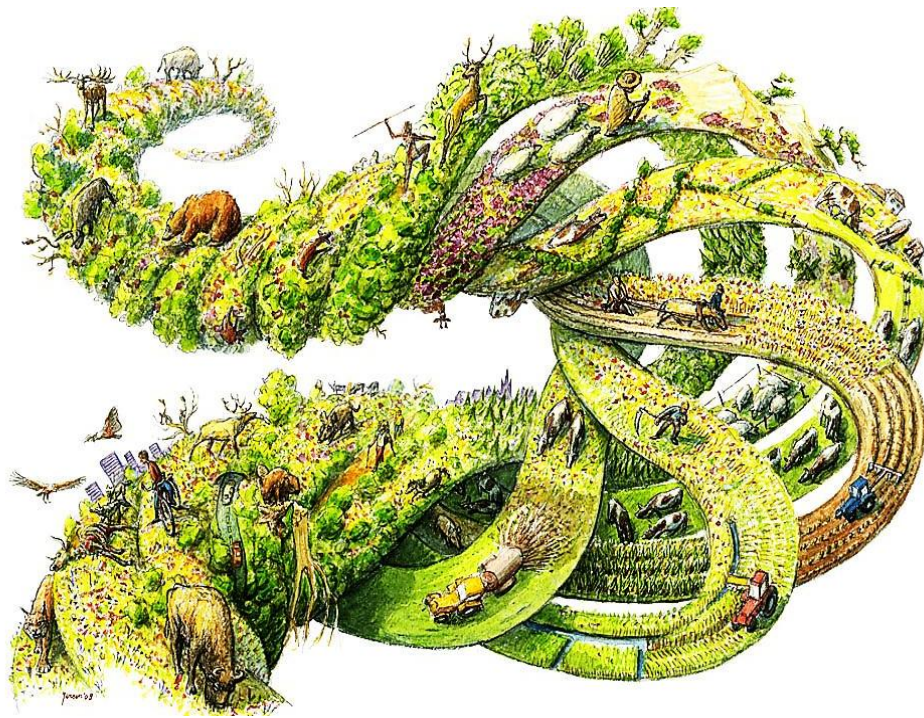


“Rewilding” and Tourism

Analysis of an Optimistic Discourse on Nature Conservation

Master Thesis



Wageningen 2012

Title: “Rewilding” and Tourism: Analysis of an Optimistic Discourse on Nature Conservation

Master Thesis Report: SAL-80433

Student: Lusine Margaryan

Registration number: 830319-543-040

Contact: lusinemarg@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. V.R. René van der Duim

Co-supervisor: Arjaan Pellis

Master Programme: Leisure, Tourism and Environment (MLE)

Chair Group: Cultural Geography

Department: Environmental Sciences

Wageningen University and Research Center

Disclaimer: This thesis is a student report produced as a part of Master Programme in Leisure, Tourism and Environment. It is not an official publication and the content does not represent an official position of Wageningen University and Research Center.

Title page: The picture on the title page is used with the kind permission of Rewilding Europe project (www.rewildingeurope.com)

ABSTRACT

It can be claimed that nature conservation and nature-based tourism have been undergoing significant transformations throughout the last decades. This shift has been visible not only “in the field” but also on the level of discourses, surrounding these phenomena. Thus, Western philosophical thought on nature has been struggling to overcome the dichotomic conceptualizations of nature/culture, wilderness/civilization complementing them with more hybrid approaches. These changes have both reflected and affected nature conservation, which seemingly moves from the “fortress” conservation and science-based managerial model in the direction of a more open and inclusive approaches, new discourses emerge. Along with that, tourism often appears as the most visible tool to create a “win-win” situation for all the involved parties and seal the deal between “people, planet and profit”. Despite substantial critique, its nature-oriented forms continue to be growing and are promoted by the majority of big nature conservation organizations. Among the new discourses on nature conservation, Rewilding is gaining increasing popularity. Involvement of prominent institutions and organization of scientific events focusing on this approach as well as growing number of publications indicate that Rewilding has not only left the borders of conservation biology but is becoming quite mainstream. Despite the increasing popularity of the Rewilding discourse, its practical impact on the conservation strategies and projects, as well as the growing body of literature, it did not receive sufficient attention from the perspective of theoretical analysis, particularly within the European context. Thus, two main aspects of interest emerge. First, it is clear that nature conservation is a highly contested field, new discourses appear and continuous updates are necessary to “keep fingers on the pulse”. Discourse analysis of Rewilding reveals what its discursive structure is and whether there are any new and distinctive approaches to nature conservation. The analysis is based on the publications, roughly divided into two categories- academic/scientific (articles in peer-reviewed journals) and popular (everything else- books, information on websites, project materials, news articles, etc.). Second, it aims to improve understanding on how the Rewilding discourse relates to tourism, what role is envisaged for it. Thus, the given study envisages contributing to increase of theoretical knowledge in new evolving discourses on nature conservation (focusing on Rewilding) and investigate the role of tourism. Based on the analysis of the Rewilding discourse, despite the existing contradictions and differences, several concluding generalizations were made. It can be argued, that Rewilding offers an optimistic view on the future of conservation. It is closely connected to the concept of “natural process” and the main way to achieve it is to ensure connectivity on different levels and restore populations of megafauna. Tourism is an important factor in the practical implementation of Rewilding and is mentioned as a facilitator of human-nature connection, an industry which brings together different sectors and is very much connected to the presence of charismatic megafauna.

Keywords: *rewilding, nature-based tourism, natural process, megafauna, connectivity*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Professor René van der Duim, for his interest in supervising this thesis, who with his wise comments, critical advice and care motivated me to improve my work. Second, I would like to thank my co-supervisor Arjaan Pellis, who never failed to give me thorough feedback, which was highly useful for this thesis. In addition, I want to thank Wouter Helmer, Conservation Director of Rewilding Europe, for his interview and further correspondence. Further, I thank all the professors of WUR Cultural Geography Chair Group who shared their valuable knowledge, experience and enthusiasm during these two amazing years and motivated me to continue my career in the academic field. Last but not least, my sincere gratitude goes to my family and friends, living nearby and scattered all over the world, who always support me and believe in my success.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| ABSTRACT..... | 3 |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | 4 |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS..... | 5 |
| CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION | 8 |
| 1.1 General Background..... | 8 |
| 1.2 Problem Statement | 12 |
| 1.3 Research Objective and Research Questions..... | 14 |
| CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK | 15 |
| 2.1 Applied Theories | 15 |
| 2.1.1 Social Constructionism..... | 15 |
| 2.1.2 Discourse Theory..... | 17 |
| 2.2 Theoretical Description of Discursive Components..... | 20 |
| 2.2.1 Conceptualization of the (Wild) Nature..... | 20 |
| 2.2.2 The Role of Culture/Humans (Human Imperative) | 25 |
| 2.2.3 Practical Implications for Nature Conservation | 28 |
| 2.2.4 The Role of Tourism | 30 |
| CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY | 32 |
| 3.2 Study Approach..... | 32 |
| 3.1 Discourse Analysis..... | 33 |
| 3.1.1 Argumentative Discourse Analysis..... | 35 |
| 3.1.2 Discourse-Historical Approach..... | 35 |
| 3.2 Data Collection | 36 |
| 3.2 Data Analysis..... | 38 |
| 3.2.1 Analysis of Discursive Components | 38 |
| 3.2.2 Analysis of General Discourse Formulation | 39 |
| 3.2.3 Analysis from the Historical Perspective..... | 40 |
| 3.3 Research Quality and Limitations | 41 |
| 3.3.1 Validity and Reliability..... | 41 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 3.3.2 Researcher's Positionality | 41 |
| 3.3.3 Limitations..... | 42 |
| CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS OF DISCURSIVE COMPONENTS | 44 |
| 4.1 Conceptualization of (Wild) Nature | 44 |
| 4.1.1. Paradox Unsolved | 44 |
| 4.1.2 The Wild Part of Rewilding..... | 46 |
| 4.2 Human Imperative | 52 |
| 4.2.1 Less radical, More Inclusive | 53 |
| 4.2.2 Connection is Everything | 54 |
| 4.3 Practical Implications for Nature Conservation | 55 |
| 4.3.1 Natural process | 55 |
| 4.3.2 Ensuring Connection | 56 |
| 4.3.3 American, European and Pleistocene Rewilding | 57 |
| 4.3.4 Management Approaches..... | 61 |
| 4.4 The Role of Tourism | 64 |
| 4.4.1 Tourism, Rewilding and the People | 66 |
| 4.4.2 More than Tourism | 67 |
| 4.4.3 Tourism as a Facilitator of Connection | 68 |
| 4.5 Scientific and Popular Discursive Streams | 69 |
| CHAPTER 5. MAIN DISCURSIVE THEMES OF REWILDING | 72 |
| 5.1 Natural Processes..... | 72 |
| 5.2 Connectivity | 75 |
| 5.3 Megafauna | 78 |
| 5.3.1 Flagships, Umbrellas, Indicators and Keystones | 79 |
| 5.3.2 For Whom is Megafauna Charismatic? | 82 |
| 5.4 How Does This Relate to Tourism? | 84 |
| 5.5 Historical Perspectives | 88 |
| CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS | 92 |
| 6.1 Conclusions | 92 |
| 6.2 Discussion. Rewilding: Old or New?..... | 95 |
| 6.3 Suggestions for Further Research | 99 |
| REFERENCES | 101 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| ANNEX 1. List of Reviewed Publications | 108 |
|--|-----|

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1 Core differences in ecological and technological discourses | 18 |
| Table 2 Different approaches to understanding nature | 25 |
| Table 3 Main reasoning behind conservation..... | 27 |
| Table 4 Role of Tourism in Nature Conservation discourses | 31 |
| Table 5 Main wilderness criteria met across the Rewilding texts | 49 |
| Table 6 Definitions of different “surrogate species” in academic literature | 81 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|----|
| Fig. 1 Theoretical framework | 19 |
| Fig. 2 Discursive streams within the theoretical framework | 33 |
| Fig. 3 The ontologies of Universal and External Nature | 45 |
| Fig. 4 Different understandings of wilderness | 50 |
| Fig. 5 History of human-nature relationship and Rewilding vision..... | 51 |
| Fig. 6 Wildlife passes in Banff National Park, Canada..... | 56 |
| Fig. 7 Idealized Rewilding nature reserve design..... | 58 |
| Fig. 8 Pleistocene, American and European versions of Rewilding | 61 |
| Fig. 9 “When you think tuna, think panda” campaign by Sea Shepherd | 80 |
| Fig. 10 Images of the “Big Five” of Africa on tourism-promoting materials..... | 85 |
| Fig. 11 Role of tourism within the Rewilding discourse..... | 88 |

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the reader to the main topic of this research, gives historical overview and current development trends, as well as reasons behind focusing on this topic. This chapter consists of three subchapters. First it provides general background, where the scene is set for the thesis. Further, the research problem is discussed. Finally, the research objective and research questions are presented.

1.1 General Background

There is a growing acknowledgement that culture should be brought back into the environmental politics and nature conservation, from which it was ironically cut off, despite the fact that their roots are in the cultural critique on modern society (Fischer and Hajer, 1999). Bringing approaches of social science into the analysis of nature conservation, such as treating this subject as a discourse and subsequently, analyzing it, will contribute to revealing new dimensions in understanding of environmental problematic we are facing today. Discourses about nature, economic and political processes that affect it, have undoubtedly multiplied in the recent decades, together with the increasing human anxiety about the future of the world we live in. Discourses (or language-in-use, melded with associated identities, images, activities and other non-linguistic “stuff”), define the way how certain phenomena are talked, thought about and presented, affecting people’s ability to decide what is right and what is wrong (Mowforth and Munt, 2009). Doremus (2000:13) talks about discourses as a *“loose collection of concepts and ideas, which provide a shared language for envisioning problems and solutions”*. Perceived global environmental crisis in the recent decades has generated powerful discourses, “environmental discourses” in their own stand. Müllhaüsler and Peace (2006:457) define environmental discourse as *“linguistic devices articulating arguments about the relationship between humans and the natural environment”*. Jagtenberg (1994:14) ironically remarks that we have to deal with *“both ecological decline and an explosion of discourses about nature”*. The words “nature” and “environment” are already very complex and loaded with multiple meanings. Despite some core differences (e.g. “environment” as essentially anthropocentric concept and “nature” as everything uninterfered by human agency) these notions often merge and overlap in the literature, depending on the understanding and preference of an author.

Multiple studies have been done exploring the evolution the discourses of the nature, wilderness or environment in the Western thought (e.g. Cronon, 1995, Oelschlaeger, 1991), tracking these concepts from the Judeo-Christian religious texts, through the romantic novels of the 19th century, to the rhetoric of the environmental movement of the late 20th century as well as expressing their vision for the future. These transformations have profoundly affected and reflected the way people treated nature. It has been argued that nature is a part of culture; it does not appear out of thin air as a free-standing and inviolate set of principles and ideas (Adams, 2003).

The way nature is conceived has also had its impact on nature conservation. The rise of post-modernist critique on science has attacked the concept of objective and value-free science, and exposed dependence of science on the socio-political processes (e.g. Haraway, 1991). Nature conservation has not been an exception. Cronon (1995), for example, establishes clear connection between the rise of romantic wilderness writing in the US, development of urbanized industrial society and appearance of the first national parks, called to protect “wilderness”. Science built on philosophical platform that nature is generally something external, separate from humans, has been in congruence with this approach.

Meanwhile, it can be claimed, that the changing discourses on nature conservation coincide with the dawn of tourism industry, reflecting complex socio-economic processes of urbanization and industrialization in the end of 19th - beginning of 20th centuries in the US and Western Europe (Hall and Page, 2002). Appearance of the first national parks in the US, such as Yellowstone and Yosemite Valley (first achievements of nature conservation as we know it) was inseparable from the growing public interest in tourist activities, i.e. visiting and gazing at nature or experiencing the “frontier life” which was proclaimed to disappear (Cronon, 1995). Preserving nature for recreational purposes is among the first and strongest discourses in the nature conservation in the US, which is true till today (Luke, 1999; Hall and Page, 2002). This interconnection is also reflected in the US Wilderness Act (1964), which defines wilderness as “*an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain*”, i.e. preserving wilderness and visiting it are not mutually exclusive. Moreover, according to this classic definition and understanding of wilderness, tourism is *the only acceptable activity which can happen in wilderness, without endangering the very existence of the latter*. In other words, the environmental and tourism discourses have been very closely intertwined since the very beginning of both.

This seemingly intimate connection of tourism and nature conservation, however, did not last long, due to profound transformations of the social, economic and political situation of the second half of the 20th century, the boom of tourist industry and growing environmental concerns. There have been multiple attempts to capture the variety of nature conservation discourses, generated since then. The well-known ideological schism between “conservation” and “preservation”, epitomized by the literary battle between influential American environmentalist thinkers Gifford Pinchot and John Muir of the late 19th-beginning of 20th centuries has been supplemented with many more subtle and diverse interpretations. For example, Doremus (2000) identifies three major discourses: *material*, *esthetical* and *ethical*. Adger *et al.* (2001) roughly divide nature conservation discourses into *managerial* and *populist*, whereas Nygren (1998) singles out *nature-*, *people-* and *profit-centered* discourses. Mowforth and Munt (2009) distinguish *resource conservation*, *human welfare ecology*, *preservation* and *ecocentrism*. Clearly, these divisions are conditional, and discourses tend to overlap, intertwine and, moreover, are not homogeneous. Nevertheless, they can provide useful frameworks, which can be used for analyzing and understanding historical roots and changes of environmental thought as well as relevant practices nowadays.

Tourism development has not been viewed unambiguously either. Serious critique, coming particularly from the field of political ecology, post-colonial studies, social science have addressed not only the

already notorious “mass” tourism but also the phenomenon of the so-called “new tourism”. It has been argued, e.g. by Mowforth and Munt (2009), that conservation in the developing countries is closely linked to the colonial tradition of alienating nature areas and mostly serves interests of Western middle-class “ego-tourists”, who undertake trips to “unspoiled”, “pristine” and “authentic” places in their pursuit of cultural capital accumulation. Tourism and conservation were criticized as top-down phenomena, where people, who have lived for generations in the areas in question and have there the biggest stake, have often the least say and decision-making power regarding these processes. Moreover, values and aesthetic preferences of the tourist-generating North are imposed on the “host” South. Nevertheless, tourism is here to stay and the ever- growing trend of tourist mobilities does not seem to change in the near future. Moreover, the increasing South-South as well as domestic tourism in the developing countries will certainly add new dimensions to this picture.

Perhaps the second strongest boost to the attempts to create symbiotic tourism-nature relationships came from the concept of “sustainable development”, popularized by the now famous *Our Common Future* report, presented by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 and further endorsed in the following Earth Summit in 1992. Due to the immediately appealing “marriage” of ecology and economy, the concept was quickly adopted by the governments, NGOs, private sector and the academia and since then has almost inevitably appeared in uncountable reports, strategies, action plans, research papers, project proposals, etc. The concept seems to have withstood the test of time and has taken its firm place in the global policy-making. Among the activities called to ensure nature conservation and successful coexistence of “people, planet and profit”, tourism has become one of the most visible and promising. It can be claimed that vast majority of nature conservation organizations still view tourism (in the forms of ecotourism, nature-based tourism, responsible tourism, community-based tourism, agro-tourism etc.) as an important tool to promote nature conservation interests. Such big NGOs as WWF, IUCN, Conservation International, Nature Conservancy, PANParks and many others have multiple projects in various corners of the world, supporting tourism development. As a sign of ecotourism going mainstream, 2002 was declared by the UN as an International Year of Ecotourism, stressing that “*the implementation of Agenda 21 requires the full integration of sustainable development in the tourism industry in order to ensure, inter alia, that travel and tourism provide a source of income for many people; that travel and tourism contribute to the conservation, protection and restoration of the Earth’s ecosystem*” (UN ECOSOC, 1998).

It has been argued, however, that ecotourism, apart from everything else, fails to bridge the gap between nature and culture and is generally built on reproduction of “othering” nature, making it something distinctly outside of the society (Hultman and Andersson Cederholm, 2006). In order for ecotourism to happen, a tourist has to distance her/himself from the nature, admire it from afar, not having any chance of interaction apart from gazing at it through the photocamera lens. Nature and the local people become observable attractions, and this approach is, in fact, very similar to the mass tourism, from which ecotourism tries to distantiate so desperately. While ecotourism promises to make people intimate with nature in a gentle way it often just formalizes the tourist gaze and promotes experience quite similar to viewing nature television documentaries. In a way, critique on ecotourism and critique on romantic perception of wilderness have many things in common. Ecotourism, and

tourism in general, become quite contested concepts, acquiring different meanings and contested by various conservation discourses.

There have been some, but not very numerous, attempts to analyze the role of tourism in the multiplicity of proliferating discourses on nature conservation, especially generated by nature conservation organizations (e.g. Grey, 2003:115; Mowforth and Munt, 2009:157). As a rule, the role of tourism in these discourse analyses is mentioned rather briefly and is usually not the central focus of the research.

Meanwhile, discourses on nature and nature conservation continue to morph and evolve both in theory and in practice, which do not easily fit into the old definitions. It is becoming hard to find exemplary propagators of conservation, preservation, resourcism and other 'classic' discourses in their orthodox understanding. It is becoming almost a truism that nature conservation cannot develop in a vacuum, and is as much about people as it is about nature. The model of "fortress" conservation has proven not only unrealistic and illusionary, but also quite unsuccessful, especially in the developing countries (Adams, 2003). Notions of nature and culture merge, and new approaches are adopted to embrace plurality of values and objectives. For example, African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) works with the holistic concept of "heartlands" – conservation landscapes, which include national parks, government and private lands, as well as local villages (AWF, 2012). Politics and conservation interests merge in the projects of Peace Parks Foundation (2012) or European Green Belt (2012). Along with that, PANParks, for example, promotes "non-intervention management", which puts more emphasis 'supporting' activities such as education, community work, research, monitoring or lobbying but abstaining from active intervention (PanParks, 2012). Tourism is mentioned as an important factor in all of these efforts and is almost inevitably included as an important component for the success of the given conservation project. Yet, not much analysis is done on how tourism fits into new developing discourses, which is the main focus of this research.

Among the multiplicity of various new discourses on nature conservation, the discourse on "rewilding" is selected as the central focus of this thesis (hereafter – Rewilding). The term Rewilding was initially coined by Soule and Noss (1998). Rewilding is treated as a discourse in its own stand by this research. There are several symptoms indicating that Rewilding is not merely a term used in conservation biology jargon but a larger discourse, leaving the frames of one scientific discipline. First of all, there is a growing number of publications, treating Rewilding as a whole new outlook on dealing with nature, reflected in such books as "Rewilding North America: A vision for conservation in the 21st century" (Foreman, 2004) or "Rewilding the World. Dispatches from the Conservation Revolution" (Fraser, 2009). Such definitions as an "*alternative conservation strategy for the twenty-first century*" (Donlan, 2005:913), "*an attractive alternative to traditional conservation*" (Eirnaes, Sandom and Svenning, 2012:1), "*a new conservation vision for Europe, with wild nature and natural processes as key elements, where rewilding is applicable to any type of landscape or level of protection*" (Rewilding Europe, 2012:13) can be frequently met, trying to emphasize the novelty and ambitiousness of Rewilding. Second, Rewilding is actively entering the discourse of nature conservation practitioners, most vivid manifestation of which is the Rewilding Europe project (Rewilding Europe, 2012). Third, Rewilding is often used not only to offer new perspectives on nature conservation, but also to describe numerous innovative conservation strategies

coming from the field, which are not yet fully analyzed and which do not readily fit into older conservation discourses (Fraser, 2009). Thus, Rewilding produces a rich surrounding rhetoric of definitions, meanings and arguments which can be treated as a discourse.

Tourism is also mentioned as an important component within the Rewilding discourse. Rewilding Europe project, for example, aims to bring wildlife and wilderness tourism to Europe and believe that *“the economic growth associated with wildlife tourism will serve to stimulate many other nature-friendly businesses”* (Rewilding Europe, 2012:7). This research, therefore, will aim at providing analysis of Rewilding discourse and the role of tourism within it.

This thesis consists of six chapters. *Chapter One* introduces the reader to the topic of this research. This chapter consists of three subchapters. First it provides general background, where the scene is set for the thesis. Further, the research problem is discussed. Finally, the research objective and research questions are discussed. *Chapter Two* introduces the theoretical framework of the research. The chapter introduces two main theories used in this thesis, i.e. social constructionism and discourse theory. This chapter gives theoretica and historical description of the discursive components used in this work-conceptualization of wild nature, the role of culture and humans (human imperative), practical imprlications for nature conservation and the role of tourism. *Chapter Three* presents the methodology of this work. Here I discuss main methodological approaches employed, which are Argumentative Discourse Analysis and Discourse-Historical Approach. The stages of data collection and analyses are also discussed in this chapter, as well as the research quality, limitation and researcher’s positionality. Main goal of *Chapter Four* is to provide analysis of discursive components, which represent the analytical foci of the Rewilding discourse and comprise the theoretical framework of this thesis. Investigation of discursive components is an important step for reaching the objective. *Chapter Five* provides material to reach research objective of this thesis. *Chapter Six* finalizes the thesis with discussion, suggestions for further research and conclusions.

1.2 Problem Statement

New discourses on nature conservation appear. Discourses on nature conservation are extensively analyzed by multiple disciplines, especially those at the crossroads of natural and social sciences, such as environmental philosophy or political ecology, or even by such specific subdiscipline as ecolinguistics (see e.g. Mühlhäusler and Peace, 2006). There have been substantial amount of studies investigating the role of nature in tourist discourses by the field of tourism research, especially regarding construction of nature as a tourist attraction, images of nature in the in the tourism products or tourist experiences of nature (e.g. Hall and Page, 2009; Stamou and Paraskevopoulos, 2006). Ecotourism is already analyzed as a discourse in its own stand (e.g. Donohoe and Needham, 2006). However, there are significantly less amount of studies, focusing on the reverse, i.e. analyzing the role and importance of tourism in the evolving environmental discourses.

New approaches to nature are being sought both from the social science and natural science perspective. Publications with titles such as “Reconstructing Conservation” (Minteer and Manning, 2003), “Beyond Conservation” (Taylor, 2007), “Future Nature” (Adams, 2003) multiplied in the last decade. Swift (2009) suggested that a new paradigm shift has happened in conservation and environmental thinking in general. Adams (2003) states, that there is little doubt that the future of the conservation will be in the integration and not isolation. Breaking through the isolation of wilderness, renewal of our relationship with nature is gradually happening on different levels, including economic, social, institutional as well as conceptual one.

Rewilding is gaining increasing popularity in nature conservation. First of all, a new big European project “Rewilding Europe” was launched in 2011 by the initiative of WWF Netherlands, ARK Nature, Wild Wonders of Europe and Conservation Capital. This project aims to “rewild” one million hectares of land by 2020, is currently focused on five areas in Europe (Western Iberia, Eastern and Southern Carpathians, Danube Delta and Vellebit) which is planned to increase in the future (Rewilding Europe, 2012). This year (08.03.2012), a symposium titled “The Business of Nature Conservation. What Europe Can Learn from Africa” was held in WWF Netherlands, in cooperation with University of Wageningen, Van Hall Larenstein University, Maastricht School of Management and other notable organizations, where Rewilding Europe and tourism involvement in this perspective were largely discussed. Later this year (11.04.2012), Aarhus University organized a symposium “Rewilding as Tool and Target in the Management for Biodiversity”, where scientists, managers and other stakeholders gathered to share the most recent knowledge and experiences on Rewilding and its role in present and nature conservation. Involvement of such prominent institutions and organization of scientific events focusing on this approach indicates that Rewilding has not only left the borders of conservation biology but becoming quite mainstream.

Despite the increasing popularity of the Rewilding discourse, its practical impact on the conservation strategies and projects, as well as the growing body of literature, it did not receive sufficient attention from the perspective of theoretical analysis. For example, Soule and Noss (1998:7) state that “[t]he greatest impediment to Rewilding is an unwillingness to imagine it”, practically implying that the conceptualization of human-nature relationship is lagging behind the innovations, coming from the conservation scientists. Ten years later, Fraser (2009:282) states that “the biggest success of Rewilding has come in the field so raw, so new, that the textbooks are still being written, terms determined and methods invented”. Eirnaes, Sandom and Svenning (2012:1) mention that “private funds and fiery souls are taking the lead in Rewilding while scientists and policy makers are struggling to keep up”. Most of the existing texts still come from the conservation field, focusing on the scientific relevance, or the technical side of the process. There is however, practical absence of studies, placing Rewilding amidst other environmental discourses (particularly in the European context) and conceiving it within a bigger picture of debates on the changing understanding of nature and nature conservation (Swift, 2009).

Thus, two main aspects of interest emerge. First of all, it is clear that nature conservation is a highly contested field, new discourses emerge and evolve and continuous updates are necessary to “keep fingers on the pulse”. Discourse analysis of Rewilding will reveal what is its discursive structure and whether there are any new and distinctive approaches to nature conservation. The analysis is based on

51 published documents, roughly divided into two categories- academic/scientific (articles in peer-reviewed journals) and popular (everything else- books, information on websites, project materials, news articles, etc.). Second, it is necessary to improve understanding on how the Rewilding discourse relates to tourism, what role is envisaged for it. This is worth of research attention since new discourses on nature conservation will undoubtedly affect the modes of tourism organization, where nature and conservation issues matter. As Hall and Page (2002:357) put it, *“geographers have been at the forefront of understanding the human relationship not only to the natural environment and wild lands in particular, but also to the behaviours of tourists and recreationists in the wilderness”*. While the main focus of tourism-oriented cultural geographers has been the role of nature and nature experiences in tourism discourses, the inverse relationship is no less important for the analysis of cutting-edge development of nature tourism-relationship. Thus, the given study envisages contributing to increase of theoretical knowledge in one of the supposedly new evolving discourses on nature conservation (Rewilding) and investigate the role of tourism within it.

1.3 Research Objective and Research Questions

The main objective of this research is:

To gain theoretical insight into the discursive construction of Rewilding discourse, and the role of tourism within it.

To achieve the research objective, the following research questions are stated:

- *What is the discursive construction of Rewilding?* This analysis is implemented by identifying and investigating the main discursive components of Rewilding, thus revealing the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions, as well as more concrete mechanisms and tools offered within the frames of this discourse.
- *How does tourism fit into the discourse of Rewilding?* This question aims to highlight the framing and envisaged role of tourism within this discourse.

Reaching the research objective will contribute to the knowledge accumulation in the field of environmental theory and analysis of development of environmental thought, and will provide some insights into how tourism is represented in the Rewilding nature conservation discourse. Based on this example, interesting trends in the development of nature conservation discourses, human-nature coexistence, the role of nature-based tourism and other ongoing discussions in this field also become visible.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides an overview on the major theories applied for this thesis. Used theories provide the “theoretical lens” through which I gaze at the topic of my work. Two main theories are applied: Social Constructionism and Discourse Theory. These theories are discussed in the Section 2.1 in greater detail. Based on this theoretic approach, four main discursive components were identified within the discourse of Nature Conservation- Conceptualization of Nature, Human Imperative, Conservation Practices and the Role of Tourism. Subchapter 2.2 provides theoretical description of these discursive components, historical perspectives and reasons behind choosing these particular components as foci of this research.

2.1 Applied Theories

2.1.1 Social Constructionism

The ontological and epistemological approaches of this thesis are largely rooted in the social constructionism paradigm. Constructionists’ premises about reality are based on the belief that it is constructed through human activity, i.e. people ascribe meanings and invent properties of the reality they encounter (Kim, 2001). In contrast to positivists, constructionists generally accept that reality *as it is* (objective reality), independent of human interpretation, cannot be fully discovered. Milton (1996) identifies extreme constructionism (claiming that reality is unknowable) and moderate constructionism (reality has no meaning). Individuals produce meanings and understandings of the reality as a result of interaction of their prior experiences, knowledge and beliefs and the phenomena which they encounter (Sridevi, 2008). There is no unmediated representation of reality, since it is embedded in social contexts, which are conditioned by different ways of knowing (Christ, 2008). Constructionism, therefore, implies epistemic relativism, which makes it a prominent critic of value-free science being capable of producing objective knowledge of physical world by means of rigorous scientific method. It has been claimed, for example, that there is an undeniable link between the competing scientific narratives and the contemporary political struggles, in which the scientists are involved (Haraway, 1991). Consequently, representations of reality are perceived to be not static but fluid and prone to spatiotemporal variations. In this perspective, Macnaghten and Urry (1998:95) state that *“there is no single nature, only natures. And these natures are not inherent in the physical world but discursively constructed through economic, political and social processes”*.

Social constructionism played an important role in the development of conceptualizations and definitions pertaining to nature, nature conservation and wilderness. Debates around this subject are still ongoing and relevant (see for example, Nelson and Callicott, 2008). Constructionists mainly elaborated on the idea of socially constructed nature, suggesting that since intrinsic meaning of nature

and its phenomena is unavailable to humans, they ascribe meaning to it, conditioned by socio-cultural factors (Christ, 2008). It can be claimed that constructionists are largely responsible for exposing the need in new, refreshed and updated approaches to understanding nature.

It can be safely said, however, that the constructionist ideas have had hard times to be understood and accepted within the environmental thought. Initial attempts to expose social construction of nature and wilderness have been met with antagonism by environmental thinkers, who perceived this philosophical approach as highly anti-environmental and harmful for the conservation agenda. The critique on this approach to nature and nature conservation has been very vivid and controversial in the so called “great wilderness debate” (Callicott and Nelson, 1998). Cronon (1995), for example, in his seminal essay “The Trouble with Wilderness” thoroughly deconstructed the “myth of wilderness” in the context of the US, exposing the uneasy baggage of historical factors, coming with this concept. Thus, the way wilderness was understood and spoken about was undividable from socioeconomic factors (booming industrialization and urbanization), culture (Romantic movement of the 19th century), as well as issues of gender, race and class (reflecting ideas of white male Americans from privileged background) (Cronon, 1995).

Deconstructing major nature conservation discourses, constructionists have been accused of “trying to knock Nature, knock the people who value Nature”, being “anti-nature intellectuals”, “anti-conservationists” or “wilderness foes” (Nelson and Callicott, 2008). Quite often the critique of the existing *concepts* and *ideas* on nature and wilderness has been perceived as a reason and also the result of the ongoing environmental degradation and destructive environmental practices. In other words, deconstruction of nature and wilderness equalled to an almost sacrilegious act in the nature conservation community. It was argued that nature was left with nothing to say for itself, perceived as mere product of human interpretations (Whatmore, 2001). Kohak (in Adams, 2003), for example, exclaims that only the person who is completely blinded by the glare and blare of his/her own devices could write that primordial awareness of the human’s integral place in nature as mere poetic imagination or “merely subjective”. This, of course, can be understood, since the whole rhetoric of nature conservation organizations has historically rested on such key concepts as wilderness or wild, pristine, untouched nature. It is, therefore, important to emphasize, that constructionists do not attack *places* thought of as wilderness, and do not deny the existence of natural world, but rather highlight the problematic of the nature and wilderness *ideas*, since ideas do matter (Nelson and Callicott, 2008). Treating nature as a social construct does not oversocialize or devalue nature, but rather reveals the social processes, necessarily surrounding this construct. Better understanding of social processes, in its turn, can have a valuable contribution to improving nature conservation strategies.

In this research, approaching the discourse of Rewilding from the constructionist perspective (in its moderate form, as differentiated by Milton (1996), means paying attention to the meanings and definitions, ascribed to certain key phenomena, important in the given context. In this light, words and definitions are treated as entities in their own right, rather than inseparable from the phenomena they attempt to describe. Exploring the multiplicity of meanings, interpretations, concepts and arguments without evaluating and testing them to be right or wrong is, therefore, the research principle of this work, in line with the constructionist paradigm.

