the club exercised and 'policed' a particular conceptual meaning of the Peninsula in the city, people categorised as 'blacks' and 'coloured' and other subjugated groups could not participate in the making of such meaning. Thus, race and class discrimination operated in subtle rather than overt ways. As one of the members of the club wrote:

We believe that, subject to any necessary safe-guards, the Mountain should remain accessible as a scenic attraction and a place of recreation for residents and visitors, whatever their social status or racial hue.⁶⁴

While this statement may seem to be inclusive in terms of race and class, the ways in which the Cape Peninsula was controlled and culturally appropriated remained abutted in the white elite and middle-classes of the city. The MCSA has provided one entry point into the ways in which the Cape Peninsula was in the process of being appropriated through making claims of belonging and identity. The conservation practices and ideas of nature in the city, mobilised by these early conservationists and mountaineers provided an account of the history of conservation which is different from the histories that transpired in the rural areas of South Africa. Nevertheless, the MCSA, although the oldest and perhaps the most influential society in terms of the Cape Peninsula, came shared the field of conservation with other civil societies that, viewed collectively, formed a collaborative network that merged into urban conservation (Brockington *et al.* 2008: 9; Tsing 2005: 100). Yet these configurations of conservation hardly occurred in isolation and as conservation interventions in South Africa matured, the MCSA was partly side-lined to make way for the culture of national parks that strengthened the rise of Afrikaner nationalism.

⁶³ In 2012 when I visited the plateau of Table Mountain, the hut was dilapidated and appeared not to be out of use. To investigate the hut's ownership and legacy may be one way to revitalize a non-white mountaineering heritage in the city.

⁶⁴ Correspondence letters in Table Mountain Catchment Area Regulations 1904/5, 1914, 1932/3, (UCT MA BC 1421 C3.4)

CHAPTER THREE: NATIONS AND NATURE

3.1 The 1929 Proposal

Flora lacked the appeal of big game and Cape botany did not have a proconsul of the calibre of Stevenson-Hamilton to repackage an imperial project in nationalist garb (Van Sittert 2002: 123).

The first nature reserve in Cape Town was founded in 1822 by Lord Somerset and public game reserves were established in the province in 1903 and 1908 (Carruthers 2009a; Child 2009; Van Sittert 2005a). Until the 1920s, game reserves were authorized by those who had the right to proclaim crown-owned properties as game reserves for hunting practices or to facilitate the wild animal trade market (Van Sittert 2005a). It was only after this period that urban citizens started mobilising for reserves and national parks that were not intended for elite hunter-sportsmen but for the protection of wild flowers (Van Sittert 2005a: 288). This transformation was in part the result of a philosophical change within the University of Cape Town's botany department (Van Sittert 2002).⁶⁵ In the past, practicing natural science was about classifying, naming and cultivating the wild flowers of the Cape Peninsula. Now flora was believed to exist in a fragile ecological equilibrium with other natural species at the risk of human intervention (Van Sittert 2002). This was the discipline of ecology and scientifically backed the ideology of parks and reserves.

However, science on its own was not initially perceived to be enough to convince the city council to establish nature reserves, tourism was highlighted instead (Lückhoff 1951). While large game sold the image of the country, during the 1920s and 1930s Cape flora and Table Mountain promoted Cape Town. Aided by the Cape Peninsula Publicity Association, Cape Town's natural features (especially the beaches) became the trademark of the city (Bickford-Smith 2009: 1769). Access to the prized natural sites of the city was radically improved by the construction of a cable car in 1929 on Table Mountain and the 'road that was built for strategic reasons during World War I' to Cape Point (Bickford-Smith 2009: 1771).⁶⁶ Cape Town actively promoted itself to tourists as a stately holiday destination by endorsing nature as the heritage of the city (Bickford-Smith 2009). However, the influx of tourists on the Cape Peninsula seeking to pocket natural souvenirs soon caused considerable concern for the conservationists of the city (Van Sittert 2002). This led the Botanical Society and the MCSA to intervene and successfully pressure the council into establishing the reserves, albeit to sustain the tourist industry (Van Sittert 2002: 123). Thus,

⁶⁵ For most of its life, this university has had a significant influence on the way in which the Cape Peninsula is managed and perceived. Situated on the lower slopes of Devil's Peak, the geographical position of the university sits on the seat of privileged knowledge.

⁶⁶ In general, military operations played a key role in inhibiting urban development on the Cape Peninsula. The cableway car is owned by the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company.

between 1922 and 1939 the Cape Peninsula saw the formation of three floral reserves on its landscapes (Van Sittert 2002).

The unification of South Africa in 1910 facilitated the cross-pollination of conservationist ideas and the notion of establishing state-proclaimed reserves was strongly influenced by the ‘national park debates’ that transpired in the northern parts of South Africa (Carruthers 1995).⁶⁷ These debates, which led to the formation of the first national park in South Africa in 1926, reached Cape Town through the artist-journalist, Mr Caldecott (Pringle 1982: 100).⁶⁸ Caldecott lived in Cape Town but frequently visited the Sabie Reserve before it was proclaimed as a national park and according to Carruthers, ‘almost singlehandedly, orchestrated a massive national press and publicity campaign in order to consolidate public opinion on the side of the national park’ (1995: 62).⁶⁹ The Transvaal Game Protection Association (TGPA) did the political work behind the formation of the national park and after its success it enhanced its national presence in the field of conservation in two ways. Firstly, it secured a position on the National Parks Board that dealt with implementing national parks and secondly, it changed its name to the Wildlife Protection Society of South Africa.⁷⁰ This name change resonated with the unification of the country and enabled the society to branch out to other provinces and maintain a strong presence in debates around establishing parks across South Africa.

It was in light of these circumstances that the Wildlife Protection Society’s Cape Branch (WSCB) made the first official proposal for a national park on the Cape Peninsula in 1928 (Fraser 1994: 29). The proposed park was on Smith’s Farm, a property located at the most south-western point of the Cape Peninsula at Cape Point (Fraser 1994: 29; Pringle 1982: 170). The proposal was rejected and some scholars suggest that it was because of the 1930s global economic downturn and the Second World War (Daitz & Myrdal 2009: 326).⁷¹ However, the WSCB managed to put into motion the formation of the

⁶⁷ After the South African War (1899-1902) attempts were made to unite the Transvaal, Orange Free State (Afrikaner republics), Natal and the Cape (British colonies) into one country. Eventually in 1910 the Union of South Africa was announced with General Louis Botha as the first minister. The country was then organized along four the provinces: Cape of Good Hope, Transvaal, Natal and Orange Free State. In the Union the protection for flora and fauna “was delegated to the respective provinces [and protective] legislation in the Cape was limited to the regulation of hunting and fishing and the protection of certain species of animals classified as ‘royal game’, and some rare birds and wild flowers” (Hey 1995: 74). Yet, this was soon to transform.

⁶⁸ The “national park debates” involved the question of the formalisation of the national parks in the north which hinged upon the right political moment, on agreed financial compensation for private landowners in the reserve, the compliance of farmers who believed they had grazing rights in the park and veterinarians who rejected the idea of a park (Beinart & Coates 1995: 77; Carruthers 1995; 2009; Pringle 1982). General public support was also an important factor, since for some – as expressed in a newspaper article – the idea of the park resembled “merely a refuge for dangerous wild animals, a focus for disease, and should be swept away” (Pringle 1982: 93).

⁶⁹ Caldecott also established the “National propaganda Committee” in Cape Town and initially “acted as the local, lone representative” of the Cape branch of the Game Protection Association (Pringle 1982: 100).

⁷⁰ The “National Parks Board was an intermediate authority, sandwiched between its master, the government and its servants, its employees” (Carruthers 1995: 69).

⁷¹ Daitz and Myrdal are two of the TMNP’s former managers.

Addo National Park in 1931 as well as the Mountain Zebra National Park in 1937 (Pringle 1982: 165).⁷² Global economic changes and priorities certainly deprioritized conservation efforts but it did not deter the possibility of a national park in the Cape completely.⁷³ Initially, national parks were about species preservation and Van Sittert suggests that ‘central government [became] aware’ of the ‘precarious position of the remnant royal game in the Cape commons’ (2005a: 288). The diminishing elephant and zebra populations thus influenced the verdict in establishing a national park (Whatmore 2002: 57). Cape Town lacked the ‘royal game’ appeal of the rural areas but this factor did not discourage the formation of a national park. The prospect of nationalizing nature was determined at the interface between local and national politics.

In the 1920s the importance of aligning the imperial loyalties with Afrikaner nationalism became paramount and creating a national park was about creating a white national identity and culture (Carruthers 1995; 2009). At the heart of Caldecott’s campaign was promoting a park for the white nation of South Africa, a space to appreciate wildlife in aesthetic and sentimental terms (Beinart & Coates 1995; Carruthers 1995). Furthermore, while the Kruger Park offered the opportunity to unify a white South African nation, it also endorsed Afrikaner nationalism by linking the park to a romanticized frontier experience and naming the park after the Afrikaner hero, President Paul Kruger (Carruthers 1995: 65).⁷⁴ Therefore the formation of national parks was deeply seated in the national Afrikaner cultural agenda which, according to Carruthers, secured ‘the support of many people – particularly a large population of Afrikaans-speaking ‘poor whites’ – who might otherwise have been antagonistic to wild life preservation’ (2009b: 41).

Once the Kruger National Park proved to be commercially successful it changed the perception that game reserves were the exclusive domain of hunter-sportsmen. Beinart and Coates further write that ‘game animals became a recurrent motif in white South Africa’s conception and projection of itself’ (1995: 77).⁷⁵ Representations and commodities of wild animals infiltrated the nation’s visual simulacrum and the

⁷² These parks still exist today and are situated in the Eastern Cape Province.

⁷³ The war certainly affected the Wildlife Society; the branch came to standstill after the formation of the two parks. The Animal Welfare Society eventually incorporated the society as a subcommittee in 1934, until it gained independence again in 1948 (Pringle 1982: 160). It is interesting to note that the current Western Cape Region Branch do not recognize this earlier history given its 50th anniversary celebration in 1998. Furthermore, the establishment of the parks were also a major challenge: the campaign for the Mountain Zebra Park lasted for 8 years (Pringle 1982: 164).

⁷⁴ Paul Kruger was president of the Zuid-Afrikaanse Republic from 1880-1898. Popular accounts incorrectly link the origin of the park with Kruger (Carruthers 2009b). It was first declared as the *Krugerwildpark* (Afrikaans for Kruger Wild Park) on 14 December 1926.

⁷⁵ Beinart and Coates suggest that wildlife was not only about advancing political motives for a white South Africa but also about employing the timeworn asocial conception of nature as if it had nothing to do with socio-political issues (1995). For instance, the Minister, Grobler, who played an instrumental role in the expropriation of the privately owned properties for the park, “pointed out that the national park was an idea outside politics” (Pringle

national park experience embraced the modern motorcar, camping tent and camera made possible by the white middle-class salary. This development in tourism also contributed to the commercialization of South African conservation. The inter-war period in South Africa saw a proliferation of game reserves and national parks which facilitated the nation's new preoccupation with wildlife (Beinart & Coates 1995: 77). Parks became an integral part of South Africa's mainstream conservation movement at least until the 1990s (Carruthers 2006: 805). So, why was Cape Town not bestowed with a national park?

For most of its existence, Cape Town has been the seat of British imperialism and initially the establishment of national parks was primarily about advancing Afrikaner nationalism. As a result, establishing a national park in the former British Colony's headquarters was deemed unwise. The fact that national parks in the 1920s onwards were conduits for Afrikaner nationalism made a national park on the Cape Peninsula politically unlikely. After Afrikaans was declared as an official language in 1925, the campaign for white Afrikaner nationalism gained ground and was mobilised in culture, history, education and in the (successful) attempts in promoting Afrikaner businesses (Giliomee & Mbenga 2007: 288).

It is also important to keep in mind that 'conservation' in the city adopted a different meaning to that in the northern parts of South Africa. The mountaineering and recreation culture of the city's environmental protection society, the Wild Flower Protection Society (that is comparable to the wildlife society of the north), made sure that while their core intention was protecting the wild flowers, they never questioned the right to public access, as long as visitors adhered to the conditions stipulated by the WFPS and the local state.⁷⁶ Although the Kruger Park was justified economically by tourism revenue, the question of tourists in the park remained controversial and uneasy (Carruthers 1995).⁷⁷ For example, the lifetime game warden of the Kruger Park, James Stevenson-Hamilton 'preferred being the custodian of a 'faunal sanctuary' in which humans were intruders' (Carruthers 2008: 209). It was only after Stevenson-Hamilton's retirement in 1946 that the park wholeheartedly accommodated visitors in the park (Carruthers 1995: 79). In Cape Town the implementation of restrictive borders sparked considerable controversy and an open-access system would have conflicted with the initial preservationist ideals

1982: 106). The political consequences of establishing national parks implied "more effective control over both neighbouring Africans and the few who still resided in the park" (Carruthers 1995: 65).

⁷⁶ Corresponding letters attests to the close collaboration between the mountaineers, botanists and rangers. They discussed the immemorial right of access to the mountains to those who intended to find "pleasure" in nature, as well as the restriction of access to those who intended to pursue other activities such as wood collecting (UCT MA B1421 C3.4).

⁷⁷ Carruthers elaborates on this point with the following: "In wildlife journals of the 1920s and 1930s there was energetic debate about the most appropriate discourse. While the idea of legislative entrenchment – an important characteristic of 'national park' – was attractive because of the permanence of such status, the word 'park' was problematic because it conveyed such strong ideas of public recreation" (2009b: 37).

entrenched by the National Parks Board.⁷⁸ The legacy of urban recreation thus also produced a different conception of the role of nature in the city as to what was envisioned for national parks in the country at large.

For the city's middle-classes, many parts of the Cape Peninsula such as Smith's Farm were popular destinations for picnic outings and recreation (Fraser 1994). These everyday urban practices produced a conceptual understanding of 'nature' as recreational, rather than ecological sanctuaries (Gabriel 2011). The short travelling distance between the centre of the city and Smith's Farm translated into an ideological journey between 'nature' and 'city' that represented the role parks played in the city (Gabriel 2011: 124-127). The names suggested for the park, such as – 'Van Riebeeck, Simon van der Stel, Vasco da Gama and Sir Francis Drake' – celebrated the colonial origin of the city, while 'Pixie Point' and 'Elf Land' elevated the park to a superhuman space (Fraser 1994: 30). These antiquarian names resonate with a space and time divorced from the growing industrial city. These everyday musings attests to the fabrication of 'nature' as a response to living in the city.

The likelihood of a national park on the Cape Peninsula was discouraged by a number of locally situated tensions rather than global ones. The issues around access, the lack of charismatic game to attract the attention of the National Parks Board and the political unsuitability of Cape Town for promoting Afrikaner nationalism, prevented the Cape Peninsula becoming a national park in the 1920s. The topography of the mountains and indigenous flora were brands and symbols of the city, rather than the country.

Once the government rejected the proposal for a national park on Smith's Farm, the WSCB turned to the local government.⁷⁹ The mayor of the city was anything but sympathetic and the proposal for a city reserve was rejected (Fraser 1994: 29; Pringle 1982: 170; Lückhoff 1951: 118).⁸⁰ However, the WSCB's chairperson, Mr Skaife, was a recognized naturalist and with his influence managed to consolidate support from the local city newspapers to promote the establishment of a city reserve (Fraser 1994: 29;

⁷⁸ In the 1940s there was an outcry in the newspapers with regard to the erection of notice boards signed as 'No Trespassers' on Table Mountain. For instance, 'Nature lover' asked in his/her letter whether the Mountain Club intends to do anything about the restrictions, reinforcing and acknowledging the club's authorised role on the mountains (Published in a newspaper clipping in UCT MA MCSA C3.4).

⁷⁹ Van Sittert argues that nationalising nature in Cape Town was an important prospect for botanists (who were associated with the Mountain Club) and in order to garner national support for the city's botanical garden, they promoted the unique charm of Cape flora as a national instead of regional asset (2002: 126). Yet the country's politics remained against their plight. 'Afrikaner republicanism's antipathy towards Cape liberalism and the latter's enduring imperial empathies, however, stymied this effort ... Denied official support and fearing annexation, Cape botany turned instead to the Cape Town and metropolitan middle classes for its survival' (Van Sittert 2002: 126).

⁸⁰ The city councilor remarked that the farm was a 'barren, windswept, waste with not enough grass to keep a scorpion alive', to which the naturalist and chairperson of the Wildlife Society replied, "Anyone who believes scorpions eat grass ... is hardly competent to judge this issue' (Pringle 1982: 170).

Hey 1995: 156). His efforts were successful and the council put the matter on vote which favoured the new provincially administrated Cape of Good Hope Reserve almost ten years after the initial proposal (Fraser 1994: 29).

