

Review Article

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Jacob S.T. Dlamini, *Safari Nation: A Social History of the Kruger National Park*

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Jacob S.T. Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators and the Security Police*

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**Jacob Dlamini and the hidden history tradition
of South African historiography**

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Abstract

Hidden histories are pervasive globally, particularly since the advent of 'history from below' as social history in the 1960s. Jacob Dlamini's body of work is firmly located within South African historiography's hidden histories tradition and practice. His most recent studies, both published in 2020, *Safari Nation: A Social History of the Kruger National Park* and *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police*, are a remarkable contribution to this practice, indicating the purchase it has in developing and improving South African historiography. This article seeks, first, to demonstrate how Dlamini's *Safari Nation* deepens and enriches environmental and nature conservation historiography by incorporating the

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traditionally marginalised experiences of black South Africans in the making of the Kruger National Park and the development of nature conservation and leisure in South Africa. Secondly, it demonstrates how *The Terrorist Album* contributes to and improves South African struggle history through the telling of an often neglected or overlooked interface between surveillance technology and subterfuge in the liberation struggle.

Keywords: Hidden history; struggle history; environmental history; conservation history; social history; South African historiography.

Opsomming

Verborgte geskiedenis is wêreldwyd volop, veral nadat 'geskiedenis van benede' in die 1960's as 'n deel van sosiale geskiedenis ontstaan het. Die geskiedskrywing van Jacob Dlamini pas netjies in die tradisie en praktyk van verborge geskiedenis in die Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedskrywing. Sy jongste studies, wat albei in 2020 gepubliseer is, *Safari Nation: A Social History of the Kruger National Park* en *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police*, lewer 'n noemenswaardige bydrae tot hierdie praktyk en toon die waarde daarvan vir die ontwikkeling en bevordering van Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedskrywing. Hierdie artikel poog, eerstens, om te wys hoe Dlamini se *Safari Nation* die geskiedskrywing rondom die omgewing en natuurbewaring verdiep en verryk deur die ervaring van swart Suid-Afrikaners in te sluit wat tot nou toe in die ontstaan en ontwikkeling van die Nasionale Kruger Wildtuin en die ontwikkeling van natuurbewaring en ontspanning in Suid-Afrika, geringgeskat is. Tweedens wys dit hoe *The Terrorist Album* 'n bydrae lewer ter versterking van Suid Afrikaanse vryheidstryd-geskiedenis deur die verkenning van 'n dikwels afgeskepte of miskende raakvlak tussen waarnemingstechnologie en slenterslae in die vryheidstryd.

Sleutelwoorde: Verborgte geskiedenis; vryheidstryd-geskiedenis; omgewingsgeskiedenis; natuurbewaringsgeskiedenis; sosiale geskiedenis; Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedskrywing.

Since the advent of ‘history from below’ as social history in the 1960s,¹ hidden histories of all manner of subjects treated by historians and other scholars have been published.² The list of titles referencing hidden histories and other examples of this practice is seemingly inexhaustible and includes almost all fields of scholarship.³ Closer to home, there are examples with specific reference to Africa.⁴ More specifically in South Africa, there is the University of South Africa’s Hidden History and SAVUSA (South Africa Vrije Universiteit Strategic Alliances) series of books started in 2004/2005, which focuses on ‘history works which uncover personal histories, significant issues and events that have previously been neglected in existing scholarship or published material’.⁵ The earliest book published in that series in 2005, is *The Making of an African Communist: Edwin Thabo Mofutsanyana and the Communist Party* by Robert R. Edgar.⁶ With 21 titles in print currently, the series is

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1. L. King and G. Rivett, ‘Engaging People in Making History: Impact, Public Engagement and the World Beyond the Campus’, *History Workshop Journal*, 80, 1 (June 2015), 218.
 2. An example is the *Hidden Histories of Science*, edited by Robert B. Silvers, which is a collection of essays of five world-renowned writers who explore obscure and neglected episodes in the history of science. Reporting on the collection, Arminta Wallace, notes that ‘these five essays share a common theme: the ways in which major discoveries in biology, physics and medicine have been suppressed, misunderstood or simply forgotten during the course of scientific history’. See A. Wallace, ‘Hidden Histories of Science, edited by Robert B Silvers’. *The Irish Times*, 18 April 1998.
 3. There are D. Rose, *Hidden Histories: Black Stories from Victoria River Downs, Humbert River and Wave Hill Stations* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1991); V. Bernhard, B. Brandon, E. Fox-Genovese, et al (eds), *Hidden Histories of Women in the New South* (London: University of Missouri Press, 1994); E. Dore and M. Molyneux (eds), *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); E. Sonnet, L. Grieveson and P. Stanfield, *Mob Culture: Hidden Histories of the American Gangster Film* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005); G. Lipsitz, *Footsteps in the Dark: The Hidden History of Popular Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); F. Holloway and L. Jones, *Hidden Histories of Exploration* (London: Royal Geographical Society, 2009); J.F. Witt, *The Patriots and Cosmopolitans: Hidden Histories of American Law* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); K. Heller and G. Simpson (eds), *The Hidden History of War Crimes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); M.L. Shetterly, *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race* (New York: William Morrow, 2015), which also inspired the film by the self-same title; and D. Simon, *Holocaust Escapees and Global Development: Hidden Histories* (London: Zed Books, 2019).
 4. Some examples are: I.A. Phiri, D.B. Govinden and S. Nadar (eds), *Her-stories: Hidden Histories of Women of Faith in Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2002); K. Barber (ed.), *African Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); and S. Reily and J. Dueck (eds). ‘Hidden Histories of Religious Music in a South African Coloured Community’, *The Oxford Handbook of Music and World Christianities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
 5. ‘Hidden History Series’, University of South Africa, accessed 16 January 2021, <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Unisa-Press/Books/Hidden-History-&-SAVUSA-Series>.
 6. D.P. Wagner, ‘The Hidden Histories Series’, accessed 17 January 2021, <https://www.publishinghistory.com/hidden-histories-series-unisa.html>.

