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The Neverlands of Nature

Exploring Representations of the Non-Human in Visitor Information Publication Material on Swedish National Parks

ABSTRACT In this paper, we distinguish, make visible, and problematize how the non-human world (often depicted as nature) in Swedish national parks comes into being through representations in visitor information publications, and what the productive effects of those representations are. Through a discursive analysis, we identify seven discursive formations that concern portrayals of the non-human world. On the one hand, it is represented as extraordinary and sublime pieces of wild and pristine nature—and on the other, as ordinary and accessible. Despite this divergence, these kinds of spaces function as national heritage with an elitist status, which creates hierarchizations between national parks and other spaces, but also between the national parks themselves. North and south are assigned different attraction values and portrayed as desirable in different contexts. The north is wild, pristine, and sublime, while the south is safe, available, and always open to tourists. Furthermore, the material generates portrayals of national parks as places for learning, where the non-human world is displayed, explored, experienced, and taught. The uniting force of these formations is the focus of national parks as places of otherness, which turns them into heterotopian neverlands far away from the mainland of modernity.

KEYWORDS heterotopia, visual culture, discourse, power, sublime, nature-culture, elitism, exploration arena, visibility, tourism

Introduction

Deep forests with grounds covered in moss, dark blue lakes with white lilies, extensive mountain areas roamed by reindeer, pitch-black skies illuminated by dancing northern lights, and an archipelago of islands too numerous to count. These are only a few examples of the scenery that can be found while browsing visitor information publications about Swedish national parks. Such publications function as public productions

informed by the intention to enlighten tourists about the parks and make them interested in going there (see Peterson Rai 1988; Grusin 1995; Tschida 2012). Together with other productions and services offered to tourists, visitor information publications contribute to influencing and forming tourists' experiences of Swedish national parks by providing information and telling stories about what is worth exploring. From these representations, there follow values and imaginaries of how tourists should understand the parks, but also how they should relate themselves to those places and how they should behave once there. In other words, visitor information publications produce and communicate representations of the parks and thereby influence human understandings of them and their nature (see Grusin 2004; Patin 2012; Tschida 2012).

One understanding of national parks, which dates back to the 1800s and the establishment of the world's first national parks in the United States, depicts them as environmentalist-oriented protectors of original pieces of nature (Grusin 2004; Gissibl, Höhler & Kupper 2012; Patin 2012). Around the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, several enthusiasts and a growing environmentalist movement worked intensively to persuade the government to establish the first parks in Sweden. The modern industrial development that was marching into society was posited as a threat to the natural world, and the establishment of national parks was considered a reasonable solution to preserve nature intact. Alongside the intention to foster value for natural science, hopes that the national parks could generate economic revenue by welcoming tourists were also expressed (Lundgren 2009; Lundgren 2011). In 1909, the first Swedish national parks were established, at a time when attitudes were influenced by discourses on national identity, natural scientific knowledge production, recreation, outdoor education for public health, and the fostering of the young generations (Sandell 2009; Fredman & Sandell 2014; Wall Reinius 2014). Since then, the parks have been said to preserve Sweden's grains of golden nature, but have never really exhibited strong tourist traditions (Zachrisson *et al.* 2006; Fredman & Sandell 2014), until recently (Fälton & Mels forthcoming).

During the 1990s, policies on nature conservation and the approach to tourism started to transform. From being posited as a threat to national parks, tourism was now approached as an important asset (Fälton & Mels forthcoming). Around the beginning of the 2010s, the Swedish Government (e.g., 2009a; 2009b; 2012) and the national agency responsible for the parks—The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (hereafter SEPA) (e.g., SEPA 2011a; SEPA 2011b; SEPA 2012)—began intensifying their presentation of the national parks as important tourist destinations. This was not only because the parks can offer rich experiences of something unique but also because they can function as essential contributors to involving the public in nature and nature conservation. By attracting tourists to the parks and providing them with knowledge and information, the intention is to capture their interest and engagement, but also to encourage them to spread the word to others (The Swedish Government 2009b; The Swedish Government 2012; SEPA 2011a; 2011b; 2012). Thus, several initiatives to establish these parks on the European market as competitive nature tourism destinations have taken place, and the parks currently face a tourist displacement—a shift in how they are understood in a tourism context (see Foucault 1991a; Foucault 1991b; Foucault 1992).