2.1.2 Discourse Theory

Discourse theory is rooted in the constructionist paradigm. Thus, discourse theory believes that discourses produce knowledge about the reality through language. Discourses themselves are produced through “discursive practice”, i.e. the practice of producing meaning (Hall, 1992). There is no single and exhaustive definition of what constitutes a discourse. Foucault (in Hall, 1992:291) gave a popular definition of a discourse as *“a group of statements which provide a language for talking about - a way of representing the knowledge about - a particular topic at a particular historical moment”*. Hajer (1995:44) for example, defines discourse as *“an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities”*. Stokowski (2003:287) formulates a discourse as *“cultural and organizational structures of the social worlds, that produce them and offer a perspective for evaluating what appears to be rational individual and institutional behavior”*. Despite the great amount of different definitions, they seem to agree that the reality as we know it is constructed, “framed” by multiplicity of competing discourses, which in their turn represent processes by which knowledge is generated through the action of communication. Language is acknowledged to have power to make politics, to create symbols that impact institutions and policy-making or shift the balance of power. Language can “frame” certain phenomena as harmless but also can create political conflicts (Hajer, 2005).

Discourse theory has been used widely in the social sciences throughout the last decades and the subjects of tourism and nature conservation have not been an exception (see e.g. Jaworski and Pritchard, 2005; Mühlhäusler and Peace, 2006; Hallett and Kaplan Weinger, 2010). From this perspective, “nature” like any other phenomenon, can be treated as a socially constructed discourse. There is a whole body of literature tracking the changes of nature-related discourses (see for example, Adams, 2003; Minteer, 2003; Taylor, 2005). These changes have been visible not only across every-day cultural understandings in different time and space (e.g. provided by Milton, 1996) but also in science. Thus, Callicott (2003) gives an explicit analysis of two discourses on nature, existing within the scientific works of ecology and conservation biology. Within one, older discourse, nature is thought of as an entity of balance or dynamic equilibrium, upset by human disruptive actions. According to another, newer discourse, nature is in the state of flux, without a linear development trajectory and with no climax. It can be assumed, that difference is also quite visible on all levels of ecological practice, depending on whether “nature-as-balance” or “nature-as-flux” is dominant (Callicott, 2003).

Accepting that even such fundamental phenomenon as “nature” can be subject to multiple rather contradictory discourses there is no surprise that nature conservation is a highly contested field in its own as well. Previous analyses have revealed numerous competing discourses on nature conservation. Some authors identify two major ones- conservation and preservation (Meine, 2003), some single out resourcism, preservation and harmonization (Callicott, 2003), some see materialist, ethical and esthetical discourses (Doremus, 2000) just to name a few. This whole plethora of discourses created confusion and complains that nature conservation has been reduced to a *“cacophony of bickering ideologies”* (Meine, 2003:169). There are even voices accusing discourses analysts in hijacking the conservation agenda and attracting great deal of attention to the rivaling discourses away from the real

problems, as a result of which, such issues as biodiversity loss fail to be taken seriously (Christ, 2008). Despite the varying opinions on the usability of discourse analysis, it becomes clear that this theory has firm grounds in the literature on nature and nature conservation. Based on this theoretical understanding, this thesis will rely on discourse analysis as a relevant framework to approach the research subject.

Discourse on nature conservation is, of course, a confluence of various other discourses which for the purposes of this thesis I label “discursive components”. This I consider necessary, since finding out major fundamental building blocks of a given discourse may provide a vivid picture of its difference/similarity with others. For example, Benton and Short (1999) analyze “ecological” and “technological” discourses based on differences in understanding time, place, causation, people and society as well as humanity-environment relationships. Different understandings of these notions provide clear picture of major conflicting points between these two discourses. In line with the social constructionist perspective, it becomes possible to perceive each of these components as social constructs and therefore accept their differences, which can vary from being similar to completely opposite. Thus, time can be understood as cyclical or linear, place can be full of significance and meaning or be relative and separate, all living beings can be viewed as equal or can be arranged in hierarchical system with humans on the top, and so on and so forth (see Table 1 for more details). These categories are left unnamed in the aforementioned work, whereas for the greater clarity I operationalize this approach under the label of “discursive components”. If a discourse is often described as a frame, then discursive components can perhaps be described as facets, sides of this frame.

Table 1 Core differences in ecological and technological discourses

| | Ecological discourse (pre-modern, post-modern) | Technological discourse (modern) |
|--|---|--|
| Time | Cyclical | Linear |
| Place | Has significance and meaning | Is relative and separate, a practical attachment |
| Causation | Divine, unknown | Scientific reasoning |
| Economy | Sustainable, meeting basic needs | Accumulation, growth is necessary and good |
| People and society | Holistic, biocentric view | Anthropocentric, hierarchical view |
| Humanity-Environment relationship | Stewardship, interdependence | Control, exploitation |

Adapted from Benton and Short (1999:3).

Since the focus of my research is s particular discourse on nature conservation (Rewilding) and not an ecological discourse in general, I select different discursive components. Based on the literature, four major discursive components are distinguished for the purposes the given research objective: (1) conceptualization of nature, (2) understanding of the role of humans within it (human imperative), (3) practical implications for conservation and (4) the role of tourism (which will be discussed in greater

detail in Section 2.2). In my understanding, each discourse on nature conservation includes a core belief about the “nature” of nature out there, which permeates other consequential steps. Understanding of nature defines human role and prescribes certain behavior for humans, which on later steps translates into concrete nature conservation practices. Numerous studies have been done tracking this line, though, perhaps not stating it explicitly and not representing graphically (e.g. Cronon, 1995; Birch, 1998; Oelschlagger, 1991). These critics of the “classic” understanding of nature conservation have basically claimed, that: (1) nature is perceived as something external, opposed to culture -> (2) humans should conserve nature by staying away from it, only admire from afar, guarding the nature-culture borders -> (3) best way to conserve nature is to create designated wilderness areas with no human presence. (4) Tourism, the forth discursive component, included here as a focus of interest, is undoubtedly affected by the first three. Thus, tourism can be viewed as a destructive force to be kept at bay, or on the contrary, necessary process to engage people with nature, a source of income generation and much more. These relationships, of course, are far from linear, but this simplified model is created as a starting point to understand unique characteristics of Rewilding discourse. Thus, these discursive components are arranged in a loose hierarchy, which can be illustrated as shown in Fig. 1. I explain the historical perspectives, theoretical understanding and reasons behind choosing these particular discursive components in greater detail in Section 2.2.

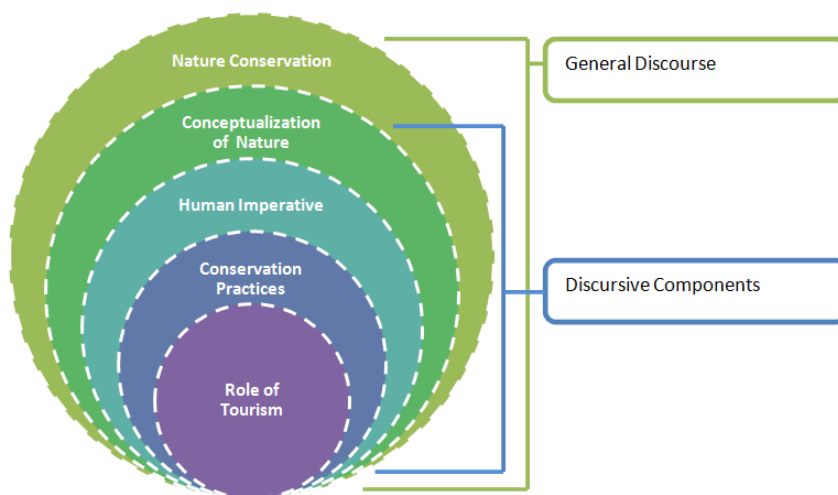


Fig. 1 Theoretical framework

Thus, for the purposes of this thesis two main theoretical concepts emerge:

Discourse- ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005).

Discursive components- underlying principles, ideas, beliefs and practical prescriptions, embedded in the cultural context of the discourse producers; “minor discourses”, which affect the general discourse and represent the focus of interest for this research.

It has, of course, to be emphasized that this representation is rather conditional, and a discourse cannot be treated as a “Russian doll”, each containing a smaller one within it. Each discourse, as well as numerous components it has, is an open system, interacting with multiple other discourses on its own or in clusters with others in various combinations (emphasized by the dashed border lines in Fig.1). This representation, therefore, demonstrates only one particular *focus* of this research subject but by no means the whole exhaustive picture. In other words, Fig. 1 represents “theoretical lens” which I chose to look at the topic of this research. Focusing on each of these discursive components during the discourse analysis of Rewilding will shed light on its “building blocks” which will on a later stage enable to analyze this discourse as a whole and put it in a historical and theoretical perspective of nature conservation.

2.2 Theoretical Description of Discursive Components

2.2.1 Conceptualization of the (Wild) Nature

Historical overview

Looking back into the long history of human relationship with nature and trying to find the main milestones that have shaped this process is very important for understanding the roots of many phenomena that we face today. Though environmental history is not a focus of this research, a brief overview is necessary for contextual positioning of the current developments in environmental thought. History of ideas is important to keep track of the cognitive lenses through which people look at the world and which influence their actions accordingly.

Human relationship with nature has not been an easy and simple one and has been varying significantly throughout time and space. Humans have come long way since the supposedly primordial animal immersiveness into nature. The first revolution in thinking nature is often ascribed to the Neolithic revolution, development of agriculture and sessile lifestyle, abandoning the magic and rise of organized religions, which laid the fundament for nature-culture dichotomy, which structuralist thinkers such as Levi-Strauss (1963) called the most basic duality upon which everything else is constructed. Much has been written on the role of religion in shaping human attitude towards nature, e.g. dominion of humans over other living beings in Judeo-Christian religions as opposed to Hinduism or Buddhism. While it is certainly difficult to give an account of decisive factors, affecting human attitude towards nature throughout the whole history of human existence, some major events in the recent times are definitely worth paying attention to. Understanding of the very “nature” of nature has varied greatly across different cultures. Milton (1996), drawing on the accumulated anthropological knowledge of various cultures of the world, identifies perceptions of nature as *robust*, *fragile*, *capricious* or *robust within*

limits. This diversity is, of course, the product of different environmental conditions, historical and cultural trajectories, affecting human understanding of nature. The scope of this research will be limited to the development of human-nature relationship in the Western world (i.e. Europe and North America), which by no means represents the experience of humanity in general.

The most prominent breakthrough in conceptualizing nature in the Western thought is conventionally ascribed to the Age of Enlightenment, the rise of science and Baconian method of “twisting the lion’s tail”, which according to bitter science critics, has demystified nature, has turned into an object, a machine, who has to be dominated, manipulated according to human desires, and whose secrets have to be discovered at any cost (Merchant, 1989). This has been the predominant view on the nature since then, throughout the Industrialization era and, one can argue, is still very much alive in certain spheres. There are also opposing opinions on this issue, e.g. Thomas (1983) argues that development of science also lead to the shattering human’s self-made pedestal by discovering worlds of microorganisms indifferent to human existence or a whole plethora of animals dying out before humans even appeared on the planet, which contradicts to the traditional anthropocentric interpretations of the Bible. In any case, there is little argument that development of science played a crucial role in human’s understanding of nature and, consequently, shaped attitudes towards it.

Another important shift in viewing nature is associated with the Romantic protest of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The explosive growth of industrial cities started to be perceived as alienating, intimidating, dirty and lifeless. Europe has turned to “medievalism” and development of “rural myths”, seeing the countryside as a stable, predictable, anti-mechanized, anti-chaotic world without industry and technology (Adams, 2003). Romantic movement in Europe inspired similar sentiments in the United States, where the ideas of return to the pure nature and, particularly, the concept of *wilderness*, received a remarkable development (Hall and Page, 2002).

The concept of wilderness deserves a special attention due to its particular relevance for this research and the development of nature conservation. Perhaps in no other language the word and idea of wilderness has undergone so much re-thinking and transformation as in English. According to Hall and Page (2002), the word “wilderness” comes from the old English word *wilddeoren*, which means “of wild beasts”. “Wild” is etymologically tracked to something which has the will of its own, beyond the human will (Foreman, 2004). This understanding of particular form of nature and expressing it through one word is not universal and is, for example, absent from Romance languages, which mostly express the idea of wilderness through description of an uncultivated, deserted, remote or confusing piece of land (Hall and Page, 2002). Initially representing the nature in its most untamed, ferocious, unpredictable and dangerous form, an alien landscape of fear, wilderness in American Romanticism and transcendentalism became a source of inspiration, a place to escape from corrupted technocratic civilization, a place of freedom and real life experiences. In other words, an age-old opposition of culture (good) versus wild nature (bad) in the Western romantic thought has started to be re-considered to the point of acquiring the opposite values. It is interesting to note, that the environmentalist movement of the late 20th century also heavily relied on the rhetoric and the vocabulary of the Romantic period (Adams, 2003). Writings of such American authors as Henry D. Thoreau, Ralph W. Emerson, John Muir, Frederick J. Turner and many others, calling for appreciating and protecting the remaining wilderness, greatly

influenced and also reflected the contemporary public opinion on wild nature and have played their role in the dawn of the nature conservation in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, gradually spreading further all over the world (Hall and Page, 2002). These developments in the US became a classic example, illustrating the thesis of transformation of values related to wilderness in the Western culture. This view, however, is not devoid of critique, which will be explored further.

Critical Perspectives

The last decades of the 20th century have been renowned for development of critical, post-modern, post-structuralist philosophy, profoundly affecting social science. Numerous normalized and “self-evident” concepts have been put to severe scrutiny and critique, revealing “myths”, exposing hegemonies and ideologies. The concept of nature (and “wilderness” as its ultimate essence) was not an exception. Attempts to rethink nature have been coming not only from the fields of environmental philosophy, but also from sub-disciplines of social science, such as social psychology, anthropology and particularly cultural geography, as a discipline inhabiting the *“nature–society settlement more self-consciously than other disciplines”* (Whatmore, 2001:2).

One of the most prominent critics of American “wilderness myth” is Cronon (1995). In his overview of the development of wilderness history, he tries to find reasons which have provoked such drastic transformation in the public opinion on wilderness. He identifies two main sources –the sublime (the basis of Romanticism movement in general) and the frontier (more specific to the American culture). Sublime nature and sublime landscapes *“were those rare places on earth where one had more chance than elsewhere to glimpse the face of God”* (ibid: 75) and which helped to transform wilderness into a sacred American icon. The basic idea of “the frontier” myth was that the Europeans, settled in the vast lands of the American wilderness shed the unnecessary accumulations of the Old World culture and turned into more “real”, creative, independent, fresh and active society (ibid). Thus, the wilderness became not only the source of the sublime experience but also spiritual renewal. By the end of the 19th century the frontier and the “Wild West” with its individualistic heroes have been proclaimed to disappear, which caused a wave of nostalgic sentiments towards the wilderness, *“the myth of the vanishing frontier lay the seeds of wilderness preservation in the United States, for if wild land had been so crucial in the making of the nation, then surely one must save its last remnants as monuments to the American past—and as an insurance policy to protect its future”* (ibid: 76).

Another interesting (but hardly surprising) point raised by Cronon (1995) is that the main writers on the frontier wilderness nostalgia were particularly celebrating the rugged individualism of “real men” who were not yet corrupted and emasculated by the encroaching feminizing effects of civilization. The lamenting writers, who were coming from elite backgrounds, and benefitting from the urban capitalism the most, felt the need to escape the horrors of modernity. In light of disappearing frontier wilderness, they called for its preservation, in order to secure an opportunity to get renewed and regenerated. Here Cronon (1995) stresses that despite the frontier was gone, the frontier experience was called to stay, which brings us to an interesting intermingle of gender, race, class and also tourism. Cronon’s main point basically is that the roots of conservation and tourism have to be found in the Western elites’

searches for wilderness and *“ever since the nineteenth century, celebrating wilderness has been an activity mainly for well-to-do city folks”* (ibid:78).

A very sad and noteworthy chapter in the American conservation is, of course, the treatment of the native people of the American continent. Not only their existence and history was destroyed and ignored by celebrating pristine and pure wilderness, but with the arrival of the national parks many of them had to be relocated from their homes to make room for tourists to enjoy the unspoiled beauty of uninhabited landscapes (Cronon, 1995). A Sioux chief Luther Standing Bear (1934, in Birch, 1998) famously said *“we did not think of the great open plains, the beautiful rolling hills and the winding streams with tangled growth as “wild.” Only to the white man was nature a “wilderness” and ... the land “infested” with “wild” animals and “savage” people... There was no wilderness; since nature was not dangerous but hospitable; not forbidding but friendly”*. The removal of the natives to create wilderness is the underlying illustration for Cronon (1995) of how artificial, how constructed and even hypocritical the idea of wilderness is. This history and the way of thinking is very important to remember since it, unfortunately, has perpetuated in many other parts of the world and can still be encountered (Mowforth and Munt, 2009). Mentioning this it is quite important not to not to fall into the romanization of “the natives” and idealization of the pre-industrial relationship with nature as a model for the contemporary societies. This trend used to be quite popular in the discourses on nature conservation (and still can be often met) which is the result of not only long-standing racist stereotypes but also an insufficient contribution of social science in these discourses (Milton, 1996).

Cronon (1995) states, that wilderness serves as an undercriticized basis, on which so many values of modern environmentalism are constructed. The concept of wilderness is inherently reproducing the values that its protectors try to fight so vehemently. The central paradox of wilderness for Cronon (*ibid*) is that it lives no place for humans, the place with humans automatically ceases to be wild nature, with the exception of “visitors who do not remain”, as mentioned in the Wilderness Act (1964). This vision therefore reinforces the nature vs. culture binary thinking and hardly offers any solution for the environmental problems we have today.

Birch (1998) gives an interesting somewhat Foucauldian analysis on wilderness by discussing the process of “locking it up”. Wilderness has been “imprisoned” in the designated areas- reservations. This, however, does not mean that within the reservations wilderness is allowed to get completely out of control, these areas are not places of wilderness anarchy and “liberated nature”. What was once perceived as the “outside” was brought by the Western culture, to which Birch (1998) refers to as “imperium”, to the inside as legal reserves, thus extending its control over the “other” which is always criminalized. The reserves serve as an attempt to bring law and order to the world of chaotic nature with the aim of subjugation and obedience. This has resulted to the fact that majority of current nature-related efforts are appropriated by this judicial discourse and turned into exhausting legal battles (*ibid*). Along with that, the system holds the rights to abolish, declassify, invade and manage the areas, so establishment of designated spaces does not diminish the power over the wilderness. The wilderness reserves become a collection of museum relics, *“wilderness and wildness are placed on the supermarket shelf of values along with everything else, and everything is enclosed inside the supermarket”* (Birch, 1998:12).

Birch's main argument is that humans already reside inside the nature, which is always wild, far larger and mighty than humans can control. Humans are participants in the wilderness, and should learn how to act consciously, respectfully and carefully with the interconnected nature processes. Institutionalizing legally designated wilderness reserves (i.e. setting humanity and nature at the opposite poles again) does not bring any substantial contribution to reach this goal. Birch (*ibid*) concludes that Western culture needs a completely different story about wildness and otherness, a story that does not create "criminal" otherness to be dominated, controlled or destroyed. We should stop living in the "imperium" but start living in the wilderness, he suggests.

Another interesting critique on the "traditional" understanding of wilderness and nature, comes from a completely opposite perspective. In his essay "Censorship Today: Violence, or Ecology as a New Opium for the Masses", Žižek (2007) claims that our concept and understanding of Nature is one of the biggest obstacle on our way to protect it. His argument is that humans keep on thinking about the nature as an independent powerful entity able to cope with all the human mess. In our times, however, this is no longer true and humans potency has reached the point where technology and consumption rates can not only provoke serious catastrophes, overexploit resources and drive species to extinction (dominating nature) but also alter the very fabric of nature, e.g. create new species via genetic engineering (creating new nature). In these circumstances there can no longer be "the big Other", an organism always capable of restoring its homeostasis. In other words, under the human manipulation "nature is no longer natural" and humans have no place to retreat. In this regard it is not only important to think about the limitations of the "progress" ideology but also about the danger of the "putting the train of the progress to stop", since it is already too late, and stopping it might cause bigger unpredictable catastrophes (*ibid*). In Žižek's opinion the current ecology is not able to grasp this and sticks to the regressive reasoning quite similar to that of the Catholic Church: do not enter forbidden domains, God/Nature has already created everything in its perfection, any change is likely to cause more harm than good, our actions disturbs the divine harmony/natural balance, etc. Regarding the latter Žižek (*ibid*) takes the stance of the "ecology of chaos" vis-à-vis "ecology of equilibrium" and considers it wiser to adapt to the constant changes of the Earth, rather than trying to futilely preserve or return to an illusionary harmonious balance. Here he poses a philosophical question, regarding the human desire to see meanings in the surrounding world, have faith and confidence in reality, a belief that nature-in-itself is not just a meaningless mixture of multiples; it is Nature, which is, in other words, the very idealistic "big Other". But what if we become more materialistic and accept that the nature-in-itself is a meaningless chaotic manifold? What if we abandon our archaic perception of embeddedness into the Nature, uproot ourselves and accept (though horrifying) freedom we achieve via technology and, consequently, the responsibility? It remains to be seen whether this point of view gains any popularity among the nature conservationists.

It can be claimed that the "middle grounds" between the two polarizing points of view (accepting the totality of nature and negating the nature whatsoever) is represented by the Actor Network Theory (ANT) or "hybrid" geographies as called by Whatmore (2001). ANT supports neither realism nor constructionism and does not differentiate between nature and the society, human and non-human, subject and object, claiming that all entities become significant in relation to others (Ritzer, 2005). In

addition, the action of non-human actors (be that animals, plants or anything else) is acknowledged, the can enter networks and associate/disassociate with other agents. According to Whatmore (2001: 3) our understanding should include “*an upheaval in the binary terms in which the question of nature has been posed and a re-cognition of the intimate, sensible and hectic bonds through which people and plants; devices and creatures; documents and elements take and hold their shape in relation to each other in the fabrications of everyday life*”. The emphasis, therefore, should be put on rethinking geographical imaginations of places designated for nature and the society, to stress more the links, relationships, interactions and intertwining networks of social and material world in all possible promiscuous manners.

Table 2 Different approaches to understanding nature

| Understanding of nature | Main Arguments |
|--|---|
| “Traditional” approaches (nature-culture dichotomy) | <i>Nature/wilderness is external; it is, in fact, opposed to culture/society (be that positive or negative)</i> |
| Critical approaches (nature-culture dichotomy is irrelevant, because...) | <i>Nature/wilderness is a social construct. Nature can only be understood through culture, is a part of culture.</i> |
| | <i>Culture/society is embedded in universal nature/wilderness, there is a totality of nature</i> |
| | <i>Nature and culture are in a constant interaction, there are myriads of links and networks among everything, and these relations is what is important</i> |

It can be thus summarized that the main critique on “traditional” view on nature is mainly against the clear division between nature and culture, “othering” of nature and conceptualizing nature as something external to humans and their everyday life. “Othering” included not only the nature itself but also the pre-industrial societies, making them part of nature and creating a myth of “harmonious coexistence”. In addition, there is a critique on teleological understanding of nature, e.g. nature as an entity which is developing towards a certain goal, where everything has a meaning and “is meant to be” in a certain way. As was demonstrated, the critique on the nature-culture/society dichotomy can take form of accepting the totality of nature, negating the relevance of this concept whatsoever and offering the ANT or “hybrid” approaches. While not aspiring to be exhaustive, this overview provides several main directions of thinking on nature (presented in Table 2). As it will be visible further, these ontological perspectives will appear explicitly or implicitly on different other levels of nature conservation discourse.

2.2.2 The Role of Culture/Humans (Human Imperative)

Historical overview

Another interesting aspect to consider in the variety of discourses on nature conservation is the whole multiplicity of understandings regarding the role of humans in relation to nature. In light of the discussion on the transformation of the perceptions of nature, it becomes clear that the mere idea that

people can and should protect or conserve nature is a result of certain fundamental transformations of everyday life. As mentioned above, the project of modernization and development of science and technologies were largely targeted at fearlessly modifying nature according to human needs, which is vividly summarized by Russian botanist Ivan Michurin as *"We cannot wait for favors from Nature. To take them from it - that is our task"* (which became a popular slogan of communist industrialization in the USSR) (Shubnaya, 2012). With deteriorating environmental conditions, growing environmental risks and subsequent development of nature conservation rhetoric different imperatives emerged. In other words, different understandings appeared of how people should behave in relation to nature and why. In this regard, several major imperative discourses will be discussed below. Needless to say, they rarely appear in isolation from each other and quite often overlap and intertwine.

One of the oldest and most popular imperative discourses can be labeled as *materialist* (Doremus, 2000). Humans are encouraged to conserve nature because of the economic benefits it provides to humans. One of the forefathers of this approach is Gifford Pinchot, declaring that *"there are only two things on this material Earth: people and natural resources"* and the goal of humans is to improve efficiency of using this resources, to achieve *"the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time"* (Callicott, 2003: 244, 245). This rationale is further elaborated, for example, in the concept of *"ecosystem services"*, i.e. services that nature provides for humans for free but are otherwise impossible or extremely expensive to replace once gone. This includes clean air, water, timber, habitats for fisheries, pollination, storage of known and yet unknown medical resources and many others (ESA, 2000). This rationale is also, of course, also very strong behind establishing specially protected nature areas (particularly in developing countries), as means to attract income through tourists. There are multiple other terms describing this type of reasoning, e.g. anthropocentrism, resourcism, conservation (as opposed to preservation), *"wise use"* and many others.

Another important discourse, labelled by Doremus (2003) *aesthetical*, appeals to psychological and spiritual, rather than purely material importance of nature. Aesthetical reasoning, starting with works of Henry D. Thoreau and Ralph W. Emerson, initially very strong and powerful contributor to promoting conservation agenda, nowadays is quite often easily dismissed and perceived as frivolous or self-indulgent, not sufficient for *"serious"* debates in the *"real"* life (Doremus, 2003). There are, however, other interesting arguments falling into these lines, one of which is, for example, the *"biophilia"* hypothesis, claiming that humans are hard-wired by evolution to need other species, humans have innate disposition towards forms of life and life-like processes (Adams, 2003). In other words, nature should be conserved because it has great aesthetic value and is a source of inspiration, spiritual satisfaction, beauty, good mental and physical health, necessary to have a fulfilling life as a human. In a way this view also shares grounds with anthropocentric and resourcist perspective, since it treats nature as an *"aesthetic resource"*, though it is usually not explicitly mentioned.

Ethical imperative to conserve nature is another discourse, which is getting more and more strong (Doremus, 2003). The main idea promoted by its proponents is that humans have ethical obligation to conserve nature regardless of its instrumental value for humans. Aldo Leopold, a developer of *"land ethics"*, argued that humans should perceive themselves as a part of a bigger biotic community and therefore are obliged to respect all community members (Doremus, 2003). Ethical arguments can range

from mild versions of harmonizing human-nature relationships to more radical stances. An important concept in this way of thinking is “intrinsic value”, which recognizes that each organism on our planet has some value which transcends their value to humans (Trombulak, 2003). Each species is a form of life that has perpetuated itself since the times unknown, every organism is our partner on evolutionary journey and this is already a sufficient condition to ensure a certain “value”. Humans, due to their unique development trajectory on Earth, are entitled to a moral responsibility for other beings and should not allow their deterioration and extinction. This views are quite often described as non-anthropocentric, eco-centric, bio-centric, “deep ecology”, “deep green”, etc.

One more radical conservation imperative which I would like to mention here is which I would call “survival” or “no alternative” imperative. The reasoning behind this is that humans have to conserve nature simply because there is no other choice. Continuing old modes of functioning and old ways of thinking are unacceptable because this will eventually bring to a disaster, ranging from local crises to the fall of our civilization as we know it. Ultimately this is an anthropocentric discourse, but material or aesthetic gains, as well as responsibility in front of other species are not considered central arguments. Main drive is the human survival, preferably in favourable environment for us and the future generations. This discourse is particularly popular in case of tackling the “global issues” such as the ozone hole (practically the only undoubtedly effective collective global environmental action so far) and, recently, the climate change (with largely no success yet). This kind of reasoning was labelled as apocalyptic, horror story, doomsday speaking or alarmist and to some degree has lost its power and ability to be taken seriously (Doremus, 2003). Some nature conservationists, however, would like to see other problems to be elevated at this level of reasoning, e.g. deforestation and loss of biodiversity, but with no tangible results so far (Christ, 2008; UNEP, 2012).

Table 3 Main reasoning behind conservation

| Human imperative | Reasoning |
|---|---|
| Humans should conserve nature, because... | <i>There is a lot of material gain and potential losses if otherwise (materialist, anthropocentric)</i> |
| | <i>Nature is a source of spiritual fulfilment, beauty and inspiration (aesthetical, anthropocentric)</i> |
| | <i>Humans have a moral responsibility for other species; species have intrinsic value (ethical, non-anthropocentric)</i> |
| | <i>There is no alternative. If the action is not taken now, the degradation on various fronts will cause catastrophes, threatening human survival and well-being (apocalyptic, horror story).</i> |

Main reasons usually brought up on the table by nature conservationists are summarized in Table 2. These approaches have been subject to critique in the recent decades which will be elaborated below.

Critical Perspectives

One main line of critique brought onto the reasoning behind the need for conservation activities is that all of them fail to provide a vision for an appropriate human role within nature (Doremus, 2003). People are motivated to do something for nature based on self-interest, fear, misanthropic disappointment in our civilization and various other reasons, which ultimately are a product of nature vs. culture ontology. New imperatives for nature conservation should therefore, stem out of the perspectives, transcending this division and stressing the importance of linkages and relationships. Humans, therefore, should be invited to do something *together with* nature, as a part of nature, rather than for or against it.

Another important argument comes from the perspective that nature conservation often (intentionally) avoids explicitly mentioning social, economic and political issues and therefore the whole project not only becomes largely irrelevant as such but is doomed to fail. Even though the concept of “sustainable development” tried to emphasize this link by stating that global poverty is basically the main reason behind environmental degradation, the global power relations and growth-oriented capitalist economy are generally left unchallenged (Carruthers, 2001). Some fervent critics, rooted in the political ecology perspective, even perceive the whole project of nature conservation as nothing less than another western colonization agenda in disguise, which, by the tactics of declaring something a “global issue” or “world heritage” reserves the right to intervene and promote its interests (Shiva, 1993; Mowforth and Munt, 2009). In other words, motivating people to take action on nature is impossible in separation from the issues of economics, politics and power on the local as well as global scale. Conservation is about people- this point of view is becoming more and more dominant in the new conservation discourses. This line of argumentation is sometimes labelled as people-centered, or populist discourses.

2.2.3 Practical Implications for Nature Conservation

Historical overview and Critical Perspectives

There are not many arguments nowadays against importance of ideas for the nature conservation. Adams (2003) clearly states that conservation has to work with a heavy baggage of ideas and cultural meanings. Ideas and concerns of the past must be addressed and means for imagining and creating the future needs to be provided. It has been generally acknowledged that the development of the idea of wilderness as it was imagined in the US has had a great influence on the development of nature conservation. In 1832 the Arkansas Hot Springs were declared a national reservation, in 1864 Yosemite Valley became a park open to public. Yellowstone National Park is renowned as the first national park (appeared 1872), and was practically the first place in the world with large areas of wilderness to be preserved within its borders (Hall and Page, 2002).

American conservationists, such as Nash (1977:58) consider US wilderness and conservation to be a matter of great pride: *“Wilderness allocation and management is truly a cultural contribution of the United States to the world. Although other nations have established programs to preserve and protect*

tracts of land, it is only in the United States that a program of broad scope has been implemented, largely because of the fortuitous combination of physical availability, environmental diversity, and cultural receptivity." It becomes clear, that wilderness has firmly entered the English-speaking conservation rhetoric. For example, the US Congress adopted "The Wilderness Act", which defines wilderness as follows: "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." (The Wilderness Act, 1964).

This vision of wilderness and acknowledged need to protect it defined the nature conservation policies throughout the 20th century, which Adams (2003:xiii) illustrates as willingness *"to secure and preserve from destruction...as much and as many as possible of the surviving haunts of nature"*. Conservationists have put most of their efforts into getting more territories allocated as protected wilderness and insisting on stricter regimes, and, as Adams (ibid:79) illustrates by the example of the UK, *"after WWII conservation was merely a chess game of land allocation and statutory control"* and has changed remarkably little since then. In other words, the view on wilderness as a "place out there", away from human presence and impact which has to be preserved, has been reflected in the conservation policy-making, which focused on identification of appropriate wilderness (e.g. sceneries of outstanding beauty, habitat of a charismatic species) and creation of specially protected nature areas. It can be claimed that the nature-culture dichotomy has been maintained and even reinforced, only now the open rhetoric of conquest and domination of nature and wildlife have been substituted (or supplemented?) with multiple others, such as scientific interest or aesthetic and spiritual value.

Another problem arising from this way of thinking is that once there is a designated protected area, the government, business and general public often begin to think that they received a "green light" to do whatever they want outside the boundaries of the designated wilderness; there is a need to go "beyond the reserve" mentality (Adams, 2003:116).

The "wilderness reserves" approach to nature conservation has been criticized as not only by social scientists as "illusionary", "socially constructed" or "hegemonic" (e.g. Birch, 1998), but also as largely inefficient from conservation perspective (e.g. Adams, 2003). In addition to the difficulties related to the enforcement of the regime, the *island biogeography* approach has argued that isolated "islands" of wilderness are not capable of supporting healthy species populations just as small remote islands are poorer in biodiversity comparing to those which are larger and closer to the continent (Soule and Noss, 1998). Newark (1985) has found out that the size of the protected area is inversely related to the rates of species extinction. This became known as the "SLOSS debate" among the conservationists regarding whether it is better to establish "single large" reserve or "several small" ones, both sides having pros and cons (Holsinger, 2006). Besides, as mentioned earlier, the larger areas of nature are outside the protected areas (be those big or small), and quite often establishment of a protected area is perceived as a "free license" to exploit the unprotected ones with little control. It was understood that designating wilderness areas is not the whole solution for conservation. Integration has become the dominating theme of the conservation throughout the last decade (Adams, 2003).