aimed at publishing ‘scientific, yet broadly accessible texts on historic and contemporary issues in South and Southern Africa’.⁷

Other historians and scholars in South Africa have also wrestled with the hidden history tradition. Select contemporary examples of overt engagement with this tradition are Archie L. Dick’s *The Hidden History of South Africa’s Book and Reading Cultures*;⁸ Martin Leggasick’s *Hidden History of Gordonia: Land Dispossession and Resistance in the Northern Cape, 1800-1990*;⁹ and Hein Willemsse’s ‘The Hidden History of Afrikaans’ written in 2015 and published in *Whiteness, Afrikaans, Afrikaners: Addressing Post-apartheid Legacies, Privileges and Burdens* in 2018.¹⁰ There are also examples of publications published under the banner of hidden history in fields as divergent as architecture and design.¹¹

Not always explicitly declared as such, hidden histories span and transcend the labours of professional historians and the discipline of History. Histories regarding gendered realities and experiences in society and histories about the exile experience of South Africans as part of the struggle history tradition offer noteworthy examples of this phenomenon.¹² While these writings are not necessarily written by professional historians only, as life histories they represent, among other things, struggle histories through the racial diversity of South African women writing about women’s experiences both in South Africa and in exile, which until the appearance of these books were a little explored experience in South African struggle historiography given its dominant focus on ‘great men’ and the armed struggle.

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7. ‘Hidden History Series’, University of South Africa, accessed 16 January 2021, <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Unisa-Press/Books/Hidden-History-&-SAVUSA-Series>.
 8. A.L. Dick, *The Hidden History of South Africa’s Book and Reading Cultures* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2013).
 9. M. Leggasick, *Hidden History of Gordonia: Land Dispossession and Resistance in the Northern Cape, 1800-1990* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2016).
 10. H. Willemsse, ‘The Hidden History of Afrikaans’ in *Whiteness, Afrikaans, Afrikaners: Addressing Post-apartheid Legacies, Privileges and Burdens* (London: MISTRA, African Books Collective, 2018).
 11. P. Duncan and A. Proust, *Hidden Cape Town* (Cape Town: Struik Lifestyle, 2016); P. Duncan and A. Proust, *Hidden Johannesburg* (Cape Town: Struik Lifestyle/Penguin Random House, 2016); and J. Swart and A. Proust, *Hidden Pretoria* (Cape Town: Struik Lifestyle/Penguin Random House, 2019), among other treatises.
 12. Examples in this regard are: H. Bernstein, *The Rift: Exile Experience of South Africans* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2014); L. Ngcobo (ed.), *Prodigal Daughters: Stories of South African Women in Exile* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2012); T. Strasburg, *Fractured Lives* (Athlone: Modjaji Books, 2013); Z. De Sas Kropiwnicki, *Exile Identity, Agency and Belonging in South Africa* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); and S. Moodley, *Time to Remember: Reflections of Women from the Black Consciousness Movement* (Durban: Women for Awareness, 2018).

Notwithstanding the above, Jacob Dlamini's sustained contribution to the hidden history tradition in South African historiography is noteworthy. Dlamini entered this area of scholarship in 2009 with his first book, *Native Nostalgia*.¹³ This work, which has variously been described as 'polemic, ethnography, autobiography, and history',¹⁴ is about Katlehong, a township near Johannesburg where Dlamini grew up in the 1970s and '80s. Contrary to the dominant view of townships solely being bleak apartheid dormitories for the urban black working class to service white capital and industry in the cities, Dlamini has fond memories of growing up in Katlehong. Through *Native Nostalgia*, Dlamini challenges orthodoxy and received wisdom about the meaning of townships for black South Africans. His debut engagement has since served contemporary discourse in South Africa in remarkable ways. *Native Nostalgia*, for example, has been referenced by eminent scholars such as Jonathan Hyslop in his investigation of the influence of E.P. Thompson on South African historiography¹⁵ and was treated as the central text for analysis and interrogation in Musi Kahimbaara's Masters' dissertation.¹⁶

Building on his contribution to the hidden history tradition, Dlamini followed this achievement with his study of African National Congress (ANC) insurgents turned collaborators by the apartheid security apparatus in *Askari: A Story of Collaboration and Betrayal in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle*,¹⁷ which shed light on a previously little considered phenomenon (a hidden history of combatants turned by the apartheid government through torture and other means to fight against their former comrades in the struggle) of great consequence in the South African struggle against apartheid. For his exceptional scholarship, Dlamini received the prestigious 2015 *Alan Paton Award* for non-fiction. This achievement was followed by his 2020 publication of *Safari Nation*,¹⁸ which I argue is an outstanding contribution to the hidden history tradition. *Safari Nation* offers a revised, expanded and critical look at the history of the Kruger National Park (KNP) from the point of view of Africans and their relationship to the park, and travel and leisure activities in South Africa. Dlamini then also published *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police*¹⁹ in 2020. *The Terrorist Album* explores the intersection between

