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Rifling Through 'Nature': An ethnographic account of biltong hunting, late capitalist 'nature' and a politics of belonging in the South African wildlife ranching industry.

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Thesis Presented for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of Social Anthropology.

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

February 2013

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Abstract

Since the early 1990s, what is known in South Africa as Biltong Hunting, has grown hand over fist and the wildlife ranching industry as a result stands as the sixth largest contributor to the agricultural sector of the South African Economy, generating roughly R7.7 billion per year. The industry caters to roughly 200 000 predominantly Afrikaans speaking hunters who shoot roughly a million head of game per year on the 205 000 square kilometres of South Africa taken up by 9 600 wildlife ranches. These large amounts of land and money are the result of a seventeen fold growth in the wildlife ranching sector since the early 1990s. This thesis offers an attempt to explain the rapid rise to prominence of this lucrative 'nature'.

Based on ethnographic research data, I argue that biltong hunting is motivated by two factors, hunters' desire: to enter into hunting nature or the veld*;* and to celebrate a perceived cultural heritage that reveals the extent to which hunting is metonymic of a cultural mythology of pioneering ancestors and nationalist guerrilla fighters that lived intimately off the land as they strove to form and defend the Boer Republics during what they consider Afrikaner nationalism's golden age.

During apartheid, the Afrikaner nationalist masculinity attached to this mythology retained its hegemony through ideological and coercive state apparatuses that authored, reproduced, enforced and naturalized the mythology of its legitimate dominion and belonging. Yet Afrikaner nationalism's dominance over state apparatuses ended with the transition to democracy beginning in 1990.

Drawing on participant observation based ethnographic data gathered on a game farm in the 2009 hunting season, I argue that the veld is emergent from farmers' staging two types of play on their farms for visiting hunters. The first, structured competitive play, comprises a contest between the hunter and the animal out of which an assemblage of affordances that constitute the hunting nature emerges. The second, symbolic labour,

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is a role playing element through which an emergent hunting nature is made to enfold within itself a mythic past.

I argue that the biltong hunting industry's unprecedented growth forms part of a response to the disassembly of the state centred complex that materialized an Afrikaner nationalist mythology of hierarchy and belonging. I suggest that what hunters today call 'the veld' emerges on hunting farms as a staged nature that forms part of a new gathering of symbolic and material objects able to perform the old mythology such that the hierarchy and belonging that biltong hunters associate with it emerges anew as 'natural' in the post-apartheid context. Biltong hunting is thus politics by other means, a commercialised cultural prosthetic device for stabilizing a once hegemonic masculine identity now cut loose from its institutional moorings by South Africa's transition to democracy. The thesis disentangles this staging, and examines the narrative and embodied strategies employed by hunters and farmers to enable the play out which the *veld* emerges and through which it comes to embody and naturalize the mythic Afrikaner nationalist past in the post-apartheid present.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge, above all, my family. Without the support of my wife Pia and my daughter Alyssa this thesis would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank my supervisors, Prof. Lesley Green and Prof Mugsy Spiegel for the guidance, patience and support they gave me along each step of the way.

University of Cape Town

Contents

Abstract i

Acknowledgements iii

Contents iv

Introduction 1

Chapter One: A Late Capitalist Landscape: How the Haunting of Hunting Repositions Nature in Late Capitalism 6

Cattle farming's footprint 6

How Land becomes landscape: 14

The shift from nature as the means of life of production to productivity as the means of life of nature 17

Chapter Two: The Spectre's Space: Imperialism, Nationalism and the Spatiality of Capitalist Nature 37

The natures of constructivism 1: the systems scientific approach 37

The natures of constructivism 2: dialectical constructivism 40

The natures of constructivism 3: post-structural constructivism 45

Natures of constructivism 4: embodiment as a (failed) way beyond the limits of constructivism 51

From representationalism to performativity: shifting from textualised worlds to world as staged experiments 59

How object-worlds emerge from embodied activity. 65

Natures as emergent out of the staged landscapes of modernity 70

Observing the hunting world-in-progress 73

Chapter Three: Violent Desire and Intimate Invisibility: How the Reciprocity of Structured Competitive Play Becomes the Hunting Nature Object-World 78

Positively experienced hunts associated with a failure to kill quarry. 78

Negatively experienced hunts associated with successfully killing quarry. 85

The centrality of contest to the hunters' reports of positive hunting experiences. 88

The contest between hunter and quarry as that out of which the hunting nature object-world emerges. 90

The relationship between the hunting nature object world and the embodiment of the contest between hunter and quarry 94

University of Cape Town

Hunters' work to stage their hunting trips as contests. 99

Chapter Four: Unlevelling the Playing Field and Unbalancing the Reciprocity: Making the Hunting Nature Object-World Easy to Find in the Commercial Hunting Context 103

The one that got away: the challenge of pursuing an individual prey..... 103

Hunters have to know how to move if they are to enter a contest with their quarry 109

The hunting nature object-world emerges from the transformations in movement and perception that the contest with the quarry requires of hunters. No contest, no hunting nature 113

The tall task of creating contests between quarry and outmatched hunters on commercial farms114

Farmers' staging the contest between hunters and quarry to compensate for hunters' skills deficit and the time pressure of the commercial contest 126

Chapter Five: At Play in the Veld of Belonging: Symbolic Labour and the Enfolding of Nationalist Belonging into the Hunting Nature Object-World 137

Game on a game farm is agricultural, but game on a sheep farm is natural. 137

Biltong hunters and the Afrikaner nationalist masculine ideal 142

Symbolic labour: enfolding the Afrikaner nationalist mythic past into the hunting nature object-world 156

Chapter Six: Escaping Modernity by Telling to Tell: The Narrative Education of Play and Retrospection 167

Balancing the requirements of structured competitive play against those of symbolic labour in the context of the commercial hunting trip 168

Narrative and reality 171

Narrative and identity 181

Chapter Seven: Resistance and the Art of Domination: A Narrative Return to Dominance within an Embodied Escape from the Modern 190

Narrative as a means of carrying the Afrikaner nationalist masculine ideal back into the everyday world once the hunting trip ends 190

Deriding metropolitan masculinities..... 195

Performing racial domination 198

Racism reinvigorated in hunting nature 206

Conclusion..... 213

Reference List..... 215

University of Cape Town

Introduction

My basic hypothesis, if one can call it that, is that since the collapse of the apartheid regime the political circuitry through which many South African social identities emerge, become naturalized and intersect (Rofel, 1994: 703) has become increasingly detached from representational politics. The reason for this is that the Afrikaner nationalist symbolic order in terms of which the apartheid state once told its citizens what their identities were and where they belonged as a result is no longer hegemonic. In order to understand how white identities are articulated post the collapse of the apartheid state, and particularly how those particular identities have come to belong on the South African landscape without the apartheid state's coercive power, one must look to the creation of new public spaces outside of the state. For those citizens who, in John Coetzee's (1988: 11) words, are 'no longer European and not yet African', the politics of belonging congeals as new public spaces out of which identities can emerge and where they can belong.

Here, in keeping with Latour's (2004: 235) adoption of the Heideggerian 'thing', I treat the commercial game farm as a public space; an assemblage of people and objects in a network that functions as a prosthetic device for the politically disabled (those whose concerns are not perceived to be represented in the formal public fora of the polis). The argument that I am making is as follows: The field of Afrikaner identity politics has been cast open and is rife with experiment. From the so-called *zef* performance of popular musicians such as *Die Antwoord* or Jack Parrow, to less parodic youth music such as *Fokofpolisiekar*, to photographic exhibitions such as *Jong Afrikaner: a self portrait* that recently exhibited in Cape Town, each such performance is an attempt to hold in place an assemblage of Afrikanerness capable of significantly representing the concerns of those that participate in its composition.

My argument is that the veld that forms the terrain of what is called biltong hunting in South Africa is similarly a political prosthetic assembled around a particular Afrikaner masculine performance of belonging, one that cannot legitimately be pursued or represented within the traditional spaces of representational politics in the New South

University of Cape Town

Africa. I thus look at how this prosthetic is gathered and stabilized as the assemblage out of which belonging can meaningfully emerge as real.

In what follows in this Introduction, I demonstrate that, since the 1990s, there has been extraordinary growth in the wildlife ranching sector in order to supply biltong hunting with terrain and animals. This growth, of the order of 20% p.a., is driven predominantly by local hunters and is far in excess of South Africa's general economic growth rate, which was 3% p.a. between 1995 and 2004 (Du Plessis and Smit 2006: 4) and which attained 5% p.a. for the period 2004-2006 (Ogujiuba et al, 2012: 1). In Chapter One I discuss my first impressions of the game farm where I did my fieldwork. In Particular I explain a tension between two rhythms of activity, two temporalities, that became evident during my fieldwork. The argument of this thesis builds on this tension to show how the 'nature' that emerges out of contemporary biltong hunting is a late capitalist one – by which I mean a 'nature' into which the use value of identity is enfolded for purchase within its exchange value of the commodity. Crucial here is an inversion of Marx's understanding of the relationship between nature and production. For Marx (1996: 440) that relationship was one where nature was the means of life of both labour and production. Inverting that understanding means seeing production as the means of life of nature. It is this inversion that, I argue, has enabled the coding of use value into exchange value such that belonging can be enfolded within ownership. The chapters that follow unpack the staging required to effect the emergence of this late capitalist moment in the veld.

Chapter Two charts the theoretical transition required to sustain my argument, proposing a move away from the textual metaphor through which anthropology and social science generally have approached landscape. This transition is required for two reasons. First, the textual metaphor is what lies behind the division of labour between the natural and the social sciences in which the former describe the really real nature and the latter only describe social or cultural distortions inscribed upon it. Second, the textual metaphor has resulted in an epistemological hall of mirrors that limits social scientists to asking questions of access to the world. The result is that anthropologists have come to speak almost exclusively about representations of the world to the extent

University of Cape Town

that we are forced either to the position of nihilist, or that of relativist. I use Chapter Two to propose replacing the metaphor of landscape as text with another metaphor: one of landscape as a staging of experimental success – an achievement that emerges out of a gathering together and a holding in place of all relevant human and non-human actors. What I use this proposal for is to be able to argue that the landscape of the game farm geared towards biltong hunting is an experimental apparatus out of which emerges a very profound sense of belonging.

Chapter Three outlines the first type of play that I assert was being staged on the farm, namely structured competitive play between hunter and quarry. The argument here is that the most profound achievement of hunting is for hunters to enter into an intimate reciprocal relationship with his quarry in ways that permit the hunter to become the inverse of his quarry's profound defensive sensory array. In Chapter Three I demonstrate that this intimacy comes to be embodied by the hunter, and is the cornerstone of his experience of what I term the hunting nature object-world.

Chapter Four outlines some strategies that the farm management uses to balance the relative skills deficit of visiting hunters, the challenge posed by the abbreviated time of a commercial hunt and the requirements of the reciprocity between hunter and quarry. Chapter Three being there to argue that the emergence of such a reciprocity is the achievement of experimental success that marks entry into the hunting nature object-world, Chapter Four is intended to allow examination of how farmers stack the landscape and hunters' embodied abilities relative to quarry, precisely in order to account for the hunters' relative skills deficit as well for as commercial hunts' abbreviated time frame. I do that to demonstrate that entry into that reciprocal space between hunter and quarry, and out of which the hunting nature object-world emerges, requires a staging that disentangles the relation hunters desire from the messy but real entanglements of a commercial hunting context. To achieve that disentanglement is akin to a gambler stacking a deck of cards in order, unfairly, to improve his odds. The trick here is that the farmer has to stack the landscape and its affordances in favour of the emergence of a contest that constitutes structured competitive play. Doing that primarily requires his manipulating the landscape to render the animals' movements

University of Cape Town

predictable and to artificially increase the hunter's capacity to evade the animal's senses. I show how it is achieved through use of hides and the elimination of alarm species such as *kwe* birds, and also through increasing the hunters' ability apparently to outmanoeuvre his quarry through the use of vehicles.

Chapter Five explores the second type of play through which belonging is staged through ownership. Crucial here is a seeming contradiction in terms of which wild animals wandering across commercial agricultural range land (sheep or cattle farms) are considered more 'natural' than their equivalents when found on commercial game farms. This has to do primarily with a notion that hunting is most natural when it forms an integrated part of the habitation of land. I term this second type of play symbolic labour and argue that it is employed to enfold the Afrikaner nationalist myth of ancestral habitation of land into the hunting nature object-world. My argument here is that a mythological past is enfolded within the hunting nature object-world, so that hunters' movements became mimetic of the practices of mythological ancestors; practices that hunters understood to be intimately interwoven into the natural rhythms of the landscapes those ancestors inhabited.

Chapter Six then suggests that the two types of play upon which the emergence of the world-in-progress that I term hunting nature depends are mutually antagonistic – at least within the commercial context and to an extent that goes beyond farmers' and hunters' ability strategically to balance the tension. I show that narrative plays two crucial roles here: on the one hand that it educates hunters' attention in structured competitive play in ways that enable the successful emergence of the hunting nature object-world; and on the other hand it educates an operation of retrospective disentanglement in terms of which sought after reciprocity between hunter and quarry are disentangled from the entangled set of contradictions that interpose themselves between these two types of play in the commercial biltong hunting context.

Together, Chapters Four, Five and Six describe and analyse the assemblage through which hunters and farmers work to stabilize the operations of disentanglement that permit the hunting nature object-world to emerge and to enfold the Afrikaner nationalist mythology of an extended history of habitation and thus of belonging. Chapter Seven

University of Cape Town

builds on that discussion and considers an important third aspect of hunters' narrative, one that both farmers and hunters use in hunting nature as a basis for imagining and reinvigorating a masculine hierarchy. The chapter also considers the narrative strategies that are used for generalizing that hierarchy beyond the confines of hunting nature even as it enables the operations of disentanglement essential to its emergence in the particular context of the game farm.

University of Cape Town

Chapter One: A Late Capitalist Landscape: How the Haunting of Hunting Repositions Nature in Late Capitalism

If it had not been for the sign saying 'Mehring[1] Safaris' and the game fences lining the road I would not have believed I was entering a game farm as we turned off the unforgiving mud track that led past the farm. Turning north through the farm's main gate, the road snaked right and then left, passed under some low hanging trees, through the pungent smell of sheep manure and spilled us into a sun-washed gravel parking area between high razor wire fence surrounding the farm house compound to the west and a large corrugated iron and brick building to the east.

I later learned that this building housed the farm store and butchery, and concealed from view a sheep feeding lot situated behind it. Nothing of the galvanized scene put me in mind of a hunting lodge or a game farm. Reflecting upon my moment of disconcertment and anxiety that grew upon this sight and smell as I wondered if I had perhaps made a mistake in selecting my field site, I recognize its source as my own tacit expectations of what a game farm *ought* to look like. I had expected shaded timber, stone and thatched construction blending into the surrounding muted greens and browns. I had not expected so harsh a divide between the earth and its vegetation and the colours and materials of constructions upon and among it. I had not expected galvanized corrugated iron and razor wire or the crushed grey blue stone onto which we drove. I had expected a configuration of objects and features meeting the aesthetic I had come to associate with the 'natural' landscapes of eco-tourism.

Cattle farming's footprint

The only thatch roof in sight was one we had driven past as we reached the turn off, and it, if anything, was a further departure from my imaginary game farm. It stood atop a raised brick platform overlooking a complex of livestock pens constructed from robust

[1] This is not the real name of the farm. I have changed the name on the request of the owners.

University of Cape Town

iron pipes and painted in the dull red of rust proof paint. The fences between them were topped with black plastic tubing connected to sprinklers intended to keep confined animals cool. A narrow channel of the same construction led between the raised platform and the pens, with a system of gates for controlling the flow of animals into the complex. The channel's narrowness led me to assume that the complex was designed for domesticated animals, wild animals being neither docile nor easily enough controlled to move into and through such a channel without risking injury. The fencing's height and its robust construction of thick iron piping inclined me towards assuming that what I was seeing was made for cattle. The raised platform and thatch roof in addition led me to assume it was made for trading cattle; that prospective buyers would do their business there, sheltered from the elements and elevated above the cattle for ease of viewing.

Slowly fading to pink from years in the sun, the iron structure clashed with the surrounding vegetation in a struggle against grasses and weeds to dominate a scene far departed from the bucolic Highveld aesthetic in terms of which I had imagined this part of the North-West Province. Here was no attempt to blend into the surroundings or enable a sense of being removed from the productive realm of everyday life. Apart from the weather-damaged thatch of the roof over the platform, the structure was as unapologetically agricultural as the smell of sheep manure accompanying it; and, judging from that weather damage, it was a relic of an earlier period when the farm was still a cattle farm.

A few days later as, for the first time, I accompanied the farm owner's cousin, Jan, on a hunt, we drove past the pens and he, unbidden, volunteered a comment on the structure. He told me that Snr, the farm's owner, had built it several years earlier when he had relocated permanently to the farm after selling off his grain farm near Lichtenburg, also in the North West Province. He had reportedly hoped to be able to create a place for the area's cattle farmers to come and auction their stock. This was in keeping with how I later came to know Snr, a shrewd, entrepreneurial and fiercely independent business man eschewing intrusions into his farming by middle men and marketers. As a grain farmer he had constructed his own silos and marketed his own

University of Cape Town

grain, earning him the hostility of the cooperative that generally handled farmers' grain marketing. He and his wife, Linda, told of how they were ostracized by other grain farmers and the cooperative for their decision to market independently; but, as Snr was fond of saying, fear and greed are the two reasons businesses fail, and he had not been afraid to go it alone in the grain business.

Nor was he afraid to go it alone in the cattle business. According to Jan, the construction had cost of the order of a million Rand, representing a large investment. Its construction had, however, coincided with a decline in cattle farming in the area as farmers increasingly turned to game farming. The pens thus never realized the vision that had produced them. At the time of my fieldwork, not a single surrounding farm was raising cattle on a large scale. The only cattle I saw in the area were Snr's small herd of less than sixty animals that he kept on the farm's southern side, well removed from the wildebeest population to the north.[2] Snr explained that he had continued to raise sheep and cattle in order to manage risk, a diversification kept on hand for business manoeuvrability should what he considered an unpredictable industry change.

The raised brick platform, the ruffled thatch roof and the red iron skeleton with its fading paint were thus the result and the remains of an earlier era in a region once dominated by cattle farming, but now given over to the game industry. While cattle have largely vanished from the land, the taskscape[3] that led towards the red oxide pen where cattle would have been medicated, sorted and sold is literally everywhere visible. Even the vegetation of the area, with which I thought the pens and other buildings of my first impression so clashed, is, ironically, directly related to cattle production so that what I imagined was an aesthetic clash belies a material coincidence.

University of Cape Town

[2] In South Africa farmers are required to keep cattle separate from wildebeest to prevent the latter infecting the former with *snotsiekte* (bovine malignant catarrhal fever). Wildebeest are hosts for this disease which is fatal to cattle.

[3] Ingold (2000: 195) defines taskscape simply as "an ensemble of tasks in their mutual interlocking" or as "an array of related activities". He links these activities to elements of the visible landscape by arguing that "the landscape as a whole must likewise be understood as the taskscape in its embodied form: a pattern of activities 'collapsed' into an array of features." (Ingold, 2000: 198).

Red oxide pipes, galvanized iron and the thick bush covering the land are twin embodiments of the history of cattle farming in the area as it arose among the scattered cartridges littering the landscape as dull brass reminders of the struggles by which Boers had displaced Tswana from the area.[4] On the day of my arrival I had told Snr how surprised I was by the dense and bushy vegetation I had seen on the sides of the road as we drove towards the farm. I had expected, I said, to see open autumn-yellow grassland occasionally broken by green stands of woody species typical of the savannah biome. Snr confirmed that the area had indeed been far less bushy and more of a savannah landscape in the past. What Snr did not mention, but what Jan, and later Huibrie (a professional hunter on a neighbouring farm), did point out was that the transformation in vegetation on the farm and in the region was as man-made as the red oxide-covered pens, suggesting clearly that the vegetation is rooted in the fading remains of a cattle farming past with which it seemed so crudely to clash.

Such a reading of the bushy landscape is supported by the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 (Act No 43 of 1983)'s definition of bush encroachment. The Act's regulation 16 defines bush encroachment as 'stands of plants of the kinds specified in table 4 where individual plants are closer to each other than three times the mean crown diameter." *Dichrostachys Cinerea* (sickle bush) appears in the Act's table, and parts of Snr's farm are densely enough overgrown with that species that, by this definition, they can be considered 'abnormally abundant' and taken as an indication that 'the area is degraded by e.g. overgrazing or injudicious fires'. *The Game Rancher*, a website catering to game farmers, (http://thegamerancher.com/ accessed July 2010) similarly attributes bush encroachment to overgrazing: "Bush encroachment tends to be the result of extensive overgrazing where the grass layer has been utilized to such an extent that it cannot recover sufficiently and is therefore replaced by a woody layer which is more resilient."

[4] In response to a hunter wondering out loud how many spent cartridges must litter the farm Jnr explained that there were already a great many cartridges to be found dating from "when the Boers chased the Tswana off the land and into Botswana".

University of Cape Town

Bush encroachment is covered by the 1983 Act as it reportedly reduces land's livestock carrying capacity and thus poses a threat to cattle farming. Something understood as 'natural', namely the increased spread of woody species once competition from grasses is removed, must thus be regulated in order to preserve the means of life of cattle farming – namely sufficient grazing potential. It also carries consequences for game ranching. While the dense woody copses do provide browsing options that game (unlike cattle) are able to exploit, they can become too dense for animals to penetrate thus undermining their browsing potential. The result then is a diminished carrying capacity for game too (Ward, 2005).

According to the North West Province's State of Environment Report Maps (see the North West Provincial Government's website (http://www.nwpg.gov.za/soer/FullReport/NWPSOERM.html, accessed November 2009), the Marico magisterial district, within which Snr's farm is situated, is regarded by the provincial government as one of nine districts, all in the province's north, affected by severe sickle bush encroachment. It is a district with 'moderately high' soil degradation, the second most severe level of degradation within the rating system used, and it corresponds to the highest level of land degradation and to a moderate increase (again the highest level) in grazing intensity over the past ten years. While grazing intensity increases in Marico are the same as those experienced across the province, the land degradation, soil degradation and bush encroachment there is more severe, leading one to suspect that other factors besides cattle farming may have contributed. However, range degradation due to bush encroachment other than from sickle bush is widespread in the province, affecting seventeen magisterial districts; while the Madikwe Game Reserve, proclaimed in 1991 and surrounded by the nine magisterial districts with the worst sickle bush encroachment, has no corresponding encroachment problems. Thus, while the causes are more complex than simply overgrazing, the phenomenon of bush encroachment cannot be separated from grazing.

Towards dusk on the day I arrived I accompanied Snr, his son Jnr (who was also the farm's resident professional hunter) and John, one of the general farm labourers

University of Cape Town

employed by Snr, on a drive to go and put *lek*[5] out at several of the farm's water points. The trip gave me my first look at the part of the farm through which hunters and guides walk in pursuit of game and, once again I was surprised to see cattle farming's past etched into the land. Far from being the tranquil water holes I had ordinarily associated with game reserves and wildlife documentaries, the water points I saw were circular cement dams and rectangular concrete troughs to which water was piped, its flow regulated by floatation valves made of two litre soft drink bottles. The roads along which we travelled were also remnants of the farm's cattle raising past: straight lines connecting one water point to the next in a grid-like efficiency, a spatial tale of production broken only occasionally by more recently constructed roads such as that leading to the hunting lodge. These newer roads, constructed after the move from cattle to game farming, meandered through the bush and told of consumption; they stood in relation to the cattle farming grid as detours from strict utility, born of an assumed desire to experience close contact with the veld rather than an imperative to move quickly through it. Apart from hides, constructed around the watering points of tar poles draped in camouflage netting or sticks and grass taken from the nearby bush, the only visible alteration related to the shift from cattle to game farming were the very low troughs catering to warthogs that dig up and destroy piping unless provided with easily accessible water sources.

As my stay on the farm wore on I realized that, in addition to the legacy of material infrastructure such as the pens, water points and road arrangements, the current game farming and hunting activities, even those along the meandering new roads, continued to be located and managed through a spatial discourse inherited from the cattle farming past. For example the northern section of the farm, now used exclusively for hunting, continued nonetheless to be divided into, and spoken about with reference to numbered *kampe* (camps), each separated from the next by a low barbed wire fence and provisioned with a watering point. The language of numbered camps reflected a system

[5] Literally translated as "lick", *lek* is the conventional name for a powdered mineral supplement used in cattle farming. Snr uses it for both cattle farming and to supplement the diet of the game on his farm. He maintains that it prevents illness and generally ensures that his animals are kept in a good condition.

University of Cape Town

that was once integral to cattle farm management and that enabled systematic rotation of grazing, both to prevent overgrazing and to manage the risk of veld fires by keeping potential fuel low – particularly in those camps nearest the house and the farm store. The farm owner's direction of activities within the cattle farming taskscape had taken place in a language of technical division of the earth's surface into parcels of scientifically calculated carrying capacity, and in terms of which veld management and stock related decisions could be made.

Yet this system of camps, albeit still used to refer to areas of the farm, no longer directly relates to the game farming and hunting taskscape of the farm's northern part. Even on the southern side, where fenced camps are still used to manage the now scaled down cattle farming activities, game animals housed in that 1000 hectare section of the farm move across and between them as if the fences were not there. Whenever Snr asked Jnr where he had been; where the labourers were busy; where new hides were being built; where he was going to drop off the hunters; where they would walk to; or whenever Jnr instructed his father about where to collect hunters; described the day's events; directed labourers to particular tasks; or enquired of them where they had seen game and what they had seen in preparation for a hunting group, they did so by reference to 'camp X', or to 'between camps X and Y'. If the fading livestock pens and the cement dams were material remains of the cattle industry's presence, and the vegetation and roads tracks left upon the land by the movements of its performance, then the spatial language through which the present game farming activities continued to be expressed was the occult tongue that invoked its spectre. The cattle industry's material passing continued to roam the tracks of the past, trapped between the representations of space in and through which capital flows and its particular taskscape fixed into the land as place, in order to drive that flow.

The farm's topography and vegetation were not widely varied from one place to the next, so in some sense there was a good practical reason for using an imposed spatial grid to locate activities, and in terms of which to direct work. The point, however, remains that both the landscape of the farm and the language in terms of which the movements across, or management of activity on the land were communicated were

University of Cape Town

dominated by the spectre of the cattle farming taskscape. The barbed wire of the fences surrounding the camps on the Northern part of the farm had all been removed with the shift to game farming, but the fence posts remained – dotted lines marking out the past use of the land. Walking with hunters, we regularly passed alongside or moved across these dotted lines that followed the roads and cut across the veld. A hunter in one of the groups asked Jnr why they had not removed the fence posts, to which he replied that they wanted them there should they ever decide to revert to cattle farming. The persistent presence of the farm's cattle farming past, and the on-going domination of the landscape by its taskscape was thus no mere oversight but a deliberate decision to preserve manoeuvrability that, like the continuing of cattle and sheep raising on the farm's southern section, points to a commitment to commercial farming rather than to conservation. Shifting from cattle to game was, and remained, a business decision, and Snr made it clear that he would not hesitate to shift back should revenue from hunting and game meat sales decline excessively. As he explained: "it is about Rands per hectare and game gives more Rands per hectare at a lower risk".

The neighbouring farm also had its farming history etched into the landscape, but here the visible legacy is not of cattle farming but of grain farming. While accompanying a hunter in pursuit of a blue wildebeest onto that neighbouring farm, I noted two enormous sharp-edged rectangular clearings. Such large open expanses of grass contrasted so strongly with Snr's land, and the line between bush and grass was so crisp and pronounced, that I asked Huibrie, that farm's professional hunter, what they were. He explained that some thirty years previously grain was cultivated on those two patches and that woody species cleared to make way for the fields had never managed to re-emerge. He added that he was planning to soften the break between the bush and grass by cutting out some of the surrounding bush which, he added, would give a more 'natural', less straight-lined appearance to the clearings.

My first drive on the farm, with John, Jnr and Snr, on the day I arrived was also clearly anchored in the agricultural mode that had prevailed on the farm until relatively recently and that persisted in a sense in Snr's habitus. His provision of *lek* for the game pointed to his stock farming experience and practices. As he explained when I enquired,

University of Cape Town

providing *lek* and salt blocks was not essential; after all animals in the wild are not so provided. But their having access to *lek* does, he said, improve the condition of animals, reducing their susceptibility to parasites and disease, and hence contributes to the farm's capacity to generate Rands per hectare. The land literally, through its physical ordering, through the language describing movement on it, its division, its vegetation, its infrastructure and development, spoke as much to cattle farming as to game ranching; and it spoke to the transition from the former to the latter for strictly economic reasons and to preservation of its capacity to revert should cattle farming at some future time promise more Rands per hectare than game. Once I came to think about it after these encounters, I was surprised by how thickly the agricultural, particularly cattle farming, past was laid out upon the landscape and continued to provide a spatial imaginary for the *business* of running a game farm.

How Land becomes landscape:

The embodied hunting activities I discuss in Chapter Four thus took place amidst, within, and across *land* (Ingold, 2000: 190), quantitatively understood in the technical language of capitalist social space to be units of area, hectares, ordered to produce revenue through incorporation into Escobar's twin domains of governmentality and the commodity. The archaeological stratigraphy, stretching from cartridges from Boer rifles used to drive Tswana inhabitants from the land, through a recent cattle farming past and into the game farming present, tells a story of the land's capture into capitalist social space, as taskscapes to make revenue from hectares. The landscape I observed whilst driving up to the farm, as also the landscape of my imagining from which the former so disconcertingly departed, must thus 'be understood as [a] taskscape in its embodied form' (Ingold 2000: 198). Each fence post, pen, cement dam, encroaching sickle bush, chalet and road told of an endless cycle of fixity and flow to preserve the flow of value through commodity; of how the resulting rhythms of life and work thus fixed in each layer of taskscape have changed in order that the underlying spatial abstraction that is land might produce ever more Rands per hectare.

University of Cape Town

It is as if a spectre of cattle farming, invoked by a language of Cartesian grid-work, of camps and roads, is the old ghost of imperial expansion. First fed on the rounds by which this specific patch of the earth's surface was won into the world of imperial 'nature' (discussed in chapter two), the ghost has ever since hungrily waited to take the form of new taskscapes to generate revenue from the region. Its newest form is wildlife ranching, a taskscape promising ever 'greener' and supposedly more developmental revenue. This spectre that haunts the land is the object of the field discussed here, as technocratic necromancers in the ephemeral realm of capitalist social space try to reanimate it to their cause. Through it, the chronology implied by my archaeological metaphor becomes the temporality of the landscape (Ingold, 2000: 194); through it the present holds within itself the past and the future. Much as the ancestors whose movements become the landscape during the time of the dreaming (Ingold, 2000: 52), the movements of this spectre in the dream time of capitalist social space, the rhythms and activities of the taskscapes that are its tracks, become the landscape.

I first encountered the spectre's newest manifestation later on my first thoroughly disconcerting day on the farm. Seeing activity at the farm's butchery, visible from the flat I was staying in, I walked down to watch carcasses being unloaded, and to meet the hunters who claimed those carcasses as theirs. Finding me there, Jnr then invited me to accompany him on the drive returning the hunters to the hunting lodge. The first thing I noted of this alternative modality to the stock farming remains related to the road we turned onto when leaving one of the farm's dead straight old roads. It was narrower by some margin and, for the first time I had to duck down on the back of the *bakkie* (pickup truck) to avoid being caught by occasional low hanging branches. The road twisted and turned, snaking forward with the bush close on each side. Later on during my fieldwork, when I drove that road to drop Eunice, the woman employed on the farm to clean both the farm house and the hunting lodge between visits from hunting parties, at the lodge in order to clean up between groups of hunters, I remember having to be careful to avoid scratching the *bakkie* on the thorn bushes leaning into the road, so narrow was it. The feeling of travelling down that road on that first night was of entering the bush, of leaving the farm, a sense reinforced by the lodge's appearance. The copy on the Mehring Safari's website, advertising its accommodation, told part of the story: of

University of Cape Town

untouched bushveld beauty, of a camp ‘cradled’ in a stone amphitheatre, surrounded by a grove of *tambotie* trees and surrounded by the outline of ‘Ndebele war kraals’.

Down this meandering road, designed either deliberately or by happenstance so that I was never able to see more than about fifty metres of the road at a time, and was unable to see the lodge buildings until right upon them, I found what I expected. Eddie, a friend of Jnr’s who had accompanied him as he collected the hunters that first day, put my expectation in perspective. He told me that this was for city people, what they expected, thatch, stone and, most important of all, a large area in which to make a fire. Nestled in a crescent at the base of a rocky *koppie*, and surrounded by the grove of *tambotie* trees, the place was a world away from what I had seen up until that point. I could well understand how this could be the anchor of an escape into ‘nature’. As the website suggested, the trees and rocks ‘cradled’ the construction in a radically different relationship between earth, vegetation and constructed form from what I had encountered earlier the same day. The lodge was ruggedly luxurious; its large wrought iron dining chairs, covered in the dark pelts of blue wildebeest, complemented the black granite counter tops in the communal area; the toilet paper in the well-appointed toilet/shower rooms adjoining the communal area was held ready on warthog tusks; wood was piled high near a broad, round concrete plinth upon which a fire was kept burning throughout a group’s stay.

Once I drove with Snr’s wife, Linda, to deliver food for a visiting hunter one evening, and she explained that they had selected the particular spot because of the trees and the crescent of rocks; but also because it was far enough removed from the main farmhouse, store and pens that the visiting hunters would not experience the sense of incongruity that I had felt upon arrival; that they would be able to ‘escape’, without the necessary workings of the farm, upon which such ‘escape’ is contingent, disrupting that experience. Its ‘traditional’ construction and quality as a hideaway fit well with my argument in Chapters Four, Five and Six, that hunting ‘nature’ constitutes an escape to an authentic relationship to the land, the authenticity of which is shown to be utterly contrived, with the decision to keep the trees, and with the degree to which such a hunting escape is contingently, perhaps precariously, perched upon a working

University of Cape Town

taskscape that needs constantly to be concealed and protected from the hunters' view, and from their demands.

Such a spatial strategy, of protecting hunters' experiences from intrusion by the necessary work related to cropping and providing meat for sale, and of doing maintenance and expansion work to the hunting taskscape, such as building hides, constructing workers' accommodation, distributing *lek* and salt, de-silting concrete troughs, repairing pipes, and raising sheep and cattle, seemed to work well enough. What was far more complicated, however, was the set of tasks needed to protect and keep separate the necessary work on the farm from the work of giving hunters the experience they sought. This was most acutely brought to the fore when Jnr and Snr were in a (fortunately minor) accident involving two farm *bakkies* and temporarily reduced the farm's vehicles to one working *bakkie* and a delivery vehicle, a *bakkie* with a cold storage unit in place of the loadbox. Chaos erupted: national supermarket Pick 'n Pay required biltong; clients normally supplied twice weekly with game meat, beef, pork, lamb, eggs and biltong were waiting for deliveries; past hunters were waiting for Jnr to deliver the meat they had paid him to process in the farm butchery; Jnr's meat slicer, in for repairs, had to be collected; hunters had to be dropped off and collected; beef, eggs and pork had to be collected; game had to be cropped; bills had to be paid; and the usual shopping to provision the house or buy ammunition had to be done. Hearing about the crisis, Snr's mother arrived making her *bakkie* available and taking the sting out of the crisis. But by then deliveries were already behind and it took a week before a normal rhythm had returned – even I was sent to the butchery, provided with a fearsome sharp knife, given a brief lecture on how not to cut my fingers off and presented with a large plastic bucket of wildebeest meat with instructions to cut it into thin strips to make chilli bites, stocks of which had rapidly run out.

The shift from nature as the means of life of production to productivity as the means of life of nature

It is the tension between the two patterns of activity discussed in the previous section that is at the heart of what I am calling late capitalist nature. The veld, with its trappings

University of Cape Town

(*tambotie* trees; winding narrow roads; stone and thatch; roaring fires) and the activities of visiting hunters is but one taskscape, contingent upon another that embodies the patterns of commodity and governmentality that protect the veld against any disruption. The relationship between these taskscapes was put starkly into perspective when Snr explained that no more than twenty percent of his farm's income was generated by accommodating hunters during the hunting season[6]. The bulk of the farm's income, he added, derived from marketing the meat of animals, shot by Jnr, to regular clients who in turn served it to a predominantly foreign cohort of extremely wealthy tourists in exclusive five star hotels, where it was fashioned, at the hands of trained chefs, into what may be understood to be the culinary equivalent of warthog tusk toilet roll holders. In other words, game is primarily a way of adding value, by means beyond the traditional narrative of incremental growth, that codes use value into exchange value (Foster, 2005: 11) – itself a shift characteristic of the consumerism that defines late capitalism.

Significantly, the tension between the two taskscapes mentioned above results from a radical alteration of the relationship between land and landscape as Ingold (2000: 190) explains them. Land, according to Ingold (2000: 190) "is a kind of lowest common denominator of the phenomenal world", it is purely quantitative and homogenous. As he puts it, "You can ask of land, as of weight, how much there is, but not what it is like." Landscape is, by contrast to land, "qualitative and heterogeneous". Ingold characterises the relationship between land and landscape as analogous to that between exchange value "as the denominator of commodities that enables us to say how much any one thing is worth by comparison with another" and use value, which refers to those properties of an object particularly "commend it to the project of a user" (Ingold, 2000: 194).

The taskscape, in this instance, comprises the array of activities that become embodied as landscape. In the case of this game farm, and at least 9600 others (Dry, 2010), the

[6] Game farms with adequate enclosure are not subject to a strict hunting season and hunters can legally hunt year round of these farms. As such, the term 'hunting season' as used by biltong hunters roughly refers to the cooler months of the year. For the purposes of my fieldwork, I treated the season as falling between April and August.

University of Cape Town

incorporation of what Marx (1996: 440) termed the sensuous external world into the domain of the commodity (Escobar, 1999: 7) – the conduit through which the spectre's corporeal shape is controlled – now stands embodied as a wildlife-ranching landscape. The above shows that such a landscape is not restricted to traditional stone and thatch constructions or a plinth for a hunting-lodge fire. It includes a set of diverse but historically related material manifestations of taskscapes that have marked the space, turned it into a sequence of particular kinds of place some of which may well manifest again in the future.

This history is not readily and neatly periodised; nor is it neatly layered, the livestock pen following the Boer cartridges, the lodge following the livestock pen, and the livestock pen waiting in the wings possibly to return. Rather, we are dealing with an enfolding of the past and the future into the present, while the spectre is that which guides the argument away from neat chronology and into a blurred temporality of a kind that Ingold (2000: 194) has described. The lodge's stone and thatch was a manifestation of but one pattern of activity, itself contingent upon other patterns manifest in the livestock pens and straight roads and concrete water points. The archaeology of the farm, and the history of imperial and national natures dealt with in the next chapter, must thus not be understood as neat layers each distinct from the other. Rather, they are patterns that clash and harmonize and the task of the following chapter is to show how clashes of change have driven harmonies of continuity.

In Chapter Two I show that imperial and nationalist natures each emerged as what Escobar (1999: 7) terms capitalist nature, understood as the 'incorporation of nature into the twin domains of governmentality and the commodity'. Yet Escobar's turn of phrase is unfortunate in that it implies a separate 'nature' available for incorporation into these domains. It thus reproduces the great modernist divide between nature and society (Latour, 1993: 99). This is at odds with an understanding of nature upon which my argument depends, namely that nature itself is the result rather than the locus of embodied activity. Escobar's analytical distinction between the extractive processes of commoditisation and those of regulation directed towards the longevity of those processes is, however, very useful for the argument put forward in this thesis. His

University of Cape Town

implying the existence of 'nature' pre any such incorporation thus needs remedying. In *Estranged Labour*, Marx (1996: 440) asserted

> The worker can create nothing without nature, without the sensuous external world. It is the material on which his labour is manifested, in which it is active, from which and by means of which it produces. But just as nature provides labour with the means of life in the sense that labour cannot live without objects on which to operate, on the other hand, it also provides the means of life in the more restricted sense—i.e., the means for the physical subsistence of the worker himself. Thus the more the worker by his labour appropriates the external world, sensuous nature, the more he deprives himself of the means of life in the double respect: first, that the sensuous external world more and more ceases to be an object belonging to his labour—to be his labour's means of life: and secondly, that it more and more ceases to be means of life in the immediate sense, means for the physical subsistence of the worker.

What makes Marx useful here is the slippage between his uses of the terms 'sensuous external world', 'nature', 'external world', 'sensuous nature' and finally back to 'sensuous external world'; and also how he used them to designate the means of life of both labour and labourers. In the passage, he characterizes the external world, or nature as primarily sensuous. Marx's "sensuousness external world" is admitting of multiple natures beyond Escobar's implied restriction of multiplicity to the realm of capitalist appropriation through labour, and by which there is just one positively real nature and a multitude of potential capitalist incorporations. Marx, in the above quote, does not abstract a single nature from the multitude of human experience. Rather, he foregrounds that experience and in so suggests a multitude of natures prior to any capitalist incorporation.

The spectre of cattle farming had, I suggest, found a new material corporeality in the shape of a game farm; a taskscape ordering activity in service of flows of value in capitalist social space, and this thesis considers how that congealed as hunting nature so that region could become revenue. The field structuring its reanimation as game farming was primarily ordered around stakes found in the domain of the commodity and

University of Cape Town

in the regulation of its means of life. Because its means of life is habitat able to reproduce the sale of hunts, the cropping of meat and the sale of live animals, the regulation is one that is chiefly concerned with flows of value through transactions of these commodities.

What Marx only implies, and Escobar makes explicit, is that, if appropriation of the sensuous external world through labour threatens to destroy the very means of life for labour and the worker, then regulation is needed to stave off or manage and distribute the consequences of production's assault on this means of life. The flow of value through production of commodities – pure exchange value – in the imperialist and nationalist eras, in other words, threatened the existence of the material conditions that were the means of life of production itself (and by extension that of the elite that comprised the farm's owners who derived benefit from it). Regulation in the imperial and nationalist eras thus served elites intent upon ensuring that flows of value benefitted them and that processes or populations that might threaten these flows or lay alternative claim to the land upon which they were fixed could be legitimately removed from the picture by framing them as a threat to 'nature' (defined in terms of its being the means of life of labour), that is as poachers and eroders.

Such patterns of regulation related to defending the means of life of the flow of value through farms and other points of fixity where the sensuous external world is incorporated into the realm of the commodity, is well supported in historical literature[7].

University of Cape Town

[7] Grove (1997) convincingly shows how environmental consciousness and conservation emerged first on the Indian Ocean islands central to the British and French imperial projects in response to the drought, erosion and silting that resulted from colonial settlement and plantation economies. He shows how the conservation discourse that arose on these islands travelled to the continental settings of empire where it became part of the arsenal in terms of which native and settler populations could be removed from areas by being cast as threats to the environment. Tyrrell (1997) similarly considers the afforestation programmes in California and Australia as responses to the perceived environmental degradation of economic activities there. Brockway (1979) analyses the rise of the scientific botanical garden in Kew as a locus to coordinate the efforts of numerous botanical gardens in order to maximize their usefulness to the imperial project.

Capitalist nature, in its imperial and nationalist guises, was conceived and conserved as the means of life of production; and, as such, it was peripheral to commodity. This is no longer the case. Late capitalist nature is, as a result of a fundamental transformation at the level of the commodity, a departure from its predecessors' peripheral position relative to production.

Under late capitalism, 'nature', Marx's sensuous external world, has itself *become* commodity – domination tending towards destruction has given way to appropriation (Lefebvre, 1991: 343), a complete alteration of the relationship Marx saw between 'nature' and commodity production. In Marx's reasoning, the sensuous external world was the means of life of production. Under late capitalism production has become the means of the sensuous external world's continuing life.

To say this is to point to a profound shift in the production of 'nature' as something ostensibly separate from society and representing a first great divide at the heart of the modern ontology. It is most succinctly summed up in the pithy 'truism' of the 'conservation revolution': "If it pays, it stays".

Such an inversion of the relationship between production and the sensuous external world was clear on Snr's farm in the tension between, on the one hand, the rhythms and materials of the hunting experience that was being sold, and on the other hand, the rhythms and materials of the productive, hardworking piece of land upon which the experience being sold depended. It is further illustrated by the hunting lobby's attempt to cleave unto itself the reanimation of the cattle farming ghost through an argument that wildlife ranching pays best – in terms of conservation, rural development and farmers' profits.

In Chapter Four I argue that that the experience being sold, the sensuous external world I call hunting nature, emerges from the interaction of two types of play that are

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Mitman (2005) shows how health concerns in the USA, stemming from increasing pollution levels due to industrialization, beginning in 1850, cast the US landscape in terms of public health concerns, in much the same way as what Grove (1997) shows was the case in India.

University of Cape Town

constitutive of hunting practice. What the inversion of the Marxian relationship between the sensuous external world and production makes clear, is that this hunting nature is contingent upon an archaeology of productive activity on the land. Here I use the term land in the way Ingold (2000: 190) has defined it: that is as an abstract quantity of the earth's surface parcelled out in productive units. Capitalist social space is the abstract realm of planners and technocrats within which land exists (Merrifield, 1993: 523). The farm's transition from cattle farming to game farming is the result of thinking on the level of this realm. Approaching the farm as land enables the technocratic calculation that the productivity per unit of land is higher if one sells the experience of hunting nature than if one sells beef. The two types of play analysed in chapter four are thus dominated by the cultural web within which ideas about what constitutes hunting are suspended.

In the South African case, late capitalist nature was made possible, from the 1960s onwards, with the passage of provincial legislation that, for the first time, enabled private ownership of game on fenced off privately owned land. This legislative departure from understanding game as *res nullius* (nobody's property) transformed game into a potential source of income for land owners. In terms of the legislation, land owners in South Africa can apply for a Certificate of Adequate Enclosure from a provincial authority. If successful in their application, they may then apply to the same authority for what is called 'exemption status' – which means that no permits are required to hunt on exemption-status farms, and landowners are not restricted to any particular hunting season/s. They may, however, hunt only those animals specified on their particular certificate of exemption (Patterson & Khosa, 2005: 10). By transforming game into privately ownable property, this legislation squarely repositioned game as a commodity, thus permitting another way in which region can become revenue.

The legislation thus also altered the ways in which region can become revenue by valorising game through what derives from the experience of the hunt rather than (or even primarily) from the resulting carcasses. The perfectly interchangeable Rands per hectare formula, in terms of which farmers are able to plan for the most profitable use of their land, was thus no longer restricted to productive considerations alone. Under

University of Cape Town

nationalist and imperial regimes, different kinds of emergent nature were conserved precisely in opposition to extractive processes that were seen to destroy them. An example is the efforts made to ensure that no more than a specified head of cattle could be raised on a particular land parcel without so depleting it that future cattle farming would be threatened. Another is assessing how much timber can be extracted without so undermining a forest's regenerative potential that its potential to supply timber is lost. Yet another is assessing how much land should be set aside to preserve biodiversity so that productive activity elsewhere does not drive species to extinction. Land set aside for cattle farming (commodity production) thus became subject to regulatory measures such as the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 (Act No 43 of 1983).

In Marxist terms we can understand such regulatory measures as preserving or extending capitalist flows of money, people and information from the effects of production's domination of nature (Lefebvre, 1991: 343). If Marx (1996: 440) understood nature to be the "material in which [the worker's] labour realizes itself" then the conservation measures such as those introduced through the Acts referred to above can be understood as intended to preserve or secure the reproduction of that material in order that productive labour might continue. The consequence was the development of technical interventions on processes understood to be both natural and essential to production. Another consequence was the spatial segregation of areas deemed unsuited to the conquest of nature from those able to produce elements of nature deemed less directly valuable.