From this period onwards the symbolic value of the Cape Peninsula carried more weight than its economic value. The protection of the catchment areas were relaxed when it became clear that the mountains were no longer a viable source of water for the city and the municipality turned to the Hottentots-Holland Mountain Range (Wall 2008: 9).⁸¹ Forest plantations also proved to be mostly unproductive due to repetitive and severe fires (Anderson & O'Farrell 2012).⁸² The Cape summer seasons bring hot and windy conditions and since the vegetation is fire prone, it has brought through centuries the feared ferocious fires that leave green landscapes in regimes of ash blackness (Forsyth & Wilgen 2008: 3). A fire taken by the strong Southeaster knows no human or natural boundaries.

3.2 Table Mountain: the emblem for white national identity

[The] irony of the situation is that a National Monument is managed by humans to look natural (Goetze 2002: 475).

How might have White philosophies of park-making – such as the notion of the urban pastoral ... influenced park design, and in turn instantiated White ideals of nature into park landscapes, thus encoding those places as 'for Whites only' (Byrne 2012: 596)?

The question of nationalising nature in Cape Town resurfaced in 1948 when a group of civil societies appealed to the central government to develop a management plan for Table Mountain and declare the mountain a 'national asset' under statutory legislation (Lückhoff 1951: 120). This was also the year the National Party won the election, and the construction of an Afrikaner nation was being realised on symbolic, economic and social levels.⁸³ The National Party's victory now depended on consolidating whites against blacks and the 1952 Jan Van Riebeeck tercentenary festival was about endorsing Van Riebeeck as the 'symbol ... of white rule as a whole and Cape Town was promoted as the founding city of the white nation' (Rasool & Witz 1993: 449). Table Mountain, as the 'witness' for this prejudiced white colonial history and the new emblem of a (white) national identity, was illuminated for 91 days by

⁸¹ The Hottentots-Holland Mountains lie 40 km east from Cape Town.

⁸² At that time, fires were a major concern in spite of the establishment of the Cape Peninsula Fire Protection Committee (the first comprehensive body attending to the Cape Peninsula, which depended on the volunteering services of the Mountain Club).

⁸³ The National Party was established in 1914. It promoted white supremacy, implemented apartheid policies and sought to entrench Afrikaner nationalism on every level of the country's landscape.

21 spray lights to celebrate the festival (Beukes 2011: 27). In a meeting before the festival the following was said:

Silently and nobly [Table Mountain] watches not only over Cape Town, but over the whole of South Africa which we love so much. It symbolizes the efforts and glories of the past and the hopes of a future generation of a united South African nation (Rasool & Witz 1993: 452).

The announcement of Table Mountain as a National Monument in 1958 came therefore as no surprise, as was the demarcation of it as a White Group Area in 1957 (Hey 1978; Lückhoff 1951; Vergunst 2002). In addition, the shaky legislation of the provincial Table Mountain Flora Reserve from 1931 was replaced with national legislation in 1960s (Hey 1978; Editorial 2003). This introduced the mountain to a modern scientific conservation ideology, such as the controlling of veld fires and eradication of alien vegetation (Hey 1978: 17).⁸⁴

Moreover, from the 1950s to the 1980s the image of Table Mountain was reproduced through a plethora of media that became material and symbolic references for white South Africa. Postcards, Christmas cards and newspaper images popularised the image of Table Mountain as seen from Bloubergstrand that, not incidentally, was also a whites only beach (Vergunst 2002: 37). Proclaiming the mountain as a national monument was thus also part of the process of creating a white national identity that symbolised a supposedly ‘common’ white colonial heritage, even if it was a fabrication (Goetze 2002; Kaufmann 1998).

During this period, Douglas Hey, the founder of the first Nature Conservation Department of the Cape in 1952, initiated a number of campaigns for conservation in the Cape that both educated and installed a moral sense of responsibility and attachment to the environment in the broadest sense (1995). This broadened the Cape Peninsula’s narrow hold by botanists and mountaineers to a much wider conservation agenda in the white community (Hey 1995). The proliferation of civil societies taking up conservation practices in fire prevention, anti-litter campaigns, alien eradication and conservation education illustrated the influence of this change (Hey 1995: 74, 192). For instance, before 1949 the membership growth of the Wildlife Society in Cape Town was constant, however membership doubled from 1949 to 1951.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Appeals for intervention on the Cape Peninsula were also reflected in the detailed studies on the ecological status of and, recreation patterns on, Table Mountain by McLachlan and Moll from the botany department at UCT (1977). They developed a comprehensive management policy for controlling recreational patterns by surveying the human uses of the mountain, and recommending future plans and path reconstructions, citing in particular, their concern for the increasing popularity of Table Mountain by “non-whites” (1977: 15). Key to their study is the demarcation of high and low impact areas and the channelling of visitors to particular areas to lessen their impact on “fragile areas” (McLachlan & Moll 1977: ii). McLachlan and Moll’s research was widely publicised and they augmented the need to control recreation on Table Mountain. This management plan is key to the TMNP’s current management plan.

⁸⁵ (WESSA, 50th anniversary Western Cape Region: 1998: 26).

The city's natural scientists also conducted extensive investigations of the Cape Peninsula that reflected the broader national transformation in conservation policy in which scientists endeavoured to intervene in the management of parks and reserves to restore the 'natural state of beauty' (Editorial 2003; Carruthers 2008: 217; Hey 1995: 17; McLachlan & Moll 1977). Carruthers refers to this style of conservation as 'command and control' (or 'management by intervention') and links its characteristics to the apartheid ruling paradigm (2008: 213).⁸⁶ Following Carruthers' lead, it may also be possible to read a correlation between the 'command and control' conservation ideology and apartheid's population control schemes (2008). The question of controlling the city's population growth was an important subject matter in conservationist publications (and continues to be) and resonated with the city's preoccupation with racialised demographic controls to protect white interests in the city (Dodson & Oelofse 2000; Moultrie 2011).⁸⁷ Pleas for better management of Table Mountain were thus also influenced by the influx of black workers and their families to Cape Town, albeit on the periphery of the metropolitan landscape.

However, white custodianship of the Cape Peninsula was a contested process. Hostilities between the English and Afrikaner camps prevailed and handing over ownership (and thus also custodianship) to the national authorities implied losing their regionally unique custodianship in the face of Afrikaner nationalism. Furthermore, while the white ideological ownership of Table Mountain officially denied non-whites a share in the mountain's symbolic and ideological ownership, it did not deter coloureds and blacks from visiting the mountains nor could such ideological territorial pronouncement remain isolated from contradiction (Bickford-Smith 2009: 1771; Green 2007). This complexity involved with land and race is embedded in a number of local social histories around the Cape Peninsula, but I wish to focus in particular on Hout Bay's historical relationship with the Cape Peninsula. This history underpins the ethnographical account of Hangberg in chapter five.

In 1956 Hout Bay was declared as a White Area Only even though the operation of the harbour was dependent on the labour of the coloured and black workers residing in Hout Bay. While everyday race relations followed a less rigid narrative than apartheid would have it, it nevertheless informed the race dynamics upon which the operation of the harbour depended. In order to satisfy this labour demand, the draconian spatial laws of apartheid were bent and the area above the harbour at the western section of the Cape Peninsula on the base of the Sentinel Peak was granted to the coloured people of Hout Bay (Froestad 2005: 341). At the time, the designated land was probably deemed insignificant in relation to Cape Point and Table Mountain. Given its steep incline and reputation for strong winds, exaggerated by

⁸⁶ The "managing by intervention" was by no means a thoroughly accepted policy. Discussions remained confined to the national parks in the rural areas (Carruthers 2008).

⁸⁷ Articles on population growth populate the newsletters of the Wildlife Society in the 1970s.

the stench of the fishing factories at the harbour, it was probably also worthless in terms of commercial property development.

The place became known as Hangberg. Its residents worked for the white (or Portuguese) owned commercial fishing companies, the harbour factories or, sustained an independent living through small-scale fishing practices (Witte 2010: 10). The connection between labour and capital was augmented in the 1970s with the construction of rental flats, of which residence was conditioned upon working in the fishing factories. As the population expanded and the demand for labour increased additional brick rental houses were built by the local council in the 1960s (Fieuw 2011: 3). Given this history, the positionality of Hangberg on the Cape Peninsula enabled a relationship between its residents and the mountains that differentiated significantly from the conservationist-inspired forms of custodianship discussed thus far. Hangberg people lived on the mountain slopes even though official apartheid planning attempted to establish physical and symbolic forms of white ownership on the Cape Peninsula .

Furthermore, in spite of the white custodianship of the Cape Peninsula, Table Mountain was always frequented by non-whites, although by a significantly smaller number than whites. Before the forced removals of the 1950s many coloured families lived in the shadow of Table Mountain and fostered intimate relations with the urban mountains. For instance, research surveys conducted by the city's Engineering Department in 1982 and the McLachlan and Moll surveys in 1977 recorded a number of 'coloureds' on the mountains (however very few 'blacks'). Mark Hawthorne (2012), a ranger who worked in the mountain reserves during this time took it upon himself to reach out to non-whites living in the Cape Flats some distance from the mountains. He also initiated a number of educational projects facilitating the popularity of the mountains in the townships. He noted the following during an interview:

The old thinking was that parks were not accessible to blacks and coloureds, but I have been going to Langa and Gugulethu for over 25 years. The park was open to anyone (it never had boundaries) since the park was established. It was not the case that 'now they suddenly could come'. People also expressed a lot of interest. [There] was always expression of interest – a thirst for the park in council times ... a lot of interest.

Perhaps people found the wild topography as a space in which the discriminating shades of skin were less prevalent. Green writes:

For many people living in Cape Town the years before political liberation, Table Mountain represented a space outside the particular social relations imposed by apartheid ... The space of the mountain seemed to exceed that which could realistically be controlled (2007: 174).

Ed February and his family was most likely one of the recorded coloured families hiking on the Peninsula. Ed was born in Wynberg, one of the suburbs situated in the afternoon shadow of Table Mountain where he and his family developed a long relationship with the mountains. His family took him to the mountains on a weekly basis but February soon explored rock climbing and excelled in the sport.

Later on he studied botany at UCT and achieved his doctorate. He was working as a lecturer at UCT when I had the opportunity to meet with him. Ed's parents were two of the founding members of the Western Province Mountain Club (WPMC) – the first non-white mountain club in the city.⁸⁸ *'The WPMC was for coloured people because they could not join the [Mountain Club]'* February said and in reflection added:

You know people always say: did you try? That is the nice question about apartheid! Apartheid was a subtle erosion of one's dignity ... I did not want to go through that trauma of trying to become part of the [Mountain Club]. There was an active directive to promote not climbing with me because of my colour ... the white elitist climbers were not allowed to climb with me even though they had the ability. It was a bunch of Saxon guys that said it was bullshit (February 2012).

February's story is a powerful account of the ways in which non-whites developed symbolic and real relations with the Cape Peninsula but were denied the opportunity or rights to share it on the same institutional or ideological level of 'nature-making' as whites (Byrne & Wolch 2009: 743). This is how racism came to manifest itself in the most mundane and unexpected realms such as mountaineering and conservation.

The colonial history mountaineering and botany formed a particular ideological representation of nature in the city that also determined its value and utilisation. In the words of Byrne and Wolch, '[park makers] constructed the park's image as natural, sanctifying, wholesome, and White, counterposing it against a city construed as artificial, profane, insalubrious and coloured' (2009: 747). This separation between nature and urban not only served to conjure an ideological representation of nature but also one that is subliminally discriminating (Tsing 2005: 201).

3.3 The context of the 1990s proposal

[The] IUCN has recently demonstrated increasing interest in urban parks ... In a world where a growing share of the population lives in cities, the constituency for biodiversity will be played out in urban centres (Landy & Zerah 2013: 26).

In 1974, the MCSA published a document that lamented the management of Table Mountain. '[Based] on the personal observations of its members', they argued 'the mountain was deteriorating so rapidly that only the most energetic measures could save it' (Hey 1978: 21).⁸⁹ It also continued to exhibit the discourse discussed in the previous chapter by noting that the public on Table Mountain do not behave as 'nature lovers' thereby situating themselves outside of the mainstream tourists as a specific visitor of the

⁸⁸ I could not determine the exact date and details of the WPMC. A study of this club, as well as "Bats" – another non-white mountain club that operated in the 1970s – would be useful to explore the city/mountain relationship from an alternative viewpoint than is explored here.

⁸⁹ The report was noted for its advanced views on baboon and alien fauna management (Hey 1978).

Cape Peninsula.⁹⁰ After more than a century the club continued to exert a voice on matters concerning the city's mountains and along with the Wildlife Society, it was representative in almost every commission, advisory body and board mentioned thus far (Hey 1978; Lückhoff 1951).

This local stronghold on the management of the Cape Peninsula was nonetheless threatened by the trend in nationalisation which led the MCSA to conclude in the report that a local management body should be implemented since the 'National Parks Board ... does not provide for special representation of local interests'.⁹¹ However, Cape Town citizens also supported the question of establishing a national park on the Cape Peninsula. Nationalisation implied statutory legislation, proper funding and comprehensive conservation management strategies and yet it also meant losing the local power threshold on the Peninsula, not to mention the threat it posed to existing forms of local custodianship. Therefore, sixty-six years after their first attempt to establish a national park on the Cape Peninsula, the Wildlife Society (then turned into WESSA)⁹² established the Peninsula Mountain Forum that aspired to mediate between the state and civil society on the issue of nationalisation. In 1977, the government promulgated a one-man commission led by Douglas Hey to:

[Investigate] the continued degradation and deterioration of the national environment of Table Mountain, a cause of great concern to the general public, and to submit recommendations for the conservation of this important recreational area (Hey 1978: 200).

Hey had experience in the proclamation of large nature reserves in other parts of the country and his unique contribution to the issue of conserving the city's mountain was to suggest that the focus on Table Mountain should shift to the whole Cape Peninsula Mountain Chain: from Signal Hill to Cape Point (1987: 33). Many of the findings in Hey's report were repetitions of the previous investigations mentioned but, up to that point, the western table of the Peninsula that comprises Table Mountain attracted most of the attention. For instance, despite the proclamation of the Silvermine Nature Reserve in 1965, its ecological status hardly ever received the same kind of attention as that of Table Mountain.

Interestingly, Hey's report states that the main motivation for his decision to incorporate the whole Cape Peninsula was not ecological, instead '[it] was evident that Table Mountain was too small to meet the recreational needs of the residents of the greater Cape Town metropolitan area and visitors' (1995: 201). Hey's report was accepted in 1983 and for the first time the Cape Peninsula Mountain Chain was collectively subject to a legal border that delineated it from the urban environment under the Environmental Conservation Act of 1982 as 'nature' (Hey 1995: 201). This included the 'entire Cape Peninsula mountain range above the 152m contour' (Hey 1995: 201) roughly 300km² in size and

⁹⁰ Correspondence from the Table Mountain Preservation Committee (UCT MA MCSA C3. 6. 2).

⁹¹ Reports on Table Mountain by the Mountain Club, 1950 (UCT MA MCSA C3. 6. 2).

⁹² The society changed its name in 1996 to the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA).

comprised of ‘land under the control of 14 different public authorities at national, provincial and local government level, as well as 174 private landowners’ (Daitz & Myrdal 2009: 326). Given this multiplicity in ownership, a single authority (while recommended), proved unattainable and a Management Advisory Committee was implemented.

In 1987, the responsibility of managing reserves again devolved to the provinces, which led to the formation of the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) in 1989. According to Daitz and Myrdal, the CPPNE was a ‘form of weak legal protection ... [a] constitutional mechanism for cooperation between government authorities’ (2009: 326). In general the CPPNE’s boundaries were ‘interpretable’ and the cooperation between the different authorities was weak which made conservation strategies ineffective (Kier 2012). In 1991 a journalist wrote an article titled, ‘Don’t trip over the mountain ministers’ that addressed the problematic and conflicting management of the Peninsula in detail. He pointed out that ‘four ministers have a finger in the precipices’ and while Table Mountain falls under the CPPNE it is managed by its own advisory body and legislation (Scott 1991). Thus, Table Mountain, the Silvermine section and Cape Point were officially managed as reserves by the local government and the rest of the Cape Peninsula was subject to the CPPNE provincial legislation.

In 1993 the city appointed UCT to ‘prepare policy and management options for the future planning, development and management of the mountain chain, constituent nature reserves, forests, monuments and other land included in the CPPNE’ (UCT 1994:15). Perhaps the appointment was a precursor to the perceived political turmoil imagined to follow the election the in 1994.

The city’s decision to investigate the future protection of the CPPNE was certainly motivated by development proposals on the privately owned properties within the CPPNE border. This illustrated the divergent roles the Cape Peninsula occupied in the urban centre, even though parts of the city residents and management were beginning to perceive the mountains as environmentally significant. For example, in 1992 the construction of a cable car was proposed from the waterfront to Signal Hill. The construction was to be an investment in Cape Town’s tourism industry and an extension of the commercialisation of the waterfront whereby tourists would have had a raised gaze across the city from the harbour to the mountains.⁹³ Yet this alliance between private investment and conservation proved to be difficult (Brockington *et al.* 2008: 13). The city’s citizens resisted the proposal and managed to put construction at bay, while others used the opportunity to raise their concern about the general degradation of the Cape Peninsula.