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13. J. Dlamini, *Native Nostalgia* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2009).
 14. A. Akpome, 'Post-TRC Anxieties in Jacob Dlamini's *Native Nostalgia*', *English Academy Review*, 34, 1 (2017), 40.
 15. J. Hyslop, 'E.P. Thompson in South Africa: The Practice and Politics of Social History in an Era of Revolt and Transition, 1976-2012', *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis*, (2016), 95-116.
 16. M.J.A. Kahimbaara, 'Aspects of Memory, Identity, and Narrative in Jacob Dlamini's *Native Nostalgia*' (MA dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2016).
 17. J. Dlamini, *Askari: A Story of Collaboration and Betrayal in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2014).
 18. J. Dlamini, *Safari Nation: A Social History of the Kruger National Park* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2020).
 19. J. Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2020).

technology, surveillance, and apartheid. Through reading the archive against the grain in *The Terrorist Album* Dlamini unearths a history of struggle through the object of a photograph album the apartheid government used to maintain and defend apartheid against those who were hell-bent on destroying it.

As a critical engagement with Dlamini's contribution to the hidden history tradition, this essay cautions against uncritically embracing the value, virtue, and utility of hidden histories. While hidden histories emerge from the turn and development of social histories and offer wonderful opportunities to expand and deepen historiography, their uncritical acceptance can also lead to the 'baby and the bathwater' syndrome', as cautioned by scholars such as Paul Maylam²⁰ and Peter Kallaway²¹ in a different context. Consequently, and in our zeal to unearth and uncover hidden histories or read sources differently, we must seek to promote rigorous scholarship more so than undermine, dismiss, ridicule, or silence other or earlier efforts for all manner of reasons masquerading as new scholarship. As such, the notion of any single scholar possessing a superior reading of history in relation to others, or worse, having a monopoly on historical fact and truth, has been proven a fallacy. Furthermore, 'imposing a homogenising template is hazardous in the idiographic art of history', as Sandra Swart so eloquently cautions.²² While this essay will largely focus on *Safari Nation*, it also discusses *The Terrorist Album* and references *Native Nostalgia* as examples of Dlamini's contribution to the hidden

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20. Addressing himself to the challenges posed to historians by the postmodernist turn, Paul Maylam cautions against the wholesale acceptance or rejection of postmodernism's critique of historians. For Maylam, while postmodernists have been correct to emphasise and highlight the constraints, shortcomings, limitations that go with the business of historical reconstruction and explanation and consequently to demand from historians a greater sensitivity of these, 'ultimately, if the task of reconstruction and explanation is to continue, all historians, modernist or postmodernist, have to work within those constraints. See P. Maylam, 'Dead Horses, the Baby and the Bathwater: "Post-theory" and the Historian's Practice', *South African Historical Journal*, 42, 1 (2000), 134-135.
 21. Arguing for a serious and comprehensive focus on the history of education in developing an education policy in the post-apartheid context, Peter Kallaway notes that '[w]hat is revealed in the survey [of the history of education] is that South African historians, whether liberal, Afrikaner nationalist, Africanist, revisionist or those belonging to the social history or popular history traditions, have on the whole not placed education at the centre of the historical picture' mainly due to a wholesale rejection of or lack of consideration of education history pre-1994. For Kallaway, '[t]o deny the history of the system that has been built up over two centuries is in many ways counterproductive to meaningful change as there are inevitably many aspects of school culture that will have value – and others that need to be challenged. It is only through a careful study of the history of that system that such critical grasp can be obtained and meaningful change crafted'. P. Kallaway, 'The Forgotten History of South African Education', *Southern African Review of Education*, 18, 1 (2012), 15 and 16.
 22. S. Swart, 'Writing Animals into African History'. *Critical African Studies*, 8, 2 (2016), 100.

history tradition in South African historiography. Furthermore, the essay engages critically with the notion of hidden history as a fruitful tradition in the development and expansion of South African history in general and social history in particular.

As a stellar example of the hidden history tradition in South African historiography, *Safari Nation* foregrounds African agency in the development of the KNP, which has seldom been, if at all, part of South African environment and conservation historiography. Consequently, *Safari Nation* opens new vistas of inquiry about the story of nature conservation in South Africa and the views, ideas, involvement and influence of Africans in this important aspect of South African history. In this effort, Dlamini ‘has found illuminating sources by re-examining the KNP’s own archives but also in sources such as diaries and creative writing and in unexpected archives’.²³ As environmental history, *Safari Nation* builds on a sub-discipline and tradition in history with significance for contemporary concerns about environmental degradation and modernity and its implications for the livelihoods of peoples in South Africa and abroad. Through *Safari Nation*, Dlamini extends this debate to include the historically marginalised, thus strengthening the efforts that consider these ‘silent voices’ not only as victims but as agents of and contributors to this history.