Because it has become a product itself rather than the means of life of production, the sensuous external world has come to look decidedly more natural under late capitalism, at least at first glance, than what it did during colonialism or, in South Africa, Afrikaner nationalism. Undoubtedly the legislative shift that enabled private ownership of game animals on adequately enclosed land is what lies behind South Africa's present day 'conservation revolution', as the tremendous increase in South Africa's game population since the mid-20th century has come to be known. The increase in the total game population from 575 000 in 1964 to the 18,6 million in 2007 (Carruthers, 2008: 161) has come to stand as powerful, even indisputable, confirmation of a libertarian economic

University of Cape Town

critique of state regulation that holds that, because the market generates allocative efficiency, institutions and rules other than the market can only undermine development (Streak 1997: 311). This belief in the market's ability to generate allocative efficiency is what fuels the current drive by the Wildlife Ranching South Africa for self-regulation.

During South Africa's imperial and nationalist periods, game was at best a diversion alongside direct interventionist productive use of land. Consequently, value was only symbolically attached to 'nature'. By contrast, the new order of late capitalist nature is summed up as 'if it pays, it stays', and hunting is one of the activities that has and continues to permit what conservationists aim to achieve, because it can be made to pay. This is profit driven allocative efficiency come to roost in the boughs of the tree of conservation organizations. The new bird happens to carry a rifle, itself no longer an instrument of death but a wand for imbuing game with value and thereby conserving it. Conservation bodies eager to protect biodiversity thus find, in the move to sell the experience of hunting nature, a guarantee of their continued existence. And wildlife based land use certainly does seem to pay well.

Hunting and game ranching have experienced staggering growth over the past five years. KwaZulu-Natal province's Ezemvelo auction in 2006 sold 1 936 head of game for 8,075 million Rand (Damm, 2008: 9). In 2008 it generated 14 million Rand, the figure then dropping to 13 million Rand from the sale of 1600 head of game in 2009 (African Indaba, 2008: 16). This amounts to a 62% increase, on the 2006 revenue base of the auction, over a three year period, or an average of over 20% growth per annum, despite a corresponding 17% drop in the volume traded. Carruthers (2008: 175) gives a more general picture, suggesting that the revenue generated by live game sales increased from R10 million in 1991 to R105 million in 2002 – a phenomenal ten-fold increase over a twelve year period. Lindsey (2011) shows that there was a further increase in sales value to R183 million in 2009 despite the volume of animals traded dropping from 20 022 in 2002 to 11 841, a decline of 43%. What these figures indicate is that the contribution made to the South African economy by sales of game animals nominally increased seventeen-fold over a twenty year period and that over the seven

University of Cape Town

year period between 2002 and 2009 still managed to sustain a nominal growth rate of over 10% per annum.

Revenue from live sale at auctions is, however, the smallest contribution the game industry makes to the South African economy[8]. From 1 October 2006 to 30 September 2007 16 394 foreign hunters visited South Africa (Flack, 2008: 9). During the course of their average stay of four days, each reportedly spent an average of R44 500, over twenty times what the average tourist to South Africa spends. Foreign hunters thus contributed R730 million to the economy from direct hunting costs alone (trophy fees and accommodation) during this period (Flack, 2008: 9).

The numbers available in the sources are, however, somewhat unclear as regards foreign trophy hunters and their contribution to the South African economy. That is because there are big discrepancies between both the numbers of foreign hunters visiting South Africa, and the amount of money they spend while in the country.

According to the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) 7 000 hunters visited South Africa in 2004 and spent R900 million, or R128 571 per hunter on average (Lindsey, 2006: 13). Van der Merwe and Saaiman (cited in Lindsey, 2006: 13) offer a far smaller figure of R263 million contributed by 7 000 visiting hunters in 2006, an average of R37 571 per hunter. The CIC figures for 2006, however, indicate over twice the number of visits by foreign hunters. Figures for 2009 from the Department of Water and Environmental Affairs suggest that trophy hunting generated R650 million rand directly (Mabuda, 2010: 1), while SANParks director, Peter Mabunda (2011, 6), puts foreign trophy hunters' contribution to the South African economy during 2009 at R1 billion, equal to that of local hunters, for a total contribution from hunters of R2 billion per year.

University of Cape Town

[8] Namibia has also experienced tremendous growth in the foreign trophy hunting market with roughly 7000 trophy hunters visiting the country in 2008, up from just 155 ten years earlier, an increase that should perhaps be read against the decline in numbers of cattle on freehold land from 1,6 to 1 million head between 1980 and 2005 (Lindsey, 2011: 4).

Van der Merwe and Saaiman (cited in Lindsey, 2006: 13), however, put the economic contribution of local hunters far above that of foreign trophy hunters. They assert that in 2004 roughly 200 000 South African biltong hunters spent an estimated R3 billion on hunting (R15 000 average per hunter). Of this, R2 billion was spent directly on the approximately 1 000 000 game animals killed by hunters in South Africa each year, according to Pickover (2010: 5). Van der Merwe and Saaiman (2007) estimate the hunting industry's total contribution to the South African economy to have been of the order of R4,5 billion in 2006 and R7,7 billion in 2007 - a figure that made game farming the sixth biggest contributor to the agricultural sector in South Africa (Dry, 2010: 6). Translating the growth of the game farming sector into the spatiality of Ingold's idea of land, game farming now offers a return of R220 per hectare, 175% more than the R80 per hectare offered by cattle (Dry, 2010: 5). With so much higher a return per unit of land coupled with such promising annual revenue growth it is small wonder that game ranching has steadily expanded at a rate of about 5% per year in the last decade, as farmers such as Snr make the switch from cattle to game ranching (Dry, 2010: 6).

There is, however, a qualitative amplification of this picture when one takes into account that the game industry's average return of R220 per hectare has been achieved on some of the country's most marginal and degraded land, land that may be particularly poorly suited to cattle or other domestic livestock farming, or that may have suffered land degradation as a result of previous sustained intensive cattle farming. Such land is of a type upon which it may not be possible to achieve the national average return of R80 per hectare for cattle.

What this points to is that the increased opportunities offered farmers by wildlife ranching has been accompanied by, may even have been a product of, a decline in cattle farming prospects. As Lindsey (2011: 54) points out, drought, such as that experienced in Zimbabwe in 1991, has added to a general decline in range condition due to overgrazing, and that that in turn has reduced rangeland's cattle-rearing productive capacity by as much as 90% in parts of Zimbabwe and Namibia. Within a context of low profitability and declining state subsidies to cattle farming, there seems to

University of Cape Town

be as powerful a set of negative incentives driving farmers cum landowners away from cattle ranching as there are positive incentives to take up wildlife ranching.

This bidirectional set of incentives has resulted in a situation in which at present 205 000 square kilometres, or 16,8% of South Africa's total land surface is now taken up by over 9 600 privately owned and registered game ranches, estimated to accommodate 80% of the country's total game population (Dry, 2010: 3). State protected areas, by contrast, occupy only 75 000 square kilometres (6,1% of the land surface) and house only 20% of the game. The industry's contribution to game preservation is most dramatically illustrated by the fact that South Africa's game population is recorded as currently being higher than at any time in the previous 150 years. The private wildlife farming industry's contribution to this trend is beyond dispute.

Productive agricultural land use such as for stock farming is thus, unsurprisingly, giving way to wildlife farming in the wake of landowners realizing that it is possible to add value outside of the traditional narrative of incremental growth by selling the experience of hunting nature rather than just the carcass of the hunted animal. In chapter four I present an argument that the additional Rands per hectare boasted by the wildlife farming industry do not simply derive from game animals being less risky, being better adapted to marginal land or having more direct value than cattle when sold as meat.

That argument is based on the fact that the hunters I encountered during my field work did not hunt simply to kill, nor did they hunt simply for meat; they hunted to acquire meat through embodied practice that enfolded within itself a sense of masculinity deriving from a mythic past, and that was a central part of a reciprocal relationship they had with the hunted animal and the land it occupied – a relationship, I argue, that is particularly relevant to the post-apartheid South African context. This relevance of hunting to post-apartheid Afrikaner masculine identity in a sense corroborates JM Coetzee's scholarly and fictional writing which reflects on the challenges of identification with the South African landscape.

Coetzee (1988: 85) presents the archetypical South African farm as being surrounded by the 'myth of natural right'. According to this myth, the land was won and the farm

University of Cape Town

formed through the blood and sweat of those very mythic figures that Du Pisani (2001 & 2004) and Swart (2001) argue stood as the archetypes of Afrikaner Nationalist masculinity. Of white South African writers' apparent need to engage with the landscape, Coetzee (1988: 7) writes: 'In the words he throws out to the landscape, in the echoes he listens for, he is seeking a dialogue with Africa, a reciprocity with Africa, that will allow him an identity better than that of visitor, stranger, transient'. As Coetzee's argument would have it, the white writer throws out these words and seeks this reciprocity because he is white. These concerns are white in that they are those 'of people no longer European, not yet African' (Coetzee, 1988: 11). My own argument, throughout the chapters that follow, is that the phenomenal (but questionable) 175% more Rands per hectare offered by game over cattle farming relates to a coding, into the commodified bodies of game, of white desire for a reciprocal relationship with the land, be it in the shape of exotic food or of quarry.

My contention, and I demonstrate, is that game farms create, for hunters, the experience of being immersed in hunting nature. I argue that hunters find, while they are immersed in this 'nature', a reciprocity that allows them an identity better than that of 'visitor, stranger, transient'. The consequent enfolding of an Afrikaner Nationalist mythic past into hunting nature lends that mythology a profound sense of 'natural right'. Moreover, it adds Rands to hectares at a rate conventional stock farming cannot match.

The sheen rubs somewhat off the game farming industry's growth figures when one considers that the total amount of land set aside for game farming is of the order of 20% of the roughly 1 million square kilometres of available agricultural land, and that, even as the sixth largest sector in the agricultural economy, it produced only 9,5% as much gross income as the poultry, beef, maize, fruit and vegetable sectors – the top five agricultural production sectors in 2008/2009. If the total amount of land set aside for raising animals is of the order of 86% of South Africa's agricultural land, and wildlife ranching falls within this category, then 66% of agricultural land continues to be used for livestock grazing (Department of Environmental Affairs 2011). For every square kilometre of private game farm there are therefore 3,3 square kilometres of livestock farm. In a presentation he delivered to the Green Economy Summit in 2010 (a Summit

University of Cape Town

arranged by the South African Ministries of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs, Science and Technology and Trade and Industry in order to outline a "resource efficient, low carbon and pro-employment growth path) Dr G.C. Dry argued that the beef industry generates R18 billion and the wildlife ranching industry R7,7 billion. This leaves us with a figure that suggests that for every rand per hectare generated by cattle farming the wildlife ranching industry generates R1,41. This ratio of 1:1,41 is considerably lower than the figures of 1:2,5 released by the wildlife ranching lobby. Considering that the R7,7 billion is not all from direct earnings through sales and use of wildlife animals, but includes total hunting spend too (travel, equipment, food), the wildlife ranching side of the ratio is surely lower, especially if one takes only direct spending into account. The cattle ranching side of the ratio would, however, presumably increase if one were able to factor out the area devoted to the 28 million strong national sheep herd.

Even if one were, as I have just attempted to do, to call into question the figures describing the wildlife farming sector as economically phenomenally successful, wildlife farming nonetheless remains an agricultural sector that must be taken seriously by farmers as well as conservationists. However, as the immediately preceding paragraph shows, we need to guard against too optimistic a portrayal of the economic benefits wildlife farming offers, especially when it comes to the cases made for the expansion of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programmes. Such caution can only be wise given the discrepant figures coming out of the pro hunting lobby itself. One example is the discrepancy between CIC figures for trophy hunting's contribution to the South African economy and local researchers' figures that are fully 75% lower. My own calculations above of how much land is devoted to livestock and wildlife farming and how much each raises, yields a comparative ratio of Rands per hectare for livestock and wildlife farming that is radically lower than the one put forward by the wildlife farming lobby. That suggests that a reasonable case exists for proceeding under an assumption that, when it comes to considering what hunting might be able to offer poor rural village populations, the figures are being driven by the pro hunting agenda, rather than the case following on the back of the numbers.

University of Cape Town

I believe the figures' being driven by the pro-hunting agenda to be the result of the wildlife farming lobby's eagerness to defend what remains a highly elitist pursuit in the face of questions about land ownership and redistribution post-apartheid. This belief is corroborated by an article by Shane Mahoney, a renowned Canadian conservationist who has long championed the positive contribution that hunting can make to conservation. Like so many writers publishing in *African Indaba*, Mahoney (2008: 1) begins by pointing out how controversial hunting is and that the debate between the pro and anti groups 'each wrapped in the cloak of conservation' is one that typically takes the form of 'a clash of soft sentimentality and rigorous rationalism'.

The soft sentimental side bases its argument on the suffering of individual animals and the behaviour of individual hunters. The rigorous rational side responds by defending hunting in terms of its conservation benefits and its economic benefits, especially in rural economies – by focusing on abstracted aggregates of animals and hunters. Scathingly describing the debate as 'a tournament of frauds and follies', Mahoney warns hunters that defending their passion by appealing to pragmatic economistic arguments is a tactical error. While he accepts the pragmatic arguments as true and valid, he argues that hunters are on a dangerous path as long as they fail to explain that they hunt because to say that hunting is good for conservation belittles hunting which he sees as "the generator of our human condition, the crucible of intellect" (Mahoney, 2008: 20). He suggests hunters should defend hunting as "a reinterpretation of Eden; a great contemplation of the future of mankind". The salient point here is that facts and figures detailing the conservation and economic benefits of hunting are not merely neutral numbers, dutifully portraying the state of affairs in a detached manner; they are part of the a arsenal in Mahoney's tournament of frauds and follies intended as a defence of hunting – a defence that fails, according to Mahoney, to tell the truth of why people hunt. It does that even while data show that hunting has been responsible for the massive increases in game numbers since the mid 1960s. But, as Chapter Three will show, hunters do not hunt to conserve game; they hunt to experience a profound intimacy with what they call the veld, what I call hunting nature,

University of Cape Town

The extractive processes of late capitalist nature are thus notably moderate and in themselves pleasing to conservationists. What is more, the experience being sold so much resembles the objectives of conservationists that it has become one of the leading drivers of conservationism worldwide. The USA, with its US$67 billion hunting industry (Mabunda, 2011: 6) that almost single handedly bankrolls conservation in that country, is the most extreme example of the conservation benefits attachable to hunting. In the Southern African case, history is repeating itself in the sense that nature conservation through hunting comes into conflict with rural village populations that have differing ideas of what to do with the land upon which they live. When faced with such land use conflicts, conservation organizations serve as a source of legitimation for the late capitalist turn that has collapsed a mythic Afrikaner Nationalist landscape into land ownership, management and development. States too have found a measure of legitimacy in the global arena through supporting environmental initiatives that promise economic growth and rural economic development (MacDonald 2005). The relative success of privatized and commoditized nature experiences in these settings is being held up as a potential panacea for both conservation and development challenges by those who would see the spectre of cattle farming reanimated as wildlife ranching.

The hunting field is thus rife with initiatives to expand hunting areas, ostensibly in service of conservation and development through CBNRM (community based natural resource management) programmes. The most famous of these is the Zimbabwean CAMPFIRE (Community Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources) programme, while probably the most successful is Botswana's NRMP (Natural Resources Management Project). Similar programmes in the region include: LIFE (Living in a Finite Environment) and NASCO (The Namibian Association of Community Based Natural Resource Management Support Organizations) in Namibia; ADMADE (Administrative Management Design) and IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme) in Zambia; and the SCP (Selous Conservation Programme) and Culman and Hurt Community Wildlife Project in Tanzania.

However, one cannot eat an experience, and rural populations that are drawn into CBNRM projects have found themselves entering into arrangements in which they are

University of Cape Town

not allowed direct access to environmental resources such as land for grazing or for cultivation in order that they too might offer an experience of hunting nature for sale. Data for household income generated by CBNRM programmes in Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia, as reproduced in the table below, show clearly that such income is virtually non-existent – with the significant exception of Botswana where sparseness of the population living in CBNRM programme areas permits some returns.

Country	Annual Value (US$)	Annual Community Benefits Per Household (US$)
Botswana	Gross US$ 12.5 – 20 million from trophy hunting	Sanyuku Community: Ngamiland (ND) Area 34, 1996 – 2001: 22-50 households: US$ 1 190 – 9 577 gross
		Khwai, ngamiland Area 18, 2000 – 2002: 35-50 households: US$ 4 536 – 6 480 gross
		Okavango Community Trust: ND 22 & 23, 2000 – 2004: 300-500 households: US$ 800 – 1 333 gross
Namibia	Gross > US$ 42 million from trophy and biltong hunting, venison and live sales in 1999	Nyae Nyae Conservancy, 1997 – 2002: 400 Households: US$ 79 gross 1998 to 2002, US$ 196 gross in 2003
	Gross > US$ 4.7 – 5 million from trophy hunting in 1999	Torra Conservancy, 2002: 120 households, US$ 853 gross (US$ 363 net)

University of Cape Town

Tanzania	Gross US$ 27 – 39 million	Selous Conservation Programme, 1990s to present: 16 500 households: US$ 15.84 – 16.13 gross
		Cullman-Hurt Community Wildlife Project, 1990s: US$14.50 – 120 gross
Zimbabwe	Gross US$ 18.6 – 22.3 million, pre-2000	CAMPFIRE, Average 1989 – 1999: ≈95 000 households: US$ 18.60 gross
Zambia	Gross US$ 12 million in 1999	ADMADE Programme, 1991: 1 000 households Munyamadzi Corridor only, US$ 17 gross
		LRDP, 1990s: 10 000 households: US$ 22 – 27 gross

(De Georges and Reilly, 2009: 748))

The income data from the table above strongly undermines the so-called triple bottom line in terms of which hunting is lauded as a powerful driver of rural development. It seems far more reasonable to assume, on the basis of the difficulty of tying the figures down and on the knowledge that those figures are part of a defence of hunting, that rural development is a powerful driver of hunting – at least rhetorically –than what it is to assume that hunting based land use can drive rural development.

It is difficult to sustain an argument that rural village populations should embrace wildlife ranching and the hunting industry in the face of evidence that they overwhelmingly miss out on the revenue flowing through hunting taskscapes to which they are required to commit, and because the opportunity costs of doing so is that land is used for purposes other than raising domestic animals or crops, or hunting for their own use. For them, hunting based CBNRM programmes seem to be an engine of un-belonging. By

University of Cape Town

becoming the custodians of the experience of hunting nature they are no longer permitted to inhabit the land on their own terms lest they undermine the Rands per hectare they are told they can reap from the sale of this experience. They have proved, however, not to be the only or even the main beneficiaries of such a sale. DeGeorges and Reilly (2009: 749) estimate that 'CBNRM communities in Southern Africa capture only 5.8–13% of the gross turnover from safari hunting', while the rest goes to the state and to the private operators, neither of which have any ties to so-called CBNRM communities. Such an uneven distribution of profits, and the accompanying fact that the bulk of profits leave the area completely, has prompted DeGeorges and Reilly (2009: 750) to wonder whether CBNRM hunting programmes effectively always 'keep rural communities marginalized while maintaining the old colonial ties between the safari operators and governments'.

In terms of the argument I am developing here, DeGeorges and Reilly's concerns are most reasonable. The hunting taskscape I have described fixes a white desire for a historicized reciprocal relationship to the land in a white controlled circuit (Private farms in South Africa and White owned safari hunting operators outfitting hunts on community land), a circuit through which value flows and profit is made. The spectre of capitalist nature is thus able to undo Ingold's distinction between quantitative land and qualitative landscape and to make of the latter a quantifiable quality of the former. If, as Ingold (2000: 195) suggests, the Marxian 'distinction, between [exchange] value and use value, is precisely homologous to that between land and landscape', then adding additional value beyond traditional narratives of incremental growth, and doing so by pre coding use value into commodities, as Foster (2005: 11) explains, is perfectly homologous with the collapsing of the landscape into land in order to win more Rands per hectare.

What I argue in the chapters that follow is that biltong hunters invert the relationship between production and the sensuous external world as its means of life, and further, that this inversion enables the transformation of quantitative, ownable land itself into a sublime landscape of romantic or nationalistic belonging. I do not mean by this an understanding of landscaping by which land is made to conform to a pre-imagined

University of Cape Town

aesthetic. I mean the mythic landscapes of the pastoral mode, of which Coetzee writes, literally becoming the value of the land so that it becomes possible to buy and sell belonging. Moreover, I mean presenting this pastoral mode of belonging as a national salvation by convincing states, conservationists and rural village populations that an at-base unchanged white pleasure drives both conservation and rural development. It is an engine of belonging for some and of un-belonging for others, who have had to alter the way they inhabit the land, forsake their own taskscapes, in order that the taskscape catering to hunters' desire might be embodied in a landscape in which hunters belong.

University of Cape Town

Chapter Two: The Spectre's Space: Imperialism, Nationalism and the Spatiality of Capitalist Nature

My insistence in the previous chapter of the presence of distinguishable imperial, national and late capitalist natures is an insistence that a diachronic multiplicity of natures exists. Ndebele's (1999) critique of the game lodge to which I referred earlier similarly insists upon a plurality of natures, but a synchronic present plurality. Increasingly commonplace encounters between nature and social science or cultural or literary studies have, at least since the middle of the 20th century, made assertions of a plurality of natures more than commonplace; it has rendered them dominant. In this chapter I show that the now commonplace pluralisation of nature is in need of some detailed disentangling from such notions as landscape or 'ideas of nature'. This thesis subjects game farms to a similar, but more detailed analysis asking how the hunting nature that is emergent from the game farm fits into broader South African politics as a parliament of things (Latour, 2005: 24) in terms of which a long prevailing South African modernity is held stably in place amid revolutionary changes at the level of the state.

The task of this chapter is thus three-fold. The opening section outlines the constructivist frame that has traditionally surrounded social science's engagement with nature, and within which multiplicity has problematically multiplied. The aim of the opening section is to show clearly both the limits of a constructivist frame as inherited from scientific realism, and the inability of constructivism to enable thinking beyond those limits. The second section draws on what is variously termed post-humanism (Barad, 2003) or neo-realism (Escobar, 2008: 127) to move the theoretical foundation of my approach to the nature of game farms beyond the limits of constructivism, and to lend the multiplicity a sense of gravitas and consequence. The third section relates the methodological approach upon which this thesis rests, and I use in order to achieve that theoretical shift.

The natures of constructivism 1: the systems scientific approach

Early social science and humanities encounters with nature, such as ecological anthropology, environmental sociology, landscape ecology and historical ecology,

University of Cape Town

treated nature as a separate and prior ontological realm. They consequently studied the ways in which societies 'adapted' to particular ecologies (Brosius, 1999: 278), impacted upon environments (Crumley, 1994), or both (Dunlar and Catton, 1979). Each approach's protagonists concerned themselves with the impact of humans upon their physical environment (Rossler, 2009: 302). In these approaches landscape was taken as the analytical unit and the locus of multiplicity, and was understood to be the dialectical result of an encounter between human societies and a physical environment understood as synonymous with nature. This dialectical formulation clearly positions nature as a separate, unitary and logically prior ontological realm. The only noticeable differences between these approaches are their variable location of agency and their differential focus on past societies (History), Western societies (Sociology), or non-western societies (Anthropology). Agency is either in nature, with society adapting to it, or in society, impacting upon nature, or in a dialectical relation between the two in a cycle of impact and adaptation).

By designating these approaches as 'early' I do not wish to suggest that they have passed out of use. I do so merely to indicate that they are the first and most enduring approaches taken in on-going sociological, anthropological and historical encounters with nature. Environmental history, for example, has an on-going focus on past impacts of societies on ecologies and environments. Beinart (1984), for example, examined the relationship between soil erosion in southern Africa and interventions by colonial states in peasant agriculture between 1900 and 1960. Showers (1989) similarly considered the origins of, and the colonial politics relating to soil erosion in Lesotho between the 1830s and the 1950s. In much the same way, Crosby (1986), Van Sittert (2000) and Frost (1997) have considered the relationship between European colonial expansion and the spread of imported 'weeds', as well as the impact of this relationship on settler agriculture.

Within the ambit of Anthropological engagement with nature, Holt (2005) is typical of a large body of concern with the ecological impact of local or indigenous populations on local ecologies. While Holt (2005: 201) argues that the question as to whether or not indigenous groups have a conservation ethos is itself highly flawed, broader debate

University of Cape Town

around the relationship between local and indigenous populations and biodiversity conservation continues to revolve around the extent to which indigenous people should be included in or excluded from conservation efforts. It also hinges on the extent to which such people can be shown to have impacted negatively (Kramer and Van Schaik, 1997) or not (Colchester, 2000 & Schwartzman et al, 2000) on local ecologies that have been described by natural scientists. In this debate natural science is assumed to have described a real singular nature and also apparent threats to it; and social scientists have either examined the social and cultural factors underpinning the degree to which local populations impact upon nature, or have tried to intervene in such social or cultural factors in ways intended to enable local populations participate in nature preservation. Independently of where authors fall in the debate, they all have in common that nature prevails as an autonomous already-there realm, one that precedes any encounter with the social and that can be accurately described by natural science.

The locus of multiplicity in the social sciences that characterises this early approach is in ideas of nature, local cultural landscapes, or even local natures, and the extent to which these can be shown to fit, or to suit 'real' nature as described by natural scientists. What I refer to as 'early approaches' then are characterized by an academic division of labour of which Macnaghten and Urry (1998) are very critical. It is a division that sees social scientists relegated to the secondary role of establishing social causes, impacts, responses to and constructions of nature and environmental problems. Yet, in this division of labour nature and environmental problems were assumed to be 'properly' described only by natural scientists. Early approaches are thus premised upon an implicitly hierarchical epistemological continuum in terms of which natural science knowledge is authoritative knowledge about 'nature' (singular) while social science knowledge constitutes knowledge of different constructions or understandings of that real 'nature'; and the goal of social science knowledge is assumed to be to address "the social causes, impacts and responses to environmental problems" (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 6).

It is this epistemological hierarchy that in part lies behind nature's political force as a moral and ethical arbiter for human activity (Macnaghten and Urry (1998). In the

University of Cape Town

epistemological space of the 'early' approaches, nature as described by natural scientists was said to function as a measure of acceptable activity in terms of which to judge indigenous and local populations and populations of the past. Moreover, the judgements passed have had profound material and political consequences: for example that people are permitted to remain in areas described as valuable by scientific experts only when they can be shown to live in ways that do not impact negatively upon them.

Even when historical analysis foregrounds the cultural construction of multiple natures in the West, variability and mutability are usually demonstrated by recourse to the same dialectic so that the ontological independence of nature and the ensuing epistemological hierarchy are both reinforced. Barros (2001: 149), for example, has shown how medieval religious ideology 'created an ambience of both tension and harmony between man and nature' that humanized and protected nature; and he has contrasted this with the adversarial relationship between man and nature, the source of its adversarial character being said to stem from contemporary secular economism. Raymond Williams, possibly the most significant and influential author to develop this perspective, examined nature in the West through a wider array of cultural lenses than has Barros (2001). In doing that Williams showed that nature is undeniably an ideological reflection of dominant social and cultural categories.

The natures of constructivism 2: dialectical constructivism

For Williams (1976) as for Barros (2001), however, a nature is implied and goes unaddressed. Consider Barros's language in the sentence: 'Religious ideology created an ambience of both tension and harmony between man and nature'. The 'nature' in this sentence is actual and distinct from 'man' but linked to him through an 'ambience'. The resulting 'humanized' nature is a representation of actual (real, pristine) nature that is held by man. It is the mutability of this representation that Barros (2001) discusses and that he suggests is particularly relevant to man's impact on what he implies is a distinctly separate and immutable nature. Nature as the ontological realm of the real

University of Cape Town

remains hidden but unchanged, and politics continues to be restricted to the social as associated with the representations of that realm – in art, literature, and politics.

Since it builds on such analyses and perspectives, environmental history is unsurprisingly full of critiques that dramatically unmask how representations of nature articulate or symbolize social power relations. In these historical critiques, ideas of nature, like landscapes before them, have become a locus of multiplicity which is the dialectical result of an encounter between Western culture in the past and a singular already-there 'real' nature.

This dialectic, and the ideological role of nature in obscuring politics, are particularly visible in the history of hunting in England and her colonies. In England the aristocracy's ability to dominate the landscape through legislation that controlled hunting dates back to the fourteenth century (Smalley, 2005: 185). As I aim to show in the following section of this chapter, this mode of landscape domination was transplanted into the colonies with only minor differences. The criminalization of previously common rights, so that hunting in the colonies came to mark the distinction between the gentleman colonist, the settler, and especially the native, can thus be seen to have moulded the empire as 'estate' (Beinart, 1990: 175). Hunting for the pot or the market, by peasants in the metropole, or by settlers and natives in the colonies, was cast as "wasteful and decadent; as a squandering of the animals' true value" (Loo, 2001: 308).

The struggle for access to wild animals and the land that housed them centred, throughout Europe's 19th century colonies, on definitions of legitimate practice central to which were notions of nature. Conservationist science was crucial in this definitional struggle as a means of naturalizing elite practices and thereby obscuring that elite's political, economic and environmental interests (Smalley, 2005: 185). Thus it was that the 'sportsman' model of hunting as a leisure activity rather than for food or income – one that was favoured by colonial elites – was installed as the only legitimate model in the USA (Fine, 2000: 807), India (Pandian 1995) and southern Africa (Beinart, 1990: 175, Carruthers, 1989: 190). Native and settler hunting practices were, in contrast, cast as threats to the environment and outlawed.

University of Cape Town

Various environmental historians have shown that men drawn from the elite ranks of British society codified and vaunted notions of hunting as 'sport' in order to augment and elevate their public school and officer masculinity above the masculinities of other hunters, who were thereby condemned to the lower social ranks by their race, ethnicity or class position, throughout Africa (McKenzie, 2000; McKenzie, 1987; Carruthers, 1989; Steinhart, 1989; Beinart, 1990), in India (Sramek, 2006; Pandian, 1995), in Australia (Franklin, 1996), in the USA (Loo, 2001; Smalley, 2005) and in Canada (Loo, 2001). Modification of the landscape through the introduction of new patterns of ownership and commodity extraction, and through new institutionalized rules governing legitimate practice (governmentality), was thus common throughout the colonies. In each case the idea of nature naturalized the contours that commodity and governmentality took, to the extent that Franklin (1996) has been able to map the transition from colonialism to nationalism in the commodification and processes of governmentality of and in Australia's nature. In all these cases national and imperial natures were the dialectical results of a meeting of politics in society and an already-there nature. The difference Franklin (1996) draws between imperial and national nature in Australia is in the representational realm - his discussion relates (as do the discussions of the historians cited in this paragraph) to changes in the meaning given to nature (symbol) and to the particulars of its incorporation into the domains of governmentality and the commodity.

Anthropological examples of the constructivist approach taken by environmental historians, I argue below, typically bring ideas of nature and landscape together such that the latter becomes a repository or container for cultural memory and symbolism. Changing culture manifests as dynamic cultural landscape such that local landscapes become methodological windows into myth and history. Senses of place, according to Basso (1996: xiv) 'partake of cultures, of shared bodies of "local knowledge" (the phrase is Clifford Geertz's) with which persons and whole communities render their places meaningful and endow them with social importance'. Basso's point is that places are in some sense prior to meaning and social importance. He is concerned with the meaning and social importance people attach to places. An implicit assumption therefore is that the materiality of the objects that make places must itself precede any of the meaning or

University of Cape Town

social importance attached to those objects. This implication becomes clear when we consider Basso's language more closely, particularly his use of the word 'render', which can either denote cause (the GPS navigator was rendered useless by the incomplete map data); translation from one medium to another (the GPS navigator rendered the map data graphically); or coating (the walls of the house are rendered with a white plaster). Taking all three meanings, culture, understood as shared local knowledge, is translated into spatial knowledge and becomes a cultural coating that causes the already present material features of the landscape to become meaningful. Rossler (2009: 308) considers the work of Santos-Granero (1998) in Peru, of Sikkink and Chopue (1999) in Bolivia, of Roseman (1998) in Malaysia and of Rumsey (1994) in Australia as similar to that of Basso in the extent to which they all consider the inscription of history into the features of the landscape. While nature is not explicitly mentioned in any of these works, the same dialectic is visible. For all the authors, place is the dialectical result of an encounter between a particular cultural realm of meaning making and an already present unitary nature that is the concern of natural science.

Ingold (2000) offers a way of escaping the dialectic evident in the arguments of the authors discussed in the preceding paragraph. As Ingold (2000: 208) explains, metaphors of blanketing the world in meaning imply (often against the intentions of authors such as Basso) a layer beneath the cultural blanket that is more ultimately real, and that can be arrived at by stripping away the cultural blanket. By this formulation the nature that is the concern of natural science is seen to lie below any cultural natures, and scientific critique will cut away the falsehoods that culture creates, just as Galileo once did. By reducing all other 'natures' to constructions, the constructivism typified by Basso (1996) ironically bolsters the non-indexical authority of natural science by reproducing the traditional ontological structure of nature as distinct from culture (including cultural models of nature). This constructivism thus directly converges with the realism of natural science at the level of ontology. I assert this because each constructed nature implies a separate and real unitary and singular 'physical world' that is distinct from society, accessible through natural science, upon which various 'local knowledges' can work to construct cultural versions of 'nature'. The blanketing

University of Cape Town

metaphor thus clearly reproduces the ontological split between the ontological realm of the real and the cultural or social world of meaning and history.

One can understand why social scientists have persevered along this constructionist line. It is, after all, founded upon a long standing and intuitively sensible division of labour between the science and humanities divisions of university campuses. Already in Durkheim and Mauss's (1963) *Primitive Classification*, first published in 1903, we find the idea that natural categories are reflections of social categories. We also, however, have natural science that is believed capable of accurately describing nature. Why then should social scientists and historians not concern themselves with measuring the extent to which the natures that reflect social categories compare with the real nature described by natural scientists (which social scientists and historians ascribing to this idea do not view as reflections of social categories)?

Despite their tacit reproduction or affirmation of the ontological domain of the real, historical and sociological insights produced by constructivists such as Basso (1996) did significantly unsettle the authoritative and neutral nature of the natural sciences by their insistence that nature is multiple and political. This insistence opened an epistemological space from within which historians and social scientists could approach nature. In Anthropology, for example, interrogation of the assumed universality of a western ontological category of nature resulted, in the 1970s, in a number of 'epistemologies of nature in various fields and approaches' (Escobar, 2008: 112). Escobar (2008: 122-123) situates landscape history, historical ecology, cultural ecology and landscape ecology – what I have labelled 'early approaches' above – within the 'systems scientific perspective' of epistemological realism. While the systems scientific perspective did contribute to unsettling the then dominant epistemological position which was a 'positivist science perspective', it nonetheless 'tended to reproduce the basic tenets of realism at a higher level – namely, identifying truth as the correspondence of holistic knowledge with a total, albeit complex, reality' (Escobar, 2008: 123).

Cultural constructivists like Williams (1976), and the protagonists of the blanketing metaphor, such as Basso (1996), further unsettled the 'positivist science perspective' by

University of Cape Town

shifting social science engagement with nature into an epistemological realm of constructivism, in particular a version of constructivism that Escobar (2008: 123) qualifies as 'dialectical'. This dialectical constructivism, says Escobar (2008: 123) 'sees social reality as undergoing constant transformation, the product of conflict and power, not as constituted by value-free knowledge'. Framed in this way, the social study of nature resulted in a concern with the cultural or ideological meanings attached to apparently neutral natural objects and the role this attachment played in conflict and power relations. At its base, however, the priority of nature as the ontological domain of the real was preserved behind the assumption of an 'organic origin to all social orders' (Escobar, 2008: 124).

The natures of constructivism 3: post-structural constructivism

Ndebele's (1999) critique of the game lodge typifies post-structural constructivism as an attempt to escape the dialectical constructivism that preserved the ontological priority of nature over cultural constructions of nature. Ndebele is not in the least concerned with the extent to which the game lodge, as a pattern of located activities, is detrimental or beneficial to an actually existing nature, nor is he interested in the attachment of meaning to an already present nature. He is not trying to cut away an ideological falsehood to reveal a 'true' Nature beneath it. He is exclusively interested in the extent to which the object of his critique – the game lodge as institution – is a reflection or an embodiment of colonial relations of racial domination. So exclusive is his interest in this regard that the object disappears altogether. The game lodge may as well be a movie or a novel or a text of any kind.

Such detachment of critique from any real objects is typical of this approach. In their 'postcolonial and feminist critique' of the view in some conservation quarters that 'Third World overpopulation [is] the primary threat to the environment', Sawyer and Agrawal (2000: 71) "maintain that arguments that define population as the nemesis of global ecological stability and biodiversity possess racist and imperialist overtones and are buttressed by a peculiarly Western, gendered perception of Nature."

University of Cape Town

Their 'reading' of the conservationist discourse linking third world overpopulation to global ecological stability is thus a deconstruction of the sort Ndebele calls for. Post structural constructivism of this sort thus directly identifies nature as political rather than leaving it implicitly neutral, as does dialectical constructivism of the sort discussed above. Despite their shared concern with the relationship between third world population growth in the tropics and the conservation of tropical rain forests, what differentiates Sawyer and Agrawal (2000) from Holt (2005) and the other authors referred to above as being concerned with changing indigenous demographics is that the former begin from the epistemological assumption that evaluating local populations and their activities against natural science descriptions of ecologies or biodiversity is above all a political act. In such an epistemological space, natural science descriptions of the kind marshalled to make claims that overpopulation is a threat to conservation are fundamentally and primarily a reflection not of a nature that is "objectively there", but of power relations in society. Nature thus appears here as a construct that ideologically obscures power relations and politics and must be stripped away to lay them bare. Unlike in the blanketing metaphor where the cultural layer is peeled away to reveal a nature below, here nature as a construct must be peeled away to reveal the politics and power relations it masks. Once again, the object of the critic's gaze disappears altogether. Tropical ecologies may as well be a novel or a movie; they seemingly have no more substantial realness than such representations. Rather than indigenous populations being evaluated against neutral scientific nature, the latter is now evaluated as a construct and exposed as concealing raced and gendered discourses of neo-colonial domination.

Ndebele's (1999) critique of the game lodge is itself an example of this inversion, premised as it is on the treatment of the game lodge as a text, as a construct "which can be 'read' and which therefore is also open to interpretation" (Rossler, 2009: 301). Such a call to deconstruct the game lodge, or to deconstruct conservationists' concerns with third world overpopulation, thus makes no attempt to evaluate a locally constructed nature against something actual or real. That is because deconstruction, after all, insists that "there is nothing outside the text" (Derrida, 1997: 158). Such an approach, with it particular form of criticality, is of course apt as a framework through which to

University of Cape Town

“read” the metaphorical text that one might see in the game lodge and to show what it means in the context of post-apartheid and post-colonial South Africa. It is in other words appropriate to the project of exposing the game lodge, or conservation biologists’ concerns with the threat posed to ecologies by third world population growth, as ideological constructs resting not on external reality but on politics. The reason for this is that deconstructionist ‘readings’ such as Ndebele’s

> cannot legitimately transgress the text towards something other than it, towards a referent (a reality that is metaphysical, historical, psychobiographical, etc.) or toward a signified outside the text whose content could take place, could have taken place outside of language (Derrida, 1997: 158).

This textuality is what gives the approach its political usefulness. No one could contest Ndebele’s reading by appealing to a transcendent reality beyond the text. The reading stands or falls on the basis of the cogency with which the critic can find meaning by establishing connections to structures of difference found in this and in other such ‘texts’. The politics of landscapes thus become discernible in the endless deferral of difference in a textual universe with no external referents. Indeed, the scientific account itself becomes a text to be deconstructed to reveal the implicit power relations upon which it rests and which it ideologically supports. .

The kind of epistemological turn outlined above has very successfully narrowed the aperture through which any appeal to a transcendent reality can disqualify, dominate or determine interpretation. It thus hands the critic a great deal of argumentative power, by bringing the politics submerged below appeals to nature into the critical light of day. For example, any claim that the game lodge is the most effective way of managing some sort of transcendent nature outside the text or prior to interpretation becomes inadmissible; so does any suggestion that the game lodge in its current form is desirable because it attracts the income needed to generate revenue that will preserve an actually existing nature. Any evidence based argument that third world population growth can be linked to a decrease in biodiversity, or to the destruction of wildlife habitat, is similarly disqualified as a result of its reliance on an inadmissible epistemological belief that knowledge mirrors a prior real nature beyond the text and

University of Cape Town

that people may impact upon it, a belief behind which neo-colonial, patriarchal and racial politics are conveniently obscured.

This kind of epistemological turn does decentre nature; it also, and forever, banishes any lingering beliefs that Nature can be politically neutral. For social scientists wanting to focus research on what has been called nature, this is a step to be highly valued. However, having cast our weight behind the body blow against positivist science this epistemological turn offers, we now find ourselves in the position of the overeager fencer. Thinking we will win the game with a match ending touch, we have reframed the entire question of nature by locking it into text, by denying its existence beyond representation. As it turns out, and as I argue below, this has proven to be a very clumsy lunge that has seen us overbalance and quite accidentally fall on our own swords. As Ingold (2000: 41) explains:

> It is recognized that the concept of nature, insofar as it denotes an external world of matter and substance 'waiting to be given meaningful shape and content by the mind of man' (Sahlins 1976: 210), is part of that very intentional world within which is situated the project of Western science as the 'objective' study of natural phenomena (Shweder 1990: 24). And yet the notion that there are intentional worlds, and that human realities are culturally constructed, rests on precisely the same ontological foundation.

Touché. In all seriousness, what are we to do with the argument that scientists' concerns about third world population growth as a threat to biodiversity reflect a raced and gendered concern with the control of female sexuality? What are we to do when we work from a basis that there is nothing beyond the text? No third world population (itself a discursive construction reflecting power relations (Escobar, 1995; Said, 1969 or Mudimbe, 1988)), no objectively existing environmental problems, only those constituted by environmentalist discourse (Brosius, 1999: 278), no actual biodiversity to be threatened, nothing but the endless deferral of difference within text? Adopting such a perspective certainly removes the social sciences from its otherwise subordinate position in the academic division of labour that Macnaghten and Urry (1998) bemoan. Regrettably, however, it achieves that feat by widening the division beyond all repair.

University of Cape Town

The critical power unlocked by the linguistic turn, it would therefore seem, comes at an enormous cost, no less than the ultimate undoing of that which made critique valuable to begin with. Critique, Latour (2010: 474-5) argues,

> Did a wonderful job of debunking prejudices, enlightening nations, prodding minds, but […] 'ran out of steam' because it was predicated on the discovery of a true world of realities lying behind a veil of appearances… Critique was meaningful only as long as it was accompanied by the sturdy yet juvenile belief in a real world beyond. Once deprived of this naïve belief in transcendence, critique is no longer able to produce this difference potential that had literally given it its steam.

The irony here is that the very invalidation of appeals to a transcendent reality or an actually existing referent or signified outside of language – to nature – takes from critique the engine of its political usefulness, even as it empowers the critic. Simply put, critique mattered as long as a referent or signified was to be found behind the veil of appearance being lifted by critics such as Ndebele. After the epistemological lunge towards the linguistic turn, with no hope of glimpsing anything outside of the representational world that is the veil of appearance, the critic is able to stand against appeals to 'reality' that would invalidate a 'reading' or obscure an ideological function; but then 'critique suddenly looks like another call to nihilism' (Latour, 2010: 475). It is as if St George, that great slayer of dragons, denied the presence of a maiden to save, is beginning to ask why he should bother to slay dragons in the first place.

We social scientists are thus left with little more than "the by now dull debate between 'realists' and 'constructivists'" (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 2). The result is that social science engagement with nature is 'caught up in the geometrical optics of reflection where, much like the infinite play of images between two mirrors, the epistemological gets bounced back and forth, but nothing more is seen' (Barad, 2003: 802-803). What Barad means is that, while the above turning of the world into language has enabled the critical consideration of the social or cultural construction of natures liberated from the authoritative monolith at home in the natural sciences, that same turning has resulted in

University of Cape Town

a focus on ‘questions of correspondence between descriptions and reality (e.g., do they mirror nature or culture)’ (Barad, 2003: 802).

Constructivist approaches based in such representationalist vortices ironically end up having a great deal in common with scientific positivism. To suggest that nature is but one among many possible discursive constructions, and that there is no way of getting beyond the text, necessarily implies that there is an ‘outside’ to the text. As Ingold (2000: 14) explains, “To suggest that human beings inhabit discursive worlds of culturally constructed significance is to imply that they have already taken a step out of the world of nature within which the lives of all other creatures are confined.”

We have thus accomplished nothing more than to expand the set of constructed natures introduced in what I labelled the early approach in the beginning of this chapter to include scientific construction. We are thus, in a very significant sense, exactly where we started. We still have a separate ontological realm of reality that is distinct from society; the only difference, and I suggest a not terribly useful difference, is that this realm is impossible to access through any type of knowledge and that any attempt to describe it merely reflects conflict and power within the realm of the social, a realm that our disciplinary commitment inclines us to allow as external to text. Such an approach thus fails to get beyond the ontological dualism from which we started.

Half a century of constructivism has therefore achieved little more than lengthening an epistemological continuum of relative opacity; an ‘array of epistemological positions along the essentialist-constructivist axis’ (Escobar, 2008: 122-128). At the one extreme we have positivists holding that natural science unproblematically reveals reality; at the other we have deconstructionists holding that there is nothing beyond representation, that reality remains perfectly opaque and any appeal to it or claim to represent it is therefore purely ideological. It is in the optics that describes this array that we encounter the limits of constructivism. No position within it is a departure from the ontological separation of nature from society as the differences between them boil down to matters of correspondence.

University of Cape Town

Natures of constructivism 4: embodiment as a (failed) way beyond the limits of constructivism

Macnaghten and Urry (2000)'s work is worth dwelling on here at some length, in part because of the body of work on leisure related natures they inspired, but in the main for their recognition of how limiting the epistemological continuum described by Escobar (2008) is and for their attempt to overcome it by, once again, providing social scientists with something beyond the text, but something that is neither neutral nor ontologically prior. Their incorporation of a phenomenological concern with embodied perception has given rise to a special edition of the journal *Body and Society* in which various contributors (Edensor, 2000; Lewis, 2000; Macnaghten and Urry, 2000; Matless, 2000; and Michael, 2000) analyse the production of natures without resorting to the radical epistemological step of deconstructionists. What these authors propose is a multiplicity of natures that are not simply written as texts in the deconstructionist sense, but that result from diverse embodied practices.

Their suggestion is that the way to escape the epistemological vicious cycle described above is to look at the ontological foundation upon which it rests, namely the distinction between nature and culture (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 16). This makes intuitive sense. If the epistemological array is trapped in a concern with the correspondence of representation and represented because of the bifurcation of reality, then challenging this bifurcation head on is a sensible place to begin plotting an escape from what is effectively a hall of mirrors. The above-mentioned authors' challenge argues that replacing the orthodox faith in 'nature' with a new faith in embodied natures (natures not constituted by text based constructions alone, but by the operations of human bodily perception) will transcend 'the by now dull debate between "realists" and "constructivists"'. I will consequently move beyond an academic division of labour that has relegated social scientists to the secondary role of studying impacts, adaptations, ideas and understandings of nature and of environmental problems, both of which, in terms of that division of labour, are properly identified and described by natural scientists (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 2).