A central component of this displacement is the desire to display nature to national park visitors and develop a strong visual identity (Fälton & Mels forthcoming). In other words, the visual has become central to efforts to establish the parks as tourism destinations. Visitor information publications play an essential role here because, together with other kinds of productions, they construct a vision of national park visitors (Tschida 2012;

Lund 2013). This paper focuses on embodied representations of the non-human world in visitor information publications about Swedish national parks, which have sprung from the tourist displacement. Its aim is to distinguish, make visible, and problematize how nature comes into being and what the productive effects of those representations are. To support this, we address the following research questions:

- How is the non-human world portrayed and characterized?
- What ontological and epistemological understandings appear, and how are these constructed?
- How is the relationship between humans and the non-human world presented?
- What implications might the above have for how humans understand and relate to the non-human world?

In other words, a primary interest in this paper is the process by which the non-human world in Swedish national parks is positioned and repositioned, but also made and remade through visitor information publications. By analyzing representations of the non-human that emerge in visitor information publications, we discern empirical categories that account for the construction of nature in the context of Swedish national parks and their tourism, provide insights into the tourist displacement that is currently taking place in relation to those spaces, and also problematize how the visual is part of all this. Instead of following deeply rooted traditional Western understandings of the non-human world as a fixed object that is named nature and exists beyond the human realm, representing everything that is not a product of humans, we offer a problematizing approach that rests upon the notion of nature as socially constructed (see Bird 1987; Soper 1995; Hedrén 1998; Grusin 2004; Descola 2013; Castree 2014; Lövbrand *et al.* 2015). Such an approach implies that it is through human ways of making sense of nature that it comes into being (see Williams 1976; Cronon 1995; Soper 1995; Mels 1999; Mitchell 2002; Rose 2011), but that this also occurs through how humans interact with and encounter the non-human world (e.g., Lund 2005; Bird Rose 2015; Jóhannesson 2019). This implies that nature is a cultural phenomenon displaying both immaterial and material bonds that are grounded in time and space, but also that it would not exist without human comprehensions of it (Chaloupka & Cawley 1993; Cronon 1995; Grusin 2004; Castree 2014).

A Discursive Focus on Representations of the Non-Human

To distinguish, make visible, and problematize how the non-human world comes into being in Swedish national parks, we conduct a discourse analysis. Discourses are meaning-making assemblages of representations that give meaning to social and physical realities. These collective structures constitute sets of conditions of existence through which human understandings are shaped (see Foucault 1982; Foucault 1997). Through their operations, national parks offer a combination of representations that materialize through actions, practices, and materials. This enables them to be interpreted as discursive apparatuses that produce, construct, and reconstruct how people look upon the non-human, what they see when they look in certain ways, and also what they know and think, and how they approach it (see Grusin 2004; Mirzoeff 2011; Patin 2012). Thus, it is within discursive fields that the cultural construction of Swedish national park nature circulates. Discourses contain epistemological and ontological structures that prescribe particular ways of looking, seeing, knowing, thinking, approaching, and experiencing the

non-human world, and accordingly they shape how nature is understood and how things are done concerning it (see Bal 1996; Foucault 2001; Mirzoeff 2011; Rose 2016). Discourses also shape the contours of accepted and unaccepted actions in this world. They define what is visible or invisible, comprehensible or nonsense, sayable or unsayable, thinkable or unthinkable, and also normal or abnormal (see Foucault 1991c; Foucault 2001; Feder 2011; Mirzoeff 2011; Castree 2014; Rose 2016).

In other words, discourses are ensembles of representations that constitute a set of conditions of existence, which affect the true and the false within a specific context (Foucault 1982; Foucault 1991c). They construct norms and deviations within the practice of tourism by institutionalizing and professionalizing procedures. Through all of these implicating structures of discourses, power rewards its own pursuit (Foucault 1980). Discourses enable power relations through their production, accumulation, circulation, and functioning. The exercise of power is dependent upon the existence of discourses of truth, which concern what is considered to be true, right, or wrong. This process is called the regime of truth. Who governs is not of interest, but rather how human societies govern, since discourses are socially rather than individually produced (Foucault 1986). Individuals can hold different roles or subject positions, but neither the individual nor the role is powerful in itself. Instead, they afford possibilities for the exercise of disciplinary power (Foucault 1982), which disciplines individuals into different kinds of behaviors and influences how they think about themselves and others (May 2011). On this understanding, power can accrue from anywhere within societies and has no apparent source. It works through culture, customs, organizations, and individuals (Foucault 1994). Thus, power produces knowledge and vice versa. The two imply each other because there can be no power without the constitution of a field of knowledge, nor knowledge without the constitution and presupposition of power (Foucault 1991 *a*). All knowledge is discursive, just as all discourses are saturated with power (Rose 2016).