Following the tradition, both overt and implicit, of hidden histories identified by the sources already referenced here, Jacob Dlamini’s *Safari Nation* provides us with a remarkable re-evaluation of a little-known aspect of one of South Africa’s most iconic treasures, the Kruger National Park (KNP). Much scholarship exists about the KNP, covering its nineteenth-century history as conservation sanctuary to the political contestations birthed by the colonial and apartheid enterprises and their attempts to obliterate, contain, and impinge Africans and their affinity and association to the land and South Africa as a political entity. Dlamini references this scholarship exhaustively and augments it with a new reading and interpretation that unearths fresh insights from the archive and the new and old histories his expansive reading enables and interrogates. His incorporation of the marginalised voices in history greatly supplements and adds depth and distinction to his work, which exemplifies the value and utility of hidden history.

23. I. Glenn, ‘Review Article. The Kruger Park and Jacob Dlamini’s *Safari Nation: A Social History of the Kruger National Park*’, *Critical Arts* (2021), 1.

Akin to South African history in general, South African environmental history, particularly concerning the KNP, can also be broadly read as representing three different historiographical schools of thought, perspectives or lenses.²⁴ In this regard, there is an Afrikaner nationalist perspective offered by scholars like Hennie Grobler,²⁵ followed by a liberal perspective offered by scholars such as Jane Carruthers,²⁶ and also a black nationalist perspective, which Dlamini can be considered to represent in terms of Wessel Visser's characterisation of South Africa's historiographical schools of thought, although it is a label he himself might contest.²⁷ Albeit different lenses through which to read the history of the KNP, these perspectives also intersect and relate to each other, for instance in the history of the formation of the KNP. Carruthers reports that Rudolph Johannes Labuschagne, in a book he wrote around 1970, ties the creation of the KNP specifically to Afrikaner conservation sensibilities in the form of Paul Kruger's tireless fight 'for an idea that often involved him in bitter controversy', leading to the conceptualisation and creation of the KNP at the end of the nineteenth century by the government of the ZAR.²⁸ Carruthers also reports that English/Scottish missionary interests and concerns fuelled and contributed to its development as embodied by James Stevenson-Hamilton, a long-time warden of the KNP.²⁹

More recently has come the perspective of Africans being involved not only in conservation and tourism, but also having agency during the twentieth century development of the park, in other words 'hidden histories' surfacing through looking below the archival and existing historiographical surfaces. Another example of this

24. W. Visser, 'Trends in South African Historiography and the Present State of Historical Research', Paper presented at the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, 24 September 2004, 1.

25. Hennie Grobler, among other things, wrote *Politieke Leier of Meeloper? Die Lewe van Piet Grobler, 1873-1942* (Scripta Africana, Johannesburg, 1988), which translates to *Political Leader or mere fellow traveller? The Life of Piet Grobler, 1873-1942*. Piet G. W. Grobler was Paul Kruger's grand-nephew and a minister of land in the 1920s and the grandfather of Hennie Grobler who wrote his biography, published in 1988 by Scripta Africana in Johannesburg.

26. Jane Carruthers is a world-renowned historian in conservation and environmental history, who, among other things, authored *The Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 1995), based on her PhD dissertation.

27. According to Wessel Visser, 'historians such as Smith, Van Jaarsveld, Moll and Van Aswegen concur that the emergence of a black nationalist historiography was partly stimulated by the radical revisionist historiography. In the works of the black historians the main emphasis is on the black experience. As in the case of Afrikaner nationalist histories, it is "committed" historiography with a clear reflection of black peoples' conceptions of the course of history, as well as their ideals regarding their position in South Africa'. See W. Visser, 'Trends in South African Historiography', 9.

28. J. Carruthers, 'Dissecting the myth: Paul Kruger and the Kruger National Park', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20, 2 (1994), 265.

29. J. Carruthers, 'Dissecting the Myth', 266; Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 10 and 35.

scholarship is the Honours thesis by Thanyani Madzhuta (2008), which devotes a section specifically highlighting the role played by the black rangers in the development of the KNP. This is significant as to date the history of many of the South African national parks only acknowledges the white rangers and fails to recognise the role of black rangers in carving out the conservation areas and the knowledge and wisdom they shared with their peers and visitors in developing a better understanding of the resources these parks manage.³⁰

Beyond this characterisation of his efforts, Dlamini also offers an alternative and critical reading of black South Africans' differential sense of self and orientation towards the land, nature conservation, leisure, and tourism which is very different from previous approaches to these issues. In *Safari Nation*, he considers the notion of route (Africans' right to travel) over roots (Africans' right to land) as an alternative approach to reading Africans' affinity to nature conservation, leisure, and tourism because, as he puts it,

roots and routes spoke directly to two of the primary concerns of elite and nonelite blacks in South Africa in the early twentieth century. ... The [traditional] privileging of roots over routes has blinded scholars to the complex nature of the black experience of the birth of modern South Africa.³¹

This perspective raises novel questions about identity, sense of self, and space and time, among other things, in the historiographical enterprise. It also demands responses to the debate it initiates, which could have remarkable implications for historical analyses in other areas of scholarship in South Africa. As a result of his 'reading the archive against the grain', Dlamini's study sheds new light on and provides insight into the scholarship on black leisure, tourism and the association thereof with the KNP, which has not been readily available in the public domain in an accessible and engaging form. Consequently, Dlamini treats the reader to what this history and association has been, 'what has been missing, and how it might be made fuller and more accurate'.³²