Thus, the main critique on nature conservation policies can be summarized as follows. It becomes clear that identifying and isolating the most valuable nature areas is not sufficient to guarantee long-term nature conservation. In addition, nature conservation in general and establishment of specially protected areas in particular have often been built on authoritarian principles, which, in many cases, did not contribute to creating long-term support among the local population, generating feeling of exclusion and injustice, which is hardly a good base for nature conservation project.

2.2.4 The Role of Tourism

Tourism continues to play an important role in nature conservation discourse. Tourism has long since been associated with the issues of nature conservation, its involvement been acknowledged particularly in the following areas (Hall, 2005:213):

- providing economic justification for conservation, including establishment of national parks, public and private reserves
- source of financial support for biodiversity maintenance and conservation
- economic alternative to other forms of development, that may negatively impact biodiversity and to inappropriate exploitation or harvesting wildlife, poaching
- mechanism for educating people about the benefits of conservation
- involving local people in the conservation and incorporating local ecological knowledge in biodiversity management practices

Adger *et al* (2001), roughly divides environmental discourses on managerial and populist, while Nygren (1998), singles out nature, people and profit-centered discourses on nature. Tourism is claimed by all of these discourses as an important tool to reach their goals. Tourism is called to save nature, generate profit or help people, serve as an integral part of material, esthetical or ethical reasoning of nature conservation or all of these together. Luke (1999) claims that in general, the very broad social concern over environmental decline was basically translated into the 3Rs - resources, risk and recreation. Mowforth and Munt (2009) in their analysis of the role of tourism in nature conservation discourses came to the following conclusion, which is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Role of Tourism in Nature Conservation discourses

| | Resource conservation | Human welfare ecology | Preservationism | Ecocentrism |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Organizations associated with this view | WWF, IUCN, UNEP, Conservation international, UNDP; tour companies promoting “green” holidays | Green Movement, Friends of Earth; individuals concerned with the state of the planet | Coral Cay Conservation, Elefriends, Tusk Force, Born Free Foundation, EarthWatch | Greenpeace, Earth First, Wilderness Society |
| Place of origin and main ideas | USA, 19 th century. Utilitarian- greatest good for the greatest number, wise use of resources | Industrialized Europe, 20 th century. Enlightened self-interest; For laws of ecology. | USA, 19 th century. The reverence of nature, aesthetics and spiritual appreciation of “wilderness” | USA, Australia, New Zealand. Nature and environment are of equal importance to humans |
| Views on resources/conservation aims | Nature to be managed for the great good of people, non-human world can be valued. “Sustainable development” – sustaining natural resource base for human production and economic yield | Concern for environmental degradation, health, safety. “Sustainable development” – sustaining both natural resources and biological support systems for human reproduction | Preserving nature from development. Defense of “wild nature” for spiritual value of humans. “Sustainability”- preservationism at an cost | Nature and wilderness are of intrinsic worth and are not resources |
| Policies and political programmes | Conserve nature <i>for</i> development, resource management, National Parks and protected areas, “costing” flora and fauna | Critique of unrestrained and inequitable economic growth, policies to counter pollution; alternative technologies and lifestyle, pro-poor policies and sustainable livelihoods | Resistance to values of technological society, aim to create alternative society; National Parks and protected areas | Protection of threatened populations, species, habitats and ecosystems <i>wherever</i> situated, regardless of their use or value to humans |
| Views on tourism | Manage wilderness as tourist attraction; cost ‘natural attractions’ as economic assets; conservation areas can pay their own way; encouragement of high-paying ecotourists | Concern with environmental impact of tourism; alternative tourism as part of alternative lifestyle; pro-poor tourism | Selective and exclusionary, volunteer holidays, research tours, ‘ego-tourists’. Trekking in ‘off-beat’ places (rainforests, mountains) | Tourism is perceived as part of the problem, largely ignored. Nevertheless, full of travelling academics, scientists, volunteers, etc. |

Source: Adapted from Mowforth and Munt (2009:156)

It becomes clear that regardless of the position taken tourism plays an important role in almost all discourses on nature conservation. Disagreements may rise regarding the issues of tourism management but not regarding the relevance of tourism for nature conservation as such. The way of interpretation of tourism relevance for the discourse of Rewilding will be discussed in greater details further in Section 5.4.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.2 Study Approach

This study relies on qualitative research methods, in particular Discourse Analysis (DA), which is discussed in section 3.1 in more details. Qualitative research methods often rely on the assumption that individuals play an active role in the construction of social reality, i.e. the ontological stance of social constructionism paradigm (see section 2.1.1). For example, qualitative research may be focused on studying how people construct reality with the use of language, such as specific arguments, rhetoric devices and words (Boeije, 2010). Qualitative research is widely used in social sciences and has multiple definitions. This study shares the definition provided by Boeije (2012:11), stating that *“the purpose of qualitative research is to describe and understand social phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them”*. In this regard, the thesis is not normative or evaluative, is not concerned with ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ questions, but aims to reach deeper understanding of the Rewilding discourse and the way tourism is represented there.

Through the adopted method of DA, this study aims to analyze the Rewilding discourse and provide answers to more specific questions, namely what is the role of tourism within it and how does Rewilding relate to the historical perspective of discursive evolution of nature conservation in general (see section 1.3).

Primarily sources of information are written texts, available in electronic and hard copy format. For the purposes of getting more in-depth information on the nature of the discourse, differentiation is made between academic (scientific) and popular sources. Academic sources are primarily comprised of articles in scientific journals, produced by experts and mainly aimed at expert audience. Popular sources are books, articles in newspapers and magazines, information available on project websites, aimed at general audience. It can, therefore, be pictured that the Rewilding discourse comes in two major “discursive streams”, which might or might not run in parallel, as is revealed in the course of the analysis. Both academic and popular sources are treated equally during the analysis. The dynamics between academic and popular texts may provide interesting insights in the way Rewilding is conceptualized depending on the target audience. This is represented in Fig.2, which demonstrates the position of discursive streams within the adopted framework (Fig.1). It is not, however, assumed that both discursive streams are necessarily homogeneous themselves, their inner contradictions and debates also taken into consideration. In addition, expert interviews were conducted to gain additional insight into the ways Rewilding discourse is constructed from different perspectives.

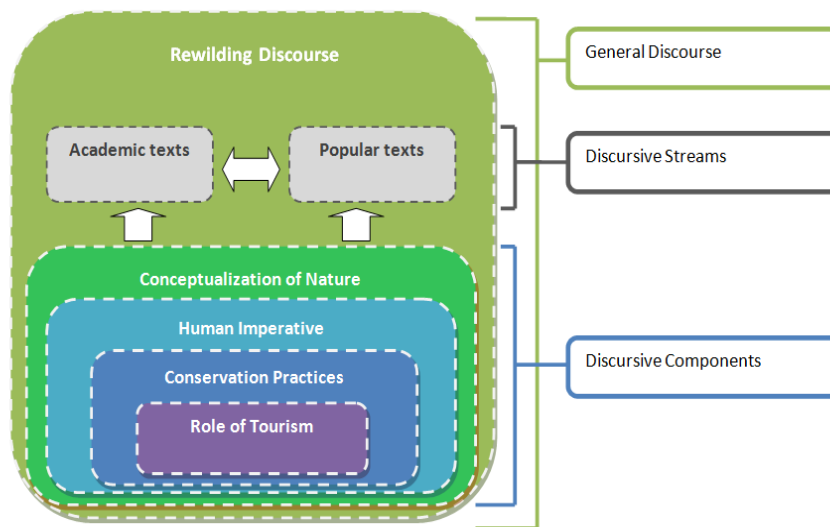


Fig. 2 Discursive streams within the theoretical framework

3.1 Discourse Analysis

This thesis uses the methodological approach of Discourse Analysis (DA). DA is primarily is an analysis of the language-in-use, considers how language (spoken and written) enacts social and cultural perspectives (Gee, 2005). DA can be placed in the social constructionist tradition of the social science, which was described in greater detail in Chapter 2. In their analysis of the applicability of DA approach towards the issues of nature conservation, Hajer and Versteeg (2005) argue that since reality is treated socially constructed, the analysis of meaning is what is important. In other words, it is not the nature phenomenon that is important itself, but the meaning the society ascribes to it. *“Dying forests do not contain in themselves the reason for the public attention and concern they receive. The fact that they do receive this attention at a specific place and time cannot be deduced from a natural-scientific analysis of its urgency, but from the symbols and experiences that govern the way people think and act”* (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005:176).

The main assumption of DA is that a language is capable of shaping one’s world view and is not a simply neutral medium (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005). It matters which terms and metaphors are used, whether it is a jungle or a rainforest, a swamp or a wetland, killing or culling, hunting or harvesting. Barua (2011) states, that metaphors play a major role in the use of conservation terminology, particularly in non-academic literature. Metaphors structure the way people think about ecology, creating coherent narratives about species or ecosystems (*ibid*). Arguments brought by scientists working with nature conservation may seem only dry and scientific, but they are capable of creating an “atmosphere” and convey a certain meaning. If successful, these meanings affect conservation practices and create a context in which the issues in question are discussed.

According to Hajer and Versteeg (2005), nature must be expressed linguistically, since without a shared formulation of certain fundamentals it is hard to imagine problem solving as such. Shared terms and storylines, however, does not necessarily mean shared understanding of the phenomena. More often than not, different interpretations produce a discursive complexity, which is possible to reveal through DA. This power of DA is very applicable to the first research question of the theses *“What is the discursive construction of Rewilding?”*. Another strong point of DA applicable to this work is the ability to answer the “how” questions (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005). DA helps revealing how certain phenomena are enacted in language, how the meanings evolve and are molded in particular settings. This strength of DA is applicable to answering the second and the third questions of this study: *“How does tourism fit into the discourse of Rewilding?”* and *“How does the discourse of Rewilding (and tourism within it) fit into the broader debates on nature conservation?”*.

Thus, it can be summarized that DA is considered to be a relevant methodological approach for analyzing new visions on nature conservation (such as Rewilding) due to several reasons. First of all, DA recognizes nature (and subsequently nature conservation) as a constructed notion and, consequently, its nature is contested and complex. Since nature has been thrown down from its sacral untouchable pedestal of a “reality out there” in the conservation rhetoric and is considered to be constantly invented and reinvented, discourse analysis becomes very relevant. Using the word “nature” inevitably brings out questions like “which nature?”, “what kind of nature?”, “whose nature?”. Second, DA recognizes the value-laden nature of knowledge, particularly in environmental issues, where the level of uncertainty is very high. Such global environmental concerns as climate change, loss of biodiversity or deforestation emerge and are represented by competing and contradicting discourses, reflecting interests of different groups. Rather than searching for right or wrong opinion, DA acknowledges the possibility of different interpretation of the same phenomenon. Third, DA has the ability to answer the “how” questions about the complex process of nature conservation rhetoric. By using DA it becomes possible to reveal how conservation policies are framed and how tourism fits into these frames. Last but not least, DA emphasizes the importance of language in the nature conservation, which is very powerful to construct and “materialize” problems in a particular way, and its consequences can be detected in practice. This is vividly demonstrated, for example, by Luke (1999), whose work not only analyses the contemporary environmental discourse, arguing that the whole ensemble of environmental concerns are channelled through the management of the 3R (resources, risk and recreation), but also demonstrates how it is translated into the curricula and production of experts in the higher education institutions in the US.

There are various approaches to and different versions of DA. This study is largely based on two approaches which are considered most relevant for the purposes of this thesis: the Argumentative Discourse Analysis (ADA) approach described by Hajer (2005) and Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), described by Wodak and Meyer (2009), which will be discussed below. Generally speaking, regardless of the particular form it takes, DA examines the nature of social action by dealing with how actions and/or meanings are constructed in and throughout the text (Nikander, 2006). In addition, as put by Nikander (2006) discourse researcher may focus on historical and longer-term features of discursive formation, e.g. on how meaning-making concerning a particular institution over time.

Selection of ADA is explained by the interest to explore the argumentative construction of Rewilding, focusing on the narratives, storylines and metaphors utilized. DHA was selected since it reflects my interest to put the revealed arguments, narratives and storylines into the historical perspective. In addition, utilizing these two approaches will contribute to diminishing the risk of bias, by following so to say, the principle of triangulation.

3.1.1 Argumentative Discourse Analysis

As can be assumed from its name, ADA focuses on analyzing argumentation, what is being said and in what context. In general, argumentation, together with exposition, description and narration, are usually referred as the four main modes of a discourse (Morrel, 2006). ADA allows for better understanding of the debate *“not in terms of rational argumentation, but in terms of the argumentative rationality”*, brought into a discussion (ibid:301).

There are two key concepts that illuminate distinctive features of an argumentative discourse: metaphors and storylines (Hajer, 2005). Metaphor can be described as *“understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another”* (ibid, 301). Environmental discourses have always been full of metaphors, called to convey a particular emotional charge to a phenomenon. Among the most popular ones “acid rain”, “ozone hole”, “black triangle”, “planet’s lungs”, “nuclear winter” and many others. A storyline, in its turn, is a condensed statement, summarizing complex narratives, usually describing some sequence of events, in which metaphors are usually used (ibid). Storylines are usually used as “short hands” in discussions, on the assumption that the reader/listener knows what is meant. Thus, a complex modeling, assumptions and uncertainties in the scientific research on climate change can be transformed into a summary, such as “driving a car contributes to CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere, which causes global warming and rise of the oceans”. Emphasizing the role of metaphors and storylines in the argumentation, is therefore, quite important for understanding formulation of a particular discourse.

3.1.2 Discourse-Historical Approach

Discourse-historical approach (DHA) proposed by Wodak and Meyer (2009) stems out of the need to integrate the available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of social, economic and cultural fields in which the discourse in view is embedded. DHA aims to systematically include available background information in the analysis and interpretation of texts (written or spoken). Historical dimension is analyzed by exploring the ways in which particular genres of discourse are subject to change throughout time. This information is used on the later stage to explain the so-called context of a particular discourse (ibid).

DHA envisages several steps, among which the most important and recurrent are (1) establishing specific contents or topics of a specific discourse (2) investigating argumentation strategies and (3) examining linguistic articulations within a broader context (Reisingl and Wodak, 2001). These steps are undertaken in the analysis of Rewilding, by, first, defining topics of this discourse (labelled here as discursive components), then investigating the argumentation strategies with the help of ADA approach, and finally, contextualizing it within the broader historical discourse of nature conservation.

In this regard, nature conservation is treated as a specific “genre”, with its traditions and history as well as diachronic changes and developments. Applying DHA will enable to contextualize Rewilding in the genre of nature conservation and demonstrate generic differences and similarities with historical accounts as well as other current discourses.

Discourse analysis of Rewilding is split into three major analytical steps: (1) analysis of discursive components, (2) analysis of general discourse formulation and (3) analysis from the historical perspective (further discussed in sections 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3) . With the help of ADA and DHA, the analytical logic goes from closer look to the building blocks of a discourse to gradually zooming out into the historical context and position of Rewilding in the general picture of nature conservation discourses. Thus, the historical context is interwoven in the whole tapestry of DA.

3.2 Data Collection

Data collection includes two main sources of “texts”. Texts, according to Wodak and Meyer (2009:67) are “*materially durable products of linguistic actions*”. For implementation of DA, the selected sources are literary texts (books, scientific articles, project websites) and verbal texts (public presentations and interviews). Literary texts are gathered from the Internet sources as well as the library of Wageningen University. Scientific literature was gathered primarily relying on Google Scholar search engine but also including double checking with search engines Scencedirect, Elsevier, EBSCO, JStore, Global Search of WUR electronic library. The sample is limited to scientific journals, open for access from Wageningen University academic network. Popular publications were collected electronically via Google Search and include news articles, information on project websites, informative brochures and books targeted for general audience. Popular hardcopy publications were collected in the WUR library or from the sources freely available in Wageningen (e.g. newspapers and magazines). For collection of electronic publications “Rewilding” was used as a primary keyword. It is assumed that texts utilizing the term “Rewilding” do so purposefully, following a specific view on nature conservation. Texts containing the word “Rewilding” but not related to nature conservation (which were very few) were screened as irrelevant.

Since discourse on Rewilding is relatively new, I believe that a nearly exhaustive collection of literary texts is possible at this stage. Primarily, only texts that contain the term “Rewilding” are paid attention to. The discourses using the term “wilding” are occasionally included if they contain similar debates as “Rewilding” and it is clear that similar ideas are used under this term. Texts which are close to

“Rewilding” in their content but use different terminology (for example, various approaches within restoration ecology) are generally out of the scope of this study but are occasionally considered in case of particular relevance. Fifty independent literary texts were collected, comprised of scientific articles, news articles, project documentation available online, as well as several books, among which those solely dedicated to Rewilding, such as “Rewilding North America: A Vision for Conservation in the 21st century” (Foreman, 2004), “Beyond Conservation” (Taylor, 2005), “Rewilding the World. Dispatches from the Conservation Revolution” (Fraser, 2009) (for the complete list of publications see Annex 1).

For the purposes of this study, the texts are roughly divided into academic (30 publications) and popular (21 publications). Academic texts are comprised of scientific articles published in peer-reviewed journals as well as academic dissertations. Popular texts are comprised of everything else- books, news articles, information on project websites and other publications, which are targeted at general audience. In general, one of the most difficult aspects during the research was to deal with the division into academic/scientific and popular discourses. There is obviously an asymmetry, since the only rigid criteria was to consider academic texts those which were published in scientific journal, whereas the “popular” discourse would include everything else lumped together. In addition, this border becomes blurred with sources like popular science. Besides, some sources can be considered discourse analysis in their own stand. Is it appropriate to do discourse analyses over discourse analyses? These challenges required making decisions, which affected the results of the research. Different approach, for example, employing more detailed division, such as project documentation, magazines, newspapers, books and making comparisons among these sources would probably generate interesting insights which remained unrevealed for this research.

All texts are treated similarly during the discourse analysis steps. All the texts were read and coded based on the Theoretical Framework of this research, i.e. chunks of text related to the identified discursive components (Conceptualization of (Wild) Nature, Human Imperative, Practical Implications for Nature Conservation, and the Role of Tourism) were coded respectively. Several important themes, not fitting into the initial code categories but considered important throughout the, were also extracted and assigned a relevant code. Further, the segments of coded text were analysed from the perspective of ADA and DHA.

In addition, auxiliary data was gathered by attending “The Business of Nature Conservation. What Europe Can Learn from Africa” Symposium in Zeist, Netherlands (organized in partnership with Rewilding Europe) and “Rewilding Europe” seminar in Wageningen, Netherlands. In addition, a semi-structured expert interview was conducted with Wouter Helmer (Conservation Director in Rewilding Europe), based on the theoretical framework of this research. All the events were recorded and analysed similarly to other texts on Rewilding.

3.2 Data Analysis

3.2.1 Analysis of Discursive Components

This stage of analyzing discursive components is the first step for providing answers to the two research questions, namely *What is the discursive construction of Rewilding?* and *How does tourism fit into the discourse of Rewilding?* Gained information is used for moving to the next analytical stage, i.e. analysis of a general discourse formulation.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, discourse on Rewilding is viewed as a composition of various other discourses, which are labelled here as “discursive components”. The discursive components interesting in the frames of this work are conceptualization of nature, human imperative, practical implications for nature conservation and the role of tourism. At this stage of the analysis, the discourse of Rewilding is “deconstructed” and the building blocks, i.e. discursive components in focus are analyzed in their own stance. At this stage a number of questions are asked regarding each of the discursive components. The questions stem from the literature, stated in the theoretical description of discursive components and are based on the discourse analysis principles described by Wodak and Meyer (2009:72-73) and Hajer and Versteeg (2005). These subquestions can be summarized as follows:

- How are the discursive components referred to linguistically, by means of what metaphors and storylines?
- What traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to them?
- By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes do the authors promote their take on discursive components?
- From what perspective or point of view are these attributions and arguments expressed?

These questions are used as starting points to approach and formulate discursive components in the Rewilding discourse. Conceptualization of nature, human imperative, practical implications for nature conservation and the role of tourism in the Rewilding discourse are investigated in their own stand based on these questions. Thus, for example, to formulate the discursive component of “conceptualization of nature”, these subquestions will be adapted as follows:

- How is the nature referred to? (*e.g. as external, “out there”, wilderness, Mother Earth*)
- What traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to it? (*e.g. robust, powerful, fragile, chaotic, harmonious, inconceivable*)
- By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes do the authors promote their take on nature? (*what is the argumentative strategy and justification behind the attributed characteristics, what are the metaphors and storylines?*)

- From what perspective or point of view are these attributions and arguments expressed? *(do they clearly reflect anthropocentric, biocentric, materialist, aesthetic and other standpoints, offer anything new?)*

It has to be added, that I try to approach this initial analytical stage with an open mind and include new discursive components if their importance is evident throughout the analysis. It is also quite possible, that a pre-decided discursive component proves to be useless for the analysis of Rewilding discourse. Analytical framework, therefore, might be adjusted throughout the analysis.

3.2.2 Analysis of General Discourse Formulation

The stage of analyzing general discourse formulation is the second step for answering questions *What is the discursive construction of Rewilding?* and *How does tourism fit into the discourse of Rewilding?*

At this stage of discourse analysis the building blocks/discursive components are “reconstructed” in a coherent discourse(s). The analysis “zooms out” from the concrete components, aiming to make statements about Rewilding discourse in general. At this stage of second-level analysis, the main themes of Rewilding discourse emerge. With the help of ADA, relationships and dynamics among the discursive components, dominating argumentation lines, theoretical patterns are discussed. Rewilding discourse is not only viewed and treated as a homogeneous whole, but also investigated to reveal inconsistencies, contradictions, paradoxes and dilemmas in the discourse structure, whether it contains major contradictory streams. Here more general conclusions are made about the role of tourism in Rewilding discourse.

In addition, at this stage differences, similarities and dynamics between the academic and popular discursive streams are analyzed. It is paid attention, whether the influence of one upon the other can be tracked, say, whether it is noticeable that the producers of popular texts on Rewilding are aware of and in line with the academic texts.

The following subquestions are asked at this stage, based on the guidelines of Hajer and Versteeg (2005):

- What is the main argumentation strategy of Rewilding? What are the main themes?
- How do the defined discursive components integrate into the general discourse?
- Is Rewilding a homogenous discourse or is it self-contradicting and chaotic? What major discursive strategies can be defined?
- Is there a difference between academic and popular discursive streams?
- How is tourism represented in the Rewilding discourse? What is its role, does it hold a central/marginal place?

Answering these questions during this second-level analysis provides holistic picture about Rewilding as a discourse on its own and outlines the role of tourism within it.

3.2.3 Analysis from the Historical Perspective

Analysis from historical perspective will provide the answer to the third research question *How does the discourse of Rewilding (and tourism within it) fit into the broader debates on nature conservation?*

This step is similar to what Wodak (2010) calls “recontextualization”, i.e. putting an element in a new context. In case of this work, Rewilding is put in the context of historical development of nature conservation. At this stage, making use of my own background and contextual knowledge, I aim to position the Rewilding discourse in a wider frame of nature conservation history. Based on the principle of DHA, it is attempted to integrate a large quantity of existing literature on nature conservation history and development, as well as the general background of the social and political processes in which nature conservation is embedded. Integrating historical dimension and diachronic change of nature conservation “genre” in general will contribute to better understanding of Rewilding and its meaning for this tradition.

The following subquestions are asked at this stage:

- What are the main similarities/differences with mainstream nature conservation discourses?
- Can Rewilding be easily fit, compared and contrasted with other major discourses on nature conservation?
- How does Rewilding reflect/construct social, economic or cultural contexts it stems from?
- What are the specific characteristics/novelty of Rewilding discourse?
- How does the Rewilding discourse reflect diachronic changes of discourses and approaches to nature conservation in general?
- What can be said about the changing role and views on tourism in the historical perspective of nature conservation and how does Rewilding reflect/construct them?

Answering these third-level analysis subquestions positions Rewilding in the historical perspective of nature conservation, which contributes to its better understanding, which gives opportunity for its critique as well as further development and improvement.

3.3 Research Quality and Limitations

3.3.1 Validity and Reliability

Generally speaking both validity and reliability are necessary for evaluating the quality of the research. However, the concepts of validity and reliability for qualitative research have different meaning than for the quantitative one (Golafshani, 2003). Golafshani (*ibid*) suggests that validity and reliability have their roots essentially in positivist, quantitative-oriented epistemologies and therefore cannot have the same criteria for the qualitative research approaches.

In general, validity relates to the degree to which a research is accurate or trustworthy. In qualitative research, validity means the degree to which a result is considered to be interpreted in a correct way. Reliability relates to consistency and dependability of the research. Generally speaking, reliability has been paid less attention to in the qualitative research, since it is not concerned with achieving the same results by repeating the research (and which is, in many cases, impossible). There are questions whether there is a need for the concept of reliability in the qualitative research at all. Stenbacka (2001:552) for example, states that *“the concept of reliability is even misleading in qualitative research. If a qualitative study is discussed with reliability as a criterion, the consequence is rather that the study is no good”*. In any case, reliability is mainly important as a prerequisite for achieving validity. Thus, it becomes rather difficult to draw a clear line between the concerns of validity and reliability.

Several strategies have been employed to increase the validity and reliability of the research. First of all, the method of triangulation and cross-checking has been applied. During the stage of data gathering, the following strategies were used: electronic publications were collected via Internet using the keyword “rewilding” in several search engines – Google Scholar, Scencedirect, Elsevier, EBSCO, JStore, Global Search of WUR electronic library. Further, references in the found literature were tracked to generate additional relevant sources and ensure that no major available source has been omitted. During the data analysis stage, the texts were approached from two perspectives- Argumentative Discourse Analysis and Discourse-Historical Approach. In addition to the publications, supplementary information has been collected during the “The Business of Nature Conservation. What Europe Can Learn from Africa” Symposium and “Rewilding Europe” seminar, to get additional dimensions on Rewilding discourse in the European context. Finally, to have a different perspective on the findings of the discourse analysis of Rewilding and cross-check the results with a practitioner’s perspective, a semi-structured expert interview was conducted with the Conservation Director in Rewilding Europe.

3.3.2 Researcher’s Positionality

Researcher’s positionality is important to acknowledge in discourse analysis since personal biases influence methods, interpretation and knowledge production throughout the whole research and

consequently, affect the research validity. Personal background and experiences create the “lens” through which researchers view the world and interpret it.

As an author of this thesis I consider it important to acknowledge my personal background and roots of interest in this topic. First of all, having previous educational and work experience in environmental sciences and nature conservation I am very much involved in this topic of research. Rewilding captured my interest as and immediately sparked an ambition to take it as a topic of my thesis. Having deep interest in nature and being emotionally connected to the whole project of nature conservation at times makes it difficult to stay critical and sufficiently open to the alternative views, argumentation and reasoning. Though well aware of this bias and attempting to stay vigilant towards uncritical acceptance of certain ideas which spoke to the “green” part of my heart, I acknowledge that my personal opinion has nevertheless permeated this research. Among the measures taken to minimize this bias are regular communications with my supervisors, who provided their critical perspectives and pointed out possible ways to improve my work, communication with colleagues who hold other views and reading critical articles on this topic. Adopting social constructivist framework also enables me to accept the power of subjective interpretation rather than struggle for unattainable ideal of pure scientific objectivity.

In addition, I would like to emphasize that my position regarding Rewilding is close to Hintz’s (2007a:178) who says that *“In highlighting ... deficiencies, my goal is not to provide a rationale for dismissing this wing of the environmental movement. Rather, in a reconstructive and pragmatic spirit, my aim is to help point a way toward a more roundly defensible and effective politics of wild nature”*. My position is even more modest: I would like to provide a more descriptive, rather than critical account of Rewilding discourse, its structuration and the role of tourism within it.

3.3.3 Limitations

This thesis, of course, has encountered certain limitations which affected the quality of the work. It has to be emphasized, that as any qualitative research, certain bias and limitations were unavoidable, related to the researcher’s personal bias, language limitations, technical possibilities of data gathering, and others. First of all, this refers to linguistic limitations. Though Rewilding as a conservation vision originated within the English-speaking cultural space (and particularly Anglo-American) and offer a wide spectrum of views and approaches, there is evidence that growing number of publications exist in other languages, e.g. in Dutch or German. While many of non-English speaking European authors also publish in English and were included in this research, it can be assumed that analysis of non-English publications would have added other interesting dimensions. Rewilding is still a relatively new, developing discourse and number of publications focusing on it is rather limited. It is without doubt, that with the growing interest towards this nature conservation approach and appearance of new sources, especially focusing on the European context would add additional dimensions to the discussed issues. It would also be interesting to add sources and make analyses of cases which are not limited to the English language and are not focused on the Western cultural space.

Another limitation is related to the methodological aspect, i.e. the fact that all the documents were analyzed and coded “by hand” without utilization of any qualitative software, such as KODANI, Atlas.ti or NVivo. This is primarily explained by the technical reasons. Many of the texts existed only in the form of hard copy (especially books) or scanned documents with inactive text, digitalization of which would make it extremely time consuming for the frames of this project. Though there are ongoing debates about the importance of the qualitative software for qualitative research (e.g. Morison and Muir, 1998; McLafferty and Farley, 2006) I acknowledge the possibility that utilization of qualitative software would probably have revealed some new properties of the researched data.

Last but not least, an important limitation is related to unavailability of the proceedings of the first European symposium on “Rewilding as Tool and Target in the Management for Biodiversity”. Unfortunately, the proceedings of this event were not ready by the time of accomplishment of this thesis. Availability of these materials would have undoubtedly added some interesting aspects regarding the specifics of Rewilding discourse within the European context.

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS OF DISCURSIVE COMPONENTS

Main goal of Chapter Four is to provide analysis of discursive components, which represent the analytical foci of the Rewilding discourse and comprise the theoretical framework of this thesis. The discursive components were identified as Conceptualization of (Wild) Nature, Human Imperative, Practical Implications for Nature Conservation, and the Role of Tourism. Theoretical and historical perspectives on these components are provided in Chapter Two. Investigation of discursive components will be an important step for reaching the objective of this thesis, i.e. *to gain theoretical insight into the discursive construction of the new evolving discourses on nature conservation, focusing on the discourse of Rewilding, and the role of tourism within it*. To reach this objective, first, each discursive component is analysed separately. This analysis will help providing answers for the first and the second research questions, i.e. *what is the discursive construction of Rewilding?* and *how does tourism fit into the discourse of Rewilding?* To reach answers to these questions a number of subquestions were asked, based on the suggestions of Hajer (2005) and Hajer and Versteeg (2005), namely:

- How are the discursive components referred to linguistically, what are the main narratives, metaphors and storylines utilized?
- What traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to them?
- By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes do the authors promote their take on discursive components?
- From what perspective or point of view are these attributions and arguments expressed?

The list of the publications, on which this analysis is based in provided in Annex 1.

4.1 Conceptualization of (Wild) Nature

It can definitely be stated that, borrowing Nelson and Callicott's (2008) words, the wilderness debate rages on. The literature analysis of publications on Rewilding (for the full list see Annex 1) shows that not only there is no uniformly accepted conceptualization of nature, but also demonstrates that old and well-known debates around the issues of nature and wilderness are still very much alive despite their long history. Main themes which became prominent during the analysis will be provided in the subsections below.

4.1.1. Paradox Unsolved

First of all it becomes clear that discourses on Rewilding incorporate both the orthodox "nature is external" and less traditional in the Western conservation literature "nature is universal" approaches. Moreover, such authors as Hintz (2005) and earlier Smith (1991) argue that this is a fundamental

ideological contradiction which underpins the whole ideology of contemporary conservation movement and which has not been (or cannot be?) resolved. Thus, on one hand nature is objectified as a result of human transformation of nature (nature is externalized). On the other hand, however, humans still depend on the whims of nature and are subject to its laws (are part of universal nature) (Hintz, 2005). Taylor (2005) considers this contradiction to be the inevitable consequence of human condition, who is an animal organism (subject to nature laws) and but is also a *homo sapiens* (trying to cheat those laws). This situation with two different perceptions of nature can be graphically represented as shown in Fig 3.

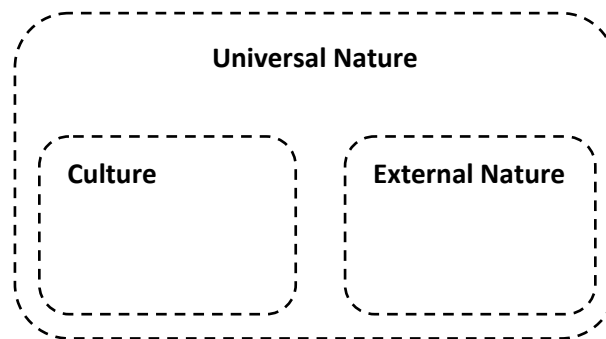


Fig. 3 The ontologies of Universal and External Nature

This duality is reflected in the arguments of the Rewilding proponents, quite often within the work of the same author. Thus, for example, in his book “Beyond Conservation”, solely dedicated to Rewilding conservation approach, Taylor (2005:2) makes conscious attempts to bridge the age-old gap between nature and culture and lean to the “universal nature” ontological understanding:

Nature’ as such is still marginalized...Nature exists in mental and physical reservations...Nature is the underlying reality of our existence...In some sense, the whole nature conservation endeavour has been a category mistake, born of false separation between what is to be human and what is to be natural...We think we know what nature is and know how to conserve it but afflicted by our separation we see through the distortion of denial and only now we are realizing how much has been delusion.

We need to break out of the ghetto category of seeing nature separate from ourselves, something that needs to be protected, conserved or enhanced (Taylor, 2005:4).