University of Cape Town

The founding act of Macnaghten and Urry's (1998) new faith in multiple natures is, however, an historical analysis aimed at debunking the old ontological faith in a single nature. They thus begin by historically demonstrating that nature is a product of "the abstraction of a singular nature from the multiplicity of lived experiences" (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 8). Crucially for my argument here, Macnaghten and Urry rely heavily on the critical account of nature offered by Williams (1976). That account was prominent in (even seminal to) the constructivist trajectory Macnaghten and Urry hope to move beyond. Their focus on the abstraction of nature from lived experience is best seen as their attempt to build upon the success with which the representationalist critique dismissed the notion of a singular nature before moving on thereafter to introduce a concern with the human senses and with bodily practices as being crucial components of lived experience, and thus to move the argument beyond a representationalist debate. This abstraction, however, is cast by Macnaghten and Urry as the root of the problem: the separateness of nature from culture is a product of the abstraction of a singular nature from lived experience; and the variable existence of such an abstracted nature has made possible a normative consideration of whether human activities are natural (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 8). From such a perspective it begins to look as if the project has to be to exit the representationalist debate and to do so by inserting embodied perception and practice into the process by which singular nature is abstracted from lived experience.

Such a historical analysis directly addresses the academic division of labour that Macnaghten and Urry lament; but it does not confront ontological bifurcation upon which that division of labour between natural and social scientist rests. In effect Macnaghten and Urry's approach means that they base an ontological project in already tainted epistemological territory and, as I show below, their adding a corporeal component into the mix is not sufficient to undo the already implied ontological structure. The result is that individuals' sensual embodied engagements with landscapes that they themselves deem to be natural – what the authors aim to give back to the critic as something outside of text – ends up being incorporated into the prevailing representationalist concern with correspondence. By launching their argument from within dialectical constructivism, the phenomenological approach to embodiment, through which they

University of Cape Town

hope to escape the dualism at the heart of the representationalist trap, becomes infected with the same optical problem.

The result is that Macnaghten and Urry (1998) continue to formulate statements about their proposed multiplicity of natures as if they are talking about *ideas* of nature or landscapes that characterised what I have called early approaches. Their doing that confounds their addition of the 's' to nature and invites confusion about whether they are talking about different material natures or different ideas of nature. To exemplify: their third chapter deals with "how these ideas of nature and the environment engage with lay publics, and the effects [these ideas] have on them" (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 74). Yet at the very outset of the book this engagement is spoken of as itself falling within the realm of ideas.

> Once we acknowledge that ideas of nature both have been, and currently are, fundamentally intertwined with dominant ideas of society, we need to address what ideas of society and of its ordering become reproduced, legitimated, excluded, validated, and so on, through appeals to nature. (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 15)

The articulation of 'natures' as 'ideas of nature' appears in the book in questions the authors pose, such as "how [are] ideas of nature permeating the human lifeworld [?]" (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 212) or "how contested ideas of nature reconfigured and structured identity [?]" (1998: 238). Macnaghten and Urry also formulate assertions relating to the relationship between humans and nature in this way thus enabling them to say that "discursive processes construct what we tend to think of as 'natural'" while "ideas of nature construct how we think of ourselves" (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 95).

Moreover, where Macnaghten and Urry do use 'natures', it is used interchangeably with 'ideas of nature'. Williams, for example, is credited with identifying "the social significance of the formation of abstracted, singular and personified natures" (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 8), and, we are told, competing "natures are not inherent in the physical world" but are discursively or socially constructed (Macnaghten and Urry,

University of Cape Town

1998: 95). This seems to sit rather comfortably within the dialectical constructivist position in the epistemological array the authors propose to move beyond.

That is probably because that dialectical constructivist approach has effectively come to dominate Macnaghten and Urry's attempts to use a phenomenological perspective on embodiment to break the dualistic base of the epistemological trap and to attach, to a world outside the text, the success the constructionists enjoyed in unmasking apparently neutral nature as fundamentally political. Even at their most removed from the realm of ideas and discourse, Macnaghten and Urry (1998: 104) understand 'bodily senses' to play a role in 'leading people to *deem* certain environments as "unnatural"' (emphasis added). The assertion that "natures and their perception are in part produced by specific concatenations of the senses" (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 109), therefore, implies a mental operation of interpretation ('deeming') that is superordinate to the senses. The result is a version of perception in which the discursive *conception* of nature, so primary in the constructivist approach, governs the sensual *perception* of nature. What humans sense through their embodied engagements is thus itself obscured behind a discursive conception that makes sense of sensory data; that represents sensory data and brings it to consciousness. The epistemological debate's concern with the correspondence between a representation and that being represented is thus generalized to intervene between raw sense data as perceived by bodies and perception that is dominated by discursively constructed conceptions.

Welsch (1999: 126), in a review of Macnaghten and Urry (1998), draws attention to these formulation troubles by asking how, if there is no single unitary nature, is nature able to "exert revenge on human and animal life" (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 253 quoted by Welsch, 1999: 126)? The answer to this question is simple. Welsch is mistaken and by pointing out how Welsch is mistaken, we cut to the heart of the problem with Macnaghten and Urry's proposed multiplicity. It is not, as Welsch alleges, 'nature' that exerts revenge, it is "the physical world" (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 250). Rather than phenomenology offering a route out of the epistemological hall of mirrors that Barad (2003: 803) identifies, the representationalist approaches' focus on access to reality is actually strengthened by Macnaghten and Urry's use of embodiment. If

University of Cape Town

anything, the linguistic turn is bolstered precisely as Descartes's original mistrust of the senses is given new force in a world of objects that ever recede and withhold their secrets behind their surface effects on the world (Harman, 2005: 15). Representationalist concerns with correspondence between description and reality are generalized to a concern with a correspondence between perception and reality, and in terms of which perception becomes a sort of internal representation. Phenomenology's own concern with 'the possibility of human access' (Harman, 2005: 15) to these secrets opens the door through which representationalism floods to the fore.

Ingold (2000: 15) labels as 'perceptual relativism' this understanding of perception as a kind of internal representation of sensory. Moreover, he describes perceptual relativism as the notion that people from different cultural backgrounds (holding different bodies of local knowledge; different discursively constructed conceptions) perceive reality differently because "they process the same data of experience in terms of alternative frameworks of belief and representational schemata". In an attempt to bring back to the table a world outside the text, Macnaghten and Urry (1998) have textualised perception itself, so that it has become a form of internal representation subject to the same epistemological concern with correspondence that characterizes the limits of Escobar's (2008) continuum. Embodiment is thus still treated as subordinate to the mental realm of culture, and nature remains the impenetrable, opaque realm of the real. It would thus appear that nature has exacted some revenge on Macnaghten and Urry's attempt to denature it.

The dynamics of this vengeance as they are untangled above must be recognized as ironic. The form taken by this irony is that what was supposed to be a circuit along which we could escape an epistemological concern with correspondence turned out to be one along which that concern could travel into new territory. The sensing and active body that it was intended would enable a break out of text was itself textualised. The consequent irony is that representationalist concerns with opacity that introduction of the sensing body was intended to go beyond have ended up generalizing those very concerns into the realm of perception in a way that borders on solipsistic.

University of Cape Town

It is probable that that irony has appeared because Macnaghten and Urry (1998) were overzealous in proposing a new faith – and because faith is itself a concern with a correspondence between the represented and the transcendent. Haraway (1991: 149) has said that "irony is about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes, even dialectically, about the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and true". If that is the case then what we need is an ironic faith, a blasphemy. If the multiple natures of Macnaghten and Urry are problematic because they lead back to the ontological structure from which both they and I want to escape, and if they lead back that way because the argument begins in an epistemological terrain dominated by a concern with correspondence, then the required blasphemy may be to propose a multiplicity of ontologies, of literally different worlds that do not resolve into a larger whole, with an emphasis on 'whole' which I understand to imply an already there and fully formed ontological domain of the real.

Here Blaser's (2009) work on political ontology is a useful guide, as multiple ontologies do not resolve into wholes; they remain mutually incompatible and yet are all necessary and true. Blaser (2009: 877) identifies "three layers of meaning" in his own use of the term ontology:

> The first layer is a dictionary definition: 'any way of understanding the world must make assumptions (which may be implicit or explicit) about what kinds of things do or can exist, and what might be their conditions of existence, relations of dependency, and so on. Such an inventory of kinds of being and their relations is an ontology' (Scott & Marshall 2005). The second layer I borrow from the insights and language of science and technology studies, and in particular from Actor Network Theory: ontologies do not precede mundane practices, rather they are shaped through the practices and interactions of both humans and non-humans (see Latour 1999; Law 2004; Mol 1999). Hence, ontologies perform themselves into worlds – this is why … I use the terms 'ontologies' and 'worlds' as synonyms. The third layer builds on a voluminous ethnographic record that traces the connections between 'myths' and practices: ontologies also manifest as 'stories' in which the assumptions of what kinds of things and

University of Cape Town

relations make up a given world become readily graspable – again, this warrants my use of the term 'story' to refer to a given ontology.

Political ontology, according to Blaser, is an alternative to what he understands as the inevitable violence done to other ontologies at the hands of the modern ontology – as explained in terms of Latour's (1993: 99) 'First Great Divide' between nature and society. Latour argues that the modern ontology obliterates the possibility of alternatives by taming and incorporating into itself all other ontologies, and by translating them into what it describes as culture (Blaser, 2009: 888-889). Such a criticism seems promising, perfectly matching Ingold's evaluation of arguments, such as those offered by Basso (1996), Santos-Granero (1998) and others, that present landscapes as blanketed in cultural meaning. The modern version of non-indexically understandable and unitary nature is confirmed each time an alternative version of nature is absorbed into the modern ontology as a cultural (mis)understanding or construction of the neutral and really real and unitary nature of the moderns. Modernity cannot, it seems, tolerate irony. Everything must resolve into a great integrated and mutually comprehensible whole, and the taming of alternative versions of nature that Blaser describes is through the violence of translation – and thereby through the obliteration of difference. The propositions of political ontology seem promising in this regard because, as Blaser argues, it is a framework devised expressly for the purpose of avoiding the incorporation of alternative versions of nature into the realm of culture.

To assert the existence of multiple ontologies is, however, to confer existence upon ontologies themselves, and it is therefore an ontological statement in terms of the first layer of meaning that Blaser himself has identified. It is to make an assumption about what kinds of things, in this case a multitude of ontologies, can and do exist. Such an ontological statement implies an ontological framework of its own; a framework that may or may not be one of the ontological positions included within the multiplicity, and within which the multiplicity is therefore itself included (and I would suggest nullified). The assertion of the existence of multiple ontologies thus necessitates a meta level ontological framework, for the simple reason that such explicit description is essential to

University of Cape Town

avoid the possibility that the multiplicity Blaser works with is not being described from within one among the multiplicity.

What is thus necessary is what I call a metaphysics of multiplicity; an ontology in terms of the first layer of meaning Blaser attributes to the term in the quote above, but one in terms of which multiple ontologies, in Blaser's second sense, become simultaneously possible; one in terms of which the contestation in Macnaghten and Urry's (1998: 1) 'diversity of contested natures', is produced, reproduced and transformed through practice, and thereby becomes understandable in the frame of political ontology, hence escaping any tendency in Macnaghten and Urry's work to revert to an epistemology and a constructivism that might tame multiplicity in terms of a modernist nature/culture divide. Multiple ontologies, as an idea, thus presents a potential way of avoiding the epistemological precipice down which Macnaghten and Urry plunge all the way back to Latour's 'First Great Divide'; but it also presents a potentially problematic cataract of swirling ontologies each threatening to engulf the next.

Sanders (1999) offers a potential middle road in the shape of an ironic first philosophy. He identifies the basic problem of formulating a first philosophy, a new faith, to be the very problem over which Macnaghten and Urry (1998) and Blaser (2009) trip: namely the question of, or concern with trying to establish which questions are most fundamental, epistemological ones or ontological ones. Sanders concludes that neither an epistemological nor an ontological starting point can suffice. Starting with epistemology requires us to make ontological assumptions. Similarly, some epistemological criteria of acceptability are required in order to ask any ontological questions (Sanders, 1999: 125). As I argue below, such criteria lead to a bizarre twist in terms of which knowledge ends up determining what can and cannot exist such that we loop back into the epistemological trap of correspondence that we are trying to break from.

I have argued above that Macnaghten and Urry's (1998) attempt to escape the epistemological trap of correspondence was impeded by the textual metaphor smuggled into their book through their attempts to build on constructivists' achievements with regard to decentring the natural science version of nature. In what follows I argue that

University of Cape Town

what is needed to break out of the epistemological trap is a new metaphor, one in terms of which I may escape the framing they suffer through their having used a textual metaphor. Such a replacement metaphor must do two things. First, it must enable a focus on performativity rather than on the representationalism of historical accounts such as that offered by Williams (1976). Second, it must allow for a version of perception that does not privilege the cognitive realm; that does not assume that discursively constructed, mentally held conceptions overdetermine perceptions.

From representationalism to performativity: shifting from textualised worlds to world as staged experiments

The Latin American research project that Escobar (2007: 179) labels Coloniality/Modernity offers a point of entry into a history that emphasizes performance over representation. Coloniality/Modernity rejects the idea that modernity has a history that can be traced only in terms of an intellectual history of Europe. It thus overtly rejects the notion that the roots of modernity are to be found in the philosophers of the enlightenment or that the story of modernity's development is the story of the practical unfolding of events internal to Europe and their diffusion to the rest of the world (Escobar, 2007: 181). In other words, it does not credit philosophers such as Descartes and Locke for the durable bifurcations that characterise modernity (subject/object, nature/culture). Rather, and in a sense in place of such a modern telos, Coloniality/Modernity proposes that the roots of modernity are to be found in the actual *doing* of colonialism (Escobar, 2007:184), thus introducing a departure from approaches that see colonialism as the unfolding of Eurocentric ideas and discourses onto dominated colonial populations. Now modernity can be seen to emerge from the practices of colonialism and as the endurance of colonial relations.

Bunn (2001: 6) suggests, from the Southern African context, that the central thesis of Comaroff and Comaroff's (1997) *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume II* "is that the colonial age is not over, and that in fact it is still unfolding in the present global logic of modernity". From such a perspective, colonial landscapes are understood to be sites of experimentation in modernity and from which modernity is re-imported into metropolitan

University of Cape Town

societies. Put simply, the contradictions within modernity that are generated in the colonies are resolved through experimentation within such landscapes such as the mission station. Bunn (2001) successfully extends the Comaroffs' treatment of the mission landscape to the landscape of the game reserve by considering the extent to which it is suitable to an analysis of the Kruger National Park. He effectively shows how the Kruger National Park, like the nineteenth century southern African mission station, is a site for experimentation of the sort the Comaroffs describe, and in terms of which modernity emerges experimentally out of the colonial encounter. In terms of my own argument, the metaphor of experimentation is a very felicitous departure from the textual metaphor behind accounts of bounded landscapes, such as Ndebele's (1999). The politics of these landscapes revealed not by their treatment as readable texts, but by considering them as colonizing experiments out of which modernity emerges as the bifurcations of reality into nature and society and self and other.

The notion of landscape as experiment promises an avenue out of the problem of arriving at a starting point, as pointed out by Sanders (1999) and as mentioned above. Stengers' (2005) argument for a performative understanding of the notion of "the soul", which suggests that "the soul" is not the ultimate truth of our experience (Stengers, 2005: 54) but is a "speculative mode of functioning" that occasionally happens since we have been given speech, is a productive text in terms of which to flesh out the 'landscape as experiment' metaphor for two reasons. First, that is because she discusses experiments in depth, with a particular focus on how both realists and idealists (and all other positions along the idealist- representationalist continuum) misrecognize them, before offering a position from which to understand them that is outside that continuum. Second, her argument is productive for its overt attempt to avoid the trouble of choosing between epistemology and ontology as a starting point, and in her doing so in precisely the manner that Sanders suggests is necessary – that is, by avoiding the subject/object dichotomy that the very notion of ontology implies. What follows is a brief but detailed aside into Stengers' attempt to reposition language relative to the world, thereby to escape the linguistic turn.

University of Cape Town

For Stengers (2005: 38) an experiment is first and foremost a demonstration of 'how something changes in terms of something else'; of a necessary condition. For an experiment successfully to demonstrate such a condition, however, a great deal of work has to be put into the task of disentangling the two somethings from the entangled world that the scientist is given. The work of disentanglement is itself, therefore, a necessary condition for the experimental demonstration of a necessary condition. As Stengers (2005: 38) says, it "is the condition for a framing that will enact a distinction between some so-called general conditions, which may be taken for granted, and what will be the matter of experimental demonstration, when it becomes possible to demonstrate how something changes as a function of something else."

An experiment therefore is an enactment, and experimental success is an event. From the realist pole of the epistemological continuum, experimental success is proof of a general, objective already-there relation in the ontological domain of the real. Simply put, an experiment is understood to enable perception (albeit often indirect perception) of a particular phenomenon. From the idealist pole of the continuum, however, the ontological domain of the real remains mute and a transcendentally or socially conditioned human consciousness is understood to be the author of any apparently objective explanation (Stengers, 2005: 39). Conception is here understood thoroughly to overdetermine perception.

Stengers' particular insight into this conflict (the same 'dull debate' that Macnaghten and Urry (1998) try to exit) is her novel interpretation of the commonality that exists between realist and idealist interpretations. Where Ingold (2000) makes the case that there is commonality in a persisting ontological split, and where Barad (2003) has pointed out that the two seemingly distinct positions rest upon an optical continuum of relative opacity, Stengers (2005) goes much further. She points out how the ontological split itself emerges out of ways of explaining away the event that constitutes experimental success. What she considers most significant is that both interpretations exemplify a modern habit of thought, the specificity of which 'consists in its having necessary conditions parading as nearly sufficient ones' (Stengers, 2005: 38). What makes this possible is that both realists and idealists deny or forget, or explain away, the event of

University of Cape Town

experimental success. Any condition that is experimentally demonstrated cannot be considered to be necessary and sufficient so long as the operation of disentanglement is understood to be a necessary condition for the demonstration itself. The desire, from all points along the epistemological spectrum, to generalize experimental success to a set of general conditions (the specificity of modern thought) is what Stengers suggests lies behind representationalism and that constitutes an epistemological vicious cycle.

Representationalism by this argument endures because the event of experimental success is explained away by interpreting it through a distinction between what is given (what is to be found in the ontological domain of the real) and what is culturally or socially conditioned; by a focus on correspondence. As a result of such an interpretive frame, nearly sufficient conditions rise to the fore in all cases. The only distinction then left to be made is whether those nearly sufficient conditions reside in the realm of nature or in the realm of society. Stengers (2005: 36) cuts to the contradiction at the heart of a focus on correspondence, pointing out that 'to be given refers to a problem of existence, while to be conditioned refers to a problem of explanation, that is, of knowledge'. She is referring here to a particular sort of knowledge, objective knowledge, knowledge in terms of which what exists is deduced from demonstrable conditions (that must be both necessary and sufficient). The result of this, she says, is the utter conflation of knowledge and existence. Worse, it results in a bizarre situation in terms of which it is knowledge that determines what exists and what does not exist – epistemology becomes ontology. Hence the persistence of the epistemological debate.

Stengers' solution to this conflation is very elegant in its suggestion that the shortest route out of the epistemological hall of mirrors is to focus on the disentangling framing of an event in which a particular distinction is enacted; is to reintroduce what has been explained away at all points of the epistemological continuum. This focus on the disentangling framing of an event will prevent necessary conditions (held in place by the operations of disentanglement necessary to the staging of the event) from being mistaken as being necessary and sufficient. A focus on the staging can therefore preclude a situation in which knowledge determines existence. In short it will escape the fatal interwovenness of epistemology and ontology that Sanders (1999) cautions

University of Cape Town

against. A performative focus, on the staging of experimental success, can thus disable a realist misrecognition of an experiment as enabling perception of necessary and sufficient conditions within an ontological realm of the real, while also disabling an idealist misrecognition that conflates knowledge with existence, in terms of which discursively constructed conceptions are said to overdetermine any such perceptions. It thus appears that Stengers' meditation on the scientific experiment allows that both the bifurcation of nature from culture itself and more recent concerns with correspondence emerge from the two misrecognitions of the preceding sentence.

Stengers offers a very elegant solution to the complex problem of an inanimate universe, criticised by Latour (2010: 482) as a crucial element in what upholds the radical ontological separation of nature (always fully formed and already-there) from society. It may thus be important to make two elements of Stengers' (2005) argument central to the metaphor through which I approach landscape in this thesis.

First is her suggestion that the necessary conditions established through experimentation are able to masquerade as necessary and sufficient because the work of disentanglement is 'explained away'. Second is her suggestion that it is that 'explaining away' that gives modern thought its specificity as a type of knowledge that determines what can exist. The implication of these two insights to someone hoping to escape what Macnaghten and Urry (1998) have referred to as the by now dull debate between realists and constructivists is profound.

Macnaghten and Urry's (1998) 'dull debate', Barad's (2003) 'hall of mirrors', Escobar's (2008) continuum are thus, by Stengers' (2005) argument, the same result of a particular habit of modern thought. It is by this habit that knowledge determines existence; that necessary conditions parade as necessary and sufficient; that epistemology implies ontological assumptions in a manner that establishes the subject/object distinction as a default point of departure. I therefore argue that the best way to proceed in order to avoid being pulled back into the optical illusion of representationalism, as happened to Macnaghten and Urry, is to foreground the operation of disentanglement from which a particular landscape emerges as what

University of Cape Town

(Moser, 2008: 99) terms a world-in-progress. By doing that, one avoids the 'explaining away' that is central to representationalism.

By treating the game farm as a staged enactment, I explore, in the chapters that follow, how hunting nature emerges as a world-in-progress out of an operation of disentanglement rather than how an implied, already-there, neutral object-world is inscribed upon or blanketed over. A landscape such as a game lodge or a game farm is thus able to stand as a matter of concern rather than as a matter of fact (Latour, 2004: 231); as an enactment, the staging of which is neither explained away as a cultural blanket nor as an already-there physical substrate. By refusing to explain away the staging by idealist or realist means, landscapes become visible as what Latour refers to as prosthetic devices for the politically challenged (Latour, 2005: 21). Landscape does not reflect politics in the mode described by representationalist analysis; rather it emerges as a thing in the Heideggerian sense, as a gathering or an assembly of human and non-human actors; a parliament of things through which politics is done and out of which an order, a world-in-progress emerges.

The politics of landscape is, therefore, to be found in a staging and not a representing, and this politics is thus obscured from constructivists and positivists alike by their explaining away all operations of disentanglement. Explaining operations of disentanglement away thus becomes how the politics of landscape is hidden. For Stengers, as for Latour, a representationalist assumption of an already-there set of relations, in the shape of nature or the ontological domain of the real (explicitly for realists and implicitly for idealists), means that experimenters, those whom Lefebvre (1991: 37) might call technocrats (planners, architects, ecologists and the like) do not need to take responsibility for any staging, with a result that whatever is staged is depoliticized. Seen from that perspective, Williams' (1976) history is representationalist because the staging out of which the natures he describes emerged is explained away along an idealist circuitry – there is no event because human consciousness is the only true author of objective definition. All natures (even the scientific version) are thus merely competing ideas of nature. But, by explaining staging away in this manner, even

University of Cape Town

a constructivist approach that would unmask the politics behind nature, turns out to obscure the gathering out of which nature emerges.

How object-worlds emerge from embodied activity.

Turning now to how it is that landscapes are practically staged requires revisiting the notions of embodiment and sensuous perception employed by Macnaghten and Urry (1998) and revising them as per the rejection of the subject/object dichotomy achieved in a landscape-as-experiment metaphor. According to Sanders (1999: 149) an ontology is a map of the metaphysical terrain "in terms of arrays of independent objects of some kind, fully separate – at least in some dimensions – from one another and from those who create and use the maps" (Sanders, 1999: 128). The way around this implicit separateness must therefore deliberately undermine the stability of any boundary proposed between the knower/perceiver and the known/perceived. It is surely for that reason that Haraway (1991: 149) suggests that "at the centre of my ironic faith, my blasphemy, is the image of the cyborg", a creature that disrupts binary oppositions and shows that they are culturally constructed. Sanders also introduces the cyborg in order to disrupt binary oppositions, characterising it as a creature "within which the lines that distinguish objects from one another – and even objects from the observer – are not solely a matter of objective fact, but are rather – at least partially – a function of the purposes of whoever describes the situation" (Sanders, 1999: 126). The following section sets out to describe an understanding of embodiment and sensory perception that is in keeping with a landscape-as-experiment metaphor, as outlined above.

A close examination of the idea of affordances is particularly useful in this regard. Most commonly associated with an ecological theory of perception (Gibson 1979), affordances are best understood as action possibilities available to an animal by virtue of the constraints imposed by its environment. Heft (1989: 6 quoted in Michael, 2000: 111) describes affordances as "the environmental counterparts to the animal's behavioural potentialities".

The boundaries between the animal and its environment are, however, by no means simple. Moreover, how one understands them is complicated by the manner in which

University of Cape Town

Gibson (1979) extended the notion of affordances beyond their definition as merely 'action possibilities'. Gibson's predecessors in this theoretical trajectory held that affordances arise either in the phenomenal field or in the behavioural field. Consequently an organism was understood to be able to perceive an object (a chair for example) and deduce affordances from it (sitting, standing on it, using it as a footrest, a piece of exercise equipment or a weapon) based either on the organism's purpose at the time (in the phenomenal field) or on its conditioning through the course of its life (in the behavioural field) (Sanders, 1999: 129). In this formulation sense data and neutral object recognition are primary, and affordances are secondary.

According to this formulation, moreover, each neatly bounded organism is inundated with raw data, about the world 'out there', that it is able to pick up with its sense organs. The organism then converts those data into patterns of sensation that are then processed and sorted into objects. This process provides the organism with a "minimal perceptual perspective on its world" (Sanders, 1999: 130). On the basis of this minimal perceptual perspective of its world, Gibson's predecessors believed organisms deduce uses for objects, or process objects into affordances. Within its world of objects "the organism focuses attention on portions of that world as it recognizes the opportunities and dangers presented by the several objects it perceives" (Sanders, 1999: 130). From a phenomenological and behavioural perspective, then, recognition of affordances is the end point of a process beginning with gathering raw sense data, moving through its arrangement into patterns and then into object recognition, and ending with a conditioning and/or activity based recognition of opportunities and dangers. It is easy to see in this sequence a potential to suggest an ontology in which the 'physical world' is an already-there neutral object-world, while Macnaghten and Urry's (1998) natures constitute examples of post processing understandings of a world as determined by the opportunities and dangers that (passive) sensing bodies are led by conditioning and/or activity based recognition to deem to be significant in particular. An internal processing model such as what I have just described leads, however, directly back to the ontological orthodoxy via the route of perceptual relativism that I have critiqued above. To escape the ontological orthodoxy of an already-there physical world I require an

University of Cape Town

approach in terms of which the object world is emergent, is staged, is not a matter of fact but is emergent out of matters of concern.

A first step in achieving that goal is to show explicitly how an internal processing model must be rejected as crucial to both realist and idealist ways of explaining away the operation of framing out of how worlds-in-progress emerge. The internal processing model discussed above is circular in its suggestion that "an organism is able to recognize that certain things in its environment are important to it because it has an internal processor that recognizes this" (Sanders, 1999: 130). What Sanders offers here is a critique of the internal processing model by pointing out that the processors tautologically do the very thing they are supposed to explain. Moreover, there is no neurophysiological basis for "the notion that the human brain is functionally arranged into 'processors' of the relevant kind" (Sanders, 1999: 131), which means that such processors can be no more than theoretical constructs – constructs that stand in the place of the staging.

Gibson, on the basis of the above criticisms of the internal processing model, suggests, first, that affordances are in fact in the world (rather than in the phenomenal or behavioural realms); and, second, that affordances (sitting etc.) rather than sense data and neutral object recognition (the chair) are the raw units of perception. In Gibson's version, therefore, affordances are directly perceived by an organism and are not the result of its internal processing (Sanders, 1999: 130).

What this demonstrates is that Gibson's direct perception model has simply shed the unfounded cognitive supposition that, what happens to organisms must be somehow internally represented; it is a supposition that implies a subject/object distinction and keeps cognitive science squarely in the Cartesian theatre (Sanders, 1999: 141). In terms of Gibson's direct perception model, even that most enduringly stable component of the 'physical world' or of the ontological domain of the real, namely Newtonian space, a profoundly disembodied representation of the world, is understandable only as emergent from a particular located and embodied operation of disentanglement.

University of Cape Town

Turnbull (1989: 15) has argued that the non-indexicality of maps, and of the associated understanding of Newtonian space (their being independent of any point of view and their encoding propositions that are valid regardless of where one stands), is a myth. If by that he means they are not accurate reflections of the ontological domain of the real then his argument is one that can be built upon although, for my present purposes, I would formulate it somewhat differently. A myth is typically a mentally held cultural construction; a "received 'cultural model' for the interpretation of experience" (Ingold and Kurttila, 2000: 185). Such a formulation repeats the habit of idealism so that the non-indexicality of Newtonian space is dismissed for its having been authored by human consciousness. .

Dismissing the non-indexicality of maps and of Newtonian space as myth, from a perspective within the optics of correspondence, implies that the essential content of the received knowledge that is that myth, "is assumed to take place both independently of, and prior to, its application or expression in real-life contexts of activity" (Ingold and Kurttila, 2000: 185). In other words dismissing the non-indexicality of maps as myth implies that we conceive of space as a board of potential movement viewed from above, because that is what we have been taught. This aspect of the ontological domain of the real thus becomes an epistemological problem that can be brushed aside as a false representation, independent of such real-life activities as driving, viewing television shows about other places, corresponding via email and fax, or planning our summer holidays and trips to the field.

Szerszinski and Urry (2006: 115) have described the sorts of activities mentioned above as multiple mobilities that are among the "conditions for a cosmopolitan being-in-the-world". Their argument regarding the chief implication of this kind of being-in-the-world is "that growing numbers of humans might now be said to 'inhabit' their world at a distance", to see the world through a "cartographic visuality". To treat Newtonian space or the map in representationalist terms, as mere constructions in the realm of culture or society, is thus, I argue, to risk concluding falsely that cartographic visuality, conceptualizing the world as a map, is an automatic living out of a received idea, and

University of Cape Town

quite disconnected from any actual living. In other words it is to arrive back at a position from which knowledge paradoxically determines existence.

The risk of arriving back at such a position can be avoided by distinguishing carefully between clues and cyphers (Ingold, 2000: 22) – by applying an important distinction in terms of which the discursive can be reframed as part of a staging rather than as a representation. Ingold argues that cyphers correspond to processes of decoding according to which we make sense of the world around us by mentally representing object distinctions in terms of a received cultural model, implying that conception determines perception. Clues correspond, by contrast, to processes of revelation according to which we pull object distinctions out of sentient beings' activity in the world, so that conception directs (but does not determine) perception. If ciphers tell us how we should decode the world in terms of mentally held cultural models independently of any activity in the world, clues educate us as to how we should pay attention to the world and our activity in it. Thought of as clues, cultural models such as cartographic visuality are not mentally received schemes that determine our perceptions of the world by overdetermining how we decode it; they are rather themselves part of the operation of disentanglement, part of the gathering (the 'parliament of things') from which the world of our experience emerges.

It is thus not simply a matter of saying 'forget about it', and setting 'the myth' of abstract space to one side, any more than it is a matter of deconstructing the game lodge. We need to try to understand how worlds-in-progress emerge out of the operations of disentanglement necessary to their staging. To put it another way, Newtonian space is a stabilised effect of highly specific sets of embodiment relations with technologies of real travel, imaginary travel and virtual travel, along with an infrastructure upon which these depend, and the clues as to how to attend to them. These embodiment relations are what disentangle Newtonian space from the entangled world and hold it stably in place. Understanding the non-indexicality of Newtonian space as itself emergent is important to my argument here as nature is the spatialisation of staged worlds-in-progress – by which I mean the depoliticisation of multiple stagings as already-there.

University of Cape Town

Natures as emergent out of the staged landscapes of modernity

Rossler (2009: 299) has pointed out that the notion of landscape began its etymological life in the seventeenth century as a term the referent of which was "not the physical landscape itself, but rather a particular experience of seeing a landscape, namely its representation in painting". It is no wonder then that the metaphorical use of the term by social scientists has tended towards representationalism. Cultural landscapes, or historical landscapes are metaphors that render Stengers' staging or Latour's gathering invisible. The very word is itself something of a textual metaphor. A brief look a landscape paintings, however, reveals that something of the experiment metaphor can be imposed upon them too.

In *Parham Hill House and Sugar Plantation, Antigua* Thomas Hearne (1779) depicts, from an elevated position, the picturesque landscape of a Caribbean plantation including the productive and the cultural processes that are associated with it.

> In the centre of the painting a field gang is hard at work cutting the ripe cane. Nearby, another group of slaves load the cane they have cut onto a cart. A second cart, fully loaded, makes its way to the nearby sugar mill and boiler house… In the foreground, to the right, another cart is about to disappear round a bend in the road, transporting the barrels of raw sugar down to the local Parham Harbour to be shipped to Britain (Seymore et al 1998, 317).

From the description, the painting depicts the rhythm and activity constitutive of a taskscape. Visible in the depiction is the apparatus and work of disentanglement through which the painting that is a landscape has been enacted. It does that by depicting process fixed as place and the spectre of flows, to which I referred in chapter one, touching down as a taskscape enacting a landscape.

Hearne's (c1788-9) *View from Bredwardine, taken from the Meadows Upstream from Bredwardine Bridge* similarly links a picturesque and productive Herefordshire into a landscape that highlights productive processes and with national and imperial interests. The painting's focal point is the meeting place of the county's two most significant transport routes, the River Wye and the turnpike road - routes that respectively linked

University of Cape Town

Herefordshire to Bristol and Wales facilitating export of produce to the former for distribution elsewhere in the kingdom and its growing empire, and import of coal from Welsh mines (Seymore et al 1998, 326). Again, the spectre of capitalist flows congeals as a taskscape that stages a landscape along the lines of the spectre's passing.

A third of Hearne's many paintings, *Moccas Deer Park with a Large Oak Tree* (c. 1788–9), again set in Herefordshire, illustrates a different circuit through which that spectre can materialize. Dominated by an ancient gnarled and weathered oak tree, the painting achieved public significance in 1798, during the Napoleonic Wars, after its publication as an etching in *Antiquities of Britain* (Hearne and Byrne, 1807). The copy accompanying the etching is worth quoting:

> The oak is the first in the class of deciduous trees; and it is a happiness to the lovers of the picturesque that it is as useful as it is beautiful. Because, from the utility of the oak, it is everywhere to be found; and surely, no one who is a lover of his country, but, in addition to the pleasure which he has in contemplating this noble plant, must feel his heart glow on reflecting, that from its produce springs the British Navy, which gives our Island so honourable a distinction among surrounding nations. (Hearne and Byrne, 1807 quoted in Seymore et al, 1998: 326)

The British navy's military and commercial might, upon which the empire rested, is thus literally shown as rooted in the picturesque Moccas estate that serves as a metonym for the English countryside more generally. Hearne thus portrays both English countryside and Caribbean Plantation as embodiments of the same operations of disentanglement upon which the event of the imperial project's success was contingent. As Latour might put it, a gathering together of all of what constituted empire was required and to hold in place long enough for Hearne to paint the landscapes. The countryside and plantation are, in other words, not texts to be read as reflections of imperial discourse, to be treated as if they are imperial ways of seeing. They are, rather, co-emergent refractions of local operations of disentanglement behind imperial success. As taskscapes, they are local operations of disentanglement necessary to a staging of the imperial experiment. As landscapes they are emergent materializations of those taskscapes and

University of Cape Town

they endure only as long as they are held in place by the event of imperial success. Furthermore, the paintings do not simply represent, they are part of what holds them in place, as texts that educate our attention; that aid our and others' participation in staging their emergence.

Just as for Marx capital is both process and thing, for Lefebvre, space is both process and thing so that "the fixity nature (the thing quality) of a landscape is necessary to permit the flow and diffusive nature of capital; and vice versa" (Merrifield 1993, 521). Place is thus essentially staged through the physical grounding or fixing of flows in capitalist social space, in ways that further facilitate those same flows. The spectre of cattle farming that I introduced in chapter one moves as the taskscapes that function as the operations of disentanglement necessary enact landscapes that convert region into revenue. That spectre is thus a metaphor for the flows that both stage landscapes and link them into larger wholes. The radical departure here is that the representationalism of abstraction as used by Macnaghten and Urry (1998) and Williams (1976) is replaced by the performativity of enactment as used by Stengers (2005), or of gathering as used by Latour (2004).

The question to ask at this point is: how, in the game reserve (Bunn, 2001) and game lodge (Ndebele, 1999) can nature and modernity be understood as co-emergent refractions of the staging of the worlds-in-progress that are visible in the paintings discussed above? I argue that nature and modernity are the space and time that emerge out of acts by both realists and idealists when they explain away the staging of landscape and the operation of disentanglement that doing that requires. As Latour might have it, nature and modernity are a space and time of an already-there, behind which is obscured a gathering that holds in place worlds-in-progress. They are in other words the anti-politics machinery of realists and idealists alike, and they emerge out of their explaining away the enactment of particular landscapes. Nature and modernity are thus nothing more or less than an emergent materialization of operations of disentanglement in terms of which stagings of empire are explained away and then allowed to continue as if they constitute a natural and inevitable unfolding of general conditions.

University of Cape Town

For purposes of my argument in this thesis, it is appropriate, first, to argue that it is better to think of what prior approaches termed 'landscapes', 'ideas of nature', or 'natures' as staged worlds-in-progress; and, secondly, that these staged worlds-in-progress are best approached as clusters of composed affordances attended to by active and purposeful extended bodies in keeping with representations or myths that serve as clues to their discovery. The benefit of using the notion of affordances is that, once seen as action possibilities prior to the perception of objects, they are the source not only of the objects perceived in terms of the myth guiding how the extended bodies attend to them; they also, as action possibilities, contain the possible interactions between objects, thereby confirming that neither objects of the world, nor the relations between them are either inevitable or already-there, any more than they are purely products of human consciousness.

Observing the hunting world-in-progress

Perhaps the real irony of this chapter is the simplicity with which this theoretical model that treats 'landscapes', 'ideas of nature', or 'natures' as staged worlds-in-progress translates into a methodological approach. The reason is that the model above revolves around three basic elements. The first is the set of clues in terms of which owners and managers of farms stage hunting nature on their farms and in terms of which hunters attend to that staging so that hunting nature emerges as 'experimental' success. Here I am referring to the circulation of hunting narratives in magazines, books (fiction and non-fiction) and, of course, in orally narrated stories. The second element is the actual staging, the work farmers and professional hunters need to do on game farms in order to hold hunting nature in place. The third element is the set of skills and equipment, the extended-bodily activities, through and with the help of which hunters attend to the staging and, in the case of 'experimental' success, materialize hunting nature by parsing it as an object-world out of the staging managed by the farmer.

Approaching hunting nature as a successful result of an experiment (the staging of which is a landscaped game farm) thus requires participant observation with two foci:

University of Cape Town

first, on the operation of disentanglement in terms of which farmers enable the emergence of hunting nature on their farms; and second, on the active embodiment of hunters, on the skills and equipment required to enact nature upon a hunting nature stage. These are, however, bidirectional movements. The first relates to hypothesising and setting up an experiment on the basis of that hypothesised the second relates to executing the experiment and then revising the hypothesis relative to the results. The first pertains to farmers. It moves from the level of hypothesis regarding the disentanglement required to stage hunting nature successfully on a farm, to a staged landscape seeking experimental success without disrupting the myths or narratives underpinning the hypothesis and how hunters will attend to that landscape. The second pertains to hunters. It moves from the level of the embodied practice necessary for hunting nature to emerge from the disentangled experimental and landscaped game farm. Both the farmer's disentangling to create the landscape, and the hunters embodied activity within that landscaped arena are essential to the event of experimental success. Operationalising a landscape-as-experiment metaphor into a set of research activities has thus required methods that follow these two directions and the education of attention that connects them; it has required attention to the staging of hunting nature as landscape (that is to its having been landscaped) and to the operation of disentanglement necessary to enable hunting nature's emergence on a particular piece of land.

My participant observation thus involved accompanying the landowner and the resident professional hunter on the game farm where I spent the 2009 hunting season as they went about their business of staging the farm for the hunters that would visit it. This involved work on and off the farm, related directly to hunting but also to other seemingly unrelated farming activities. I accompanied them as they set up hunters' hides; placed mineral supplements out for animals; repaired water pipes; made deliveries; purchased supplies and equipment; processed meat. By the end of my stay I had become sufficiently trusted to drive hunters and labourers around the farm and to help with meat processing. My research efforts also, of course, involved accompanying hunters as, in the course of their hunting, they attended to and exploited the affordances landscaped (staged) for them.

University of Cape Town

Almost daily I accompanied visiting hunters into the veld once the resident professional hunter who was also the farm owner's son was satisfied that I was sufficiently competent to be in the bush, and would not ruin hunters' opportunities thereby undermining the farm's capacity to generate income. Once the former was prepared to vouch for my competence, hunters were happy to have me along; especially as daily practice improved my game spotting ability. I never, however, hunted in the sense of carrying and/or firing a fire-arm at any game. That was because I felt that the competence I acquired and observed through accompanying hunters gave me sufficient insight into the embodiment out of which hunting nature emerged in the staged hunting-nature space. In both cases, whether accompanying hunters, the farmer, his son or the professional hunter, the day usually began before dawn and ended after dusk. The long hours made field note-taking challenging; but in the evenings, after eating supper with the farm owner and his wife, I tried to keep them current. Sundays were days on which there was neither hunting nor other work activity, so I used these to expand, catch up and organize my notes.

In preparation for fieldwork I undertook a programme of interviews with practising hunters. Using the online register of members of the Potchefstroom branch of the South African Hunters and Game Conservation Society, I approached hunters in Potchefstroom (my place of work and residence) and asked for permission to conduct interviews with them. Hunters were of course free to refuse my telephonic requests for interviews and free to withdraw their participation at any stage. Given the high cost of hunting, the men interviewed were predominantly professionals, managers and academics. Consequently, given their valorisation of their time, making appointments was difficult. Given also the emotive controversy surrounding hunting, the men I approached were, in addition, suspicious of my motives, and all made a point of questioning me to establish whether or not I was 'green' – an animal-rights activist. For these two reasons I found it difficult to secure appointments, but I did manage to arrange interviews with a set of fourteen hunters in late 2008.

I planned my first interviews around obtaining a sense of what hunters look for in a game farm, what sort of staging they expect, the skills and equipment they think is

University of Cape Town

essential and what constitutes a good or a bad hunter, a good or a bad hunt. I realised, after my second interview, that I was leading my interviewees towards speculative generalization and therefore getting from them the sort of material one would find in a general guide to hunting. In subsequent interviews I thus attempted to ground conversation in the respondent's personal biographical context. I began by asking when, how and where respondents had begun hunting; how often and where they currently hunted and, leading from there, moved them towards telling me about particular recent hunting experiences and discussing hunting practices within that framework. Still they tended to slip into a generalizing, normative register when discussing hunting practices, making it seem as if their expressed knowledge of how to hunt was detached from their hunting experience; text rather than experience based. Again I felt that I was getting the sort of material one would find in a general guide: such as the importance of being able accurately to judge distance, the need to practice shooting throughout the year and the like.

As a result I decided to approach the same set of respondents for a second round of interviews. Keeping the interviews conversational and open-ended, I this time asked participants to prepare two stories: one, of their best hunting experience and one of their worst. My aim was to get a descriptive account of hunting success and failure relative to the staging, affordances, equipment, animals, companions and so on. The second set of interviews proved very valuable in providing me with insight into what counts as success and failure. Regrettably, two of the fourteen hunters I interviewed in the first round refused to participate in the second. Their reluctance to speak with me was, however, out of keeping with the eagerness with which the other participants shared their experiences and lent me advice for my own impending trip into the field. I was left with the impression that the interviews were enjoyable opportunities for each of them to talk about something they enjoyed doing, thought of as important and enjoyed sharing. The result was that the average interview lasted about two hours and required very little prodding or directing on my part.

The series of interviews with which I began my research was intended to get a sense from hunters of what would count as experimental success, or, in simpler terms, why

University of Cape Town

they hunt and what they look for in a game farm. As the next chapter shows, hunters do not hunt in order to kill. Rather they hunt in the hope of realising a pair of related connections. The first is an intimate reciprocal exchange with a hunted quarry; the second is a mimetic exchange with their mythic republican ancestors. Once I had learned this from my interview data, I planned my participant observation to learn about whether and how such reciprocal exchanges between hunter and quarry, and between hunter and ancestor, were set up on the game farm, what threatened their realisation and how hunters and farmers strategically acted to ensure their emergence.

University of Cape Town

Chapter Three: Violent Desire and Intimate Invisibility: How the Reciprocity of Structured Competitive Play Becomes the Hunting Nature Object-World

In order to arrive at an understanding of why hunters hunt it is necessary first to remove from the list of motivating candidates a popularly held reason that offers little more than emotionally charged debate that confuses more than what it clarifies. Although killing is necessarily associated with hunting, hunters do not hunt in order to kill. I have reached this conclusion on the basis of interview data that suggests first, that killing is experienced ambivalently, even negatively, by hunters, and that the feeling increases with a hunter's age; and second, that the extent to which a particular hunting experience is considered good or bad appears unrelated to whether or not a killing occurred. Interviews indicated that that killing was as readily associated with a bad as with a good hunting experience, and that the same applied to its absence during the course of a hunt.

Positively experienced hunts associated with a failure to kill quarry.

All but one of my conversations and interviews with hunters in the period leading up to my period of participant observation had in common statements expressing mixed emotions in the moments after a kill. Several respondents reported that either they, or older hunters they knew, increasingly felt bad or sorry for the killed animal as they themselves got older, some to the point that they had either stopped hunting or were in the process of deciding whether or not they would continue hunting. Dirk, a Potchefstroom-based lawyer with a long hunting career, expressed this most strongly when he described having literally been reduced to tears alongside the carcass of a *rooi hartebees* he had killed. What struck me more than his statement, which I experienced as clashing with the otherwise hard masculine demeanour with which he self presented, was that he made it mere days before leaving for another hunting trip where he would presumably once again be subject to similarly powerfully negative emotional responses.

University of Cape Town

The question is why would someone continue to pursue an activity in which success is experienced so negatively? Part of the answer must lie in the possibility that killing is not what all hunters set out to do.

All but one of the hunters I spoke with in the pre-fieldwork period expressed ambivalent feelings about killing game animals that were similar to those Dirk experienced. Riaan, a Psychologist working in Potchefstroom, had shot his first kudu when he was seventeen years old, and he described his emotions after the act as follows:

> I felt very proud because, in a way, and maybe it is a very primal thing, the animal is a contribution to your group. In a deeper way. So here is the animal I shot, and I will make biltong and *wors* [sausage] for ***us***[9] [bold italics represents his spoken emphasis]. But, on the other hand, the shooting of the animal made me feel a little bad. But it is definitely the case that, as you get older, it catches you more.

Far from being viewed as a weakness or a bad thing, Riaan viewed an ambivalence about killing as essential to hunting. He drew an explicit distinction between *jagters* (Afrikaans for hunters) and *slagters* (Afrikaans for slaughterers or butchers), and he considered the hunters of old who had killed antelope by the thousands, and without using their entire carcasses, and those contemporary hunters that, as he saw it, go on "killing sprees", to fall in the latter category. As he explained:

> I am happy I could shoot an antelope, and I walked for a day or two; but I also feel a bit bad too. But it tells me that my conscience is still alive and well, and that is a good sign for me. I do not want to shoot more than I can manage or use.

What Riaan's words here indicate is that feeling bad is significantly cast as part of what defines a proper hunter. For the hunter, as opposed to the slaughterer, life is not something to be taken lightly. To kill is, and should be, associated with negative feelings. For Riaan those negative feelings are offset by the pleasure derived from the

[9] Riaan explained that the 'us' referred to was the extended family on the farm during these childhood visits.

University of Cape Town

effort of pursuing an animal and from the pride deriving from providing meat for one's family. Ironically, some of the pleasure seems also to stem from the sense of disease and displeasure, in that it provides a reminder of one's moral virtue, killing here being an ironic confirmation that one takes life seriously.