Through framing his *Safari Nation* around the 'idea of a "histories of presence"', a conceptual framework he 'derived from the notion of a "politics of presence"',³³ Dlamini transforms the reading of Africans and their history and relationship with the KNP into that of agents/agency and not merely victims. He does this by 'directing our historical gaze to places where scholars of the KNP and its

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30. T.D. Madzhuta, 'Cultural Heritage Sites in the Kruger National Park' (Honours paper, University of Pretoria, 2008), 2.
 31. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 108.
 32. P. Burgess, 'Review Essay. Discovering Hidden Histories: The Identity of Place and Time', *Journal of Urban History*, 26, 5 (2000), 646.
 33. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 3.

history have rarely sought the presence of blacks before'.³⁴ He also achieves this by foregrounding the views and experience of blacks as co-creators and participants in the making of the history of the KNP and tourism and leisure different from traditional approaches that mainly focused on the exclusionary endeavours led by the state concerning blacks in conservation history in South Africa generally.³⁵ In this context, Dlamini does indeed unearth and reveal a hidden history.

As a result of the earlier mentioned 'historical reconstruction and explanation',³⁶ history builds on previous premises. In *Safari Nation*, Dlamini builds on several previous histories that may be regarded as hidden histories in their own right. It is clear that within the landscape of South African historiography the hidden history tradition resides most comfortably within the revisionist school. In her survey of environmental history, Phia Steyn noted that 'the theoretical shift in South African Revisionist historiography from the late 1970s onwards had important repercussions for the development of South African environmental history'.³⁷ Affected in part by the Soweto uprisings of 1976, as also argued by Michael Cross,³⁸ the revisionist historiography agenda broadened considerably in the 1980s, which, 'coupled with the emergence of a general interest in the state and the environment in South Africa, directly contributed to the development of South African environmental history as an identifiable sub-discipline within South African historiography'.³⁹ Steyn reports that 'revisionist historians such as Jeff Guy, Roger Wagner, Stanley Trapido and William Beinart brought the environment to the centre of their narratives from which it had previously been absent'.⁴⁰ Furthermore and as Steyn suggests, 'the history of the conservation of South Africa's diverse collection of fauna and flora species is a major field in South African environmental historiography'.⁴¹

In response to the Afrikaner nationalist historiography that had dominated at the time, Carruthers pioneered historical research on wildlife protection in the 1980s and published widely on the history of wildlife protection in the Transvaal from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. She offered a strong 'corrective' character to deconstruct some of the popular myths about wildlife protection in the Transvaal and the role played by Paul Kruger in establishing the Kruger National Park.⁴² This new reading of conservation history led to a visible rupture with earlier

34. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 3.

35. Carruthers, 'Dissecting the Myth', 270-271.

36. Maylam, 'Dead horses, the baby and the bathwater', 135.

37. P. Steyn, 'A greener past? An Assessment of South African Environmental Historiography', *New Contree*, 46 (1999), 9.

38. M. Cross, 'A Historical Review of Education in South Africa: Towards an Assessment', *Comparative Education*, 22, 3 (1986), 193.

39. Steyn, 'A greener past?', 9.

40. Steyn, 'A greener past?', 13.

41. Steyn, 'A greener past?', 14.

42. Steyn, 'A greener past?', 14.

scholarship, which promoted Afrikaner nationalist interest through the story of the KNP.⁴³ Through tracing the history of protectionist legislation and policies in the Transvaal, Carruthers was able to debunk white people's blaming of indigenous black groups' hunting practices for the demise of game in the region. She argues that it was this 'scapegoating' that led to further and severe restrictions of blacks' access to free-ranging wildlife and their being denied legal access to firearms, hunting licenses, and ownership of hunting dogs.⁴⁴

Consequently, the popular view that people, and especially black people, were the enemies of conservation and that they should be kept out of protected areas was severely criticised from the late 1980s. This stimulated further interest in the history of black conservation efforts in the twentieth century, with a robust corrective character. In this regard, Steyn references Farieda Khan's work, 'Rewriting South Africa's conservation history: The role of the Native Farmers Association' and 'Soil wars: The role of the African National Soil Conservation Association in South Africa, 1953-1959',⁴⁵ as examples, which also reside comfortably in the hidden history tradition.

Safari Nation also makes it clear that, notwithstanding the extent that it provides treatment of black leisure and tourism proclivities in South African historiography, 'there was more to the presence of blacks in the history of the KNP'.⁴⁶ While referencing and acknowledging existing scholarship in his study, Dlamini regularly questions and augments previous views and understanding through the range of issues he covers. For example, Dlamini acknowledges that the extensive scholarship cited in *Safari Nation* 'certainly enriched our understanding of the park and its history. But narratives of dispossession dominate the historiographic insights of this scholarship'.⁴⁷ As illustrated below, *Safari Nation* corrects this oversight, thereby casting the book as a stellar example of the value of the hidden history tradition in historiography. In addition to declaring the intent of his study as him wanting 'to render historical what has hitherto been hidden from history [...] to place on the historical record stories that had existed in the archives, if at all, as fragments, marginalia and hints of a history yet to be written',⁴⁸ Dlamini also titles one

43. J. Carruthers, 'Defending Kruger's Honour? A Reply to Professor Hennie Grobler', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22, 3 (1996), 473-480.