It seems that most of the reviewed authors (e.g. Donlan, 2005; Taylor, 2005; Hintz, 2005; Frazer, 2009; 2010; Sylven *et al*, 2012 etc.) are clearly aware of these ontological battles and explicitly state their position, advocating for the “universal nature” point of view. Moreover, Rewilding is often presented as *the* concept, called to bridge the traditional ideological gap. For example, Frazer (2009:9) states that:

Conservation biologists have developed a number of methods for restoring the balance between ourselves and the nature...The most exciting and promising of these methods is Rewilding.

Most of the reviewed authors (e.g. Donlan, 2005; Taylor, 2005; Hintz, 2005; Frazer, 2009; 2010; Sylven *et al*, 2012 etc.) agree that nature should not be externalized in theory. Rewilding is permeated with

calls to acknowledge that culture and everything else is a part of universal nature, and that humans should work *with* nature, as a part of nature, in other words calling to move from objectification towards intersubjectivity. But how to reach it in practice, translate it into concrete actions within our contemporary society at a more or less large scale- is still very much the question, since when dealing with practicalities the discourse logic switches back to the “external nature” mode.

This duality of perception of nature can also be found in works of contemporary philosophers, e.g. Bruno Latour. In his essay “Waiting for Gaia. Composing the Common World through Arts and Politics” (Latour, 2011) he identifies several paradoxes that permeate the contemporary understanding of nature. According to Latour (*ibid*), the roots of contemporary environmental crisis lies in the total disconnect between the scale and range of the phenomena and the emotions, feelings and thoughts needed to grasp and handle the crisis. In other words the humans cannot bridge the gap between the scale of phenomena they hear about (e.g. climate change, extinction of species) and the small immediate environment they experience. Latour (*ibid*) considers that the concept of “anthropocene”, actively propagated recently forces us to realize that nature cannot be perceived anymore as “the sublime” and humans overpowered by it, but on the contrary, humans collectively have become a “giant” which acts as the main geological force shaping the Earth. We cannot feel the sublime nature forces anymore because we should simultaneously feel that we might be responsible for their disappearance. At the same time, our misbehaviour threatens our well-being as well, which might result in what Lovelock (2006) names “the revenge of Gaia”. Latour (2011) even calls this duality the enigma of the anthropocene, where there is some sort of Moebius strip at work. It seems that we are simultaneously what encompasses the Earth or Gaia (since we are able to harm Her) while She is encompassing us (since we have nowhere else to go) (*ibid*). It can be concluded that this duality is still unresolved and the philosophical debates around it still go on.

4.1.2 The Wild Part of Rewilding

Argumentation lines become more diverse and contradictory once the concept of “wilderness” is brought into the picture. The term “Rewilding” itself already raises expectations of bringing “wild” and “wilderness” back to the center of attention and these expectations are definitely met in the Rewilding texts. The “wild” in the Rewilding proves to be not just a beautiful word beloved by conservationists but a very important, even fundamental concept and advocacy tool.

Generally speaking it was rather surprising to find such well-criticized and problematized concept as “wilderness” (discussed in greater detail in section 2.2.1) reanimated and employed with such vigour and strength. Browning (2009) states, that “wild land”, “wilderness” and “Rewilding” are becoming increasingly popular and common terms in the UK, occurring in the documents on land use, nature conservation or wider media, such as tourist publications and periodicals. Due to the important place of these concepts in practically all the publications on Rewilding I consider it worthy to pay a closer look.

The “trouble with wilderness” as put by Cronon (1995), starts, first of all, from the fact that it acquired its positive meaning and importance for the conservation movement primarily (if not exclusively) in the English language, thanks to the literary works of American conservation “founding fathers”, such as John Muir or Henry David Thoreau (Cronon, 1995). Adoption of this concept to use in non-English speaking cultural space often becomes difficult and problematic, if not completely irrelevant. Hall and Page (1992) already brought attention to this fact, stating that the concept of wilderness is absent from, for example, Romance languages. In French wilderness can be translated as *lieu desert* (deserted place), in Spanish - *la naturaleza, inmensidad, falta de cultura* (lack of cultivation), whereas Italian uses *scene di disordine o confusione* (place of confusion) (Hall and Page, 1992:359). It is interesting that this problem was also realized by researchers, investigating the attitudes towards Rewilding in Switzerland (Bauer *et al*, 2009:2913), mentioning that:

As the terms “wild”, “wilderness” and “Rewilding” are negatively connoted for some parts of the Swiss population ... we paraphrased these terms whenever possible (“areas in which nature is not or is no longer influenced”).

Similarly, from my perspective I would like to add, that in my native language Armenian, the words “wilderness” and “wild” also have a negative connotation and are semantically close to “barbaric”, “uncivilized” or “frantic”, nowadays not immediately connected to nature but rather describing unruly human behavior. The reason why I am dwelling on this is because I would like to emphasize that the “wild” and “wilderness” are not only problematic terms criticized within English language by English-speaking authors but are also hardly relevant outside the English language. However, due to expansion of English language all over the world the concept of the “wild” and “wilderness” becomes adopted and used in greater number of contexts. Keeping this in mind, the fundamental importance of these concepts for the Rewilding discourse becomes even more interesting, which will be discussed further.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that wilderness is one of the concepts which clearly splits Rewilding promoters into different “camps”. Conservation Director of Rewilding Europe project Wouter Helmer (2012, pers. comm.) mentions that the question of wilderness provokes the majority of his debates with fellow conservationists and he personally avoids using this term. The reviewed literature on Rewilding reveals several distinct points of view on this issue. Thus, some authors clearly express their mistrust towards relevance of wilderness as a state of untouched, pristine nature, which can be illustrated by the following examples:

Earth is now nowhere pristine, in the sense of being substantially free from human influence, and indeed, most landmasses have sustained many thousands of years of human occupancy and impacts (Donlan, in press).

Our economics, politics, demographics and technology pervade every ecosystem. (Donlan, 2005:913)

Parts of the United Kingdom, the Highlands of Scotland and the northern counties in particular, have regularly been described in recent years as our “last great wilderness.” A romantic notion no doubt, but to those who live and work on the land, and to anyone with an educated eye, it is far from being a wilderness. Thousands of years of human history have created a landscape that is a mosaic of different land uses, in which even those that appear to be wholly natural are, on closer inspection, the product of human action in recent or more distant times (Carver, 2007:267).

These Rewilding proponents, as a rule, use the concepts of wild and wilderness but do not claim the objectivity of these concepts, rather acknowledging that they are in the eye of the beholder. In other words, there is no objective wilderness but rather a subjective “feeling of wilderness” which can be experienced by an individual, when visiting a remote area, bearing no visible impact of human activity. Browning (2009:56) explains this position:

It is people who see the valley as a different place from our homes, describing it as adventurous, spiritually refreshing, tranquil, and more. Whilst people may not describe the valley as ‘wild’, we believe that the words which they use can be summed up by using the single word ‘wild’ to convey a wide range of emotions, and experiences. We have come to call this the ‘sense of wildness’... Appreciation of wildness is a matter of an individual’s experience, and their perceptions of and preferences for landscapes of this kind. Wildness cannot be captured and measured, but it can be experienced and interpreted by people in many different ways (Browning, 2009:268)

This point of view, however, is far from paramount. Other authors (particularly Taylor:2005; Foreman:2004; Fraser:2009; Soule and Noss, 1998) have quite concrete understanding (which may also differ from author to author, of course) of what constitutes wilderness area, what pieces of nature are less or more wild, or what can be considered true, real wilderness. These authors are particularly close to the “classic” understanding of wilderness (as a pristine, untouched, virgin land), attacked by Cronon (1998) as well as the elevated wilderness writing style, typical for American nature writing tradition. For example, presence of native species, and particularly apex predators and megafauna in general, such as wolf, grizzly bear, mountain lion or buffalo, is often considered to be the necessary quality of wilderness:

Without native species, the land is domesticated or feral, not wild. Unmanaged land without native species is not a wilderness, but a wasteland (Foreman, 2004:125). Wilderness is hardly ‘wild’ where top carnivores, such as cougars, jaguars, wolves, wolverines, grizzlies, or black bears have been extirpated. Without these components, nature seems somehow incomplete, truncated, overly tame (ibid, 129).

It (presence of predators) is not just matter of natural predation but central to the whole ethos of wildlands... Britain cannot truly be wild whilst carnivores are absent (Taylor, 2005:127)

The vast majority of the Rewilding literature fluctuates somewhere between the two opposites – perceiving wilderness as a social construct, a subjective experience, or presenting wilderness as something objective, corresponding to a certain number of objective criteria, without openly stating that these criteria (e.g. presence of big predators) often also stems from human experience (such as feeling of fear, awe) rather than some objective necessity of natural process. It is true that “objective wilderness” spoken about uncritically is already quite rare in the contemporary publications and can more often be met in those dated to the 1990s. However, it is also true that there are very few cases where wilderness is spoken about as purely constructed concept. It can perhaps be assumed that the recent decades of critique brought on the unequivocal utilization of wilderness concept as an idealized pristine, untouched nature, completely free from human activity, “core areas, where nature reigns” has had its effect (Hintz, 2005; Cronon, 1998). Though wilderness is very much present and remains to be a popular concept in the Rewilding literature its meaning becomes more and more vague and difficult to operationalize. Wild and wilderness become more of a relative category rather than the absolute one. In many cases wilderness and the wild become just synonyms of nature and natural, these words being used interchangeably, not having any specific distinctive meanings. In most cases wilderness becomes

any non-urban and non-agricultural area, with little immediate human impacts visible. Sparmann (2012: 39-40) describes these different “shades” of wilderness from her own perception:

To me, the word ‘wilderness’ conjured up images of great herds of wildebeest in the Serengeti or the remote rainforests of Amazonia. Europe, on the other hand, was nature tamed, a continent whose picturesque landscapes graced milk cartons. True wilderness in the sense of totally untouched nature is rare in Europe. But one can use the phrase in a broader sense: as a stretch of land that is not, or only sparsely, populated, has barely any roads and is covered by natural vegetation.

Wilderness has undoubtedly many commonalities but also some place-specific qualities in the reviewed literature. Here I have to mention that the lack of roads is a recurrent theme in “what is wilderness” argument and is at least as important as the rest of the arguments regarding the natural processes, presence of animals, etc. Perhaps it can be linked to some basic human feeling of disorientation and confusion in roadless places, a true “bewilderment” in its initial sense. In areas where the natural ecosystem does not presume forests or abundance of mammals, as for example in Iceland, the lack of roads becomes a primary criterion for a place to qualify as “wilderness” (Sæþórsdóttir, 2011). I would like to claim that all the variety of wilderness, there are a number of criteria which qualify a piece of land for “wilderness” (stemming from subjective human experience), and which are common throughout the Rewilding discourse. They are summarized below in Table 5 .

Table 5 Main wilderness criteria met across the Rewilding texts

| Concept | Primary Criteria | Details |
|------------|---|--|
| Wilderness | No immediately visible traces of human activity | - absence (or near absence) of roads -allowance of certain natural processes - grazing, predation, fire, flood, natural selection, etc. |
| | Visible abundance of animals | - megafauna in general and top predators in particular - native (or historically native) species are preferable |

On one hand there is still a visible centrality and importance of wilderness as a place devoid of people, separate of people’s everyday lives, an exotic land offering extraordinary experience. On the other hand, it seems to me that the emphasis on being “untouched”, “pristine” or “virgin” nature has disappeared. Relevance of this approach for conservation agenda *per se* has been widely scrutinized and criticized (e.g. Cronon, 1995; Birch, 1998; Hintz, 2005) and discussed in greater detail in theoretical part of this work, more specifically in section 2.2.1. It is however, quite clear that the concept of wilderness and the wild continues to be important in new conservation discourses such as Rewilding. Though its meaning varies from author to author some general trends are visible as shown in Table 5. New meanings are ascribed to it and used in multiple versatile and creative ways.

Coming back to the fundamental paradox of the external vs. universal nature mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, I would like to hypothesize that the very persistence of wilderness concept in the conservation texts is the consequence of the unsolved duality of using “universal nature” and

“external nature” concepts. It seems almost as if the authors intuitively try to deal with this situation by utilizing the word “nature” when referring to the “universal nature” and applying “wilderness” when referring to the “external nature” paradigm. Thus, on one hand we have clear attempts within the Rewilding literature to challenge nature-culture dichotomy and accepting the futility and counterproductivity of such divisions, but on the other hand, unable to provide consistency of this argument within traditional conservation logic (which requires externalization of nature as an object of protection), the concept of wilderness is often evoked to ensure easier transition back to the old track (wilderness as something fundamentally opposed to culture). This argumentation flip can probably be represented as shown in Fig 4.

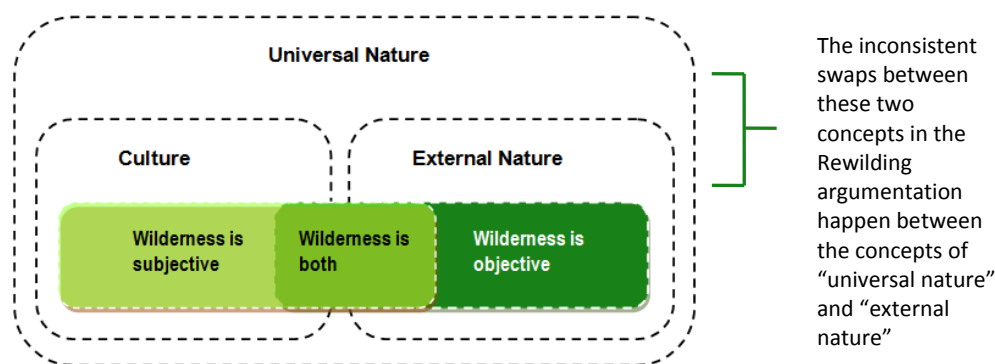
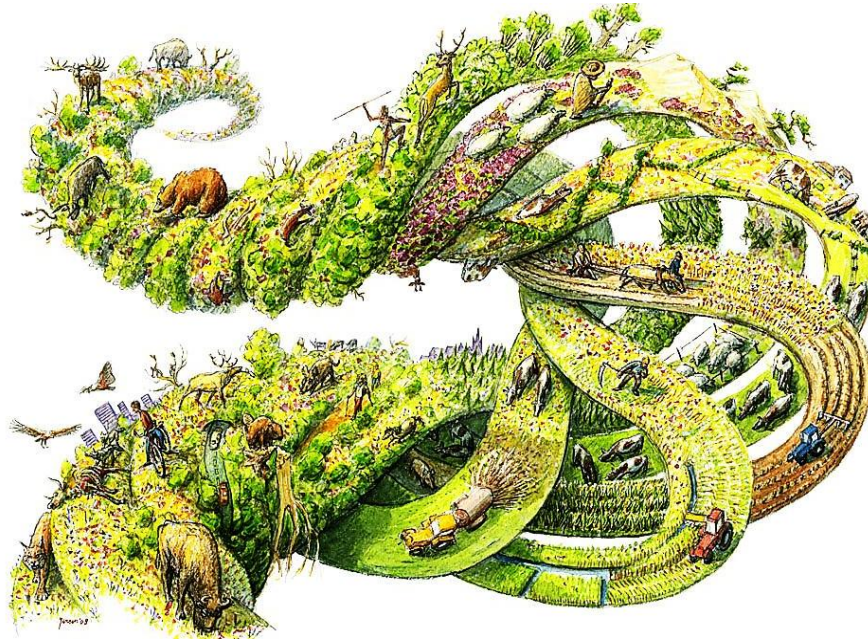


Fig. 4 Different understandings of wilderness

It is perhaps relevant to assume that the fuzziness and inconsistency of these concepts throughout the Rewilding literature (as well as conservation-related texts in general) reflect the clashes of modern and post-modern paradigmatic takes on human-nature relationships. I am tempted to illustrate this interpretation by a wonderful picture from Rewilding Europe promotional materials (see Fig 5). It can be argued that the beginning of the “road” represents pre-modern (supposedly) immersiveness of humans into the natural processes, following externalization of nature and disconnection from it in the modern era and a postmodern vision of blurring the human-nature ontological separation yet again. It is interesting, that this arguable congruence of premodern and postmodern views on nature has been expressed by e.g. Benton and Short (1999) and which is shown in Table 1. The viability and practical relevance of this vision, is, of course, subject of another debate, outside the scope of this thesis.



Courtesy of Wouter Helmer, <http://Rewildingeurope.com/>

Fig. 5 History of human-nature relationship and Rewilding vision

Another interesting dimension specific to the Rewilding discourse is the reversibility of wilderness (and inherent in its name, where **Re-** wilding hints at making something wild again). This is perhaps one of the main ideas that distinguish Rewilding from other nature conservation visions, whose argumentation line largely revolves around the message of irreversibility of biodiversity loss, disappearance of wild areas and focusing on preserving the “last remaining wilderness” from human encroachment and destruction. Fraser (2009) acknowledges the suspicion towards Rewilding and restoration ecology from other conservation perspectives, which accuse it of “faking” or “reinventing” nature, acting out of paternalistic (and predominantly Western) fantasies. This becomes a particularly “slippery slope” regarding the conservation agenda of big international organizations in developing countries, since Rewilding may send mixed messages to the public, e.g. that conservation can be postponed for the sake of immediate economic growth since nature can be successfully rewilded sometime later. In this light, the argumentation line further ramifies, depending on the authors’ ontological perspective on nature-human relationship. Taylor (2005:10, 88, 101) and Helmer (2012, pers.comm) for example, clearly state (respectively):

Recreation or restoration of nature is an act of co-creation. We cannot recreate the past... We should be aware that not only we cannot expect to recreate what has passed but there may be little merit in trying to do so... We should re-evaluate paradigm of naturalness in light of more functional ethos.

Rewilding is a cultural thing. Nature conservation is a cultural thing. What we are doing is culture. But it's culture with much more respect for nature than our parents and grandparents had. We are taking our responsibility.

In other words, there is not only no ambition of restoring “true” wilderness but also no intention of presenting the Rewilding Europe project in the conservation tradition of “eco-/biocentrism”, or fight for nature as an intrinsically valuable entity. As Hintz (2005) emphasizes in his critique on the Rewilding initiative in Idaho, US, nature can never really be preserved in itself and for itself. In general, some differences between the American and European Rewilding texts is quite visible, and this will further be elaborated Sections 4.3.3.

Thus, several conclusions can be made about the (wild) nature discursive component in the Rewilding literature. First of all, it already becomes clear that there Rewilding discourse is far from unanimous in terms of understanding and conceptualizing nature. There is certain agreement on the totality of nature where the word “nature” is employed. Humans and culture are viewed as a part of nature, the futility of nature-culture, natural-artificial dichotomies is explicitly emphasized, “universal nature” argument is utilized and the necessity for connection is emphasized.

However, there is far more diversity in understanding and utilizing the concept of “wilderness”, which is very central and relevant for the Rewilding discourse and arguably embodies the “external nature” approach. Both constructivist perspective (wilderness is a subjective experience) or positivist perspective (wilderness is an area, corresponding to different objective criteria) can be met. Majority of the authors fluctuate between these two positions and employ concepts of wilderness and wild rather inconsistently, making them difficult to define and operationalize. As a result, these concepts become place-specific and context-specific, though having certain commonalities. In general, it could be argued that major debates about nature and wilderness within the Rewilding discourse struggle to overcome the dichotomies of external/universal, subjective/objective, place-specific/global and reversible/irreversible nature.

In addition, it can almost be assumed that the concepts of “wild” and “wilderness” are primarily utilized for their long-standing positive emotional charge within the English language. It would be interesting, perhaps in further research, to investigate whether utilization of “wild” and “wilderness” by conservation organizations is done primarily for marketing and fundraising purposes and if yes, whether this strategy is justified. How the aforementioned situation manifests itself within more concrete Rewilding arguments and actions will be demonstrated in the following sections.

4.2 Human Imperative

It can be argued, within the example of Rewilding discourse, that the days of bold and uncompromising slogans, motivating people to “act now” for which environmental movement has always been (in)famous, be that from ethical, aesthetical, materialist or any other perspective has probably passed.

This is especially visible with the literature produced in the recent decade. Hintz (2005:189) in his critique on primarily American Rewilding rhetoric states notices that:

Thankfully, leading theorists in the Rewilding movement have, in recent years, substantially retreated from such openly misanthropic warrior rhetoric. Nonetheless, they have yet to fully place an egalitarian commitment as central to their ecological-political theory and vision.

In other words, the Rewilding certainly does not fit to the stereotypical “ecospeak” frames one might expect at a first glance. Several recurrent themes in the Rewilding discourse will be discussed below.

4.2.1 Less radical, More Inclusive

Though the reviewed authors might have their own preferences, which might or might not become clear through the texts they produce, they obviously try make sure that the whole range of motivators (perhaps even contradictory in the long run) are “laid on the table” to enable all the audience members to pick what fits them best. Helmer (2012, pers.comm) tells on this issue that:

Mostly we tell the whole story but you see that different groups take different parts as the main thing for them. You tell about nature, you tell about economy, also other values of nature and ask people, well, look what is there for you. And then you see different groups take different parts of the story.

This “motivation shop” approach, however, though egalitarian and inclusive by design, quite often fails in the text, when certain motives and values are often *a priori* assigned to certain groups, e.g. clear distinction is made between rural population having material drives and urban population having spiritual/aesthetic drives guiding their actions. What can be argued as rather problematic is, however, not the fact that rural communities have materialistic drives (which they certainly have), but the fact that other actors who aim to get material gain from nature (such as multinational tour operators, conservation organizations, all the countless experts or project employees) are staying behind the scenes or presented as having surpassed the realm of the material. Hintz (2005) calls this ‘environmentalist hubris’ which can still quite often be met in conservation rhetoric, and that of Rewilding is, generally speaking, not an exception. It seems that the rural communities still have to see the day when their realistic representation in the environmental texts becomes the norm. From the rich history of romantization of the rural population as the “children of nature” living in harmony with the environment and Mother Earth, their representation often jumps to another extreme- of crude peasants only driven by material gain. Milton (1996) in her book *Environmentalism And Cultural Theory: Exploring The Role Of Anthropology In Environmental Discourse* attributes these exotizations to the lack of incorporation of rich baggage of social sciences and particularly, anthropology, into the environmental discourse.

It can be claimed that there is a growing acceptance of conservation (and Rewilding) as a social project, based on the ontological shift of the views on nature, discussed in the previous section. In other words acceptance of nature/wilderness as a social construct subject to spatio-temporal variations leads to acceptance of nature conservation project to be an outcome of social processes as well, by human

means and for human ends. This is for example visible in Rewilding literature, which openly speaks about the importance of material component (as a part of capitalist society) or aesthetic pleasure driven from nature rather than hiding behind elevated “eco-/biocentric” speech, while accusing the rest of “anthropocentrism”. Two examples from different texts promoting Rewilding will help me to illustrate my point:

Bringing back the variety of life for us all to enjoy. Exploring new ways for people to earn a fair living from the wild (Rewilding Europe, 2012)

This goes in stark contrast with the “old-school” Rewilding advocates, such Soule and Noss (1998:8), in their landmark essay *Rewilding and biodiversity: Complementary goals for continental conservation. Wild Earth*.

A conservation plan cannot give equal weight to biocentric and socioeconomic goals, or the former will never be realized. Biology has to be the “bottom line”... many people are uncomfortable in proposing the reintroduction of large and politically troublesome carnivores. But this is no excuse.

It can be claimed that there has been a shift in the recent decade in this aspect (reflected also in the ontological perspective, as mentioned above) and the latter form of motivational speech becomes more and more rare in the texts on Rewilding and conservation texts in general. It becomes more and more clear that conservation, as a social project, needs wide public support to succeed, and this includes, of course, the population who lives in the very proximity of the conservation areas and bears various environmental costs, such as conflict with predators. This seemingly obvious argument, however, was far from being evident in the environmental rhetoric in the previous decades and has, unfortunately, driven away many potential allies. Hintz (2005) notices that, many critics (both sympathetic and hostile to conservation) have feared that “ecocentrists” would not shy away from an opportunistic alliance with authoritarian politics (and which was not far from reality in some developing countries, where forced relocations of the disempowered and land-grabbing were disguised as nature conservation, as widely discussed by Mowforth and Munt (2009). The importance of creating new alliances for the nature conservation and establishment of more democratic and inclusive approaches have been gaining attention and have been explored by Van der Duim *et al* (2011). It can be awaited that the conservation rhetoric and Rewilding approach in particular will be moving towards integrative and inclusive politics even more, providing more people-oriented arguments.

4.2.2 Connection is Everything

Among all the multiplicity and fragmentation of various argumentation lines regarding the role of humans in nature and various motivations to rewild, there is, however, one overarching theme that I would like to point out, that is the importance of *the connection* and *to connect*. The importance of connecting humans to nature and natural processes is shining through the discourse of Rewilding, being mentioned in practically every publication on this topic. This argument goes both on emotional level (people have to reconnect with the nature and its processes) as well as on the level of conservation

practicalities (specially protected areas need to be connected to each other or other natural areas, conservation has to be connected with other sectors). Thus, both the emotional and physical isolation of humans from the nature as well as the natural areas from each other is perceived as the root of the current ecological (as well as social) ills.

We recognize three independent features that characterize contemporary Rewilding: large, strictly protected, core reserves (the wild); Connectivity; and Keystone species (Soule and Noss, 1998).

We have to reclaim the deeper spiritual sense that once connected us to the land, to nature and to a wilder heart. ... Wild areas are not incompatible with industrially advanced society, even in the most populated of countries – the secret is connectivity and an inclusive mosaic of habitats (Taylor, 2005:11; Taylor 2009)

The ambition is as wild as technically, economically and politically possible for all involved lands. All these rewilded areas should preferably also try to connect with other existing natural or protected areas, establishing larger ecological corridors (Rewilding Europe, 2012)

Only connect. Rewilding is about making connections. Forging literal connections through corridors. Creating linkages across landscapes and responsible economic relationships between protected areas and people. Forging links between ourselves and the intact ecosystems we need to survive. (Fraser, 2009:342)

This omnipresent appeal for connection is undoubtedly in line with the noticeable paradigmatic shift from the nature-culture dichotomist ontology to a more blurred and inclusive framework, which tries to build bridges between natural and cultural spaces, both in literal and figurative meaning. The necessity to connect on a whole variety of levels is probably the most popular and accepted argument, promoted by all the reviewed Rewilding texts.

4.3 Practical Implications for Nature Conservation

It can be said that there are some general principles of how to implement Rewilding which are shared by practically all Rewilding proponents, which will be discussed below.

4.3.1 Natural process

One of the most important principles to be used in conservation approaches promoted by Rewilding is that of a *natural process*. Natural processes are the physical, chemical and biological processes that maintain natural ecosystems (Galatowitsch, 2011). These processes are uncountable, but some of them are singled out as the key components of a healthy (or truly wild as some authors would put it) ecosystem. Such processes are, for example, grazing or predation, the results of presence of keystone species who are often megafauna representatives. Keystone species are defined as “*species whose influence on ecosystem function and diversity are disproportionate to their numerical abundance*” (Soule and Noss, 1998:5). As a rule of thumb, big animals, and particularly apex predators are often considered keystone

species. However, keystone species can also be relatively small in size, e.g. the iconic beaver and the impact its dam-building has on the habitat of a number of other species. While it is generally not argued that some animals are more important than others and all are caught in a complex web of interactions, it is acknowledged that keystone species interact in such far reaching and profound ways, that their disappearance triggers a whole cascade of direct and indirect changes within the ecosystem (Soule and Noss, 1998:5). The smartest strategy, therefore, is considered to conserve the keystone species, since their presence will ensure the natural processes running (which will in turn ensure survival of a whole range of other species). Consequently, in places where keystone species have disappeared, they need to be restored, in order to restore the natural processes, i.e. rewild the area. Most of the Rewilding authors explicitly agree that keystone species hypothesis is central to the whole Rewilding argument.

4.3.2 Ensuring Connection

Another important argument emerging from the whole body of Rewilding literature is the necessity to connect (as was also discussed in the previous section). The “connection ethos” permeating Rewilding, manifests itself on multiple levels, ranging from small-scale propositions, such as building passes for animals through various human-made obstacles (such as underpass tunnels or viaducts), stepping stones in the cities (e.g. green roofs for birds), corridors between the protected areas to ambitious non-interrupted habitats on continental scale (such as e.g. Yukon to Yellowstone or European Green Belt initiatives). Examples of wildlife passes over highways in Banff National Park, Canada, can be seen in Fig.6



Source: www.arc-solutions.org

Fig. 6 Wildlife passes in Banff National Park, Canada

The connection on continental scale, of course, has a great deal of political symbolism, i.e. connecting natural processes across national borders symbolizes peace and cooperation among the neighboring countries. The vision of European Green Belt (2012) project, for examples, states that:

By following a course that was in large sections part of the former east-western border - one of the most divisive barriers in history - it symbolizes the global effort for joint, cross border activities in nature conservation and sustainable development...The European Green Belt has the chance to take one of the world's leading symbols of human division and transform it into a model of future nature conservation in Europe.

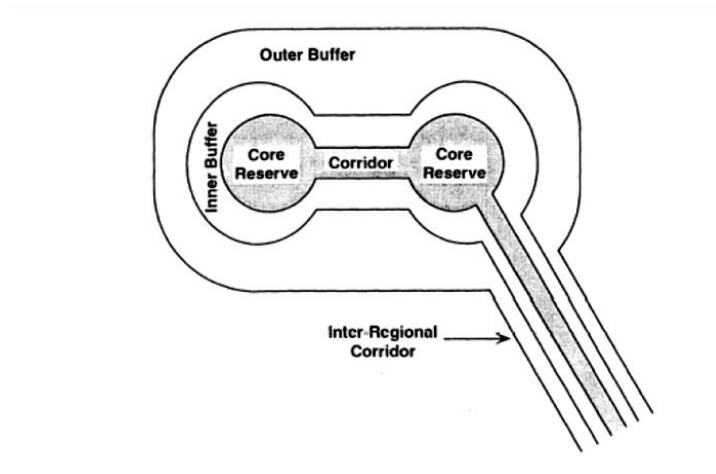
At the same time, there is a big emphasis on the necessity of promoting emotional (or, as some authors put it, spiritual) connection between humans and nature, to be reached through education and nature experiences. Connection on all levels is another important and broad theme in Rewilding discourse.

This emphasis on the *process* and the *connection* rather than on conservation regimes, particular areas or particular species is very characteristic of Rewilding rhetoric. These, in my opinion, are the characteristics which indicate the ongoing paradigm shift in nature conservation approaches, an attempt to incorporate the decades of critique on nature-culture and wilderness-cultivated areas division. The processes going on and connectedness between these objects become more important than the objects and their definitions.

4.3.3 American, European and Pleistocene Rewilding

Despite overall agreement on the Rewilding principles, there are some interesting different perspectives regarding its implementation. Here I would like to distinguish the, so to say, American and European approaches as well as mention Pleistocene Rewilding as a separate branch, present to a certain extent in both the American and European approaches but existing “on the peripheries”. These approaches, while having overall commonalities, have noticeable differences, due to conservation traditions as well as geographic, demographic and natural conditions.

The Rewilding from American perspective is much more bold, ambitious and true to the American conservation and “wilderness ethos”. Foreman (2004) in his vision for American Rewilding gives a four-parcel model of rearranging the system of protected areas. First, there are “core reserves”, which have to be large areas without any traces of civilization. Core reserves must be linked to each other with “biological corridors”, which will enable migration of animals and mitigate the isolation, inbreeding and island effect. Both core reserves and corridors have to be surrounded with “buffer zones”, which are called to protect them from negative human impact (though some sustainable activities might be allowed within the buffer zones). Finally, the fourth parcel in this model is areas with intensive human activities. The idealized version of this vision can be represented as shown in Fig. 7



Source: Noss et al (1996), in Hintz (2005)

Fig. 7 Idealized Rewilding nature reserve design

In addition, American Rewilding model focuses primarily on the conservation and reintroduction of top predators as keystone species. Though Soule and Noss (1998:5) initially summarize Rewilding project as “Large, strictly protected, core reserves (the wild); Connectivity; and Keystone species” later on this model is summarized as “3Cs: Cores, Corridors and Carnivores” (Frazer, 2009). Earlier in this chapter I already mentioned about the importance of carnivores for the conservation in American tradition not only as keystone species but also as a necessary component in the construction of “true wilderness”.

In the European Rewilding discourse, however, the keystone species are primarily large herbivores. Rewilding vision in Europe owes much to the Dutch biologist, ecologist and visionary Frans Vera, who in his landmark work *“Grazing Ecology and Forest History”* (Vera, 2000) debunks the historical vision of European lowlands being covered by endless forests before the arrival of humans. In his opinion, Europe had much more open grasslands and park-like landscapes, which were produced by the grazing and browsing of big herbivores such as bison, deer, tarpan or auroch. Extermination of these animals or driving them away from the grasslands resulted in encroachment of forests, which become unaffected by the impact of herbivores. Grazing and browsing, therefore, are the key natural processes which Europe lost and which need to be restored, thus shifting the focus from reforestation. This view becomes particularly popular after the famous projects with breeding herbivores in an experimental biodiversity reserve Oostvaardersplassen (Zuid Flevoland, The Netherlands), which is often referred to as “Serengeti behind the dikes”, “new nature below sea-level” and is mentioned in practically every text on Rewilding within the European context and inspired several individual “rewilders” and Rewilding initiative groups (see e.g. Swift, 2009). Helmer (2012, pers. comm.) also confirms that predators are not the priority of Rewilding Europe (yet), since their recovery will likely to happen on its own sometime in the future after the herbivore populations are restored. In addition to this main difference from the American discourse, we also see less preoccupation with “true wilderness” or misanthropic sentiments

about keeping the destructive humans away, though the concept of cores, corridors and buffer zones is quite visible here as well.