Andre, an academic and manager at the North-West University, articulated his experience of killing an animal slightly differently. Framing his hunting as a contest between himself and the animal, he expressed a mix of sorrow and admiration accompanying his victory.

> I have also had the feeling, after killing an animal, that it was not just the feeling of a victory, but that it is at times a *hartseer* (heart sore) moment; that you are in nature, together with an animal that is strong… It is like an opponent that you beat in a sport. You are not necessarily angry with it. You actually feel like you should honour the animal that you hunted, to give recognition to its achievement.

James, who grew up hunting on his parents' farm, was awarded national colours for marksmanship as a schoolchild and who was at the time of our interview retired from the director's post of the Potchefstroom rugby franchise, also said that he experienced killing ambivalently. While explaining to me that he does not go into the veld "just to shoot and kill", he said:

> I really feel sorry for the animals. I am not an emotional type of person, but I attach a great value to nature. Nature is a wonderful thing for me. This year, for example, I had to deliver a speech at Pietersburg, and then the guys said to me I could go and shoot what I want on Saturday afternoon and Sunday. Early on Saturday afternoon I shot a big *rooibok* ram and later I shot a blue wildebeest; and then I said: "no, I am finished". They said "no, let's go drive around again on Sunday", and I… In the first place I don't like to shoot on a Sunday, I am one of those people that respect Sunday; it is my Christian values. But to get back to feeling sorry... And on this farm there are no kudus. As we were driving down the fence, a young kudu bull, a nice bull, and a big kudu cow came in the corner, totally confused, and they wanted to get into the neighbouring farm. They came

University of Cape Town

> jogging toward me and I watched them in the scope. And I just decided at a stage, "Why must I shoot one of these two animals?" Ok, once they are over the fence, tomorrow, someone else might shoot them; but it was so beautiful to me that I just had the feeling I was not going to shoot. And I said to the guy that was with me "no, come let's go, I am not going to shoot".

Significantly in his narrative, he had encountered the kudu through the scope of his rifle. To see something in the crosshairs of a scope is to see a kill, to have an opportunity to shoot. Yet in that moment he saw the beauty of the pair of animals and elected to not shoot, because of his experience of their beauty. For Andre and James, the *hartseer* and feeling sorry relate to their being in nature. For Andre, the *hartseer* was associated with being in nature with an animal that is strong. For James, feeling sorry was not the result of his being an emotional man; it related to the great value he placed on nature. But what exactly is the 'nature' they spoke of?

James' encounter with the beauty of nature came about through his being on a hunt, through his looking through the scope at an animal where the scope is a metonym for hunting. One might say that, through hunting, he was presented with the beauty of the animals so that it was hunting in this instance that motivated him not to kill. This is deeply ironic. The intention to kill brought the hunter into what both men described as nature, exposed them to its beauty, such that eventually to kill inspired some negative emotions.

Andre and Riaan both suggested that 'feeling bad for the animal' or *hartseer* after its death increased with a hunter's age. Contrasting his experience of shooting his first kudu, as a boy with his father's later experience as an elderly man, Riaan explained that

> As one gets older the mixed feelings, or feeling bad for the animal, certainly increases. For example: my father says he no longer has a desire to hunt. I also catch myself occasionally thinking I no longer desire to hunt. I think that, as you get older, you are yourself confronted with death; but when you are young you think you will live forever. So young people are a bit less concerned. But as you

University of Cape Town

> get older you definitely come to feel differently about it. The sanctity of life thing comes much more into your consciousness.

Andre echoed this, saying that his father, a man of 78 at the time, hunted primarily to spend time with his sons,

> That is the experience for him. In fact, I almost get the idea that it is difficult for him these days to shoot a *bok*. I think that as one gets older one approaches the end of one's own life, and you start to develop a different sensitivity for life.

Why hunters feel increasingly bad about killing as they get older is, at this point in my discussion, beside the point. For my purposes here it is sufficient to recognize that killing is not only something that hunters feel bad about, it is something that many feel increasingly bad about as their hunting careers proceed. The question this raises, with regard to the prominence of killing in the intentional structure that underpins hunting, is given greater substance by hunters describing to me positive hunting experiences that did not involve killing.

Pieter, a retired political scientist and former chairman of the South African Hunters and Game Conservation Association, recounted his best hunting experience as one that had taken place in Namibia and had not resulted in a kill. His intended quarry was an eland, the largest antelope species. He had pursued an eland herd almost an entire day and had come to a point in the pursuit, when, in thick bush, he was only metres from the herd. The bush, however, while affording him the possibility of such close contact, also denied him a vantage from which to shoot. He could hear the animals breathing and moving, and caught glimpses of them through the undergrowth. He described his amazement at how such large animals could move, 'like ghosts' were his words, in the bush, and his pleasure derived from what he said was the inexpressibly profound experience of having been so close to such large and majestic animals without their being aware of his presence – from his being a ghost among ghosts.

Other hunters recounted similar sentiments without attaching them to a specific encounter. For Riaan, hunting "is not just about going to kill an animal. Many people will say that if they walk around in the veld for a day without shooting anything it is also

University of Cape Town

fine, it is still a *moerse* (tremendous) experience". Of his trips to Namibia, for him the place of 'real' hunting, Louis explained

> I have said many times, and I am very serious when I say it. If I go away to Namibia for a week and return without a *bok*, I have still hunted *lekker* (had an enjoyable hunt). So the shooting is the last priority for me. And I try also to bring that home to my son. He shoots a *bok* or two every year, but that must not be his priority. It must be *lekker* for him in the veld, and it must be a privilege for him.

To be clear, shooting is a priority, but it is the last priority. The first priority in Louis' account is his encounter with the veld, an encounter that takes place through his intention to kill, not through any actual kill.

While Andre too argued that, for him, the kill is only one element of hunting, he placed more emphasis on it than did Louis or Riaan.

> My view is that I very much want to bring something significant back. So in that sense I am goal oriented. For me a hunt without a *bok* is not completely a hunt. Although one has to leave room that you can have good hunting experiences without bringing anything back. The hunting context is greater than the shooting of a *bok*.

James expressed the relative importance of killing more overtly. He explained that he loves to walk in pursuit of an animal so that his priority is being in the veld rather than killing. As he put it,

> What I also think is important is, for me, when I go to the veld I don't go just to shoot and kill. There I am totally different from many other people. You get people that if they see something move they want to shoot it. And with me it is not about that.

University of Cape Town

When I spoke with Jim, a onetime professional hunter in a family run hunting outfitters[10] business, about his hunting career, and asked him to recount his best hunting experiences he surprisingly told not of spectacular kills or even of sublime stalks. He told of things gone horribly wrong, of harrowing experiences in the bush while hunting. One such encounter that he related had taken place at the very beginning of his career as a professional hunter. Jim had grown up in a family of hunters, both his father and uncle were professional hunters and ran an outfitting company taking mostly foreign hunters on hunting safaris in Africa (not really in South Africa). Jim had followed in their footsteps, becoming a professional hunter himself. He had subsequently stopped working as a hunting outfitter and at the time was running a successful business training gun owners and issuing them with certificates of competency as part of their applications for firearm licences.

The story Jim told was of his accompanying his uncle, an established professional hunter, and two clients to a concession[11] in Tanzania. On the first morning of the hunt his uncle had asked him which way he wanted to go with the one client while his uncle took the other client in the opposite direction. James picked a direction and he and the client set out before dawn broke. After several hours of walking they became disoriented and James had no idea which way to go in the vastness of the concession to get back to the camp. He of course did not want to let the client know that they were lost and decided that his best course of action would be to walk a wide arc that would likely bring them across their own tracks, which he could then follow back to the camp.

They were thus stuck out in the bush for the day and, because the common practice on such a hunt, is to return for a brunch at camp by about eleven o'clock, they were not carrying much water with them. As the day wore on, they ran out of water and the

[10] Hunting outfitters are businesses that plan and run hunting safaris for paying customers. They typically serve foreign trophy hunters and are not used by South African biltong hunters, who are catered to by game farmers.

[11] In Tanzania a concession is defined as follows: "An area of land that the Wildlife Division leases together with a hunting quota to companies authorized to guide foreign hunting clients on a hunting safari." (Baldus and Cauldwell, 2004: 6). Concessions in Tanzania range from 37 100 hectares to 247 200 hectares (Baldus and Cauldwell, 2004: 108).

University of Cape Town

situation became increasingly dire. Eventually, towards sunset, and just before they finally found the trail back to the camp and safety, they came across an elephant footprint, a deep indentation in the ground in which some water had accumulated. Jim described the water as containing the carcass of a dead snake and extremely filthy. By this time, however, he had found it impossible to keep from the client that they were lost and that their situation was serious and that they needed therefore to drink some of the water. They did so after filtering the water through a hat to extract as much of the muck from it as they could.

The story of the footprint filled with filthy water and a dead snake was the punch line of what he told me. The dead snake is important because of the profound sense of disgust its presence in the story seemed to be intended to provoke. Moreover, it illustrates the extremity of the situation in which Jim knew they had found themselves. At that point, they had been in the heat without water for almost a whole day, and they had no idea that they were going to find their way back to camp anytime soon.

As he told me the above story I was at first confused as to how so extreme and harrowing an experience could count as one of his best hunting experiences. Reflecting upon what I first experienced as a contradiction, I realized that what made this experience great for him was the intensity of his experience of the veld. The significant point of Jim's story, at this juncture in my argument, is that, like the other accounts above, it was told as a positive hunting experience despite (or perhaps because of) the fact of his having been unsuccessful in terms of killing an animal.

Negatively experienced hunts associated with successfully killing quarry.

These accounts of good hunting experiences are mirrored by accounts of bad hunting experiences that did include a kill having occurred. Louis, who lectured economics at the North-West University and hunted multiple times each year, for example explained that he opens the hunting season each year with an afternoon visit to a nearby farm where he and his son each shoot a *blesbok*. Louis explained that killing animals on a small farm like that is not hunting, it is simply shooting.

University of Cape Town

> We speak of *skiet* (shooting). That is *skiet*. You drive with a *bakkie* and you shoot off the *bakkie* and the *bok* falls and you load it and you go. Hunting is Namibia, you rise in the morning, you take your rifle, and you walk into the veld. So we differentiate, I don't know if it is a general term, [but] I think it is quite general in hunting, between *skiet* and *jag* (hunting). *Skiet* is just ride and shoot off a *bakkie,* load it and go; hunting is to be physically in the veld, the stalk, your skills against his skills. So it's just… this is really… it is actually like slaughtering sheep. They are enclosed within x number of hectares, and you shoot and you butcher the meat and it's done.

James' refusal to shoot one of the two kudu in the encounter mentioned above can also be understood in this context, killing would in that instance have attached to a negative hunting experience. As Louis put it,

> And I think the big challenge is not just shooting the first one you encounter. I mean, that is not so hard. If a game farm has a lot of game, you will encounter a *bok* in an hour or two or three. And you can shoot him. But the stalking and checking if it is the right *bok*, if it is a large *bok*, and then shooting it after that, that is hunting.

What Louis called shooting, Andre called a bad hunt. He explained: "I can walk into the bush, find an animal and shoot him in his head, dead, so that he falls there. And normally I say to myself that is a bad hunt".

From the above accounts of how failing to kill can be positive, or how killing too easily can be negative, I conclude that a good hunt is differentiated from a bad hunt on the basis of the context in which a kill (or no kill) takes place. However, in order to understand fully the complex valence of a kill it is necessary to show that the ambivalent emotions and the ambivalent narrative position do not seem to stem simply from some sense of sentiment toward animals.

In the interview in which Andre told me how he associated a too-easy kill with a bad hunt, he followed up with an illustration of a preferable yet still problematic hunt:

University of Cape Town

> Then I could shoot a different shot and it's… and here ethics come in… I shoot a terribly difficult shot, and this *bok* runs away. Now I am on his trail. Now I am tracking and I look there and I look there and if I get him then, after I have walked 10km after him, then I feel terribly proud. I almost want to say that the more difficult it is and the more successful, the greater the satisfaction.

What Andre was describing was wounding an animal, having it bolt, and then tracking it, finding it, and finally killing it. To deliberately wound rather than kill an animal is a gross transgression of the ethical guidelines spelled out by the two major South African hunting associations. His qualifying that the situation he describes results from the difficulty of the shot suggests that he does not deliberately set out to wound the animal. What he is suggesting is that his sense of satisfaction derives from having to deal with the challenge of the hunt, and that tracking down a wounded animal is in that respect preferable to an easy kill. Besides intimating that the satisfaction he seeks lies in the challenge, the above account shows no real sympathy for the wounded animal, and as such raises questions about the source of the *hartseer* that some hunters associated with killing.

My experience in the field, and from interviews and conversations, was that when hunters did express a negative response to wounding an animal rather than killing it outright, this derived from their loss of prestige among fellow hunters. One hunter, Cecil, for example recounted that, while hunting with a bow, he had taken a shot at a Kudu about forty metres away from the hide in which he was sitting. The arrow had struck the animal in the neck with sufficient force to penetrate, but with insufficient force to bring it down. Consequently the animal had run off. Cecil and his audience chuckled at the image with which he ended his account, an image of kudus running around with arrows sticking out of them, like porcupine quills, in areas frequented by bow hunters. Cecil's lack of sympathy, evident in the humour he found in the image of multiply wounded kudu was confirmed by what he then narrated as being the negative consequence of wounding that kudu. He closed the story with a shake of his head

University of Cape Town

muttering about how he was teased for months about his lack of hunting prowess by the shop assistants where he buys bow hunting equipment[12].

Andre confirmed such negativity when he said that "to wound a *bok* and lose it in a big hunting group is a tremendous penalty in terms of prestige and status and power". Riaan similarly explained that

> If you go hunt and you are a successful hunter, you shoot well and shoot accurately. You get your mark and you don't shoot a lot of shots; those are all things that elevate your reputation a bit – as opposed to another guy that wounds a lot of animals, or that can't shoot well, or that shoots a lot of shots, and they are miss and miss and miss.

Melville too articulated the negative consequences of wounding an animal in terms of prestige in the group. He said "it is not pleasant to wound an animal or miss a shot. Because these guys next to you look and say 'oh, so this guy can't shoot properly', so there is pressure that when you shoot you kill".

The centrality of contest to the hunters' reports of positive hunting experiences

But what these statements fail to indicate is why that negativity arises if it is not simply sympathy for a wounded animal. One possible answer derives from James' explanation that he is not saddened because he is an emotional person but because he loves what he called nature. In other words, his sadness derived from the loss, through an animal's death, of opportunity for him to continue to be in hunting nature.

Significantly, most hunters associated negative emotions following a kill with experiences of good hunts which they said were marked by the challenge they brought and that required address. Consider again Riaan's account of his first kudu kill where

[12] Bow hunting is commonly understood to require more skill than rifle hunting as it requires the hunter to get much closer to the quarry in order to kill it with a bow that has a maximum effective range of no more than 40m. Telling a story of wounding an animal with a bow, therefore, does not damage the hunter's image in the eyes of his hunting partners as would a story about wounding an animal with a rifle.

University of Cape Town

he contrasted and thus associated feeling bad about, on one hand, the kill with, on the other, walking for a day or two in order to be able to achieve it. Such, a formulation indicates that the intensity of his experience of that kill derives from the effort that went in to achieving it. Andre's contrasting of wounding an animal with killing one easily, and his casting the former as preferable because of the challenge it involved, reflects a similar attitude. Moreover, when he contrasted *hartseer* with a feeling of victory and he suggested that both increase relative to the honour due to a worthy fellow competitor. His ideal experience, he explained,

> is where I, on my own, in a veld situation, in difficult circumstances, identify a good *bok*, I shoot the right shot, I make the bok fall there, get it, slit its throat, and then, by whatever means, even if I have to walk 20km back, find people to come and get it, take photos. That for me is the absolute experience.

Indeed, all of the hunters I spoke with were in general agreement that hunting hinges on the challenge posed to the hunter by his quarry. As Louis put it:

> Hunting is your skills against the animal's skills, and then the challenge of stalking him. And I think the big challenge is not just shooting the first one you encounter. I mean, that is not so hard. If a game farm has a lot of game you will encounter a *bok* (antelope) in an hour or two or three. And you can shoot him. But the stalking and checking if it is the right *bok*, if it is a large *bok*, and then shooting it after that, that is hunting.

Melville, professor of tourism and a leading expert on the South African biltong hunting industry articulated a similar view of hunting: "For me, a good hunt is a good stalk and a killing shot […]. It is a good challenge for me".

That said, however, I would argue that the challenge that hunters seek is not a challenge simply for the sake of challenge. To see it that way would not explain the negative emotions associated with success in overcoming the challenge. The challenge itself serves another purpose as the driving force behind their being able to escape from their everyday working and domestic lives.

University of Cape Town

The contest between hunter and quarry as that out of which the hunting nature object-world emerges

Speaking of hunting, James explained: "For me it is about… I always say, two weeks in the veld means much more to me than three months by the sea. You get a '*siel rustigheid*' (peace in your soul) in the veld". James was comparing a hunting trip to a holiday at the seaside, and concluding that the hunting trip, particularly that it requires being in the bush, is a far more satisfying recreational activity than is a seaside holiday. Importantly, the kind of being "in the veld" to which James was referring was directly linked to hunting and that it involves an intention to kill a pursued animal.

Riaan also tied the satisfaction of a hunting trip to the goal of a hunt, explaining that

> You are away from your everyday existence, from the rut and the race that you are usually in. It is a form of meditation because you focus on totally different stuff from your daily life. For two or three or four days your reality becomes totally different in terms of your daily grind. And it is probably like that for most holidays, but here you have a particular goal.

The language in this quote is extremely telling. It demonstrates that hunting is not merely a break from daily life; it is a removal from everyday existence, a meditation that is more than an escape, one that generates a different reality, a reality that stems from the goal of a hunting trip, to hunt and kill an animal.

Melville also overtly articulated hunting as a breakaway. Furthermore he explained that the extent to which it is experienced as a breakaway relates to the intensity of the challenge posed to the hunter by the quarry. For him, hunting is "a good breakaway [from everyday life], it's a sort of… it is me and nature and a specific *bok*; and, if you are there, it's sort of 'what are the issues there?'" An example of the way a hunter breaks away is in his description of:

> The last time we went to hunt on the game farm ... my colleagues had gone already. I had a meeting in Mafikeng that morning, so I went to Mafikeng and came back. So I got there after them. When I came into the farm, and I saw

University of Cape Town

> them, I could already see the difference between their state of mind and my state of mind. I was still in a meeting with all these issues, they were already… you know, 'we are here… we are away'. You are sort of on another planet. I could feel it clearly, and they could feel it too, because I said to them 'you know, guys, I feel… I feel like I am in a different environment to you'. Then they said 'no, that is precisely the same experience as what we have'. It was only… you know, we usually first shoot in a bit. They were already finished hunting a few things. It was only after a few shots that I began to feel 'OK, the meeting and everything is behind me and I am busy building distance between that world and this world'. And later that afternoon, only after I shot an animal, was I one with this world.

Melville, Riaan and James all painted pictures of two different worlds, Melville describing his journeying between them. One is the world of work and meetings, what Riaan called everyday existence, and the other is the world defined by a restful state of mind, free from the issues of work, absorbed in the non-alienating work of the hunt. Melville's brief story is one of gradual movement from the former to the latter, movement first effected, once on the game farm, by firing off a few shots at a target to set the scope on his rifle, and only fully effected after an encounter between him and nature and the animal he kills. His sense of a break away, in this case, was realized only after he had encountered a way of being that, from their perspective is capable of more rapidly and more dramatically bringing about *siel rustigheid* than any other type of holiday. James labelled this way of being as "living like nature in nature". The activity of hunting inflates an ontological bubble: the veld is literally a different object world – one that involves reality done differently.

What it was about the experience that finally propelled Melville into the world of hunting, at least as narrated in the story recounted above, is well illustrated by what Riaan said when characterizing for me the experience of stalking an animal in the moments leading up to the shot being fired:

> You go into a state of flow and you are completely absorbed in this thing you are busy with. To the extent that nothing besides that which you are busy doing exists for you. You are so focused… I don't even hear the gun or feel the kick.

University of Cape Town

> But when at the shooting table at the shooting range, even with my ear protection on, I still hear the sound and the gun kicks bloody painfully. But in the situation, you don't hear or feel it. The difference is: you are focused and you have a limited amount of time. So you are super focused on the successful achievement of your goal. I think that is the difference.

Melville too characterized the experience of stalking an animal as an intense encounter between himself, nature and an animal. It is a good leisure pursuit because it is all consuming; if one is there, all other 'issues' are displaced by those immediately pertaining to what he constructs narratively as a threefold relationship brought about by his intention to kill a *bok*.

Three elements of the threefold relationship Melville narrates are worth examining here. The first is his use of 'and' to link himself to nature and the bok. "Me *and* nature *and* a specific *bok*" posits three distinct entities in relationship to one another. It can be read to suggest that neither he nor the *bok* is part of nature and that nature appears to be a third party in the contest between himself and the *bok*. The second is the positioning of this third party between himself and the *bok*, as if it is the substance that relates him to the animal through his intention to kill it, but is separate from them both. Nature by this interpretation is his intention to kill the animal, it is the world intervening between what the animal affords him by providing him a chance to kill and his ability to act on what is being afforded him. It is as if the object world springs from the affordances and needs to be exploited and overcome if he is to realize his intention. Nature in this formulation is not something that can be spatially defined, somewhere into or to which one can go. Nature here is something that exists between him and the *bok* precisely because of his intention to kill the *bok*. Yet, as we have seen, for many, especially older and more experienced hunters, a kill is not essential to the experience of hunting; and it is often experienced negatively.

One can, I would argue, come to the conclusion then that the hunting nature object-world emerges from the contest between hunter and quarry, and it is the loss of that object-world and the pleasurable sense of tense but seemingly authentic contestation which is mourned once it is sundered by the kill.

University of Cape Town

Such an interpretation is supported by the third element of Melville's phrase "it is me and nature and a specific *bok*; and, if you are there, it's sort of 'what are the issues there?'" to which I want to draw attention, namely Melville's use of 'there'. In terms of his threefold division of the contest into himself and nature and the *bok*, what he refers to as 'there' is not an absolute place in a spatial grid. 'There'; rather, refers to a relative position *vis a vis* the *bok*. If one can get into that specific relationship to a *bok* that one is hunting, one manifests nature and all other issues fall away; one is then occupied only by what Melville refers to as the contest between hunter and quarry.

Hunting nature is thus that object world generated out of a contest in which a hunter's intention to kill an animal pits his skills against the animal's in a contest that, because it requires extreme focus and is all consuming, births a sense of being within an alternative reality, an enchanted if not euphoric rapture, in which the hunter's embodiment mirrors his quarry's defences. What I mean by this mirroring metaphor is that hunters have to embody the inverse of the quarry's senses, they have to move in ways that make them imperceptible to the quarry's well developed defensive sensory array. We thus have an actor model in which 'nature' is not something one can simply go to. It is as if nature is the substance through which, as hunter, one is related to the animal, a substance that enchants, as Melville's account of his late arrival on a hunting trip attests, through requiring the hunter to become imperceptible to the animal, to become its inverse by engaging in a challenge of pursuing an animal with the intention of killing it. If to be in the veld is to find peace in one's soul as James suggests, then to enter into a competition between oneself and a pursued animal, with the intention of killing it, is to manifest the veld around yourself; is to enter into what I term the hunting nature object-world.

Such a reading is reinforced by Melville's comparison of hunting with just walking in the bush. Just walking in the bush, he explained, does not seem to be able to enable him to enter nature. Of such walking he said:

> There is not necessarily that goal orientedness, there is not necessarily that … you know … where is this action going to take place, is it around this corner, and, you know, there is all this stuff; and when you are in the hunt then other stuff

University of Cape Town

> comes to the fore and you concentrate on other things and you are influenced by other things: by wind, by where are the animals, you know, am I making a noise? Whereas if you just go and walk those are not issues.

Simply walking in the bush is not able to transport Melville to or into that different world that hunting does. The reason is that walking is not accompanied by the same awareness that results from being in the bush with a goal of shooting an animal. One does not need to be aware of the wind, of one's movement, of the location of the animals.

Let us now return to Louis' definition of hunting as the pitting of a hunter's skills against the skills of a pursued animal in order to examine the distinction between walking in the bush and hunting. I have already shown that for Melville the distinction is one possible only when the alternative world to which he escapes emerges out of the contest between his skills and the animal's. It is only through an encounter in which he becomes the mirror image of the animal that he is able to break away and to enable nature to be the result of a transformation in movement and perception derived from that mirroring. Hunting nature emerges in the act of mirroring an animal and does not exist prior to that.

University of Cape Town

The relationship between the hunting nature object world and the embodiment of the contest between hunter and quarry

How hunting nature emerges from a hunter's mirroring of his quarry can be explained using the notion of affordances outlined in the previous chapter. Gibson's (1979) notion of affordances deviates from similar notions put forward by others in that he held affordances and not objects to be what he called the primitives of perception, and by which he meant that organisms directly perceive action possibilities rather than objects in their environment. Because, Gibson argued, the brain's internal processing model advocated by his predecessors in that theoretical lineage is tautological, and because there is according to Sanders (1999) no neurophysiological evidence to support the notion that the brain is functionally arranged into processors of the relevant kind, Sanders (1999) argued, there is less reason to accept a common-sense view that

humans deduce action opportunities from directly perceived objects than there is reason to take up the inverse position, namely that humans do directly perceive action possibilities, and that we deduce object worlds from these.

If affordances are action possibilities that an organism can undertake, and to which that organism is, as a function of its intentional activities, inclined towards, then these affordances are, by Sanders' (1999: 133) argument, parsed into individual objects "picked out as significant individuals and kinds from the background". Moreover, if that is so then the capabilities and demands placed on the human body result in an application of ones and zeros that assign, as Stephenson's Librarian in *Snowcrash* puts it, being and nonbeing. Or, as Sanders (1999: 132) explains, "rocks and trees would not *be* objects for organisms so constructed as to be offered no opportunities for action by them"; they would be assigned zero, nonbeing. Object worlds are thus absolutely a matter of what the organism *can do*. And what the organism can do is in turn dependent upon how it is extended relative to the activity in which it is engaged. Thus, the ones and zeros are assigned not by a mental processor on the basis of pre-existing cognitive schemes. As the previous chapter argued, object worlds result from both the extended body and the environment in which it acts, behaving appropriately relative to a particular intentional activity such that the discovery of a particular object world is possible.

James' explanation of how time spent hunting in the veld alters one's visual perception lends support to this interpretation.

> If you go into the veld, it takes you two days before you can see through the bush. Because, if you go from the town [directly] into the veld, you just look into (against) the bush for the first two days; you don't look through it. If your eye is not practiced, you battle a lot. I have personally noted that, after about two days, you begin... I say you can look through the bushes.

The language here is informative. James, like various other hunters I encountered on the farm, as well as the farm's professional hunter, Jnr, all phrased it similarly. During the informal lessons he gave me as we moved around the farmland, Jnr often used the

University of Cape Town

phrase '*deur die bos kyk*' (look through the bush) not '*deur die bos sien*' (see through the bush). Look and see are both verbs relating to sight but, whereas to see is to perceive visually in a manner in which that being perceived comes to a passive eye, to look is actively and intentionally to direct one's gaze towards something so that the gaze penetrates. What James's phrasing thus says is that it takes two days of practice before one is able to direct one's gaze beyond the surface of the bushes; before one can overcome the obstacle the bushes present to the application of one's visual sense to one's intention to kill an animal. When I asked James to explain how one's visual sense might change after two days, he said:

> Look, I think in the first instance, you, as a human limit yourself through the work that you do. You sit behind a computer, I mean many times you only get home at half past seven or nine o'clock after meetings. And then you have not even seen a tree! So I think, in the first place, it is a mind-set that you have to say to yourself in the bush: 'remember you must look for the deviations because what happens is that when you begin then you look into (against) the trees. And, after a while in the bush, you realize 'but what is the deviation'. That stump is not a normal stump. And so you begin to look deeper and deeper into the bush. So I think, in the first place it is practice; in the second place it is a mind-set, that you have to get used to, because there is no way… because you can see, that guys that are on the farm … it is not that they have better sight than you; it is also not that he can see further than you. His eye is just practised. And I think that is a thing that you are not going to get right in the space of a day.

What James described above is a transformation in his visual sense that resulted from the activity of searching for prey. This sensual transformation is important to understanding how that third entity in the hunting relationship, one that Melville called nature emerges out of the relationship between the hunter and the animal.

What is am arguing is that hunting nature emerges through alterations in perception, such as being able to look through the bush or, as I will show later, the subordination of the eye to the ear so that one comes to see sounds. Because these perceptual changes result from the hunter's attempt to become the mirror image of the animal's

University of Cape Town

ability to sense his presence and itself avoid being sensed by the hunter, his tuning into the action possibilities that make this mirroring possible, I argue that hunting does not take place in nature, rather hunting nature emerges out of hunting.

Hunting nature is in other words the object world born of attending to the affordances relevant to pursuit and evasion, such as the wind, or cover, or noise, or shadow. One type of awareness that no hunter with whom I interacted mentioned is light. One afternoon, as sunset was approaching and Andre and I were driving slowly back towards the farmhouse he spotted a large wildebeest standing about 400m away from us in the shade of a tree next to a road running North-South. Because he still wanted to shoot a wildebeest he decided to stop the *bakkie* and approach it.

The plan was to approach the animal through the cover offered by the sickle bush growing on the western edge of the road – the eastern edge was covered predominantly by knee high grass and offered little cover. We moved slowly, being careful to keep the bushes between ourselves and the animal, occasionally sneaking a look from around a bush to be sure the animal had not moved off. After doing that for about 150 metres we peeked out from around a bush to find the animal gone. Disappointed, we turned to return to the *bakkie* and Andre chastised himself as a fool. I asked why he was being so hard on himself, and he pointed to the grass on the eastern side of the road. Glistening silver in the light from the low hanging sun our long shadows extended across the road to form stark black shapes breaking the reflected light in the most obvious index of our presence. Despite our bodies being concealed from view by the bushes, the late afternoon sun broadcast our approach through the striking contrast between our shadows and the glistening of the silver grass. The stalk had failed for our lack of awareness.

In Chapter Two I compare cartographic visuality with the enchanted experience of the sublime, a parallel that hinged on the fact that in both instances the body must behave appropriately to enable the experience. The above accounts of an alternative reality, the ontological bubble that is hunting nature, indicate that the same is true here. Riaan's describing hunting nature as being away from his everyday *existence* is in some ways similar to the sublime, a state in which relocation into a particular object world

University of Cape Town

overwhelms one to the point of unmaking the everyday. Melville and James did speak of a mind-set, and Riaan did speak of hunting as a meditation, both decidedly mental activities; but, significantly, both described these as being the result of a visceral relationship to the animal being hunted and to the challenge of overcoming its defences.

The focus that transports the hunter to such an other world is the product of an intention to kill that requires a type of embodiment, an embodiment of invisibility, what I have elsewhere termed mirroring the animal. The animals being hunted are possessed of three powerful senses upon which they rely for their survival; their sight, hearing and smell are therefore the factors most prominently structuring of the embodied relationship between hunter and quarry. The hunter wears camouflage and approaches through cover to avoid the animal's eyes. To avoid the animal's ears he moves slowly and smoothly, mindful to avoid items that can betray his approach through sound; and he approaches from down-wind to avoid the animal's sense of smell detecting his presence. His movement and his clothing are thus designed to be the inverse of the animal's abilities. The goal of embodying invisibility leads to the perception of those affordances that offer or resist that disappearance and to the movement particular to either exploiting or avoiding them. To disappear from the animal's perception is nothing other than to enter the object world of hunting nature. So profound are the animal's powers to sense the hunter, and these are often amplified by the fact that hunted animals move in herds, that the intense focus required of a hunter makes his presence in this object world a particularly intense one.

Chapter Two shows how imperial and nationalist natures emerged out of flows of people, capital and information relative to relations of production. These scientific natures, I argued there, are thus natures in which cartographic visuality dominates; object worlds born out of the activities in what Lefebvre calls representations of space (Merrifield, 1993: 523). Those humans that engage with scientific nature become invisible by being external to it. After all, one of the major characteristics of this scientific nature is its ability to make statements about the world that are true, regardless of the position from which they are uttered, statements that Ingold (2000: 233) categorises as non-indexical. A curious parallel to the non-indexical invisibility of

University of Cape Town

scientific nature thus permits hunting to construct its object world out of indexical invisibility, an invisibility that intimately attaches the hunter to that which affords his being exposed to (and thus escaping detection by) the animal's senses.

The object world that is hunting nature is thus the product of transformations in perception and movement defining the relationship between a man intent on approaching to within the range required to kill, and an animal, the senses and wits of which are bent on preventing that from occurring. That object-world results from the demands made on the hunter's senses and on the hunter's movements by his immediate goal to kill an animal. It is not a pre-existing non-indexically knowable object world of a scientific sort and as defined in capitalist social space as constituting a collection and configuration of already-there objects. The same is true of the nature of scientists, the disembodied abstractness of which (i.e. science) is the product of embodied activity. Both object worlds can thus be thought of as ontologies, worlds of objects and their potential relations in terms of the metaphysics of multiplicity outlined in Chapter Two.

Hunters' work to stage their hunting trips as contests.

The extent to which hunting nature does not pre-exist the actual act of hunting is further evident in the amount of work hunters put in to ensure that the hunt meets the requirements needed to produce the object-world that is the engine of the activity's power as a breakaway. Were hunting about killing, or merely about securing meat, or about being in a pre-existing nature, then Louis, who distinguished between his hunting trips to Namibia and his afternoons shooting on a nearby farm, would have been content simply to spend extended periods of time shooting on the nearby game farm. He could kill more animals, get more meat and presumably spend more time in this pre-existing natural space than he did in Namibia where he reported considering real hunting to occur. The amount of work he put into saving money, travelling to Namibia and organizing the logistics of such a trip would, were that to have been the case, have been irrational and hugely disproportionate. It is, however, not disproportionate

University of Cape Town

because, as he says, “hunting is Namibia”; because the challenge out of which the nature at the heart of his breakaway is parsed resides in Namibia.

Melville, who like Louis emphasized provisioning as one reason why he hunted, would for the same reasons not have bothered to vary the species he shot each year. Varying species annually is more expensive than shooting the same species each year because one has to travel to where diverse species reside, and because one needs the appropriate equipment for shooting different species in different regions. As Melville explained:

> The challenge is different, because to shoot a springbuck is one thing but to shoot another, say a kudu, is again another thing. So there must be a degree of challenge for me in terms of one of my hunting sessions, because I usually go on two or three hunting sessions per year. Because, obviously, the species that you shoot are area bound, so you… you won’t necessarily find *ribbokke* here, you will get them more in the Free State. So now you must travel to places to get those species. But now I know, I will shoot a *ribbok* but it won’t necessarily have much meat; so to supply my meat I must maybe also shoot a kudu or a blue wildebeest or something.

The opposite approach, of always attempting to shoot the same type of animal, can also serve as a mechanism for making work of hunting. Andre for example said that he always tried to shoot a kudu bull. When I asked him why he explained:

> You know… I can’t tell you what it is. It is just an unbelievably *mooi* (beautiful) *bok* for me. It is a *bok* that sets a tremendously large challenge. And all my hunting trips, if I have not shot a *mooi* kudu bull I feel I’ve missed something, or something could have been better. But it is a subjective thing; it is part of that little piece of experience that you are after.

So, whereas Melville varied species to keep the challenge fresh, Andre identified a particular challenge he enjoyed and sought to replicate it – because, from what he said, it is that challenge that is the engine of the experience he was after. In Louis’ language Melville liked to vary the skills he was pitting himself against by varying his quarry, while

University of Cape Town

Andre liked to pit his skills against what is considered to be a particularly skilful opponent.

Riaan and Dirk took yet another approach, that of limiting their technological superiority. In an interview with Riaan, he mentioned that hunting is an ancient practice and explained what a marvellous technological breakthrough the use of poison arrows by Bushmen was, as it enabled them to bring down large game. I decided to challenge him on this point recalling a paper by Manhire, Parkington and Yates (1985) that raised questions about rock art depicting triple curve or fully recurve bows. Technologically speaking, the fully recurve bow is a weapon capable of delivering a more powerful impact, of generating far greater blood loss, and of enabling hunters to be effective from a far greater range than is possible with a simple self-bow typically associated with Bushmen. I thus put it to him that perhaps, in the pursuit of a particular hunting experience, Bushmen had in fact taken a technological step backwards, abandoning the fully recurve bow for the self-bow that, even when coupled with the use of poison, increased the labour of the hunt tremendously.

He did not like the revised understanding I offered, saying it made no sense to take a step backwards like that when one's survival hinged upon effective hunting. He nonetheless found the revision sensible in terms of his own hunting, saying "I recently bought a muzzle loader to limit my technological superiority. Perhaps the San were the same". Whether or not the San took a technological step backwards is beside the point: the fact that Riaan, like Dirk decided to forego the tremendous technological advantage of the cartridge in favour of a muzzle loading rifle is indicative of their apparently felt need to increase the challenge of hunting by decreasing their technological advantage through adopting a rifle with an effective range of no more than seventy or eighty metres.

Hunters' use of words like 'victory' and 'challenge' to describe hunting, or their formulating it as the pitting of their skills against those of the stalked animal, coupled with their efforts to ensure that they experience the hunt as a challenge, lead me to suggest that hunting nature, the object world in which hunting takes place, is generated out of embodied competitive play. That is what Burch (1965: 606) called structured

University of Cape Town

play: “play which is organized, finite, and ruled by collective sanctions for the duration of its existence. It has clearly defined goals, traditionalized roles, and explicit means to the goals. Games, contests, etc., are examples.” In other words, as Melville’s description of his journey from the world of work to the world of hunting suggests, the object-world of hunting emerges out of the contest between hunter and quarry, out of the efforts of the former to become imperceptible to the latter. The space of this intimate imperceptibility is the veld, which is what I have, in this chapter, argued constitutes the hunting nature object-world.

University of Cape Town

Chapter Four: Unlevelling the Playing Field and Unbalancing the Reciprocity: Making the Hunting Nature Object-World Easy to Find in the Commercial Hunting Context

The structured competitive play discussed in the previous chapter is played out within the commercial hunting trip's constraining context. My only experience of pursuing a particular animal, a *gemsbok*[13], when viewed together with three other unsuccessful at attempts to kill it (even to fire a shot at it), very clearly illustrates these constraints' extent, especially when compared with how hunters visiting the farm shot other *gemsbok*. Through exploring this comparison in the present chapter I argue that the degree of difficulty arising from deliberately reducing one's number of potential targets, by pursuing an individual animal with the intention of killing it, cannot be accommodated within commercialized hunting trips. Pursuing an individual prey is so challenging that it is an impossible approach for hunters in a commercial context, pressured as they are to get their quota of animals within a short, two night stay.

The one that got away: the challenge of pursuing an individual prey

In my case, of course, my extended presence permitted me to pursue one specific *gemsbok*, a male that had repeatedly damaged the game farm's southern fence during fights with another male on the neighbouring farm. This persisting problem had led Jnr and Snr to conclude that the only solution was to shoot the *gemsbok* before he did any serious and costly damage to the fence. It was thus that Jnr, Isaac and I pursued him for about six hours one afternoon – mid-day to sunset. During that time he led us on two and a half repeat circuits of a figure eight route that allowed him, apparently cunningly, always to keep us out of the line of sight and often upwind too. It was a disquieting display of animal skill, my first real encounter with an antelope's ability to avoid a hunter. It was disquieting in that I was left with the impression that the animal understood far more about being hunted than I had previously thought possible.

[13] *Gemsbok* is the Afrikaans name for an Oryx

University of Cape Town

The figure eight circuits that he traversed and forced us to follow him along were my first experience of walking in the bush whilst attempting to be imperceptible to an animal's senses. My previous experience was of driving around the farm in a *bakkie*, stopping when a shot presented itself to whomever I was accompanying, and walking only a short distance to get a clear line of fire; or, further, to follow a wounded animal.

Isaac, the guide tasked with tracking the targeted *gemsbok*, took the lead. Jnr, who would shoot the animal if a shot presented itself walked second. I followed in third place, battling to keep pace with the two practised walkers. I can, of course, walk as fast as the next person; but what challenged me in this instance was the type of walking needed and the terrain that had to be covered. The farm's southern part, like its main part from which the southern section is separated by a public dirt road running east to west, is covered with a dense growth of sickle bush.

The southern section, whilst still used for cattle farming, differs from the main northern part, in that it is sandy and interspersed with densely grouped clumps of grass, features that stood out as I walked. The sickle bush overgrowth provided cover but it also meant I had constantly to crouch to avoid getting snagged by sharp curved spines on overhanging branches, while twisting and turning to avoid getting my trousers and jacket hooked on smaller branches growing up from the plants' bases. Another hindrance was the completely dried out clumps of knee high grass dotting the sandy surface that rustled loudly on contact and had to be avoided. I had thus to engage in a crouched, twisting and turning, high stepping mode of walking that was extremely awkward and exhausting for an unpractised novice whose behaviour would doubtlessly have been most comical to an initiated onlooker.

Having been dropped off along the perimeter road running alongside the southern fence, at a point at which the tracks of the *gemsbok* we were after were evident, Jnr and Isaac passed swiftly into the dense bushes along a game trail the animal was following. As I set off after them, I recalled the words of a colleague of mine, JK, whom I had conversed with a few months before I began fieldwork. He had told that he can tell, within the first few steps taken by a fellow hunter, whether or not that hunter will be successful. This was a statement I found both encouraging and daunting: encouraging

University of Cape Town

because, despite JK's inability to explain exactly how he was able to make that assessment, it suggested the existence of an observable hunting embodiment; daunting because it hinted at a potential problem with my planned fieldwork – the possibility that my own presence, as a result of my lack of knowhow, would put hunters' successful achievement of their goals, and as a result, the farm's income, at risk. The hunt for the errant *gemsbok* thus seemed a safe opportunity for me to learn, as I was not accompanying farm clients whose hunt my learning might have ruined.

Once we had broken from the road into the game trail, I did my level best to keep up whilst also keeping quiet, a pair of apparently contradictory goals. During the first half hour I was so focused on the vegetation and on avoiding it that I constantly fell behind as I ducked under sickle bushes that grabbed at my hat, sidestepped low branches that grabbed at my trousers and jacket and tried to step over the bone dry clumps of grass that rustled and crunched under foot. I marvelled, quite frustratedly, at the ease with which Isaac and Jnr silently glided through the bush; at their quiet economy of movement. Isaac was particularly impressive. It was as if his feet moved at half the speed of my own as I struggled to keep pace, but nonetheless propelled him forward at twice the rate I was able to achieve. Amid the dense bush, with visibility reduced to little more than three metres, I was unable to judge direction; and my frantic hurrying was in part a manifestation of my fear of getting lost should I fall too far behind.

After the first thirty minutes I either calmed down or tired enough to realize that I must be doing something wrong; so I busied myself trying to copy Isaac's movements as best I could. The first thing I noticed was that he looked to be relaxed in his slow and evenly deliberate movements. By that stage I was a tense, huffing collection of limbs, the movements of which could only be described as crisis management as I tried to get them and the rest of me over the grasses and under and around the sickle bushes as rapidly and quietly as I could manage. Part of what gave me the impression of Isaac's being relaxed was his holding his hands behind his back as he walked, one grasped in the other, as if formally standing at ease. At first I thought that his adopting such a stance was merely a matter of comfort, or of saving energy for a potentially very long walk. However, once I began emulating it I realized it was a useful way of narrowing my

University of Cape Town

silhouette and of preventing my arms from brushing against, or getting hooked by the vegetation lining the narrow game trails along which our pursuit had taken us, a technique that disciplined my arms by, in effect, fusing them with my torso.

Adopting that position for my arms proved to be a revelation; it was as if moving in this context suddenly began to make sense. Not only did it prevent my arms from interfering with my passage through the narrow spaces where the game trail passed through dense sickle bush; it also conveniently counterbalanced a slightly forward lean that both relieved the tension in my back that accompanied my carefully looking at the ground for both the tracks Isaac was following, and for objects like twigs and stones that I needed to avoid stepping on. Having a comfortable forward lean also took the pressure off my legs which, after only a short time on the trail were heavy with fatigue from my constant high stepping crouch walk. While the sickle bush still made crouching an occasional necessity, the forward leaning posture I adopted after clasping my hands behind my back for the most part enabled me to comfortably avoid the thorny branches overhead.

The second aspect of Isaac's movement I noted was that he took a completely different approach to managing his legs relative to the grasses from that with which I had begun. Whereas I had constantly attempted to step over the dry grass clumps, he only very slightly lifted his feet off the ground and, rather, slid his leg in an arc around or through gaps between the clumps' bases, turning his feet this way or that so as always to lead with his foot's narrowest profile. His consequent silent movement resulted from how this technique avoided his making large movements or upsetting his balance, so that his leg movement was always controlled, soft, slow and regular. My attempts to step over the grasses, based on the misapprehension that the best approach to silent passage through them was to avoid them entirely, both rapidly tired my legs and often upset my balance, resulting in a heavy footfall on the clump's other side. Avoiding one clump by this approach risked my stepping heavily onto the next, while the challenge presented to my balance meant that I was not always in control of my footfall, neither its force nor its location. Compounding my lack of control over my footfall was the fact that I could not always see what was on the other side of the grass clump I was stepping over, and thus

University of Cape Town

risked crunching twigs or kicking stones with a heavy, almost falling movement that I was not fully able to control.

As my increasingly tired legs told me at the time, my approach was theoretically flawed in that I was walking as if intent on getting through to an imaginary grassless zone on the other side of each grass clump as it seemed to rise up immediately in front of me. The trouble was that there was no 'other side', only more clumps of grasses, and yet more after that. As I began adopting Isaac's approach I realized that the challenge was not to move silently to a space beyond the grass (as if creeping over an isolated obstacle on an otherwise clear and flat surface); it was, rather, to move silently *among* the clumps of grass. For me this was a revelation. I had been walking as I would walk on a city pavement, or in my own home.

My default walking movement was one that assumed a level and obstacle free surface, so that my approach to negotiating the clumps of grass was the same as what I would employ to negotiate a pile of my daughter's toys in my sitting room. The result was that the demands of the terrain through which we were moving were produced as obstacles breaking the level, obstacle free surface my comportment assumed. I was thus permanently out of sorts and unable to be comfortable. Every step I took meant that I encountered an interruption, an obstacle to the default comportment mode in terms of which I was operating. But in the veld context, what was required was a different default comportment, one that matched or coincided with the terrain rather than one that viewed it as a collection or series of obstacles to overcome.

By the time of my second hour in the veld, I was moving comfortably through the terrain, still highly conscious of my movements, but comfortable in them, or at least comfortable enough to notice a new set of problems, my clothing's suitability. For my hunting excursions, Jnr had leant me two pieces of clothing, a fleece jacket with a woodland camouflage pattern, and a pair of trousers made of very fine camouflage printed netting intended to be worn over regular trousers. Isaac and Jnr were wearing jackets of the same camouflage print; but, whereas my jacket was fleece, theirs were canvas. Fleece seems like a great idea as the fabric is quiet and does not 'rustle' when its wearer moves. Canvas on the other hand does produce a slight rustle as the fabric chafes

University of Cape Town

against itself when its wearer moves. Because both Isaac and Jnr walked holding their hands behind their back, Jnr cradling the stock of his rifle in his hands so that the rifle rested along his spine, its barrel protruding above his head, the canvas's potential to rustle was negated.

The significant difference between the fleece and the canvas was therefore not the noise each inherently afforded, but each's potential to trigger the noise potential of the sickle bush we were moving through. Canvas, being a harder fabric than fleece, the very reason it produces more noise than fleece, was largely immune to the sickle bush's spines, which easily penetrated and snagged the fleece. The result was that, despite my adopting a similar comportment to that used by my two companions, and despite my moving through much the same spaces they did, I had regularly to stop and, as quietly as possible, to disentangle myself from the thorny branches that just slid off their canvas jackets.