44. Steyn, 'A greener past?', 15.

45. Steyn, 'A greener past?', 16.

46. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 12.

47. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 14.

48. J. Dlamini, "To know the African wild was to know the African subject": What training as a field guide taught Jacob Dlamini about culture, nature, power and race', *The Johannesburg Review of Books*, 1 July 2019, available online, accessed 27 July 2021 at <https://johannesburgreviewofbooks.com/2019/07/01/to-know-the-african-wild-was-to-know-the-african-subject-what-training-as-a-field-guide-taught-jacob-dlamini-about-culture-nature-power-and-race/>.

subheading in his book, 'Hidden histories of travel',⁴⁹ underscoring his awareness and appreciation of this tradition and practice in relation to his own efforts.

Furthermore, Dlamini correctly argues that 'by recuperating stories that have yet to trouble conventional histories of the Park, *Safari Nation* contributes to a growing literature about alternative histories of conservation in Africa',⁵⁰ which is a significant goal of his toil and one of the benefits of hidden histories. He also posits that 'this literature is part of a historiographical trend defined by an interest in how ordinary people, acting as something other than victims, have engaged with conservation'.⁵¹ He achieves this well, thereby casting *Safari Nation* as a contribution to and promotion of hidden histories by showcasing its utility and value to enrich South African historiography and its treatment of subjects that may seem already addressed through his attention to and correction of 'the selective selections and silences'⁵² in the historical record. Dlamini accomplishes this by referencing the work of scholars 'such as Peter Alegi [on sport], David Coplan [on black urban music and theatre], Tim Couzens [on leisure time], and Andre Odendaal [on black cricket]', who, in Dlamini's view, have provided 'us excellent studies of these activities ... and helped us understand how urban Africans, both the elite and the poor, occupied their time in colonial South Africa'.⁵³ Dlamini indicates that this scholarship 'laid the groundwork for [his] examination of the ways in which black leisure activities helped blacks develop new relations with the land'.⁵⁴

Dlamini then deepens the scholarship by, among other things, referencing the black middle class' views of tourism and leisure expressed through reports in black newspapers like *Tsala ea Becoana* of the 1900s, *Umteteli wa Bantu* in the 1920s⁵⁵ and the *Bantu World* of the 1930s.⁵⁶ He shows that there were also presentations and deputations to the government of the day of black concerns with the restrictions imposed on them through national legislation. Here he cites prominent black South Africans such as John Langalibalele Dube. The latter was, among other things, a founding member of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC, the forerunner of the ANC), and had applied for an exemption so he could own a firearm, which Dube eventually obtained when J.B.M. Hertzog, the prime minister, recommended Dube's exemption to Lord Clarendon, the governor-general on 12

49. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 196.

50. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 18.

51. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 18.

52. M. Cross, C. Carpentier and H. Ait-Mehdi, 'Unfulfilled Promises: Radical Discourses in South African Educational Historiography, 1970-2007', *History of Education* (2008), 3.

53. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 95.

54. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 95.

55. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 102-103.

56. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 95.

March 1936.⁵⁷ This recommendation was after the Department of Defence had opposed an earlier application of Dube's in 1929.⁵⁸ There is also reference made to other leaders of the SANNC such as Sefako Makgatho, Thomas Mapikela, and Sol Plaatje who met with Jacobus Sauer, the Minister of Railways in the Union of South Africa, on 19 March 1912 to 'protest the ill-treatment of Africans by officials of the state-owned South African Railways and Harbour corporation'.⁵⁹ Public transportation was an important mode of transport for a large segment of the African population who could afford to enjoy travel for leisure and other recreational purposes. Consequently, their experiences at the hands of the officials of the South African Railways and Harbour corporation provides an important, if unorthodox, window to understanding and appreciating their participation in, contribution to, and challenges with travel, tourism, and recreation in the country.

As hidden history, Dlamini's other 2020 publication, *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police*⁶⁰ is a critical consideration of the devastating utilisation of recording and tracking technology in the form of fingerprinting and photography in the National Party government's fight to defend apartheid and maintain white supremacy at all cost. Composed of 'about seven thousand mug shots by the end of apartheid in the 1990s', the police created the album in the 1960s.⁶¹ The 'instrumentalisation and co-option of photographic headshots in the service of a cumbersome and often inefficient bureaucracy is the subject of his study'.⁶² Dlamini reports that 'in the course of putting together the portraits [that eventually constituted the terrorist album, police] had assassinated individuals, tortured thousands, and in at least two cases recounted in *The Terrorist Album*, turned fathers into informers charged with spying on their sons'.⁶³

As hidden history, *The Terrorist Album* unearths and makes available a history the apartheid government was literally set on destroying.⁶⁴ As Garb writes:

In 1993, five hundred copies of the album existed, held in drawers and cabinets in Security Police offices across the country, but they were ordered to be destroyed, alongside piles of incriminating evidence, in the dying days of National Party rule.⁶⁵

57. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 99.

58. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 99.

59. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 108.

60. Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album*.

61. Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album*, 4.