⁹³ The Victoria and Alfred Waterfront is the country’s most popular tourist destination. Its attraction is the Victorian-styled shopping complex on the harbor with a view of Robben Island, luxurious hotels and living complexes.

Professor Fuggle led the UCT commission and the results were circulated to the public for comments in the document, ‘Draft Policy for Multipurpose use of the Cape Peninsula’ in April 1994 (UCT 1994).⁹⁴ The commission recommended that their policies should take immediate effect in which biological, cultural and scenic ‘diversity’ in management is a priority (UCT 1994: 8). The infiltration of the new country’s democratic discourse and emphasis on diversity (and tolerance thereof) is palpable. They also recommended a single management body and the expansion of the CPPNE’s borders to include the ocean and urban fringe which should be demarcated according to use zones (UCT 1994: 8). The document also recommended that while initial support was needed in the interim period from SANParks, eventual independence with statutory legislation was needed.

A year later Professor Huntley, who was affiliated with Cape Town’s Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, was appointed by the state to investigate possible management options.⁹⁵ Although Huntley decided upon SANParks, the decision was not his alone. The nationalisation of the Cape Peninsula was pressurised by global agendas and yet another nationalist narrative related to the new ruling party’s political aspirations.

Firstly, once again Table Mountain served as an emblem for the nation, as said by the Minister of Environmental Affairs at the time: ‘[Table Mountain] would become a model of co-operative governance and help build national unity and trust’ (as cited in Fuller 1999: 141). It is interesting that the ANC embraced the proclamation of a national park in Cape Town, effectively endorsing a colonial inheritance in a period of political transition when the model of parks could have been subject to radical revision (Ndebele 2007).⁹⁶ Perhaps the potential of establishing a national park in Cape Town provided for the ANC a power threshold in the city which was politically held by the National Party and later on by the Democratic Party (DA) (McDonald 2008).

In addition, writing about Robben Island, Garuba argues that the transformation of the island from a prison to a tourist destination implied a reconfiguration of its heritage (2007). He observes that the establishment of a museum on the island was part of establishing a new South African identity and doing so implied shaping a usable past that fits into this discourse even if it remains fraught with contradictions and unwanted legacies (Garuba 2007: 142). This reconfiguration of the heritage was also the fate of Table

⁹⁴ The Fuggle recommendations were substantiated by a second investigation by the Khan Working Group who determined the number of functions and type of control exerted on different areas of the CPPNE (Jackelman, Kilian, Shroyer 2000: 20).

⁹⁵ The competitors included Cape Nature Conservation (the Western Cape nature conservationist body) and the Cape Metropolitan Council.

⁹⁶ Ndebele suggests that the “game lodge resonates with an aspect our history that has remained relatively untouched in the discourse of freedom” (2007: 99). Even though the pre-1994 model of conservation in the country has transformed to democratic ideals, it remained entrenched with an imagined wilderness discourse (Neumann 1997).

Mountain. The colonial history associated with the mountain mentioned earlier from the 1950s was substituted with a pre-colonial history, or rather heritage, in which the mountain became Hoerikwaggo: the Khoi word for Table Mountain meaning ‘mountain in the sea’ (Bickford-Smith 2009: 1777). This redressing of Table Mountain was about opening up a history that ought to celebrate a multiracial heritage in the quest for nation building in the post-apartheid moment. Along a similar line, in 2004, the TMNP’s name was changed from the Cape Peninsula National Park to the Table Mountain National Park (Daitz & Myrdal 2009: 335). The former name was a legacy of the white custodianship of the Cape Peninsula, while the latter seemed to want to symbolise the new nation. It emboldened the vision of hope Mandela saw in Table Mountain from Robben Island. In doing this, it also re-scripted a heritage narrative that suited the nationalist discourse (Garuba 2007).

Secondly, despite Table Mountain’s capacity to capture (once again) the spirit of the nation, the government prioritized spending on social development, not conservation. While this transition to democracy signalled hope and freedom for the largest part of the country’s population, the process of redistribution to the poor was slow and, given the new spatial fragmentations of governance, it was insufficient to bridge the gap between largely poor blacks and wealthier whites (McDonald 2008). Realising this, SANParks approached the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for financial support who allocated R56, 7 million for the nationalisation of the Cape Peninsula (Daitz & Myrdal 2009: 330).

This global interest in the city’s mountains was made possible by the academic research that tabled and detailed the ecological value of the Cape Peninsula, efficiently making ‘present’ and translating the nonhuman creatures and plants of the landscape into suitable codes of value for transnational NGOs (Hinchliffe 2008: 89). In the global circulation of biological value, the vegetation of the mountains makes its contribution by being part of the CFR and being one of the world’s few biodiversity hotspots (even called the ‘hottest of hot-spots’, Myers 1990 quoted in McNeely 2001: 44). Both these categories signify remarkably high levels of endemism and biodiversity. A hotspot is also usually associated with a small area threatened with ‘exceptional loss of habitat’ (Da Fonseca, Kent, Mittermeier, Mittermeier & Myers 2000: 853). The CFR is one of the smallest of six floral kingdoms in the world and 17,7% of the land in Cape Town is dedicated to some sort of conservation effort, of which, SANParks covers half (Dorse *et al.* 2011: 29). ‘It represents less than 0.5% of the area of Africa but is home to nearly 20% of the continent’s flora’ (UNESCO 2013). These scientific facts and hierarchies of biodiversity value bestowed the Cape Peninsula with the UNESCO title, Natural World Heritage Site. The discourse on biodiversity is also a discursive realm that is problematic in regards to the imminent presence of the authoritative scientist and because it tends to obscure the larger environmental justice framework of Cape Town in which the Cape Peninsula is situated (Escobar 1998: 56).

Moreover, ‘endangerment’, Choy argues, ‘operates through two gestures: threat and specification’ (2011: 29). It is the task of the scientist to specify plants and animals as unique to a place and, as Choy suggests to a people and nation (2011). This scientific discourse was also substantiated by the imagined place of nature in a developing country and, more specifically, in an African city: ‘a greening of social relations which may be viewed as ‘a kind of eco-structural adjustment where Third World people and places must fall in line with First world thinking’’ (Mowforth & Munt 2003: 60 as cited in Cater 2006: 26). It also relates to the idea of wilderness embodied by national parks (discussed before) by which ‘nature’ comes to symbolise a trope on the dangers of extinction that compels external donors to provide aid for the preservation of a ‘dying nature’ (Argyrou 2005). Up to this point, the links between conservation and capitalism in the city played out on a local level.

Authors have argued that when conservation becomes reliant on global NGO funding – an effective incorporation into the ‘neoliberal regime’ – it alters local patterns of ownership and control over nature by facilitating the commercialisation of nature and introducing new configurations of profit and value (Brockington *et al.* 2008: 13; Spierenburg & Wels 2010: 650). Following this global trend, the GEF funding presented the intertwining of global capitalism and conservation and locally transformed the city/mountain relationship in at least two ways (Brockington & Scholfield 2010: 552).

Firstly, while the GEF funding loosened the local grip on the properties of the Cape Peninsula and effectively dismissed the city’s custodianship of its mountains, it did not occur without ‘friction’ (Tsing 2005; Daitz & Myrdal 2009: 333). In the book, *Friction* Tsing discusses the global connections in environmental politics and argues that the particularity of global influences in the local causes friction which ‘refuses the lie that global power operates as a well-oiled machine’ (2005: 6). Nationalising the Cape Peninsula meant slackening the local civic custodianship which frustrated Capetonians considerably. The city’s newspapers played a major role in expressing the anxieties of the white affluent members of Cape Town. Citizens were in particular concerned whether open-access to the Cape Peninsula would continue once it was proclaimed as a national park. This was a concern that resonated with that of the colonial mountaineers in the early 20th century.

Secondly, Daitz and Myrdal note that the provincial government was also reluctant in accepting the status of a national park (2009). They conditioned a six month trial in which, if SANParks did not display ‘‘significant progress’ ... the provincial government reserved the right to reject SANParks’ involvement and implement their preferred solution – a provincial reserve’ (Daitz & Myrdal 2009: 326). Journalists also took note of the local/national power juggle about the Cape Peninsula, which seemed to agree with the suggestion made by Daitz and Myrdal that the province’s reluctance to hand over its mountains to SANParks was more ‘a desire for parochial political advantage’ than the conservation of nature’ (2009:

326). Nonetheless, it was easier to make a ‘positive difference’ in 1998 because the mountains were in such a ‘bad [ecological] condition’ (Myrdal 2012). Moreover, most of the GEF funding was invested in alien clearance which made making a visible difference more or less straightforward. In addition, in order to sway the public, SANParks deliberately supported a local NGO court case against a development proposal.⁹⁷

To summarise, in 1998 a number of circumstances and actors contributed to the nationalisation of the Cape Peninsula in which, global rather than local, factors seemed to carry most of the weight. In some ways, the vitality embedded in protecting the Cape Peninsula transcended local custodianship and became encapsulated in a global environmental discourse heavy with the moral responsibility in preventing biodiversity extinction and environmental degradation on a planetary scale.

⁹⁷ The development was to be a township on the Peninsula close to Camps Bay. Fuller provides ample detail of the Oudekraal case (1999: 133-139).

CHAPTER FOUR: TABLE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

4.1 National custodianship in the city

In May 1998 the TMNP was proclaimed with the vision of expanding within the CPPNE borders and becoming the ‘world’s premier class urban park’ (Ferreira 2012: 276). Looking back 14 years later, these goals have largely been achieved. More than 80% of the CPPNE territory has been proclaimed and strengthened with national legislation and the TMNP is one the most visited sites in Southern Africa, receiving almost four million visitors each year (one of the highest compared to other national parks in the country) (Gordon 2012). The famous Cape Point that forms the most southern point of the African continent alone attracts roughly 800 000 visitors annually of which 80% are international tourists (Gordon 2012). Cape Point is an attractive site for international visitors but most of the visitors to the TMNP are local (Ferreira 2012: 285). Ferreira further notes that ‘[the] operation of the TMNP has had considerable macroeconomic consequences for Cape Town, Western Cape and South Africa’ (2012: 284). The TMNP’s contribution to the tourism sector is particularly valuable. The TMNP is also one of only three national parks in the country (out of 21) making profit. These profits are redistributed to other rural national parks which thereby extends the TMNP’s economic value to other biodiversity biomes (Cock & Fig 2000: 30).

Furthermore, under national custodianship, the Cape Peninsula once again functioned as a symbol of belonging and identity in the new liberated post-apartheid society. Yet, to synthesize the national custodianship of the Cape Peninsula with the broader political transformation of this new dispensation is fundamentally a challenging course. The new management was required to commit to the institutional directives of SANParks that linked conservation with development and ‘human needs’ (Cock & Fig 2000: 23). This occurred when SANParks transformed from the National Parks Board to the South African National Parks (SANParks). Changes in the practice of conservation with regard to becoming more socially accountable were already discernible in the 1980s, yet it was only after 1994 that national conservation management ‘adopted a transformation mission in which the importance of interaction between conservation and community capacity-building [was] acknowledged’ (De Villiers 2008: 21).

This change culminated in the country’s political rhetorical commitment to environmental justice as defined by bringing the issues of the environment into the larger ‘intellectual and institutional framework

of human rights and democratic accountability' (McDonald 2002 as cited in Dahlberg, Rohde & Sandell 2010: 210; Cock 2010). Environmental justice is, however, more complicated than simply equalising the distributed benefits of the park to minorities or historically disadvantaged groups in the city (Floyd & Johnson 2002: 61). Critics have pointed out that South Africa's environmental policies straddle conflicting discourses, such as that of environmental justice and liberal capitalism and are more likely to give way to the latter than the former (Bond 2000). Below I consider the TMNP within this larger framework. I examine (within a limited scope) the directions the TMNP had taken to expunge itself from the legacy of racial and social exclusion and displacement in the history of South African conservation.

The TMNP's mandate to expand its borders is firstly problematic in an economically uneven city since '[the] protection of the land on which rare plant and animal diversity is found is essential, but ecological sensitivity has effectively frozen for development large tracts of otherwise well-located land' (Parnell & Pieterse 2010: 154). Secondly, this conflict in interests, between housing the poor and biodiversity conservation, is compounded by the legacy of racial segregation and the historical alienation of blacks and coloureds from environmental protection and appreciation (Khan 2002: 21). Previously I have shown the historical white custodianship of the Cape Peninsula which in the post-apartheid era continues to create 'perceived barriers' and renders the urban mountains as an exclusive 'white' space (Byrne 2012: 596).

The TMNP is fully aware of the historical legacies and contemporary issues of the city and how these influences the visitation profile of the park (Annecke 2012). Its efforts to become a racially and socially inclusive park mainly revolve around environmental education and creating employment opportunities. The effort is also reflected in the TMNP's marketing slogan: 'A park for all forever'. The 'park' part draws attention to the core directive of biodiversity conservation, 'the all' promotes social inclusivity and the 'forever' part prolongs the vitality of nature along an infinite continuum (Daitz & Myrdal 2009). More broadly, the slogan is embedded in the above-mentioned national conservation strategy that SANParks adopted in the new South Africa.

One of the national transformation directives of SANParks involved the establishment of a Park Forum that serves to establish relations with the social environment in which the protected area is embedded. In Cape Town, the forum operates as an independent advisory body of 14 portfolios representing Cape Town's citizenry.⁹⁸ Initially, much effort was invested in creating a forum representing different

⁹⁸ The portfolios include: Environmental Experience; Legal; Safety and Security; Traditional & Spiritual Users; Recreational Users; Communications and Media; Volunteer Management; Cape Flats Nature; Biodiversity

backgrounds. The launching of the first forum was on 2005 at the Edith Stephens Nature Reserve (ESNR). The place for the launch was intentional: the park manager noted that at the ESNR the president of the MCSA had to realise that *'he was not always in charge ... he had to level with the coloureds. Recognise and acknowledge people he never [had to] before'*. Thus, at this stage, the Park Forum was not only a medium through which the TMNP intended to communicate with the city but it was also a way of challenging the historical white custodianship (especially that of the MCSA) of the Cape Peninsula .

The ESNR embodies a precarious and interesting history in the unfolding of conservation in the city. Situated at the edge of the Cape Flats sprawl it is both the birthing place for environmental practice amongst and for the poor as well as a legacy of colonial botany (Olwage 2013).⁹⁹ The motivation behind holding the first meeting at the reserve was to complicate the tradition of 'white conservation'. However, despite the promising role the forum could have played within the managerial operation of the TMNP by opening up the scope of custodianship on the mountains to a diversity of people who never had the opportunity before, it experienced considerable difficulties (Daitz & Myrdal 2009).¹⁰⁰ This may be explained by the fact that the directive for the forum developed from the national parks in rural areas that are sparsely populated. Almost four million people live adjacent to the TMNP and the difficulty in sustaining a forum that represents the people may be resolved by revising the traditional model to suit the hybridity and diversity of the urban environment.

Other local efforts to instil a sense of appreciation for the TMNP were facilitated (but not financed) by a bus service that takes up to 25 000 children per year to the TMNP, a volunteer programme in nature conservation and field guiding aimed at building capacity in young unemployed citizens and a recent 'affordability model' in which city residents pay reduced entry fees (Gordon 2012).¹⁰¹ The People's Trail programme created the opportunity for NGOs and schools to take children on hikes up Table Mountain and stay overnight in the People's Hut.

Management; Financial Sustainability & Fund Raising; Cultural Heritage Resource Management; Land Consolidation; Marine – Fishing Communities; Tourism; Community Partnerships and Benefits – Cape Peninsula; Community Partnerships and Benefits – Cape Flats of Cape Town (Myrdal 2012).

⁹⁹ Olwage's thesis presents an excellent ethnographic exploration of contemporary environmental politics at ESNR (2013).

¹⁰⁰ Apparently the forum continues to form an important foundation of city/park connections, yet its influence and capacity in establishing constituent relations between the city and the Park is questionable.

¹⁰¹ Gordon noted that while it was clear that the city wanted free access and "that they did not want to charge" the TMNP concluded that if a user "*bring in another impact (dog, bicycle etc.) ... Then they have to be charged. We want to give the people free access to the park but we charge them for impact*" (2012).

I was fortunate enough to participate in one of these overnight hikes and witnessed how impoverished children relished the silence of the mountain. I saw the feeling of elevation and empowerment as they saw the city stretched out in front of them and felt the sadness as the Pollsmoor Prison was their only familiar reference in the grand green lush areas of the wealthy neighbourhoods around the Peninsula. The mountain space gave these children an opportunity to confide in NGO representatives about issues that would be difficult in the intimate spaces of the township. Yet, organising these trips required tremendous effort and resources and the chances for impoverished children to participate depended on external donor funds as well as the ingenuity of the NGO organisers (see figure 3).



Figure 3: BEEP

This photograph was taken on the overnight hike I participated with the NGO, Beyond Environmental Expectations Programme (BEEP). Lying on their backs, the children were instructed to keep silent and listen to the sounds in the park (Source: author's photograph).