To be able to study power, it is important to try to understand where it is installed and where its effects arise (Foucault 1982; Foucault 1986). Therefore, it becomes essential for us to identify the normalizing practices that subjectify and objectify the non-human. We understand national parks as discursive apparatuses with attached systems of discourses (see Grusin 2004; Rutherford 2011; Patin 2012) which, in turn, are connected to a myriad of other apparatuses that contribute to the construction of Swedish national park nature. This means that discourses are the results of meaning-making interactions within a web of contributing actors and processes (Foucault 1982). In order to contribute to the understanding of discourses on Swedish national parks and the nature conservation enabled by the practice of tourism, we identify discursive formations. These are systems of representation that together make up a discourse, construct it, and relate its different meanings to each other. They correlate by positioning themselves in relation to each other and creating an order within the discourse (Foucault 1980; Foucault 1982; Foucault 2001; Rose 2016).

Exploring Discursive Formations in Visitor Information Publication Material

The products in which we seek discursive formations, and thereby representations, are visitor information publications produced between 2008 and 2018. This time span corresponds to the displacement in the incorporation of tourism in Swedish national parks (Fälton & Mels forthcoming), which makes our paper an essential contributor to deepening our understanding of what that displacement entails. Visitor information publications are interesting for this study due to their function as appetizers for tourists who

are interested in visiting national parks. These publications frame certain experiences, locations, and activities as appropriate for tourists, which makes them instrumental in influencing tourists' understandings of the parks (Tschida 2012; Lund 2013). But they also incorporate power and power relations. Through their representations, they govern the ways in which humans look upon, see, understand, think of, approach, and experience the non-human world. By analyzing them, we can gain insights into the governing and commodification of the non-human (see Castree 2003; Rutherford 2011).

Two groups of actors have produced our material: nature conservation actors and tourism actors. By the first, we are referring to organizations connected to the development and maintenance of national parks, or organizations that state themselves as being experts in nature conservation questions. SEPA has collected its information into two books: *Nationalparkerna i Sverige* ['The national parks of Sweden'] (Hanneberg, Löfgren & Arnell 2010), and *Naturresevat & nationalparker. Pärlor i den svenska naturen* ['Nature reserves and national parks. Pearls of Swedish nature'] (Abelin [ed.] 2008) and a website, available at www.sverigenationalparker.se (SEPA 2018b). The book *Upplev Sveriges natur. En guide till naturupplevelser i hela landet* ['Explore Sweden's nature. A guide to nature experiences across the whole country'], produced by the well-known Swedish journalist and television presenter Martin Emtenäs, together with the photographer Mikael Gustafsson (with support from The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation), is another publication that constitutes our material (Emtenäs & Gustafsson 2017). We chose these actors due to their stated role as experts who have the authority to produce knowledge about Sweden's national parks. Even though their main focus is not tourism, their publications are intended for tourists. By tourism actors, we are referring to organizations that take tourism and tourist operations as their primary interest. This part of the material consists of four websites. First, we chose www.visitsweden.se (Visit Sweden 2018b) and its associated online image bank www.imagebank.sweden.se (Sweden.se, Swedish Institute, Visit Sweden, Embassy of Sweden & Business Sweden 2018) due to Visit Sweden's position as the country's official website for tourism and travel information. Second, we chose Nature's Best Sweden's website www.naturesbestsweden.com (The Swedish Ecotourism Society 2018a) because it is an ecotourism label organizer for Swedish nature tourism, and The Swedish Tourist Association's website, www.svenskaturistforeningen.se (The Swedish Tourist Association 2018), because it offers travel within Sweden, directed towards the Swedish market, and focuses on nature tourism. By choosing material produced by these two kinds of actors, who both claim to be producers of "expert knowledge," and play an essential role in Swedish national park tourism, we can gain insight into the representations that they produce and thus contribute to the understanding of how the non-human world in national parks is placed and replaced, made and remade.