62. T. Garb, 'Book Review, Jacob Dlamini: The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators, and The Security Police', *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*, 48 (2021), 178.

63. Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album*, 4.

64. Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album*, 14.

65. Garb, 'Book Review', 179.

Furthermore, *The Terrorist Album* also traces the history of criminal justice and law enforcement through its adoption of world-class and cutting-edge technology such as photography and how this was brought to bear on the government's fight against the liberation movement insurgents seeking to destroy the apartheid system. *The Terrorist Album* is significant as hidden history because

... [s]cholars of contemporary South African history have neglected this object. But it deserves attention because it speaks like no other relic from the apartheid past of the ambitions of South Africa's Security Police to document every known enemy of the state.⁶⁶

Through Dlamini's treatment, *The Terrorist Album* becomes 'a brilliant object through which to uncover the myths and mythologies of apartheid's operational functionality'.⁶⁷ Similar to what Verne Harris refers to as 'the archival sliver',⁶⁸ Dlamini also postulates that:

by looking at the album as a crack through which to peer into the past, scholars might also come up with historically grounded and ethically sound protocols for the treatment of the thousands of remnants from the apartheid security archive that scholars have yet to explore.⁶⁹

Furthermore, and through tracking and illustrating 'the history of apartheid violence through objects', *The Terrorist Album* also showcases and sheds a light on 'the arbitrariness and extent of political repression in South Africa'.⁷⁰ For Lennart Bolliger, through *The Terrorist Album*, 'Dlamini not only brings together an impressive collection of 'individual stories that speak to the complexity of life under apartheid', but also peels away at claims, both new and revisionist, about the alleged efficiency and omniscience of the apartheid state'.⁷¹ Bolliger further notes that of greater significance, *The Terrorist Album* 'is a thought-provoking and unsettling examination of the apartheid state, its authoritarian bureaucracy and its security apparatus through one artefact, the so-called Terrorist Album'.⁷² Nicholas Rush Smith notes that it is in *The Terrorist Album* that 'Dlamini points us to the ultimate delusion of apartheid: that the racial divisions, which underpinned this brutal, incompetent state apparatus, had any truth to them in the first place'.⁷³ For Smith,

66. Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album*, 4.

67. Garb, 'Book Review', 179.

68. V. Harris, 'The Archival Sliver: Power, Memory and Archives in South Africa', *Archival Science*, 2 (2002), 64.

69. Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album*, 6.

70. Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album*, 6.

71. L. Bolliger, 'Book Review of *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police*', in *South African Historical Journal* 72, 4 (2020), 699.

72. Bolliger, 'Book Review', 699.

73. N.R. Smith, 'Book Review: *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police*', *Africa Spectrum*, 56, 3 (2021), 337.

... much as the apartheid state's brutal incompetence continues to live on in the violent institutional routines of the post-apartheid state and in the traumas haunting those people the Security Police terrorised, this biggest of all delusions continues to live on in the country's present inequities and injustices.⁷⁴

Smith also notes that in *The Terrorist Album*, Dlamini continues the practice of “asking questions that unsettle received wisdoms” [when] he trains his analytical lens on the apartheid state itself.⁷⁵ Dlamini also questions the common-sense notion that although racist and violent, the apartheid state was well-organised and accomplished.⁷⁶ Consequently, *The Terrorist Album* has excellent import for hidden history. Finally, and according to Bolliger, ‘despite its primarily South African target audience, *The Terrorist Album* and the questions it raises warrant careful consideration by scholars and interested readers well beyond South Africa’.⁷⁷

As indicated earlier, there are clear virtues and benefits to the hidden history tradition. However, we must be cautious when embracing and promoting the value and utility the scholarship of hidden histories offers as this can also lead to prioritising new points of view above existing scholarship. This tendency is visible in some of Dlamini's treatment of earlier scholarship when, for example, he seemingly dismisses Hannah Arendt's explanation of the South African National Publicity Association's view of Africans as ‘raw material’ and insists on his own view that ‘the association had something else in mind’.⁷⁸ Dlamini reports his awareness of ‘the trenchant criticism to which Arendt's secondary reading of South Africa has been subjected [as well as] the criticism of the anti-Semitic undertones of her claims about mining in South Africa’ in his notes on the chapter,⁷⁹ which can be read as informing his dismissal of Arendt's views. However, this posture and explanation can suggest a discernible sense of superiority in his own reading and interpreting the evidence, better than any other previous effort or scholar. I had noted signs of this characteristic in Dlamini's scholarship and cautioned against this tendency in my review of his first book, *Native Nostalgia* in 2010.⁸⁰

Furthermore, Dlamini's inclination to favour his own reading of evidence over that of other scholars is also discernible when he counsels that when thinking about black people being ‘colonial subjects... we should not read too much into their subjection to colonial rule’. Here he is referencing historian Phyllis Martin, who in 1995, writing about leisure and society in Colonial Brazzaville, wrote ‘colonialism was

74. Smith, ‘Book Review’, 337.

75. Smith, ‘Book Review’, 335.

76. Smith, ‘Book Review’, 1.

77. Bolliger, ‘Book Review’, 701.

78. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 119.

79. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 290.