Worse than the fleece in this regard was the fine camouflage printed netting I wore over my trousers. Excellent as camouflage because the netting very effectively blurs its wearer's silhouette – apparently making it difficult for a stalked animal to discern a hunter against the background of vegetation – the netting trousers were particularly poorly suited to the surrounding vegetation. The netting, even more than the fleece, acted as a magnet to low sickle bush growth, and the low point during our pursuit of the errant *gemsbok* was when Isaac had to help untangle the netting from a fence we had to cross at the mid-point of our figure eight circuit, while I sat gracelessly and helplessly on the ground, leaning back on my elbows, my right leg awkwardly snagged on barbed wire high above my head.

Later, Jnr added to my sense of my equipment's the shortcomings, pointing out that the boots I was wearing were 'noisy'. He explained that, because of their hard rubber soles and hard leather uppers, rigidly moulded together to create a hollow space around my foot, rather than tightly hugging it, the boots were unsuited to hunting as they tended to amplify the sounds the boots generated when brought into contact with objects on the ground. Kicking a stone produced a resonating hollow echo, the hard sole picking up the sound and the hard leather functioning like a soundbox and amplifying the noise.

University of Cape Town

The consequent beat betrayed my position to the *gemsbok* each time I moved. Similarly, the sound of grains of sand crunching against each other under the boot was amplified.

This effect was, however, largely reduced once I had found an appropriate way of moving, which included placing my foot down from outer to inner edge rather than from heel to toe, and thus reducing the noise generated by my footfalls. Jnr nonetheless suggested that I could in future avoid the problem altogether by wearing tighter fitting soft rubber soled fabric shoes such I had worn the previous day.

Hunters have to know how to move if they are to enter a contest with their quarry

I had, a few months before my fieldwork, been discursively introduced to the transformed movement that I then learned whilst pursuing the errant *gemsbok*. This occurred during a conversation in which my colleague, JK, performed a rather odd pantomime to illustrate the movement to me in his office. It was an impromptu lecture on the importance of being able, smoothly, to resolve the position one is in while stalking, and the terrain and cover one is stalking through, into a stable shooting platform from which accurately to fire a lethal shot. As JK explained, in those situations the hunter needs to be as quiet as possible, to limit his movements as much as possible, and to get an accurate, stable and unobstructed shot off as quickly as possible. Through his performance, at roughly 08h30 on a Monday morning in an otherwise normal academic's office, office chairs became bushes, a desk became a tree branch and JK stalked between them before readying himself as if to fire what he said would be a shot into an imaginary animal's neck.

He did this to demonstrate that the final stalk to get into position for a killing shot is always unpredictable; that one has to attend closely to the available cover, the quality of the ground, be it grassy, rocky or sandy, the direction of the wind which has to be from the direction of the animal lest it smell one, the presence of twigs or long grasses capable of interfering with the bullet's trajectory as it rips towards the animal. What I understood from JK's performance, was that a hunter has to be able to move quietly

University of Cape Town

and within the limits dictated by the action possibilities and constraints of the immediate environment to get into a position, also dictated by possibilities and constraints, from which a killing shot is possible.

What JK was demonstrating was that, if the wind's direction required one to approach from an angle that took one through thick bush, one might have to crawl, or even leopard crawl to exploit the cover afforded by that bush and thereby avoid being seen, heard or smelled. However, adopting such positions might preclude a clear shot free of twigs and other intervening objects. Upon reaching a position from which to shoot, one might have to shift into a position from which one could get a clear shot. JK described this required shift in one's position as a very risky moment because, to see the animal clearly, to take aim and to fire, is to be in a position from which the animal can actually see at least part of one. The shift in position therefore needs to happen as quickly as possible. However, a hunter's rapid movement risks attracting the animal's eyes or ears which will see the hunter lose the shot.

At this point in the lecture he was delivering in his office, he was virtually on all fours in a low crouch behind an office chair that he had crept towards from behind the desk. He slipped his left foot slightly forward and sank his weight down onto his right, bending it until his knee rested firmly on the carpet. His imaginary rifle came up in a fluid motion leaving him crouching, left elbow resting on left knee, rifle shouldered, weight distributed evenly between a tripod formed by his left foot, his right knee and that foot's toes. He could believably have fired a well-aimed and accurate shot from this position, but he noticed, just as he was about to fire, some low hanging branches in his line of fire, and a tree branch just to his right.

He explained that, because of the twigs on the imaginary low hanging branches springing from the bookshelf against the office wall, there was a chance that the bullet might be deflected and thus miss or only wound the animal. Also, he explained, one should always take a dead rest[14] when one can, and the tree branch to his right, the

[14] A dead rest is simply something independently stable upon which one can rest one's rifle to minimize any potential error resulting from one's own minor movements as one shoots.

University of Cape Town

corner of his desk, afforded such an opportunity. Without lowering his rifle he quietly and quickly shifted his weight onto his left foot, slid his right leg to his right, shifted his weight back onto it and brought his left leg into line again. Settling the rifle on the desk-branch he was once again ready to fire. Judging his shooting platform suitably stable and his line of fire suitably free of any interferences, he inhaled, exhaled half the breath and slowly squeezed off the shot.

JK was not a man given to flights of fancy or to stalking around his office with an imaginary rifle in pursuit of imaginary game. He was a serious man; and a serious hunter – possibly the most serious hunter I encountered during my research. His seriousness was what lay behind that morning's conversation; his passion for hunting is what lay behind the demonstration.

In an interview a week earlier with an avid reloader named Willie, who claimed to have published numerous articles on reloading and ballistics in hunting magazines, we had touched on actual shooting skill and development of that skill. I had put it to Willie that I had experienced the shooting range as a space dominated not by hunting but by reloading: an activity that, while associated with hunting, in that hunters do it, is a hobby in itself. Reloading involves developing one's own ammunition, experimenting with differently sized charges in the cartridges, differently weighted bullets and with positioning the bullet to particular depths within the cartridge, all in pursuit of the best grouping, in other words the highest degree of precision.

My experience of the shooting range was dominated by reloading. Men arrived with a few batches of prepared ammunition, set up a target at 125 metres and then shot three rounds from each batch, the specifications of which were carefully recorded beforehand. The shots were fired off sand bags resting on a perfectly stable shooting table so as to minimize any influence the person pulling the trigger might have on the shot's accuracy. Typically a shooter fired at 30+ second intervals to allow the barrel to cool between shots and then waited several minutes between batches to allow his rifle to cool off completely to ensure that each batch was tested under the same conditions. Between each three shot volley the target was collected and the grouping's size, defined by the distance between the two most widely spaced bullet holes, measured and noted. The

University of Cape Town

batch associated with the smallest grouping was considered the best, and exemplified what ammunition would be produced in preparation for a hunting trip. Some men arrived with machines for measuring the velocity with which a bullet leaves the barrel; others asked them for an opportunity to test the velocity of their own most precise batch if they had no machine of their own. Conversation between testing was about the specifications of particularly good or bad batches, and the shooters advised one another about variables to change to improve one's ammunition's performance.

My experience at and on the shooting range, I explained to Willie, was restricted to having accompanied one man, Johan, a lawyer and deputy president of the local branch of the South African Hunters and Game Conservation Association. Johan was a keen reloader and, I told Willie, I felt that this may have skewed my experience of the shooting range. Willie's response was that he thought not. His own experience of the shooting range was similar, as was Andre's, James' and Melville's. Like James, Willie expressed an opinion that people who visited the range did so *om die geweer in te skiet* (lit: 'to shoot the rifle in' similar to (previously) driving a new car in; in other words, to set their rifle scope for precision) and to test batches of ammunition in preparation for a hunting trip. As a hunter with a tremendous interest in the technicalities of reloading and ballistics, Willie said he regretted that hunters tended not to match their work of perfecting their equipment, rifles and ammunition, with work to improve their own ability as marksmen. He held up my colleague, JK, the political scientist who performed a stalk for me in his office, as an exception to this tendency, explaining that JK often visited the shooting range and practised getting into and firing from a range of positions, crouching, standing and lying. For this reason, among others, Willie regarded JK as the finest example of a complete hunter he knew.

When I encountered JK at our place of work on Monday the following week, I asked him about Willie's characterization of activity at the shooting range. JK confirmed my experience and Willie's opinion regarding the technical and technological focus of the shooting range and launched into the office stalk in order to make the point that being able to successfully kill the animal one is pursuing requires an ability to adapt to and be competent in relation to the terrain's enabling and constraining factors relative to one's

University of Cape Town

goal. He explained that, while one's equipment must obviously be in order, success or failure in a hunt depends far more on one's own skills, being able to walk properly, and being able to shoot accurately from whatever position was possible in the circumstances of a particular stalk.

The *gemsbok* easily won the encounter described above and, while I am still certain that my ill-suited equipment and my novice comportment were factors, my feeling responsible for our failure was significantly lessened when Jnr told me later that this was a particularly *skelm* (cunning) *bok* that had beaten him and Isaac in the past. A week later, when Snr's cousin, Jan, returned to the farm and was also bested by the animal, I was able to put all such guilt aside.

The hunting nature object-world emerges from the transformations in movement and perception that the contest with the quarry requires of hunters. No contest, no hunting nature

What the above two episodes from my education in moving through the bush to hunt illustrate is the extent to which a transformed embodiment is required, one that stems from the practical unfaltering requirements of pursuing an antelope. Prominent in my memory are sickle bush branches, the grasses and the sand. The reason for their prominence in my memory is their being the objects, derived from the action possibilities I perceived in the terrain I was moving through, that most threatened to expose my presence to the animal.

While I tried, and was occasionally able, to see the tracks Isaac was following, my focus was on remaining invisible to the animal's senses and I paid little attention to following it. What I found interesting in terms of the above pursuit, structured as it was by my striving to become the inverse of the animal's senses, was the degree to which my sense of sight became subordinate to my sense of hearing. I do not mean that I was primarily sensing the environment around me through my ears. What I mean is that my eyes were mostly occupied with the need to perceive potential sound.

University of Cape Town

If one can hear oneself move, hear the rustle of the grass and the crunch of the sand beneath ones feet, the crack of a twig, the thump of a kicked stone or the shaking of a branch as it springs back into its original position after snagging ones clothing, so can the animal. In this situation, to see the grass is to see the potential rustle. It is one's visual sense that one uses to select the quietest route; to avoid the gravel and to step on the fine sand. To see a twig is to primarily see the potential crack that will result from stepping on it so one places one's foot next to it. In such a context, where one's primary goal is to evade the animal's sense of hearing, one identifies objects according to their potential to generate noise or not. This sensory transformation, coupled with a transformation in movement, as they both relate to the goal of approaching a stalked animal, are the two chief characteristics of the embodiment that produces and experiences hunting nature. The hunting nature object-world, in other words, emerges from the embodiment resulting from and produced by a hunter's attempt to become invisible to his quarry.

After he had killed his imaginary animal in his office that Monday morning, I gently teased JK about his stalking around the office. He chuckled, seeing the comic side of it, but quickly went on to reinforce his point and reiterated that being able to walk in the veld is a skill, as is being able, quickly and quietly, to get into a shooting position, as is the ability to shoot accurately and quickly. As he explained, these skills are the main factors determining a hunter's success or failure. Isaac, during my *gemsbok* stalk with him and Jnr, exemplified the movement JK argued was essential to hunting success.

The tall task of creating contests between quarry and outmatched hunters on commercial farms

Two months after my unsuccessful pursuit of the *gemsbok* with Jnr and Isaac, I accompanied another hunter, visiting the farm as part of a group of employees from the agricultural cooperative in a nearby small town, in his search for an animal to shoot. His decided lack of skill confirmed JK's argument, but from an opposing perspective.

I dubbed this hunter 'the penguin' when recounting to Jnr my experience of walking with him later that day. This disdainful title derived from my being extremely frustrated whist

University of Cape Town

accompanying him on a hunt. After two months, by then, of near daily practice of moving quietly when pursuing animals, I found his noisy, shuffling gait and inattentive manner offensive. I dubbed him the penguin because he waddled, holding his feet outward in an accidental emulation of Charlie Chaplin and dragging them as he shuffled along with little regard to the scraping, crunching and rustling of sand, twigs and grasses. While George, Isaac's brother and fellow guide on the farm, who was assigned to the penguin searched through the bushes, listened for any game signs, watched for tracks and checked any dung we passed for its freshness, the penguin constantly checked his cell phone and, each time we encountered a pocket of network coverage, paused to send a text message, either to his son (to enquire about his university results), or to one of his fellow hunters to ask about their progress. Only two things betrayed any intention to hunt: his carrying a rifle; and his occasionally kicking up a puff of dust in order to determine the wind direction. I was surprised by the level of disdain his attitude and lack of ability inspired in me, and took this as an indication of my having become sufficiently competent that such incompetence in the field annoyed me. If George, felt the same way, he did not show it, as he dutifully carried the penguin's cooler bag, and his jacket too once the day began to warm.

I was relatively sure that we were not going to encounter any game, given the noise the penguin generated as we moved along. After about an hour and a half, however, upon reaching one of the roads, George quickly crouched and with his hand signalled us to do the same. I crouched alongside George. The penguin had first to fish his rifle out from under his arm and replace his mobile phone in his pocket. By the time he eventually got down I could see the wildebeest George had spotted staring curiously in our direction, its nose raised as if sniffing for signs of danger. In his struggle to marshal himself into a crouch the penguin had not yet seen the animal, so George indicated the direction with his hand and, shouldering an imaginary rifle, suggested the position he should get himself into in order to take a shot.

Knowing that it was just a matter of seconds before the animal's suspicion was sufficiently raised for it to move off, I was stunned when the penguin began fumbling in his pockets for ammunition and began loading his rifle. The common practice I had

University of Cape Town

observed was that hunters walked with a round in the rifle's chamber, the safety catch on and the bolt action's lever up in order to deactivate the firing pin. Hunters did that so that they could ready their rifles for a shot by lowering the lever to close the chamber and enable the firing pin, and by releasing the safety catch.

After eventually getting the rifle loaded, the penguin elected to stand up for the shot. This is generally a poor idea as it is a far less stable position from which to shoot than is a crouch. The decision to stand was particularly bad given that George had indicated he should shoot from a crouch to enable him to get a clear shot while the bush we were behind continued to hide his body. Not only was so large a movement unlikely to pass unnoticed by the already alert animal, but the penguin's shoulders and head protruding above the bush would render camouflage useless by cutting a neat silhouette against the morning sky. As he stood and shouldered his rifle the animal turned and entered the bushes on the road's edge. With that, the penguin lost as perfect a shooting opportunity as I had seen.

Two weeks previously, I had witnessed a hunter, Stefan, put a bullet into the tip of the raised nose of a wildebeest from 80 metres as it stared, head raised, towards his position in exactly the same fashion. He explained to me at the time that it is not ordinarily a good idea to aim for an animal's nose as such a shot can produce a terrible wound and fail to kill the animal. However, because of the raised muzzle, the bullet in this case travelled straight from nose to brain, shattering the skull so that the animal had died before it hit the ground. To be sure, such a shot is risky and not to be recommended, but Stefan's sound knowledge of the animal's anatomy and his confidence in his clear shooting ability, resulted in a clean kill.

As the penguin's wildebeest disappeared into the bush I became aware of more wildebeest visible in the bushes. Because the one George had first spotted had not bolted, he was able to scout a few metres forward for another shooting opportunity. Finding a position from which he judged there to be a shot on a second animal, he beckoned the penguin to join him. Recognising the explosive snorting coming from the bushes as a sign that the herd was anxious, and not wanting to risk generating any movement or sound that might cause the herd to bolt, I stayed put. From the exchange

University of Cape Town

between George and the penguin I could tell that the latter was having trouble seeing the animal George was trying to point out to him. The animal was moving slowly away from us, taking a few steps, then pausing, then taking a few more. To keep it in view along a line of sight suited to taking a shot, George gradually guided the penguin back towards where I was crouching and towards the road's centre. After each such move, the penguin again battled to locate the animal. The animal would each time move on while the penguin battled until George would again have to move the penguin to re-establish a line of sight to the animal. Eventually, after what felt to me like two or three minutes had passed since George had first stopped us, the penguin acquired his target. At that point he was bending forward at the waist, his legs straight, his hands on his knees for support, his head up, neck straining to manage this awkward position. He could see the animal but could not shoot from such a position, and as he attempted to resolve his pose into the crouch required to shoot through the gap George was directing him to, the herd bolted.

While the penguin was hands down the worst hunter I encountered, few other hunters that visited the farm were as capable as Jnr, for the simple reason that they only had opportunity to hunt once or twice a year and then in the context of a two night hunting trip. Reflecting on James's having told me in an interview that it takes two days to be able to 'look through the bush' that is, to acquire the mode of visual perception required to spot game, hunters purchasing two night hunting trips do not have the time to acclimatize their senses to hunting's challenges. That it takes time to develop the required mode of visual perception, and practice to maintain it, is why the penguin battled so to see the animal George was pointing out to him, and why several hunters commented on my 'good eyes' when I pointed out to them game they had missed near the road or off a route we were walking. Because it took time to acclimatize visual perception to the task of spotting game, very few hunters shot anything on their first day unless they did so from a hide. Because neither their senses nor their movement were yet fully up and running for hunting, they encountered too few animals, while walking, to be able to enter into and win any contest with them. Most hunters shot their quota on the final day of their hunting visit as pressure mounted and their willingness to shoot in association with or from the loadbox of a *bakkie* increased.

University of Cape Town

One hunting group visited the farm from a nearby mining town as part of a team building exercise paid for by the engineering supplies company that employed them. Its members were particularly lucky with shooting *gemsbok*: three of the party's eight hunters each managed to shoot one. Yet each such *gemsbok* kill was very different from my *gemsbok* pursuit described above, resulting as it did from a random opportunity out of keeping with the sort of challenge the hunters I interviewed claimed to seek. Cecil, the first hunter in the group to succeed did so on the first evening of their two night stay on the farm. Jnr and I picked the hunters up from the hunting lodge at around 15h00 and drove them out to several water points where they wait in hides for game to come to drink. Roughly three hours later at sunset, we went out to collect them and found that two had killed animals. Cecil's son had shot a *rooibok* and a small warthog (so small that Jnr had teased him by asking if he had wiped the milk off the animal's mouth after he shot it, implying that it was a suckling baby). Cecil, from a hide at a different water point, had shot a large female *gemsbok* that had fled a short distance into the thick bush surrounding the open area housing the *krip* (small cement dam). He had wounded the animal, not unusual given that *gemsbok* are considered tough antelopes and that their vital area, heart and lungs, sits lower than in most other antelope species resulting in many hunters failing to kill them outright because they shoot too high. Upon our arrival at the water point Jnr had to lead Cecil into the bush in the failing light to look for a wounded animal armed with a pair of metre long horns; horns it might have wielded deftly. After the episode ended, Cecil told the group that, if one throws a stone at a wounded *gemsbok* as it lies on the ground, it will use its horns to bat the stone away, so capable is it of wielding them.

I, always uncomfortable as the animal breathed out the last of its life, never had the heart to test this empirically but took Jnr at his word when he told us all to wait by the vehicle, saying that as a wounded *gemsbok* could be very dangerous. The other hunters and I waited in the clearing around the water point to be summoned to help retrieve and load the animal. Fifteen minutes later, after two shots from Jnr's rifle had shattered the quiet darkness, we entered the bush, dragged the animal out and, being mindful to avoid the rapier-sharp horns, managed to load it.

University of Cape Town

Cecil, the hunter who had shot the animal was ecstatic, describing how, while he was sitting in the hide, the animal had wandered into the clearing and he had taken his opportunity. The gushing tale in the *bakkie's* open loadbox, as we drove towards the farm abattoir and butchery to drop off the carcasses, did not focus on the challenge of the hunt, or his victory in a contest. There was little challenge after all, and he had anyway failed to kill with an easy 50 metre unpressured shot from a concealed position. He had merely waited in a hide, shot what came his way, and shot poorly. His tale focussed instead on the danger of pursuing a wounded *gemsbok* into the bush in the dark and knowing it was not dead, and about how dangerous its horns were. His brush with danger seemed, from his story, to be the significant part of his experience. It was this encounter in the dark that was the extent of his relationship to the animal. He did not relate to it in terms of his having had to pit his skills against its in a protracted pursuit in which he was able to avoid its finely honed senses to stalk it and get into a position from which to kill it. He related to it only through what he believed was its finely honed ability to run him through with its sharp horns. It was during those fifteen minutes that he and Jnr spent looking for it in the dark that Cecil seemed to have found the other world of hunting, and he returned to the vehicle, after Jnr had delivered the two fatal shots, as if on a high, rushing on the experience.

The second *gemsbok* taken by a group member occurred equally opportunistically the following day while Jnr and I were collecting hunters who had been taken into the veld for the morning session. We always drove slowly when collecting or dropping off hunters and their assigned guides. Driving was thus always an opportunity to spot potential targets for the hunters. Whoever was driving would stop in response to a tap on the cab's roof indicating that someone on the *bakkie* back had spotted an animal. A hunter would then dismount and move to a position from which to take a shot. Angle and distance permitting, they would occasionally use the *bakkie* as a dead rest or else move a short distance away from it to get a clear firing line.

On this occasion, Jnr spotted a *gemsbok* standing in some long grass near a small sickle grove. Quinton, who like Cecil held a management position in the company and who was due to take the shot, quickly dismounted. Jnr then led him back along the

University of Cape Town

road about twenty metres to a point from which he could get a clear line for a shot at the animal. Jnr then offered him his shoulder and Quinton rested the rifle on it as a dead rest. The shot rang out followed almost immediately by the thump of a 9,3mm round thundering into the antelope's side. The animal set off, running perhaps thirty metres parallel to the road away from Quinton and Jnr then wheeled to its left and came to a faltering halt. Jnr rapidly lead Quinton off the road, further into the veld and a few metres to their left and again offered Quinton his shoulder as a dead rest. Quinton attempted to steady himself for a shot but Jnr stopped him just before the animal's legs buckled beneath it and it sank to the ground. Later Jnr teased Quinton in front of the group about how much he was shaking, saying that the barrel was bouncing around on his shoulder and that he had stopped Quinton from shooting against the possibility that the panic and shock from a second wounding shot might cause the animal to bolt.

Jnr then reclaimed his rifle from Quinton and cautiously approached the wounded animal; its sides heaving under the strain of its wound; pink froth bursting from its mouth with each ragged breath indicating a lung shot; its eyes wide and reeling. As we approached, the animal began jerking its head upward and rolled from side to side as it tried and repeatedly failed to gain its footing. Jnr delivered a *coup de grâce*. The hunters then lit cigarettes and shook Quinton's hand to congratulate him. After Jnr, Isaac and George had cleared the ground around the carcass and Jnr had taken a photograph of Quinton smiling over his *gemsbok*, we loaded it and continued towards the farm abattoir and butchery. Comparing Quinton's killing this *gemsbok* to what the hunters I interviewed described as a good hunt, it becomes clear that Quinton's kill lacked the competitive structured play component central to those other hunters' accounts. Although he got his *gemsbok*, in the absence of a contest between him and the animal, he perhaps failed to get it in the context of an experience of what I have argued constitutes hunting nature. It exemplifies what Louis, in an interview quoted in the previous chapter, termed *skiet* (shooting) rather than *jag* (hunting).

On the basis of my fieldwork observation of the three hunters that regularly hunted on the farm outside of the commercial context, namely Jnr, Andre (a stonemason who visited the farm weekly to secure stock for his flea market venison business), and Jan

University of Cape Town

(Snr's cousin), I would argue that the skill of anticipating one's quarry's behaviour is an additional important skill alongside shooting, walking and sensing, a skill that hunters like Quinton, Cecil and the penguin lacked, as did I. I did not observe hunters in commercial groups exhibiting any ability to anticipate their quarry's behaviour. Like shooting, walking and sensing quarry, anticipating a quarry's behaviour requires practice and experience. Whereas walking requires skills related to defeating the animal's senses, anticipation is needed to defeat the animal's wits or to predict when an opportunity will present itself.

During the six hour pursuit of the *gemsbok* which I described earlier, I was astounded that, while we were twice able to hear it moving through the bush, none of Jnr, Isaac nor I saw it. I had an opportunity to see four *gemsbok* close up during my stay on the farm. They are large animals, standing about 120cm to the shoulder, with long straight horns that can be over a metre long, giving the 200 odd kilogramme animal a formidable presence that I still battle to reconcile with its stealth. It was, as I have indicated, as if the animal understood enough about hunting to repeatedly foil our attempts to achieve a line of sight from which to take a shot.

On the return leg of our first circuit during that unsuccessful hunt, along the western half of the figure of eight, the errant *gemsbok* had even gone onto the road and galloped down it, using his superior speed to generate distance between us and him before entering the bush at the very point at which we had begun the pursuit. Jnr attempted to outsmart him on the second circuit, moving directly off the trail and onto the road after instructing Isaac and me to continue following its tracks. Jnr's plan was to ambush the animal and take a shot when it again entered the road; but, to his disappointment, the animal remained just off the road under cover of the bushes. While it was as if he was aware of Jnr's ruse, it was more likely that, because the wind was blowing from the east, its nose had alerted it to keep track of us on each circuit's westward return leg.

On each circuit's eastward leg, the *gemsbok* exhibited another cunning move, leading us along a stretch of rock at the top of a small rise and thus making it difficult for us to find and follow its tracks. At several points, Isaac would lose the tracks and, presented with two potential paths the animal may have taken at forks in the game trail, would,

University of Cape Town

with a flick of his hand, silently indicate one to Jnr and himself take the other. This effectively generated distance by slowing us down, as one party member would inevitably be on the wrong trail and would have to double back to re-join the one that reacquired the correct trail.

It is, of course, highly unlikely that the *gemsbok* had any knowledge of hunting beyond its recognizing us as predators and its working to prevent us from gaining a position from which to attack. Our endeavours were to subvert the sensory array that is its defence and to gain the required position for a shot, or, alternatively, to anticipate its movement and move along a tangent in order to counteract its evasive manoeuvring – as Jnr did unsuccessfully when he broke from the trail and returned to the road. The apparent cunning evident in the *gemsbok*'s evasive manoeuvring is part of what Louis meant when, in his interview, he characterized hunting as a battle of skills; it is why Andre thinks of the animals he hunts as opponents in a contest. The skills of hunting are to be able to sense the animal, to become invisible to the animal's senses and to anticipate its response to one's presence if it does become aware of one.

The best example I encountered of the role that such anticipation plays in hunting success was one that occurred while I was out hunting blue wildebeest with Snr's cousin, Jan. While driving around scouting for them, we spotted a large group in the bushes to our right. Jan stopped the *bakkie* and we dismounted and moved into the bush to get closer to the herd. They had already noted the *bakkie's* presence and were visibly restless; but they did not move off. We moved a short distance into the bush, crouching low to avoid them seeing us. Jan picked out a large cow, took aim and fired. This was the first kill I would witness and I was nervous. Worried that I would find it disturbing, a part of me was hoping he would miss, and a part was hoping that it would be a clean kill. Milliseconds after the shot rang out the sound of the bullet striking the target reached us, the cow looked as if she was about to run, took a step or two, faltered and collapsed dead.

As soon as the shot rang out, the rest of the herd bolted, fleeing parallel to the road in the direction we had been driving. It was my first close view of so many wildebeest in full flight, and the near black shapes visible as blurs in the gaps between the trees and

University of Cape Town

the sickle bush was an impressive sight, the low rumble of their hooves beating their escape almost perceivable through the ground. Then they wheeled left, heading for the road and I stood amazed by their power and grace as one after the other and in groups they leapt into and over the dirt track to disappear into the bush to our left.

This was a sight I would witness many more times through my stay on the farm but frequency did nothing to diminish its beauty. From my perspective that first day, the game was up and there would surely not be a second shot since the first had given us away and the herd would escape. Jan, however, quickly made his way back to the *bakkie*, opened the door and, standing behind it to use the open window as a dead rest for his rifle, settled into position and readied himself for another shot. I made my way quickly to a position behind him so that I was obscured from view by both him and the open door. Initially I was worried he was going to try and hit one as it sped across the road. Having just witnessed my first kill my heart was racing, and seeing juveniles crossing with the herd, my desire was for the animals to escape. Jim, the ex professional hunter I interviewed before my fieldwork period, had warned me against anthropomorphizing animals, telling me that they did not have the same emotional world as humans, something I needed, but found difficult, to keep in mind as Walt Disney inspired thoughts of forest families came to the fore.

As the herd's tail end approached the road, I heard Jan whisper "*gaan staan*" (stand still) as he crouched down to look through his rifle's scope. To my amazement, and disappointment, a bull ambled out onto the road as if guarding the passage, stopped and turned its head to look directly at us where we stood forty metres away. No sooner had his head come full around than the shot rang out, followed almost immediately by the thwack of bullet breaking flesh and bone. The bull leapt sideways as if startled, twisting away from the impact and the pain and bolted straight into the bushes. Jan swore, and we walked to where the bull had stood to pick up the blood trail and track it into the bush. An hour later we found it dead in a dense thicket about 500 metres away from where it was shot. Examining the wound Jan realized that he had not properly altered his shot placement to account for the animal being slightly turned towards us and, as a result, of the angle at which the bullet had struck the animal, it had only

University of Cape Town

passed partially through one lung and into the gut. This apparently accounted for the animal running so far, and I winced at the thought of its enduring that distance.

I was reminded of Jan's being able to anticipate the likelihood of a male stopping briefly after the herd had passed while accompanying the penguin. After the penguin had botched his second opportunity to shoot a wildebeest in the episode I described earlier, the herd had bolted. Rather than fleeing directly away from us the animals fled across the road in the direction from which we had come, a move that would put them downwind from us and thereby make it impossible for us to approach them unnoticed again. Once again, I was presented with the majesty of a large group of these massive animals in full flight across a road, no more than fifty metres away from where I stood. Seemingly the penguin assumed, as I had done that first day with Jan, that the game was up and he lowered his rifle and stood there, in the road, appreciating the spectacle. George had moved back to the initial cover where I still crouched, remembering Jan's whisper as the herd's tail approached. George and I crouched, hidden, and waited to see if a male would pause at the herd's rear. The penguin was not expecting such a pause and, to be fair to him, this was the second and only other time I experienced it, and I saw many groups run off with no trailing male protectively lingering. Because the penguin did not ready himself in anticipation of this possibility, he was unable to get his rifle raised and into a position from which to fire before the animal which did indeed stop snorted and took off after the rest of the herd. George and I exchanged a slight smile and we made our way to a nearby hide, where the penguin napped in a camping chair until Jnr arrived to pick us up for lunch.

Another example of the effectiveness of being able to predict the behaviour of the animals one pursues occurred on a late afternoon drive with, Jnr, Snr, and a farm labourer named John to put *lek* at several of the water points. As was usually the case, Jnr and Snr sat in the cab and John and I on the back of the *bakkie,* and we slowly toured from water point to water point. About half way through this particular trip, during which I, as usual, practiced trying to look through the bush and spot game, we came across a herd of *rooibok* about one hundred metres into the bush on our right. Jnr, who was driving, stopped the *bakkie* and dismounted with his .22 rifle. He instructed his

University of Cape Town

father, Snr, to drive the *bakkie* up to the northern fence and to leave the engine running while we waited for him. We did so, and Snr and I stood next to the *bakkie* talking for about a half hour before Jnr emerged from the bush nearby, a *rooibok* draped over his shoulders, its blood staining his shirt's front. He was very pleased that his ruse had worked, the animals were focused on the *bakkie* and its noise, associating it with the dangers of being hunted. He was therefore able to stalk to a distance at which the .22 would be able effectively to kill one while we preoccupied their attention. This was only possible because he knew how they would respond relative to the *bakkie*.

Illustrated by the contrast between Jan and Jnr and Andre, on the one hand, together with the challenge presented by the *gemsbok* Jnr was unable to shoot, and, on the other hand, Cecil, Quinton and the penguin is the set of compromises necessitated by the constraints of a typical commercial hunt's two night duration. Neither Cecil nor Quinton could shoot well; the first had wounded the animal he shot from 50 metres, despite his having a fixed dead rest in the hide and his being under no pressure to take the shot quickly. The second had also wounded the animal he shot, and was shaking so much that Jnr intervened to prevent him from taking a second shot. That they shot from a hide and in association with the *bakkie* relates to their having to take opportunities as they arose in order to try to get their wish list of animals, paid for in advance[15], within the visit's limited time. The picture of their skills deficit relative to the challenge of stalking an animal and shooting it is rounded out by the images of the penguin. He failed sufficiently to integrate his motion and equipment to use the first opportunity to shoot a wildebeest when George pointed out the first animal in the herd we had encountered the morning he had taken the penguin out hunting. He also failed to spot the second opportunity George repeatedly tried to point out to him from their position on the road; and he then failed to anticipate and ready himself for the possibility of a bull pausing on the road for a third opportunity at a shot. Many, indeed most of these visitor hunters did not have the skill set required to enter into what recognised

[15] Cecil's group was the only group to visit the farm during my fieldwork period that paid for the animals they intended to shoot in advance. More accurately they paid over a sum of money and Jnr deducted the cost of each shot animal from that sum until the whole sum was used up. Hunting parties usually paid for the animals they shot on the morning of their departure.

University of Cape Town

good hunters treated as a contest with their quarry. They had therefore to rely on other means in order to get their quota of animals during the course of their two night stay on the game farm.

Farmers' staging the contest between hunters and quarry to compensate for hunters' skills deficit and the time pressure of the commercial contest

My argument of the previous chapter was that the hunting nature that the biltong hunters I interviewed sought from hunting trips emerged out of structured competitive play, out of what they perceived as a contest between them and their quarry. How might it be possible for hunters such as Quinton or Cecil to enter into such a contest when their skills as hunters are so lacking relative to those of the animals they are hunting? The answer lies, I suggest, in what I would call the relative character of affordances. Affordances are relative to the capabilities of organisms; and organisms' capabilities can be functionally extended through technologies. The practice of hunting that I encountered during the season I spent on the game farm was different from the pursuit of a form of challenging and structured competitive play that the hunters I had earlier interviewed had emphasised. Hunters on two day visits were content to shoot opportunistically, the decisive factor involved in determining whether or not they shot a particular animal they encountered being whether or not they could get themselves ready to shoot a decent shot at it before the opportunity was lost. All the visitor hunters with whom I walked and drove around were under time pressure and were inclined to settle for what came their way. All were willing to extend their capacity to get their animals through the use of hides and the *bakkie*.

Faced with visiting hunters' skills deficit *vis a vis* an ideal hunting nature, the time pressure under which those hunters had to operate, and being dependent on these hunters' success for their income, Jnr and Snr worked hard to stack the landscape in the hunters' favour much as a gambler might cheat by stacking a deck of cards in order to beat an opponent. This stacking in favour of visitor hunters took several forms. I argue in what follows that in each form of stacking, hunting nature emerged out of the constraints and opportunities that limited and enabled visitor hunters' movement,

University of Cape Town

perception and anticipation as those are required to approach and kill an animal. Jnr and Snr manipulated these constraints and opportunities by extending hunters' capacity to outmanoeuvre the animal or become invisible to it. The challenge that Jnr and Snr faced was to balance their manipulation so that visitor hunters were favoured just sufficiently that they might sense that they were entering into structured competitive play, and without their sensing that they were being favoured as to make structured competitive play impossible.

The most obvious landscape manipulation to afford visitor hunters shooting opportunities was the construction, around water points, of hides that extended hunters' ability to disappear from prey animals' senses. While the farm does not usually cater to trophy hunters, Jnr received an American trophy hunter during my first week on the farm. Scott, a wealthy engineer working in Saudi Arabia, was the only trophy hunter to visit the farm during my time there, but the preparations for his arrival are a good illustration of how the landscape was stacked relative to the skill deficit he was anticipated to arrive with, and time constraints all knew he would face. He had communicated to Jnr a list of five animal species he wanted to shoot and I witnessed a hide's construction on the farm's southern part in preparation for a particular trophy quality *gemsbok* Jnr identified as suitable for Scott.

Jnr selected an isolated sickle bush next to a water point roughly in the centre of a clearing neatly trimmed by the cattle that Snr still kept in the farm's south. The bush was roughly one and a half metres tall and was particularly broad, producing deep shadow below its long low spindly branches. Jnr instructed Isaac, George and Lucas, the guides assigned to construct the hide, to dig a hole about a metre deep on the bush's north eastern side, under its branches, and to pile the excavated dirt up around its front to form a low wall so that a pair of hunters could easily be concealed there. He further instructed them to then collect vegetation and densely pack it behind the hole to close any gaps through which light was visible so that any animal standing on the north eastern side would not be able to see the silhouettes of the hunters in the hole. To ensure that the animals would be on the north-eastern side he had George empty a bag of *lek* about 30 metres away from the hole on that side. To complete the subterfuge he

University of Cape Town

had the guides liberally cover the area with chicken droppings, acquired from a nearby chicken farmer, to mask the scent of the guides that had constructed it and the hunters that would occupy it should the wind be wrong on the day he was planning to use it. Jnr had the hide built in that particular place because he knew that there was a trophy quality male *gemsbok* in the area (the same *gemsbok* he, Isaac and I unsuccessfully pursued a few weeks thereafter) and he put the *lek* out in a bid to attract it to the spot so that Scott would have an opportunity to shoot it.

Directing your, the reader's, attention back to the six hour fruitless pursuit of the same *gemsbok*, and adding that the trophy hunter had only three days in which to get his total bag of five trophies, this sort of manipulation, in the service of expediency, was an absolute necessity. Because Scott had initially planned to take his animals with a bow, and since hides are common in bow hunting, he readily accepted this inroad into the challenge of pursuing and stalking the animals he was after. The same was not the case with the wildebeest Scott took two days later.

Scott failed to bag the *gemsbok* he was after on his visit's first day. He did however manage to shoot and kill the trophy quality male *nyala* he was after. He took the *nyala* with a hunting bow but made a terrible hash of the kill. I was very pleased, when I heard the story afterwards, that I had not been there to witness the six shots, four with a bow and two with Jnr's rifle, that it took to kill the animal. Because there were no trophy-quality *nyala* on Snr's farm, Jnr had arranged to shoot one of the *nyalas* on a neighbouring farm. He had also arranged to hunt a trophy quality wildebeest there the following day. However, upon hearing how poorly the *nyala* hunt had gone, the old woman running the neighbouring farm was livid and threatened to revoke their permission to hunt the wildebeest. In order to salvage the situation, and in response to her anger and wishing to avoid a repeat of the *nyala* incident with a much larger and tougher wildebeest, Jnr managed to convince Scott to abandon the bow and take the animal with Jnr's 9.3mm Mauser rifle. Using a 9.3x62mm cartridge, the rifle is suitable for dangerous game and, with its large knockdown power, Jnr was relatively convinced that Scott could bring down his wildebeest with relatively little drama.

University of Cape Town

Unwelcome beeping from my cell phone told me it was 04h00 and time to get up. The chill May air tempted me to take another couple of minutes under the covers. I knew, however, that Jnr would arrive to pick me up outside the farm storehouse in half an hour so I groaned through the shower and dressed in the light brown clothing I had brought with me in preparation for a day of walking in the bush. I had arranged with Jnr the night before that I would accompany him and Scott in pursuit of the wildebeest. Having learned of the *nyala's* grizzly death the previous day, I was very nervous at the prospect of witnessing another such episode.

After rushing through a large mug of coffee to warm and wake me, I pulled my jacket's collar tightly around my neck, put on my woollen skullcap and made my way out into the small semi-circle of light cast by a single bulb around the door to the flat Snr had allowed me to use during my fieldwork. There I smoked a cigarette in the hope of catching the farms dogs' attention. I was hoping to get their attention in a lit area rather than in the near total darkness of the roughly 50 metre distance between the door and the gate of the fenced-in area on which the farm house was located. The dogs did not notice me, so I swallowed my anxiety and set off at a pace that I hoped was a confident enough statement of belonging to win unhindered passage from the dogs. I almost jumped out of my skin when a thigh high black shape sped past me silently and, unseen in the darkness, near enough to brush my trouser leg as it passed. Interpreting this as a test of sorts I merely called out a greeting and left my pace unchanged as it circled back and forth a few metres away from me. Knowing that there were two other large dogs on the property, and knowing that they were there for protection, I was very pleased to reach the gate and get beyond it into the gravel parking area between the house compound and the farm's work buildings.

By this time, I was wide awake, more due to the walk's anxiety and stress than the coffee, but it was only once I was through the gate that I realized how unsuited to the task of keeping me warm the jacket I had brought was going to be. The fabric was unable to keep the wind out and the icy air cut right through

University of Cape Town

it, so that I stood shivering outside the gate until Jnr arrived to collect me. He emerged from the *bakkie* wearing a pair of short pants and a sweat shirt, a broad grin on his face and his hands jammed casually into his sweater's front pocket. I must have cut something of a pathetic figure outside the gate because he sarcastically asked me, through a grin, whether I was cold; and his grin broadened when I answered that I was. He was clearly untroubled by the cold, his stocky frame balanced relaxedly upon equally stocky legs was a stark contrast to my own scrawny tense huddle as I tried not to look as if I was in a hurry to get into the shelter of the *bakkie's* cab.

Once we had arrived at the hunting lodge, Jnr introduced me to Scott and I was pleased to learn that I would be driving, as this would keep me off the back of the *bakkie* and out of the cold. Jnr instructed me to drive very slowly towards a gate on the northern fence adjoining the neighbouring farm we were to pursue the wildebeest. He and Scott, still in search of a suitable *gemsbok* and of *rooibok*, stood on the *bakkie* back hoping to spot one. We arrived at the gate about 30 minutes, later having encountered nothing. There we met Huibrie, the neighbouring farm's professional hunter, who was to accompany us in pursuit of the wildebeest as part of Jnr's arrangement with the neighbouring farm's owner. After getting into Huibrie's *bakkie*, me in the cab with Huibrie, and Jnr and Scott on the back, a long slow day of searching began.

On the off chance that we might encounter a suitable *gemsbok* or *rooibok*, we took a circuitous route to the territory that the lone male wildebeest, selected as Scott's trophy animal, was known to frequent. Andre and I had seen him there the previous day as we drove along the fence separating the two farms. After a long delay during which we had to wait for a farm worker to bring a tractor to pull Huibrie's *bakkie* out of some mud, we moved to the wildebeest bull's territory and it was not long before we found him in a stretch of dense bush about 50 metres wide running between two parallel roads. When Jnr and Scott dismounted to approach, I was disappointed to see Scott carrying the bow. But, as they approached, the animal moved away through the strip of bush towards the road

University of Cape Town

beyond it. A game, resembling – from my perspective – one child chasing another around a table, had begun.

Scott and Jnr jumped back on board and we drove around to the road on the other side of the bushes. This time Scott attempted to stalk it using the *bakkie* as a backdrop to obscure his movement, but the animal passed back through to the side of the bush we had just come from. By this stage it was 11h00 and it was clear to all that Scott was not going to be able to get close enough to be able to use the bow, about 30-40 metres for such a large and tough animal. After driving back around to the side of the bush we had been on originally, only to have the animal flee through the narrow strip of bush for the third time, Scott got a shooting opportunity with Jnr's rifle after we had driven back around to complete half of our second circuit.

This time the animal did not pass all the way through the bush and Huibrie drove off the road into a large grassy patch, free of trees, and to about 80 metres from where the animal stood warily looking at us. With a bullet already in the chamber, Scott quickly stood up in the *bakkie* and, using the *bakkie's* hunting frame[16], for a dead rest, squeezed the trigger. We heard the impact of the bullet striking the animal, which wheeled around and ran back into the bush. The shot was a poor one that hit the wildebeest in the gut, a wound that could take hours to kill the animal. Jnr and Scott dismounted and ran towards where the animal had stood to pick up the blood trail. Huibrie and I remained in the *bakkie* hurriedly driving around to the road on the other side of the bushes and into which the animal had bolted. Rounding the edge of the strip of bush we saw it standing in the shade of a tree about 100 metres into a largely open grassy field. Huibrie sped to about 50m from its position stopped, flung open his door, stepped out, levelled his rifle and dropped the animal where it stood.

[16] A hunting frame is a structure constructed out of mettle bars that bolts onto the leadbox of a *bakkie*. It raises the height of the loadbox walls without reducing visibility and can be used by hunters on the loadbox as a deadrest.

University of Cape Town

Tellingly, after loading the animal and driving it back to the butchery on Snr's farm, where the horns measured in at a satisfying 30.5 inches (775 millimetres), comfortably within the Rowland Ward[17] minimum trophy size of 28.5 inches (724 millimetres), Scott said to me: "well now I have had the real African hunting experience, shooting off a truck." He was clearly disappointed. To have dropped his aspirations from taking his trophies with a bow to shooting this one with a rifle off the back of a *bakkie* had seemingly denied him the contest required for him to enter into hunting nature. As I show in Chapter Seven, in revisiting this kind of disappointment, narrative plays an important role in rehabilitating hunting experiences when the compromises demanded by hunting in a commercial context preclude proper entry into hunting nature, as was the case with Scott, and probably with Quinton too.

By here foregrounding Scott's attempt to get a *gemsbok*, the very same one Jnr, Isaac and I later pursued, and the challenges he faced in getting his wildebeest trophy, the point I am making is that the commercial context required compromises. In the case of the attempted *gemsbok* hunt, *lek*, and subterfuge were respectively employed to manipulate the animals' movements and to extend Scott's ability to disappear in order to avoid a potentially fruitless six hour pursuit that could not be accommodated in the space of three days of visitor hunting – especially given that Scott explicitly wanted five different trophies. In the case of the wildebeest, the *bakkie* was used to extend his capacity to outmanoeuvre the animal so as to make its escape next to impossible.

In both cases, technologies were employed to skew the structured competitive play in Scott's favour by extending his ability to outcompete his quarry. Because his walking and shooting in the southern African context were unpractised, there was a significant chance that he would lose a contest with the animals he wanted to shoot. Because the time available for Scott to get his trophies was limited, Jnr and Snr could not risk that eventuality, so Jnr encouraged him to make compromises. For Scott to leave without his trophies would have meant a direct income loss, as hunters only pay for what they

[17] Rowland Ward 's Records of Big Game (Rowland Ward, 2006) was first published in 1892 and is recognised as the authority on what counts as a trophy animal among the world's major game species. The book, now in its 27th edition lists the minimum measurements in terms of which an animal can be considered a trophy.

University of Cape Town

actually shoot, and might also have carried an indirect cost of his telling other hunters that the farm is a poor trophy hunting destination.

From the comment Scott made at the butchery about his having had a 'real African hunting experience', analysed in some detail above, I concluded that the compromise, for him, of shooting from the *bakkie's* loadbox in order to get his wildebeest trophy was too great, and that he regretted not having been able to engage in the contest that his initially wanting to hunt with a bow suggested he sought. Because the visiting biltong hunters, like Cecil and Quinton, did not limit their potential quarry in the same way as Scott had, by insisting on trophy quality kills, it was easier for Snr and Jnr to stack things in their favour without going too far; to skew the playing field without giving them a sense that the game had been ruined.

The first such manipulation I witnessed was during our regular drives around the farm to put *lek* out in the veld. Snr took great pride in his animals' health, and the carcasses I encountered on his farm were almost entirely tick free in comparison to those I encountered on his neighbour's farm, where, Huibrie confirmed, they did not put out *lek*. Snr claimed that this difference in parasite infestation proved *lek's* effectiveness in promoting his stock's health. I observed, however, that the *lek* also served a second purpose. It made the movement of animals on his farm predictable by attracting them to particular locations. The same result was achieved by distributing large salt blocks at water points. On many of the drives when I accompanied Jnr in preparation for visitor hunters' arrival consisted of our driving around inspecting salt blocks and their immediate surroundings for signs of recent activity, such as lick marks on the salt or fresh dung. On the basis of his observations of the presence or absence of tracks and dung around a salt block, Jnr would decide where to drop hunters off to walk routes that were likely to lead to encounters with the animals they sought.