Applying Four Analytical Steps to Identify Discursive Formations

In order to identify discursive formations and their representations, we analyze the visitor information publications in a reflexive-explorative manner based on four steps. Instead of basing the analysis on pre-existing analytical frameworks, we allow the material to guide us incrementally in different discursive directions (see Foucault 1982). We understand ourselves not only as analyzers of discursive representations, but also as participants in their production. This calls for a critical and reflexive approach to our research practices (Bal 2003; Pink 2012; Rose 2016; Rose 2017) and is a reason why we try to be as open as possible in how we conduct our analysis.

Step One. Identification of Representational Configurations of Visibilities and Invisibilities in the Pictures and Texts

As we have stated, there is a strong focus on strengthening the visual identity of Swedish national parks, with visual components being emphasized as especially important (SEPA 2012). This is a trend that not only applies to the national parks but is also a pattern in contemporary modern societies more generally, as the visual has become a central part of many of the experiences that humans seek out and take part in (e.g. Mirzoeff 2013; Rose 2016; Sandywell & Heywood 2017). The representations that appear in the visitor information material influence the social and cultural world by possessing the agency and properties of discourses (see Rose 2016; Rose 2017), which make them part of visual culture and the social construction of visual experiences (Mitchell 1995). Therefore, we start our first step with an identification of the structure of visibilities and invisibilities in the pictures and texts of the visitor information publications. Visibilities and invisibilities refer to the discursive proceeding of visibility and its material effects. By focusing on the process of “nomination of the visible” that this idea classifies, we can gain a first impression of inclusions and exclusions in the material (Foucault 2001; Mirzoeff 2011). Visibility concerns questions of how we see, how our seeing is enabled, how we are allowed to see, how our seeing is shaped, who sees, who is seen, and how we see this seeing and unseeing (Foucault 1991a; Hooper-Greenhill 2000). Hence, visibility is a colonial and imperial practice through which power visualizes itself (Mirzoeff 2013). It resides in the productive effects of the relation between power and knowledge and can be noticed in both pictures and texts. It determines what objects and aspects become visible, regulates which ones remain invisible, and orders ways of seeing, looking, knowing, thinking, and approaching (Pajaczkowska 2000; Bal 2003). These performative acts are directed by knowledge, which makes visible aspects that would otherwise have been invisible (Foucault 1991a).

Since our material contains not only texts but also a significant number of pictures (2,043 in total), we decide to develop a way of identifying discursive elements in which the pictures are pivotal. This is also spurred by our criticism of the understanding of pictures as pure “evidence” of truth that primarily function as decorative supporters for texts. By separating the pictures from the texts, and using them as a starting point, we want to question this understanding and highlight pictures as being just as formative, representational, and interpretable as text (see Mitchell 2005; Rose 2016). Two components that characterize our approach and its specific directions are our analysis of collages and the facility in which we conduct our analysis. Instead of printing several pictures, or looking at a group of them on a screen, we create collages of several pictures (see Fig. 1). When designing these collages, each national park is assigned a folder with all of the pictures belonging to it. Then, we divide the national parks and their associated pictures into six categories based on SEPA’s classification of the parks into six different nature types, or biotypes: 1) coniferous forest, 2) broadleaved deciduous forest, 3) mountain, 4) island, archipelago, and shore, 5) ocean, and 6) wetland and marshland. This division is frequently used by SEPA when marketing Sweden’s national parks and is common in the publications produced by other actors as well. Through this division, we can trace similarities and differences in the portrayals and characteristics of different “types” of nature, which can give insights into ways of ordering the non-human world (which at this stage already appear to be positioned according to the ideas of natural science). It also enables us to take a wider perspective concerning Swedish national parks as an institutionalized union, rather than focusing on them as unique individuals. Since our material has two



Fig. 1. An example of how the collages are organized. Due to the copyright of the analyzed pictures and the impossibility of publishing them without permission from their copyright owners, photos taken by one of the authors are used as examples in the collage shown above. Copyright: Emelie Fälton.

other orientations as well, we divide all of our categories into the two subcategories of tourism material and nature conservation material. We make this division in order to identify potential similarities and dissimilarities between the material produced by the two actors.