Separately I would like to mention another interesting innovative stream within the Rewilding discourse, which can be referred to as the Pleistocene Rewilding and which can be found in the works of both European and American authors as well as some others. This vision is probably the most bold, ambitious and controversial, generating the biggest amount of critique (see, for example, Donlan, 2005; Dinerstein and Irwin, 2005; Jaffe, 2006; Cajal and Tonni, 2006; Caro, 2007). The inspiration of this vision comes from the Pleistocene - an epoch about 13,000 years ago preceding the most recent ice age, which was populated by essentially modern animals, though much larger in size, in addition to multiple iconic mammals that went extinct due to different factors (e.g. the mammoth (gen. *Mammuthus*), woolly rhino (*Coelodonta antiquitatis*), sabre-toothed tiger (subfamily *Machairodontinae*), giant sloth (family *Megatheridae*), etc.). Loss of this megafauna resulted in loss of natural processes, such as browsing and grazing, which irreversibly affected their habitats. Remnants of Pleistocene megafauna, such as lions (*Panthera leo*), rhinos (family *Rhinocerotidae*), hippos (*Hippopotamus amphibious*) or elephants (gen. *Elephas* and *Loxodonta*), are currently concentrated primarily in Africa and Asia, though earlier their areal included also other continents, including Europe and the Americas. For example, the Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo persica*) once roamed all over Eurasia, from the Mediterranean to the Indian Subcontinent, but due to the habitat loss and excessive hunting the population currently survived only in one small forest area in the state of Gujarat, India (Quammen 2003). Of course, these animals had their impact on the local ecosystems. The proponents of Pleistocene Rewilding suggest a bold plan: to introduce some of the world's surviving megafauna to the vast natural spaces which are currently stripped of big animals, primarily the vast unpopulated terrains of the North America and Eurasia but may also include smaller-scale reintroductions. This approach aims at two main goals: restoring the natural process of grazing and predation on one hand and help boosting the population of endangered species (which can be viewed as *ex situ* conservation tool) on the other. In addition, there are two main arguments in favour of this project: first, megafauna is considered to be benevolent for the whole ecosystem and its disappearance brings a vast number of various consequences - "cascade" or "domino" effects, which also affect humans; second, Pleistocene Rewilding appeals to moral responsibility of humans in front of the megafauna, which was the primary object of extermination throughout the human history. Taylor (2005) argues that numerous species of surviving megafauna are already quite adapted to various conditions in the zoos all over the world, so releasing them in suitable areas is more of a matter of overcoming cultural prejudice rather than ecological problems. Caro (2007:281) provides the following distinction between the two Rewilding streams- "simple" Rewilding and Pleistocene Rewilding:

Both groups are clear in distinguishing re-wilding (the reintroduction of recently extirpated native species into their indigenous habitats) from Pleistocene re-wilding (populating North American big game parks with exotic Old-World species that are descended from extinct Pleistocene ancestral species or that are ecological proxies for such extinct ancestors).

Needless to say, this approach generated a lot of critique in the conservation circles (e.g. Oliveira-Santos and Fernandez, 2010; Toledo *et al.* 2011). The proponents of Pleistocene Rewilding are accused of

trying to create “Frankenstein-like ecosystems” and wasting the conservation effort by diverting it from more realistic problems and solutions to utopian visions (Oliveira-Santos and Fernandez, 2010). In addition, it is noticed that social, economic and political aspects, as well as human dimensions in general, are left out of the focus (which is quite “traditional” critique on numerous conservation projects in general). In addition, other authors argue that from conservation perspective this approach will never live up to the Rewilding ethos in terms of connectedness and corridors. Caro (2007:283) for examples, states:

Certainly, US citizens take personal safety seriously (e.g. worries about jogging and camping in wilderness areas) and federally sponsored programmes eradicated large carnivores from many areas of the USA at the end of the 19th century because of livestock losses. Given these reservations, it is likely that barriers might never come down, reconfiguring the Pleistocene re-wilding concept to simply being exotic game parks far larger but akin to Safari World in California.

Unrealistic as the Pleistocene Rewilding may seem, some small steps have already been taken, e.g. re-introduction of Bolson tortoises (*Gopherus flavomarginatus*) from Mexico to New Mexico and Arizona, the US (where they were extinct since the Pleistocene) or re-introduction of muskoxen (*Ovibos moschatus*) from Greenland, Yakutian horses (species close to Przewalski’s horse) to the Pleistocene Park¹ in Sakha (Yakutia) Republic, North East of Russian Federation (Donlan *et al*, 2006). It remains to be seen if this approach will receive any popularity on a larger scale.

To sum it up, the whole Rewilding discourse can arguably be represented in the traditional “shades of green”, based on the degrees of radical boldness and ambition (Fig.8). Pleistocene Rewilding presents the most bold and controversial, offering qualitatively new outlook on conservation, American Rewilding is bold in terms of scale and strong emphasis on the presence of top carnivores and European Rewilding shows (so far) the most realistic and people-oriented approach.

¹ For more information about the Pleistocene Park visit <http://www.pleistocenepark.ru/en/>

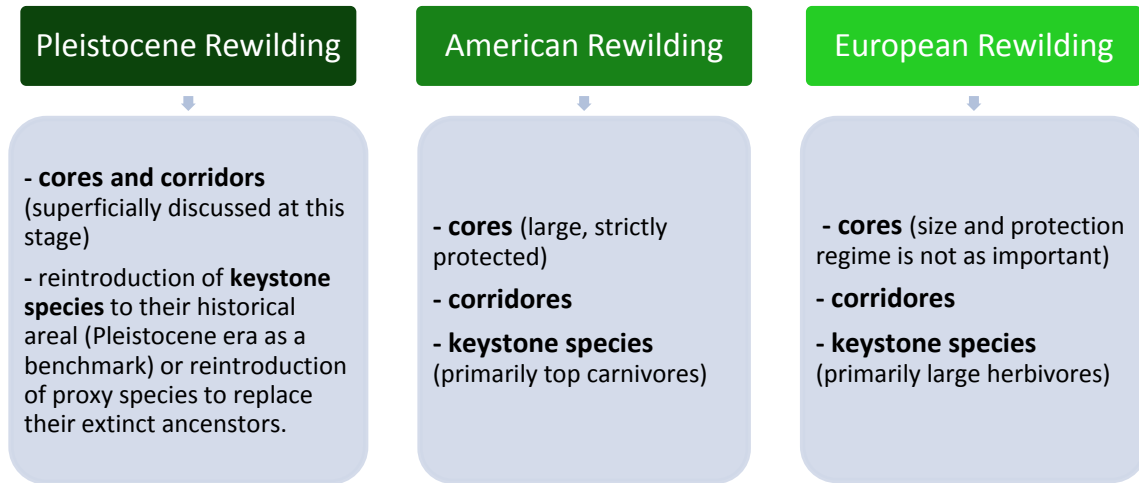


Fig. 8 Pleistocene, American and European versions of Rewilding

Based on the aforementioned examples, an important argument on behalf of the social constructionists can be made, regarding selection of benchmarks, representing the most “natural” desired state. Not only can the Rewilding benchmarks be rather arbitrary (e.g. the pre-human, pre-ice age, pre-Neolithic, etc.) but also the arguments vary from getting redemption for the overhunt to saving the remaining populations of megafauna from the unfavorable conditions in developing countries (and here is when it gets particularly questionable from the political perspective, for example willingness to accept animal “migrants” to provide them with better life but ignoring humans). I would like to emphasize, as I did earlier in Section 2.1, that the point is not to criticize these theories and find them “guilty as charged” (and many of them are indeed fascinating) but to demonstrate that conservation rhetoric produces multiplicity of visions based on their historical, cultural and political context. Moreover, it has to be kept in mind, that success of these visions and their practical implementation will ultimately depend on public support and not on intricate scientific argumentation of what is the “real nature” and “true wilderness”, as was discussed by numerous critiques and analysts of conservation rhetoric, e.g. Cronon (1995) or Adams (2003). As pointed out by Oliveira-Santos and Fernandez (2010:565) “[t]he ecological justification, however, should go hand-in-hand with the cultural, economic, social, and anthropological justifications, to be reasonable not only in ecological terms but also in terms of time, money, and desired outcomes”.

4.3.4 Management Approaches

An interesting aspect in the conservation practices offered within the frames of Rewilding is the management approaches and the level of intervention intensity. At a first glance one would imagine

that extensive talk about the importance of wilderness would also imply a more “non-intervention” approach, leaving nature to do its thing. However, from the analyzed literature it becomes clear that this is not the case. Of course, one could sarcastically argue that since the literature comes primarily from conservationists to begin with they would not “shoot themselves in the foot” and argue against their own active professional involvement. Swift (2009) in her analysis of Rewilding initiative in Knepp Castle Estate, West Sussex, come to the conclusion that not only nature is not “just” let to do its own thing but it is also steered to produce a particular wanted result. For example, in this case biodiversity is expected to increase and the landscape is expected to look like a game park. Foreman (2004), for example, says that there is a big difference between a wild area and a wasteland. Helmer (2012, pers.comm) mentions that humans have no moral right to withdraw their intervention at this stage, after they did so much harm, it would be just hypocritical. In some sense, the Rewilding management approach sounds almost “deistic”, i.e. the task of the conservationists is to set up a natural process where it was lost (e.g. reintroduce certain species, or remove the invasive ones, establish a connecting corridor etc.) but withdraw from active intervention on later stages. Withdrawal stage, however, is so distantly remote in the future and requires such ambitious changes in the natural as well as social conditions, that it can probably be ignored at this stage of analysis.

Restore of the “natural process” is also, of course, a contested discourse. Vera’s (2008) hypothesis on the importance of grazers, for example, has radically shifted the envisaged natural state of European landscape, switching it from the closed forest to open grasslands. Depending on the point of view, grassland encroachment under the influence of big grazers or forest succession may be seen as “natural” and the other one seen as “unnatural”. Similarly, proponents of the Pleistocene Rewilding argue presence of big vertebrates ensures the natural functioning of the ecosystem, whereas their absence is unnatural. Should, for example, the presence of Asiatic lion in southern Europe, its historical areal, be considered natural or unnatural? In other words, Rewilding will hardly be a result of nature’s expression alone, but rather interplay of various interests and power struggles as well as competing discourses.

Nevertheless, there are several common management approaches, which can be singled out on the general level. Thus, practically all proponents of Rewilding agree on the necessity to use big vertebrates as primal agents of Rewilding, i.e. restoration of the natural process, main drivers of large-scale naturalistic management regimes. There is also a general agreement on the necessity to implement zonation- i.e. “core areas” and “buffer zones”, but there is less pronounced agreement on the protection regime. Thus, the proponents of American Rewilding model propagate more strict division and “border control” (e.g. Soule and Noss, 1998; Foreman, 2005) comparing to other sources.

An interesting aspect is animal population control. Thus, annual debates rise about the herbivore population control in Oostvaardersplassen reserve, the Netherlands. Thus, about 20-30% of all animals in Oostvaardersplassen starve to death every year at the end of winter since the animals are not capable of migrating (Sparmann, 2012). This fact generates hot debates whether animals should be left to die in order for the nature to take its course or culling should be employed. Some environmentalists (including the mastermind behind Oostvaardersplassen Frans Vera) consider the natural way preferable, since a number of animals feed off the corpses (*ibid*). The Staatsbosbeheer (the National Forest Management

Commission), managing the area, is against putting extra food because it considers the animals to be part of the eco-system in the reserve (Dutch News, 2012). However, public opinion supports culling as a more humane method of animal management, since starvation involves long suffering (*ibid*). Therefore, 1,255 wild cattle, horses and deer were shot in the winter of 2011-2012 (Dutch News, 2012). In addition, farmers are strictly opposed to letting the corpses rot in nature due to biosecurity reasons (Lorimer and Drissen, 2011). Taylor (2005) for example, clearly states that until the population of predators is restored in Europe, culling will be an important tool of herbivore management. Here an interesting contradiction emerges on the example of Oostvaardersplassen. This project is more often than not referred to as a success story and pioneer project of Rewilding (e.g. referred to by Taylor, 2005; Frazer, 2009; Sparmann, 2012, etc.). On the website of the Staatsbosbeheer (2012) regarding the Oostvaardersplassen we see that:

Nature there stands on its own two feet and has a full life cycle. This leads to exceptional natural values, but also to a new relationship between man and nature. Never before have the ethical and legal aspects of nature management been so thoroughly scrutinised.

The objective is to provide room for natural dynamics. Natural processes are always in motion and an entirely stable situation will never develop. Animal numbers, the species which occur in the area and poor and rich periods will always be subject to natural fluctuations. Limiting human intervention as much as possible allows nature to choose its own path. This has led to a unique nature reserve where the cycle of life can clearly be seen.

On the blog of the Oostvaardersplassen by one of the chief foresters (in Dutch) there are also arguments against some animal welfare supporters who let their feelings and emotions interfere with scientific knowledge, natural dynamics and the way nature works in general (Breeveld, 2012). Keeping in mind that Oostvaardersplassen is not open to free public access (at least yet) due to lack of facilities and also because *“it is home to many wild animals that need peace and quiet and space”* (Staatsbosbeheer, 2012) it can be assumed that ontological perspective of this project is true to preservationist tradition, which aims at reinforcing and guarding the borders between nature and culture, providing a model of conservation where specially protected areas are places “out there” which are not only hardly accessible to public but which have no space for human emotions and feelings. Lewis (2012) considers this approach to be a clear product of positivist, masculine and authoritarian imagination of “wild nature”. Thus, even though it is stated that Oostvaardersplassen *“leads to exceptional natural values”* (as mentioned above) it remains not very clear what exactly constitute these values and whether they are compatible with more general Rewilding ethos, particularly with its great emphasis on promoting connectivity with nature on various levels (including emotional). In addition, from the analysis of Lorimer and Drissen (2011) of the case of Oostvaardersplassen, it is concluded that Rewilding strategies can have conflicts with conventional conservation, biosecurity and animal welfare, thus making Oostvaardersplassen an interesting experiment, raising highly relevant debates, but hardly a success story for immediate replication.

In practically all the Rewilding publications reviewed, it becomes more and more acknowledged that conservation cannot function on its own, in isolation from other fields and is not even as much about managing nature as it is about managing people. In this regard conservation becomes more and more

connected with social and economic aspects, such as inclusion of local population in the decision-making process, as well as entrepreneurship and business. With the popularity of this theme, tourism, for example, is indeed the number one sector, linking Rewilding with the issues of financial sustainability. Rewilding Europe (2012:13) states “[s]everal areas have the potential to become world-class wildlife tourism attractions, alongside the many other ways of reaping economic benefits from the wild” that it aims for “Europe with much more wildlife than today, where this is also much more watchable and accessible to its citizens”. How tourism is represented in the Rewilding texts in general will be discussed in the following section in greater details.

4.4 The Role of Tourism

It would not be an exaggeration to state that tourism in one way or another is spoken about in every Rewilding publication reviewed. There is however, a significant ambivalence in the way tourism is represented in different publications or even within a single publication, which will be discussed below.

First of all, tourism is, undoubtedly, considered an important factor for the Rewilding vision and suggested practices. Its importance is presented in two main manifestations: source of income and facilitator of environmental education and connection to nature.

Tourism as a source of income is, of course, one of the most popular (if not the most popular) discourse which can be met in nature conservation literature in general and Rewilding in particular, when dealing with financial realities. In this case, tourism is presented as something benevolent, and sometimes as the “only hope” or the only viable alternative to nature-destructive, resource-intensive practices in developing countries. This is particularly visible regarding the argumentation for conserving and re-introducing such “uncomfortable” keystone species as big predators, e.g. lion, tiger, bear, wolf, crocodile, etc. Sparmann (2012:44), for example, vividly describes this logic in her popular article on visiting the Rewilding sites by the conversation between the locals and the conservation scientists:

- What will the last remaining farmers say if the wolf returns? Would they not say: Antonio, do you now want to drive even us away?
- Involve the people too, Antonio.
- Tell them the animals are the future. People will come and pay good money to see them.

Frazer (2009) describes how tourism urges local people to re-evaluate the role of dangerous animals in, e.g. by emphasizing the improvements in the community life from tourism revenues and linking it to the animals. For example, she emphasizes, that children in Lewa, Kenya, are taught that “[w]hen you sit at that desk or write in that book, it’s the lion who bought that book, it’s the elephant that bought that book” (Frazer 2009:224). Reintroduction of wolves in the Yellowstone national park is routinely quoted as a success story and a solid proof that predators bring immediate tourism revenues, up to \$7-10 million per year (Donlan, 2005; Taylor, 2005; Frazer, 2009; Helmer, 2012, pers. comm.; YellowstonePark, 2011). Sparmann (2012:45) poetically illustrates the Rewilding ideal of bringing tourism and abundance of animals together in Europe:

At that moment, I think we understood what was meant by 'visions'. All we had to do was close our eyes to imagine great herds of wild horses and cattle moving across the pastures, the setting sun in the background. We could hear the clinking of cocktail glasses, the hum of conversation. In our minds, we listened to safari guests discussing their day in the wildlife park.

Such examples are abundant and these arguments have been used extensively by ecotourism propagators throughout the recent decades. The immense popularity of this argumentation line is not accidental in the Rewilding discourse, since large animals, and particularly predators, play there a very important role. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that large animals are crucial component of the Rewilding project. It is logical to assume that tapping onto already existing rich ecotourism rhetoric on animal-based tourism revenues becomes very relevant in this context.

It is quite interesting that tourism is present even in the Rewilding texts which are concentrated almost exclusively on conservation issues and which are, in principle, express their distrust to any serious overlap between conservation and business and which are quite questionable from conservation perspective to begin with. For example, in the texts which can be characterized as Pleistocene Rewilding mentioned above, tourism is quite often evoked as the most obvious economic justification of the project. Donlan (2005:913), for example, states:

More than 1.5 million people annually visit San Diego's Wild Animal Park to catch a glimpse of large mammals - more than the number of visitors to most US National Parks. So an understanding of ecological and evolutionary history, inspired by visits to private or public reserves containing free-roaming megafauna, could strengthen support for conservation. Pleistocene re-wilding would probably increase the appeal and economic value of both private and public reserves, as evidenced by the restoration of wolves to Yellowstone National Park.

Other authors are more bold and put tourism development and economic boost as an almost unavoidable effect of Rewilding.

It [Rewilding] is good for the economy. Tourists would visit the park and other rewilded areas, promoting the local economies, mostly in rural areas... A secondary advantage [*after the ecological*] is the potential economic boom to areas where these megafauna would be rewilded. An ecological history park, say in Kansas, would bring in huge ecotourism benefits...It could become a tourist activity where people follow elephants to see how they move to different landscapes seasonally to forage for food. Could be great for the economy, just like the buffalo commons. (Barlow, 2007).

While, on one hand, it is good that importance of tourism is becoming so widely accepted, on the other hand it may backfire in terms of overusing it as a quick-fix argument when in reality it might be far from feasible. It almost seems that tourism is often thrown as an economic "bone" in the direction of those who would question the sustainability of any conservation project.

On the other hand, however, there is the other side of the tourist "coin", which appears quite unexpectedly and often within texts of those authors who are also propagate monetary-based argumentation. Depending on the context, anti-business and, consequently, anti-tourism sentiments may become quite visible. First of all there are arguments that heavy reliance on material benefits of nature conservation and particular species is a slippery slope. Adams (2003:108), for example, argues:

On one hand, if it can be shown even on economic grounds the case for conservation makes sense, all to the good. On the other hand it might not often be so. The economic argument analysis might also argue against conservation and if it does it is no good if conservation-economists suddenly asking the rules to be changed back so that the game can be replayed on stronger grounds.

The same fears are shared by e.g. Fraser (2009), who says that it is very wrong to build expectations that animals should “pay to stay” and that there is no reliable proof that wildlife can pay for itself. Taylor (2009:13) also warns that “[f]or business oriented minds, if the new drugs can turn a profit, then tropical forests have a future; the same is true for elephant and ivory and lions and eco-tourist potential”. In other words, if we are to secure nature for the indefinite future, other powerful frameworks have to also be created to counterbalance the business-talk.

In this regard, (eco)tourism receives its fair share of critique as an unstable, volatile and unreliable basis for Rewilding initiatives, which should never be put in the forefront but rather stay as a supplementary measure, along with multiple others. *“If someone comes from the outside and says ‘I will bring you ecotourism’ that’s always very dangerous. You need to support local people in their own activities”* Fraser (2009:92) emphasizes.

4.4.1 Tourism, Rewilding and the People

Another interesting twist this discussion gets in the European context which is characterized by a unique phenomenon of land abandonment as a result of unprofitability of agriculture, particularly in peripheral communities. More than 1 million hectares of agricultural land is abandoned every year in Europe (Rewilding Europe, 2012). Tourism (ecotourism, rural tourism), attracted by Rewilding initiatives, is often presented as a catalyst, capable of boosting and revitalizing the local economies, providing alternative source of income and entrepreneurship opportunities to the population, thus mitigating migration and land abandonment. Carver (2007: 270) in his analysis of Rewilding initiatives in Wales, UK, ponders:

The question on many people’s minds is what will happen to the marginal lands if they are no longer farmed because it is simply not profitable to do so? Can marginal lands be farmed in other ways using, say, more extensive grazing and harvesting methods? Or can marginal lands be rewilded to create better wildlife habitats and a more tourist focused landscape resource?

Rewilding is often presented as an opportunity for farmers to diversify their income primarily by creating more tourist-friendly and attractive environment (picturesque landscapes, abundance of animals to look at, hunt or interact with) and produce niche-marketable goods, such as organic food, which again, is mainly targeted at, but not limited to, tourists. Taylor (2005:26), for example, offers the following picture of how Rewilding could benefit the farmers:

There is no a priori reason why the same farmers could not be retrained to manage a regenerating forest, the introduction of former species, eco-holidays and conservation work camps as well as shepherding small herds of organic beef.

Rotherham (2008:93), discussing the Rewilding initiatives in the uplands of the UK, expresses his scepticism, explaining that once the agricultural component as the main activity is gone from the rural community it dies and tourism alone cannot revitalize it.

[W]hilst tourism and recreation can provide important and maybe critical contributions to economic function, they are not the panacea so widely predicted. Ideas of upland landscape abandonment to become 're-wilded' areas powered by tourism are naïve... Firstly, tourism is fickle, unpredictable, and generally highly seasonal. Furthermore... the tourism pound does little to manage either the landscape or the infrastructure of footpaths and facilities that the same tourists require. In the absence of a vibrant farming community, residential populations drift away, age, and are reduced to fringing commuter dormitories for adjacent cities and towns.

Among the authors who speak extensively about tourism development, that there is a general agreement that Rewilding as a tourism-boosting initiative can and should be implemented as an additional source of income to an already more or less viable community but never sold as a primary source of income and a remedy to a "dying" community. Rotherham (2008:93) warns the Rewilding initiatives in the UK that *"there are serious issues in seeing tourism not as a complement to, but a replacement for, a traditional farm-based economy"*. In this light, it is interesting to see the selection criteria of sites for Rewilding Europe project, which are (not in order of priority): (i) geographical spread, (ii) biodiversity uniqueness, (iii) funding potential, (iv) local capacity, (v) strategic links (political, business community, banking sector, media, etc.), (vi) marketing opportunity, (vii) legal land tenure options and (viii) business prospects (Rewilding Europe, 2012). As becomes clear, only 2 out of 8 criteria refer to natural factors and 6 refer to socio-economic factors. It can be assumed that areas with low scores on the latter 6 criteria will have difficulties to qualify for a Rewilding area even if the scores for the former 2 criteria are high. Thus, it can be concluded that the Rewilding initiative, and tourism as its important component, should not be viewed as a source of creating good conditions for "people, planet and profit" but rather can succeed in places where there are *already* decent conditions for people, planet and profit. This point of view, however, is far from paramount and significant chunk of Rewilding literature presents tourism as a quick answer for financial questions, as was discussed above.

4.4.2 More than Tourism

Here another interesting theme is worth paying attention to. In light of the vast critique brought on tourism as a destructive practice which, in the long run, cannot be trusted as a worthy ally of conservation, it is clear that many authors (intentionally or unintentionally) try to avoid the word "tourism" or "tourists" in their texts. It is my assumption that the word "tourism" in the conservation literature has acquired strong association with consumerism, elitism, multinational enterprises and commodification of nature. I think it is not accidental that numerous reviewed publications on Rewilding avoid using "tourism", but substitute it with such words are "recreation", "visitation", "wildlife watching", "backpacking", "hiking", etc. Tourists, respectively, are referred to as "guests", "visitors", "recreationists", "hikers", etc. It becomes even more obvious if tourism-critical and tourism-supporting passages are compared. The word "tourism" is usually abundant in the critical rhetoric and used more

reluctantly, peppered with more substitutes in the tourism-supporting one. To illustrate my point, I will bring some examples:

Both the acceptance of fire and the limitation (but not exclusion) of visitors are the first steps to an exciting version of wilderness management in Germany (Meyer, 2009:9)

Today, visitors on conducted tours in Finland and Sweden watch and marvel at these diurnal hunters (Sparmann, 2012:39)

In our minds, we listened to safari guests discussing their day in the wildlife park (Sparmann, 2012:45)

Recreational areas for walkers, ramblers and climbers... (Taylor, 2005:26)

It can be argued, of course, that “visitors” or “guests” are broader categories than “tourists”, or on the contrary, “walkers” and “climbers” are more specific. Nevertheless, in my opinion, there is a certain tendency to use these words abundantly and avoid “tourists” in cases when pro-tourism argumentation is given, perhaps to achieve a more positive impression and leave out the baggage of negative associations coming with “tourists”. This interesting tendency of replacing tourism with all kinds of more “appealing” synonyms has been noticed and discussed in tourism literature (e.g. Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Jaworski and Pritchard, 2005) and analysed in light of rising “new” middle classes and a growing demand for “intellectualization” of their consumption, including tourism. Mowforth and Munt (2009) analyzed terminology associated with the “new” tourism and consider it as an attempt to distance the activities associated with new forms of tourism from what are presumed to be activities pursued by the masses. This trend has been widely discussed and is connected to “post-Fordist consumption”, “political economy of late capitalism”, etc. (Mowforth and Munt, 2009:59). In other words, “tourism” and particularly package holidays have become too trivialized and is associated with mass tourism boom of the 1950s-1980s. In order to address the new demand, tourism as a product must become “more than just tourism”. Avoiding the word “tourism” in the Rewilding literature thus serves at least two goals: on one hand it subverts the critique of hard-core conservation camp of promoting business-oriented approach too blatantly and, on the other hand, it caters to the consumption needs of the “new” tourists, which are the potential main market for the Rewilding-induced touristic attractions.

4.4.3 Tourism as a Facilitator of Connection

The second important role of tourism in the Rewilding discourse after the income generation is, most probably, the facilitation of connection between humans and nature. In light of the importance of restoring the lost connection with nature in the modernized society and increasing processes of urbanization, engaging in nature-based tourist activities is, presumably, one way how urbanites can learn to appreciate nature and feel connected to it.

There is a huge interest among young people in outdoor adventure sports and yet many of these simply use wild places and physical risk without fostering any real contact of understanding of nature and natural processes. Educationalists could contribute greatly by balancing such programmes with quiet observation ... (Taylor, 2005:235)

Other authors have expressed concern that the nature tourists are rarely aware of the whole complexity and biodiversity richness of the areas they visit, focusing mainly on one of two big mammals, of “flagship species”. Kerley *et al* (2003) mention that:

... it would be beneficial to increase the range of biodiversity experienced by tourists, in order to enhance their wildlife experience (the educational component of ecotourism) and to provide ‘tourism value’ to a wider range of species.

It is argued majority of tourists would be equally satisfied with viewing “flagship species”, for example, in a small enclosed nature area (in semi-captivity) and won’t pay too much attention regarding more abstract concerns of population survival, biodiversity or ecosystem (*ibid*). Kerley *et al* (2003) emphasize that ecotourism has an educational component by definition and it should be used more extensively by the managers of conservation areas to go beyond presenting nature and wildlife as simplistic tourist products offered to the tourists.

It has already become “common knowledge” that nature-based tourism and nature experiences have positive impact on nature values or environmentally-friendly behaviour among children, youth and population in general, but in fact, there is very little scientific evidence published (Lee and Moscardo, 2005). Nevertheless, there is a general agreement that nature-based tourism and various positive nature-related experiences result in some sort of positive net gain from the perspective of physical and mental health, quality of life as well as environmental-friendly behaviour (*ibid*).

Thus, it becomes clear that tourism is a popular theme in the Rewilding publications and is among the first and immediate arguments, providing economic justification. This is true even for the authors, showing suspicion towards business basis of conservation in general. There is a danger, however, that these income-generating justifications are often not based on any serious assessments. In addition, tourism is evoked as a facilitator of connection between humans and nature as well as between conservation, business and public sectors.

4.5 Scientific and Popular Discursive Streams

In the frames of this thesis the analysed data was conditionally divided into scientific (academic) and popular sources. From 51 analyzed publications, 30 were classified as scientific and 21 as popular. Academic publications are a narrower category, which is mainly comprised of publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals as well as academic dissertations. Popular sources are more diverse and include books, newspaper articles, articles in popular science magazines, materials from project websites etc. Both academic and popular sources were analyzed in a similar way (see Chapter 3). For the full list of publications see Annex 1.

Generally speaking, content-wise no major contradictions or difference was noticed between the academic and popular discursive streams. This can probably be explained by the fact that much of the popular sources actually refer to the academic ones or are even authored by the same authors. For

example, the books of Taylor (2005) and Fraser (2009) are heavily built and inspired by the work of Soulé and Noss (1998), Forman's (2005) book is actually dedicated to Michal Soulé. Hintz's (2005; 2007a; 2007b) critique is largely targeted at works of Soulé and Noss (1998) and Foreman (2005). Many authors demonstrate awareness of each other's works, e.g. Taylor (2005) can be found quoting Vera (2000). Barlow (2007), Cajal and Tonni (2006), Caro (2007), Chapron (2005), Dienersten and Irwin (2005), Oliveira-Santos and Fernandez (2010) – all heavily refer to the groundbreaking work by Donlan (2005) regarding the concept and the perspectives of Pleistocene rewilding.

However, even though there are no major differences regarding the content of the academic and popular publications on Rewilding, there is, not surprisingly, a difference in the way of representing the project. First of all, the focus on megafauna is more noticeable in the popular texts. This can probably be explained by the historic popularity of megafauna among the public and, consequently, readiness of the media and popular sources to include images and stories about megafauna in their texts in hope to catch public attention. Thus, for example, the following headlines can be frequently met: *"Brave Old World. Debate over Rewilding North America with Ancient Animals"* (Jaffe, 2006) *"Rewilding Megafauna: Lions and Camels in North America?"* (Burlow, 2007), *"Hay Festival 2012: Britain Should 'Rewild the Countryside' With Wolves, Lynx and Moose"* (Grey, 2012). However, apart from the mentioning animals and "rewilding" the headlines, both popular and academic sources are very much oriented towards emphasizing the "wild" and "wilderness", e.g. *"Wild Ennerdale"* (Browning and Oakley, 2009), *"Wilderness Rewilding Basics: Cores, Corridors, and Carnivores"* (Fojamble, 2010), *"Re-wilding or Hyperwilderness - plus ça change?"* (Haywood, 2007), *"Recall of the Wild"* (Martin, 2005), *"Europe Goes Wild"* (2012), *"Home Counties Wildland"* (2006). In other words, it can be assumed that using words "wild" and "wilderness" are also considered by the authors of these publications to be attention-grabbing and interesting for the general public. It has to be emphasized that search of the publications was not limited to selecting those having "rewilding" in the headlines, but rather aimed to collect texts which have "rewilding" mentioned in the text as such. Such publications exist but they are very few, namely: *"Beyond Conservation"* (Taylor, 2005), *"Recall of the Wild"* (Marren, 2007), *"Wilderness Momentum in Europe"* (Martin et al, 2008), *"Tourism and Recreation as Economic Drivers in Future Uplands"* (Rotherham, 2008). As a rule, vast majority of the publications that speak about Rewilding have the word "rewilding" mentioned in its title.

There is also difference regarding the storylines employed by the academic and popular sources. Thus, while appealing to the general public in an attempt to provide justification for the Rewilding project several following storylines are employed. Thus, for example, a widely employed storyline in the popular texts is that humans are to blame for decrease or extinction of megafauna and therefore, have a moral responsibility to protect the surviving species and support their reintroduction to historical habitats. In addition, developed countries of the West have additional responsibility to restore the megafauna which has been sacrificed to the altar of industrialization, thus setting a good example for the rest of the world, which struggles to combine economic growth with nature conservation. This line of argumentation, i.e. appealing to moral grounds, can most often be met in the popular sources but is also encountered in some academic ones (e.g. Donlan 2005; Donlan *et al*, 2006; or Martin *et al*, 2008). Propagators of Pleistocene Rewilding are in general offer more outspoken and passionate discourse

even within academic frames, which can probably be explained by the necessity to promote a controversial and non-orthodox approach to conservation. Thus, Donlan *et al* (2006:674), for example, write:

We ask those who find objections to Pleistocene rewilding compelling, are you content with the negative slope of our current conservation philosophy? Are you willing to risk the extinction of the remaining megafauna should economic, political, and climate change prove catastrophic for Bolson tortoises, cheetahs, camelids, lions, elephants, and other species within their current ranges? Are you content that your descendants might well live in a world devoid of these and other large species? Are you willing to settle for an American wilderness that is severely depauperate relative to just 100 centuries ago?

In the academic sources (e.g. Meyer, 2010; Fuhlendorf *et al*, 2009; Hodder *et al*, 2009 etc.), however, the more popular storyline revolves around the responsibility of humans to restore the natural process in general, framed and justified from more scientific ecological or economic perspectives, akin to the rhetoric of restoration ecology (e.g. in Galatowitsch, 2012; Greipsson, 2011). The moral component is more toned down here comparing to the popular sources. This can probably explained by the tradition of academic writing, which tends to exclude emotional and moral side of the issue.

Thus, it can be concluded that there is no major difference between the academic and popular discourses. Both critical and supportive views, similar challenges are discussed, European, American or Pleistocene approaches can be encountered. Representatives of both streams generally demonstrate awareness of each others' work and often quote or cross-refer the common pool of publications. There is, however, some difference regarding the way of augmenting for the cause, i.e. popular sources emphasize megafauna more and more vigorously appeal to moral and emotional grounds of the issue (which is particularly true for the proponents of the Pleistocene Rewilding).