During the season I was on the farm, the significance of the *lek* and salt in rendering animals' movements predictable to Jnr was heightened by the fact that there had been what Snr reported to be excessive unseasonal rain. As a result, there was sufficient veld water that animals had little reason to come to the water points. Provision of water is a very effective way of making game's movement predictable, a fact well illustrated by

University of Cape Town

all of the farm's hides being situated next to water points. The veld water to a large extent negated the effectiveness or usefulness of the hides constructed around these points, and placement of salt and mineral supplements at these locations was thus central to drawing animals there, and thereby ensuring that the hides would continue to afford shooting opportunities.

A similar strategy was employed to assist an old visitor hunter, Gert, who wanted to shoot a warthog with his crossbow. On the first afternoon session he was visiting, Jnr had dropped him off at a water point that warthogs frequented because of the rich covering of short green grass that they prefer to eat. After the session, Gert reported, with some displeasure, seeing no warthogs at all. Jnr and I both assured him that we often saw warthogs there. This did little to convince him, so Jnr said he would put some yellow corn out there early the next morning before picking the hunters up and once again dropping Gert at that spot. Gert never got his warthog, but I think that had to do with the unlikely approach to hunting warthogs that he employed. Lying in the long grass in a nearby tree's shade, accompanied daily by his giant cooler box, which he presumably accessed repeatedly enough to betray his presence, and once by his four year old grandson, was a strategy for which the weaknesses of the temptation of yellow corn was never going to be able to compensate.

On our regular *lek*-distribution drives I also observed a second manipulation. On the first such drive in which I participated, and after we had been driving for about fifteen minutes, Jnr stopped the *bakkie* and I noticed the barrel of a .22 rifle emerge from the passenger side window as Snr took aim at something in the trees. I could not see what he was aiming at but, after the shot rang out, a bird fell dead from the trees and John leapt down and ran to retrieve it. This happened three times more on that one trip and was a fixture of subsequent drives. John, with whom I sat on the *bakkie* back on such trips, reported not knowing why Jnr and Snr shot this particular bird species. Snr later explained to me that the birds they had shot were Grey Louries, commonly called *kwe* birds because of the sound of their calls. He explained that they shot the *kwe* birds to thin out their population because they interfered with hunting. As he told it, if these birds saw hunters they would follow them and their *kwe kwe* calls would broadcast their

University of Cape Town

location, making it impossible for them to approach any game. While *lek* or corn increased hunters' ability to predict game's movement and location, eliminating *kwe* birds removed an environmental resource in terms of which the game could become aware of hunters' movements and location.

By inspecting the areas around water points, salt blocks and *lek*, by driving around the farm regularly, and by talking to the guides about what animals they had seen while working on a hide, fence or water point, Jnr was able to construct and maintain a relatively accurate picture of game's movements and distribution on the farm. This intelligence, in conjunction with the use of *lek*, salt blocks and water, along with the thinning of the *kwe* bird population, and biltong hunters' willingness to shoot opportunistically, allowed Jnr to achieve the satisfactory compromise that he was not able to achieve with Scott.

The compromise was achieved through an effective standard practice founded on the manipulations mentioned above. Focussing on the distribution of salt blocks, *lek* and water, Jnr would inspect the sites for evidence of recent game movement and activity. This, together with his and the guides' game sightings, allowed Jnr to plan where to distribute hunters before a group arrived. By dropping them off with a guide at a particular point, and instructing the guide to lead them towards one of the hides, he ensured that the hunters would encounter animals while walking and thus have the opportunity to stalk them – that way to enable them to enter into a competition with them. Jnr hedged the risk of their not being able to shoot anything while walking by placing the session's walking component between a slow *bakkie* ride from the lodge to the drop-off point and a period of time in a hide, waiting to ambush game; followed thereafter by another slow *bakkie* ride back to the lodge. These slow drives' purpose was to scan the surrounds for potential targets. Visitor hunters on the farm thus got the opportunity to encounter animals and get the experience of being in hunting nature through structured competitive play on a playing field well skewed in their favour, albeit behind the scenes by Jnr's efforts. They also had the risk of failing to secure the meat they sought reduced by two technological interventions that extended their capacity to disappear and to outmanoeuvre the animals. This was definitely the case with the

University of Cape Town

penguin who, despite himself, managed to leave the farm smiling with a wildebeest and a sense of accomplishment.

Chapter Five: At Play in the Veld of Belonging: Symbolic Labour and the Enfolding of Nationalist Belonging into the Hunting Nature Object-World

In Chapters Three and Four I argued that hunting nature emerges out of a contest between the hunter and his quarry and is contingent, in the commercial context, on strategies to mitigate the threat posed to its emergence by hunting trips of short duration and of hunters' skills deficit. This chapter builds on that argument by showing how biltong hunters work to enfold an Afrikaner Nationalist myth within hunting nature. My goal in this chapter is to show that biltong hunters actively pursue the enfolding of an Afrikaner Nationalism of the past into a hunting nature object-world, and also that their doing that is a seeming contradiction – one that emerged in an interview with a hunter named Gerhard. The presence of such a contradiction, upon closer examination, proved to be common amongst all the biltong hunters to whom I spoke, though no others overtly articulated awareness of it.

Game on a game farm is agricultural, but game on a sheep farm is natural.

Gerhard had grown up in Namibia and had inherited the family property in that country's north. His narrative of his early hunting experiences was not unusual among those hunters that told me they had started hunting during their childhood. While only James among the fourteen biltong hunters I interviewed had actually grown up on a farm, the others had had regular access to farms and Riaan, Louis and James, all roughly the same age as Gerhard (late forties), all described similar childhood arrangements.

Riaan said he had started hunting antelope on annual visits to his grandfather's farm in Namibia. Louis said he had hunted throughout high school with a friend on that friend's father's farm near Parys in the Free State. Neither was a game farm. Both were livestock farms – raising sheep and cattle respectively. Each, however, had game roaming within and across its boundaries. Riaan described the hunting that took place on the Namibian farm as part of its everyday rhythms, saying that animals were killed as

University of Cape Town

the household's or the farm workers' meat requirements dictated. In Louis' case, his friend's father would supplement the farm's income by converting the game into biltong and selling it in that form, and Louis' early hunting provided carcasses for this enterprise. As Gerhard explained, his case was one in which the prevalence of game on farms nearby his ancestral property, the sparse human population, and the relationships between the local farmers were all such that he and his father were able to hunt the free roaming game on the nearby farms without having to pay for animals they took. His early hunting was thus an ordinary part of what he described as a rural Namibian way of life, the meat being converted into biltong for family consumption or cooked in the home kitchen. Like Riaan and James, Gerhard described hunting in this context as natural; and he contrasted it with hunting in the commercial context as on the farm where I did my fieldwork.

What made Gerhard unique among the biltong hunters with whom I interacted who began hunting in their childhoods, was that his situation had not changed. Unlike Riaan and James, who now relied on the commercial hunting industry to access opportunities to hunt game, Gerhard had inherited the property in Namibia where he now spent a month annually. Despite that month falling outside the strict hunting season, Gerhard enjoyed access to game on the nearby farms. As was the case with both Riaan and James in their early hunting careers on family owned farms, Gerhard did not go there expressly to hunt. Hunting was, rather, a part of the rhythm of being there, an activity associated with that mode of living on the land. From his unique position of still having the ability to hunt in such a context, Gerhard was able to respond quite unexpectedly when my interview with him turned to his thoughts on the relationship between the hunting industry and nature conservation. He said, simply, that there was no relationship between the two, and reinforced this by saying that the hunting industry was a type of agriculture and not a type of conservation enterprise; that it was about money rather than about nature. What surprised me was the degree to which Gerhard's opinion deviated from the typical hunting rhetoric, and in this respect anthropology is, perhaps, similar to hunting. Both, as James put it when describing looking for game in the veld, "look for deviations" (exceptions, for anthropologists, to apparent sociological rules).

University of Cape Town

Gerhard's argument was simple: the hunting industry benefits game farming and not nature conservation. And game farming, while it may appear to relate to conservation because it has to do with the sorts of animals one encounters in nature reserves, is in fact a form of agriculture and has more in common with livestock farming than with conservation. Animals are 'farmed' for their economic exchange value as meat and as quarries in hunts. As Snr had explained, he thinks in terms of Rands per hectare, and farms game because it gives him more Rands per hectare than what cattle does.

It is important to note that Gerhard was not creating an opposition between game farms and national parks or nature reserves. What is significant about his differentiating game farms from conservation areas is the implication that game animals roaming freely across agricultural land, as is the case in the area surrounding his property in Namibia or as was the case on Riaan's grandfather's farm, on James's family farm or on Louis' friend's father's farm, is more natural than is game walking within the confines of a game farm. The same system of value was evident when Louis explicitly distinguished hunting from shooting. Shooting, he said, takes place on a nearby game farm, while hunting takes place in Namibia, on a farm that was not a game farm but a sheep farm with game on it. James similarly implied a link between hunting nature and agriculture (other than game farming) with his statement "I had the privilege of growing up on a farm, so I learned a lot of things about nature". The contradiction that Gerhard pointed to and that the other hunters discussed here corroborated is that game animals on agricultural land, like a cattle farm, are natural while those in the apparently natural game farm are understood to be agricultural or not natural.

This contradiction lends support to my assertion that hunting nature does not pre-exist a hunting encounter. It suggests that hunting nature can be found on cattle or sheep farms that are not typically deemed to be natural landscapes. Game's variable status, as natural on a cattle or sheep farm and unnatural on a game farm, I argue in the rest of this chapter, expands the hunting nature object-world that emerges from the contest between hunter and quarry in a decidedly cultural direction. Game roaming freely on land that is used for other agricultural purposes is external to those purposes, and Gerhard understood that externality to render it wild as it was there *despite* the

University of Cape Town

agriculture, and that its presence led to it being integrated into the rhythms of the way of life associated with farm life. In Marxian jargon, game is restricted to the category of use value when it is integrated into the rhythms and routines of living on farms other than game farms. In contrast, game animals on game farm are like cows on cattle farms in that they represent exchange value; they are commodities that link visitor hunters to the market rather than to a way of inhabiting the land. For Gerhard, his dismissal of commercial hunting and its context as agricultural represented a contradiction in those terms – not that he spelled it out that way.

Riaan's childhood hunting reportedly took place on an agricultural landscape similar to the one Gerhard described and was not, as he explained it, a leisure pursuit. Using phrases like "it was normal", "it was business-like", "it was not a strange thing for me", Riaan repeatedly emphasised that his early hunting on his grandfather's farm in Namibia was an activity integrated into the farm's taskscape (Ingold, 2000: 154) – the pattern of activities characteristic of inhabiting the farm. It was, Riaan insisted, not an extraordinary activity or a leisure pursuit. The people on the farm "just shot what they needed" so that hunting for the pot "was an everyday phenomenon". The result of hunting's integration into the farm's everyday rhythm was that "there was no contrast between everyday life and going hunting; the two blended into one another, especially in terms of the meat." When his grandmother felt that they required more meat or biltong for the household, his grandfather would take his rifle with him on his rounds to check on the livestock. If he encountered an antelope, and if a shot was possible, he would take it. If the antelope was too far for an easy shot, or if the shot was in some other way not right, he would leave it. In the space of a few days of travelling with his rifle, Riaan said, his grandfather would eventually get a good opportunity, shoot an animal, load it and take it home where his wife would process the carcass. Riaan could thus not emphasize strongly enough that, in his early experience, hunting was seamlessly integrated into farm life.

Andre corroborated the idea that hunting in a bygone era was integrated into life on the land in a tale (below) of the largest kudu trophy taken in Namibia. Andre intended the tale, which he narrated to me in an interview when I enquired about the relationship

University of Cape Town

between hunting and the desire to obtain large trophies, to illustrate to me that biltong hunters are not interested in trophies per se. It supports Gerhard and Riaan's valorisations of real hunting as flowing from habitation.

> This guy was in Namibia, I think in the Gobabis area. Where we used to hunt. This guy drove somewhere from town, with his *bakkie*, or whatever in those days. It was in the '60s or '70s, and he had a Lee-Metford [rifle] in the back. And when he got out he realized he had to shoot a kudu for *sy mense* (his people – meaning his labourers) because his people needed meat and it was his policy to shoot a kudu for them. When he got to the farm in the late afternoon he saw 'there is a group of kudus, and there is a nice bull'. He pulled out the rifle and he (clicking his fingers for shot) shot the thing and it fell there where it stood. He drove back with it, butchered it, and put the horns to one side. One weekend one of his friends came and saw this and said to him: 'do you realize what horns those are?' And then it turned out to be one of the top ten largest kudus ever shot in southern Africa.

As with Riaan's grandfather or Gerhard, the above story provides insight into the degree to which the value of the game roaming on agricultural land derived from its integration into a taskscape typical of rural agricultural life, a mode of inhabiting the land, rather than from its horn size's symbolic value. The contradiction that Gerhard pointed out, and that is corroborated by other interview data, suggests that biltong hunters sought more than entry into the object-world emergent from the contest between themselves and their quarry. It suggests that they sought a context for that encounter that connected them to a way of life that they understood was part of their cultural heritage. For some, such as James, Riaan and Gerhard, it was a way of life they themselves experienced and now felt was disappearing. For most, however, as I demonstrate in the following section, it was a way of life they had encountered in literature and other mythological material underpinning an Afrikaner masculine ideal, and to which they felt a need to aspire.

University of Cape Town

Biltong hunters and the Afrikaner nationalist masculine ideal

Melville, who had grown up surfing in the Eastern Cape city of Port Elizabeth and began hunting while at university, had no experience of the kind of farm life described by Riaan. Despite an urban upbringing far removed from farm life as described above, he cited cultural reasons for his hunting far more earnestly, it seemed, than did anyone else I interviewed. When I asked him what he meant when he said that hunting is a "cultural activity" he answered:

> Ag, I think if you are in the culture… let me put it like this, within… A large percentage of South African hunters, if I take them, are Afrikaans speaking. And I think that whole hunting tradition, in the same way as what black people also have a particular hunting tradition… its origin I think from even the days of the *voortrekkers* (pioneers), you know that you are the hunter you go into the veld, you have your knife, you have your gun [here he was speaking with a deliberately excited tone, as if speaking to a child about a particularly exciting activity] and you go and you *uitoorlê* (out compete), um... And I think it is a sort of continuation of those things. Because if you look, still today, the bulk of your biltong hunters, or South African hunters, come out of the Boere community.

Melville's excited tone when he mentioned being in the veld with knife and gun, a tone one might employ to convince a child that a proposed activity will be very exciting, immediately put me in mind of play, particularly playing at being a *voortrekker*. In the absence of a real connection to the rural life he narrated, it was his own hunting that constituted that play in terms of his inhabiting the land as a *voortrekker*. Du Pisani (2004) has argued that the *voortrekker* is an iconic masculine figure that was central to early 20th century Afrikaner Nationalism. Melville was, by framing his hunting as a cultural activity, identifying with this pioneer, surviving and provisioning his and his dependants' needs by his cunning and his skill with the rifle. Melville's tone suggested that knife and gun are more than merely sporting equipment; they are props in a cultural performance that, as White (1995) has suggested was the case for the Bushmen at Kagga Kamma in the 1990s, was enacted as a means of constructing and claiming a distinctive identity and thereby made real.

University of Cape Town

Andre also described hunting explicitly as a cultural activity, and gave that heritage a tangible face by connecting it to his father's and his grandfathers' hunting activities.

> In my family, my father and my grandfathers were all hunters. Some of them still hunted with muzzle loaders. The first time that the cartridge rifle, the Mauser, came out they looked at the bullet and said 'this thing is not powerful enough to kill anything'. And to their surprise, when they went for a drive that day they shot more springbuck than they ever had before. They tell me the story of the *rooi hartebees* that they shot with the black powder guns [muzzle loaders]. And when the shot rings out there is a tremendous cloud of smoke and the hartebeest springs away, they could never shoot it until they took the cartridge rifle to the Kalahari. They shot him dead then and there.

Hunting, from the quote above, enables Andre to connect to his own ancestors and the hunting stories they told. And he spoke of these stories in the same breath as the story of the large kudu trophy (above) and as the works of veld themed Afrikaans literature that he had consumed as a boy. He described this literature, the large Kudu trophy story and the stories told him by his father and grandfathers as exemplifying, in his terms, the "culture historical frame of reference" of what he called "the Afrikaner hunter".

Andre, Riaan, Louis, James and Melville all mentioned the Afrikaans youth author, P.J. Schoeman as formative of their understandings of hunting nature. This suggests that hunting nature cannot follow simply from the structured competitive play discussed in the previous chapter. To perceive hunting nature is to a degree to perceive something first encountered in narrative form far away from the veld. This is not simply the projection or inscription of a cultural version of nature onto an ontologically prior neutral physical world. Rather, as I argue below, narrative educates hunters' attention to the world, guiding, rather than determining, perception. My argument is, as Ingold puts it, that to perceive the landscape in these stories' terms, is "to carry out an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past" (Ingold, 2000: 89).

University of Cape Town

Ingold's account of narrative's influence over perception introduces a second type of play, symbolic labour, into biltong hunting. Alongside the structured competitive play that hunting nature emerges from, is a fantasy role-playing element. This role-play takes the form of a narratively informed attentiveness, through which the object-world emergent out of structured competitive play is made to enfold cultural heritage. I show, in the argument below that through this second type of play hunting nature becomes culturally owned and cultural heritage becomes naturally authorised. Put differently, hunting nature is the object-world emergent from structured competitive play, made cultural by enfolding within it, through symbolic labour, the activities, lives and times of those men biltong hunters take to be their forebears.

There is ample historical evidence to support biltong hunters' asserting that hunting was an everyday aspect of how their forebears inhabited land. During the 19th century, hunting subsidised the settlers in the Transvaal Republic. Not only was biltong an important commodity among the settlers, but hunting also provided a viable means to avoid waged labour for the landless settlers, whose pattern of migration between the Highveld and the Lowveld was related in part to the pursuit of game for both the pot and the market (Trapido, 1984 cited in Beinart, 1990).

From a decidedly negative angle, the derisive descriptions of Boer hunters penned by their English sport hunting counterparts, also point to a rural Boer life in which hunting was an integrated component. These derisive accounts must be factored through the lens of a struggle for material and symbolic dominance over the landscape and its inhabitants. Abel Chapman for example expressed the class representative view that the "Boers did not understand the elementary significance of our British term 'sport'. No sense of respect for game, no admiration of its grace and beauty ever penetrated minds debased by decades of slaughter" (McKenzie, 2000, 73). John Buchan, a member of Milner's Kindergarten, similarly wrote, in *The African Colony*, that "It is worth considering the Boer in sport, for it is there that he is seen at his worst. Without tradition of fair play, soured and harassed by want and disaster, his sport [hunting] became a matter of commerce, and he held no device unworthy of the game" (Henshaw, 2003: 22).

University of Cape Town

The historical evidence that Boer hunting was an integral part of Boer rural life in the Boer republics rather than a 'sporting' leisure pursuit is not sufficient to explain why contemporary biltong hunters would choose to position their hunting within this heritage's frame. Viewing Trapido's descriptive account of hunting as integral to Boer economic life in the Boer republics alongside Chapman and Buchan's respective normative accounts of the 'debased' Boer sense of sport provides a clue as to why biltong hunters choose to frame hunting as heritage. The answer lies in the waning and waxing fortunes of metropolitan elite and settler masculinities respectively with regard to changes in the nature's symbolic significance within the context of emerging settler nationalisms throughout the empire in the late 19th and early 20th century. To understand this transformation a brief historical aside is necessary.

As I argued in Chapter Two, the struggle for material and symbolic dominance over access to game can be understood as a struggle between competing masculinities. The derisive accounts of Boer hunters given by Chapman and Buchan above must be viewed within the light of this struggle.

Colonial natures, by which I mean the sensuous external world's incorporation into the realm of colonial legislation thus favoured the aristocratic sportsman by declaring all hunting outside of the mould of leisure and sport, hunting for the pot or for the market, to be illegitimate and morally and ethically questionable.

As Steinhart (1989: 253) explains, "[Gentlemen colonists] contributed to the ideological foundations of the hunting dilemma: their very eminence and wealth, their social standing and class backgrounds supported the belief that proper hunting was the sport of gentlemen who obeyed a civilized and humane set of rules of the game."

In keeping with dominant metropolitan hunters' values, 'true' hunting was constructed, in the nineteenth century, as conspicuous consumption; the leisure class's domain and the symbol of their dominance over both the Other and the lower settler classes. Hunting in the colonies thus became a mirror of metropolitan politics. In the metropole hunting was the aristocracy's preserve and distinguished them from the 'lower classes'. In the colonies it came to mark the distinction between the gentleman colonist, "the aristocracy

University of Cape Town

of the sword" (Steinhart, 1989: 255), and the settler and native, whose practices were derided and outlawed in the same way as those of the peasants in England and Europe had been.

This hierarchy was turned on its head with the emergence of settler nationalisms. With the rise of Australian nationalism, the Australian nation's uniqueness was sought, found and given symbolic substance through an identification with the unique 'bush' that the early settlers had found so unnerving and alienating (Franklin, 1996). Franklin has argued that the settler population's maturation was accompanied by an Australian romanticism. This, he suggests, resulted in two parallel processes, the one imbued indigenous flora and fauna with nationalist significance while the other attempted to eradicate alien species introduced during the period he describes as Britainization.

Because the natural world provided material in terms of which the emerging nation could 'imagine' itself a community (Anderson, 1983) 'true' hunters in Australia came to be understood as those practicing the sport against the alien species introductions to landscape the colony in the metropolitan image. In Australia, then, hunting came to symbolize the claiming of the landscape by a nation shaking off imperial domination (Franklin, 1996). As the new patrons and protectors of a national nature, the Australian everyman came to supplant the British aristocrat of the sword.

In the USA, a similar replacement of the gentleman aristocrat with the American everyman is evident beginning after the First World War. This marked what Loo (2001: 303) terms the Americanization of hunting as the American corporate and professional classes came to replace the European and particularly British elite as dominant in the field. Here too, hunting practices were transformed. The bourgeois classes could not match the European leisure class' consumptive power. The thirty or even forty day hunts the aristocratic elites enjoyed at the turn of the 20th Century were thus replaced by shorter ten day hunts more suited to the busy professional's schedule (Loo, 2001: 303). By the end of the Second World War this process was complete. Before the war, sporting journals differentiated between the refined and elite 'sportsman' and the shooting masses in terms of class and of European standards of sportsmanship dating from the nineteenth century. After the war these same journals "depicted hunters as

University of Cape Town

part of the 'rough' side of American society". Smalley (2005: 192) has suggested that the transformed depiction of hunters was a response to US nationalism surrounding the war and to the belief that hunting produced better and more formidable soldiers.

From the above it is evident that in the US and Australian cases hunting nature was transformed from being an arena for performing metropolitan masculinities' dominance over settler masculinities, to one for performing nationalist masculinities' dominance and belonging relative to their indigenous or metropolitan counterparts. The result was that the sorts of hunting associated with the increasingly powerful settler nationalist masculinities gained ascendancy. Two elements of the South African political situation at the *fin de siècle* demonstrate that the same transformation was underway here.

The fact that the rate at which southern African national parks were founded spiked around the time of independence (Ramutsindela, 2004: 20) points to a parallel with the Australian and US cases by indicating that here too nature was seized upon as a way of imagining the new nations emerging in the region. The myth of Paul Kruger's founding of the Kruger National Park during his presidency of the Transvaal Republic (Carruthers, 1994 & 1996) illustrates the prominent role played by the natural world in the imagination of the emerging settler nationalism in South Africa in the early 20th century. An examination of this myth will also shed light on how this national nature was formulated as the province of a particular Afrikaner masculinity. In 1889 Kruger, after substantial pressure from the '*Volksraad'*, and motivated by territorial politics between the Transvaal Republic and the British colony in Natal, proclaimed a tiny piece of ill-suited land, all in the Pongola river gorge in the eastern Transvaal, as the Pongola Game Reserve (Caruthers, 1994).

After their victory in the South African War in 1902, the British extended the original reserve northwards and employed the first professional warden to oversee it. In the Afrikaner Nationalist climate that took hold after 1948, this British connection could not be exploited (Caruthers, 1994: 278). The myth of Kruger's 'world lead' in nature conservation therefore enabled the nationalists to avoid falling behind in the area of conservation while, as in the Australian case (Franklin, 1996), distancing themselves from the British legacy. Because nature conservation was seen by the electorate as an

University of Cape Town

extra-political matter of common cause, the deployment of the myth also engendered a renewed patriotism and sense of cohesion among white South Africans (Caruthers, 1994: 279).

John Buchan, a member of Lord Milner's "Kindergarten", in 1910 suggested using the South African natural environment to articulate and foster a South African Nationalism capable of uniting 'Brit and Boer' in a dominion of the British Empire (Henshaw, 2003: 3). Buchan felt that the British would never enjoy a political victory over the Boers so long as the latter held a strong identification with the land and the former lacked one. It is thus ironic that notions aimed at unifying South Africa as a dominion of the British Empire only found their expression after Afrikaner nationalism's rise and the myth of Kruger's national park. It is doubly ironic that the very man that decried Boer hunting as un-sporting seized upon the heart of that un-sportingness (its integration into how Boers inhabited rural land) as the key to the establishment of a robust British loyalty in South Africa.

Buchan, despite his lowly consideration of the Boers in sport, argued in *The African Colony* that "Any South African civilization must grow up on the soil and must borrow from the Dutch race, else it is no true growth but a frail exotic" (Buchan, 1903: 389 quoted in Henshaw, 2003: 13). Fundamentally, he believed that "no race or kingdom can endure which is not rooted in the soil, drawing sustenance from natural forces" (Buchan, 1903: 32 quoted in Henshaw, 2003: 14). In other words, he considered the degree to which the Boers had a cultural identity rooted in the soil as more significant to South Africa's relationship to Britain than was Britain's victory in the Boer War. The soil Buchan refers to is farm soil and the quotes form part of a case for the need to establish a substantial British farming class that can take their lead from the Dutch and develop a way of life and a related cultural identity both loyal to Britain and rooted in their inhabiting the land. Failing this, British settlers would never belong and would remain a "frail exotic" unable to survive alongside the Boers. Biltong hunters' asserting that their hunting is part of their cultural heritage are thus asserting a nationalist belonging by framing what remains a leisure pursuit as related to an 'authentic' rural way of life.

University of Cape Town

Buchan's vision of a rurally based and soil-rooted English loyalty to empire was never realized. His approach was, however, taken further and realized by the emerging Afrikaner Nationalists. Du Pisani (2004) has argued that the rural ideal of the old pre-South African war Boer republics became particularly salient in the period between the war and the National Party electoral victory in 1948 for two reasons. The first of these is that the emerging nationalist movement held the period between the great trek and the South African War to be Afrikanerdom's a golden age. The second is Afrikaners' harsh experience of urban life in the early 20th century. Afrikaner nationalist ideologues thus seized upon two heroic figures to represent the republican ideal: the '*bittereinder*' (the Boer soldier that had fought to the bitter end and opposed surrender in the South African War); and the '*voortrekker*' (Du Pisani, 2004: 164). Nationalist ideologues' claiming nature for the emerging nation through the myth of Paul Kruger's park can thus be seen to coincide with the rise of an Afrikaner nationalist masculine ideal, of which Kruger was exemplary. Using the Paul Kruger and his mythic world lead in nature conservation to foster a sense of cohesion among white South Africans, was, through the figure of Kruger and his prominence in the republican era, bound to the project of naturalizing Afrikaner nationalist claims to the land. This republican hero conveniently tied the hunting nature object-world to the national identity rooted in the Afrikaners' inhabiting of the rural land before the Boer War.

According to Du Pisani (2004: 167), Afrikaners' harsh experience of urban life in the early 20th century, resulted in a romanticizing of pre Boer War rural lives which the figure of the republican hero dominated. As part of the centenary festival of the great trek in 1938, D.F. Malan, who would go on to become the National Party prime minister ten years later, delivered a speech reconstructing the large-scale Afrikaner urbanization through the trope of a second great trek. On the day of the covenant, commemorating Afrikaner nationalists' belief that god granted the *voortrekkers* a victory over Dingaan's Zulu warriors in the battle of blood river, Malan drew on imagery from that battle to exhort his followers to conquer the cities by bringing the values underpinning the divinely ordained victory at blood river with them to avoid becoming mere Afrikaans translations of an English urban masculinity (Du Pisani, 2004: 170).

University of Cape Town

The great trek centenary festival was thus instrumental in bringing the rural and the emerging urban Afrikaner masculinities together. Du Pisani (2004: 171) has argued that because of Afrikaners' economic insecurity at the time, the middle class cultural brokers behind the nationalist movement:

> had to function through a sentimental culture sufficiently accessible to the lower strata. By capturing the confluence of the modern and the archaic they enabled the Afrikaner workers to overcome their feelings of industrial dislocation. They managed to paper over the myriad regional, gender and class tensions threatening *volkseenheid* [ethnic solidarity] and overcome the rival mythologies of socialism and South Africanism.

It was thus that the rural republican masculine model trekked into town and to some extent managed to conquer the city. By the 1960s less than 10% of Afrikaners still lived on farms, and while for most of the other 90% no relationship to the land remained, a nostalgia and the masculine ideal rooted in that nostalgia persisted and was nurtured through the education system, particularly the history curriculum, but also through prescribing youth literature such as the books of P.J. Schoeman in schools (Gordon, 2007: 121).

PJ Schoeman, author of the youth literature referred to by Andre, Melville and Riaan, was prescribed reading for school children in Afrikaans primary schools. Gordon (2007) has argued that he contributed to the Afrikaner nationalist in all three of his official capacities: as game warden of Etosha National Park in Namibia; as Anthropologist committed to both the nationalist cause and the idea that cultures should be encouraged to develop autonomously; and as author of Afrikaans youth literature. Gordon (2007: 98) ascribes the upsurge in reprints of Schoeman's books in the first decade of the twenty first century to "his being praised as a prophet of conservation in South Africa". Schoeman is arguably exemplary of the hegemonic Afrikaner nationalist masculinity that Du Pisani (2001: 158-159) and Swart (2001: 77) describe, and the reprints may thus relate to the same flight to extra-political masculine arenas that Du Pisani (2001: 166) suggests lay behind Rugby's increasing importance in Afrikaner society post-apartheid. What I argue below is that the resurgence of Schoeman's

University of Cape Town

literature, and indeed biltong hunting's growth, stem from a new use of landscape to stabilize a shaken sense of belonging.

According to Gordon (2007) Schoeman received his Doctorate from Stellenbosch University in 1933, and continued his education in London under Malinowski and became increasingly active in Afrikaner intellectual circles. Appointed to the position of lecturer in Anthropology at Stellenbosch in 1936 he became head of anthropology in 1938 but resigned from this position in 1946. During this period he used his position as a university academic to advance the nationalist cause. He was a senior enough member of the *Ossewa Brandwag* to warrant being given a body guard, and in 1940 participated in an *Afrikaner Broederbond* secret commission into the race question that served as a sounding board for apartheid policy (Gordon, 2007: 106). During 1938 he also presented a series of radio talks aimed at the youth dealing with what was then euphemistically called 'the native question'. His devotion to the Afrikaner cause was further in evidence when he unsuccessfully attempted to be elected to the South African Parliament as African Representative in 1949. Beyond this he was a staunch Calvinist, having originally entered the university with the goal of becoming a clergyman. These political, religious and intellectual convictions were further bound up in the hunter and game warden persona so similar to the republican hero celebrated by the nationalists and given to school children through Schoeman's fiction.

Viewed in this light it is understandable that Andre would consider these works central to the frame of reference of the "Afrikaner hunter". What I argue below is that the nature encountered in Schoeman's works is nationalist appropriated hunting nature. At the centre of this Afrikaner nationalist nature stands the republican hero, *voortrekker* and *bittereinder*, a figure in which the Afrikaner nationalists' natural and historical imaginings are welded into one powerful trope. Telling in this regard is the contradiction that Gordon (2007) points out between his literary works and his official works. Two of his literary works, *Jagters van die Woestynland* (Hunters of the Desert land) first published in 1951 and *Uit die Dagboek van 'n Wildbewaarder* (From the Diary of a Game Warden) first published in 1967, stand in particularly stark relief to the 1955 report he penned in

University of Cape Town

his capacity as Chairman of the Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen in South-West Africa.

Jagters, a series of dialogues between Schoeman and a Bushman named Xameb "is seen as an important contribution to Afrikaans literature for its humanistic portrayal of indigenous people" (Gordon, 2007: 121). The closing chapter contains a touching plea by Xameb, who responds to Schoeman's asking what message he should take back to the administrators in Windhoek, the capital of South-West Africa, saying:

> … ask them to listen to the weeping of a race which is tired of running away. Give us a piece of land, too. Give us a piece of land where our women will not be taken from us … If your law protects our women there, we will never leave our land … Bushman-land". (Schoeman, 1982: 212 quoted in Gordon, 2007: 120).

In a recent review of the republication of *Uit die Dagboek van 'n Wildbewaarder* J.R. Botha (2006: 181) characterised the work as *"… die verhaal van 'n gesoute man van die bosveld, 'n man wat die natuur kan lees en deur sy vriendskap met die Boesmans daarin slaag om 'n buitengewone bydrae te maak tot die vestiging van een van ons mooiste parke*." (... the story of an experienced man of the bushveld, a man who can read nature and who, through his friendship with the Bushmen, succeeds in making an extraordinary contribution to the founding of one of our most beautiful parks).

The concern for, and friendship with, the Bushmen evident in these books must be viewed from the awkward space between his positions as South-West Africa's Chief Game Warden between 1950 and 1956, and as Chairman of the Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen during the same period. Because he spoke no Bushmen languages, he used two interpreters for his Commission work. One of these was Xameb from *Jagters*, who he used to interpret Heikum. The friendship and concern for Xameb and the Bushmen in Etosha area that is so prominent in the abovementioned texts is put in perspective by the 1955 report he penned for the commission. Despite the fact that his work for the Commission supplied much of the material for his literary works, the contrast is glaring.

University of Cape Town

Despite having such intimate knowledge of the suffering and struggle of a fleeing population recounted through the figure of Xameb in *Jagters*, Schoeman, in the 1955 report that sits uncomfortably between the two literary works mentioned above stated:

> Nowhere did your Commission receive the impression that it would be worthwhile to preserve the Heikum or the Barrakwengo as Bushmen. In both cases the process of assimilation has proceeded too far and these Bushmen are already abandoning their nomadic habits and are settling down amongst the neighbouring tribes to agriculture and stock breeding. (South West Africa, Report of the Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen in South West Africa, 1950 (circa 1955), paragraph 20 quoted in Gordon, 2007: 118)

This 1955 recommendation was a radical about-face with regard to the recommendation put forward in the interim report four years earlier which celebrated the extent to which the Heikum had preserved and continued to practice their tribal laws and customs – to the point of suggesting that Schoeman produce a "treatise on their customs and usages" (Gordon, 2007: 115-116). With no explanation given for so radical a change in the commission's position, Gordon (2007: 119) has suggested that Schoeman's position as Etosha Game Park's Chief Warden may have played a role. This suggestion is in keeping with park management practices and legislation throughout Africa, where the establishment of conservation parks has more often than not gone hand in hand with the forced relocation of local populations.

Schoeman's telling Maria Elizabeth Rothman that he wrote his youth books in service of race relations to humanize Africans in Afrikaners' eyes, goes some way towards clarifying this about face with regard to the commission's recommendations. He believed that the solution to the race issues in South Africa was total segregation and saw his humanization of the Africans in his literary works as serving this goal. As he explained in a 1938 radio broadcast aimed at youth, "one of the most important things whites should thus provide for, are the conditions under which natives will retain their self-respect and racial pride because then they will not think of intermarrying with us" (1938 SABC radio broadcast quoted in Gordon, 2007: 105). Humanizing Africans through his literature thus linked to a grand vision of total segregation and autonomous

University of Cape Town

cultural development that was rooted in the fertile nationalist conjuncture that lead him to argue that "[w]e, as Afrikaners, have no right before God to fight and promote our own people's rights as long as we refuse to give rights of autonomous development to those who stand under us" (Schoeman, 1941: 31 quoted in Gordon, 2007: 108).

Thus, his literary works serve the nationalist causes in two ways. On the one hand they symbolically attach a masculine ideal to the nation through hunting as a component of Boers' authentic inhabiting of the land praised by Buchan and seized upon by the nationalist image makers. On the other hand they humanize Africans in service of separateness. His official work for the Commission may therefore seem contradictory because of its representation of the Bushmen, but it is easily understood as being the other side of the same coin. The 1955 report demonstrates environmental governmentality in service of a racist Afrikaner nationalist vision in a manner consistent with the use of game legislation to maintain class distinctions in the process of moulding "empire as estate" (Beinart, 1990: 128). It is thus no more possible to hold P.J. Schoeman's youth and other literature as neatly separate from his cultural/nationalist convictions, than what it is to hold his involvement in nature conservation as separate from his convictions about the need for total racial segregation in order to preserve Afrikaners' apparent racial purity. Through his involvement in nature conservation, Schoeman promoted Afrikaner nationalists' sense of belonging by bolstering their claims to a scientific and cultural attachment to the land. It also enabled him to put forward the argument that the Other no longer belonged, having lost their 'nomadic habits' , and that they had come to pose a threat to the nature romanticized in his literary works as the landscape of Afrikaner belonging. This mirrors perfectly the landscape's construction as an engine of belonging for some and of un-belonging for others in the discussion of Southern African CBNRM programmes in Chapter One.

The juxtaposition of his literary and official work shows how his project of humanizing natives in Afrikaners' eyes, served his inhuman segregationist ideals. Schoeman's literature thus stands as an Afrikaner nationalist intervention, on the one hand playing into and strengthening the masculine around which the rural nostalgia so emphasized in the early nationalist movement was constructed, and on the other working towards the

University of Cape Town

material domination of the landscape by constructing it as cleared of competing claims by the native Other.

Nostalgia for the mythic nationalist figure integrated into the land that Schoeman and other nationalist image makers crafted is what lies behind Gerhard's assertion that game on a game farm are not natural but agricultural. The republican masculine ideal's ascendancy to hegemonic status, coupled with the difficulty of living out that masculine fantasy in the urban context, lies behind playing at living it out in the veld through the re-enactment of the feats of Boer heroes encountered in children's literature and in history classrooms. Because habitation of the land is taken to be the source of both national and masculine identity and belonging, it follows that men would consider hunting a cultural activity, inasmuch as it performs this habitation and thereby revitalizes their relationship to their mythic ancestors. Given the lack of any real connection to the land by the 1960s, hunting is an activity able to reconnect urban-based biltong hunters to the symbolic font of their nationalist sense of belonging by enfolding a mythic rural life into the intense experience of nature derived from the competitive play between him and the animal.

Presenting the historical case above regretfully necessitated a deviation into what Ingold (2000: 94) terms B-series time, "in which events are strung out in time like beads on a thread". This is the result of using chronological historical literature. The B-series account simply makes the case for there being ample material in terms of which to adopt hunting and the veld as 'cultural', and shows the significance of that material in relation to a national mythology's development. It should not be confused how hunters experience that mythology. Biltong hunters' experience of the Afrikaner nationalist mythology through hunting takes place in a different sort of time. It occurs in A-series time, in which events are "seen to encompass a pattern of retentions from the past and projections for the future" (Ingold, 2000: 94).

University of Cape Town

Symbolic labour: enfolding the Afrikaner nationalist mythic past into the hunting nature object-world

To reframe my argument into A-Series time it is useful to once again turn to the notion of play and suggest that hunting is a form of serious play in terms of which the activities in the present are made to encompass the nationalist mythology crafted out of a B-series account of the past. Burch (1965: 610) suggests that symbolic labour is a type of play in which outdoor activities practitioners link present to past and create the opportunity to perform rural values that are "no longer widely acceptable or possible".

My argument thus far suggests that biltong hunters go hunting for two reasons. The first motivating factor is entry into the object world that emerges out of structured competitive play. As I have shown in Chapter Three, this object world emerges out of a relationship between hunter and quarry in which the hunter strives to become the embodied inverse of the animal's capacity to sense and evade him. This effort steers his perception towards those affordances that enable and resist this inversion and it is out of these that the object world in question is parsed. The second motivating factor centres on the veld being the sight of symbolic labour linking the activities that a hunting nature object world emerges out of, to a romanticized inhabiting of the land at the root of the masculine ideal that nationalist image makers placed at Afrikaner nationalist imagery's centre. The labour associated with acquiring meat, and with cooking it or consuming it as biltong, anchors biltong hunters to what they consider to be their cultural heritage. It is symbolic labour through which the object world that emerged out of structured competitive play enfolds, within that object world, the past, the present and the future, thereby revisiting the sustenance that the Afrikaner nationalist movement, like nationalist movements in the USA and Australia in the twilight of empire, drew from natures imagined as the provinces of nationalist masculinities. Thus, while structured competitive play inflates a bubble of ontological distance from everyday reality, symbolic labour enfolds a mythic transhistorical past within it.

My observation of hunting on Snr's game farm over the hunting season I spent there puts these two types of play into a relief that I argue confirms Gerhard's dismissing

University of Cape Town

hunting in the commercial context as not 'real'. I argue thus because the symbolic labour is undermined by the fact that the hunters' relationship to the land and the animals they shoot for meat is an alienated market relationship. What follows is a discussion of the strategic work Biltong Hunters have to do to militate against the commercial context in order to enable symbolic labour.

The past that biltong hunters want to enfold within the object world emergent out of their contest with their quarry through symbolic labour is, as argued above, found in hunting's integration into an Afrikaner nationalist romance of inhabiting the land. Contemporary hunting's market context is resistant to the exploitation of that symbolic material. The resistance to exploiting this symbolic material is what I conclude lies behind Gerhard's considering hunting on an ordinary farm to be more 'natural' than hunting on a dedicated game farm. In the dedicated game farm context, a hunter's relationship to the land is not one of habitation, it is rather one of commodity, and as such, hunting is available to everyone, and it loses its status as a cultural activity.

Of the men I interviewed, all besides Gerhard hunted in commercial arrangements, and significantly, all of their best hunting experiences were associated with particularities that diminished the hunting situation's obvious commercial character. These particularities are desired, I suggest, because they create room for the symbolic labour crucial to hunters' ability to enfold the Afrikaner nationalist rural idyll into the hunting nature object-world. Most commonly these measures aimed at diminishing the hunting trip's commercial feel, related to accommodation and to personal relationships with the farm owner. These two strategies proved able to obscure the market dominated relationship to the land and in that way afford the cultural experience.

When asked to describe their ideal or their best hunting trip, the hunters I interviewed universally stressed austerity, ruggedness and a lack of amenities, all of which result in more rather than less labour to secure meat and to enter into structured competitive play with quarry. Riaan's best trip was one on which he had accompanied a friend, and that friend's five year old son, to a game farm in Natal. There they had camped in two tents under a tree. He described the camp as without any electricity or toilets and explained that water had to be fetched from a nearby "*krip*" (a concrete reservoir for

University of Cape Town

animals to drink from). They did not bath or shower in that time, and they hung the carcasses of the animals they shot from the tree's branches, covering them with sheets and trusting that they would not go bad in the cold winter weather[18]. They only washed on the final day before leaving, each taking a turn to stand on the *krip's* wall and use the camp kettle to scoop and pour water over the other who quickly washed under this cold stream. He described this two night trip as "brilliant" and sandwiched his account of it between two significant framing assertions. He prefigured the account by saying of his preferred hunting trip: "the more primitive it is, the better it is". By way of summary, he ended his description of the hunting trip, saying: "the more upmarket it is, the more negative it is for me."

Pieter echoed this sentiment, saying that his ideal hunting situation was one in which he could stay in a tent pitched under a tree with just his dog for company. Andre was perhaps the most vocal about the importance of rugged trips. Describing trips to Namibia with his father, he said:

> We went under the most difficult of difficult circumstances. We stayed in tents. We slept in the veld. We were in environments where the temperature was below freezing. We showered in a freezing environment where we literally warmed water in a fire, in a *varkpot*, and threw it into a shower made from a sawn off forty four gallon drum. And then you shower there in a very cold environment so that you are exposed to the environment.

These men all wanted to have their hunting happen in a context characterized by self-reliance rather than reliance on amenities; by exposure to the environment's harshness; and by a close proximity to the veld, camping rather than staying in a house or a chalet.

The above accounts give an indication of what Riaan meant by the loaded adjective "primitive" with which he prefigured this own account. For him, 'primitive' meant a lack of amenities such as running water, electricity and sewerage; freedom from regimes of

[18] From this it is clear that there were no predators on this land as it would be profoundly foolish to hang carcasses near one's sleeping area in a context within which one is not absolutely sure there are no large cats or hyenas in the area.

University of Cape Town

personal hygiene like daily showering; exposure to the elements; and perhaps even the diminished concern with privacy required to pour a kettle of cold water over one's friend so that he can wash himself before returning to civilization. As one might expect of the term, primitive here is understood to increase as one's proximity to the conveniences, conventions and trappings associated with 'civilized' life – running water, water borne sewage, hygiene and privacy – decreases.

Primitive's meaning is, however, expanded in an important direction by Riaan's framing the description of the primitive conditions of this most favoured trip in the following binary structure:

Positive	Negative
Primitive	Up-market

University of Cape Town

Upmarket is usually a phrase that is associated with luxury. We would, for example, readily describe an upmarket hotel as more luxurious than a downmarket hotel. We would, however, be very unlikely to describe a downmarket hotel as more primitive than its upmarket counterpart. This is in other words a binary structure that is unusual in a number of ways: first, primitive is typically contrasted with civilized, while upmarket is usually contrasted with downmarket; and second, primitive is usually placed on its binary's negative side of while upmarket is usually placed on its binary's positive side. The above binary structure is thus a deviant combination of the two typical binaries below:

Positive	Negative
Civilized	Primitive

Positive	Negative
Upmarket	Downmarket

The question, then, is what does it mean for the content of the adjective 'primitive', as given by Riaan in his account of his best hunting trip, that civilized is replaced with upmarket, and then in such a way that primitive lands on the positive side and upmarket lands on the negative?

The answer I propose returns to the distinction between hunting on agricultural land and hunting on a dedicated game farm. I argued above that hunting is a cultural activity for biltong hunters because it links their mythical forefathers to the land. The incorporation of hunting into the commercial arena described in Chapter One obliterates that link's specificity. Anyone with means can buy a hunting trip and pay to shoot an animal. Because that specificity hinges on imagining hunting to be integral to the 'authentic' rural life of hunters' forebears, then the desire for ruggedness that biltong hunters expressed in interviews are best thought of as symbolic labour. Symbolic labour's value resides in the amount of labour caused, not the amount saved, so that the ruggedness central to the above accounts of primitive circumstances is the very thing that enfolded the rural past into the object-world that emerged out of the contest between hunter and quarry. The ruggedness of the context inscribed upon the hunting nature object-world the hunters' having earned, through hard work, the meat that linked their hunting to the everyday of the rural Boer household in the romanticised past.

This theme was repeatedly brought up by hunters in interviews as the prime distinguishing factor between their own hunting ethic and what they considered to be other hunters' bad hunting practices. Most hunters made the point implicitly, claiming to use all of the meat from the animals that they shot, either by converting it to biltong and dried *wors*, or by cooking it in their homes. Some, like Riaan, expressly condemned those hunters that shoot more than they can use, a condemnation that hinged on the commercial context's enabling hunters that had lots of money to go on 'killing sprees'. He found these cash driven killing sprees offensive because he had no desire to shoot more than he can use. James was critical of the commercial and trophy hunting from a different angle, saying that he had no desire to shoot animals that he could not use, such as zebra, giraffe, elephant or rhino. Symbolic labour thus partially relocates biltong hunting out of the market relationship that in actuality defines it. However, the

University of Cape Town

degree to which hunters could access symbolic labour hinged on a related strategy that I observed in the field and encountered repeatedly in my interviews.