4.2 From 'Social Ecology' to 'People and Conservation'

The principal manner in which the TMNP consolidated its place in the city was by creating employment opportunities (Mojapelo 2012). Creating employment opportunities was also cited as one of the major positive outcomes of the nationalisation of the Cape Peninsula (Daitz & Myrdal 2009). The TMNP department responsible for this was initially called the Social Ecology Department but recently changed to the People and Conservation Department (PCD). Social ecology was originally introduced to SANParks policy when a previous director 'had taken a personal interest in the establishment of the first community-owned contract park, the Richtersveld National Park, in 1991. [He] saw the need to systematise community relations, and appointed a general manager for what was called 'social ecology'' (Cock & Fig 2000: 28). The recent change from 'Social Ecology' to PCD sought to emphasise the *material* benefits the TMNP could bring to the poor. For the PCD manager, the benefits of the '*traditional ways of doing things*', such as the People's Trail Programme, only reached a small part of the population (Mojapelo 2012).

The change was spearheaded by the national Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). The EPWP provides the funding and SANParks acts as the implementing agency that provides employment opportunities for communities neighbouring national parks.¹⁰² This was the TMNP's manner of 'providing benefits beyond boundaries' for people in need for employment and driven by 'politicians who like numbers' and 'feeding mouths' (Mojapelo 2012).¹⁰³ Creating economic incentives through conservation objectives was therefore led by larger ideological changes in country. In this SANParks was following the ANC-led strategy that concentrates on tourism and business, in economic terms 'benefit-sharing'.

An ethnographic example suffices: David* a community leader from Hangberg was invited to a 'People and Parks Workshop' organised by a private NGO called Resource Africa, funded by the National Lottery and hosted by SANParks and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT). After the information session, he said the following:

[The park should] be geared towards creating benefits for the people, open peoples mind to say jis man [this is] the situation, this park can be something. We need to get people buying into the business opportunities in parks. The goal is for people to look for business opportunities in conservation parks.

This articulation reflected the shift from 'Social Ecology' to 'People and Conservation' and sought to frame the relationship and engagement between the TMNP and poor neighbouring settlements such as Hangberg through economic incentives.

However, the type of employment arranged by the EPWP left workers with a sense of insecurity since it operated on a temporary contractual basis which required workers to resubmit for tenders each year. For instance, Jenny* from Hangberg who had been doing contract work (mostly alien clearance) for the TMNP since 2004 was the sole breadwinner of her family and had acquired a truck and electrical saws for the job. Yet each year she needed to reapply for tenders in the hope that the government continued the funding and that there would still be a need for eradicating alien plants.¹⁰⁴ The EPWP aimed at building capacity and independence in workers by cultivating entrepreneurialism through the establishment of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). However, in reality, it functioned mostly to outsource services and thereby cut labour and equipment costs.

¹⁰² Between 2011 and 2012, the EPWP provided 1.4 billion rand to SANParks. Employment was clustered around subcategories such as "Working for Water", "Working for Land/Coast/Wetlands" etc.

¹⁰³ The "communities" (in other words the poor areas) around the TMNP to whom these opportunities are aimed included Hangberg, Imizamo Yetho, Redhill, Ocean View, Masiphulelele, Loyolo and Westlake.

¹⁰⁴ This nature of this employment is part of a global trend in labour relations that also establishes a sense of alienation in the value of work which is understandable when put in contrast to the permanent staff working for the TMNP who were usually trained in conservation and secure in their employment (Green 2007).

Anthony's (2007) research on the attitudes of neighbouring communities edging the Kruger National Park shows that positive sentiments about park were strongly related to employment in the park. There is no doubt that employment can bring benefits to impoverished people, such as those interviewed for the latter study or for the poor people living adjacent the TMNP. However, I suggest that we should question the long-term effects of working for the TMNP in relation to how people perceive its value. Is creating short-term and contractual work contributing to a productive relationship between the TMNP and the bordering poor communities? In order to address this question, it is useful to consider the kind of labour conducted for the TMNP.

The EPWP jobs usually implied doing alien clearance, building footpaths and eco-overnight camps and controlling fires. The work achieved on the landscape therefore reflected the process by which the TMNP are reshaping the Cape Peninsula according to the values of biodiversity conservation, recreation and tourism. Currently, restoring indigenous wilderness is the prime directive of management (Gordon 2012). As the park manager noted: *'I am a very traditional conservationist ... the mission is to make a conservation area of credibility and wilderness ... a wilderness zone that is our core agenda'* (Gordon 2012). This directive was influenced by the global environmentalist movement, as well as by the material value of wilderness that '[grasps] the opportunity to benefit from the growing ecotourism-based leisure market' (Brakel, Brooks, Kolk, Lukhozi & Spierenburg 2011: 261). The development of wilderness produces an urban nature that is encountered as 'unspoilt natural areas for enjoyment and recreation' (Büsher & Whande 2007: 31).

This kind of tourism (domestic and international) is the main source of revenue for the TMNP and creating wilderness is also about promoting this market. However, it is also about commodifying the Cape Peninsula and thereby entering a particular capitalist narrative. Brockington *et al.* refer to the outcome of this commodification process as the 'ecotourist bubble' in which the simulated experience afforded by visiting the TMNP is 'simplified (a-social, a-historical, a-ecological) which obscures the socio-ecological implications ... that make [this experience] possible in the first place' (2008: 145). For those who can afford visiting the TMNP, the history involved with the urbanisation of nature and the labour invested in producing urban nature as wilderness, are scripted out from the experience in the park.

Even though sustaining the TMNP implied creating jobs for people desperately in need of employment, the type of employment was insecure and the long-term benefits surrounding communities could generate from tourism remain globally a disputable assumption (Brockington *et al.* 2008: 147). Furthermore, Mazibuko's research on rural communities in the Drakensberg Region suggests that:

Each time the question of tourism was raised, it became clear that to them tourism involves white people where an African's role is only to provide labour. These rural people can be forgiven for thinking this way. In

rural South Africa, the apartheid-induced mentality is that tourism is merely a provider of jobs and the local people providers of labour (2007: 160 as cited in Butler & Richardson 2013).

The issue of reaching out to the poor through creating this kind of employment is thus a questionable attempt at building constituencies with the residents bordering the TMNP.

4.3 The materialisation of the borders of an open-access park

In this section, I wish to discuss the complexities involved with the TMNP being an open-access park: both in terms of how borders materialise when there are none and, how ‘free’ access relates to the visitor profile of the TMNP. The political policing embedded in the borders and boundaries of parks, countries and neighbourhoods have received considerable attention in the social sciences (Caldeira 2000; Comaroff & Comaroff 2001; Mbembe 2000; Neumann 1997). In the case of the TMNP, the lack of physical borders requires us to look at the socio-ecological and political contestations that manifest in its delineation. The cadastral borders of the TMNP establish in space that which officially constitutes ‘city’ and what which constitutes ‘mountain’. However, the ideological borders between urban and nature as well as the relationship between these concepts may vary between different people such as the policy-makers in the metropolitan government, the TMNP management and other civic custodians and users of the mountains. I have also illustrated that both the physical and imagined borders are embedded in a complex material and cultural history.

For the TMNP management, the main issue of running an open-access national park in an urban environment involves the transgressors that are perceived to belong to the urban environment. The thieves, poachers, wood collectors, criminals, vagabonds and domestic plants, trees and fires spilling-over from the city into the TMNP, embody these transgressors. Conversely, the metropolitan government has issues with the TMNP transgressors, such as baboons, perceived to belong to the natural environment. These transgressors manifest political borders when there are no real borders. It also ushers in contestation over where nature ends and where the city begins; and, in particular, where the responsibility of the TMNP ends and starts. For example, a TMNP employee complained that they have ‘*problems with separating and delineating urban land from park land, so that park does not have to deal with urban development*’. Is it the local government’s responsibility to police the TMNP environment? Similarly, when baboons cross over to the city environment, whose responsibility are they? This illustrates the ways in which the state authorities wished to encode the boundaries between urban and nature, where ‘in practice it is hard see where ‘society,’ begins and ‘nature’ ends’ (Harvey 1993: 28 as cited in Heynen *et al.* 2006: 1).

The borders between urban and nature are also paradoxical. Over the last ten years, the pine forests on the lower slopes of the Cape Peninsula in Newlands have raised considerable contestation over whether the trees should be cleared for the restoration of indigenous vegetation, or if it should be preserved as part of the cultural landscape of the city that provides shade for urban recreationists. Furthermore, for Comaroff and Comaroff the panic over alien vegetation as being responsible for the great fire in Cape Town in 2000 provided insight into how to ‘deal with the sense of apprehension that seems [to] accompany this age of globalization, of borders at once open and closed, of people unavoidably on the move, of irreducible social and cultural difference, of compromised politics, of a shrinking commonweal’ (2001: 645). These authors consider the contestations over the alien plants in the TMNP as reflective of the uncertainties accompanying national politics. Furthermore, poverty and joblessness (characteristics usually perceived to be urban issues) and invasive plant clearing (understood as a conservation issue managed by people from the environmental sector) became entangled with poverty relief projects in the TMNP and illustrate the way in which urban and natural borders are being reconfigured (Neely 2010; Khan 2002). The presence of aliens on the Cape Peninsula thus traverses a variety of ideological discourses in the city. For some it is a livelihood, for others, the killer of endemic biodiversity or the subtle discourse of xenophobia that draws on notions of indigeneity in relation to policing the borders of the nation-state (Comaroff & Comaroff 2001: 628).¹⁰⁵

The TMNP’s motivation for upholding the borders for biodiversity protection is challenged and contested by a number of local social realities. Firstly, former nature conservationist, Leif Petersen, investigated what he calls ‘*the informal economy of biodiversity*’ of Cape Town and identifies ‘*a reality gap between conservators and wild harvesters that feed the informal health economy*’ (Petersen 2011; Collins *et al.* 2012). Petersen’s writings tell ‘*a contemporary story of culture, poverty, criminality and the biodiversity of Cape Town*’ that illustrates an extensive harvesting of indigenous plants and animals in the protected areas of the city.¹⁰⁶ Informal harvesting on the Cape Peninsula for cultural, medicinal and economical

¹⁰⁵ Building on the same topic but following a different thread, Neely argues that the alien plants debate also reveals specific transformations in scientific agendas as linked to the political climate in South Africa. He suggests that natural scientists are able to adapt to “the changing political priorities”, by for example, including in their research agendas the creation of jobs (Neely 2010: 886).

¹⁰⁶ Petersen’s research has shown that the extent of illicit harvestings is large. It includes 448 different species of animals and plants. Of the 250 plant species, 52% are harvested for medicinal purposes, 38% are harvested for the cut flower trade, the remainder being harvested for fibre and fuelwood. Conversely, with respect to fauna, 61% are harvested for food (primarily marine molluscs, but including four terrestrial mammals and various birds). Over 39% of animals (exclusively marine) are harvested as bait for catching food for human consumption or as primary food. Reptiles (especially tortoises and snakes), and locally occurring invertebrates such as arachnids and beetles are utilized in the collector trade. Thirty three animal species are harvested for traditional medicines - primarily reptiles. The majority of larger mammals are hunted for blood sports or gambling purposes” (Petersen 2011).

purposes goes back to the pre-colonial period but it was only criminalised from the colonial period onwards.

In some sense, the fate of the flower-sellers from the early 20th century reverberates through to the contemporary biodiversity harvesting economy. The point is not to suggest that harvesting should be promoted to the detriment of biodiversity but that the '*gigantic use of biodiversity*' in the TMNP is a reality to which the solution does not necessarily lie in criminalisation (Petersen 2011). Nonetheless, for these harvesters the Cape Peninsula represents a resource and presents a challenge to the upholding of borders for biodiversity conservation.

Secondly, relative to the local population, the users of the park (those directly investing in its recreational and spiritual value) are disproportionately restricted to the wealthier white classes which comprise only 14.4% of the city's population.¹⁰⁷ McDonald ascribes this race-related discrepancy in the visitor profile of the TMNP to the sheer poverty in the townships where the largest black and coloured populations of the city reside (2008: xviii). For the people living on the peripheral urban sprawl some 30 kilometres away from the Peninsula it is difficult to get access to public amenities such as the TMNP. However, my preliminary research on park visitation in Hangberg and in another black township situated on the border of the TMNP indicated that most people did not visit the park or know of its existence. Having easy access to the park did not simply imply that people wished to visit the TMNP and this problematizes the assertion that people of colour do not visit the park because they cannot afford it.

Based on 15 years of research on urban parks in New York, Low *et al.* (2005) argue that the racial profile of visitors to parks cannot be reduced to poverty. These authors make a strong argument for the promotion of cultural diversity and suggest that we need to understand how park management and its execution 'can encode symbols of class privilege and so discourage and even exclude many people of color, immigrants, and poor working-class people' (Low *et al.* 2005: 196). 'People need to feel that a public park is for them' (Low *et al.* 2005: 199). This means that the built and historical representation of a national park should reflect the diversity of the city. Planning and management strategies should furthermore be aimed at stimulating cultural diversity, rather than keeping with obsolete ideas (Low *et al.* 2005: 196). The latter reduces cultural and social diversity and minimises the racial diversity of park users (Low *et al.* 2005: 195).

¹⁰⁷ It is difficult to quantify this observation since it is an open-access park. The observation derives from the extensive time I personally spent in the TMNP, as well as from conversations with TMNP staff.

Following Low *et al.*, I suggest that the race-related discrepancy of Cape Town's urban park is connected to white people's historical custodianship of the public assets of the city (and its meanings). The postcolonial national park has not been able to wring itself from the mountains' colonial heritage and it has retained one of the most persistent urban legacies of its origins: recreation. From its inception, the TMNP acknowledged the urban tradition of outdoor recreation and adopted a comprehensive policy on recreation management. The policy is captured in the Central Development Framework (CDF) developed in 2008 which 'comprises [of] a map that demarcates the Park into visitor use zones and an associated set of management guidelines'.¹⁰⁸

The policy was also motivated due to the perception held by management that some citizens perceived the city's mountains as merely a recreational space and were not particularly concerned about the ecological ethics that go along with visiting a national park. These include (but are not exclusive to) the 25 000 cyclers and 185 000 dog walkers that use the TMNP on a regular basis (Gordon 2012). According to the park manager, the CDF is motivated by the desire to create '*in the middle of the city pure wilderness, where there are no people on bikes, dogs, or such activities. It is stunning*'. Therefore, the CDF controls where people go and how the Cape Peninsula is managed: each activity is relegated to a particular area with its own code of conduct (See figure 4).

However, this policy is not original to the nationalisation of the Cape Peninsula. It is a relic of the past: a set of ideas, routes, maps, bushes, water streams and crevices that travelled from the MCSA's first guidelines in mountaineering, matured in the Fuggle Report, and informed the TMNP's focus on the management of recreation. These continuities from the colonial period also carried with them the romantic discourse on nature as being distinct from the city; a modern imaginary that purifies nature from labour and resource extraction. Previously I illustrated that the practices of mountaineering and urban conservation are also embedded in historical racism and framing the TMNP exclusively according to the registers of recreation and conservation (but for the poor as a place to earn a livelihood), constrains the attempts for racial inclusivity and diversity (Byrne & Wolch 2009). It creates a certain ambiguity that has not gone unnoticed by people in poorer areas. In a number of interviews, people noted that the Cape Peninsula was for '*tourists*' or for '*white people to walk their dogs*'.

Furthermore, although the TMNP is an open-access park that is freely accessible to all, it inherited four pay points from the previous reserve and park system: Silvermine, Boulders, Oudekraal and Cape Point (see figure 4). During the proclamation of the Cape Peninsula it was agreed that SANParks would keep the three pay points and that the increase of tariffs on a yearly basis would be determined through a park's

¹⁰⁸ TMNP CDF, Volume 1: CDF report – June 2008: 1.

committee which was supposed to be representative of the city. It was also agreed that no additional pay points would be installed. Since this decision was made in 1998, the committee has disintegrated and its successors were even less successful in creating a dialogue with park management on the question of tariffs. In addition to the costs for activity permits as mentioned above, the current rate of tariffs (where applicable) are prohibitive and severely affect people's ability to utilise areas of the mountain.

To summarise, with nationalisation, the TMNP's ambition to recreate wilderness and achieve ecological integrity was substantiated by particular imaginaries of nature confined to the wealthier white citizens of the city, to tourists and the global environmentalist agenda. These imaginaries are not shared across the race and class fault lines of the city despite the TMNP's significant contribution in biodiversity restoration. While the TMNP was very much dedicated to facilitating an influx of black and coloured visitors and also made concerted efforts to establish a positive relationship with the poor, the opportunities created have not always been harnessed to their full capacity. This constrains the Cape Peninsula from becoming a less exclusive space. Addressing the race-related discrepancy in the visitor profile of the TMNP as an objective within the environmental justice framework implies considering how the history 'of park-making invested [the Cape Peninsula] with 'White' or Anglo-normative ideas/ideals of nature which, in turn reflect in the design and layout of parks, the facilities they contain, the leisure programs park managers offer' (Byrne 2012: 597).