We conduct our analysis of the collages in a visualization facility called the Norrköping Decision Arena (see Fig. 2). With its nine projectors, its ten input devices, its embracing cylinder-shaped screen, and the opportunity it affords to visualize content from nine computers on the screen simultaneously (Linköping University 2018), this facility offers the unique ability to study ten collages during one session and put them in relation to each other. We go through the categories one by one, taking notes of the patterns of visibilities and invisibilities that we identify. Conducting this analysis in dialogue with each other is something that we consider a strength when analyzing a major set of pictures, because it stimulates reflexivity. We see similar patterns, but we also present new ones to each other and elaborate upon each other's interpretations. In this way, we discuss and interpret the pictures together exploratively, with no predetermined ideas of what to look for.



Fig. 2. The analysis in the Norrköping Decision Arena. Copyright: Emelie Fälton.

When this part of the first step is complete, we do a similar procedure with the texts, focusing on identifying recurring configurations of visibilities and invisibilities, but also seeking a first glimpse of recurring discursive elements. We start by reading them several times without predetermined themes to look for. To organize our analysis, we use color markings to sort out the patterns, which also enable them to be traced afterward (Boréus & Bergström 2018). Then, after completing the reading and analysis one by one, we discuss our findings and merge them together. This process is also designed to promote reflexivity, as we reflect upon the patterns that we identify and merge them together.

Step Two. Structuring Recurring Representational Configurations into Eight Themes

In the second step, we bring the patterns from the pictures and texts together (first column in Table 1), and from these we create eight themes (second column in Table 2). After merging and structuring the discursive elements, we identify ontological and epistemological structures within them and formulate themes to enable a deepening of the discursive analysis in the next step.

Step Three. Formulation of Analytical Questions for Each of the Themes

The third step consists of formulating analytical questions for the themes. Inspired by our theoretical framework, which is permeated by a discursive focus, inspired by issues of power structures and relations, we develop questions that could help us to dive further into our material (third column in Table 1).

Table 1. Overview of the steps and the analytical process leading to step 4

Step 1. Patterns in pictures and texts	Step 2. Merging of patterns into themes	Step 3. Analytical questions related to the themes
<p>Coniferous forest Nature conservation productions Visibilities: <i>Portrayals of nature involving embracing forests of a dramatic, sublime, calm, and mysterious character that are well-visited by outdoorsy tourists all year round. Offers close encounters with the animal kingdom but also learning experiences through pedagogical operations.</i> Invisibilities: <i>Portrayals of everyday nature.</i></p> <p>Tourist productions Visibilities: <i>Portrayals of everyday nature that is calm and peaceful, offering tourists viewpoints and grand views.</i> Invisibilities: <i>Portrayals of nature as exotic, pedagogical operations.</i></p> <p>Broadleaved deciduous forest Nature conservation productions Visibilities: <i>Portrayals of safe and close nature that is available and open, idyllic, intimate, colorful, and harmonious. Places of traditional Swedish character (e.g., red cottages) with cultivated landscapes that are suitable for tourists during summer.</i> Invisibilities: <i>Portrayals of wildlife, pedagogical operations, winter, and views.</i></p> <p>Tourist productions Visibilities: <i>Portrayals of nature serving as a backdrop that is intimate, safe, close (more emphasized than in nature conservation productions). Tourist places—focus on services, accommodation, and activities.</i> Invisibilities: <i>Portrayals of nature as central in itself, wildlife, pedagogical operations, and winter.</i></p> <p>Mountain Nature conservation productions Visibilities: <i>Portrayals of corrected nature of a sublime, exotic, grand, barren, and typical mountain character filled with animals, but also outdoors-oriented tourists. Places that offer vast panoramas and viewpoints.</i> Invisibilities: <i>Portrayals of Sami culture, pedagogical operations, and mountain birch.</i></p> <p>Tourist productions Visibilities: <i>Portrayals of grand nature offering safe and comfortable mountain experiences for active tourists interested in outdoorsy activities. Vast numbers of tourists and tourist services. Some portrayals of Sami culture.</i> Invisibilities: <i>Pedagogical operations and animals.</i></p> <p>Island, archipelago, and shore Nature conservation productions Visibilities: <i>Portrayals of nature filled with birds and insects, calm, peaceful, tranquil, idyllic, and serving as a commonplace for outdoor activities and active tourists.</i> Invisibilities: <i>Portrayals of mammals, pedagogical operations, or other tourist services.</i></p>	<p>Characteristics of nature</p>	<p><i>What characteristics of nature are embedded in the discursive formations? Is nature a known commonplace or an exotic other? Is it special or typical nature that is represented? Friend or foe?</i></p>
	<p>Non-human subjectivities</p>	<p><i>What kind of non-human subjectivities are embedded in the discursive formations? Who represents the non-human, and how is this “who” portrayed?</i></p>
	<p>Relations</p>	<p><i>What relations between the human and the non-human are embedded in the discursive formations? Are humans portrayed as part of nature or as distanced from it? As kindred or foreigners?</i></p>
	<p>Ways of encountering nature</p>	<p><i>What ways of looking, seeing, knowing, thinking, approaching, and experiencing nature are embedded in the discursive formations? How are tourists supposed to encounter this kind of nature? As a distanced observer or an involved participant?</i></p>
	<p>Interpretation opportunities</p>	<p><i>What kinds of interpretation opportunities are embedded in the discursive formations? Does the material provide ready-made interpretations of what nature is or an opportunity for tourists to interact with it and explore it in their own way? Is nature portrayed as an exhibition or as a wonderland to experience on one's own?</i></p>