All of the hunters I spoke to, many of which hunted more than once per year, had at least one standing hunting trip that had been a fixture for years. And it is worth noting that these were, for all but one hunter (Melville), trips to farms that they reported were not dedicated game farms, but farms that happened to have free roaming game on them. They de-emphasized the fact that despite these farms not being dedicated game farms, they still offered hunts for sale.

Louis, for example, had, for the previous seven years, travelled to Namibia to hunt with his son and a core of two other hunters. The group consisted of eight hunters each year, and one of Louis primary enjoyments was teaching "the young men the basic principles of hunting just as [he] got them". This passing on of knowledge in the same way that he received it was intended to show me that hunting had not changed despite the increased commercial aspect after I explicitly asked him how hunting had changed in response to its increased commercial character. Unconvinced that is hadn't changed, I pressed the point and asked if the sort of hunting he described, camping in the veld and walking without guides was commonly available elsewhere. He answered with an emphatic "no" explaining that it was extremely rare to be granted the freedom to camp and hunt without guides. This freedom was what made his trip to Namibia, where hunting was not commercialised to the same degree as in South Africa, so special.

> You know in Namibia we still hunt like that. And that is why I say to you it is a great privilege for me. We actually… the owners of the farm… it is for long now no longer just a game farm, they are pals, they come and visit us and we go and visit them. And they accommodate us as a large group, but that trust relationship that we have with them, a guy does not just throw it away.

Hunting "like that" is hunting without guides, and the trust he refers to is the trust the farmer has that they will report any wounded animals to him, for which he will charge them. Louis ascribed this freedom and trust to friendship and to the fact that the farm's owners "are not in the hunting industry. They are beef farmers with lots of game on

University of Cape Town

their farm. The guys in South Africa are in the hunting industry and they must make money out of it". According to Louis, he and his fellow hunters on the trip to Namibia are hunting without participating in the hunting industry, the animals are not farmed, they are free roaming, and the relationship to the farm has ceased to be a commercial one, it is now in the realm of friendship. The way Louis told it, he went to a friend's farm to hunt, and it was not a commercial game farm but a beef farm with game on it. He did not mention that he paid his friend for accommodation and for the animals he took. By framing his Namibia trip in this way Louis' hunting was attached through friendship to the farmer's habitation of the land in order to obscure the fact that he was still a paying hunter on a farm that sold hunts.

The distinction that Louis drew between Namibia and South Africa was shared by Pieter, Andre and Willie, all of whom held their Namibian hunts on farms not set aside for hunting to be more 'authentic' than hunts in South Africa and, as a result, returned there year after year. Other hunters did, however, successfully mitigate South African game farms' commercialness in a manner similar to Louis. Melville for example annually hunted, with a regular group of friends, on a farm in the Vredefort Dome just outside Potchefstroom. Significantly, this particular farmer only catered to foreign hunters, and ironically this extreme market orientation is what enabled Melville to construct the trip as external to the market. He did so by constructing his own trip as being primarily a personal favour. The owner only allows two local groups to hunt on his farm, and the message here is that there is more to their being granted access than their ability to be able to pay for it. Local hunters cannot simply buy a hunt on this farm; the price of access is (in addition to the market price) what Melville called "a good relationship with the farmer".

During the season I spent on the game farm, I witnessed similar strategies aimed at mitigating hunting trips' commercial nature. Early in my fieldwork period, attracted by activity outside the butchery nearby the farmhouse late one afternoon, I walked down to find Jnr and a group of hunters unloading two blue wildebeest for butchering. Chris, who had shot one of the animals, was teasing his wife about crying over its death. Jnr participated in this teasing and I noted that he referred to Chris as '*Oom Chris*' (Uncle

University of Cape Town

Chris) as he did so. Initially I dismissed this as insignificant as it is common practice among Afrikaans speaking South Africans to address those older than themselves as *Oom* or *Tannie* (aunt), a title that, borrowed from the kinship lexicon, simultaneously denotes respect and familiarity.

I, however, revisited the title as significant once I noted that Jnr did not generally address hunters as *Oom* and rather used their first names. The *Oom* in '*Oom Chris*' was thus more than merely the informal generic title I initially took it to be. The campfire conversation that night gave a clue as to its signifying Chris' extra economic relationship to the farm. Early on in my time on the farm Jnr seemed to feel he should constantly be educating me about what hunting was, and that evening proved to be no exception as he and his friend Eddie, a local chicken farmer, attempted to explain to me what they understood hunting to be. A few beers into our conversation, as Jnr was explaining how hunting on the farm works he balled his hand into a fist so that the tip of his thumb protruded between his index and middle fingers, a somewhat out of date but still widely recognized hand signal meaning "fuck you" in South Africa. As he did so he said "and if they want to shoot off the *bakkie*, I show them this!"

The hand gesture and the statement were accompanied by his raising his voice in triumphant emphasis and at the crescendo Chris' head snapped around to catch both the gesture and the statement. This caused Jnr to sheepishly backtrack saying "except you *Oom Chris* because you have been coming here for years and I know you are OK". It was clear to me from Jnr's embarrassment, and Jnr confirmed it to me en route back to the farmhouse, that Chris had shot his wildebeest off the *bakkie*. But as I learned during the course of my fieldwork, shooting off the *bakkie* was, while not typical, common enough that it could not be *Oom Chris's* special privilege. Despite this, the point is that in the encounter Jnr created the impression that the privilege was Chris' alone and that it stemmed, like the kinship title, from the fact that he had been visiting the farm to hunt annually since Jnr was a teenager.

A second example of a relationship gone beyond the merely economical was Andre, his brother, his father and a friend that spent three days hunting on the farm. What set this group apart was the fact that the hunters were not accompanied by guides when they

University of Cape Town

entered the veld. The reason for this was Andre's long standing relationship with the farm characterized by regular visits to procure meat for his side-line flea market trade in game meat. The result was that all four men went into the veld unaccompanied by guides, a privileged departure from commercial practice so that the trip existed in the frame of a personal rather than a market relationship. While Andre, of course, paid for all of the animals he shot on the farm, as would any other hunter, his relationship was additionally defined in terms of balanced reciprocity. A stone mason by trade, he was installing granite counter tops and back splashes on Snr's veranda around the coal stove, on the basis of an arrangement by which he would get cash and animals as payment.

The most obvious indication that Andre's relationship to the farm extended beyond one defined purely by the market, was his staying in the farm house with the family when he visited the farm on his own. He was the only non-family member to be extended that privilege. Only one other group was granted access to the house and that was also on the basis of a long standing relationship. This group of insurance brokers was brought to the farm annually on a trip paid for by Morne, an executive in a large South African insurance company. Their visit each year coincided with the Super 14 Rugby competition's final. A traditional part of their annual hunting trip was thus Linda's opening the house for them to watch the match. She would provide snacks and they would bring drinks and watch the rugby with the family before socializing late into the night. On this particular occasion the socialization went on so enthusiastically that Snr, who ordinarily did not socialize with visiting hunters, fell over Morne's cooler box and cut his head, an accident that was the target of Jnr's teasing for a week.

Even when visiting hunters had no relationship to the farm beyond the commercial, Jnr made a point of gifting each with produce from the farm butchery that he managed. These gifts ranged from his providing cut biltong to hunters as they were driven around in the *bakkie* on their way to or from the veld; to his providing smoked wildebeest cheese sausage for them to cook over lunch; to his giving each hunter one of his home made warthog salamis upon their departure. He explained this gifting as marketing the butchery. Charging an average of four Rand per kilogram for the processing of a

University of Cape Town

carcass, successfully marketing the butchery to visiting hunters significantly increased the revenue to the farm per animal.

While the primary motive behind Jnr's gift giving was to market the butchery, it nonetheless functioned to mitigate against the purely market relationship that structured hunters' relationship to the farm as a non-market form of exchange that existed at the bottom end of a continuum of non-market exchange, the pinnacle of which was gaining access to the farm house. Guesting in the farm house was rare, but gift giving and accepting hunters' hospitality, by spending time socializing around the fire at the hunting lodge, both served to create the impression that the hunting was more than merely a commercial relationship in which hunters enjoyed no particular relationship to inhabiting the land upon which the masculine ideal discussed above was founded.

Cultivation of a special relationship with the farmer generally bolsters symbolic labour's effectiveness, and is required to access the veld in the manner hunters indicated, in interviews, that they desired. Too much success in this developing such a relationship can, however, have the opposite effect. Unequivocally agreeing with Louis that a special relationship with a farmer was essential to a hunter's ability to access the 'primitiveness' symbolic labour required, Andre added that "It is a complex thing to manage". He explained:

> If you have a good relationship with a farmer, then he wants you to sleep in his house. That is my experience. I try to stay out of their houses. That is, to be honest, my biggest problem. And I can tell you now, last year we went to hunt by a guy, in Namibia. Extremely great environment. We stayed with them in the house; we ate with them at their table. But that became too much for us. Apart from the fact that this man could talk. He waited for you to come visit, he kept you busy. Then you hunted the whole day and then you are tired and you still have to visit with him until 12 o'clock at night and when you get out of there you are half dead. So our choice is give us a tent in the veld. We really actively pursued that. But we could not always escape the comforts.

University of Cape Town

Thus, the special relationship with the farmer intended to amplify symbolic labour's power to conceal hunting's commercial character, risks undoing symbolic labour's attachment of the hunters to the past by locking them firmly in the present relationship to the land by those that currently inhabit it.

Looking back to the seeming contradiction in Gerhard's assertion that game animals on agricultural land are more natural than game animals on the apparently natural land of the game farm I conclude that Gerhard's sense of what constitutes hunting was such as to link him to something other than the market. That 'something other' is the mythological "lives and times of predecessors who, over the generations, have moved around [the landscape] and played their part in its formation" (Ingold, 2000: 189). What this chapter shows, then, is that entry into hunting nature requires a second type of play: one that enfolds the Afrikaner nationalist mythic past into the object world that emerges out of the contest between hunter and quarry. I call this second type of play symbolic labour.

University of Cape Town

Chapter Six: Escaping Modernity by Telling to Tell: The Narrative Education of Play and Retrospection

Chapters Three, Four and Five have argued that hunting nature emerges out of the interaction of two types of play: structured competitive play and symbolic labour. Through the former, the object-world of hunting nature emerges out of the contest between hunter and quarry, and through the latter this object world is made to enfold an Afrikaner nationalist myth of hunters' forefathers' habitation of the land. Through these types of play biltong hunters naturalize a myth and mythologize an emergent object-world. By embodying their forefathers' mode of dwelling biltong hunters perform a claim to their belonging on the land. Within the time pressured context of the commercial hunting trip, however, these two types of play undermine each other so that the emergence of the object-world as a bubble of ontological distance from everyday life (and within which is enfolded a mythic nationalist past) requires strategic work on the part of both hunters and farmers. Biltong hunters desire that the object-world that emerges out of structured competitive play enfolds the Afrikaner nationalist mythic past.

For this enfolding to occur, structured competitive play and symbolic labour have to resonate with one another. Such resonance is, however, threatened from two quarters, both of which relate to the fact that they are forced to hunt in a commercial context. The first is the necessary compromise between the structured play and the symbolic labour that inheres in the commercial context. Symbolic labour requires that the hunter secure enough meat for him to be able to credibly argue that hunting is integrated into his own household's meat requirements. Structured competitive play requires the hunter to enter into a contest with his quarry. Because commercial hunts are usually no more than two nights long, the time consuming challenge required for structured competitive play to have occurred must be balanced against the need to acquire enough meat for symbolic labour to have occurred. This compromise is made more difficult to manage because biltong hunting is limited to the costly commercial arena and is thus restricted to at most three hunting trips per season. This not only places pressure on biltong

University of Cape Town

hunters to get their quota of animals early in the hunt, it also means that most biltong hunters enter the field with a skills deficit relative to the animals they intend to kill.

The second threat to resonance between the two types of play derives from the fact that hunting is a market relation while symbolic labour depends on the performance of a non-market inhabiting of the land resembling that of the masculine heroes of Afrikaner nationalism. Hunters employ strategies aimed at militating against the market character of the relationship through developing relationships with farmers in terms of which they can construct their access to the land as being brought about by something other than the exchange of money, such as friendship. Farmers encourage this through gift giving and the acceptance of hunters' hospitality at the hunting lodge.

Balancing the requirements of structured competitive play against those of symbolic labour in the context of the commercial hunting trip

The first threat is not only a threat to the hunters' experience; it is also a threat to the farms income. If a group fails to shoot its full quota the farm loses income. Jnr thus made available methods of extending hunters' capacity to disappear and outmanoeuvre their quarry in order to obtain the meat central to symbolic labour. To ensure that this provision does not entirely unmake structured competitive play Jnr arranged that there be walking sessions planned according to the skewing of the landscape to accommodate hunters' skills deficit. Should this balancing act between guaranteed success and the impression of a challenge does however occasionally fail, hunters and farmers resort to narrative in order to reconstruct their belonging on the land and the challenge of their kills. This reconstructive surgery is the focus of this chapter.

It is tempting to take as the starting point for a chapter dealing with hunting narratives the third layer of meaning in Blaser's (2009: 877) definition of ontology and consider narratives as the "manifestation" of either the world of the everyday, or the world of hunting nature. The challenge then would be to show that these narrative manifestations are part of the performances out of which the worlds being narrated emerged. This would, however, be to ignore the fact that hunting nature exists not only as an alternate reality, but also as a commodity within the everyday world. The

University of Cape Town

transformation from a marketed commodity that hunters have to purchase to hunting nature, a transformation effected by structured play and symbolic labour, requires a more obtuse look at Blaser's argument.

My starting point in trying to understand hunting narratives is the reading of this transformation as an inversion of Blaser's critique of how ontologies are tamed as 'culture' within the modernist ontology. Blaser's (2009) argument suggests that the structure of the modernist ontology, particularly its division between society and nature enables it to absorb other ontologies into itself by taming them to its assumptions about what can exist and about the possible relations between existing things. This is done by transforming these alternative ontologies into 'culture' such that the worlds they entail are reduced to cultural constructions of the really real physical world. Through the structured competitive play and symbolic labour out of which the veld emerges, however, hunters seem to be doing the opposite. While the process Blaser describes is one in which ontological proximity results and the dominant relations between Self and Other are preserved, the process described in the previous three chapters is one in which ontological distance is produced through structured competitive play while dominant relations are preserved through symbolic labour.

These seemingly opposite processes can, through the metaphor of the commodity fetish, be seen as two sides of the same coin. The movement being described by Blaser can be thought of as akin to the process of commodification. In the relativistic epistemological economy of constructivism, all ontologies thus incorporated into the modernist dichotomy as 'cultures' are accorded the same epistemological value. What I mean by this is that each is reduced to a cultural understanding on the (real) physical world. As no more than mental constructions any such cultural understanding is interchangeable with any other. But, as is the case with commodities, each ontology incorporated into the modern ontology as 'culture' is incorporated as a fetish, the relationalities of its emergence obscured behind the epistemological vicious cycle explained in Chapter Two. The inflation of a bubble of ontological distance and the enfolding of a nationalist mythology within it is best thought of as akin to the reincorporation of the fetishised commodity into new patterns of relationality; as the

University of Cape Town

process by which use value is made to replace exchange value. It is thus as if hunting nature is a bubble of ontological difference, the limen of which is the elastic skin of commodity stretched dangerously taut by the relationships between hunter and quarry (structured play) and hunter and ancestors (symbolic labour).

The limits of the commodity's elasticity are evident in the balancing that the impossibility of fully realizing both types of play within the commercial context requires; in farmers' attempts to balance the compulsory challenge of structured competitive play against the compulsory success of symbolic labour by manipulating hunters' capacities to outmanoeuvre and conceal themselves from their intended quarry. Structured play depends on the hunt being an opportunity to enter into the contest with the quarry that demands an alteration in movement and perception relative to the affordances that facilitate and resist the hunter's intention to kill and the animal's intention to escape. Symbolic labour, by contrast, depends on the hunter shooting enough meat for use in his household or for processing into biltong. Within the limited timeframe of the three day hunt the risk of failure necessary to structured play jeopardizes the provisioning central to symbolic labour, while measures aimed at extending the hunter's ability to outmanoeuvre or remain obscured from the quarry threatens the aim of structured play by so reducing the challenge as to make a contest impossible.

Running with the metaphor of hunting nature as a bubble of ontological distance, sometimes the second wind that is narrative work has to be marshalled to the cause of keeping it inflated or sufficiently positively pressured that it can offer ontological distance from the everyday modernist world that constantly threatens to intrude along the commercial circuit through which hunters purchase access. I argue that this narrative work is part of what Law (2007) would call 'doing reality'. As a reality, hunting nature cannot exist outside of hunters' performing it. As a part of this performance, narrative does two things: first, it contributes to inflating the bubble and to keeping it inflated even once hunters return home; second, it holds the fragile surface of the bubble intact against those moments when the balance between the two types of play fails and the modern threatens to flood in along the commercial circuit. Narrative work, however, also carries back to the everyday world from which hunters work to escape, the

University of Cape Town

affirmation and reinvigoration of Afrikaner nationalist masculine right to domination that biltong hunters perform through symbolic labour.

We thus need a narrative lexicon capable of discussing three aspects of narrative: narrative as a complement to the embodied contest between hunter and quarry out of which hunting nature emerges; narrative as a mechanism for managing the distance between experience and expectation when the integrity of the bubble of ontological distance is threatened; and narrative as a mechanism for transporting the reinvigorated dominance of the Afrikaner nationalist masculine ideal back into the modern world of hunters' everyday lives. The first two of these aspects are discussed under the heading of narrative and reality, while the third is discussed under the heading of narrative and identity. The challenge is to enter into this territory without reintroducing into the argument the subject/object or material/mental dichotomy Chapter Three argued against.

Narrative and reality

The most obvious narrative performance contributing to the emergence of hunting nature that I encountered was the one that took place in JK's office and that I discussed in Chapter Four. At that stage I had no hunting experience to speak of and his performance in effect educated my attention towards telling, discerning, the appropriate type of movement, the availability of a dead rest, the importance of a stable shooting platform, and the need for a clear line of fire. And as a result of this narrative performance, when I did enter the veld to pursue game I was prepared, if not practiced, to pay attention to some of the relevant environmental subtleties that a non-hunter would be ignorant of.

This play on the word "tell" is not something I can take credit for. Ingold characterizes the relationship between stories about hunting and the activity of hunting as one in which the former is the education of attention in the latter, so that to tell of hunting deepens hunters' knowledge and thus increases their ability to "tell things from subtle indications that you or I, unskilled in the hunter's art, might not even notice" (Ingold, 2000: 190). Telling, in narrative form, of the environmental subtleties one is

University of Cape Town

perceptually attuned to, is to train the attention of the audience towards their being able to tell – to both discern and describe those same subtleties.

Ingold (2000: 37) thus speaks of the relationship between a narrative such as Johan's and the activity of which it tells as the *education of attention* and not the transmission of representations. By formulating the relationship between narrative and practice like this he directly confronts the critical danger of a turn towards narrative in an attempt to understand how activities such as hunting relate to singing, storytelling and the narration of myth. Ingold's emphatic point is that it is not valid to accommodate these difference between hunting and narrating a hunt, within the tempting material mental dichotomy such that the former is an interaction in nature, and the latter a construction of nature. To suggest that narrative educates attention in the performance of particular activities is to resist this temptation and avoid stumbling back into the bifurcated Cartesian realm.

To frame narrative as the inscription of meaning onto the features of the physical landscape would render any narrated nature nothing more than a reflection of whatever underlying grammar is argued to govern the attribution of meaning to features of the real already-there physical world. By such a formulation hunting nature would be tamed representationally as a cultural (mis)understanding of the physical world. Formulating narrative as educating attention treats narrative as tuning the audience and the teller to the embodied performance upon which hunting nature (and indeed the neutral physical world of science) are contingent. Sanders (1999), solidifies the case by treating the theory ladenness of scientific observation in precisely the same fashion.

Sanders argues that observation is widely believed to be influenced by antecedent beliefs. Scientists, he argues, observe what they are led to expect by their theories, and we, in our everyday perception of our environments, suppress the unexpected. Sanders is, however, careful to make the point that this is only a partial picture of the relationship between conception and perception. Regardless of this insight into the theory-ladenness of perception, it remains true that we cannot manipulate ourselves into perceiving what we want simply by rearranging our expectations.

University of Cape Town

In Chapter Two I argued that worlds-in-progress result from staged experimental success. Sanders (1999: 134), in keeping with this, suggests that perceptual readiness varies according to "interest, purpose, desire and the like". As he puts it:

> It is relative to this changing background that the world gets cast in terms of opportunities and risks – in terms, that is, of affordances. In short, it is affordances that provide detail in the account of how theory is packed into observation, how conception affects perception, how behavioural orientation, intention, or purpose exerts its powerful influence over the way environments are parsed among things and events, the way figure emerges against ground, and the way attention is directed.

Looking back at Johan's performance in his office, narrative as the education of attention is clear. In Ingold's terms, the distinction between conception's guiding perception and its determining perception is the same as that between a clue, something that leads to discovery, and a cipher, something that inscribes meaning onto a surface. Johan's narrative does not construct a world, does not, as Blaser suggests "manifest" an ontology. It rather educated me to attend to how I might stalk an animal in a way that allowed structured competitive play to occur. His performance is best thought of as conducting a novice into the structured competitive play that, I have argued, generates the hunting nature object-world. It was not a narrative construction of hunting nature any more than scientific theory is a narrative construction of nature according to the natural sciences. It instructed me on how to attend to the relationship between myself and a stalked animal in order to enable structured competitive play to occur. Johan's narrative was thus not a representation that constructed hunting nature for me. It was, rather, a part of the performance of stalking out of which the hunting nature object-world emerges. While the performative aspect was not always as directly obvious with other narratives I encountered, narratives in which hunters did not act out the story as Johan did, the same education of attention was, I argue below, readily visible once I began looking for it.

I closed each of my initial interviews with the hunters that I interviewed prior to my fieldwork period what they would advise I do if I decide to shoot an animal as part of my

University of Cape Town

fieldwork given that I have no hunting or shooting experience. This did not elicit the response I had intended. I had hoped that the question would result in a mini lecture on the basics of hunting; instead, it almost universally resulted in advice about what antelope to select as quarry and what rifle to shoot it with. The advice was, generally, that I select a small antelope such as a *rooibok*, that I avoid head or neck shots and aim for the heart lung area, and that I use a large enough calibre that the shock of impact would be sufficient to kill the animal even if I missed the vital organs. I got far more insight into hunting's basics, the importance of attending to wind direction, the importance of knowing different species' anatomy, the need to be able to accurately gauge distance and so on, from the stories hunters told about their own experience. Stories about failure or partial success were most useful in this regard.

When I asked Louis to recount to me his most memorable hunting story, I was surprised to be presented with an account of a late afternoon hunt in which he wounded, and eventually killed, what turned out to be a pregnant *gemsbok*. The event he recounted took place in Namibia during a hunting trip with a large group of hunters. Louis had initially elected to not go out hunting on that day's afternoon session. The farmer had decided to keep Louis company at the camp and the two chatted and drank "a beer or two" before Louis suggested they go for a drive and see if they come across anything.

> We drove for long, and there were opportunities for me to shoot that I did not take. But late in the afternoon we were on our way back to the camp and I was sitting up front with him talking. That was actually one of the reasons that I did not actually worry about the shooting, because for me it was actually just a chat. He and I still do that a lot, we walk in the veld and we talk, catch up on the past year. So, we were driving back to camp and it was already almost dark. So I said to him "Ag, the hunting is over, lets drive back", and at the last gate before the camp, the last camp gate, we saw a group of *gemsbok* and he said to me "*ag* those things are very relaxed at this time" and told me to climb on the back and to shoot.
>
> And that is how it happened. We drove along the fence with me on the back, and a beautiful large 'bok' stood looking at me, and I shot. But for some reason or

University of Cape Town

another it was one of the worst shots ever in my whole life. That is the bad part of it. I shot and we both heard that it was a hit. So what happened was we stopped, climbed out, and he asked if I thought it was a good shot. I said "no, I don't know". We climbed through the fence and by then it was starting to get dark quickly, and what happens in *Suidwes* [Namibia] is that if you wound a *bok* just before sunset he is gone and then the Jackals eat him during the night. So I was very, very, very worried about that. And, um, we climbed through the fence and walked to the place where the animal had stood. And when I got there we found the '*wegspring spore*'.

This guy is terribly good with tracks, but we had just walked a short distance when we found a sort of a watery stripe. That was very strange for me. And it was also very strange for him, and he said he does not know what it is. But the stripe was clear man. I said to him, "you look for the tracks; I will look ahead of us in case I can see the animal". And we probably walked about 300 or 400 metres along the tracks while talking to each other about what is going on when I saw a *bok*, and I said to him stop. When we stopped... and this is the irony of the whole thing, of the first shot that was so terribly poor. In the stop and aim and shoot I shot the animal in the neck and hit the spine, luckily, because I aimed for it, and the animal fell. And when we got there and cut the throat it turned out to be one of the biggest antelopes, it was a cow, shot on the farm in terms of the weight of the meat. And it had a tremendously long set of horns, they were the longest horns on any *gemsbok* I have shot.

But when we began to look for the hole of the first shot, that is the unfortunate thing, she stood looking at me angling towards me, and instead of hitting her on her shoulder; I shot through between her back legs. So I shot far too low for where I wanted to hit her. And the bad thing is, and that is the part that I don't want to tell, is that she was pregnant and I... and I shot her there in... What is it called? The little antelope's womb. And the fluid had run out. And it was very bad when we cut the thing open and realized what had actually happened. But that happens, I mean it is something that... he and I talked on the way back too,

University of Cape Town

> about why she was pregnant because this was not their time to be pregnant. So that is the one thing, neither of us could explain why she was pregnant. The second thing is that the first shot was very bad, and the third is the fact that I shot her in the neck and she fell right there. The good of the story was the neck shot and the fact that she was not eaten by Jackals, the bad of it is that she was pregnant and I still can't explain why. Since then we have shot a few *gemsbok* in Suidwes that were pregnant so it looks to me like it happens.

Listening to this story at the time was a little disturbing. I was troubled by the ethics of shooting a pregnant animal; by the first round puncturing the womb; by the watery stripe. Louis was also disturbed, and to some extent this story can be seen as an attempt to make sense of the random chance, a pregnant animal that stood looking at him, a particularly poor shot and an eventual clean killing shot to the neck. But, as is the case in the stories that follow below, we can see the educating of attention in the narrative. From the story the novice learns that *gemsbokke* are particularly relaxed just before sundown when hunters can easily approach them. We, however, also learn of the risk of deciding to approach and shoot at this time, as in Namibia a wounded animal can disappear into the dusk only to be devoured by jackals. We also learn a bit about the procedure of tracking a wounded animal, one I participated in many times during my fieldwork. Find the first deep tracks that mark the place from which the animal's flight started and follow the direction it fled in, one person following the blood and tracks while the other scans for any sign of the animal. The story also tells the listener to pay attention to the animal, to tell whether or not it is pregnant before shooting.

In the final analysis, however, Louis's is a story about giving up control and order, to take the opportunities that present themselves, because one can't control how or when they arise or the form that they take. The first shot was as inexplicably poor or unlucky as what the second was lucky, the animal stopped to look at Louis, he did not select it, it selected itself in a sense, the pregnancy was also inexplicable, and all of this was explained away with the statement "but that happens" echoed later in the story with the phrase "it looks to me like it happens". In keeping with my earlier argument that biltong hunting in the commercial context requires a willingness to shoot opportunistically this

University of Cape Town

story educates the listener to attend to opportunities, even late in the day, even after a beer or two at the camp, even while enjoying a conversation in the *bakkie*.

Andre told me a similar story of luck: of not explicitly intending or working hard to get anything, but of attending to opportunity and taking advantage of it.

> But I can tell you I have had experiences… I remember when I went shooting in Namibia one year and someone said to me 'no, the day is too short, it is already 9am you can't walk now' we will go and drop you off 13km away and we will come and get you again at six o'clock. It was my request to be exposed to nature with just a gun; with the possibility of shooting where I had not necessarily expected to get anything. Because it was a dry pan it was not a context that was ideal. But to cut a long story short, I went and sat there, and I began to think about a lot of things, as one tends to think about stuff, there is nothing around you, nature and all that. And at a stage a kudu cow walked out and stood still. And as I looked, there were two; the one was light and the other dark. And I asked myself, which is the better one? And I eventually decided to shoot the light one. So I shot the white one, and the white one ran a short distance and fell. The black one came literally to 30 or 40 metres from me. And I shot her dead too. So I slit their throats and I still had to wait for the pickup, I could not start walking because the area is so big that we might miss one another. And then there is panic, because there are leopards in that area. It is a dangerous environment, or it can be dangerous. You can die of thirst and from the heat, because even in winter it is very hot. And then at a stage a kudu bull arrived, while I was sitting waiting for nothing. So I shot him too. Then I already had three animals. Then a jackal began eating one of them so I shot him too. And the interesting thing is, and I have the photos at the house, they were large kudus, we loaded all three of them upright on a short wheelbase jeep. And with that jeep we took them all back.
>
> That means that on my first day in the hunting field I got everything I could shoot, I could not shoot any more. Because that was my quota that I could shoot, and actually one too many.

University of Cape Town

This story directs attention towards patient concealment when hiding. If one waits, and attends to remaining concealed, one will be presented with opportunities. It also, like Louis' story, above, and James' below, tells of giving up control. Each story directs one's attention towards important aspects of structured play, but each also directs one to resign control and attend to the opportunities come one's way.

The story James told me was about what he claimed was the only animal he had ever wounded. The animal in question was a kudu cow. He had shot it the late morning of the day in question, and pursued it until just after five in the afternoon, when he finally managed to kill it.

> We decided we would go out at 11 o'clock and for the whole morning I walked after a kudu cow. And I never got the chance for a shot. And when we were going back to the camp, as I was climbing on the Landover the kudu cow came walking over the road. And it was a big cow. And what I did was I looked through the scope saw it was an adult cow, it was not pregnant, you know because one more or less knows the animals, and I took a shoulder shot. As the shot rang out I saw her '*knack'* (buck) and I knew I had trouble. Instead of first judging the distance, I immediately put it in the scope and fired. And I went and measured after. It was 675 paces between where she stood and where I stood. And that just shows that you must always think before you shoot. I should have looked and estimated the distance and compensated for it, because I know the trajectory, the ballistics of my 30.06 very well for 180 grain.
>
> I usually zero my rifle at 100m. That is my preference. That way I know I can take it on the 'kola' up to 200m after which I must compensate. So I have more or less an idea of what to do, you must aim so much higher and so on. To judge distance plays a very very important role in hunting as far as I am concerned. There are many ways you can choose from. But it is a thing that is inborn and that you develop. If you are along a fence you can say 'ok, every pole is 50m, so it is about so and so. There are many ways you can use before you take the shot. Especially on long shots. Perhaps there are telephone poles and you say ok that tree is 2 telephone poles and the *bok* is ten paces behind it. That is more

University of Cape Town

> or less the distance. What I have done in the last 2 years, is I bought myself a nice birthday gift, and got myself a good rangefinder. And that helps a lot. I think that is a mechanism for limiting missed shots and wounding shots. If you know your gun and you know precisely where you want to go.

This brief story about James' only failure to kill an animal outright, is a narrative of a hunting event that points towards one of the aspects of a hunt that a hunter must pay attention to: namely the distance between himself and his target. His failure to correctly estimate the distance between himself and the kudu resulted in his failure to kill it outright. His narrative account of this failure became a lesson from which I, the novice, could learn the importance of attending to distance, and also a few ways of doing so. The story also was perhaps one that Louis could have learned from as it did conduct the listener's attention towards telling if the animal is pregnant or not.

By treating narratives as clues, Ingold (2000: 9-10) has tied narrative to everyday action in an example drawn from the Australian ethnographic record. According to the Pintupi of Western Australia the landscape was formed during the Dreaming as ancestral beings roamed the landscape. These ancestral beings metamorphosed into the features of the landscape such that "their movements are congealed in perpetuity" (Ingold, 2000: 53). Ingold's suggestion is that while pursuing their everyday activities, Pintupi replicate the creative movements of the ancestral beings during the Dreaming. In doing so they inscribe their own identities into the landscape so that the landscape becomes a history of significant events for each individual. This formulation suggests two narrative orders. The first is a transhistorical myth of ancestral beings' movement. The second is the biographical history of individuals' movement. . To narrate myths of the ancestral beings' landscape-creating movements is thus also to tell stories that teach people to attend to their everyday activities in ways that enfold the Dreaming within those activities. Thus, as Ingold (2000: 53) explains it, the identities people inscribe upon the landscape are derived from the transhistorical level of the Dreaming (Ingold, 2000: 53).

I argue below that the same two narrative orders are evident in the biltong hunting context. Narrative in the biltong hunting context parallels Ingold's argument above in

University of Cape Town

two ways. First, hunters' symbolic labour aimed to mimic the conditions they imagined their ancestors to have hunted in, particularly their emphasis on rugged outdoor living. Second, what the modern hunter has to attend to, namely the movement and perceptual changes that structured symbolic play require, remains largely unchanged so that hunters' moving and perceiving in this way also mimics their mythic ancestors. This parallel between Ingold's Pintupi example and biltong hunting centres on the relationship between structured competitive play and symbolic labour. The former is the individual's creative movement that generates the hunting nature object-world. The latter is the enfolding of a transhistorical mythic past into that object-world such that masculine identity is derived from creative movement that mimics a significant aspect of the ancestors' inhabiting of the land.

The three hunters' narratives, discussed above, thus partially mirror Ingold's argument that landscape emerges out of individual creative movement that enfolds within itself the creative movements of ancestral beings. The narratives underpinning symbolic labour, such as the works of P.J. Schoeman, conduct hunters deeper into the movement and activity that structured competitive play requires. In short, they enable hunters to find or discover the Afrikaner nationalist nature in the object-world emergent out of structured symbolic play. The hunting nature object-world in this way becomes an alternate reality within which biltong hunters discover the Afrikaner nationalist nature of their mythological forefathers. There are, however, narratives that fall outside of this parallel, narratives that are required in order to manage the threat to the limen of the ontological bubble that the commercial circuitry of hunting poses.

Here it is worth discussing in depth the different emphases placed on perceptual readiness by Ingold (2000) and Sanders (1999). While Ingold unproblematically describes narrative as the education of attention and leaves the problem there, Sanders foregrounds the limits of this education by reminding us that expectations are not limitless in their power to affect observation. Simply put, while perception is certainly influenced by beliefs or ideas; while conception does affect perception, those beliefs and ideas are unlikely to be decisive as perception resists beliefs as much as what it is influenced by them. The hunting nature object-world is, I have argued, a bubble of

University of Cape Town

ontological distance from the everyday that is inflated by the work of hunters and farmers in the commercial biltong hunting. It is, of course to be expected that this work does not always succeed in inflating and maintaining this bubble. My contention, therefore, is that in addition to educating attention such that conception can direct perception, there is a need to educate retrospection, such that those moments of a breakdown in ontological distance can be undone. I term this narrative and reality.

Narrative and identity

In the previous chapter I introduced Scott, an American trophy hunter who I accompanied during his hunt for a trophy quality blue wildebeest. As I explained, Scott used Jnr's rifle to shoot the animal off the back of the *bakkie* that extended his mobility and made the wildebeest's escape impossible. The wildebeest was not killed outright, and Huibrie fired the killing shot after chasing it in the *bakkie*. During the course of that day's hunting, we spent hours in the *bakkie*. We ate in it, drank in it, got it stuck in the mud – it was literally the nexus of the day's events and not a single one of us spent more than a few minutes away from it, and, as I mentioned earlier, Scott shot the wildebeest off the *bakkie*.

The bakkie's prominent role in Scott's killing the wildebeest was a source of great disappointment for him. After getting the carcass back to the butchery and unloading it Scott said to me: "well now I have had the real African hunting experience, shooting off a truck." This is turn of phrase that does two things relevant to the argument I want to make below. First, it articulates a disappointment in the event, and second, it explains away that disappointment by converting the event into an episode in a bigger story – the story of Scott's hunting career. This latter story, I argue, is articulated in terms of existing public narratives, "narratives attached to cultural and institutional formations larger than the single individual", such as the mythic narrative of the golden age of Afrikanerdom, or the metropolitan notion of sport that preceded the rise of settler masculinities as discussed in Chapter Five. This phrase, I will show, signifies and attempts close the gap between Scott's expectation of hunting the wildebeest and his experience of doing so.

University of Cape Town

Somers (1994: 618) refers to narratives through which people attempt to make sense of their lives, particularly of discrepancies between experience and expectations, as ontological narratives. These narratives connect identity to action and thereby process events into episodes. Ontological narratives, in short, lend events historicity and relationality through emplotment – the work of making experienced events intersect with a hypothesised plot. The plot can never be other than hypothetical since it is subject to change if any particular event cannot be reconciled within it (Somers, 1994: 616). This narrative process is separate from perceptual readiness as discussed by Ingold. I argue that the hypothesised plot is the myth that educates attention. The hypothesised plot guides perception until it is presented with an event that cannot be processed into an episode within it. What is required in such cases is something of Benjamin's image of the storyteller as craftsman usefully manipulating the raw material of experience (Benjamin, 1969: 108). Hence my describing it as the education of retrospection. Treating Scott's statement above as a window into an ontological narrative thus offers insight into how Scott made sense of the discrepancy between his expectation and his experience. He made sense of his disappointment by converting the disappointing event into an episode that preserved the hypothesised plot.

Scott made this statement in passing while removing his backpack from the *bakkie's*; loadbox. My impression at the time was that because I was standing nearby I happened to witnessed Scott vocalizing a piece of on-going internal dialogue. His disappointment was evident in three ways. First, his disappointment showed in resigned tone of voice. Second, it showed in his grabbing his gear and walking off as he said it, without stopping to face me or to give me an opportunity to respond. Finally, his disappointment showed in his use of the interjection "well". "Well" is an interjection that usually indicates the resumption of a conversation. It can, however, also linguistically mark a resigned conclusion, as when someone explains away a set of inexplicable, usually undesirable, circumstances or events, saying: "well, that's life". As such I think the utterance indicates a preoccupation on Scott's part and can be taken as a clue to how he explained away the disappointment resulting from the disjuncture between his experience and his expectation of hunting that wildebeest.

University of Cape Town

By framing shooting off a truck as the “real African hunting experience” Scott crafted an ontological narrative, only implicitly visible through this passing phrase, to enclose the threat posed by the event of the wildebeest hunt to the hypothesized plot. Scott effected this containment by reframing the errant event as an episode: the African hunt. By framing the hunt as African, the Scott rendered the disappointment contextually understandable; shooting off a truck is not unusual in Africa. If the kill was not authentic in terms of the sporting challenge central to structured competitive play and thus deviated from the hypothesised plot of Scott’s hunting career, it was nonetheless authentic in terms of what he understood to be “African” practice.

In addition to this ontological narrative’s normalizing effect, there is a distancing one. By terming the experience “African” Scott distanced himself from the practice of shooting off a bakkie that undermined the experience of the wildebeest hunt relative to his expectation of it. By generating an identity and a geographical distance between the hypothesized plot and experience, Scott kept his hypothesised plot intact by transforming the errant event into an episode distant from himself. But what was Scott’s hypothesized plot?

It was, I argue, the public narrative of the sporting trophy hunter. Unlike ontological narratives, public narratives are not made by individuals in order to make sense of the world around them. Public narratives are, rather, institutional products that do not belong to any individual in any direct way. One way of articulating the relationship between people and public narratives is that offered by Thornton (1988). Culture, Thornton argues, is best thought of as a set of resources to which individuals have differential and unequal access. By this formulation, public narratives are differentially accessible and can be drawn on to inform hypothetical plots in terms of which individuals can transform events into episodes through ontological narrative performances. They are themselves, however, not directly or easily changeable by any single individual. Public narratives, in other words, are narratives in terms of which people tell rather than narratives that people tell. This distinction takes us back to Ingold and his suggestion that narrative educates attention. Public narratives are, in

University of Cape Town

other words, embodied within the habitus as a disposition or educated attentiveness towards particular expectations.

As a trophy hunter, Scott inherited the chivalrous, sporting model of hunting characteristic of metropolitan elites prior to the rise of settler nationalisms in the USA, Australia and South Africa. As I showed in Chapter Five, it was the 'sportsman' model favoured by the colonial elites that dominated hunting during the colonial period. The hunting practices of settlers and natives, particularly hunting for the market and hunting for the pot, or the use of snares, poisons, or indeed any deviation from the principle of 'fair chase' were decried as unsporting and unmanly, and were rendered illegitimate and illegal by the metropolitan elites dominant in the field. Even after the rise of nationalist hunting masculinities to replace the English aristocrat of the sword as the dominant hunting figure in Australia, the USA and South Africa, however, these new figures continued to uphold the 'sportsman' model of their predecessors. The double irony, Loo (2001: 303) argues, is that the new elites lacked the consumptive power of their aristocratic predecessors, so that hunting practices had to change to suit the schedules and the budgets of the new bourgeois elite. Thus, Scott's predicament lies between the inheritance of this public narrative and this changed budget and schedule. His expectations derived from a sporting public narrative divorced from the constraints of his budget and schedule, but his experience was, in this case, undermined by those very constraints.

His ontological narrative attempts to salvage the sporting plot from which his expectations were derived by appealing to a public narrative that was contemporaneous with the public narrative of the chivalrous 'sporting' trophy hunter. I am talking here of the othering public narrative that metropolitan elites used to frame settlers and natives as deficient. This is glossed as the 'African hunt' and is reminiscent of the accusation, quoted in Chapter Five, that hunting was a matter of commerce for Boers and that they lacked a tradition of fair play and sport and hence "held no device [including shooting off a truck] unworthy of the game" (Henshaw, 2003: 22).

Evident in Scott's passing remark then is his using a public narrative of masculine deficiency, typical of the rivalry between sporting and other models of hunting in the

University of Cape Town

colonial context as a means to protect his hypothesised plot, namely that he is a sporting and chivalrous hunter. Perhaps the fact that biltong hunters had access to an additional public narrative that glorified the ancestral masculine (settler) figures vilified in the sport hunting public narrative is why I never noticed any of them exhibiting the same sense of disconcertment evident in Scott's phrase. Scott however, not having access to this 'other' public narrative in the same way was forced to replicate the old colonial distinction between the sporting aristocrat and the unsporting local (be it native or settler). He could thus avoid owning the troubling shot off the *bakkie* by recasting it as an encounter with the other. The disappointing event thus becomes an episode that in its otherness reinforces the hypothesised plot that he derived his expectations from and from which his experience deviated.

Public narratives, I have argued above, educate individuals' attention towards particular expectations, and individuals craft ontological narratives to frame events as episodes in keeping with these expectations. Public narratives thus educate attention and form expectations while ontological narratives educate retrospection. I thus argue below that the hypothesised plot's guides the decision of those staging the photograph about what elements of the event are included in the ontological narrative to make it an episode.

Between Scott's shot off the bakkie, and the disappointed phrase analysed above, the criteria for inclusion in Scott's ontological narrative of the 'real African hunt' became visible in the form of a photograph. The criteria of selection evident in the trophy photo's staging corroborate the above argument that Scott converted the disappointing event into an intelligible episode in order to preserve the hypothesised plot of his being a sporting chivalrous hunter. Immediately after the wildebeest fell to Huibrie's shot below the tree it had fled to, we approached. Finding it dead, Jnr and Huibrie set about readying the scene for the trophy photograph. This involved appropriately positioning the carcass and clearing the undergrowth from around it. The clearing of the undergrowth for such photos was, according to Jnr, a practical step to ensure that the carcass and hunter are unobstructed in the photograph.

The positioning of the carcass and the posing are, however, carefully managed relative to the photograph's intended mnemonic function.

University of Cape Town

In the interviews I conducted before going into the field, hunters explained that trophy photographs served a dual purpose. First, as trophies themselves, they captured the quarry's unusual worth. Second, as mnemonic devices they helped hunters remember a kill's particularities. Louis, for example, explained that he was not able to easily remember particular kills, but that when he had a photograph in front of him he was able to easily recall the episode. Trophy photographs also occasionally serve a rhetorical function. Andre, for example, in recounting the story of his opportunistically shooting three kudu's and a jackal, quoted above, offered photos as support for its truth, saying "I have the photo here, I can show you". It is in the light of the photograph's mnemonic and rhetorical functions, its function as a narrative support, that I want to discuss the photo of Scott and his wildebeest.

Berger (1982) has argued that what he calls communication photos are very strong in evidence, but particularly weak in meaning. While it is undeniable that the people captured in a photograph were there at the time of its taking, the fact that the photograph depicts but a moment extracted from the flow of time means that what preceded and followed that moment is excluded from it. Because of this exclusion, photographs depend on text, whether spoken or written to lend them meaning by furnishing them with pasts and futures. However, the photo's undeniability as evidence furnishes the text with a truth quality it would otherwise lack. Photograph and story thus exist within a symbiotic relationship.

Louis' and Andre's statements about the mnemonic and rhetorical function of photographs corroborate Berger's argument. For Louis the photographic evidence anchors a narrative account of the hunt, while for Andre, the story he is telling is lent truth from the photograph's undeniable quality as evidence. Hunters were, thus, not ignorant of this rhetorical symbiosis. For that reason the positioning of the carcass and hunter in order to produce a photograph capable of fulfilling these rhetorical functions is vitally important. The implication of this symbiosis is that the criteria evident in the decisions about what to include and exclude from the frame provide clues as to what sort of narrative those taking the photograph expect it will be used to support – the

University of Cape Town

criteria for inclusion in the frame allow a glimpse of what is to be included in the story (or excluded from the story).

To be clear, this is not a suggestion that Scott would recount the circumstances in which he got his wildebeest trophy any differently. Rather I am suggesting that the construction of trophy photographs is governed by its intended function as a prop supporting an ontological narrative. This narrative will transform the hunt as event into the hunt as episode in keeping with a hypothesised plot. A trophy photograph thus *favours* a particular ontological narrative by coding elements of the hypothesised plot, to which the event must be reconciled, into the frame in the form of decisions about what to include and exclude. The three decisions I observed in the staging of Scott's trophy photograph were more concerned with excluding aspects of the event resistant to its becoming an episode within Scott's hypothesised plot.

The first step in staging Scott's photo was to move the carcass. We dragged it slightly away from the tree and rotated it through ninety degrees to ensure that the photograph would not include the *bakkie* in the background. Were the photo to dutifully capture the particularities of the kill, the *bakkie's* presence in the frame would be required, given the prominent role it played in Scott's pursuing and killing his quarry. The work of rotating the carcass to remove the *bakkie* from the frame thus indicates its narrative undesirability; the fact that it is external to the sporting and chivalrous public narrative. The second piece of evidence regarding the narrative staging inherent in the composition of the photograph was the inclusion of Huibrie's, rather than Jnr's, rifle in the frame. Scott had fired the shot from the *bakkie* with Jnr's rifle, but Huibrie had fired the killing shot with his own rifle. At the time, for reasons unknown to me Jnr had affixed a large suppressor on the front of his rifle. This dampened the sound of the shot, but, because the rifle fires rounds at supersonic speeds, was unable to silence it fully as it could not affect the sonic boom that the bullet produced in flight. Huibrie pointed out that the suppressor would make for a poor photograph and his own rifle was thus selected. Huibrie offered two reasons to use his rather than Jnr's rifle in the photograph, both of which were material to the sporting public narrative. The first was that suppressed rifles are alien to the hunting context; they are outside of the aesthetic.