Therefore, in order to generate a broader appreciation of the TMNP in the urban landscape, management needs to make more of an effort to recognise the fact that coloured and black urban citizens were historically denied ownership of and, participation in, the white hegemonic and ideological custodianship of the Cape Peninsula . Failing to recognise the continuities of colonial urban recreation patterns in park management entrenches the ideological borders that hamper the possibility of the TMNP becoming 'truly *public*, something of the right and concern of all citizens (Ernstson 2011: 2, 7, author's emphasis). Such a space 'represents a new cultural framing of urban that ... [is] more inclusive than that of the past' (Ernstson 2011: 2, 7, author's emphasis). Racial and social inclusivity of space thus hinges on a more complex understanding of the urbanisation of the Cape Peninsula , i.e. by identifying 'alternative approaches to the understanding of urban nature that recognize the cultural and historical specificities' (Gandy 2006: 71). I conclude this chapter with a quote by Gandy who eloquently writes that:

The urban ecology of the contemporary city remains in a state of flux and awaits a new kind of environmental politics that can respond to the co-evolutionary dynamics of social and bio-physical systems without resort to the reactionary discourses of the past. By moving away from the idea of the city as the antithesis of an imagined bucolic ideal, we can begin to explore the production of urban space as a synthesis between nature and culture in which longstanding ideological antinomies lose their analytical utility and political resonance (2006: 71).



Figure 4:

This is a cartographic presentation of the Conservation Development Framework (CDF). The presentation also provides an impression of the TMNP's position in the urban environment (indicated by shades of green).

(Source: SANParks 2008).

CHAPTER FIVE: *SLOOT* POLITICS, URBAN CONSERVATION AND POVERTY

5.1 'Conservation is a sensitive issue'

... discourses of nature cast a sharp light on the everyday actions and events through which definitions of belonging and citizenship - and their dark underside, the politics of exclusion - are being reframed in the postcolony (Comaroff & Comaroff 2001: 651).

Hangberg is a poor coloured community of about 20,000 people situated at the base of the sharp protruding Sentinel Peak. The peak is connected to the Cape Peninsula with the neighbouring Karbonkelberg (Afrikaans for Carbuncle Mountain) and adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean. In this chapter, I consider the urbanised nature of the Cape Peninsula by focussing on the nexus between Hangberg's claim to resources and the institutional directives for conservation. The specificities of urban conservation particularly become apparent when taking in consideration that because the national park is situated within the city, more so than in rural areas, it cannot disregard its human neighbours. The engagement between Hangberg and the TMNP is also revealing in that it exposes the TMNP's disposition towards poor communities. This emerged from the politics around the border between Hangberg and the TMNP that further confronted the dichotomous pretensions between nature and culture and, the urban and the natural environment. Hangberg's bold assertion of its rights and agency also presented a counter-narrative to the larger narrative of historical discrimination and capitalism.

Hangberg is one of two informal settlements situated within Hout Bay a coastal suburb bordered by coastline and surrounded by the mountains of the Cape Peninsula under the custodianship of the TMNP. The name Hout Bay (Afrikaans for Wood Bay) derives from the abundant indigenous forests that once populated the fertile valley. However, as the forests became depleted on the other side of the mountain, Van Riebeeck started to exploit Hout Bay for the colony's timber supplies. Farming commenced around the mid-1700s and brought about further ecological changes to the area. Soon thereafter, the settlers owned and cultivated large tracts of land and the coloured and black communities became dependent on farm labour. Later on these farms mostly situated along the Disa River gradually developed into affluent white neighbourhoods. Today Hout Bay is described as

... sharply divided into three distinct cultures or communities, consisting of whites, Coloureds and blacks ... and hence is sometimes pictured as a 'mini South Africa', a delimited geographical area representing many of the contradictions and tensions that characterise the country on a national scale (Froestad 2005: 333).

Dodson and Oelofse go on to note that:

The socioeconomic differences between these three communities are starkly apparent in the type and quality of their housing: luxurious, privately owned dwellings for the wealthy white elite; predominantly rental accommodation in tenement blocks and degraded housing stock in the coloured area; and self-built shacks in the informal settlement (2000: 128).

Before 1994 apartheid was officially responsible for the separation of white and non-white living spaces but with the arrival of democracy the polarisation between the wealthy (mostly whites) and poor (mostly coloureds and Africans) has deepened through private security measures and gated living spaces (Caldeira 2000: 4; McDonald 2008; Tefre 2010). These gated enclaves expanded because of Hout Bay's scenic natural environment. Hout Bay is surrounded by the TMNP designated as a World Heritage Site and has become an attractive place for upmarket holiday homes and tourism (Dodson & Oelofse 1997: 93; Van der Walt 2010). In the wealthier pockets of the town, the value of the properties along the TMNP and the ocean has almost doubled compared to those in the rest of Hout Bay (Cullinan 2010: 205).

Hout Bay's history invokes a much more integrated narrative than this segregated appearance. Imizamo Yetho (IY or Mandela Park, the 'black' township) was established in the 1990s as a solution for the black residents who previously lived in Hout Bay in a 'clandestine existence, illegally squatting or occupying backyard shacks' (Dodson & Oelofse 2000: 129).¹⁰⁹ The coloured people lived more intimately with the white community through domestic and farm work and were also scattered across the bay. This all changed in the 1950s. An elderly gentleman I call Dave* best articulates the spatial transformation that followed. His narrative also resonates with the history of Hangberg already mentioned in an earlier chapter:

My mother came from a farm in Hout Bay where the first high school was for missionary children in Darling Street. Her name was Martha and [she] married Booï Venter* that is my roots. I was born on the farm just above Chapman's Peak which belonged to the [Trautman's]. They had the old factories and a red lorry for the crayfish, later on the SA Canning Company came. Here was too many fish in Hout Bay we buried it in the sand ... too many fish. My wife worked for the Dorman's until she was 19 ... I went to fetch her. We were put out of town because of the Group Areas Act in the 1950s. The whites fought for us but then we had to move... and then Mandela said we were free.*

This thing of colour, the rainbow nation [shakes his head], let's forget about colour: only human beings, no colour. I love my money; I have a foundation to keep this harbour to do the job. Nothing is for free. All that have value is health and love. I love this place [Hangberg]. I love this place a lot. In the 1960s they built the red roofs. I applied for my house and in 1965 November the 5th I moved in the house. I have been living there for 47 years but it is still not my house. I am a SA citizen, a burger. I am entitled to a grain of sand in this country. I have my South African ID, just my ID. This is my place, my birth place. I just want a grain.

Like many other Hangbergers, the Hout Bay harbour was an integral part of Dave's life history: for more than 50 years 'he worked on the boats' and since his retirement supervised the cleaning of the harbour. As a child, he witnessed the first real development of Hout Bay that began with the construction of the

¹⁰⁹ Froestad writes that the presence of the black residents in Hout Bay presented a "fundamental contradiction" in the 1970s whereby the white industry, despite turning Cape Town into a "Coloured labour preference area", they needed the influx of black labour but the Western Cape" (2005: 338). Considerable research has been conducted on IY focusing on the township's relation with the rest of Hout Bay, environmental issues (water pollution, fire and sanitation) and tensions between foreign and local residents (Ballantyne & Oelofse 1999; Froestad 2005; Dodson & Oelofse 1997, 2000; Oelofse 2003).

harbour and the arrival of the ‘immigrant canners’ (and later freezers) of lobster who played a significant role in the industry (Van Sittert 2003b: 200). From the 1940s onwards, the transportation of fish to the rest of the country and the exportation of lobster tail further fuelled the economy of Hout Bay.

Even though many of the fishers of Hangberg came to know the ocean through wage labour and the women came to know fish by working in the factories, a meaningful connection between the Hangberg people and the ocean was established. This connection may arguably also date further back to an association with pre-colonial ancestral fishing practices (Harrison, Hauck, Muchapondwa & Raemaekers 2010; Witte 2010: 10). As Zack* noted: *‘The people here clean fish: you won’t get it out of them’*. The meaningful connection the people of Hangberg claimed with the ocean nevertheless carried with it a shadow: over the years there was an increasing curtailment and regulation of fishing activities in the ocean, which was accompanied by a decline in employment opportunities at the harbour.

Restrictions on access to the ocean around Hout Bay for conservation purposes predate the establishment of Hangberg. These restrictions have always functioned to the disadvantage of small-scale fishers and the Hangberg people (Van Sittert 2003b: 207). The most recent addition is the proclamation of a Marine Protected Area (MPA) under the protection of the TMNP since 2005. The MPA overlaps with the 1934 Rock Lobster Sanctuary and the Karbonkelberg Restriction Zone of 1985 (Witte 2010: 16). These regulations were also responsible for the closure of many of the harbour factories in the 1990s (Froestad 2005: 341). Today only a few factories remain in which people can find work. Witte’s research from 2010 indicates that although 49% of the workers at the remaining factories of the harbour came from Hangberg, the jobs were largely low-skilled and the skilled workers were recruited from outside Hout Bay (2010: 38). Lately the harbour has also restyled itself into a tourist destination by mimicking the Californian ‘Fisherman’s Wharf’ that effectively limited employment opportunities to casual labour in the tourism industry.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ The extent to which the Californian model is replicated in Hout Bay is impressive: the similarities between the two websites serves as one example: <http://www.marinerswharf.com/> (Hout Bay) and <http://www.fishermanswharf.org/> (California) [2013, August 5]. The wharf is owned by the Dorman family one of the first major land owners in Hout Bay.



Figure 5:

This photograph was taken from Chapman's Peak drive which connects Hout Bay with the Southern Peninsula. It shows Hout Bay harbour at the bottom and Hangberg on the base of the Sentinel Peak on the left.

(Source: author's photograph)

The increasing competition between the black and coloured workers in the industry and the limitations of fishing activities contributed significantly to the impoverished condition of Hangberg today. This compounded with the low educational levels, the general difficulty in finding work within the confines of Hout Bay and the expenses of commuting to the city for work, as well as the reality of drug and alcohol abuse, leads Fieuw to characterise Hangberg as a place of hopelessness and 'deep apathy' (2011: 46). Yet, my experience amongst some of the residents also conferred a sense of solidarity and hope built by a shared belief of belonging to Hangberg. The rise and fall of the Cape Peninsula in Hangberg's backyard elicited a particular presence in the everyday meaning of living there. More than a symbolic presence, the mountain also implied a lived-in presence rendering any claim on the Sentinel Peak an act experienced intimately (Ingold 2010; Whatmore 2002: 6). Living at the foot of a mountain also encouraged a certain sense of community. The challenges involved with building on the steep mountain and creating (sometimes illegal) electrical and drain connections meant sharing knowledge which produces material and social connections. This is the meaningful connection between the Sentinel and Hangberg that gave Hangbergers their identity in relation to place (Novell 1998). However, the reality remained that the crowded informal settlement at the back of Hangberg has occupied all of the available open land which means it is almost impossible for the new generation to live in Hangberg.

This is part of the reason why people started squatting behind the urban border that delineated Hangberg from the Sentinel Mountain, partially protected by the TMNP. The other reason involved the impression in Hangberg that they were entitled to the land, even though it constitutes a protected area. Despite the relatively short apartheid and capitalist-engineered history of Hangberg, an autochthonous relation between Hangbergers and that particular fold on the Cape Peninsula was asserted. Geschiere argues that

‘autochthony’ might seem like a self-evidential assertion but there is much ambiguity involved (2009). By reverting to the Athenian use of the word, he shows that because history is in itself a process of human migrations, autochthony’s claim for stagnation is essentially paradoxical and contradictory (Geschiere 2009). Nonetheless, in Hangberg this notion of autochthony facilitated a sense of belonging to the landscape as well as having the right to the land and the surrounding natural resources. This issue of entitlement to land and the right to marine sources protected by the TMNP throws into sharp relief the political materialisation of a border of an open-access park. This contradiction led John* – a well-known resident of Hangberg – to note that *‘the ocean symbolises the fish and the landscape the mountains and the flowers. To protect these resources in this community is a very sensitive situation’*.

5.2 *Sloot* politics: from eviction to mediation

Hell broke loose before the mediations could start, before I could finish my coffee – Pastor Johannes*

Democracy created the possibility of redesigning the racialised unequal urban landscape of Cape Town and the local government invested considerable energy in producing the Cape Town Spatial Development Framework (CTSDF). This intervention strived to design a socially and economically integrated and sustainable city, to control urban sprawl and protect the city’s natural environment and agricultural areas or in the words of one of the City of Cape Town¹¹¹ (CCT) planners *‘to inhibit the sprawling of the city eating up the biodiversity, mountain and wine lands [and] farmlands at Constantia’* (Hennessey 2012).¹¹² The Urban Edge (UE), which draws a border around the areas reserved for biodiversity protection, defines the limits of developable land in Cape Town. It also earmarks areas such as the Cape Peninsula Mountain Chain as a Priority Conservation Action Area (PCAA). Since the CTSDF effectively makes it almost impossible to develop commercially beyond the UE border (Hennessey 2012), the cadastral nature of the border officially establishes the urban/nature divide (Harris & Hazen 2006). The UE delineation of the Cape Peninsula is largely a legacy of the CPPNE border and, while formalised by geographical information systems and policy, the reality of these borders were contingent upon storm-water ditches, firebreaks and the hard edges of neighbourhoods that acted as the delineators between the city and the mountains.

The border between Hangberg and the TMNP is an outcome of these city-planning transformations and was demarcated by a storm-water ditch colloquially called the *sloot* (Afrikaans for ditch). As I will explain, the *sloot* became a highly politicized subject when it transformed from being an everyday

¹¹¹ The City of Cape Town is the local metropolitan municipality of Cape Town.

¹¹² According to the CCT’s website is the CTSDF “the spatial planning document with the highest legal status applicable to the municipal area of Cape Town” (Introducing the Cape Town Spatial Development Framework 2013).

walkway to becoming the point of departure for claiming rights to the Sentinel Peak. In 2009 a private property on the Sentinel above Hangberg was auctioned at the prestigious Chapman's Peak Hotel in Hout Bay (Erf 3557) (see figure 10 & 11).¹¹³ Proclaiming the property into the TMNP was the ideal action given the park's mandate to expand within the CPPNE territory. Instead, the TMNP observed the auction with the knowledge that the property was basically cocooned by its land and that it would object against any roads leading to the property (Slayen 2011). This, in conjunction with the stalling of rezoning properties from rural to urban behind the UE border, made the property practically worthless for property development (Neethling 2009; Slayen 2011).

The sale never transpired. It was disrupted by protesters from Hangberg who objected to the auction and demanded that the Sentinel belonged to the community of Hangberg. One protester was quoted as stating:

They can sell it, but they won't be able to build anything there. That's our heritage. Our community won't allow any trucks with building material to go there. The ground belongs to the people. Our people are also struggling for land to build houses. Why does the government not buy a small piece for houses for us and leave the rest of the mountain alone? We will push the government to buy that land and we will make sure there is no building on that mountain (Gosling 2009: 3).

It thus seemed as if the Sentinel carried some weight in the making of a particular Hangberg identity. Statements such as – it is 'our heritage' – pointed to a claim of entitlement and belonging to the Sentinel as a 'community'.

This meaningful emplacement of the Hangberg community on the mountain chain was also strategic since the auction provoked an existing housing problem (Novell 1998: 17). In response to the auction and to further emphasise Hangberg's perceived ownership of the Sentinel, people started squatting illegally behind the *sloot* in a firebreak, effectively transgressing the UE border. Many squatters took advantage of this move and built a shack beyond the *sloot* without necessarily partaking in the collective resistance to the auction. The limited accommodation in Hangberg often required one to find tactical ways to navigate the limitations of space.

Behind the *sloot*, the squatters' occupied land owned by both the CCT and the TMNP and, shortly after the transgression, both parties released an order for eviction. This reaction from the state politically materialised the UE border even though there was no physical border. The CCT also responded by arranging meetings with the community to address the situation. However, after an interaction between the Premier of the Western Cape, Helen Zille and Hangberg residents turned sour, the CCT resorted to a forced eviction. On 21 September 2010, when Zille authorised 'the Metropolitan Police to dismantle

¹¹³ The property was initially valued at 11 million rand (Neethling 2009). A property on the adjacent Karbonkelberg sold recently for 23 million rands to an international buyer. There is therefore a market for properties beyond the urban edge unofficially reserved for its proclamation by SANParks. The latter property may also have been an exceptional case since it houses an infamous castle replicated after the German Lichtenstein Castle.