Step 1. Patterns in pictures and texts	Step 2. Merging of patterns into themes	Step 3. Analytical questions related to the themes
<p>Tourist productions Visibilities: <i>Portrayals of accessible and commonplace nature of a coastal character serving as a backdrop for outdoorsy and hiking tourists conducting expeditions. Vast views.</i></p> <p>Invisibilities: <i>Portrayals of details of the non-human world, archipelago.</i></p> <p>Ocean Nature conservation productions Visibilities: <i>Portrayals of available and accessible nature of a typical west-coast character that offers a glimpse of an exotic underwater world with rich fauna and flora. An invitation to see usually invisible marine animals. Places for visitors and watchers who like to learn.</i></p> <p>Invisibilities: <i>Portrayals of harshness and storms.</i></p> <p>Tourist productions Visibilities: <i>Portrayals of barren nature that offer treasures of the ocean (seafood) that can be utilized by fishermen.</i></p> <p>Invisibilities: <i>Portrayals of tourists, pedagogical operations, or other tourist services.</i></p> <p>Wetland and marshland Nature conservation productions Visibilities: <i>Portrayals of nature of a wilderness character filled with wildlife and distanced from humanity. Opportunities to gain a sneak-peek into the animal kingdom and connect with non-humans. Places of outdoorsy character suitable for tourists. Offers an opportunity to learn about nature through pedagogical operations.</i></p> <p>Invisibilities: <i>Portrayals of accessibility features and buildings.</i></p> <p>Tourist productions Visibilities: <i>Portrayals of tourist facilities and outdoorsy tourists in surroundings characterized by agricultural land and settlements.</i></p> <p>Invisibilities: <i>Portrayals of wildlife, wetlands, and marshlands.</i></p>	<p>Knowledge epistemes</p>	<p><i>What kind of knowledge epistemes are embedded in the discursive formations? What is portrayed as valid knowledge about nature? Who is a producer of knowledge, and who is a recipient?</i></p>
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<p>Invisibilities: <i>Portrayals of accessibility features and buildings.</i></p> <p>Tourist productions Visibilities: <i>Portrayals of tourist facilities and outdoorsy tourists in surroundings characterized by agricultural land and settlements.</i></p> <p>Invisibilities: <i>Portrayals of wildlife, wetlands, and marshlands.</i></p>	<p>Human subjectivities</p>	<p><i>What kind of human subjectivities are embedded in the discursive formations? Who is the ideal tourist, and how is he or she portrayed? What types of activities and actions are made visible or invisible? Who are the locals, and what attributes are they assigned?</i></p>

Step Four. Emergence of Discursive Formations through Analysis According to the Themes and Questions

Our analytical procedure is rounded off by a fourth step, which focuses on analyzing the material once more with the themes and analytical questions as directives. In contrast to the first step, we do not separate the pictures and texts from each other but analyze them in their “original shape,” which means that, instead of “picking them out” from the books and websites, we analyze them as they appear in the productions. We start by going through the productions one by one with our analytical questions in mind. Then, we discuss our findings and decide upon how to structure and present the formations. In other words, steps one to three function as preparational steps for our discursive analysis, while, in the fourth, we are able to dive into the discursive formations and draw conclusions.