80. E.T. Smith, ‘Book Review: *Native Nostalgia* by Jacob Dlamini’, *wordsetc.*, First Quarter, 2010, 47.

a process of negotiating in which all kinds of political, cultural and social transformations were worked out'.⁸¹ Whether reading the meaning of his statement as one should not make too much of the view of black people as colonial subjects or that one's reading of such a view should not extend too far, it still smacks of him directing the reader by fiat to accept his particular view and reading of history and the evidence, instead of the reader making up his or her own mind from the facts presented and the arguments offered and substantiated.

For the most part, Dlamini does seem to be alert to this danger because *Safari Nation* is replete with observations that reflect a commitment to enrich and enlarge existing scholarship. For example, Dlamini states that 'the tendency in historiography has been to see relations between blacks ... and the sanctuary [of the KNP] in utilitarian terms. ... [But] I do not intend to take away from the powerful insights that these scholars have given us'.⁸² This awareness is further demonstrated when he notes that 'domestics, too, served as "specimens of native loyalty", there to confirm the apparent resolution of the so-called native question. To leave matters here, however, would be to leave untroubled conventional histories of the park'.⁸³ Many more such instances support *Safari Nation* as a remarkable example of the scholarship of hidden histories. Thus, while *Safari Nation* enlarges and deepens historiography on the KNP and environmental history scholarship in particular, it also opens great opportunities for further developing and entrenching, in a deliberate and considered manner, the practice of hidden histories in South African historiography. This will have the ultimate benefit of improving and expanding our understanding of our story as a nation, which is a critical concern for our nascent democracy and our place in the world.

In conclusion and read in this vein, *Safari Nation* and *The Terrorist Album* are contemporary examples of the value and utility of the hidden history tradition in South African historiography. Driven by, among other things, the excavation and uncovering of new knowledge and insight from sources and materials not addressed in the dominant discourse, hidden history is a trend in South African historiography with great potential for improving history and opening up exciting new areas of scholarship for established and new historians. Although characterised by competing and highly contested viewpoints,⁸⁴ which are a necessary result of our diversity, South African historiography is alive with possibilities to construct an inclusive and cohesive

81. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 145.

82. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 142.

83. Dlamini, *Safari Nation*, 163.

84. B. Bozzoli and P. Delius (eds) 'Introduction, Radical History and South African Society', as cited in N. Roos, 'South African History and Subaltern Historiography: Ideas for a Radical History of White Folk', *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis*, 61 (2016), 120; S. Sparks, 'Review Article: Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager and Bill Nasson (eds), *The Cambridge History of South Africa: Volume 2, 1885-1994*', in *Historia*, 58, 1 (2013), 215; and C. Rassool, 'The Rise of Heritage and the Reconstitution of History in South Africa', *Kronos*, 1 (2000), 1.

narrative that reflects a common view of the establishment, development, and evolution of the country as a geopolitical and social entity within the continent and the rest of the world. As such, the advent of hidden histories is welcome because it can greatly augment and enrich such discourse.

As can be noted from the titles mentioned above, hidden histories abound. Some may thrive simply because of the irresistible allure of the notion of something new, fresh, or potentially controversial and exciting that marketers would consider the title suggests to the reading public. Others may do so because of the deliberate declaration of the substance and intent of the undertaking. However, and notwithstanding this popularity, the practice has seemingly not yet been ‘theorised’ as a particular school of thought, paradigm or theoretical construct in South Africa. Current practice suggests that historians concerned with ‘uncovering’ and ‘treating’ hidden histories, are simply ‘bringing to our attention some elements of our collective history that have been missing and guiding us in the ways of discovering them’.⁸⁵ However, viewed as a correction or expansion of scholarship or addressing a limitation, misreading or interpretation of sources, hidden history has purchase for South African historiography.

Unearthing and revealing hidden histories is a significant scholarly endeavour that can only enrich our historiography. However, hidden history also needs to be theorised in order to determine its significance and consequence for scholarship. Because of its inherent, deliberate and demonstrated intent, theorising hidden history holds great potential for improving historiography. Furthermore, and because it is focused on expanding and enriching history, new and already established, it avoids the traditional conflict and contestations⁸⁶ characterising the development of some historiographical schools of thought in South Africa, where before 1994 different schools of thought emerged as a reaction or critique, often in opposition to preceding schools rather than an organic or natural evolution of the discipline.⁸⁷ New forms of South African historiography since 1994 prefer synthesising major trends in South African history.

Both *Safari Nation* and *The Terrorist Album* are outstanding contributions to the hidden history tradition and locate Dlamini’s efforts as among the most consistent in developing this practice in modern South African historiography. These publications contribute to the value of hidden history to complement, expand and enhance the story of the road we have traversed. Through unveiling that which has been erased, overlooked, marginalised, neglected or considered unimportant and insignificant, hidden histories assist us to make whole our society and ensure it continues to develop.

85. Burgess, ‘Review Essay, Discovering Hidden Histories’, 645.

86. K. Smith, *The Changing Past: Trends in South African Historical Writing* (Athens, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1988), 7.

87. R. Elphick, ‘Book Review, *The Changing Past: Trends in South African Historiography* by Ken Smith’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 25, 1 (1991), 159.

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- <https://johannesburgreviewofbooks.com/2019/07/01/to-know-the-african-wild-was-to-know-the-african-subject-what-training-as-a-field-guide-taught-jacob-dlamini-about-culture-nature-power-and-race/>

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