‘unoccupied’ structures on the firebreak’, violence erupted between the residents and authorities (Fieuw 2011: 5). The violence involved the hurling of rocks and petrol bombs and the firing of police rubber bullets. The events of that day left a deep scar amongst the people in Hangberg and the visceral and psychological experience continues to shape their everyday socio-political experiences (see figure 7 & 8). The incident was also branded as the ‘worst community conflict post-1994 in Cape Town’ (Williams 2012c: 26). What followed was an intensive period of media coverage of what was called Zille’s war with the Hangberg community and its aftermath. It put Hangberg under the media spotlight with journalists and photographers focusing on the victims of police brutality. This attention given to Hangberg made the squatting different to what the ‘sociologist Asef Bayat, writing about Tehran and Cairo, has called the ‘the quiet encroachment of the ordinary’: the small-scale, nonconfrontational infiltration of edge or interstitial sites’ (Davis 2006: 38). From 2010 onwards Hangberg frequently featured in the headlines of the city’s newspapers and represented an important moment in the political life of the city. Front page headings rang: ‘Shack dwellers say no to eviction’ (*Sowetan*, 23 September 2010), ‘No picnic in Hangberg’ (*The Mail & Guardian*, 30 September 2010), ‘Charge Zille with genocide’ (*Sowetan*, 27 September 2010), ‘Zuma asked to probe Hangberg’ (*Sowetan*, 30 September 2010), ‘Hangberg solutions rests with the city’, ‘The Hangberg Saga’, ‘SANParks to take over Sentinel’ (*Cape Times*, 1 November 2011). The eviction has also been captured in the documentary, “The uprising of Hangberg” by Kaganof and Valley (2010) that suggests that the police turned violent first. It also relates the stories of those Hangberg residents who were seriously injured by the outbreak and the sense of injustice experienced on that day.

The eviction and its consequences also pulled the TMNP into the heart of urban struggles and elicited action from the CCT. Some sources maintained that the violent nature of the eviction was a consequence of party politics and that the violent resistance on the part of Hangberg was motivated by ANC alliances to discredit the DA authority in the city. The political differences between the ANC and the DA have been noted. The main issue was that as a national institution the TMNP was subject to ANC decision-making and, whether acting independently for SANParks or under the auspices of the ANC, the ANC government did not support the violent eviction. The *sloot* politics thus highlighted the political tensions in the country as well as the local issue regarding the national custodianship of the Cape Peninsula. As a park employee noted in an interview, the TMNP is ‘*caught in the middle of the national politics. [The] park is used to play in the political game between the ANC and the DA*’.

The city justified the eviction by responding that the houses transgressed the *sloot* illegally and occupied a firebreak, thereby increasing the already high level of fire risk in informal settlements (Pollack 2010). The firebreak was not intended to interrupt a runaway fire (that firebreak was further up at the base of the Sentinel). Instead, its purpose is to create a space from which the fire fighters can operate. However, in

Hangberg, this was a difficult situation since no roads led to this firebreak providing access for the fire trucks (Slayen 2012). It was also stressed that Hangberg was known for drug trafficking and prone to violence, especially represented by drug lords and Rastafarians (which in the authority's discourse seemed to be synonymous). The city argued that the police and the Anti-Land Invasion Unit had to take the necessary precautions. Therefore, the historical discourse of townships as being spaces of disorder, violence and crime served to justify the violence deployed by the city to re-authorise and police the urban/nature border.

The eviction also drew attention to the larger environmental politics of Cape Town and Hout Bay. The squatting beyond the *sloot* implied further urbanisation of the Cape Peninsula Mountains and struck a sensitive chord amongst certain residents of Hout Bay. These were mostly the white residents from the wealthier areas and their responses were reminiscent of the longer history of settler custodianship of the 20th century. They had the social capital and resources to collaborate and to express their grievances. This was also facilitated by their expertise and involvement in the drafting of environmental policies.¹¹⁴ Of note was the Residents Association of Hout Bay (RAHB) which admonished the 'environmental negatives' in Hangberg and Imizamo Yetho pointing out the effects of water pollution, encroachments on (and poaching from) nature, visual pollution, littering and unsanitary ablutions (Swimmer 2011).¹¹⁵ Even though the Residents Association of Hout Bay was not an environmental movement per se, it was organised around issues identified with a 'green' movement, rather than a 'brown' movement (Cock 2007). This means that, as a middle-class residents association, it was more concerned with the biodiversity conservation of the Cape Peninsula than with environmental justice issues. In fact, this bourgeois 'green' environmentalism employed the global biodiversity status of the Cape Peninsula to challenge the encroachment of the poor on the mountains in a discourse that elided the dire everyday environmental conditions people experience living in townships (Davis 2006; Nixon 2011; Oelofse 2003; Whitehead 2009).

It was thus not surprising that individuals from Hangberg were concerned that environmentally minded organisations in Hout Bay pressurised the city '*to do something about the Hangberg people encroaching on the mountain*'. However, as Cock (2007: 196) also rightly points out, the lines between the greens and

¹¹⁴ This was especially illustrated by the raucous opposition to the Chapman's Peak Plaza that entertained the national media for several weeks. Due to space limitations I cannot discuss the Chapman's Peak Campaign in detail. Suffice to say it was mostly Hout Bay-based environmental activists and residents that campaigned against the construction of a plaza on the Chapman's Peak road by the construction company, Entilini. Several mass protests, a hunger strike and court orders could not override the construction of the plaza, which at the time of writing is in its final stages. The plaza is constructed partly on land owned by the TMNP that spurred interesting debates over whether SANParks conceded land for development worthy of protection, or if it was merely a "quarry" of environmental insignificance.

¹¹⁵ The RAHB website published a report on their website on these issues compiled by a commissioned environmental consultant (Van der Spuy s.a.).

browns are not clear-cut and the association did express a concern for the socio-economic conditions of the people living in Hout Bay's informal settlements. Other local NGOs such as Thrive and the Hout Bay Partnership initiative pursued concerns more characteristic of a brown movement. These NGOs worked to synthesize development, social integration and business with an environmental focus (Cock 2007: 175; Lankers-Byrne 2012; Lin 2012; Swimmer 2012). The incorporation of business in environmental movements has been the subject of critics alerting us to the depoliticized appearance these movements take on when, in fact, they are organised around instrumentalist solutions and neoliberal tendencies (Brockington *et al.* 2008). Moreover, Hangberg was not the only transgressor of the urban edge: the city's mountains are a popular developing node for exclusive housing estates. Some of the most prominent estates are described as '*the most exclusive gated enclave of Cape Town situated high up the mountains*'. A house in these estates easily runs up to 23 million Rand. However, while the UE policy provides sufficient ammunition for environmental organisations to arrest formal development, these policies were not particularly developed for informal developments. Alternative measures, such as eviction, were thus called upon.

However, given the history of conservation reviewed earlier, the act of eviction did not sit comfortably with SANParks policies. After the news of the violent eviction reached the head office of SANParks in Pretoria, the acting chief executive, David Mabunda, ordered the TMNP's park manager to withdraw from the court bid (Mtyala 2010: 4). Mabunda's spokesperson was quoted in the newspaper as follows: "[our] mandate is not to evict people (it) is to conserve protected areas' (Mtyala 2010: 4). This reflected SANParks' commitment to its new management policy that emphasises better community relations rather than resorting to evictions (De Villiers 2008: 21). The TMNP's involvement in the *sloot* politics thus also gave the Hangberg squatters a 'softer landing'. Since SANParks strived to overcome their history in eviction, it facilitated the possibility of mediation. For instance, Jack* said the following:

Opportunities in SANParks are massive ... SANParks is in a position [to respond to communities whereas] the city/province collaborate with [the] agenda what their bosses want ... Is SANParks on the same agenda as us [Hangberg]? SANParks was willing to withdraw from the application from eviction and people in SANParks proposed to be line with us ... they [SANParks] were at the heart of negotiations. SANParks supported us – even though they were the owners of the controversial land, bending their ways [to work with us] because they have the ear.

The TMNP's withdrawal from the court order led the judge to instruct an out-of-court resolution and the subsequent 'peace and mediation process' was led by Brian Williams, an international consultant on community conflict.¹¹⁶ The mediation brought representatives from the provincial government, the local

¹¹⁶ The NGO, Development Action Group (DAG) also advocated an out of court solution with democratically sound principles and largely influenced the Judge's decision (Fieuw 2011). "Williams is the CEO of Brain Williams Consultancy, an international enterprise that specializes in conflict resolution and mediation, labour relations and

government and SANParks to Hangberg to mediate with the democratically elected Hangberg Peace and Mediation Forum (HPMF). The HPMF consisted of 39 members from different areas in the neighbourhood representing the Hangberg ‘community’ (Williams 2012a). After several months of negotiations, a number of resolutions were reached to solve the squatting beyond the *sloot* and this was promulgated in the Peace and Mediation Accord (PMA). Almost a year after the eviction, the PMA was made a court order that legally bound the parties to the conditions stipulated in the document.

The fundamental principle of the agreement rests on the demolishing of the houses beyond the *sloot* once alternative accommodation is provided for the evictees in the vicinity of Hangberg. Article 3, number 1 reads:

1. To ensure that the Sentinel Mountain in particular the area on and above the sloot and firebreak above Hangberg is protected and restored back to its former natural state, all those who currently live above the sloot referred to as the first respondents in the Court papers or the ‘sloot occupiers’ in the area on the Sentinel Mountain ... shall move back into the community as space opens up when a qualifying beneficiary below the sloot is allocated a community residential rental unit in one of the new developments (PMA 2010: 5).

The PMA also contains interventions for Hangberg designated to the CCT and the national government, including for example economic development, tourism, security of tenure of state-owned rental flats, the upgrading of informal settlements, employment opportunities, education, health and social security. The TMNP committed to the existing employment programmes designated to its social department described in Chapter Four and made one additional contribution. It also aims to support and investigate the possibility of establishing a Khoisan Cultural Heritage Centre within the vicinity of Hangberg (see figure 6). The PMA reads:

15. A small bottom section of the Sentinel Mountain which is referred to as the quarry, located behind the Water Treatment Plant is proposed by the community to be utilised by those persons or organisations from Hangberg as a Khoisan Village site for tourist and cultural heritage purposes (PMA 2010: 9).

The proposal for a Heritage Centre is in line with the TMNP’s role as custodians of both cultural and natural resources as envisaged in their Heritage Resource Management Plan (2004). Yet it seemed that instead of addressing the ancestral link between Hangberg and the Khoi as the original landowners (as certain residents were advocating for) the centre could be more about commercialising an earlier Khoisan history of the Cape in order to generate employment.

For Williams, the PMA illustrated how ‘the community of Hangberg and its partners forged a relationship that produced a gift to the nation’ (2012c: 26). The Rector of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) honoured the HPMF for a ‘*historical accord*’ that presented a step into the future of a democratic South Africa. However, while the mediation process provided some degree of agency to the Hangberg people in

labour law. He especially focuses on community reconstruction and peace building in the democratic South Africa” (Williams 2012b).

urban governance and development, it also took a number of issues for granted. By exploring the PMA in relation to the ethnographic fieldwork I conducted, I illustrate in the next section how the mediation that followed the *sloot* politics drew Hangberg into a conservation mandate rather than truly engaging with the issue of establishing and expanding a national park in the socio-economic context of Cape Town.



Figure 6:

KhoiSan Rights Now! This is a photograph of Hangberg residents protesting for their Khoisan rights on Chapman's Peak drive at the civic opposition against the construction of a toll plaza (See footnote 114).

(Source: author's photograph).



Figure 7&8: Children's drawings of Hangberg

Drawings by two Grade 6 children from the Hangberg Primary School. The children were instructed to make a drawing of Hangberg. It struck me that none of these children were aware of the TMNP, yet most of them depicted the *sloot* and the Sentinel Peak in their drawings. This illustrates the significant presence the *sloot* and the Sentinel rendered in their everyday life.



Figure 9:

Hangberg house: One of the houses in the firebreak behind the *sloot*

(Source: author's photograph, 2011)

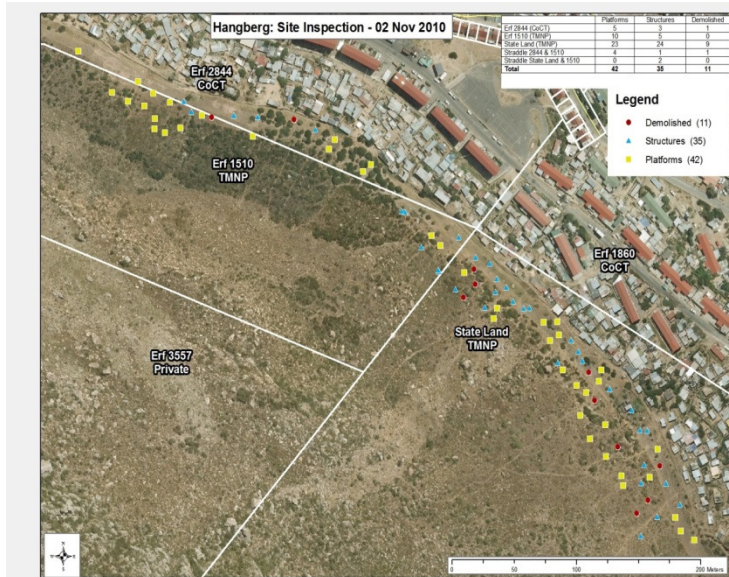


Figure 10 (left) & 11 (below):

Aerial views of the *sloot*

These images indicate the controversial property auctioned in 2009 (Erf 3557) and the land encroachment on the TMNP

(Source: SANParks 2011)





Figure 12:

View of Hout Bay: A photograph taken from the *sloot*

(Source: author's photograph, 2011)

5.3. The Peace and Mediation Accord

5.3.1 Mediating community

Globally, the notion of a 'community' has been used to frame the relationship between poor people and national parks. 'Community' in the discourse of conservation emerged from a confluence of circumstances. It was profoundly influenced by the realisation that top-down conservation strategies had negative impacts on the rural poor (Agrawal & Gibson 1999). This led conservation to 'find' community – in the words of Agrawal and Gibson – and also subsequently developed into community-based conservation management (CBCM) and other adaptations in conservation policy that claimed to be committed to poverty elimination, development and local empowerment (1999: 631). Hence, in South Africa like in other places, the notion of community emerged from the interaction between rural national parks and its neighbouring poor people (Cock & Fig 2000).

However, in numerous studies it has been pointed out that the inclusion of community in conservation has not necessarily been as positive as envisaged in policy frameworks. Critics have especially alerted us to the 'limited understanding of community' as being a 'coherent collective, with a common purpose' (Walker 2010: 289). Others have also emphasised the contradictions embedded in the 'local' part of community, given that most CBCM programmes are global and capitalist in nature (Rodary 2009). In South Africa, Robins explored the ambiguity in the internal and external forces shaping conflicts over the boundaries of 'community' that emerged during the course of a San land claim in the Northern Cape area adjacent to the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park (KGNP) (2004). He illustrates that the procedures of the land claim process ended up being divisive, resulting in leadership struggles and 'the emergence of intra-community tensions between the self-designated 'traditionalists' and the 'western' bushmen in the new settlement area' (Robins 2004: 834). The land claim by the Makuleke in the Kruger National Park

experienced similar problems relating to conflicts over the boundaries of the land claimant community (Robins & Van der Waal 2008; Walker 2010).

The difficulties and failures with community have not only been pointed out in academic papers but also by practicing conservationists. The latter have initiated what is known as ‘back to the barriers’ which marks ‘a return to classic forms of conservation’ that ‘amounts once again to excluding social issues from the sphere of conservation which is reasserted as a biological issue above all’ (Aubertin, Pinton & Rodary 2011: 5). As a result, conservation agencies are moving away from the notion of community and prefer to engage with individual agents and entrepreneurs rather than communities. Yet, despite this transformation in conservation, ‘community’ informed the framework with which the TMNP engaged with Hangberg. Asked what lessons the TMNP had learnt through engagement with Hangberg the following remarks were made:

[We] realised we cannot solve the problem with the community without solving other issues. A community is like an onion – a thick folder – housing, economic and social issues. Entrenched with lawlessness to keep [the] police out and facilitate drug dealing and poaching. They [Hangberg] are frayed What came out from the mediation process was that they wanted to be a law abiding community. This was largely influenced by Brain Williams who did the bits and pieces to drive the legal citizen.

Williams was the facilitator of the mediation and played a central role in providing the HPMF with the symbolic language to locally mobilise residents along the terms of self-employment, education and restoring ‘honour to the community’, even if this notion, or awareness, of community did not exist prior to its mobilisation through the mediation (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009: 15). The role of the mediator is also a legacy of colonialism and apartheid and fills the self-appointed gap ‘between the ignorant community and the insensitive state’ (Jensen 2004: 194).

Furthermore, the notion of ‘community’ is also prevalent in the engagement between peripheral urban townships such as Hangberg and the welfare state (Jensen 2004: 181; Lemanski 2008; Rose 1996). In Rose’s Foucauldian analysis of governance, he argues that ‘community’ is not ‘simply the territory of government, but a *means* of government: its ties, bonds, forces and affiliations are to be celebrated, encouraged, nurtured, shaped and instrumentalized in the hope of producing consequences that are desirable for all and for each’ (1996: 335, author’s emphasis). Following Rose (1996) the state’s conceptualisation of community materialises as a technique of governance that redistributes responsibility i.e. the governance of crime, drug abuse, security and health is not executed through direct state intervention, instead it is delegated to the community and its affiliated community leaders, families, friends and social networks (Jensen 2004).