CHAPTER 5. MAIN DISCURSIVE THEMES OF REWILDING

This Chapter provides material to reach the objective of this research, which is *To gain theoretical insight into the discursive construction of Rewilding discourse, and the role of tourism within it?*

The following subquestions are asked at this stage (based on the selected ADA approach and guidelines of Hajer (2005) and Hajer and Versteeg (2005)):

- What is the main argumentation strategy of Rewilding? What are the main themes?
- How do the defined discursive components integrate into the general discourse?
- Is Rewilding a homogenous discourse or is it self-contradicting and chaotic?
- How is tourism represented in the Rewilding discourse? What is its role, does it hold a central/marginal place?
- What is the difference between academic and popular discursive streams?

The analysis of the discursive components of Rewilding has revealed that despite existence of various streams and approaches three major most commonly occurring overarching themes can be identified. Those are, arguably, the themes of importance of Natural Process, Connection on different levels and importance of Megafauna. These themes and their connection to tourism will be discussed in this chapter in further detail.

5.1 Natural Processes

One of the major discursive themes occurring in the Rewilding texts is that of the necessity to restore the “natural process”. A very widely occurring definition of what is the “wild” and “wilderness” in general refers to processes of nature which happen independently (or nearly so) of human actions. Composition of various biological processes is sometimes called “ecosystem function” (Galatowitsch, 2012). The main storyline regarding the necessity of restoring the natural processes goes as follows. First, it has been claimed that natural and processes have been modified throughout history by such human-caused reasons as overgrazing, diversion or water flows, suppression of fire, logging, introductions of alien species, predator control and many others (Savage, 2003). Second, it is assumed that even if damaging activities as the aforementioned stop, ecosystems may not be able to return to their historical conditions on their own, or at least not in the foreseeable future (*ibid*). Therefore, humans have moral responsibility to take action and help restoring the natural process.

This discursive theme of restoring the processes of nature brings Rewilding particularly close to the ecological stream of *restoration ecology*. It is unclear whether Rewilding can be considered simply a part of restoration ecology, at least restoration ecology is hardly mentioned at all within the reviewed Rewilding texts. Hintz (2005) for example, considers Rewilding to be stemming from conservation

biology and being closely related to the movements of “deep ecology” and “ecocentric” environmental activism of *Earth First!* and similar organizations. Nevertheless, I consider it very relevant to look at the restoration ecology closer for better understanding important terms and concepts used in Rewilding, such as “natural process” in this case. In addition, overall debates around the restoration ecology are very relevant to Rewilding in general.

Restoration ecology is a relatively new field appearing in the 1980s but is quickly gaining momentum (Greipsson, 2011). Restoration is defined as “*a process of rebuilding a degraded ecosystem until it reaches its original state (the state before a major disturbance occurred)*” (ibid:14). Restoration may occur on different levels, such as species, community, ecosystem and even a large-scale biome. Of course, such terms as the “original state”, or “predisturbance ecosystem” raises the same questions, which are posed to the concept of “wild” and “natural” in the critique to Rewilding and environmental discourse in general. Restoration ecologists are generally well aware of this problematic and the following challenges are mentioned (Greipsson, 2011:14).

- Often, very little is known about the predisturbance state of an ecosystem
- Many ecosystems have been disturbed by humans for such a long time it is often unrealistic to outline a prehuman state
- Restoration efforts aiming at the “pristine” ecosystem may be unrealistically complicated and expensive
- Predisturbance state might not represent the “pristine” state because it might already been affected by other anthropogenic disturbances (e.g. ecosystem disturbances after the arrival of the Europeans to the North America and previous disturbances by the Native Americans)

Nevertheless, keeping in mind the aforementioned challenges, restoration ecology ventures on the nature restoration enterprise, comprised of various approaches and tools, such as revegetation, reclamation, rehabilitation, re-creation or ecological engineering. Without going much into details on the methods and goals of restoration ecology (see e.g. Egan *et al*, 2011; Greipsson, 2011; Galatowitsch, 2012) the following important points have to be made.

Restoration ecology is a rather pragmatic, problem-oriented discipline, targeted to provide solutions to environmental problems, particularly dealing with anthropogenic disasters. It uses multidisciplinary approaches, drawing its rationale on other scientific disciplines, such as biology, chemistry, botany, geography, oceanography, soil sciences and others. The rhetoric of restoration ecology is, as a rule, highly scientific and technocratic. Most importantly, as a scientific discipline, it generally does not try to deny or obscure its “antropocentric” essence. It is obvious that restoration projects have clear human-set goals, for example a desired state of an ecosystem, a desired species composition, desired set of chemical or biological parameters, which are set by the scientists.

The rationale of the restoration ecology has attracted critique, which is closely related to the debates around nature and human role within it in general and are also very relevant to Rewilding. For example, some accuse restoration ecology in unjustified optimism and technocratic hubris. The message it sends is an optimistic one, because it implies that first, humans recognized the harm they have done to the

nature and then, they have the means to correct these harms (Katz, 2009). Greipsson (2011:xiii) for example, states:

Today, the Earth's biodiversity is at risk, as delicate ecosystems struggle to overcome global warming, rain forest destruction, acid rain, overfishing, eutrophication and a whole host of other interconnected- and largely anthropogenic- environmental problems. Fortunately, as the severity of these problems has escalated globally, so has the prominence of restoration ecology, which offers practical and economical solutions.

This optimistic view also makes us feel good, it relieves the guilt we feel about destroying nature. The damage is not permanent and is reversible, nature can be made “whole” again, appropriate policies of restoration will save our environment and ensure proper functioning of ecosystems. This idea has been developed within environmental philosophy as “restitutive justice”, claiming that humans have moral obligation to repair or compensate the injured natural systems (Katz, 2009). Thus, Egan *et al* (2011:1) state, for example, that “[a] fundamental assumption underlying the concept of ecological restoration is that humans are responsible for degrading the natural environment and, therefore, humans have a responsibility to repair it”. To put it shortly, restoration ecology is criticized as being based on the same “technological fix” mentality which has caused the ecological damage in the first place. This is perceived as another manifestation of antropocentric wish-world, where human interests shape and redesign natural reality in the most comfortable way (*ibid*). Thus, the dream of human domination over nature will come true by demonstrating its power to first damage and then restore the nature as it pleases. Katz (2009) concludes, that disguised as environmental consciousness, human power here reigns supreme. Katz (2009) acknowledges that this critique, however, should not be interpreted as call not to do anything with the destroyed ecosystems. Improvements definitely should be made but they should not be perceived as “restoring” as in a sense of making the nature healthy and whole again, restored nature cannot be considered equal to the actual value of nature by the same logic as even the best copy cannot be equal to the original work of art (*ibid*). The policy goals, therefore, should be targeted at preventive measures far more than the restorative, otherwise this policy will work counterproductively with conservation agenda.

There are, of course, counterarguments against the perspective of strict separation between the “original nature” and “human-manufactured nature”, since it only reinforces the nature-culture dichotomy, which has also been acknowledged as counterproductive to the conservation agenda (Light, 2009). Light (2009), for example, introduces an interesting perspective that restoration ecology is not so much about “restoring the nature” but restoring our relationship with nature, restoring what he calls “the culture of nature”.

With this regard another important aspect has to be mentioned. Focus on “the process” instead of “the product” principle (e.g. conservation of particular species, concrete protected areas or a desired end-state of an ecosystem), demonstrates an interesting shift in the environmental sciences in general. As put by Savage (2009) restoration of natural process allows natural system to find its own dynamic equilibrium. Ecology has generally moved from the ontology of “divine order” of nature, allowing more room for chaotic, unpredictable and catastrophic events as a part of the natural process (Adams, 2003). Some ecologists call this perspective “flux-of-nature” paradigm, emphasizing that ecosystems are never

closed systems, do not develop linearly to a climax end but rather fluctuate, while also having disturbance as an integral component (Callicott, 2003). In other words natural processes are not teleological but ever dynamic.

Whatever the perceived “nature” of the processes (chaotic or ordered) which humans want to allow and assist through restoration (or Rewilding) activities, there is a clear danger of objectifying the natural process as an external object the same way as was done with “nature” or “wilderness” before. In other words, “natural process” is not only something which happens without human influence, but something which has to be necessarily externalized, which may complete its function in its “purest” way only with the eviction of humans, which is unrealistic or has any pragmatic value. It is unrealistic even due to the fact that the nature conservation experts are not propagating “hands-off” conservation or Rewilding areas by simply abandoning them. Even delegation of establishing natural process to the megafauna as “landscape architects” is not as simple as it may seem, primarily due to the fact that megafauna is first and foremost relatively easy to control, comparing to other species. The role of megafauna will be presented in greater detail in Section 5.3. In other words, human agency does not disappear or even decrease, but may become more or less benevolent for the natural areas and its non-human residents.

In their book “Human Dimensions of Ecological Restoration” Egan *et al* (2011) specifically emphasize the importance of recognizing humans as integral part of nature and its processes and that they play an important role in determining the condition of the environment in which they live. Restoring the natural processes, therefore, must be first and foremost perceived as a practice of positive ways in which humans can interact with the rest of the natural world. Recognizing and understanding human dimensions of ecological restoration are considered critical to the success and longevity of ecological restoration efforts (Egan *et al*, 2011). Importance of integration and connection is another important theme in Rewilding, which will be discussed in further sections.

It can be claimed that “restoring natural processes” is the most overarching theme in the Rewilding discourse, which is further subdivided into two focal themes: restoring of the lost connections and importance of megafauna conservation. These themes will be discussed in greater detail below.

5.2 Connectivity

Connectivity and the necessity to connect in on multiple levels and in multiple senses is one of the most important themes, permeating the Rewilding discourse. Connection is represented on various levels. As became visible in Chapter Four, connection is primarily represented on three levels: pragmatic ecological, emotional/spiritual and sectoral/disciplinary .

First and foremost, Rewilding argues for the creation of physical connection among various natural areas to ensure free migration of various organisms (as mentioned in section 4.3.2). This is primarily advocated to combat fragmentation of natural areas, which is detrimental for species populations, since fragmentation prevents migration and results in isolation, greater vulnerability and genetic

impoverishment. The movement of organisms is reduced or prevented by landscape barriers, the so-called connectivity thresholds, which can be human-made structures (roads, dikes, cities, agricultural fields) or natural (rivers, mountains, meadows). There has been a growing recognition in ecology in general that protected areas, as important as they are, can no longer be treated as islands and must be seen in a larger perspective, with an emphasis on compatible management of surround areas as well as linkages among the reserves. Reducing fragmentation by building connecting corridors both on small as well as large scale is considered among the basic steps of Rewilding initiatives.

Second important theme of connectivity, which is implicitly or explicitly present in the Rewilding discourse, is necessity to restore emotional or spiritual connection between humans and nature, something which arguably was lost during the modernity era. This theme is perhaps as old as conservation movement itself and was among its main the catalysts. Starting from the Romantics of the 19th century as a protest against growing industrialization and urbanization to the radical green movements of 20th century, ecocentric/biocentric environmental ethics, deep ecology, the hippie and New Age subcultures and many other social processes – the theme of finding the lost connection with nature has been very much alive for already across three centuries within the Western cultural space. This gave basis for some critics of Rewilding movement in the US to track similar ideas within the Rewilding texts and criticize them more or less on the same grounds the aforementioned movements were criticized (for example, being too misanthropic, elitist, unrealistic etc., see e.g. Hintz, (2005)). On a less radical side of the spectrum, the idea of recognizing humans as an integral part of nature and acknowledging links among humans and their environment is fundamental for the science of ecology in general.

Third, relatively new but already visible in many Rewilding texts, is the theme of connection between various sectors of human activity, for example closely integrating the issues of nature conservation with social or cultural dimensions. It is interesting, but this relatively simple principle has not been as mainstream as it might sound up until the end of the 20th century. Some authors, for example, wrote on this issue:

Geography, sociology and other disciplines concerned with humans, their cultures and their relations to the environment sometimes adopted the name but rarely the essence of ecology...The several efforts to bring together ecologists and social scientists failed to integrate them to produce really significant moves towards interdisciplinary approaches (McIntosh, 1986, in Egan et al, 2011:5)

Both environmental ethics and environmental economics have ignored social science as a source of information (Norton, 2003:188)

A groundbreaking work in this field appeared only in the 1990s, which is considered to be “*Humans as Components of Ecosystem: The Ecology of Subtle Effects and Populated areas*” (McDonnell and Pickett, 1993), which firmly put humans in the context of the ecosystem, clearly incorporating both social and ecological sciences (Egan et al, 2011). Egan et al (*ibid*) argue, that in 1990s and 2000s two large-scale human-related issues emerged – the acknowledgement of human role in climate change and recognition of ecological economics and ecosystem services. Disciplines traditionally immersed in the natural sciences started to come to terms with the overwhelming importance of the social realm. For

example, there are several disciplines that made a visible leap from narrow focus on natural science and technological expertise towards social sciences- e.g. forestry or wildlife management, incorporating sociology, anthropology and conflict management (*ibid*). It is becoming more and more clear, that there is a need to make use of the achievements of social sciences for improving environmental policies. Several authors have pointed out at this gap, e.g. Milton (1996) speaks about severely underused baggage of anthropology in the environmental narratives and policies, particularly related to the indigenous people. It was even proposed that natural resource management should be viewed as social value management or social conflict management (Egan *et al*, 2011). Stokowski (2003), for example, emphasizes that conservation can only arise from community participation, it is about people in relation to place. It can perhaps be claimed that the importance of bringing people in the spotlight of conservation has been a major theme in environmental texts appearing in the 2000s (Minteer, 2003). In other words, people-oriented approaches in natural sciences become increasingly acknowledged and the connection between natural and social sciences becomes increasingly tight.

Similar tendencies can be noticed regarding tightening connections between nature conservation and economic sector. It can perhaps be claimed that since the popularization of the “three pillars of sustainability” approach (integration of ecological, social and economic aspects) much of environmental effort has been put to integrate environmental and social aspects into the economic sector but not vice versa. Hintz’s (2005) accusations of the persistent tradition of “environmental hubris” within environmental texts, i.e. the tradition of speaking in highly idealized, romantic fashion, being above the mundane material needs and speaking only in the name of the nature (as a rule coming from authors of a rather privileged social status), maybe explains why ignoring economic and social components in environmental rhetoric was so common. In addition, there have always been anxieties that involvement of the business sector will inevitably obscure the conservation agenda and profit-making drive will eventually take over the conservation priorities. The necessity to try finding balance has been emphasized already in the first half of the 20th century by Aldo Leopold in his concept of “harmonization” and more recently, of course, the concept of “sustainable development” received a global popularization.

The theme of connecting the business sector and conservation activities is mostly present in the works of European authors talking about Rewilding, and particularly in the Rewilding Europe project. Nature entrepreneurship is gaining attention since specially protected areas are increasingly expected to become self-funded (Kleis, 2012). Nature-based tourism is the number one potential income source considered in this context. There is a growing demand for various nature-based activities and particularly “wildlife-watching” (Rewilding Europe, 2012). More details on how tourism is viewed in the Rewilding context is presented in Section 5.4. It is believed that “*economic growth associated with wildlife tourism will serve to stimulate many other nature-friendly businesses*” (*ibid*, 7). A barrier to develop nature-based tourism in Europe has been the lack of wildlife to watch as compared to Africa, but recent positive trend of returning animals on the European continent gives a hope that nature - based entrepreneurship similar to African (e.g. safari tours and high-end safari lodges) can be to a certain extent replicated in Europe. Ensuring present of sufficient quantity of large animals, i.e. megafauna, through natural migration or assisting Rewilding schemes, is considered particularly

important for this endeavour. The important role of megafauna for Rewilding will be discussed further in greater detail.

5.3 Megafauna

From the analysis of Rewilding texts it became clear that animals, and particularly big mammals, play an important, if not crucial role for the whole Rewilding discourse. Though restoration of natural processes might include such factors as allowing natural fires, floods, “weeds and pests”, natural plant succession and many others, restoration of big mammal population and restoring the natural processes of grazing and predation is undoubtedly the most popular theme in the Rewilding. It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to state that large animals, or megafauna, their images and the arguments about their significance and importance both for nature and for humans, permeate every text on Rewilding, regardless of its specifics. As shown in section 4.3.3, these animals are usually referred to as “keystone species”. While it is true that other species are also mentioned, the major focus, undoubtedly is on large terrestrial mammals. Due to the importance of this theme for the Rewilding discourse I would like to discuss it in further details below.

Generally speaking “megafauna” is a term used for all big animals (in proportion to humans). The commonly used threshold for a species to qualify as megafauna representative is 100kg or, sometimes, 44kg (Stuart, 1991), depending on the research focus, some authors may put this threshold up to 1000kg for the herbivores (Mills *et al* 1993). Megafauna is, roughly speaking, practically any animal which is larger than, or comparable to, a human, be that terrestrial or marine species. In order to differentiate the animals by their trophic position, these animals can sometimes be referred to as “megaherbivores” (e.g. elephants, rhinos, hippos, buffalos, gorillas), “megacarnivores” (e.g. lions, tigers, crocodiles) or “megaomnivores” (e.g. bears). Importance of megafauna throughout the human history cannot be overestimated. Devillers and Beudels-Jamar (2009:101), for example state:

They are an essential source of inspiration for cultural traditions, extensively represented since earliest times in art and myths of the region. They have an unparalleled attraction potential, extending well beyond the generation of tourism as a source of cultural, scientific and recreational interest in the land. They can be flagship species, guaranteeing sustainability of conservation efforts... Large mammals are an essential part of the cultural heritage of humankind, entirely comparable to the greatest monuments and the most important repositories of knowledge.

There are some pessimistic estimates that the majority of the contemporary surviving megafauna will become extinct in their natural habitats within this century (Donlan *et al*, 2006). Quammen (2003) in his analysis of current state of several big predators (lion, tiger, brown bear and crocodile) comes to the similar conclusion, that all the environmental trends indicate that these animals have little chances to ensure their survival in the wild even within the upcoming decades. There are numerous reasons for these negative trends, but primarily they relate to anthropogenic causes, such as growing population, increasing rates of consumption and growing demand for natural resources, which brings to direct

threats (hunting and poaching) as well as indirect - increasing deforestation and destruction of natural habitats (Quammen, 2003). There are several reasons why megafauna is particularly vulnerable to these trends. Some of those relate to the ecological specifics of these animals, especially low reproduction rates and demands for large habitat areas for successful functioning. Other reasons relate to the evolutionary connections, specific emotional, economic and cultural role large animals have played in human history, such as competition with humans for prey, posing direct threat to humans, their crops, livestock and other material assets, having great symbolic status in various cultures and, as a result, experiencing great demand and high economic value. All the aforementioned reasons have helped to keep the megafauna representatives in the center of human attention, with negative but also positive outcomes for the former.

5.3.1 Flagships, Umbrellas, Indicators and Keystones

Since the 1980s, the conservation rhetoric adopted the terms “charismatic” megafauna or “flagship” species, connected with the success in conservation efforts of elephants and of black and white rhinos throughout Africa (Leader-Williams and Dublin, 2000). The initial use of this term also recognized that these species might be the best means of conveying the whole conservation message to the general public. While such concepts as ecosystem, biological or genetic diversity may seem too abstract, the concept of survival of a concrete species is easy to grasp. Selecting a species which are easily related to by humans adds additional powerful emotional component to the whole conservation message, which helps in public awareness and fundraising campaigns. As a rule, these species are usually big mammals, due to our evolutionary proximity. There have been some attempts to pinpoint what exactly constitutes the “non-human charisma”. Lorimer (2007), for example, describes 3 aspects of non-human charisma: ecological (various parameters facilitating comfortable human- non-human encounter, such as size, behaviour, color, sound etc.), aesthetic and corporeal. Regarding the latter two it was hypothesized, that there is *“instinctive human preference towards organisms that exhibit some combination of a big head, upright posture, flat face, round profile, feet-like hands, large eyes, and soft fur: in other words, organisms that look like human babies”* (Lorimer, 2007:919).

Whatever are the reasons, there are certainly some animals that enjoy public admiration more than others, which has been used by conservation organizations. The primates, for example, have become best flagship species for conservation of the whole regions of tropical forest, elephants, rhinos or lions became popular symbols used to promote establishment of protected areas in several African countries. (Leader-Williams and Dublin, 2000). The giant panda became perhaps the best recognizable symbol of conservation in general, due to its omnipresence as a WWF logo (*ibid*). Thus, the extensive usage of flagship species and the charismatic megafauna has initially served a strategic, rather than ecologic or biologic reason. To put it more blatantly, with the use of flagship species it became easier to “sell” conservation.

This approach to focus public attention primarily to the so-called “cute and cuddly”, “big and furry” or anthropomorphic species has generated extensive critique. Other conservation causes, lacking the charismatic megafauna species as a flagship, were struggling to gain attention and sufficient public support despite the whole urgency of the cause. This refers, for example, to the cause of addressing fish stock depletion in the oceans. As a protest against excessive attention towards the charismatic species, radical environmental organization Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, for example, has launched a controversial awareness raising campaign under a slogan “When you think tuna, think panda”, attempting to sarcastically use panda as a flagship species for the blue-fin tuna conservation cause (see Fig.9).



Source: www.seashepherd.com

Fig. 9 “When you think tuna, think panda” campaign by Sea Shepherd

Later on, however, more arguments started to appear in conservation biology that megafauna species are not only important primarily for their cultural, emotional or simply marketing value for conservation but are very important for key ecological role in their habitat ecosystems (e.g. Sergio *et al*, 2006; Williams and Dublin, 2000; Barua, 2011). Studies emerged on the role of single species within conservation biology and along with “flagship species” new terms appeared, such as “keystone”, “umbrella” or “indicator” species. There have been some attempts to summarize and explain the usage of these buzzwords in conservation (e.g. Leader-Williams and Dublin, 2000; Barua, 2011). Caro and Girling (2010) for example, unite all these terms under the concept of “surrogate species”, which can be defined as “species which represent other species or aspects of the environment to attain a conservation objective” (*ibid*, 1). Barua (2011) in his analysis of the aforementioned terms used in non-

academic contexts found great deal of confusion and misinterpretation. In additions, the following conclusions were made: (1) communication is largely biased towards mammals, (2) everyday language plays a vital role in the interpretation of concepts, and (3) metaphors influence peoples' actions and understanding. To avoid repeating similar mistakes I will summarize several definitions for the most popular metaphors below.

Table 6 Definitions of different “surrogate species” in academic literature

| Term | Definition | Role | |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|
| | | Ecologic | Strategic |
| Flagship species | Popular charismatic species that serve as symbols to stimulate conservation awareness and action | | Chosen to raise public awareness, action and funding |
| | Charismatic species that draw financial support more easily and by doing so serve to protect habitat and other species | | |
| Keystone species | Species whose impact on its community of ecosystem are large and would be greater than would be expected from its relative abundance | Play vital role in an ecosystem | |
| | Species having impact on many others, often far beyond what might have been expected from a consideration of their biomass or abundance | | |
| Umbrella species | Species whose area of occupancy are large enough and whole habitat requirements are wide enough, that if they are given a sufficiently large area for their protection will bring other species under their protection. | Shelter other species | |
| | Species with such demanding habitat requirements and large area requirements that saving it will automatically save many other species. | | |
| Indicator species | Species whose presence/absence indicates the presence/absence of a whole set of other species | Reflect community composition | Chosen to reflect environmental change |
| | Species that is thought to be sensitive and indicates particular environmental conditions (climate, soil, vegetation etc). | | |

Source: (Adapted from Barua, 2011 and Leader-Williams and Dublin, 2000)

While it is true that the aforementioned species are not always mammals or representatives of megafauna, the conservation effort of big NGOs, communication, awareness-raising and fund-raising campaigns have largely revolved around big mammals, i.e. “flagship species” (Barua, 2011). Despite substantial critique on overemphasizing the conservation importance and urgency of action for the “cute and cuddly” it is hard to envisage any changes in this strategy, since general public, and consequently mass media, are interested primarily in these iconic species (ibid). As stated by Caro (2010:259-260) *‘Inevitably...the public will continue to have to swallow simplistic prose accompanied by pictures and logos of charismatic species’*.

However, as can be expected, there is an overlap among the whole abundance of categories and are some animals which are capable of fitting into all the aforementioned definitions, i.e. be the flagship, but also a keystone, umbrella and indicator species. Thus, particularly strong arguments exist to put top predators for this role, i.e. to argument for the “ecologically justified charisma” or use the top predators as “conservation tools” (Sergio *et al*, 2006; Sergio *et al*, 2008). Thus, Sergio *et al* (2008:1), claim:

Evidence suggests that top predators promote species richness or are spatio-temporally associated with it for six causative or noncausative reasons: resource facilitation, trophic cascades, dependence on ecosystem productivity, sensitivity to dysfunctions, selection of heterogeneous sites and links to multiple ecosystem components. Therefore, predator-centered conservation may deliver certain biodiversity goals. To this aim, predators have been employed in conservation as keystone, umbrella, sentinel, flagship, and indicator species.

Similar argumentation exists for a number of large herbivores (e.g. Mills *et al*, 1993; Gordon *et al*, 2004; Vera, 2000). While supporting or criticizing the relevance of this conservation approach is outside the scope of this thesis (strong arguments for both for and against this point of view exist) it is necessary to acknowledge the importance and long standing strategic value of this argumentation for the whole conservation enterprise. It is even claimed that the much of the early interest in wildlife conservation has grown out of desire to save the world’s most spectacular species, which is still very much true (Leader-Williams and Dublin, 2000). It becomes clear that megafauna has had a long history of being in the center of conservation efforts, since these are the species which are the most successful in combining the qualities of charismatic, flagship, keystone, umbrella or any other important criteria, singled out by biologists. Rewilding discourse provided additional platform for the megafauna and megafauna-based conservation approach to stay in the spotlight.

5.3.2 For Whom is Megafauna Charismatic?

Even though some authors (e.g. Lorimer, 2007) discuss the criteria that makes animals charismatic from human perspective in general, others suggest that cultural, economic and political aspects of human relationships with animals, and particularly dangerous predators, should not be underestimated (Leader-Williams and Dublin, 2000). It is already an old and well acknowledged critique on conservation project in general, coming from political ecology, colonial studies, racial, feminist and other perspectives, that the main propagators of environmental agenda are, as a rule, the representatives of rich Western countries. In other words, this critique usually refers to the descendants of white Europeans (or Caucasians) who, as a result of economic development, geographic expansion and other historical processes, have not only caused irreversible transformation of natural ecosystems in the so-called “Old and New Worlds”, but continue to indirectly contribute to the destruction of remaining ecosystems by their affluent lifestyle and globalization forces. Due to the processes of globalization, or as some would say “westernization”, this critique recently also often includes other non-Western countries which managed to successfully hop onto the “development project”, i.e. have high economic growth and adopt the western consumption patterns (primarily referring to Japan, “the Four Asian

Tigers”, and more recently China). However, the international conservation agenda is still primarily lead by developed Western countries (Leader-Williams and Dublin, 2000). In other words, there are groups of people, living in isolation from nature and its processes (in highly urbanized areas) and ascribing high aesthetic value to wild species and wild areas. They have freedom of choice with regard to wildlife, their commitment to conservation is high but experience with nature is quite low. They may decide to spend their disposable income on conservation or an opportunity to meet wild animals in captivity or in their natural habitat. It is clear that megafauna is most charismatic and most appealing to those, whose life, life of the loved ones, livelihoods and material assets are not threatened by encounter with its representatives. As put by Walpole and Leader-Williams (2002:543) *“Many of the flagship species favoured by the western public and promoted by international conservation organizations are not viewed by local people with the same equanimity, particularly where a tiger is eating their livestock or an elephant is trampling their crops”*. Roughly speaking, most of the times these species become charismatic only when they live in faraway places. Tourism revenues from these species, however, might influence their perception among the local population and may justify the emphasis on the flagships species for conservation in developing countries as well (Walpole and Leader-Williams, 2002). The aspects related to tourism will be discussed in greater detail in section 5.3.3.

In some sense, Rewilding and its emphasis on megafauna fit into the aforementioned conventional picture. However, there is a new interesting twist to this story. Rewilding also emphasizes bringing the megafauna, including predators, back to the places where they have been exterminated, including the developed countries of Europe and North America. This aspect will undoubtedly be the most severe test for the whole Rewilding project. Several Rewilding propagators recognize the fundamental importance and even moral responsibility of bringing wild megafauna (and predators, as an epitome of wilderness) back to the natural areas in the developed countries, for example:

We must send a signal to developing countries whose wildlife policies we hope to influence . Above all we would be signalling the move beyond the past conservation paradigm to a more creative and extensive philosophy one already apparent in the current projects (Taylor, 2005:236).

...growing awareness that very few biologically intact areas remain in Europe, heightened concern over climate change, and expanding wildlife populations. For example, predators such as wolves and lynx are returning to habitat from which they were formerly extirpated... Europeans have systematically reduced their wilderness resource for centuries... As a result, the wilderness concept still meets considerable resistance throughout the continent. Nonetheless, the mindset is changing, and momentum for wilderness is building. In our view, we have crossed a critical threshold: building toward a European strategy for wilderness conservation is a difficult undertaking but we believe it will happen in the foreseeable future (Vance *et al*, 2008:33).

Natural returning of wolves to Western Europe has generated plenty of debates, which indicate that this issue is far from easy. Particularly hot debates are visible on the example of UK, where the Rewilding has received multiple proponents and got numerous reviews in the news articles (e.g. Grey, 2012; Wood, 2009; Wintle, 2009; Mitchell, 2008). It doesn't take much to notice that Rewilding idea will hardly be welcomed when there are chances that it will be in “one's own backyard”. Just for the sake of illustrating my point, I will bring several reactions from the commenters of a fresh article in the online

edition of “The Telegraph” (Grey, 2012), stating that “Britain should ‘rewild the countryside’ with wolves, lynx and moose”, in an interview with British environmentalist George Monbiot:

He’s off his head. Might as well bring back the *Tyrannosaurus rex*. With any luck that will keep down the number of green vermin and other eco-nuts.

Hero this guy, what about bringing back the plague and smallpox, rickets and other goodies which have left our fair isle? Bonkers.

We can’t sustain hen harriers on the moors, never mind wolves or lynx. What’s the sense in re-introducing species that humans have already persecuted out of existence here - if we can’t protect those remaining?

Does Mr. Monbiot live in London, perchance? Does he not realise that city folk telling country folk how to run their lives became frightfully unfashionable in ‘97, when all those urban experts made fools of themselves over the foxhunting ban?

These comments, of course arbitrary and often ungrounded, express anxieties which, it can be assumed, will grow even stronger if the Rewilding gains more and more attention. One glance is sufficient to notice that the questions of effective and efficient nature management, role of public opinion, political issues of class and decision-making power and many others are inevitable in this context and this is by no means limited to the developing world.

Thus, several conclusions can be made about the role of the megafauna in the Rewilding project. First of all, it can be assumed that importance of megafauna for the Rewilding discourse is not new and is not accidental, but is rather a continuation of a long standing “tradition” within conservation discourse. Relatively new arguments supporting the ecological importance of having big carnivores and herbivores in an ecosystem for ensuring its natural process provided additional opportunities, new dimensions and new vigour for using these charismatic big mammals for successful public campaigns. Second, Rewilding introduced a new twist to this approach, by bringing the European and North American fauna back into the focus. It remains to be seen whether the Rewilding project will succeed in the developed world in its fullest sense.

5.4 How Does This Relate to Tourism?

The focus on the importance of megafauna is, in my opinion, the theme in the Rewilding discourse, which overlaps with tourism the most. There is a general agreement that the demand for nature tourism is predominantly focused on charismatic megafauna (Walpole and Leader-Williams, 2002). The most iconic and widely-known representatives of this trend are perhaps the “Big Five” of Africa, namely lion (*Panthera leo*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), Cape buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*), elephant (*Loxodonta Africana*) and rhinoceros (black (*Diceros bicornis*) or white (*Ceratotherium simum simum*). These animals became popular as a safari hunting challenge ever since the colonial times, having the reputation of the species, notoriously dangerous and difficult to hunt on the African continent (Kerley *et al*, 2003). Later on, hunting safaris was complemented and/or partially replaced with wildlife watching and photographing,

but importance of these species as an attraction did not decrease. Images of these animals (often lumped together in a “group picture”) are still omnipresent in touristic images, promoting various African destinations (see Fig. 8). In some sense, they practically became the flagship species for the whole African nature in general.



Sources: <http://www.greatafricansafaris.com/>
http://www.hunteasterncape.co.za/page/hunting_the_big_five

Fig. 10 Images of the “Big Five” of Africa on tourism-promoting materials

Various researches in Indian and African conservation areas demonstrate that majority of the tourists are interested primarily in viewing large, and preferably dangerous animals (Kerley *et al*, 2003). There are numerous similar examples all over the world. Large animals serving as main tourist attractions for the whole regions and being vital to the local tourist industry include such diverse animals and regions as mountain gorillas in Uganda (Ahebwa, 2012), orangutans on Borneo, Indonesia (Markwell, 2001), giant pandas in Sichuan, China (Su *et al*, 2007) and many others.

It can be assumed that human interest in general and tourist interest particular towards big mammals will hardly decrease (Devillers and Beudels-Jamar 2009).

National parks and nature reserves that hold large mammals have a much higher frequentation and generate much greater benefits from distant visitors than those devoid of them. On a world scale, such parks rank among the major attractions, irrespective of the continent on which are located (*ibid*:103).