University of Cape Town

The second was that it made the rifle look like a “cannon”. Huibrie’s describing the rifle as a “cannon” suggested that it gave the impression of overkill, the rifle being so big as to detract from the hunter’s shooting skill. The staging of the photograph was thus deliberately pointed towards the exclusion of technological interventions from the frame to preserve a narrative in keeping with the sporting public narrative that revolves around fair chase and a hunter’s skill. To the sporting trophy hunter, devoted as he is to the sporting contest between himself and his quarry, *bakkies* and cannons are just devices unworthy of the game.

The third element of the photograph’s staging was Jnr’s manipulation of perspective to make the wildebeest appear bigger than it actually was. By lying flat on his belly and taking the photograph slightly upward, he generated more depth between the head of the wildebeest and Scott behind it. The effect of this is added depth was that the wildebeest appeared much larger relative to Scott in the photograph, which did not show any obvious evidence of this depth manipulation. This again is in keeping with the sporting public narrative as the prowess or power of the animal, its ability to survive long enough to get that large, is itself an index of the hunter’s prowess, his ability to best it in a sporting contest. These three manipulations of the mnemonic and rhetorical photographic artefact thus favour the hypothesised plot derived from the dominant sporting public narrative.

In the opening section of this chapter I argued that biltong hunters enfold the transhistorical past of their mythical ancestors within the hunting nature object-world that emerges out of structured competitive play. I argued that this enfolding is a way of understanding the relationship between narrative and action that is in keeping with the performative theoretical framework in that it avoids formulating perception as determined by narrative. The relationship between narrative and action in the three hunters’ narratives analysed thus far in this chapter departs from the relationship between narrative and action that Ingold (2000: 53) has argued applies to the Pintupi. These stories’ departure from Ingold’s Pintupi example derives from the fact that biltong hunters, unlike the Pintupi, do not actually inhabit the landscape in question; do not live their everyday lives there. Rather, as I argued in Chapter Five, biltong hunters play at

University of Cape Town

inhabiting a world that exists as a commodity in the everyday world they wish to escape to hunting nature from. Hunters therefore have to perform symbolic labour to transform the exchange value of the commercial hunting trip they purchase into the use value of an encounter with a transhistorical past. Within Ingold's discussion, the casting of the realm of stories, narrated myths and songs, as inseparable from the material world of movement across the landscape is thus far easier to articulate because the environment does furnish the Pintupi "with all the lineaments of personal and social identity, providing each with a point of origin and a specific destiny" (Ingold, 2000: 54). There is, in other words no conversion from exchange to use value taking place – the Pintupi are not playing at inhabiting the land as an escape from their everyday lives, they actually do inhabit it. Faced with the conversion of exchange value into use value, or the generation of ontological distance from everyday life, it seems we have to work with a fractured parallel to Ingold, one in which public narrative educates attention towards particular expectations and ontological narrative educates retrospection to protect this hypothesised plot against the pressure exerted on it by the commercial circuit.

Biltong hunters' ontological narratives educate attention towards the production of the ontological distance required to successfully escape from the everyday world. These narratives also educate retrospection so that the gap between the hypothesized plot (a hunting identity founded in the myth of the Afrikaner nationalist masculine ideal) can be maintained against intrusion from the commercial circuit. The chapter that follows picks up the point above that the education of attention and retrospection are not the only two things that biltong hunters' narratives do. It argues that these narratives do a third, far more important thing, namely transporting the revitalized masculinities out of the veld and back into the everyday world from which they sought escape.

University of Cape Town

Chapter Seven: Resistance and the Art of Domination: A Narrative Return to Dominance within an Embodied Escape from the Modern

Hunting narratives do more than educate hunters' attention and retrospection. In the previous chapter I suggested that narratives educate hunters' travel between ontologies and cannot for that reason be considered through Ingold's dwelling formulation. In this chapter I want to suggest that hunters' narratives smuggle the Afrikaner nationalist mythology realized in hunting nature back into the everyday world. To this end Ingold's Pintupi example still has merit as metaphor. The fractured parallel between Ingold and the two sections dealing with the relationship between narrative and hunting activity in the preceding chapter thus remains intact.

The additional complexity of the relationship between narrative and action with regard to biltong hunting still, however, exceeds my expanding of Ingold's 'education of attention' formula to include 'educating retrospection'. Recall that in interviews biltong hunters foregrounded hunting as an escape from the everyday world. In Ingold's example the songs, stories and narrated myths "serve to conduct the attention of performers into the world, deeper and deeper, as one proceeds from outward appearances to more intense poetic involvement" (Ingold, 2000: 56). Because biltong hunters inhabit a world, but escape from it by playing at inhabiting hunting nature, hunting narratives must do more than merely conduct hunters deeper into the world they are playing at inhabiting. Hunting narratives must also do more than shape hunting events into episodes in keeping with the hypothesised plot that informs symbolic labour.

Narrative as a means of carrying the Afrikaner nationalist masculine ideal back into the everyday world once the hunting trip ends

In order to discuss an aspect of the hunting narrative that falls outside of the revision of Ingold's formulation in the previous section, it is useful to return to the metaphor of hunting nature as a bubble of ontological distance. In the argument that follows I shift focus from the content of the bubble (hunting nature), to its limen, the impossible line

University of Cape Town

between the play world and the real world. As I have already shown, hunters' narratives do conduct them deeper and deeper into the object-world that emerges out of structured competitive play because symbolic labour enfolds an Afrikaner nationalist myth of inhabiting the land into that object-world. What I want to show in this section is the relationship between hunting narratives and the everyday world that biltong hunters wish to escape from. In the previous section I argued that hunters' ontological narratives transform events in the hunting field into episodes in keeping with a mythic Afrikaner nationalist masculine ideal that informs their symbolic labour. What I argue below is that this Afrikaner nationalist masculine ideal is naturalized by hunters' 'discovering' it in the hunting nature object-world. Because of this naturalization, these ontological narratives must also be read as conducting biltong hunters deeper and deeper into the world from which they seek to escape; as educating their attention and their retrospection in the everyday world too. Thus, while narrative in one respect educates awareness with regard to the requirements of structured play and in so doing is part of doing the reality of hunting nature (of keeping the bubble of ontological distance inflated against the pressures placed upon it by its commodification), in another and equally important respect, it conducts them deeper into the modern everyday world by educating attention and retrospection relative to the naturalized public narrative that informs symbolic labour in the hunting field.

Perhaps a simpler way of articulating this bidirectionality is through the distinction between documentary and documentation drawn by Weinberger (1994) in his discussion of ethnographic film. If documentary value is the insight a movie such as John Marshal's *The Hunters* gives into how the people featured in the movie attend to the world as an attempt to depict their way of life, then documentation value is the insight afforded into how those behind the camera attend to the world in the decisions they make about how to frame the shots, order the takes and provide the movie with a plot. In Ingold's (2000) and Sanders' (1999) language then we may say that documentary conducts the viewer deeper into the world being told *of* while documentation conducts the viewer deeper into the world being told *from*. Getting back to biltong hunters, the world being told *of* is hunting nature, and my discussion of narrative has, thus far, related to how it educates hunters' attention in structured

University of Cape Town

competitive play, or their retrospection when the experience deviates from the expectations this educating gives rise to. The world being told *from*, however, is the modern world in which the Afrikaner nationalist mythology underpinning symbolic labour was first crafted. Here it is worth recalling from the previous chapter that the nationalist masculine figures emerged as part of a nationalist mythology intended to conduct a rural population into urban capitalist contexts to build a nationalist movement around an imagined organic link to the land.

The complicatedness referred to above is evident in interview data indicating that hunters imagine the world of work and the world of hunting – the two ontologies – as both separate and connected, the latter giving expression to the cultural heritage acquired in the former but alienated there. My interview data strongly presents two different worlds, the world of hunting and the world of everyday life, with descriptions of the latter dominated by images of work articulated in terms of a disembodied performance of menial work tasks or of confinement and restriction within technologies like computers and cars. Melville's example of moving from one world to another, discussed in Chapter Three, was related in such a way as to suggest that each world emerged out of an embodied performance. In the morning he performed meetings and travelled, extending his embodiment in the direction of disembodiment through the computer and the car. In the afternoon he performed hunting, extending his embodiment in the direction of structured symbolic play through the technologies of the knife and the gun. Riaan too described hunting to me as an escape from "the rut and the race of everyday life". As part of his explanation to me of the perceptual transformation hunters undergo after their first two days in the veld explained it as a consequence of how sitting in front of a computer and being in a car are characteristics of the world of everyday life that impoverish the senses. Hunting nature is, in this sense, an escape to a 'natural' and 'authentic' way of being that the urban world alienates biltong hunters from.

The theme of leisure pursuits in 'nature' as ways of escaping the confinement, stress, and routine of the modern world is common to literature dealing with a broad range of outdoor activities. The outdoor leisure pursuits dealt with in a special edition of *Body*

University of Cape Town

and Society titled “Bodies of Nature”, are understood to be resistant performances where what is being resisted is “the modernity of industry, science, the city and so on” (Macnaghten and Urry, 2000: 2). The natures in which these leisure pursuits take place are understood by their practitioners to be spaces of salvation; spaces that, because they are “ontologically distant from patterns of work and domestic routines” (Macnaghten and Urry, 2000: 7), are able to save the performers from the constraining and even pathological unnatural places and unnatural practices of modernity. This salvation is made possible because those involved in these outdoor pursuits are required to abandon the modernist notions of control and domination in order to know what to do. This abandoning of control was a prominent theme in the three hunters’ stories analysed earlier in Chapter Three. Hunters must abandon the notion of domination and control and learn to attend to their quarry if they are to be able to know what to do in structured competitive play. Hunting nature is, in this regard, understandable as a space of salvation from modernity akin to those multiple natures discussed in the special edition of *Body and Society* mentioned above or discussed by Szerzinski (1996) under the rubric of ‘environmental expressivism’.

We must, however, not forget that hunting nature, and the other leisure natures mentioned above, are ontologically distant from the everyday world practitioners would be saved from, and the ambition of practitioners is to perform such that that ontological distance is maximised – that is the measure of a good hunt. The ontological narratives crafted to transform hunting events into episodes in a hunting career in keeping with the hypothesised plot derived from the Afrikaner nationalist mythology underpinning the ancestral figures biltong hunters emulate do more than conduct hunters into hunting nature. These hunting narratives simultaneously conduct hunters deeper and deeper into the modern world from which they escape even as these conduct them into the veld to which they want to escape. After all, as Chapter Five argued, the mythic ancestral figures of Voortrekker and Bittereinder, are fictions crafted in the present of the everyday world they help hunters to escape from.

Understanding that hunters’ narratives educate attention and retrospection in hunting nature and in the everyday world, corroborates my earlier argument that we cannot

University of Cape Town

think of hunters' narrative acts in Ingold's (2000: 57) terms as a part of dwelling. To do so would be to forget that hunters *play* at inhabiting land; that the public narratives informing symbolic labour operate beyond the boundaries of hunting nature; that hunters employ ontological narrative to bring their experience of hunting nature into line with their expectations; and that their expectations are generated by fictions (public narratives) authored in the everyday world.

Because hunters' narratives simultaneously conduct them into and out of "the modernity of industry, science, the city and so on" (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 2), I must disagree with the above-mentioned analyses of outdoor leisure pursuits, which argue that the multiple natures these pursuits take place in are spaces of resistance to modernity. To treat hunters' narratives as discourses of natural and unnatural places and practices that ideologically sustain the pursuit in question, as Macnaghten and Urry (1998) suggest would contradict the ontological foundation of my thesis' argument by reinvoking the first great divide between nature and society within the modernist ontology. It would, significantly for my argument here, also ignore the crucial dynamic in terms of which the use value generated by the two types of play, particularly by the symbolic labour, returns with biltong hunters to the everyday world as an affirmation of their right to dominance there; as a ritually reinvigorated masculine hierarchy informed by Afrikaner nationalist mythology and apartheid experience.

One might say the following of the nationalist myth: During the dreaming of the nation into being, allegorical ancestral figures trekked into the cities and institutions of a modern state and economy and congealed into a social landscape of positions and relationships for which they stood as transhistorical guides. As Du Pisani (2001 & 2004) has shown, Afrikaners' movement into the city was recast in terms of the values and ideas coded into the mythology of the golden age of Boer republics. This recasting was effected, by direct appeal to the allegorical ancestral figures who won the republics on the back of an almost biblical exodus into empty land and lost them in an unjust war against unscrupulous enemies.

As Trapido (1963) has argued, the allegorical figures Du Pisani (2004) identifies as the embodiment of the masculine virtues underpinning the Afrikaner nationalist dreaming of

University of Cape Town

the nation also moved through the landscape of state, church and classroom, connecting them and congealing those connections into a transhistorical institutional landscape capable of determining the origin and destiny of all who derived or were assigned their identity within it. This institutional landscape, brought into being by the movement of the allegorical ancestors during the nationalist ideologues' dreaming the Afrikaner nation into being, was a modernist space, a space that existed in the representational realm of capitalist social space. In this realm, which passed away with the passing of the Afrikaner nationalist mythology from symbolic dominance, the masculine heroes central to the mythology of the golden age of the Boer republics, could not be mimicked. Through the symbolic labour described in Chapter Five hunting nature became a space of ontological distance where biltong hunters could mimic the movements of their mythic ancestors and in that way enfold that mythology into the hunting nature object-world while basing their own masculine identity upon what they discovered there. Biltong hunting was thus an arena of activity that realized an imagined masculine hierarchy and invigorated it in the realm of the everyday. Hunting activity, in other words, naturalizes the Afrikaner nationalist mythology that informs symbolic play. It therefore does more than educate biltong hunters' attention and retrospection within the hunting nature object-world. It educates their attention and retrospection in terms of a pattern of relations built into the institutional landscape at the height of their masculine hegemony. Biltong hunting as a leisure pursuit thus reinvigorates a masculine hierarchy threatened by a new political order.

Deriding metropolitan masculinities

In his treatment of the rise to hegemonic status of the nationalist masculine ideal, Du Pisani (2004) explained that one of the strategies employed by the hegemonic is the stereotyping and derision of its others. Thus the early 20th century saw the introduction of the caricaturing of English and Jewish men in the Afrikaner press alongside the demonising of black men as a perilous black horde, in order to present the Afrikaner Nation as threatened from all sides. In an inversion of Buchan and Chapman, the Boer hero became an upright, honest, hard working figure juxtaposed alongside caricatures such as the weak pantaloon-wearing Englishman, the greedy Jew or the savage native.

University of Cape Town

I argue below that hunting nature, as part of the complex of national identity woven around such representations of the Boer hero, exists in a framework that similarly caricatures and derides other masculinities. And indeed my data supports this, with the types even mapping fairly neatly onto the categories identified by Du Pisani.

During the interviews I conducted, hunters all identified, and distinguished themselves from, at least two of the following three types of hunters. These were corporate hunters, American trophy hunters, and biltong hunters that just go to hunt in order to *kuier* (party), usually stereotyped as first generation hunters, or hunters that don't have a feel for the veld.

Significantly, each of these three types was represented as problematic because of their being corrupted by a commercial world alien to hunting nature as a space of Afrikaner nationalist mythology. Articulated as not having a feel for the veld, by which biltong hunters such as James meant a romantic nostalgia that attached hunting practices to an authentic ancestral habitation of the land, the hunters I interviewed represented these three types in terms similar to Malan's fear, according to Du Pisani (2004: 170), that urbanizing Afrikaners would just become Afrikaans translations of their English counterparts. The performance of a 'feel for the veld' through biltong hunting is thus arguably crucial to a masculine identity in the everyday world beyond the veld for two reasons. First, it protects this masculine ideal from the commercial force that corrupted the three errant types of hunter mentioned in the above paragraph, and that threatens both structured competitive play and symbolic labour as discussed in Chapter Five. Second, performing a 'feel for the veld' provides a transhistorical validation of Afrikaner nationalist mythology within the threatening and complicating context of post-apartheid South Africa.

Jokes told around the campfire also targeted metropolitan masculinities represented as having no 'feel for the veld'. These jokes, interestingly, were set in the golden age of Afrikanerdom that Du Pisani (2004) has suggested was romanticized during the period of the rise of Afrikaner nationalism. Johan, ironically visiting the farm for a corporate hunting trip, told a joke set in the Boer War. According to this joke Lord Kitchener was riding through the veld with 1000 Tommies (a local slang for English soldiers dating

University of Cape Town

from the very early 20th century). Upon approaching a small *koppie* (hill) he heard a Boer soldier shout out (from cover on the koppie): “Hey you English dogs! Fuck you”. Incensed, Kitchener dispatched two Tommies to go to the *koppie* and kill the man. The two disappeared behind the *koppie*, and after a brief exchange of gunfire the Boer again was heard shouting “Hey you English dogs! Fuck you! Is that the best you can do?” More enraged Kitchener dispatched ten Tommies to go and rout the man. The ten disappeared behind the *koppie*, but after a slightly longer exchange of gunfire, the Boer was again heard shouting “Hey you English dogs! Fuck you! Is that the best you can do?” Fuming with rage Kitchener dispatched the remainder of his 1000 soldiers to obliterate the man. After they disappeared behind the *koppie* all hell broke loose. After a long and terrible firefight one Tommy came galloping back around screaming at the top of his lungs “It’s a trap! It’s a trap! There are two of them”.

This joke is obviously based upon the belief in the superior veld craft and military skill of the Boer fighters during the South African War, a public narrative nurtured by the Afrikaner nationalist movement that held the English to have won only because they cheated (Du Pisani, 2004). Johan’s joke thus bolsters Afrikaner nationalist’s belief in the superiority of the republican masculine figure emulated in biltong hunters’ symbolic labour. It does so while mocking the masculine credentials of their English counterparts.

Jnr told a similar joke celebrating the cunning of the Afrikaners in their battle against the Germans in South-West Africa. In both cases a metropolitan masculinity is made to appear deficient, weak and out of place relative to a Boer masculinity. These jokes constructed Boers’ inhabiting the land (and hunting as central to that inhabiting) as the foundation for the mythologized Boer position in these wars as a defence of what was legitimately theirs. In terms of this foundation, the source of their superior soldiering, their authentic inhabiting the land they defend becomes the crux of a fictional indigeneity. The hunting nature object-world that emerges from structured competitive play thus becomes the world in which the Afrikaner nationalist masculine hierarchy becomes real. Biltong hunters that are unable to realize this hierarchy in the transformed political space of the world of the everyday are able to re-enact the

University of Cape Town

habitation in terms of which these jokes articulate the superiority and legitimacy of their Boer ancestors over their metropolitan invaders. The Boers are superior because they belong, have a feel for the veld, and the English or Germans should lose because they do not belong.

An encounter that I observed outside the farm butchery as a group of hunters completed their permit paperwork and loaded their meat before returning to Gauteng illustrated how the Boer ancestors' habitation-based superiority over other metropolitan masculinities was mirrored in the Boer ancestors' historical conquest of the original inhabitants of the land taken up by the farm. A close examination of the gravel covering the parking area outside the butchery on the farm would reveal numerous cartridges that have either accidentally fallen out of vehicles when people disembarked, or been tossed aside. On the day in question, one of the hunters, finding such a cartridge remarked that there must be a vast number of cartridges littering the farm.

Jnr replied that the farm was covered in cartridges dating from when the Boers had chased "the Tswana up into Botswana." In this example the cartridge and the rifle become symbolic of the Boers' winning the land. The parallel between the cartridges outside of the butchery and those that won the land and now lie alongside those of contemporary hunters is, I argue, metonymic of biltong hunters' symbolic labour as a performance that connects a mythic past to a commodified. The performance linking the hunting nature object-world to the mythic Afrikaner nationalist past is amplified by the extent to which the cartridges marking the passage of these ancestral Boers across the land are also evidence of the hunting that sustained them on their campaign.

Performing racial domination

I observed similar direct racial domination as part of biltong hunters' symbolic labour during my fieldwork period on the farm. Interestingly, I only encountered racial stereotyping and racism in the field, a phenomenon perhaps attributable to the fact that the interviews took place in the formal space of the everyday, a world in which the old racial hierarchy, enforced through the cartridges discussed above, has become illegitimate. Not so in hunting nature where symbolic labour enfolds the Afrikaner

University of Cape Town

nationalist mythology into a real object-world. The racist language I so ubiquitously encountered in the field was a crucial part of the Afrikaner nationalist masculine hierarchy. The fact that this language was absent from my interviews and present in the field, I argue, supports my asserting that hunting nature is a space in which an unacceptable Afrikaner nationalist masculine hierarchy can be enacted and invigorated. The fact that the hunters I interviewed were not the hunters I encountered in the field problemetises such an interpretation, and the difference may merely point towards some hunters being racist while others are not. The starkness of the distinction, together with the ubiquity of racist language in the field, I argue, contests this second interpretation. My participant observation revealed hunting to be a highly radicalized pursuit. I never witnessed a scene of racial abuse or direct racism between Jnr, or Snr, or any of the hunters and the black guides. The racial slur "kaffir" was commonly used by Jnr, Snr and visiting hunters when guides were not present or were imagined to be out of earshot.

Before dealing with this language as it pertains to hunters and symbolic labour, a contextual caveat is in order. My first encounter with this extremely racist language occurred on the afternoon of the day that I arrived on the farm. The family *braaied* (barbequed) some meat and we sat outside around the fire drinking beer and getting to know one another. We chatted about the unseasonal rainfall, the local flora, the family dogs and trivia of that sort. I was still feeling quite out of place and as the conversation turned towards business that had transpired some time before my arrival I drifted away from what was being discussed only to be snapped back to attention with Jnr's use of the word 'kaffir' to describe a guide.

In the contemporary South African mainstream this is the most unutterable of words, so much so that it has come to be known as "the K-word". To hear it in conversation anywhere, let alone with the seemingly local variation on its more common pronouncement – a variant in terms of which the 'a' (usually pronounced in the Afrikaans usage so that the word sounds similar to 'cougher') is lengthened to resemble the 'a' in plant so that the word becomes "kaaffir" – strikes one's ear very roughly. During the course of my stay on the farm I came to realize that this was an everyday

University of Cape Town

word for describing black people, and a word spoken so often that not even the novel pronunciation could make it anything other than everyday and ordinary in that context. Jnr was particularly guilty of this common usage of the term. Snr tended to use it only when he got angry or frustrated. Snr's wife, Linda, did not use the term, and on that first afternoon she responded to Jnr's use of the term by saying: "I thought we had agreed that we will no longer use that word". I do not know what the reasons for that apparent agreement were, perhaps my presence was one of them, but the word continued to be commonly used throughout my period in the field.

The question is what to do with this extremely racist language and how to make sense of it relative to the hunting context given the stark contrast between my experience in the field and the absence of any such racist language in my interviews. My argument is that this language, at the very least, demonstrates that the public narrative informing symbolic labour is a profoundly racist one, and one in terms of which whites like Jnr and Snr continue to attempt to influence and understand the world around them as the political transition that undid the Afrikaner nationalist masculine hierarchy is slow in arriving on farms.

Even on this farm, where transformation has yet to arrive, I show in the argument that follows that this racist public narrative cannot be sustained in the ontological narratives that individuals use to convert experiences to episodes in keeping with a hypothesised plot. It is as if the discrepancy between experience and expectation cannot be resolved in these racist terms so that this public narrative is repeatedly shown to be false.

My first encounter with racist language during the *braai* mentioned above was preceded by a conversation with Snr earlier the same day. I arrived on the farm on the weekend of the funeral of Eugene Terreblanche – slain leader of the *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging* (AWB), a group of paramilitary right wing extremists organised around the desire for Afrikaner political autonomy in a new Boer republic. The organization was run along lines mimicking the old Boer commando system during the South African War. Terreblanche was allegedly murdered by two of his farm labourers and as a result the subject of farm murders was dominant in the Afrikaans press at the time. Earlier that afternoon, as I sat chatting to Snr on the veranda of the farmhouse,

University of Cape Town

the conversation touched on farm murders. He told me that in his opinion, an opinion echoed a few days later by Jan, a grain farmer from the Lichtenburg area, farm murders were not racially motivated. Both farmers asserted that farm murders were always motivated by one of two things: either they were motivated by robbery, or they were the result of anger.

Snr explained that afternoon that he, as a result of this opinion, kept no cash on the farm, and treated his workers well – explaining that he did not verbally or physically abuse them, paid them on time and paid them fairly. I think this reasoning, in the wake of a resurgence in media attention to farm murders, may have been partially behind the alluded to agreement to stop using the word 'kaffir', and behind the fact that within the generally low income context of farm workers on South African farms the workers were treated respectfully without any of the shouting, swearing at or hitting stereotypically associated, with so vulnerable a setting through public figures such as Eugene Terreblanche who was jailed for assaulting a worker in 2001 (Masondo, 2010).

In that conversation, Snr also showed himself to be a reasonable and level headed man in his approach to transformation post-apartheid, particularly in his attitude to the state's land redistribution policy. Having himself sold a farm to the state as part of the restitution process he was very displeased with the process, but not with the idea, and was hopeful that commercial black farmers would make good use of the land. This attitude was well illustrated in a conversation roughly three months later. On that day I had gone through to the nearby small town of Zeerust with Jnr's wife Elsie. We had to drop off a tractor tyre for repairs and do some shopping. She also wanted to get a new dog from the local SPCA to replace one that had died of tick bite fever. We drove around the town for about half an hour unsuccessfully looking for the SPCA. She eventually phoned a friend and got some vague directions that took us out of town. As the road we were directed to take took us further and further from town it became clear that we were not on the right track. At this point Elsie decided to stop at a farmhouse near the side of the road and ask for directions.

We pulled into the property and drove around to the back of the house. Not seeing anyone around she called through the open back door and a black man emerged and

University of Cape Town

asked if he could help us. She asked him for directions to the SPCA only to be told that he had just bought the place and moved there from Mafikeng and did not know the area well. He, however, offered to phone the person he had bought the property from and ask him for directions. He did so, the previous owner gave Elsie good directions and we made it to the SPCA.

When I recounted this story to Snr over dinner that evening, he wished the man success in his farming. Snr argued more than once during my stay that South Africa needed men such as this to form a successful black farming class that would grow up through the agricultural economy so that transformation in the ownership of land would be led by those able to compete, rather than those given hand-outs by the state. He argued that the latter would never become successful farmers in a world-system of subsidies and commodity exchanges hostile to farmers in the third world.

His reasoned articulation of the threat to farming and to land transformation in South Africa as posed by predominantly white banks, by farming subsidies in Europe and America, and by commodity exchanges, particularly derivatives and futures trading, what he called “cyber mielies”, surprised me. My assumption was, based on my experience of the representation of these issues in the Afrikaans press, that Afrikaans farmers would see the ANC led government and the land restitution agenda as the main threats. Snr’s own experience of battling as a grain farmer in South Africa, of being very successful doing independent marketing of his produce and, as a result, of being pressured and victimised by other farmers and the cooperative that handled their marketing, and of eventually selling his farm to the state were experiences resistant to any easy transformation into the Afrikaans press’ public narrative of reverse racism.

Snr’s experience as a grain farmer that encountered the state in a land redistribution deal inclined him towards a surprisingly leftist critique of the capitalist world-system in the emplotment of the ontological narrative he used to frame that experience an episode in his career as a farmer transitioning into the game farming industry. His ontological narrative, which made sense of farm murders by attributing them to robbery and anger rather than a political agenda, thus did not corroborate the racist public narrative. My own stereotype going into the field was that farmers would be simply and plainly racist

University of Cape Town

in the AWB mould, attributing the failures of land restitution to incompetence born of racial inferiority and farm murders to a genocidal racial plot against whites, both of which are commonly held right wing positions.

The public narrative of racial superiority, strongly present in this context as evidenced by the common use of the extremely racist term “kaffir”, was thus unable to be the dominant feature of an explanatory framework in the face of the complexities of experience. This resistance is further evident in the degree to which Snr and Linda were disdainful of the simplistic racism of the AWB, which featured on the Afrikaans TV news often in the aftermath of Terreblanche’s murder. Linda described the AWB to me on more than one occasion as men that had translated the hooliganism and racial violence of their youth as ‘ducktails’ during the1950s and 1960s into an irrelevant but dangerous political hooliganism. Snr more plainly described them as idiots who were damaging the prospects for Afrikaners and farmers in the country.

I encountered a similar problematising of the racist public narrative as an explanatory model for perceived shortcomings in the state and the perceived victimisation of whites by agents of that state in a conversation between Linda, Snr, Snr’s mother, Elsie and Elsie’s mother. I had arrived back from the veld with Snr, and we found the other four in conversation in the lounge of the farm house. Elsie’s mother was recounting an incident in which her new domestic worker was bitten by one of the dogs on their farm. As it had happened, the new domestic worker had entered the yard around the farm house and been confronted by a large dog.

Elsie’s mother said that she instructed the woman to stand still while she removed the dog. The woman was, however, terrified and ran down the path, flung her arms around Elsie’s mother and tried to manoeuvre such that she would be shielded from the dog by Elsie’s mother. The dog apparently interpreted the charge and the pushing and shoving that followed as an attack on its owner and responded with an attack of its own, during which both women were pushed to the floor where they both suffered several bite wounds to their arms and legs – some of which required stitches.

University of Cape Town

Elsie's mother took the domestic worker with her to get treatment from her own private doctor rather than taking her to the state doctor. The reason for this was the perception, perhaps founded, that the state doctor would have encouraged the woman to press charges against Elsie's mother for the attack. Going to a private doctor thus eliminated this risk. This attempt to avoid being brought into contact with the state attached to two features of the racist public narrative, first to the suspicion that black agents of the state, such as the doctor at the clinic, are maliciously intent on punishing whites, and second, to the belief that the services offered by the state, such as medical care at the clinic in question, are substandard due to an incompetence attributed to racial inferiority.

Taking the woman to a private doctor for treatment thus not only avoided potentially becoming the target of a malicious racial conspiracy directed against whites, it also secured better treatment for the woman and was thus understandable as the right thing to do; as being best for both parties.

In order to maintain that taking the woman to the private doctor was indeed best for both parties it was essential that the poor service delivery of the state be placed beyond doubt. The assertion of this decline in standards of state services was, to this end, supported by appeals to perceived declines in other services provided by the state, particularly the declining standard of education. Here I was brought into the conversation as the only person present with a small child and thus the only person in the room faced with the decision of where to send a child to school.

I said that I was well pleased with the quality of English medium schools in Potchefstroom. Elsie's mother and Snr's mother each responded with brief asides about how schools, especially English schools had become very black, and suggested that discipline and standards had suffered as a result. Elsie confirmed that this was indeed the case with the English language girls' high school in Potchefstroom which according to her had become predominantly black. I countered, saying that the school in question had recently been rated as the top school in the province in terms of matriculation results and that the predominantly black student body therefore seems to be largely outperforming their white counterparts in other schools. I added to this that of the best students I encountered in the courses I teach at the university where I work

University of Cape Town

were black women that had passed through this school and that I was for these two reasons more than happy to send my daughter there.

The conversation then moved away from me again as the merits of the *Christelike Volks Onderig* (Christian National Education) schools were discussed. These are private Afrikaans language whites-only schools targeting nationalistically minded right wing Afrikaners. Elsie's and Snr's mothers began by holding the position that the quality of education offered in these schools was better than in state schools because of the racial composition of classrooms by deploying arguments related to discipline and to language. The general consensus among the other three participants, I was silent, was that the standard of education was worse at these schools because of teacher training, which is done through CVO's own training system and because of a curriculum out of touch with the realities of the day. Elsie in particular argued strongly that she would rather send her hypothetical children to multiracial state schools which had a better curriculum and where they would be far better prepared for life and work in contemporary South Africa.

The point of this departure is not to attempt to suggest that these people are not racists. The point I want to make, rather, depends on the fact that they are racists that struggle to sustain racist explanations of the world around them. My argument is that these encounters and conversations illustrate how racist people's attempts to deal with their own experiences in a racially transforming society resist the emplotment of those experiences according to inherited racist public narrative. Their own experience, in other words, seems to resist their attempts to make racist sense of it such that the hypothesized plot of racial inferiority or conspiracy is forced to change. These are people that certainly do try to put the world together in racist terms, but, that are in their own telling able to tell that the public narrative is, if not completely false, certainly not completely true either.

I want to enter this section on racist language in hunting nature by making the point clearly that even in racist contexts, in which the extremely racist language I encountered is viewed as being acceptable, there is a more complex realization that this racist public narrative is not tenable. The public narrative of white superiority was a myth for making

University of Cape Town

sense of peoples' experience that in this setting could still be seriously offered, considered and discussed. It was, however, a potential explanation that seldom survived the scrutiny of the very people that advanced it. It is as if this is a dynamic by which undeniable racists tend away from racism in the face of their own experience's resisting reduction to the hypothesised plot of conspiracy and inferiority proposed by the racist public narrative. At the end of the discussion Elsie's and Snr's mothers did not change their minds. They remained convinced that the racial makeup of a school's student body was a good indicator of the quality of education being offered there. They conceded that it was not the most important indicator of the quality of education, that income, teacher training and facilities were indeed more significant.

Racism reinvigorated in hunting nature

In the world-in-progress that I have termed hunting nature, I encountered many statements diminishing the worth of black men and stereotyping them as lazy and weak and at the mercy of their white counterparts. These statements did not encounter the same resistance from tellers' experience observed in the above examples. One example that stands out for me occurred during the loading of the *gemsbok* Cecil shot and that I discussed in Chapter Four.

Jnr had instructed Lucas, the most senior of the guides, to reverse the *bakkie* into the bushes to get it as close to the carcass as possible. This involved threading the vehicle through the too narrow gaps in the sickle thorn bushes into which the animal had fled. Any attempt to bring a *bakkie* through the dense vegetation into which the *gemsbok* had fled was inevitably going to break the branches and spines of the tough bushes as they scraped along the body. Lucas' scraping the bakkie as he guided it through the bushes was not lost on the hunters standing around waiting for the *bakkie* to be in place to load the animal. Each of these hunters had arrived on the farm in *bakkies* of their own – highly polished and prized vehicles that had never been near a context such as this. From his position within this valuation of his own *bakkie*, Gerrie said to Lucas as he slowly tried to line the *bakkie* up with the next passable gap "you must be careful, if you damage the *bakkie* the *baas* (boss) is going to *bliksem* (beat) you."

University of Cape Town

Lucas replied in a calm tone and without breaking stride: “this is the farm *bakkie*, this is what it does”. In as plain a demonstration of Lucas’ matter of fact reply as one could imagine, Jnr, wanting to speed the process up emerged from the bushes and took over driving from Lucas. He forced the *bakkie* through the undergrowth far more aggressively than Lucas had and parked it right next to the carcass. Jnr’s aggressive driving gave rise to some joking among the hunters. Quinton quipped that they should bring Gerrie’s *bakkie* to load the next animal they killed. To this Gerrie replied “If a kaffir drives my *bakkie* like that I will fuck him up, I will rather drive through to town and pick up ten kaffirs to drag the animal out”. One of the others followed this with a comment about how upset Gerrie would be if his *bakkie* got scratched; to which another responded “he will only be upset if the Blue Bulls (a Super 14 Rugby team) sticker gets scratched”. The *bakkie*, together with its rugby sticker is a prop in Gerrie’s everyday performance of the rugged hegemonic masculinity that Du Pisani (2001 & 2004) writes about. The four wheel drive vehicle was carefully shielded from any off road activity and adorned with the biggest Blue Bulls sticker I have ever seen. Given Du Pisani’s (2001: 166) assertion that the loss of dominance in the political sphere was accompanied by a symbolic flight into the muscular sphere of rugby Gerrie’s *bakkie* and sticker can be little other than symbolic hyperbole.

Although Gerrie’s warning Lucas that he would be beaten by the *baas* for scratching the farm *bakkie* was made in a very exaggerated tone that belied a joking manner, he was not joking about himself beating any “kaffir” that drove his *bakkie* in that way. The joke was really a performance for the benefit of the other hunters so that Lucas was an unsuspecting and unwilling participant in a micro performance of racial hierarchy. This joke overtly positioned Lucas relative to the hunters in terms of the very recent racist history of which all involved were very aware. While the hardening of his face as he swallowed his anger at this racist joking shows the extent to which his position as a farm labourer disempowers and silences him, his matter of fact response that this is what the farm *bakkie* does, showed his refusal to adopt the role the Gerrie was trying to assign to him.

University of Cape Town

Lucas refused to adopt the role of subordinate according to the racist public narrative informing the symbolic labour of which Gerrie's joke formed part. He refused to apologise and supplicate himself in the face of chastisement from a 'superior', I could not help but feel that some of the laughter related to the attending hunters' knowledge that he was powerless to do anything about the joke. By calmly continuing with his job among the peals of laughter from the attending hunters in what can only be described as a scene of extraordinary racism, Lucas demonstrated that the hunters were out of place people that failed to understand how things are done on a farm.

Gerrie's hypothetical response to the hypothetical situation of a "kaffir" driving his *bakkie* like that was not a joke, but it was also not a real statement. It was clear from the encounter that such a situation would never arise as he would never risk his polished metallic blue double cab Toyota off road. The violence of the hypothetical response, however, stems from the *bakkie's* symbolic value, because damage to it is damage to what it symbolizes – in this case, as Du Pisani has argued, the connection to rugby suggests it stands as a substitute for a loss of power in the political realm. Aside from this, the world of the past in which the joke is set does not really exist, so that to beat a black man today for denting and scratching the shine of one's symbolic substitute for a loss of dominance in the political realm carries serious consequences. The slain Eugene Terreblanche discovered these consequences when he was jailed for six months in 2000 for assaulting a petrol attendant and sentenced to six years in prison in 2001 for assaulting one of his workers (Masondo, 2010). In this light there is no reason to assume that Gerrie would be so unequivocal about his use of violence to rehabilitate damage to his masculine integrity by a dehumanised and less worthy (in terms of this symbolism) Other were he actually put in that position. The veld as ontologically distant from the world in which such consequences exist, as a world that through symbolic labour enfolds a past in which such consequences did not exist, becomes a space in which such utterances and imaginings are unproblematically possible. In this world, through the joke and the hypothetical but not joking threat of violence the hunters are positioned as *base* (bosses) able to exercise violence on the bodies of the other, able, like their ancestors to violently enforce domination and ownership. In the current world of the game farm, this fantasy is held in place by the structural vulnerability of farm

University of Cape Town

workers like Lucas, who are unable to directly confront hunters like Gerrie without fear for their position on the farm.

The following day, when Gerrie shot his own *gemsbok* in a dense section of bush, he, however had nothing but praise for Lucas. Gerrie told Jnr that Lucas was a much better guide than Isaac who moved too quickly and as a result missed game. Jnr told him that if Isaac was moving quickly it was because there was no game, but Gerrie insisted that Lucas was better and that he would prefer him as a guide from that point on. Because Gerrie shot the *gemsbok* far from the road, in a spot inaccessible to the *bakkie*, Jnr asked George to take the *bakkie* and collect the other guides to help drag the carcass to the road. As we sat around waiting for them to arrive two lines of joking discussion began. The first was started by Gerrie who contrasted his own inability to move quietly through the dense undergrowth to the ease with which Lucas managed to do so. According to him, Lucas was directing him through gaps in the bushes that were inhumanly small but through which Lucas easily moved. As he told his tale, he conjured and re-enacted images of his attempts to follow Lucas' instructions on how he should move through the bush, and where he should position himself to get a shot. Gerrie was a very large man with a very large beer belly the result of this was that his comical self-deprecating narrative and had everyone (including Lucas) in stitches.

The self-deprecating tone of Gerrie's performance opened the door for Cecil to begin teasing him. Cecil suggested that Gerrie had, in fact, not shot the animal at all. It was not unheard of, Cecil claimed, that a guide, upon becoming extremely frustrated with a hunter's incompetence, would grab the rifle and go off to shoot animal on the hunter's behalf. Cecil's enactment of a frustrated Lucas wrestling the rifle out of a Gerrie's hands again elicited a great deal of laughter. Through Gerrie's comment on his competence and the two jokes at Gerrie's expense Lucas, in a reversal of the joking that had taken place at his expense the previous evening, was represented as the dominant figure, and Gerrie as the figure out of place and incompetent. The narrative was one in which Lucas was represented as the senior figure who directed and instructed Gerrie who was aware of his own limitations and, hence, his inferior position as incapable of following those directions.

University of Cape Town

This may seem like a contradiction but it is in fact not. The joking of the previous evening was about status. Gerrie and the other hunters enacted a racial hierarchy through a racist set of jokes that positioned Lucas as their subordinate. The joking that occurred while we waited for George to return with help to retrieve the carcass was about competence in the field of the hunt. That these are not mutually exclusive is well illustrated in a discussion I witnessed between a visiting hunter and Snr, in which the hunter was praising Isaac's ability as a guide. The praise followed our travelling out after dark to go and collect a warthog that the hunter in question had shot. Given the difficulty of finding a carcass in the veld during the day, finding it in the dark is an astounding feat. After driving for about twenty minutes, Isaac signalled that we should stop. He then led us along a winding route to where the carcass lay about 300m from the road.

That Isaac walked directly to where the warthog carcass lay impressed the hunter so much that after unloading it at the butchery the hunter said to Snr "You know, that Isaac is amazing. How did he find that pig so easily?" Snr's reply to this is telling relative to my suggestion that the racist victimization of Lucas is not contradicted by the praise he received the following day. Snr replied that he does not understand it either, "it is his built in GPS, his kaffir GPS". This extremely racist phrase links Isaac's astounding competence to his dehumanized status, or at least expresses the former in the language of the latter so that it becomes an ability explained in terms of his proximity to the non-human world. More significantly in relation to the making and unmaking of belonging, Isaac, who grew up on the farm, and whose ability to navigate it so fluently is an index of the intimacy of that belonging is rendered a piece of equipment in service of the hunter's project.

This apparent contradiction is also evident in historical accounts of hunting. While Indian laymen, for example, were generally referred to as effeminate and cowardly (Sramek, 2006: 669-670), those employed as guides and trackers were praised for their expertise in the tracking and killing of tigers, as well as for their "cool perseverance". Some colonial hunters went so far as to suggest they be afforded the respect and admiration worthy of the title 'professional hunter' (Sramek, 2006: 673). In Canada

University of Cape Town

during late 19th century the native guides, realizing the extent to which hunters depended upon their knowledge of the land and the game for their success, began to deliberately mislead hunters, employing their superiority in the hunting field as a weapon of the weak against the colonial legacy of domination at the hands of white hunters. This became such a problem that they were eventually replaced on hunts by professional white guides who were seen to be less skilled, but also less troublesome and more reliable (Loo, 2001: 313). A similar dependence on native expertise was evident in South Africa with regard to game preservation. Throughout southern Africa, but in South Africa in particular, native populations were removed from the parks after their establishment and forcibly relocated (Ramutsindela, 2004, Draper, 1998: 810). This was legitimized largely in terms of the so called destructive behaviour of these groups (Ramutsindela, 2004: 47), in terms of which their knowledge of tracking and hunting was deemed to be a threat. Natives' knowledge and ability were thus demonized to an even greater extent than was the case under colonial rule in the region. This resulted from the sort of exclusionary discourse of national distinction (such as the Afrikaner nationalist myth that I have shown underpins hunters' symbolic labour) that replaced the colonial one of social rank. The rise to prominence of a nationalist nature, evident in the myth of Paul Kruger's founding the Kruger National Park, thus saw an increased purging of the landscape in ways that supported the Afrikaner nationalist myth of ancestral occupation of land they portrayed as empty.

The purging of the land to make way for Nationalist natures in South Africa and elsewhere did not, however, preclude the incorporation of these demonized practices into the nationalist project in the form of assistants and wardens valued for their conservation knowledge and dedication (Draper, 1998) or into the hunting practices of dominant elites (Loo, 2001 &Sramek, 2006). Ian Player and Nick Steel, prominent (if marginalized and frustrated) figures in conservation in what was then (the 1950s and 1960s) Zululand, both credited much of the knowledge they gained during their careers in conservation to their close relationship with black game guards. Draper (1998: 827), credits these relationships with holding at bay the "ascendancy of cold-hearted science" which Carruthers (1995 cited in Draper, 1998: 827) sees as corresponding to the period I have been referring to as Nationalist.

University of Cape Town

The two seemingly contradictory joking episodes relating to Gerrie and Lucas that I discussed above, thus converge around what I argue lies at the heart of the racial hierarchy being enacted: namely, the linear narrative of the evolutionist distinction between civilized and savage, modern and non-modern. Latour (1993: 99) calls this distinction the Second Great Divide, and argues that this secondary divide stems from the First Great Divide between nature and society "through which the moderns have set themselves apart from the non-moderns" (Latour, 1993: 99).

University of Cape Town

Conclusion

As I argued in Chapters Three and Five, biltong hunters engage in two types of play in order to achieve ontological distance from the everyday world. Biltong hunters articulate this distance as a move from the world of work into the veld, or what I have termed hunting nature. I have argued that they conceive of this movement as taking them out of the world of society and into nature; as crossing what Latour (1993) terms the First Great Divide.

The hunters I interviewed also articulated escape from everyday spaces and rhythms to be an important factor in why they hunt. I conclude, however, that the opposite is in fact true. Hunters do not hunt to escape modernity. Rather, because they frame their hunting as an escape from society they create a particular line of distinction between society and nature. In other words, a particular Afrikaner nationalist mythic version of Latour's First Great Divide, emerges from the two types of play that biltong hunters engage in. While others, such as Macnaghten and Urry (1998, 2000, 2000a), have argued that outdoor leisure pursuits are about escaping modernity, my conclusion is that biltong hunting is about invigorating an alternative modernity to the one that biltong hunters are subject to in the world of their everyday lives.

Latour has argued that the second great divide, that between the moderns and the non-moderns stems from the first. In Hunting nature, biltong hunters enact a masculine hierarchy that positions them above metropolitan and native masculinities. This positioning is done in terms of the proximity of these other masculinities to nature or society as defined by the boundary between them. This boundary between nature and society emerges as a consequence of the staging of hunting nature. The narratives praising Lucas and Isaac for their ability in the field are, I argue, no less racist than the joking at Isaac's expense on the evening of Cecil's shooting his *gemsbok*. The hunters' praise for the guides' ability in the field derives from their misrecognising the guides as non-modern rather than as victims of the South African modernity that hunters play at in the hunting nature.

University of Cape Town

Such encounters showed biltong hunters perceived the guides as too close to the hunting nature object-world, which is staged by farmers. Hunter's praised guides' ability to guide them into the hunting nature object-world, but hunters perceived guides as incapable of travel between this world and the world of society the hunters were escaping from. Hunters, for example, dehumanized guides as illustrated by the encounter between Gerrie and Lucas and the farm *bakkie*, or Snr's attachment of Isaac's prowess in the field to his racial status with the slur 'kaffir gps'. The consequence of this is that guides are constructed through the hunt as closer to nature and therefore less at home in the everyday modern world that hunters typically inhabit.

At the same time, however, because hunting nature is emergent from the two types of play I discussed in Chapters Three and Five, biltong hunters frame themselves as closer to what they think of as nature and to the natural way of inhabiting the land of their ancestors than are metropolitan masculinities. Thus biltong hunters perform superiority over competing metropolitan masculinities by casting these as frail exotics, that do not have a 'feel for the veld'; that are home in the everyday world of work, but who, because they are unable to enter into hunting nature, do not really belong in the South African everyday world.

The incredible growth of the biltong hunting industry, I suggest relates to the extent to which an Afrikaner Nationalist version of the First Great Divide between nature and society emerges as a consequence of the staging of hunting nature. The particularities of hunting nature define who can travel into and out of it, define those excluded from society and those corrupted by it. Only the biltong hunter and the masculine ideal that is the basis of symbolic labour are both fully modern and fully local subjects, for them, hunting naturalises a modernity in which they belong and are dominant, a modernity unsettled by the collapse of the apartheid regime.

This is the power of conflating ownership with belonging that results from the inversion of the relationship between nature and the production of value under late capitalism. Because the production of value is now the means of life of nature, it is only possible to belong to such a nature as can be staged by virtue of its being owned. It is good to belong to a nature that belongs to someone.

University of Cape Town

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