The notion of a Hangberg community was first formalised with the establishment of the HPMF, a forum that represented the views and desires of the people living in Hangberg by participating in the discussions

that proceeded to the formulation of the PMA.¹¹⁷ However, Lemanski warns that forums representative of communities often fail because ‘these groups do not, in fact, represent the ‘community’, which was not sufficiently organized or cohesive to have agreed representation’ (2008: 400). People in Hangberg had relatively good knowledge of their neighbours and this, along with a shared history of marginalisation and the experience of collective protests, created a sense of community and union (Ross 2010: 5). Nevertheless, as I will discuss later on in more detail, it was especially the impression of a shared fishing heritage that facilitated the idea of a socially coherent community that could be represented by a body such as the HPMF.

While outsiders often wished to think of Hangberg as a homogeneous community, it constituted a mixture of different people with individual aims, affiliations and, ‘competing political structures and differences vested in resources’ (Maluleke, Mavhunga & Tapela 2007: 64).¹¹⁸ Therefore, shortly after the HPMF was established, dissenting attitudes towards the forum emerged. People started questioning the forum’s legitimacy and integrity, formed oppositional factions and even prosecuted some of the members of the HPMF for intimidating residents to yield to their views. Hence, while the mediation process envisaged enriching ordinary people’s participation in the TMNP management strategies and urban developmental processes, it instead established new forms of differences and resentment between community leaders and affiliated groups.

The articulation of these differences relied on specific knowledgeable residents who related to the urban figure Hansen and Verkaaik describe as the ‘hustler’ or the ‘urban specialist’: ‘individuals who by virtue of their reputation, skills and imputed connections provide services, connectivity and knowledge to ordinary dwellers in slums and popular neighbourhoods’ (2009: 16). Many of the leaders involved in the PMA and those who opposed it had a background in community development, activism, and party politics or participated in the struggle against apartheid (and returned with little other opportunity than becoming self-appointed leaders). These so-called community leaders capitalised on their ‘intelligibility and knowledge’ of the social and political context of Hangberg and employed the notion of a community to garner local support in resisting, assisting or participating in the mediation (Hansen & Verkaaik 2009: 15). Challenged by these internal conflicts in the neighbourhood, my ethnographic fieldwork required careful navigation in terms of maintaining a stance of neutrality, whilst also nurturing a sense of understanding of conflicting views.

¹¹⁷ This forum was of a different kind than the Park Forum discussed in Chapter Five. It was especially erected for the mediation process.

¹¹⁸ Hangberg is a diverse neighbourhood representing differences in culture, religion (Christianity, Muslim and Rastafarianism), class, education levels and households ranged from being middle-class to extremely poor.

The integrity of the engagement between the TMNP and this adjacent poor community was thus hampered by the failure to recognise the power differences within communities, as well as the relation between state institutions and ordinary people. But what about the ordinary people of Hangberg who were not involved in the mediation? During my fieldwork in the months after the PMA was made a court order, it became apparent that despite the illegal squatters' reality of eviction, most people continued their lives largely undisturbed. Some even envisioned a future on that land (however fragile) and financed their own sewage and water infrastructure, planted trees and planned to expand their houses. Others commenced with new housing structures. Four months after the PMA was approved, I encountered two young men busy with the construction of a one-roomed shack. Fully aware of the illegality of the action, they believed it to be their only solution. Another squatter proposed that the mediation was '*just another way by which they wanted to get them off the mountain*'. The resolution of eviction was thus drafted with the consensus of the 'community' of Hangberg but the realities on the ground belied this assumption. Lila* indignantly said the following:

I want to stay here... otherwise anyone can come live here. I am not going ... [even if it is a] World Heritage Site, now I can live here on the mountain. We just want a roof we did not want a park - just food on the table.

This attitude towards the PMA's resolution for eviction was further antagonised by the scepticism and mistrust reserved for its alternative housing solutions allocated to the local government. '*Development*' was an idea associated with the empty promises made in past political party campaigns to garner votes for upcoming elections. '*The coloured rather trusts the devil than the government*' one informant said it. This, along with the violent eviction of September 2010 and the fear of being relocated to a state-owned Temporary Relocation Area (TRA) on the outskirts of Cape Town, contributed to the dissidence people articulated towards the resolutions reached in the PMA.¹¹⁹

The TMNP and state representatives involved in the mediation were fully aware of the internal conflicts in Hangberg following the establishment of the HPMF. The local newspapers dubbed it as the 'Hangberg saga'. When I enquired about this discrepancy in the mediation in an interview with one of the TMNP representatives, he replied that '*we [SANParks] are a formal state structure and we deal through formal programmes*'. Thus, the nature of the mediation favoured – perhaps not intentionally – conservationist objectives in a de-political fashion without resolving the underlying power dynamics involved in the TMNP becoming the custodians of the Cape Peninsula (Sullivan 2003: 78). The point is not to suggest that housing for the poor should be prioritised above biodiversity protection. It is rather to suggest that the nature of the engagement between the TMNP and its poor neighbours was limited in its aim to empower

¹¹⁹ In a number of conversations Hangberg residents made negative references to the TRA, "Blikkiesdorp", a problematic resettlement of the urban poor on the peripheral areas of the urban landscape.

the local people or to limit effects of establishing (or expanding) a national park (Dressler & Mavhunga 2007: 46).

5.3.2 Custodians of the Sentinel Peak

[Margins] are sites of both subjugation and creativity, zones in which possibility and constraint play off one another, often in unpredictable ways (Ross 2010: 208).

By examining the multiple discourses on the Sentinel Peak, the main aim here is to reveal how custodianship reflects on a local level the urban struggles of the poor and, on an institutional level, the mandate to expand the TMNP for biodiversity protection.

The second resolution reached in the PMA concluded that SANParks ought to proclaim the controversial property on the Sentinel Peak. It reads: ‘13. Sanparks shall do all things possible to buy or expropriate the private land on the Sentinel Mountain and there is recognition that this process may take years before it is able to be effected’ (PMA 2010: 9). Since this resolution was reached through the mediation, it was done under the consent of the ‘community’ of Hangberg. The agreement was made due to the belief that there was common ground between Hangberg and the TMNP. Hangberg regarded the Sentinel Peak as their ‘*sacred heritage*’ and wanted to protect it from development and, the mountain’s proclamation by SANParks guaranteed no development. As a TMNP representative noted:

The experience with Hangberg was humbling. They believe the mountain to [be] sacred, their heritage. They wanted no development on the mountain. We [SANParks] were given the responsibility to expropriate the property and make sure that the land goes never back to private land.

However, in spite of the good intentions of SANParks in believing that they would protect the Sentinel Peak on behalf of the Hangberg community, the matter was not settled. In my conversations with people, the mountain was referred to as Hangberg, meaning in Afrikaans ‘a mountain hanging’. Further, for some people, the name ‘Sentinel’ was experienced as alien and associated with the changes brought about with the TMNP’s full custodianship of the mountain:

You can’t walk there, you can’t walk there ... I will go without a permit and we will pick [what we want]. What’s this Sentinel? That is an English name, it is Hangberg.

TMNP’s custodianship thus implied a policing of nature that this informant found unsettling. Given the poaching activities in Hangberg (discussed in the next section) it is not surprising that residents felt antagonistic towards the policing of nature. However, here I wish to draw attention to the local perceptions of TMNP’s custodianship of the Sentinel as resonating with people’s concern of market-driven displacement. Consider for instance Richard’s* comment:

...with nature they [the TMNP] only see money, the tourists make pollution. Today they are tourists and tomorrow they are owners. We are from nature. We have a connection with the mountain. It has a face and I heard its voice. I lived for 15 years in the mountain, raised four children. I was pushed out by force. They used technology to prove it. I walk this mountain.

Richard presents a strong personal sense of belonging to the Sentinel. He also alludes to the points I raised earlier in regards to the commodification of nature and the perception of the TMNP as a designation for tourists only. Richard's intimate relationship with the mountain was perhaps unique in relation to the rest of Hangberg, yet his concern over the possibility that people from the outside could own and develop in Hangberg was not. The threat of outsider development and ownership in Hangberg were nothing new (Fieuw 2011: 73).

Zille said that you [the people of Hangberg] live in a jewel. She knows he will give a billion inside and from outside the country to live here. She said that in 2007/2008 ... Now she wants to throw us the community out ... we know of development we understand ... well don't worry about the rich whites, sort out the poor. They also want to be something today or tomorrow, they are poor and financially weak, and there is no cave for the poor.

The allegory of the jewel was a recurrent theme in my conversations with Hangberg residents: it is the 'realisation' of Hangberg's worth being situated on such a geographically spectacular setting and the possibility of it becoming something similar to Camps Bay, a lavish residential area north of Hout Bay. As another resident confirmed, *'Zille told us [this] was the best real estate property in the Western Cape: waterfront, full view of a conservation area. [But] what she wants to tell us indirectly [is that it is] worth billions and billions.'*

Yet the allegory of the jewel also carried with it the concern of new urban spatial transformations in which case Hangberg will become inaccessible to its current residents. In comprehending of this potential of displacement, the resident notes *'now she wants to throw us out'*. The resistance to the auction also attested to this concern. The bold opposition was about preventing 'the Sentinel Mountain from being auctioned to some of the richest people in the world. 'We heard that Bill Gates and Oprah Winfrey wanted to buy our land and [we] protested'' (Hweshe 2010). *'We look after it; it is our mountain. It is our sacred heritage'* a Hangberg resident said. Thus, perceived as a cultural heritage, the Sentinel was protected against outsiders by the Hangberg community.

Jensen argues that 'the community conceived by the state is ... a different community from the one based on the relation between place and identity' (2004: 184). Despite the differences amongst the people of Hangberg, I was surprised by how quickly diverse interests and relations were mobilised into one voice or position under the umbrella of a 'Hangberg community' as was the case in relation to protecting the Sentinel Peak. The articulation of the Sentinel Peak as being the heritage of the Hangberg community is

suggestive of a local form of custodianship. Considered as custodians of the Sentinel Peak, I suggest that it was the political action that endorsed Hangberg's entitlement to the mountain as a community and thereby also averted the possibility of market-driven displacement. Thus, while the custodianship of the TMNP of the mountains in Hout Bay increased property values and the likelihood of market-driven displacement, it also created the opportunity by which local residents could reconfigure the Sentinel as a political platform.

SANParks, being a national conservation agency, is part of the restitution discourse, and thus has also been subject to land claims. Invigorating the rights of the Hangberg people as belonging to the mountain, indeed being entitled to the land, thus spoke to the current involvement of SANParks with other land claims and restitution options. For instance, for certain people in Hangberg dressing in traditional Khoi attire spoke to a pre-colonial identity which legitimised the claim of being the original community of the Cape Peninsula (Comaroff & Comaroff 1987: 195). Christie* an ardent believer of his indigenous rights said the following:

[I] hear under the mountain [where the] life forms begun ... The Khorana they were chased away from here. The royal house was here, here is where it all begun. The Khorana Royalty begun here. I [either] die, or I stay here by the mountain. My worry [is that] the system is destroying the mountain. Otherwise we will destroy it. If they take this one [the Sentinel] they take my nation, my people. It is time that we get this mountain back.

In Christie's belief that his ancestors were the original land-owners of Hout Bay, he echoes the Makuleke claimant community which was 'given their land back' in the Kruger National Park. Living adjacent to a national park under the hubris of post-apartheid land restitution possibilities thus motivated the strategic manoeuvres in which social agents presented their rights to the Cape Peninsula (see figure 4). Yet, as already alluded to, the claim of autochthony is questionable and given the creole history of the Cape, it would be very difficult – if not impossible – to compensate for colonial land dispossession. Nonetheless, in response to the presence of the national park certain Hangbergers presented their relations with the Sentinel as being shaped by autochthony and indigeneity.¹²⁰ The establishment of a national park thus facilitated the political platform for claiming pre-colonial rights to the land. The Khoi-movement in Hangberg was haphazard in nature and confined to a small group of people, however, it nevertheless illustrated how history morphed into a political claim and local custodianship.

The controversial property to be protected by the TMNP was one of the few remaining private properties within the CPPNE expanse. Inspired by the value of urban conservation and by the international concern of biodiversity extinction, the expansion of the national park in the city is first and foremost about

¹²⁰ The revitalization of pre-colonial identities is certainly also linked to the socio-political landscape of the country: an outcome of the tension between the nation-state, democracy, globalisation and foreign nationals (Comaroff & Comaroff 2001; Geschiere 2009).

biodiversity protection. However, the proclamation of the Sentinel Mountain aligned SANParks with the custodianship of Hangberg's heritage (Slayen 2011). As mentioned, although the TMNP developed a cultural management plan, it does not have the competence to implement it (Annecke 2012).¹²¹ Thus, in actuality, the main purpose of the proclamation was biodiversity protection, which defines SANParks' custodianship and its meaning of nature. The wording of the PMA illuminates this issue:

Recognising that the community [of Hangberg] sees the Sentinel Mountain as a heritage site and a sacred place that all must respect and it must not become a battleground but remain a place of virgin beauty that is not violated. The Sentinel Mountain is a valuable eco system and the laws in regard thereto must be respected and upheld. Sanparks are striving to have it become part of the Table Mountain National Park (PMA 2010: 3).

The Sentinel as it is described above purports a quintessential 'nature', i.e. 'virgin beauty' and a 'sacred place' erases and/or obscures the political context of the *sloot* politics and the socio-environmental history of the Cape Peninsula . While the mention of 'heritage site' recognises a historical relationship between the Sentinel and the people of Hangberg, an understanding of what that heritage may constitute is blunted by reverting to the colonial ontological border between 'nature' and 'culture' or the city and the mountains (Adams & Hutton 2007: 157). It does this by rendering the Sentinel in the singular of which its 'laws' are exclusively between nonhumans: a conceptualisation through which conservation agencies such as SANParks becomes the 'expert' of the mountain and consequently also determines its fate.¹²²

Ethnographic studies have illustrated that the discrimination involved with the creation of protected areas is most significant in the ways in which its establishment 'strip' the landscape of its socio-historical context in order to 'naturalise it' (Anderson & Berglund 2003: 5; Reyes 2011: 79). Or in the words of Swyngedouw, '[environmental] politics is a politics legitimated by a scientific consensus which, in turn, translates into a political consensus' (2009: 602). Thus, I suggest that the representation – which makes reference to the Sentinel Peak's natural properties – alienates the relationship between Hangberg and the mountain and its identity in relation to place. It also obscures the significance and meaning of expanding a national park on the Cape Peninsula .

¹²¹ Cultural heritage is also a new concept in SANParks. For Herwitz is the focus on heritage particular to postcolonial state institutions (2012). He explains that this directive to celebrate heritage by the state is aimed at enriching a nation's longevity and strengthening its destiny (Herwitz 2012).

¹²² This relates to the work of Latour in which he describes that political ecology do not fully comprehend the politics of nature since it transports "facts of nature" into the realm of politics and culture (2004: 25). In the case of the Sentinel Peak, the facts of nature carried its authoritative (unquestionable) baggage and denied a proper discussion in regards to the politics around the Sentinel.

5.4 ‘*My familie kom uit die see*’ – My family comes out of the ocean

*They promised an upgrade of Hangberg from 1992, but it has not been delivered. The people say it is enough. If we were not neglected and received services then the people would not have moved beyond the sloop. They wanted to auction the mountain, it looks to us that you are going to privatise the mountain. [We have] the rights to resources, democracy [the] constitution says it is my right to sustain [a] family, the right to the ocean as a community – Jack**

For [Karl] Marx, it is not a question of understanding how nature and society interact; rather the point is that nature is incomprehensible except as mediated by social labour, and consequently there has to be a rethinking that posits labour as central to nature (Smith 2006: xiii).

I started this chapter by illustrating that Hangberg is an outcome of the labour needed in the Hout Bay fishing industry. Through Hangberg’s labour, the marine resources extracted from the ocean turned into the commodities the fishing companies exported nationally and globally. The exploitation of the ocean’s resources caused by these capitalist endeavours led to the start of conservationist initiatives, of which the latest is the Marine Protected Area (MPA) under the custodianship of SANParks. In this section, I examine the competing claims on the marine environment surrounding Hangberg. This examination brings to light the agency of marginalised people in a larger narrative of capitalist resource exploitation, conservation and the commodification of nature.

The magnificent Atlantic Ocean neighbouring Hangberg was – even more so than the Sentinel Peak – a focal point for establishing identity and community in Hangberg (Tsing 2005: 257). People’s life histories and everyday discourses were deeply embedded in the ebb and flow of the ocean. For many years, families survived on subsistence fishing practices. People reminisced on the abundance of fish of the past and the Sunday feasts cooked from the harvests. This connection has, however, been severed by the exclusionary elite capitalist exploitation of the ocean and the conservationist regulations that consequently followed. The latter not only impeded on the livelihoods of the people living in Hangberg, it also projected small-scale fishers as *the* adversaries of the ocean (Tsing 2005: 288; Witte 2010).