Thus, here the major link with Rewilding and tourism industry becomes visible. Regardless of the motivation and the conservation arguments behind, bringing back large predators and herbivores to the areas where they have disappeared seems already sufficient to generate some tourist interest, as long

as the animals qualify as “charismatic megafauna”. This includes new opportunities for nature tourism development in areas which has long been considered primarily tourist-sending countries, e.g. those of Western Europe and beyond. For example, in the Rewilding Europe project website², it can be found that:

Europe has its own impressive “Big Fives”, and there is a long list to choose from: bison, wolf, bear, moose, wolverine, red deer, ibex, lynx, chamois, seals, wild horse, eagles, pelicans, cranes, and whales (Sylvén, 2011).

Therefore it is not accidental, that Rewilding initiatives take particular interest in the possibilities of replicating African big game-based tourism models. This refers both to literally reintroducing African megafauna into other areas (as in Pleistocene Rewilding approach, discussed in section 4.3.3) or commodifying other species, suitable for this role, in the manner of African megafauna.

Strengthening the importance of cross-sectorial connections and particularly linking the local people to the conservation efforts usually brings tourism as a number one potential income generating source, which will help reconciling the “three pillars of sustainability”. In the context of Rewilding, tourism is usually mentioned as a small-scale, locally-based enterprise, which implies some sort of community ownership and income distribution. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to state that this is the practically the only version of tourism that is present in the Rewilding texts. It can be assumed that this is the result of majority of Rewilding texts being written by primarily conservation experts, so the small-scale tourism is usually the most preferable mode of tourism business from nature conservation perspective.

In addition, the “connection ethos” emphasising involvement of local population in the Rewilding activities, using restoration as a way to reconnect with nature and each other, as well as involving tourism to contribute to the well-being of both the communities and the nature is very much in line with the concept of “new” tourism, defined by Mowforth and Munt (2009). Many reviewed Rewilding texts speak about importance of involvement in nature-based activities which can be beneficial from psychological, spiritual, physiological as well as economic perspectives, where the participants will learn new things, connect with nature, realize personally renewing experiences. Egan *et al* (2011) for example specifically focus on volunteerism as important strategy of connecting people with nature and engaging them in community-based ecosystem restoration activities. Taylor (2005) talks about the importance of involving general public and particularly young people in nature-based activities which will facilitate intimate contact with nature, education, quiet observation of flora and fauna etc. Consequently, the envisaged modes of tourism are not “just” tourism, but more fitting into niches of green, eco-, agro-, alternative, scientific, volunteer and many other variations of “new” tourism.

The small-scale nature-based tourism within the Rewilding context, however, is not limited only to the “new” tourism, primarily oriented to the middle-class standards. In fact, growing interest in African

² Please see www.RewildingEurope.com

experience of organizing megafauna-based tourism also includes development of high-end, luxurious safari lodges, as can be found in Rewilding Europe brochure:

Safari lodge operators are now beginning to look at Europe, not only as a market source but more and more as a wildlife travel destination in itself. The main problem to date has simply been that there was too little wildlife to watch, however with the wildlife comeback happening in front of our eyes, the doors are slowly beginning to open to a whole new set of tourism products and sources of rural income (Rewilding Europe, 2012).

This approach, however, is still new and untested in practice within the European context. It can be even stated that among the reviewed Rewilding publications, including possibilities for developing luxurious or elite safari-type nature tourism has been encountered only in the documents of Rewilding Europe project. It remains to be seen how these type of projects will work out in terms of touristic demand, beneficial contributions to the local environment and the population and multiple other factors which raised concerns in the past in the African context.

Restoration of natural process is the component which is linking to tourism in a most indirect way. Natural processes include a wide range of biological, chemical, physical and other processes, which all contribute to well-being of an ecosystem. Such processes include all kind of natural disturbances, natural fires or floods, or processes of organic decomposition, done by uncountable invertebrates and microorganisms. The major foci of Rewilding are, as becomes visible from the reviewed literature and discussed in previous sections, are contribution to the restoration of natural processes primarily by restoring connections on various levels and boosting megafauna population (though importance of other processes are also generally acknowledged). These foci of interest are already linked to tourism in a more direct way. Thus, the general picture discussed above and their links to tourism can be schematically represented in the following way (Fig. 11).

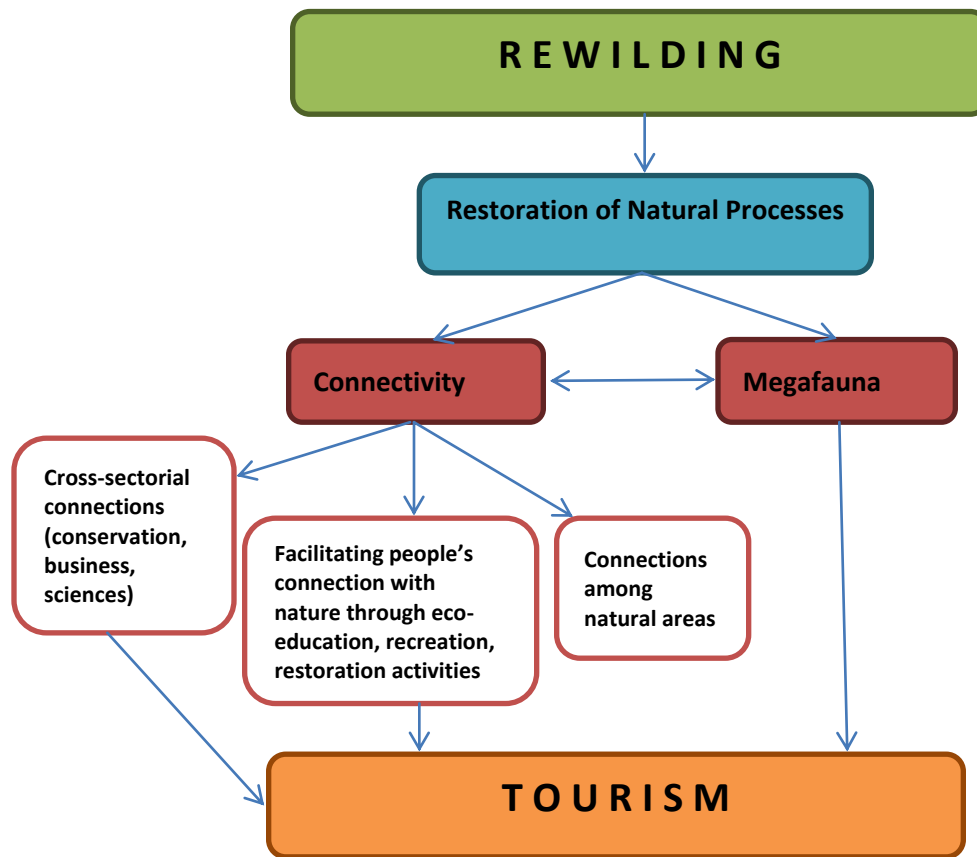


Fig. 11 Role of tourism within the Rewilding discourse

Thus, it can be argued that Tourism is represented in the discourse of Rewilding through three main discursive themes: the importance of cross-sectorial connection (integration of nature sciences with other sectors such as business or social sciences), importance to restore connection with nature via nature-based activities, education and recreation and importance of megafauna.

5.5 Historical Perspectives

Keeping in mind the historical overview of discursive components described in Section 2.2 and historical interludes throughout the Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 it becomes interesting to say a few words about the historical perspectives of the emerged Rewilding discursive themes separately. At this stage, the following questions were asked, based on the guidelines of Wodak and Meyer (2009) :

- What are the main similarities/differences of Rewilding with mainstream nature conservation discourses?

- Can Rewilding be easily fit, compared and contrasted with other major discourses on nature conservation?
- How does Rewilding reflect/construct social, economic or cultural contexts it stems from?
- How does the Rewilding discourse reflect diachronic changes of discourses and approaches to nature conservation in general?
- What can be said about the changing role and views on tourism in the historical perspective of nature conservation and how does Rewilding reflect/construct them?

Numerous authors analysing development of environmental theory (e.g. Oelschlaeger, 1991; Cronon, 1995; Birch, 1998; Benton-Short and Short, 1999; Adams, 2003; Minter, 2003; Nelson and Callicott, 2008, etc.) of the last two decades have been calling for and predicting changes in the discourses on nature conservation. Minter (2003), for example, summarized twelve criteria which will qualify new nature conservation discourse, which, in my opinion, can be generalized into three main groups. First of all, integral understanding of nature and culture is gaining great importance and Western perception of unpeopled wilderness is becoming more and more irrelevant. Further, there will be less clear border for conservation between the cultured and “pristine” landscapes, environmental principles will/should be permeating both. Second, it becomes clear for Minter (2003) that accepting value plurality, multiplicity of practices and context-specific, creative solutions becomes fundamental if nature conservation wants to succeed. Last but not least, a number of principles refer to the importance of promoting democratic, community-based conservation strategies, engaged citizenship, paying attention to inclusive partnerships and the issues of social justice (*ibid*). The list of criteria can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7 Principles for new nature conservation discourse

| | Principles for new nature conservation discourse | Main clusters |
|-----|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | Integrating understanding of nature and culture | Integration of nature and culture |
| 2. | “New”/reconstructed conservation will be concerned with working and cultural landscapes as well as more “pristine” environments | |
| 3. | Long-range landscape stewardship and restoration ethics | |
| 4. | Land-health as one of its primary socio-ecological goals | |
| 5. | Adaptive and open to multiple practices and objectives | Multiplicity and pluralism |
| 6. | Embracing value pluralism | |
| 7. | Relying on a wider and more contextual reading of the conservation tradition | |
| 8. | Promoting community-based conservation strategies | Democracy and justice |
| 9. | Engaged citizenry | |
| 10. | Engaging questions of social justice | |
| 11. | Politically inclusive and partnership driven | |
| 12. | Embracing democratic traditions | |

Source: Adapted from Minter (2003)

These three general characteristics or clusters of principles for new nature conservation discourses are in one way or another mentioned in most of the aforementioned authors and therefore can be

considered as generally agreeable among the nature conservation theorists' regarding the perspectives on the new discourses.

In this light it becomes interesting to bring Rewilding and its main discursive themes (as suggested by this thesis) into the picture. First of all, the theme of connectivity on numerous levels (cross-sectorial, emotional/spiritual and physical) is clearly in line with the new trends of historical development of nature conservation discourses. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to state that the major effort in the environmental thought of the last two decades has been targeted at restoring the nature-culture discrepancy and connect this cleft which has been bothering nature conservation theoreticians for many years, as discussed in Section 2.2 and particularly in Section 2.2.1. Rewilding's theme of connectivity generally embraces, for example, the aforementioned principles mentioned by Minter (2003), particularly the cluster of principles related to integration of nature and culture.

However, regarding the last two clusters, mentioned by Minter (2003)- insufficient attention towards multiplicity and pluralism of values and approaches as well as embracing democracy have been the main targets of criticizing environmental movements in general (Hintz, 2005). Despite acknowledging significant shift towards integrating more plural and democratic values, however, some authors (e.g. Hintz, 2005; 2007a; 2007b; Caro, 2007; Haywood, 2007, etc.) still consider them to be insufficient and argumentation lines similar to the aforementioned can be frequently met in the texts criticizing the Rewilding. Hintz (2007a) for example, considers Rewilding (at least the American version of it) to be part of conservation biology and the 'ecocentric' environmentalism. Hintz (2007a) clearly positions Rewilding as an extension of the long-established American wilderness preservation movement, recently heavily influenced by the philosophy of deep ecology and the science of conservation biology.

It can probably even be argued that much of a problem here has not only contextual but also simply linguistic reasons, which unwillingly set the frames of the discussion. First, the stem "wild" in the Rewilding immediately draws it into the old polemics around Romantic wilderness and its criticism. Second, the prefix "re-" draws it into the critique similar to that regarding restoration ecology, since it evokes the notions of reversibility of natural loss and human technological omnipotence to restore nature as desired, even make it "wild" again. I would assume that the term Rewilding creates an impression as if nature will be "rewilded", will become similar to what it was before, i.e. will become as wild and pristine as it was prior to human impact. This tempts numerous critics to vehemently argue that human cultural projects, desires and representations regarding what is nature and wilderness shall be more openly acknowledged and they cannot be equalled to just letting nature be, i.e. let it be wild in its direct sense (Hintz, 2005; 2007a; 2007b; Swift, 2009).

In this light, two major Rewilding themes revealed in this research- restoration of natural process and attention towards megafauna, may also suggest that there is still insufficient attention towards the human-centered principles listed by Minter (2003).

Though undoubtedly demonstrating some characteristics of "new" nature conservation discourse, it can be argued that, nevertheless, Rewilding cannot be considered radically new in terms of fully embracing alternative nature conservation concepts or providing a considerably new understanding of nature,

environment, human role within it and approaches to nature conservation. Several new directions of environmental thought discussed earlier in Chapter 2, including works of Birch (1998), Whatmore (2001), Žižek (2007) or Morton (2010) do not really find their clear reflection in Rewilding (or perhaps in any other nature conservation approach so far?). However, Latour (2010), for example, considers that new discourses on nature conservation have to mainly be targeted at mobilizing all possible resources to bridge the gap between the scale of the environmental problems and the emotional and cognitive states associated with it, which has to be done without denial or falling into melancholia. In Latour's opinion this can be achieved by uniting scientific, political and artistic spheres, by reviving, for example, the genre of "political art". Thus, in a way this approach also includes the theme of connectivity and integration across different sectors and traditions.

Regarding the changing perspectives on tourism and its role within nature conservation discourses, several observations can be made. First of all, as discussed in Section 5.4, tourism in the discourse of Rewilding continues the tradition (going back to African safari) of keeping megafauna in the center of attention, major tourism attraction and an important prerequisite for setting up tourism business. Comparatively less attention is paid to the scenic beauty of nature as a major tourist attraction, which was among the strongest arguments during the dawn of nature conservation movement in the end of the 19th century (Cronon, 1995). Second, tourism continues to be perceived as an important component for the success of Rewilding project, and even more important argument for such controversial conservation vision as Pleistocene Rewilding. Comparing with the classification implemented by Mowforth and Munt (2009:156) presented earlier in Table 4, it can be claimed that three out of four major views on tourism are in one way or another present in the Rewilding discourse, i.e. resource conservation, human welfare ecology and preservationism. The last remaining view, ecocentrism, is generally not present, at least not in its bold and blatant form, as described by Mowforth and Munt (*ibid*). Similar picture became visible during the analysis of "Human Imperative" discursive component, described in Section 4.2. This can also be related to the general developmental trend of increasing diversification, acceptance of multiplicity of values and lack of radicalism within the western discourses on nature conservation which has been noticed by, for example, Minter (2003).

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter finalizes the discourse analysis of Rewilding and discusses the main findings of this thesis. Based on the analysis of the Rewilding discourse, despite the existing contradictions and differences, several concluding generalizations can be made. To put it simply, after the analysis of 51 publications dedicated to this topic, it can be concluded that Rewilding is closely connected to the concept of restoration of the “natural process” and the main way to achieve it is to ensure connectivity on different levels and restore population of megafauna. Tourism is an important factor in the practical implementation of Rewilding and is mentioned as a facilitator of human-nature connection, an industry which brings together different sectors and is very much connected to the megafauna. In addition, it can, perhaps, be argued that Rewilding does indeed have several distinctive new features, which rise above the contradictions and disagreements among its propagators, but cannot be considered as alternative or radical as was anticipated by numerous environmental theoreticians and philosophers of the last two decades. These findings will be discussed in greater details below.

6.1 Conclusions

Natural process is an interesting concept in many aspects, since it emphasises the shift to the vision of nature of something dynamic, even prone to catastrophes and chaotic changes. Restoring the function of nature becomes a popular principle. It shifts the focus of conserving seemingly static entities, such as “forest”, “grassland” or “species” to the functions, such as “predation”, “grazing”, “browsing”, “scavenging”, “fear factor” etc. It can be argued that this reflects the recent “paradigm shift” in the ecology, which some authors called “flux-of-nature” or “ecology of chaos” instead of “ecology of order” (Adams, 2003). In other words, room should be left also for such destructive processes as natural fires or floods. However, on the other hand, it can still be argued, that while seemingly embracing the chaotic “nature” of nature, on a deeper level there is still a teleological belief that everything exists for a reason and is just part of a bigger picture, which is not visible from a close and short-term perspective. In other words, by ensuring the “function of nature” the environmental scientists are still guarding the “divine order” of nature (which is not immediately visible to the laymen). Rewilding discourse does not offer clear answer to this question, but whatever the deeper underlying layers, necessity to restore the function of nature or natural process becomes an important argumentative strategy.

Main vehicles to restore the natural processes distilled are what I called “connectivity” and “megafauna”. Connectivity is truly an over-encompassing concept which includes physical as well as spiritual, emotional and cross-sectorial integration. This is a theme which was truly omnipresent in conservation literature in the last decades. This can also be considered as a part of ontological struggle to overcome the nature-culture divide, which was blamed as one of the reasons for the failing environmental policies of the 20th century. Apart from the necessity to strive for connectivity on the ontological level, Rewilding also urges for very concrete connectivity strategies. Those are, of course,

building connections in the literary meaning of this word, i.e. connecting natural areas with corridors. On another level, there are strong arguments to re-establish connection of humans with nature on emotional level, which is claimed to be particularly relevant for the Western societies, who were behind creating the nature-culture divide to begin with, as a part of the modernization project. This can also be achieved via creating closer links among various sectors, such as conservation, education, business, closer links among sciences- social and natural- another level of connectivity.

Another important strategy to support restoration of natural process was found to be big mammals, or the megafauna. Recent discoveries of ecological science, such as the importance of keystone species, the “cascade effects” on the ecosystem due to the importance of herbivores and predators contributed to already existing attention to the megafauna. There are some interesting differences regarding the conservation and/or reintroduction priorities placed by various authors. Based on this difference, American and European Rewilding “streams” were identified. An interesting stream worth indentifying separately is Pleistocene Rewilding, which offers the most ambitious and controversial vision for the future conservation. In any case, it can be concluded that megafauna in general plays an important role in the whole Rewilding discourse. It can be argued that importance of megafauna can be explained not only by their ecological role as keystone species but also by the attractiveness of the megafauna for humans, explained by historical, cultural and evolutionary factors. This never decreasing popularity of the megafauna has been used profoundly by conservation organizations to generate public interest.

Keeping in mind the aforementioned major themes of the Rewilding discourse it is not hard to assume how tourism comes into the picture. It has been noticed that the strongest link to tourism is visible with the megafauna reintroduction and conservation, particularly regarding the so-called “charismatic” or “flagship” species. In addition, tourism is argued to be an important instrument to facilitate connection not only between humans and nature in general, but also among different sectors, creating new alliances among business, conservation, natural and social sciences, local communities etc. Despite the existing critique and warnings against holding tourism as the major economic justification, the interest towards tourism does not wane. Moreover, being considered an ever-growing industry, tourism in general and ecotourism in particular, open lucrative opportunities to involve new areas in this business. Finding a true balance between the interests of numerous stakeholders remains, of course, the greatest challenge.

There are, however, some concerns that tourism might fall as a victim of its own success. Tourism is eagerly mentioned as a potential income-generating source, justifying Rewilding initiatives, but little or no solid evidence, assessment or research is provided behind these claims. There are numerous studies revealing that tourism cannot work as a quick-fix solution for any kind of conservation initiative, tourism projects also often fail or lead to unpredicted and negative consequences, as profoundly discusses in e.g. Mowforth and Munt (2009). It can be suggested, that closer collaboration of tourism specialists with Rewilding proponents would bring the “tourism argument” into more realistic dimension and prevent tourism from becoming a shop-worn concept.

Analysis of Rewilding publications revealed some interesting discursive aspects. First of all it can be claimed that romantic eco-speak, which has been widely criticized as misanthropic and authoritarian, is

becoming less popular. This is visible on the example of Rewilding among the publications produced starting from the end of the 90s, largely losing the “deep green” rhetoric. In addition, the “deep green” tradition is definitely stronger in the American than in the reviewed European sources, which has a number of historical, economic, environmental, social and other reasons. Further, there is a growing tendency of ideological fragmentation and embracing plurality of values. This can perhaps be linked to the general development trends of the Western societies since the late 20th century and rise of post-modernism philosophy, which made it more difficult to claim authority and monopoly on truth, be that science or politics. It is hard to say whether environmental discourse is adapting fast and well enough to these changes. Smith (1998; 272) has noticed, that:

The radical genie of the environmental challenge to late capitalist nature has been stuffed back into the bottle of institutional normality just in time to calm millennial jitters about nature. The challenge for the twenty-first century is to start again, to make environmental politics subversive again.

However, one can ask whether being radical and subversive is the best way to ensure nature conservation in the 21st century (akin to the political ecology vs. ecological modernization debate). Perhaps, Rewilding cannot be considered a truly subversive discourse (maybe save for its Pleistocene stream), but it does not mean that it cannot be successful and achieve its goals, capture imagination and generate enthusiasm, have its contribution to the nature conservation, protecting and boosting populations of endangered species, bring benefits to the local communities. A more relevant question to ask would be how well Rewilding has integrated the experiences of the past and committed to avoid the mistakes of previous initiatives.

It can be concluded that Rewilding in general bears traits of both old and new environmental discourses. On one hand, there are still characteristics which are typical to the old, even century-old “classic” environmentalism. Those are first of all, the importance of the concepts of “wilderness” and “wild” in the argumentation, importance of big mammals and not very convincing attention towards the involvement of the people, which generated critique akin to that of the Romantic wilderness movement. On the other hand, there are also new approaches in the argumentation, among which are focus on the “process” and “function” of nature, incorporation of new discoveries in the ecology regarding the important roles of big herbivores in the European continent (Vera, 2000) or role of key predators and cascade effects (Soule and Noss, 1998, Foreman, 2005).

Here it is worth mentioning Rewilding Europe project, which offers interesting additional perspectives on the Rewilding discourse. While having general similarities, there are some unique and interesting tools which are employed (or yet to be employed) within this project, which were not encountered in other publications on Rewilding. Apart from the wide-spread measures of animal reintroduction, establishment of protected areas and tourism development as the most popular conservation mechanisms, Rewilding Europe also attempts to introduce alternative ones, which would also help engaging the local population. An interesting example is setting up European Wildlife Bank, which is an innovative mechanism to be tested on the European level (Rewilding Europe, 2012). In addition, various kinds of nature-based entrepreneurship alternative to tourism also receive attention. It can be concluded that analysis of project sites in future will give additional interesting insights on how this discourse transfers into practice.

The aforementioned conclusions also do not come in absolute terms but are subject to profound discussions, which are still ongoing in the literature and some of which will be summarized in Section 6.2. I consider it important to present some of the debates below, since the conclusions have to be put in a broader context in order to avoid missing the complexity of the whole picture.

Despite existing differences, throughout all the discursive streams, contradictions, inconsistencies and confusions there is one theme which is paramount among all the Rewilding publications. This is, undoubtedly, optimism. Above everything else, Rewilding is an optimistic discourse, oriented towards the future, with the strong belief that humans are not only capable of protecting the environment from destruction but are, in fact, capable of building new model of human-nature coexistence. This is contrasting with pessimistic environmental discourses based on fear, doom, guilt and lamentation, recently criticized, for example, by Latour (2011). Rewilding promotes approaches based on proactive, rather than reactive principles. It is not afraid to offer bold, creative, sometimes controversial conservation strategies. Rewilding proponents emphasize that they are not satisfied with maintaining the *status quo*, neither they want to revive the unattainable mythical past long gone. Above everything else, above possible controversies and inconsistencies in the details, it becomes clear that Rewilding struggles for inspiring active, enthusiastic, responsible citizens, who would work *with* nature in a creative and respectful way, and tourism is an important factor in this process. This is, in my opinion, one of the most valuable and powerful aspects Rewilding has to offer to the nature conservation project. As put by Donlan (2006), Rewilding is indeed an optimistic agenda for the twenty first century.

6.2 Discussion. Rewilding: Old or New?

Coming to the end of the analysis of the discourse of Rewilding several interesting aspects emerged, during the process of trying to reach the objective of this work. The literature review presented in the theoretical analysis of the selected discursive components (conceptualization of nature, human imperative, practical implications of conservation practice and the role of tourism) revealed interesting trends which can be tracked in the literature, trying to make sense of nature conservation theory.

It becomes clear that discourses about nature, economic and political processes that affect it, have multiplied in the recent decades, which can probably be explained by the increasing human anxiety about the future of the world we live in.

Multiple studies have been done exploring the evolution the discourses of the nature, wilderness or environment in the Western thought (e.g. Cronon, 1995, Oelschlaeger, 1991, Hall and Page, 2002; Adams, 2003; Minter, 2003), tracking these concepts from the historical religious texts, through the romantic novels of the 19th century, to the rhetoric of the environmental movement of the late 20th century as well as expressing their vision for the future. These transformations have profoundly affected and reflected the way people treated nature. It has been argued that nature is a part of culture, it does not appear out of thin air as a free-standing and inviolate set of principles and ideas (Adams, 2003). In this light, there have also been some, but not as abundant, attempts to analyze the role of tourism in

the multiplicity of various discourses on nature conservation, also from the critical perspective (e.g. Grey, 2003:115; Mowforth and Munt, 2009:157).

In this light Rewilding appears as an ambitious conservation agenda, proclaiming its novelty among the rich pool of nature conservation approaches. Such book titles as “Rewilding North America: A vision for conservation in the 21st century” (Foreman, 2004) or “Rewilding the World. Dispatches from the Conservation Revolution” (Fraser, 2009) appear, such definitions as an “*alternative conservation strategy for the twenty-first century*” (Donlan, 2005:913), “*an attractive alternative to traditional conservation*” (Eirnaes, Sandom and Svenning, 2012:1) or “*an ambitious, new initiative which aims to turn a problematic situation into an opportunity*” (Rewilding Europe, 2012:3) can be frequently met.

It becomes interesting to ask, what exactly is new, distinctive about Rewilding, what can be pinpointed as its major innovative characteristics, if any? Can Rewilding be treated as a discourse to begin with? Is it homogeneous or contradictory? These questions are definitely still left open for discussion. The discourse analysis of the reviewed publications within the scope of this thesis revealed several interesting aspects of Rewilding.

First of all, an interesting and still ongoing discussion revolves around the concept of nature. Does Rewilding offer a new or unconventional understanding of nature? It is hardly possible to give an unambiguous answer to this question. It becomes clear that discourses on Rewilding incorporate both the positivist “nature is external” and less traditional, more new in the Western conservation literature “nature is universal” approaches. Moreover, such authors as Hintz (2005) or Smith (1991) argue that this is a fundamental ideological contradiction which underpins the whole ideology of contemporary conservation movement. Latour (2011) also notices this paradox and considers it to be the main reason for the failure of our global environmental causes, such as addressing climate change or biodiversity loss. In other words, too little time has passed since humans were heavily dependent on nature’s whims (in the pre-industrial era) and our minds have hard time accommodating the fact that humans have become an important and powerful force shaping the Earth. Our modern times are often called “the anthropocene” to emphasize the human potency which is comparable to the natural force.

It can perhaps be claimed that the authors writing on the environmental theory, trying to make sense of the past trends and provide vision for the future, are generally quite aware of the aforementioned contradictions in grasping the changing role of humans in nature. This is particularly visible on the theoretical level of discussion and less so- in the description of the practical approaches. There are strong calls that people should work *with* nature, as a part of nature, in other words calling to move from objectification towards intersubjectivity. But how to reach this in practice, translate it into concrete actions within our contemporary society at a more or less large scale- is still very much the question, since when dealing with practicalities the discourse logic usually employs the “external nature” mode. This is for example, illustrated by the propagation of the connectivity ethos, blurring the borders and merging the dichotomies, but on the other hand, on the practical level, supporting e.g. strong protection regime for the “core areas”, emphasising that true/real/valuable nature exists in specially designated areas and is not an overencompassing reality. This approach has already been criticized, especially within the frames of “the great wilderness debate” (Callicott and Nelson, 1998).

One can ask a direct question of how exactly will the adoption of “universal nature” affect the nature conservation realities? It can be assumed that realization of universality of nature and accepting the need to ensure connectivity on various levels alone is insufficient to introduce visible changes into the conservation practice, which will require thorough transformations.

In this perspective it is interesting that the concept of “wild” and “wilderness” do not lose their relevance, despite general agreement that no area on Earth can currently qualify as wild in its original meaning, i.e. unspoilt, pristine, untouched, unconquered area. This is particularly relevant for the discourse of Rewilding, where the word “wild” is already encompassed within the very name. This has, in my opinion, both positive and negative consequences for Rewilding: on one hand, the word “wild” and the prefix “-re” hinting at the reversibility, return to the old ways. This sparks immediate critique which place Rewilding in the context of the “wilderness debate” and accusing it of continuing the tradition of “othering” nature as a “wild place out there” and reanimating the concept which has already been challenged as obsolete. What makes the wild and wilderness so popular? Despite the profound critique on these concepts exist for already about two decades, they don’t seem to retire. Moreover, they continue to stay particularly popular for the tourism industry, where numerous destinations are still widely advertised as “wild” (Mowforth and Munt, 2009). Can it be claimed that with disappearance of the “wilderness” and “wild” nature in their initial meaning, these concepts continue to be employed to symbolize subjective, nostalgic wilderness experience, targeted primarily at the urban citizens to facilitate their encounter with big mammals in a roadless area with no visible human impact? Do these concepts have practical value for the conservation practitioners? Are these concepts continue to be employed primarily for attention-attracting and fund-raising purposes? Analysis of Rewilding discourse does not give an unambiguous answer to these questions but leave space for interesting further discussion.

Interesting development undergoes the understanding of the position of human humans within nature. There is an overarching theme in the Rewilding publications of the necessity to connect with nature on various levels, while withdrawing aggressive intervention into the natural processes. Sometimes it seems that these two principles are pulling the discourse into two different directions: on one hand there is an imperative to bridge the gap between culture and nature, to connect this divide, which also implies development more close, intimate relationship with everything that comprises non-human world. On the other hand, the imperative of leaving room for natural process implies withdrawal from active management and control over the nature which may reinforce the nature-culture divide. There are attempts within the Rewilding discourse how to navigate these two sides and not fall into either of the extremes. It becomes almost widely acknowledged within the reviewed publications that humans should help restoring natural process not by simply abandoning nature sites or restricting access but by engaging in active and creative restoration. Megafauna is considered as human’s main allies in the project of restoring natural process. Do the natural and cultural merge in this process? Or this division becomes irrelevant whatsoever?

These questions lead us to another important aspect of Rewilding, as well as nature conservation discourse, i.e. the practical implications of these ideas for the conservation. The connectivity ethos finds its practical manifestation in, for example, advocating for restoring the natural processes of flora and

fauna migrations via connecting the specially protected areas to each other by corridors, or to build various wildlife paths over human-made obstacles. Wildlife in general and megafauna in particular become the major agents of natural process restoration. While there is a general agreement on the importance of megafauna there are different perspectives regarding what kind of species should receive priority. Can Europe accommodate the return of big predators and dangerous animals such as wolf or bear, will the public opinion, particularly that of the farming communities, be supportive? These are the questions which some countries in Europe are already facing. Can Europe use the rich experience of coexisting with dangerous animals coming from African and Asian continents? These are the questions which Rewilding tries to answer.

Here tourism enters the scene as one of the most important solutions to the megafauna-related problems. The potential of tourism to generate income for the local population and help conservation cause has been promoted since the last two decades to say the least. There is a lot of discussion going on whether tourism is a reliable tool for conservation or not, e.g. whether it supports survival of dangerous animals in their natural habitat, whether it is possible to balance conservation with the business principles of growth and income maximization, whether tourism can avert or mitigate rural-to-urban migration and other complex issues the modern society is facing today. There is a certain concern that tourism is overrated and can best function as a supplementary tool for improving social, economic or environmental situation but cannot become the major one. It can be argued that this concern is also applicable to Rewilding, since there is a big emphasis on the redeeming capacity of tourism to solve the human-predator conflict and stimulate increase of megafauna population, revitalize dying communities. The same argument is also used for providing economic justification for the controversial Pleistocene Rewilding vision. Is it a positive trend that tourism is becoming so closely integrated with nature conservation policies, or is there a risk that tourism is (ab)used as a quick solution for problems which require a more profound and fundamental transformations? Perhaps closer interdisciplinary cooperation, among local population, social sciences, business sector and conservation will provide better answers and help prevent development of unrealistic tourism development projects.

Perhaps one the main streams of critique aimed at Rewilding is actually quite an old concern, which has been raised against the nature conservation policies in general since the last couple of decades. This refers to the insufficient involvement of rural, farming communities in the process of decision-making regarding all the stages of nature conservation policy development. This has truly been a recurring theme in the literature analysing development of conservation policies. Minter (2003) for, example, based on twenty articles, analysing development of nature conservation, has come up with twelve criteria, new discourses on nature conservation should correspond to. About two-thirds of these criteria refer to the issues of democracy, justice and acceptance of plurality in values, lifestyles, local policies etc. While there is clear evidence that these aspects started to be actively incorporated in the nature conservation discourses in the last two decades, there is less evidence regarding their successful transformation into practices. Swift (2009) for example, analyzing the case of rewilding Knepp castle park concludes that it has predominantly top-down approach, without little understanding or support from the local population. Hintz (2005) analyzing the case of grizzly reintroduction in Idaho also concludes that local communities were not given any chance to have a say and were distrusted in their

ability to manage wildlife, which also generated resistance and negative sentiments in the area. Oostvaardersplassen, often mentioned as a successful experiment or bringing Rewilding principles into life, is a scientific project with little (if any?) involvement of other stakeholders. Haywood (2007) considers Rewilding in South Africa to have mutated into, what he calls, “hyperwilderness”, under which he means overpopulation of wild animals and particularly megafauna on private lands and using Rewilding as an instrument to erase colonial histories. Majority of the success stories mentioned by Frazer (2009) come from African continent and it can be claimed that is not surprising that there is an increasing interest towards the possibilities to replicate experience of these countries onto the European context (manifested e.g. by the recent symposium “The Business of Nature Conservation. What Europe Can Learn from Africa”). It is clear that active involvement of the locals in the Rewilding and their influence on the discourse formulation remains to be a challenge. Further research on the practical examples of Rewilding in Europe will shed more light on the development of this aspect of the Rewilding. The project sites of the new Rewilding Europe project would undoubtedly offer interesting examples across Europe.