Furthermore, before 1994, ‘industry associations and white fishermen have long been integrated into state resource management structures, [while] black artisanal and subsistence fishers have historically been excluded on grounds of race’ (Van Sittert 2003b: 199). The negative attitudes in Hangberg towards the state regulations of the ocean and the principles of conservation were therefore deeply-seated in the historical racial injustices that shaped the nature of the regulation of the ocean. Conversely, the coming of democracy has opened up the possibility of reclaiming the rights of previously disadvantaged small-fishers:

Following the introduction of a rights-based constitutional democracy in South Africa, the post-Apartheid societal reform processes, including those implemented in the fishery sector, were broadly known as ‘transformation’. The main aims of the fisheries transformation process, which was guided by the Marine Living Resources Act of 1998, were to correct racial imbalances and inequalities in terms of access to fishing

rights, while maintaining economic stability and resource sustainability. This created potential opportunities for, and raised the expectations of, traditional small-scale fishers who had been marginalised by Apartheid policies (Britz, Bürgener, Hauck, Mackenzie, Maharaj & Plagányi 2011: 436).

In a country where '[rights] are increasingly becoming the accepted language of political claims' articulating '*the right to the ocean as a community*' thus problematizes the TMNP's mandate to protect the marine environment (Robins 2008: 6). In Hangberg this right was further secured and authenticated by mobilising the inheritance of a traditional fishing community. Thus, exploiting the potential of the opportunities of restitution rested on expanding the political claims on the ocean by invoking and repackaging heritage through the rights discourse.

The constitutive real and imagined history of a fishing heritage acted as a political tool in the struggle to attain the rights to the ocean (Jensen 2004: 181; Zimmerer 2000: 395). '*My family comes out of the sea*' – is a metaphorical autochthonous claim to authenticate Hangberg's historical relationship with the ocean. Many people in Hangberg believed that they had the right to the ocean and by using this heritage they situated and practiced this claim, in spite of the fact that the marine environment was under the protection and custodianship of the TMNP which prohibited open-access to the marine environment. A study on Hangberg by the Environmental Unit (Geography) at UCT prepared for SANParks makes a similar observation:

There is a strong sense of entitlement amongst fishers, and fisher households, that highlight a perception that fishing activities are associated with 'tradition' and 'history', and therefore a belief that there are rights associated with these (Harrison *et al.* 2010: 10).

Moreover, the history of Hangberg was hardly the romantic narrative of simple subsistence fishing people. It was entwined with the history of racial capitalism and racialised forms of labour that placed Hangbergers in a perpetual cycle of poverty.¹²³ Hangberg's mobilisation of its historical rights to the ocean has caught the attention of the state, the TMNP and other NGOs and organisations. It also seemed if SANParks was in the process of considering alternative solutions to the current situation. However, on an everyday level, for the fishers of Hangberg access to fishing rights, quotas and permits remained an ongoing battle. This was partly because the fishing industry continued to operate for the benefit of capitalist endeavours and to the detriment of the poor (Fieuw 2011: 47). Jan* summarised the fishing situation in Hangberg as follows:

¹²³ Writing about the notion of community on the West Coast, Van Sittert writes that '[far] from being determined by a "call of the blood", fishing was part of flexible repertoire that included subsistence farming, agricultural day labour and periods of formal wage employment. In this context, 'community', where it cohered at all, did so most robustly around production and kinship, but even these were fragile and impermanent bonds. Rather, 'community' in the conventional territorial sense of 'community of residence' was the modern creation of fishery and factory owner's seeking to counter the centrifugal pull on labour of mining-led industrialization and immobilise it permanently on the coast' (2003b: 210).

There are so many different [fishing] permits ... the fisherman doesn't know what he is anymore. It was said a line fish catcher, then that is all that you are allowed to do. Poachers are a word the government gave us. The Marine and Coastal Management still works on the old system: we always get the shortest end.

This complex web of bureaucracy, corruption, top-down natural science authoritarianism, along with changing legislation in which the Hangberg fishers are embedded, resonate with other marginalised fishing communities along the South African coast (Van Sittert 2003b).

Furthermore, like encroaching on nature, poaching from nature was also an inherently contradictory political issue that complicated the national park's relationship with Hangberg. Negativity towards the idea of a national park and urban conservation was encouraged by the fact that the TMNP was, in conjunction with the state, responsible for enforcing the restrictions on the MPA adjacent to Hangberg. An elderly man said the following:

It is their nature. We call them the 'bokkies' [the diminutive for buck making the logo of SANParks] because they wear the clothes with the bokkies on - nature belongs to them. I grew up in Orange Kloof. It was my place. Now it is a reserve. The mountain belongs to them – it is almost like a tollgate.

This predicament was also further heightened by the alarming rate of poaching occurring in Hangberg (Hauck 2008; Witte 2010; Britz *et al.* 2011). The sense of historical entitlement to the ocean and the impoverished condition of many people living there was complicated in the 1990s with the intensification of the poaching of abalone and lobster.¹²⁴ The local and global networks that these highly valued sea creatures introduced to Hangberg, however dangerous, were extremely profitable. Having to face the perilous Atlantic Ocean at night and harvesting the catches for the lucrative Asian black market – especially abalone – exposed the local illegal harvesters to the business of organised crime and drug trafficking (Britz *et al.* 2011). The youth, in particular, seemed to be vulnerable. Reflecting on his experience, Jim* said the following:

Poaching is much more lucrative than drugs. [A] diver makes between 30 000 to 100 000 Rands per night, the buyer pays per night between 1 and 2 million rand. It is the Chinese Mafia [and] poaching [and] drugs pedalling are [in] the same industry. In the poaching game, the only thing is dollars. The fellow poacher may die. The shipment must be safe rather than the people. They [the poachers] have parties [and] are disrespectful, showing off ... [The] reality of poaching [is that] the youth move into the shoes of their parents. They become suddenly an adult. [They are] between 9-25 years old and the majority are under 15; the youngsters carry the perlemoen [abalone] and are called caddies. The older guys either manage the boat or are divers. Divers have to be fit and cannot do hard drugs. Why must they go to school? They are the breadwinners. They see themselves as adults. [This is the] the shape of poaching. [It is the] danger lurking in Hangberg. How is a person surviving in the Cape Flats? Selling drugs, they don't have an ocean.

Many residents in Hangberg earned a living from the ocean and given the ongoing struggle in pursuing a living from fishing, as well as the difficulties in getting access to marine resources, people turned to

¹²⁴ Scholars have illustrated the concept of “poaching” is a criminalising concept for a much more complex and ambiguous practice embedded in the flows of capital and privatization of natural resources (Britz *et al.* 2011; Watte 2010).

poaching (Fieuw 2011: 47).¹²⁵ The extensive business of poaching reached into the everyday lives of all Hangbergers and illustrated the complex issues the management of the TMNP encounter when establishing a national park. However, Hangbergers were not the only poachers: studies and investigations have found that poaching was more prevalent in the larger industries operating in Hout Bay and amongst the upper-classes of Cape Town (Brill 2012). Criminalising the poor however seem to be a much easier route in seeking solutions for the reality of poaching, which also obscures Hangberg's historical marginalisation in the fishing industry.

This section has highlighted the urbanised nature of the ocean in the sense that while its past exploitation led to its current protection, the social power involved within this process remained obscured. The racialised labour and power relations involved with exploiting the ocean produced the place of Hangberg and also subsequently criminalised Hangberg as the adversaries of the ocean. I suggest that there is a need to further explore the implications involved in urban conservation by considering how the environment in the first place came to be produced as something mediated by capital and social power. In relation to Hangberg, the conservation of the ocean is interpreted by the fishers as indicative of history of labour accompanied with racial discrimination and political marginalisation.

5.5 Contesting borders

This chapter presented an account of the contestations over the protection of urban natural resources that are prevalent all over the world (Landy & Zérah 2013). The global and national mandate to expand protected areas in cities influenced the TMNP to expand its borders for biodiversity conservation on the Cape Peninsula . Yet by focussing on Hangberg's claims to the natural resources, I have illustrated the difficulties the TMNP encountered in committing to this expansion.

My attention to community in Hangberg was about illustrating that it is a construction contingent upon circumstances which reflects a meaningful and political relationship between identity, citizenship and place, rather than a homogeneous group of people. It presented the transformation in SANParks to commit to building relations with communities and the limitations to this challenge. The mediation that followed after the violent eviction also showed the differences in local and institutional custodianship. It illustrated that custodianship changes the ideological representation of nature as either heritage or biodiversity. To expand the national park was driven by the concern for urbanisation, whereas the mobilisation of heritage was responding to the fear of market-driven displacement. As such, custodianship emerges as a claim thoroughly embedded in the experience of living in the city and is reflective of the politics of the city.

¹²⁵ In 2010 Witte estimated that only 382 Hangberg individuals were legally earning a living from the fishing industry.

My analysis of Hangberg's relationship with the TMNP also graphically illustrates the porous borders between the 'natural' and 'urban' environment. The mobilisation against the initial auction of the property above Hangberg and the subsequent encroachment by Hangbergers materialised a political border between 'nature' and 'urban' as it elicited action by the state authorities. However, Hangberg's claim on the Cape Peninsula and the marine environment problematized the institutional directive in Cape Town to keep the management of the natural and urban environments separate. Finally, this local mobilisation that emanated from Hangberg presented a counter-narrative to the narrative of capitalism and marginalisation.

CONCLUSION

This thesis sought to trace the past and present configurations of urban conservation on the Cape Peninsula Mountain Chain. I showed that from the city's inception, the Cape Peninsula has been subjected to the material and cultural manipulations of building the city. By drawing on in-depth historical analyses and small-scale ethnographic research, I was able to make conclusions around the socio-ecological processes and conflicts involved with conservation management in urban areas. The significance of these conclusions addresses the neglect of urban conservation in the literature raised at the beginning of this thesis, as well as the use of the dichotomy between nature and culture in urban studies. The history of conservation in Cape Town and prospect or failure of establishing a national park on the Cape Peninsula especially highlighted the interconnectedness between rural and urban conservation management. However, the issue around access to the Cape Peninsula and urban recreation again illustrated the unique facets of urban conservation.

By employing the notion of custodianship, I highlighted the contingencies involved with protecting the mountainous areas of the city. These included the socio-ecological transformations of the city on multiple levels of time and scale. An examination of the socio-political conditions from which the custodians of the Cape Peninsula emerged revealed that conserving or protecting the Cape Peninsula (or parts thereof) is related to the experience of living in the city and in the country. As such, official and unofficial custodianship is class- and race-differentiated, embedded in the politics of identity, responsive to the local and national political transformations in governance and is connected to the urban struggles of marginalised Capetonians. These discussions also illustrated the persistency of race in environmental management and provide some critical reflections on the current strategies employed to overcome this legacy.

Throughout the thesis, I also considered the ideological currents that underlie the chronology of managing or protecting the Cape Peninsula. Thus, inherent in custodianship is the appropriation of the Cape Peninsula according to particular cultural frameworks which was shown to produce specific ideological representations of nature. These representations are not shared equally across the race and class dynamics of the urban environment. The significance of this conclusion addresses the question of why people associate themselves (or not) with the Cape Peninsula, or with the TMNP. For example, I have shown that whilst the relationship between local communities and conservation agencies are changing, an agreement nonetheless often boils down to serving a conservationist agenda rather than enriching the poor.

Moreover, the subject of this thesis – i.e. a nonhuman subject, the Cape Peninsula – required me to move beyond the traditional ethnographic and methodological approaches associated with anthropology (De la Cadena 2010: 358). I attempted to develop a perspective that is not exclusively focussed on human ideology and culture, even though the social meaning-making processes situated relationally between city and the mountains was an important dimension of this study and draws on a long tradition in ethnographic writing.

In Chapter One I argued that an understanding of urban nature requires methodological and ontological reflection. This involves surpassing the nature/human separation and developing new ways of reading the urban and natural environment. I suggested that acknowledging the interfaces between human and nonhuman worlds requires us to rethink the role of ‘nature’ in the city environment. Further, ethnographic research is complementary to environmental historiography by broadening the scope of the changing socio-environmental processes situated within the relationship between the city spaces and the mountain spaces.

Chapter Two considered the urbanisation of the Cape Peninsula. The archival material used in this chapter included the Mountain Club of South Africa’s collection at the UCT archive, various biographies and old newspaper articles. Van Sittert’s work in environmental history on colonial mountaineering and indigenous plants during the colonial period was in particular useful for this chapter. The antagonistic relationship between the early Dutch settlement and the ‘wilderness’ illustrated how perceptions of nature were informed by the Christian doctrine and the fear of the unknown. During this time, the fear of indigenous people, predators and perceived threats derived from fantasy defined the relation between the Cape Peninsula and the first settlers.

In the late 19th century, deforestation and the construction of roads and catchment areas caused major destruction on the Cape Peninsula. This socio-ecological transformation of the Cape Peninsula was the hallmark of modernity that determined man’s ranking in (western) humanity. The settlers’ attachment to the colonial soil and the domestication of the Cape Peninsula gave rise to the development of urban conservation practices. This chapter illustrated how citizenship, identity and class boundaries sought to produce an ideological role of ‘nature’ in the city that continues to permeate contemporary conservationist frameworks.

In Chapter Three, the question of establishing a national park on the Cape Peninsula was examined in conjunction with the political transformations of the country. This analysis illustrated the ways in which the mandate for conservation is contested and situated on multiple scales of power. The 64-year gap between the 1929 and 1993 proposals for a national park in Cape Town owes much to the establishment

of a democracy and the intervention of a global agenda for biodiversity extinction. It was shown that during apartheid South Africa Table Mountain represented the foundation of the white nation, whereas in post-1994, it represented the hope invested in the new multiracial democracy.

Chapter Four considered the position of an urban national park, namely the Table Mountain National Park, in the new political dispensation. It was shown that the limitations involved in synchronising development and conservation was especially related to the commercialisation of nature. Becoming a racially and socially inclusive park in the democratic period was illustrated to be a task of recognising the Cape Peninsula's position within a larger urban political framework besieged by the historical and ideological legacies of apartheid and colonialism.

Chapter Five concerned my ethnographic research in Hangberg. This chapter delineated the bold and assertive claims made on the natural resources protected by the TMNP. Hangberg's sense of belonging to the Sentinel Peak and its perceived self-entitled right to the ocean illustrated the construction of a 'community' as contingent upon circumstances. I illustrated that the place of Hangberg was a product of the fishing industry which exploited the ocean for its natural resources. Ironically, today the Hangberg people are criminalised as the adversaries of nature. My ethnographic engagements in Hangberg also illustrated the consequences of establishing an urban national park in a city such as Cape Town. The nationalisation of the Cape Peninsula and the surrounding marine environment also allowed Hangberg to resourcefully articulate notions of identity and culture and to make claims of custodianship on the resources reserved for nature conservation.

My analysis of the situation in Hangberg also graphically illustrated the porous boundaries between nature and culture and between the urban and the natural environment. The case of Hangberg is an ideal example of why it is important to study the relationship between the poor and a national park. It showed the willingness of SANParks to commit to transformation, as well as the institutional and ideological blockages in achieving change. The ethnographical vignettes in this chapter also illustrated the effects of expanding a national park in a city such as Cape Town on an everyday level. The personal accounts of fishermen, ex-poachers and Rastafarians challenged the dominant understanding of nature in the city as defined by the biodiversity discourse. They also illustrated that the conflict in Hangberg was not about the needs of the poor versus biodiversity conservation. By employing critical urban ecological theory, I was able to illustrate that, as elsewhere, it is much more about understanding the socio-ecological processes and power relations in which different claims on the natural environment is embedded.

The analyses drawn from the discussions in this thesis speak directly to the current issues the TMNP team are experiencing in sustaining and building a relationship with the residents of Cape Town. It points to the

importance of acknowledging the Cape Peninsula's integration into the city, instead of managing the park as an island for biodiversity conservation. In the urban setting, issues around access, control and economic viability becomes much more pressing than in rural settings and by reverting to the classic top-down control and managerial solutions further problematizes the TMNP's relationship with its human neighbours.

The city is not the antithesis to the Cape Peninsula. Instead, the natural environment is fundamentally part of the urban environment. Protecting the Cape Peninsula is about recognising its place in the larger political ecology of the city and about widening the scope of cultural diversity to make the TMNP socially and racially equitable. Without acknowledging the urbanised nature of the Cape Peninsula, urban conservation and the Cape Peninsula lose their place and meaning in Cape Town. These findings have the potential to contribute to the future of management of the urban environment since it exposes the illusions involved with separating 'nature' and conservation from the city environment. The Cape Peninsula will always be in close proximity to millions inhabitants of city and if the park management is truly committed to its ideology in becoming a 'park for all', the Cape Peninsula environment needs to be conceptualised and managed as being part of the urban landscape.

To summarise, I illustrated that 'nature' can represent something radically different from one generation to the next and that it is reproduced and recycled through human and nonhuman encounters. Going from a feared wilderness to an object inherent in modernisation, to a playground of colonial nature lovers, a resource, heritage and finally the wilderness that simulates the eco-tourist experience, these past and present configurations of urban nature expose the meaning of the Cape Peninsula as not being self-evident or 'natural' as many Capetonians wish to imagine it is. It is strewn with a history of racial discrimination, difference and national ideology. This history permeates into the present and shapes the current space of the Cape Peninsula and the kind of people investing in its perceived value. It also illuminates the motivations behind establishing new kinds of custodianship that emerge as a form of political action. In this sense, custodianship also represents the agency of the poor within the larger planetary concern of biodiversity and its embodied tendencies to protect its extinction.

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