Discussing the main characteristics of Rewilding discourse, and various “streams” within, it becomes interesting to ask what is the essence of this approach, is there anything new, or does this discourse develop in line with the requirements and anticipations for new discourses, which emerge from the critical environmental literature? Do the discursive components offer new, alternative understanding of nature, the role of humans within it, conservation practice? How does tourism fit in this picture? The answers to this question are, of course, open to debate.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

During the course of the analysis of Rewilding discourse several interesting questions have been identified which could not be covered within the frames of this research. Perhaps these themes would be useful for the other students and researchers which select Rewilding and/or new nature conservation discourses as a topic of their work.

First of all, there is a clear lack of case studies coming from concrete field studies. Majority of the reviewed publications provide vision for conservation and suggestions for improvement of conservation practices based on generalizations and conservation trends. There are, however, already some cases where these principles started to be applied in the field, primarily by small-scale enthusiasts. Therefore, it would be interesting to analyse conservation practices, positioned as “Rewilding”, and track what is the connection with the discourse, visible in the publications, what are the contradictions and congruencies. The new Rewilding Europe project with its several sites all over Europe offer interesting cases for this research in the European context. To find out how tourism works in the Rewilding context would be, of course, of particular interest. In other words, how do the principles of natural process, connectivity and megafauna restoration work in practice and how does tourism function in this set up?

Apart from Rewilding there are other competing nature conservation discourses, promoted by various nature conservation organizations, such as the approaches of Peace Parks, European Green Belt, Hot Spots, Heartlands and others. It would be interesting to make a comparative analysis between Rewilding and other new conservation discourses, identify their similarities and differences. In addition, it would be interesting to compare other new conservation discourses against the “new” conservation paradigm, and see whether the conservation practices go in line with the predictions and anticipations of environmentalist theoreticians and philosophers.

In light of persistent popularity of the concepts of “wild” and “wilderness” it is still unclear what the main reason for this trend is. At the first sight, it can be immediately suggested that growing urban population sees it as an antidote of civilization, similar to the 19th century romantic movement, despite these concepts have been criticized and demystified long time ago. However, it would be interesting to conduct a research, finding out what is the contemporary meaning of these concepts, in English as well as non-English speaking contexts and what are the reasons of their popularity amidst the conservation and tourism organizations. Are the words wild and wilderness included primarily for fund-raising purposes, are they also operationalizable “in the field”?

A very interesting aspect, in my perspective, is the connection of Rewilding and ecological restoration. The similarities in both approaches are so big to the point that Rewilding can be considered as a subset (perhaps somewhat more emotional) of ecological restoration. Along with that, nothing much is mentioned about the ecological restoration within the Rewilding publications and vice versa, despite that ecological restoration literature is abundant. A deeper research would reveal historical perspectives on the development of both approaches and perhaps contribute to avoiding confusion and duplications.

Last but not least, high importance should be paid in the further research to the role of the local population. Analysis of the Rewilding discourse showed insufficient representation of the local population’s interests and mechanisms of their involvement, which is one of the strongest and long-standing critique on nature conservation practices in general. However, there are also signs that this situation is changing and local population have stronger say in the conservation practices and it is becoming more and more widely acknowledged that support of the locals is the prerequisite of nature conservation success. Analysis of the role of local communities in Rewilding projects would provide interesting insights in these issues and assess whether progress in this perspectives has indeed been made.

REFERENCES

- Adams, W. M. (2003). *Future nature: A vision for conservation*. London: Earthscan.
- Adger, W. N., Benjaminsen, T. A., Brown, K. and Svarstad, H. (2001). Advancing a Political Ecology of Global Environmental Discourses. *Development and Change* 32, pp. 681-715.
- Ahebwa, W.M. (2012). *Tourism, livelihoods and biodiversity conservation : an assessment of tourism related policy interventions at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP), Uganda*. PhD Thesis. WUR
- Barua, M. (2011). Mobilizing metaphors: the popular use of keystone, flagship and umbrella species concepts. *Biodiversity Conservation* 20, pp. 1427–1440
- Bauer, N., Wallner, A., Hunziker, M. (2009). The Change of European Landscapes: Human-Nature Relationships, Public Attitudes Towards Rewilding, and the Implications for Landscape Management in Switzerland. *Journal Of Environmental Management*, 90, pp. 2910–2920
- Benton-Short, L., and Short, J. R. (1999). *Environmental discourse and practice*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Birch, T. (1998). The Incarceration of Wilderness. Wilderness Areas as Prisons. In Callicott, J. B., & Nelson, M. P. *The great new wilderness debate*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Barlow, C. (2007). Rewilding Megafauna: Lions and Camels in North America? *Action Bioscience*. <http://www.actionbioscience.org/newfrontiers/barlow.html/#fullbio> [Accessed on July 06, 2012]
- Boeije, H. (2010). *Analysis in qualitative research*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Breeveld, H. (2012). Dynamiek, Emoties en Verdieping. <http://oostvaardersplassen.wordpress.com/2012/04/13/dynamiek-emoties-en-verdieping/> [Accessed on August 06, 2012]
- Callicott, J. (2003). The Implications of “The Shifting Paradigm” in Ecology for Paradigm Shift in the Philosophy of Conservation. In Minter, B. (eds) *Reconstructing conservation: Finding common ground*. Washington: Island Press, pp. 239-263
- Callicott, J., and Nelson, M. P. (1998). *The great new wilderness debate*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Caro, T. M. and Girling, S. (2010). *Conservation by proxy: Indicator, umbrella, keystone, flagship, and other surrogate species*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Carruthers, D. (2001). From Opposition to Orthodoxy: The Remaking of Sustainable Development. *Journal of Third World Studies*, 18(2). pp. 93-112
- Cronon, W. (1995). *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
- Christ, E. (2008). Against the social construction of nature and wilderness. In *The Wilderness Debate Rages On*, Volume II, Michael Nelson and J. Baird Callicott, eds., University of Georgia Press, pp. 500-525
- Devillers, P. and Beudels-Jamar, R. (2009). The Role of Megafauna Restoration in Dryland, Natural and Cultural Heritage Conservation. In Schaaf, T. and Lee, C. (eds.) *The Future of Drylands*. Springer Netherlands, pp. 101-113
- Donlan, J. (2005). Rewilding North America. *Nature*. 436 (18), pp. 913-914

- Donlan, J. *et al.* (2006) Pleistocene Rewilding: An Optimistic Agenda for Twenty-First Century Conservation. *The American Naturalist*, 168 (5), pp. 660-681
- Donohoe, H.M. and Needham, R.D. (2006). Ecotourism: The Evolving Contemporary Definition. *Journal of Ecotourism*. 5(3), pp. 192-210
- Doremus, H. (2000). The Rhetoric and Reality of Nature Protection: Toward a New Discourse. *Washington and Lee Law Review*. 57(1).
- Duim, R. van der, Meyer, D., Saarinen, J. and Zellmer, K. (eds) (2011) *New Alliances for Tourism, Conservation and Development in Eastern and Southern Africa*. Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers.
- Dutch News, 2012. More Animals Shot in Nature Reserve This Winter. http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2012/05/more_animals_shot_in_nature_re.php [Accessed on 05 August 2012]
- Egan, D., Hjerpe, E. E., and Abrams, J. (2011). *Human Dimensions Of Ecological Restoration: Integrating Science, Nature, And Culture*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Eckersley, R. (1992). *Environmentalism and Political Theory: Towards and Ecocentric Approach*. London: UCL Press
- Eirnaes, R., Sandom, Ch. and Svenning, J. (2012). *Rewilding as a Tool and Target in the Management for Biodiversity. A One-Day Symposium for Scientists, Managers and Stakeholders*. Aarhus University
- Ecological Society of America (ESA) (2000). *Ecosystem Services*. http://www.esa.org/education_diversity/pdfDocs/ecosystems-services.pdf [Accessed on April 18, 2012]
- European Green Belt (2012). <http://www.europeangreenbelt.org/> [Accessed on April 14, 2012]
- Fischer, F. and Hajer, M. A. (1999). *Living with nature: Environmental politics as cultural discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Foreman, D. (2004). *Rewilding North America: A Vision for Conservation in the 21st century*. Washington: Island Press.
- Fraser, C. (2009). *Rewilding the World. Dispatches from the Conservation Revolution*. Henry Holt and Co.
- Galatowitsch, S. M. (2012). *Ecological Restoration*. Sunderland, Mass: Sinauer Associates
- Gee, J. (2005). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*. NY: Routledge
- Golafshani, H. (2003). Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8 (4), pp. 597-607
- Gordon, I. J., A. J. Hester, et al. (2004). Review: The management of wild large herbivores to meet economic, conservation and environmental objectives. *Journal of Applied Ecology* 41(6), pp. 1021-1031.
- Grey, L. (2012) Hay Festival 2012: Britain Should 'Rewild the Countryside' With Wolves, Lynx and Moose. *The Telegraph*. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/hay-festival/9309756/Hay-Festival-2012-Britain-should-rewild-the-countryside-with-wolves-lynx-and-moose.html> [Accessed on July 04, 2012]
- Grey, N. (2003). Unpacking the Baggage of Ecotourism: Nature, Science, and Local Participation. *The Great Lakes Geographer*. 9(2). pp 113-123
- Greipsson, S. (2011). *Restoration Ecology*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.

- Hajer, M. (1995). *The Politics of Environmental Discourse, Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hajer, M. (2005) Coalitions, practices, and meaning in environmental politics: from acid rain to BSE. In Howarth, D. and J. Torfing (eds). *Discourse Theory in European Politics*. NY: Palgrave MacMillan
- Hajer, M. and Versteeg, W. (2005). A Decade of Discourse Analysis of Environmental Politics: Achievements, Challenges, Perspectives. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 7(3), pp.175-184
- Hall, S. (1992). *The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power*. In Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben, eds. *Formations of Modernity*. Open University/Polity Press, pp. 275-331
- Hall, C.M. (2005). Tourism, Biodiversity and Global Environmental Change. In Gössling, S. and Hall, C. M. (eds). *Tourism and Global Environmental Change*. New York: Routledge.
- Hall, C. M. and Page, S. (2002). *The geography of tourism and recreation: Environment, place and space*. London: Routledge.
- Hallett, R. W., and Kaplan-Weinger, J. (2010). *Official tourism websites: A discourse analysis perspective*. Bristol, England: Channel View Publications.
- Haraway, D. J. (1991). *Simians, cyborgs, and women: The reinvention of nature*. New York: Routledge.
- Hintz, J. (2005). *Pragmatism And The Politics Of Rewilding Nature: The Case Of Grizzly Bear Reintroduction In Idaho*., Doctoral Dissertation. University of Kentucky, Paper 357.
- Hintz, J. (2007a). Some Political Problems for Rewilding Nature, Ethics, Place & Environment. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 10 (2), pp. 177-192
- Hintz, J. (2007b) Response to Woods: On with the Debate (but Let's Be Careful with Those Swords). *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 10(2) pp. 207-216
- Holsinger, K. (2006). Theory and Design of Nature Reserves. *Ecology and Evolutionary Biology*. <http://darwin.eeb.uconn.edu/> [Accessed 04 August 2012]
- Hultman, J. and Andersson Cederholm, E. (2006). The Role of Nature in Swedish Ecotourism.. Gössling, S., & Hultman, J. *Ecotourism in Scandinavia: Lessons in theory and practice*. Cambridge, MA: CABI Pub.
- Jagtenberg T. (1994). The end of nature? *Australian Journal of Communication*. 21(3). pp. 14–25
- Jaworski, A., and Pritchard, A. (2005). *Discourse, communication and tourism*. Clevedon, UK: Channel View Publications.
- Katz, E. (2009). The Big Lie: Human Restoration of Nature. In Kaplan, D. (ed). *Readings In The Philosophy Of Technology*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, pp.443-451
- Kerley, G., Geach, G. and Vial. C. (2003). Jumbos or Bust: Do Tourists' Perceptions Lead to an Under-Appreciation of Biodiversity? *South African Journal of Wildlife Research*, 33 (1), pp. 13–21
- Kim, B. (2001). Social constructivism. In M. Orey (Ed.), *Emerging perspectives on learning, teaching, and technology*. <http://www.coe.uga.edu/epltt/SocialConstructivism.htm> [Accessed on April 15, 2012]

- Latour, B. (2011). Waiting for Gaia. Composing the Common World Through Arts And Politics. *A lecture at the French Institute for the launching of SPEAP*. http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/124-GAIA-LONDON-SPEAP_0.pdf [Accessed on August 10, 2012]
- Leader-Williams, N. and Dublin, H. (2000). Charismatic Megafauna as Flagship Species. in Dunstone, N., and Entwistle, A. (eds). *Priorities for the conservation of mammalian diversity: Has the Panda Had its Day?* Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Lee, W.H. and Moscardo, G. (2005). Understanding the Impact of Ecotourism Resort Experiences on Tourists, Environmental Attitudes and Behavioural Intentions. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 13(6), pp. 546-565
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1963), *Structural Anthropology*, New York: Basic Books.
- Lewis, S. (2012). *Biodiversity Production as Creative Destruction*. N00220629 GPOL.6468.A.Sp12.6569. http://newschool.academia.edu/SophieLewis/Papers/1675709/Biodiversity_production_as_creative_destruction [Accessed on August 06, 2012]
- Light, A. (2009). Ecological Restoration and the Culture of Nature. In Kaplan, D. (ed). *Readings In The Philosophy Of Technology*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 452-467
- Lorimer, J. (2007). Non-Human Charisma. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 25, pp. 911- 932
- Lovelock, J. (2006). *The Revenge of Gaia: Earth's Climate in Crisis and the Fate Of Humanity*. New York: Basic Books.
- Luke, T. (1999). Eco-Managerialism: Environmental Studies as a Power/Knowledge Formation. In Fischer, F. and Hajer, M. A. (eds). *Living with nature: Environmental politics as cultural discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Macnaghten, P. and Urry, J. (1998). *Contested Natures*. London: Sage.
- McDonnell, M. and Pickett, S. (1993). *Humans as components of ecosystems: The ecology of subtle human effects and populated areas*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- McLareferty, E. and Farley, A. (2006). Analysing qualitative research data using computer software. *Nursing Times*, 102(24), pp. 34-36
- Markwell, K. (2001). Borneo, nature's paradise": Constructions and representations of nature within nature-based tourism. In Teo, P., Chang, T. and Ho, K. (ed). *Interconnected worlds: tourism in Southeast Asia*. Elsevier: Oxford, pp. 248-265
- Merchant, C. (1989). *The death of nature: Women, ecology, and the scientific revolution*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Meine, C. (2003). Conservation and the Progressive Movement. Growing from the Radical Center. In Minter, B. (eds) *Reconstructing conservation: Finding common ground*. Washington: Island Press, pp. 165-185
- Milton, K. (1996). *Environmentalism And Cultural Theory: Exploring The Role Of Anthropology In Environmental Discourse*. London: Routledge.
- Minter, B. (2003) *Reconstructing conservation: Finding common ground*. Washington: Island Press
- Morrell, J. (2006). *Between the Lines: Master the Subtle Elements of Fiction Writing*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books
- Morrison, M. and Moir, J. (1998). The role of computer software in the analysis of qualitative data: efficient clerk, research assistant or Trojan horse? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 28(1), pp. 106-16.
- Morton, T. (2010). *The Ecological Thought*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

- Mowforth, M., and Munt, I. (2009). *Tourism and sustainability: Development, globalisation and new tourism in the Third World*. London: Routledge.
- Mühlhäusler, P and Peace, A. (2006). Environmental Discourses. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 35. pp.457–79
- Nash, R. (1977). International Concepts of Wilderness Preservation, in Hendee, Stankey, and Lucas, *Wilderness Management*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Forest Service. p. 58.
- Newmark, W.D. 1995. Extinction of mammal populations in western North American national parks. *Conservation Biology* 9. 512-526.
- Nelson, M. P. and Callicott, J. B. (2008). *The wilderness Debate Rages on: Continuing the Great New Wilderness Debate*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press
- Nikander, P. (2006). Constructionism and Discourse Analysis. In Holstein, J. and Gubrium, J. (eds) *Handbook Of Constructionist Research*. Guilford Publications
- Norton, B. (2003) Conservation: Moral Crusade or Environmental Public Policy? In Minter, B. (eds) *Reconstructing conservation: Finding common ground*. Washington: Island Press
- Oelschlaeger, M. (1991). *The idea of wilderness: From prehistory to the age of ecology*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Oliveira-Santos, L. G. R. and Fernandez, F. A. S. (2010). Pleistocene Rewilding, Frankenstein Ecosystems, and an Alternative Conservation Agenda. *Conservation Biology* 24(1), pp. 4-5.
- PANParks, (2012). <http://www.panparks.org/> [accessed on March 26, 2012]
- Peace Parks Foundation (2012) <http://www.peaceparks.org/> [accessed on April 14, 2012]
- Quammen, D. (2003). *Monster of God: The man-eating predator in the jungles of history and the mind*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Rewilding Europe. (2012). *Rewilding Europe*. Executive Summary. <http://RewildingEurope.com/assets/uploads/Downloads/RwE-Factsheet-Juni-2011Def2HR.pdf> [accessed on June 6, 2012]
- Reisigl, M. & Wodak, R. (2001) *Discourse and Discrimination*. London: Routledge.
- Ritzer, G. (2005). *Encyclopedia of social theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sergio, F., Caro, T., Brown, D. et al. (2008) Top Predators as Conservation Tools: Ecological Rationale, Assumptions, and Efficacy. *The Annual Review of Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics*. 39, pp. 1–19
- Sergio, F. Newton, I., Marchesi, L. and Pedrini, P. (2006) Ecologically Justified Charisma: Preservation Of Top Predators Delivers Biodiversity Conservation. *Journal of Applied Ecology* 43, pp. 1049–1055
- Savage, M. (2003). Restoring Natural Systems Through Natural Processes. The Quivira Coalition, 6 (2), pp. 1-28
- Shubnaya, E. (2012). *Prominent Russians: Ivan Michurin*. <http://russiapedia.rt.com/prominent-russians/science-and-technology/ivan-michurin/> [Accessed on April 18, 2012]
- Sridevi, K. V. (2008). *Constructivism in science education*. New Delhi: Discovery Pub. House
- Shiva, V. (1993). The Greening of the Global Reach. In Sachs, W (ed.) *Global Ecology*, London: Zed Books

- Stenbacka, C. (2001). Qualitative research requires quality concepts of its own. *Management Decision*, 39(7), pp. 551-555
- Stokowski, P. (2003) Community Values in Conservation. In Minter, B. (eds) *Reconstructing conservation: Finding common ground*. Washington: Island Press, pp. 279-297
- Staatsbosbeheer (2012). *Oostvaardersplassen. Frequently Asked Questions*. <http://www.staatsbosbeheer.nl/English/Oostvaardersplassen/FAQ.aspx> [Accessed 06 August 2012]
- Stamou, G. and Paraskevopoulos, S. (2006). Representing Protected Areas: a Critical Discourse Analysis of Tourism Destination Building in a Greek Travel Magazine. *Journal of Tourism Research*. 8, pp. 431–449
- Soulé, M.E., and R. Noss. (1998). Rewilding and biodiversity: Complementary goals for continental conservation. *Wild Earth*. 8 (3), pp. 18-28.
- Su, D., Wall, G., Eagles, P. (2007). Emerging Governance Approaches for Tourism in the Protected Areas of China. *Environmental Management* 39, pp. 749-759
- Swift, R. (2009). *Rewilding. New Constructions of Nature in Conservation Biology. The Knepp Castle Estate, West Sussex*. http://www.knepp.co.uk/Other_docs/surveys/Graduat%20work%20on%20re%20wilding.pdf [accessed on March 11, 2012]
- Sultana, F. (2007). Reflexivity, Positionality and Participatory Ethics: Negotiating Fieldwork Dilemmas in International Research. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 6 (3), pp. 374-385
- Sylvén, M. 2011. Bears worth more alive than dead. *Rewilding Europe*. <http://RewildingEurope.com/blog/bears-worth-more-alive-than-dead/> [accessed on July 04, 2012]
- Taylor, P. (2005). *Beyond conservation*. London: Earthscan.
- Thomas, K. (1983). *Man and the natural world: A history of the modern sensibility*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Toledo, D., M. S. Agudelo, et al. (2011). The Shifting of Ecological Restoration Benchmarks and Their Social Impacts: Digging Deeper into Pleistocene Re-wilding. *Restoration Ecology* 19(5), pp. 564-568.
- Trombulak, S. integrative Model for Landscape-scale Conservation in the XXI c. In Minter, B. (eds) *Reconstructing conservation: Finding common ground*. Washington: Island Press
- United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) (2012). *Environment and Development Challenges: The Imperative to Act*. Blue Planet Synthesis Paper. http://www.unep.org/pdf/pressreleases/Blue_Planet_synthesis_paper.pdf [Accessed on April 20, 2012]
- United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) (1998). Resolution 1998/40. Declaring the year 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism. <http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/res/1998/eres1998-40.htm> [accessed on March 26, 2012]
- Vance, G., Martin, C., Kormos, F. et al. Wilderness Momentum in Europe. *International Journal of Wilderness* 14(2).
- Vera, F.W.M (2000) *Grazing Ecology and Forest History*.UK, CABI Publishing
- Walpole, M. and Leader-Williams, N. (2002). Tourism And Flagship Species In Conservation. *Biodiversity and Conservation* 11, pp. 543–547

Western, D., Pearl, M. C., & Wildlife Conservation International (New York Zoological Society). (1989). *Conservation for the twenty-first century*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Whatmore, S. (2001). *Hybrid geographies*. London: Sage

Wodak, R. (2010). *Critical Discourse Analysis. Some Important Concepts for Consideration*. Accept CDA Course. <http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Documents/Events/2010-11-2ndMeetingACCEPT/presentations/CRITICALDISCOURSE%28ANALYSIS%29RuthWodakpresentation.pdf> [accessed on May 11, 2012]

Wodak, R., and Meyer, M. (2009). *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage Publications.

The Wilderness Act (1964) http://www.wildernessproject.org/environmentallinks_wilderness_act.php [accessed on March 11, 2012]

YellowstonePark, 2011. Yellowstone Wolves Bring Estimated \$7-10 Million in Annual Tourism Revenue <http://www.yellowstonepark.com/2011/06/yellowstone-wolves-bring-estimated-7-10-million-in-annual-tourism-revenue/> [accessed on June 21, 2012]

Žižek, S. (2007). *Censorship Today: Violence, or Ecology as New Opium for the Masses*. <http://www.lacan.com/zizecology1.htm> [accessed on March 24, 2012]

ANNEX 1. List of Reviewed Publications

| | | |
|-----|---|------------|
| 1. | Bauer, N., Wallner, A., Hunziker, M. (2009). The Change Of European Landscapes: Human-Nature Relationships, Public Attitudes Towards Rewilding, and the Implications for Landscape Management in Switzerland. <i>Journal Of Environmental Management</i> , 90, pp. 2910–2920 | Scientific |
| 2. | Barlow, C. (2007). Rewilding Megafauna: Lions and Camels in North America? <i>Action Bioscience</i> . http://www.actionbioscience.org/newfrontiers/barlow.html/#fullbio [Accessed on July 06, 2012] | Popular |
| 3. | Browning, G., Oakley, R. (2009). Wild Ennerdale. <i>British Wildlife</i> , 20(5), pp.56-59 | Scientific |
| 4. | Cajal, J. and Tonni, E. (2006). Re-Wilding In South America: Is It Possible? <i>Mastozoología Neotropical</i> , 13(2), pp. 281-282 | Scientific |
| 5. | Caro, T. (2007). The Pleistocene Re-Wilding Gambit. <i>Trends in Ecology and Evolution</i> , 22(6), pp. 281-283 | Scientific |
| 6. | Carver, S. (2007) <i>Rewilding in England and Wales: A Review of Recent Developments, Issues, and Concerns</i> . USDA Forest Service Proceedings RMRS-P-49. | Scientific |
| 7. | Chapron, G. (2005). Re-Wilding: Other Projects Help Carnivores Stay Wild. <i>Nature</i> , 437, p. 318 | Scientific |
| 8. | Dinerstein, E., Irwin, R. (2005). Re-Wilding: No Need For Exotics As Natives Return, <i>Nature</i> , 437, p. 319 | Scientific |
| 9. | Donlan, J. (2005). Re-Wilding North America. <i>Nature</i> , 436(23), pp. 913-914 | Scientific |
| 10. | Donlan, J., Berger, J., Bock, C. (2006). Pleistocene Rewilding: An Optimistic Agenda for Twenty-First Century Conservation. <i>The American Naturalist</i> . 168(5), pp.660-681 | Scientific |
| 11. | Donlan, J. In press. <i>Rewilding as a Call For Action Strategy For Biodiversity Conservation In The 21st Century</i> . Proceedings Of the UNESCO IYB Biodiversity Science Policy Forum, Paris. | Scientific |
| 12. | Eirnaes, R., Sandom, Ch., Svenning, J. (2012). <i>Rewilding as a Tool and Target in the Management for Biodiversity</i> . A One-Day Symposium for Scientists, Managers and Stakeholders. Aarhus University | Scientific |
| 13. | Foreman, D. (2004). <i>Rewilding North America: A Vision For Conservation In The 21st Century</i> . Washington: Island Press. | Popular |
| 14. | Fraser, C. (2009). <i>Rewilding The World: Dispatches From The Conservation Revolution</i> . New York, N.Y: Metropolitan Books. | Popular |
| 15. | Fraser, C. (2010). Could Re-Wilding Avert the 6th Great Extinction? <i>Scientific American</i> . http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=could-re-wilding-avert-6th-great-extinction [Accessed on July 04, 2012] | Popular |
| 16. | Foljambe, A. (2010) Wilderness Rewilding Basics: Cores, Corridors, and Carnivores. <i>Suite 101</i> . http://suite101.com/article/wilderness-Rewilding-basics-cores-corridors-and-carnivores-a248936 | Popular |
| 17. | Fuhlendorf, S., Engle, D., Hamilton, R. (2009). Pyric Herbivory: Rewilding Landscapes through the Recoupling of Fire and Grazing. <i>Conservation Biology</i> . 23(3), pp.588-598 | Scientific |
| 18. | Grey, L. (2012) Hay Festival 2012: Britain Should 'Rewild the Countryside' With Wolves, Lynx and Moose. <i>The Telegraph</i> . http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/hay-festival/9309756/Hay-Festival-2012-Britain-should-rewild-the-countryside-with-wolves-lynx-and-moose.html [Accessed on July 04, 2012] | Popular |
| 19. | Jaffe, E. (2006) Brave Old World. Debate over Rewilding North America With Ancient Animals. <i>Science News</i> . 170(20), pp. 314-316 | Scientific |
| 20. | Haywood, M. (2007). Re-Wilding Or Hyperwilderness-Plus Ca Change? <i>South African Journal of Art and History</i> , 22(2), pp. 195-203. | Scientific |
| 21. | Hintz, J. (2005). <i>Pragmatism And The Politics Of Rewilding Nature: The Case Of Grizzly Bear Reintroduction In Idaho.</i> , Doctoral Dissertation. University of Kentucky, Paper 357. | Scientific |
| 22. | Hintz, J. (2007). Some Political Problems for Rewilding Nature, Ethics, Place & Environment. | Scientific |

| | | |
|-----|---|------------|
| | <i>Ethics, Place & Environment</i> , 10 (2), pp. 177-192 | |
| 23. | Hintz, J. (2007) Response to Woods: On with the Debate (but Let's Be Careful with Those Swords). <i>Ethics, Place & Environment</i> , 10(2) pp. 207-216 | Scientific |
| 24. | Hodder, K., Buckland, P., Kirby, K., Bullock, J. (2009). Can the Pre-Neolithic Provide Suitable Models For Re-Wilding the Landscape in Britain? <i>British Wildlife</i> . 20(5), pp. 4-16 | Scientific |
| 25. | Huitson, L. (2010). Rewilding: A Fresh Approach to Conservation. <i>Suite101</i> . http://suite101.com/article/Rewilding-a-fresh-approach-to-conservation-a253307 | Popular |
| 26. | Kleis, R. (2012) Nature Pays Better. <i>Resource</i> . 4, http://resource.wur.nl/en/wetenschap/detail/nature_pays_better/ [accessed on June 6, 2012] | Popular |
| 27. | Leake, J. (2008). If You Go Down To The Woods...Support Is Growing For 'Rewilding', Which Could See Bears, Wolves And Elk Roaming Britain. <i>The Times Online</i> . http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/environment/article5404100ece | Popular |
| 28. | Lorimer, J. and Driessen, C. (2011) Bovine Biopolitics and The Promise Of Monsters In The Rewilding Of Heck Cattle. <i>Geoforum</i> (in press) | Scientific |
| 29. | Lorimer, J. (2011). <i>Living with Biodiversity. Rewilding and Biopolitics of Wildlife Conservation</i> . Lecture notes. http://content.dow.wur.nl/webdocs/internet/fnp/symposium%20living%20with%20biodiversity/Presentation%20Jamie%20Lorimer.pdf [accessed on June 6, 2012] | Popular |
| 30. | Marren, P. (2007). Recall of the Wild. <i>The Guardian</i> , May 9. http://www.knepp.co.uk/Other_docs/press/peter_marren_guardian_07.asp | Popular |
| 31. | Martin, P. S. (2005). <i>Twilight Of The Mammoths: Ice Age Extinctions And The Rewilding Of America</i> . Berkeley: University of California Press. | Popular |
| 32. | Martin, V., Kormos, C., Zunino, F., Meyer, U., Aykroyd, T. (2008) Wilderness Momentum In Europe. <i>International Journal Of Wilderness</i> , 14(2) | Scientific |
| 33. | Meyer, T. (2010). Rewilding Germany. <i>International Journal Of Wilderness</i> , 16 (3), pp.8-13 | Scientific |
| 34. | Mitchell, S. (2008) Tear Down the Barricades. <i>Country Life</i> . http://www.knepp.co.uk/Other_docs/press/sandy_mitchell_country_life_07.asp | Popular |
| 35. | Rewilding Europe. (2012). <i>Rewilding Europe</i> . Executive Summary. http://Rewildingeurope.com/assets/uploads/Downloads/RwE-Factsheet-Juni-2011Def2HR.pdf [accessed on June 6, 2012] | Popular |
| 36. | Rotherham, I. (2008). Tourism and Recreation as Economic Drivers in Future Uplands. <i>Aspects Of Applied Biology</i> , 85, pp. 93-98 | Scientific |
| 37. | Schlaepfer, M. (2005) Re-Wilding: A Bold Plan That Needs Native Megafauna. <i>Nature</i> . 437, p. 13 | Scientific |
| 38. | Smith, C. (2005). Re-Wilding: Introductions Could Reduce Biodiversity. <i>Nature</i> , 437, p.15 | Scientific |
| 39. | Soulé, M.E., and R. Noss. (1998). Rewilding and biodiversity: Complementary goals for continental conservation. <i>Wild Earth</i> . 8 (3), pp. 18-28. | Scientific |
| 40. | Sparmann, A. (2012). Europe Goes Wild. Can Nature Reclaim its Lost Continent? <i>GEO-Indian Edition</i> .1, pp. 27-55 | Popular |
| 41. | Swift, R. (2009). Rewilding. New Constructions of Nature in Conservation Biology. The Knepp Castle Estate, West Sussex. http://www.knepp.co.uk/Other_docs/surveys/Graduat%20work%20on%20re%20wilding.pdf [accessed on May 11, 2012] | Scientific |
| 42. | Sylvén, M., Widstrand, S., Schepers, F., Birnie, N., Teunissen, T. (2012). <i>Rewilding Europe. Making Europe a wilder Place</i> . http://Rewildingeurope.com/assets/uploads/Downloads/Rewilding-Europe-Brochure-2012.pdf [accessed on June 5, 2012] | Popular |
| 43. | Oliveira-Santos, L. G. R. and Fernandez, F. A. S. (2010). Pleistocene Rewilding, Frankenstein Ecosystems, and an Alternative Conservation Agenda. <i>Conservation Biology</i> 24(1): 4-5. | Scientific |
| 44. | Taylor, P. (2005). <i>Beyond Conservation</i> . London: Earthscan. | Popular |

| | | |
|-----|---|------------|
| 45. | Taylor, P. (2006). Home Counties Wildland. <i>ECOS</i> , 27, pp. 3-4 | Popular |
| 46. | Taylor, P. (2009). Re-Wilding The Grazers: Obstacles To The 'Wild' In Wildlife Management. <i>British Wildlife</i> , 20(5), pp. 50-56 | Scientific |
| 47. | Toledo, D., M. S. Agudelo, et al. (2011). The Shifting of Ecological Restoration Benchmarks and Their Social Impacts: Digging Deeper into Pleistocene Re-wilding. <i>Restoration Ecology</i> 19(5): 564-568. | Scientific |
| 48. | Wood, T. (2009). A Walk On The Wild Side. <i>The Argus</i> . http://www.knepp.co.uk/Other_docs/press/The_Argus_Sat_Jan_09.asp [accessed on June 3, 2012] | Popular |
| 49. | Woods, M. (2007) Conservation Biology, Deep Ecology, and the Outside World: Some Problems for the Politics of Nature. <i>Ethics, Place & Environment</i> , 10(2), 192-207 | Scientific |
| 50. | Wintle, A. (2009). Knepp Castle: Gone To The Dogs, And Horses, And Pigs... <i>The Daily Telegraph</i> . http://www.knepp.co.uk/Other_docs/press/The_Daily_Telegraph.asp [accessed on June 3, 2012] | Popular |
| 51. | Zoological Society Of London. (2010). <i>Re-Wilding Europe And The Return Of Predators</i> . Communicating Science Series https://static.zsl.org/files/zsl-abstract-13-7-10-1183.pdf [accessed on June 5, 2012] | Scientific |