Identification of Seven Discursive Formations of the Non-Human in Swedish National Parks

Extraordinary Features of the North as Sublime

The portrayals and characterizations of the non-human world in Swedish national parks offer a palette of different focuses, but one of the most clearly present is the depiction of extraordinary nature with sublime characteristics. Scenic landscapes presenting extensive views of “untouched” land are everywhere in both sets of material, together with descriptions of nature as beautiful, scenic, grand, awe-inspiring, majestic, and magnificent. Pictures of lone tourists gazing towards impressive scenery (Fig. 3) with no other signs of humanity follow one after another and make it seem as though there are only the tourist and the great wonders of nature, within which the tourist appears very small.

Such images, featuring a minimal human presence, someone looking away from the camera and into the landscape, with photo angles set up at a distance, are typical sublime features (Corbett 2002). Even though a central part of the sublime is aesthetics and a reverence for the beauty of the landscape, it is also so much more. With its constant tension between the qualities of pleasure and fear (Brady 2014), it always encompasses that which lies beyond the comprehensible, but also the ordered, and the harmonious. It triggers intense emotional reactions of being overwhelmed, of pleasure and excitement, but also anxiety, through a palette of multi-sensory qualities. The great meets obscurity, the disordered meets the massive, the shapeless meets the tremendous, and the dizzying meets the thundering. The sublime brings together a myriad of challenging aesthetic qualities of nature, offering experiences that contrast with forms of “simpler” natural beauty (Brady 2014):

High mountains and fearful glaciers, it is this inhospitable but awe-inspiring nature that I have learned to appreciate the most after all years in Sarek. A nature with more philosophical than biological elements. (Hanneberg, Löfgren & Arnell 2010: 110)

These portrayals carry a connected dimension of remoteness. With its characteristics of inhospitality and fearsomeness, but also the fact that the visitor must learn how to appreciate it, this kind of nature is different from the safe, “everyday” spaces that are familiar to the visitor (see Soper 1995). It enables experiences not only of the non-human world, but also of those who experience it. The sublime feels. It makes its way into the human body, triggering all the senses, and making visitors feel insignificant, but it also awakens reflections upon the self and self-understanding. Sublimity awakens in encounters be-



Fig. 3. This is an example of a picture of sublime character, with the tourist standing on top of a high cliff and gazing towards the scenery. Copyright: Fredrik Schlyter/imagebank.sweden.se.

tween the human and the non-human; what is central here is the constituted relations between these two worlds that arise, but also the reflexive experiences that come with it (Brady 2014):

The overall impression is laid bare and makes it easier for the wild and the pristine to make its way into the body. Here, you are free from the cluttered everyday life of the cities, the air carefully carrying birdsong and the scents of the forest. This is the most expansive forest in the south of Sweden, nowhere else can one be as deeply embraced by the wilderness. It feels. And it is an exception. (Emtenäs & Gustafsson 2017: 139)

Through such portrayals, nature is depicted as desolate and far away from humanity, almost assigned a divine status. It offers something extraordinary that can only be achieved there. Thus, national parks become places of opportunity for tourists to interact with an extraordinary kind of nature that can only be found in a few areas of the country and needs protection from human presence and utilization. Here, the wild and the pristine play an important role and are classical components of discourses that emphasize nature as something out of the ordinary (e.g., Cronon 1996; Soper 1995; Oravec 1996; Macnaghten & Urry 1998; Castree 2014). With a long history of attracting tourists to certain places that are considered to be “original” nature (Oravec 1996), the parks lure visitors who long for spaces that are different from the ones they experience in their everyday lives (Soper 1995).

The sublime is primarily assigned to the northern parts of Sweden, and especially its mountain areas. Both parts of our material share portrayals of the north as sublime, wild, and pristine, but the tourism material places a much stronger emphasis on portraying the north. It is depicted as a place for redeemed outdoor visitors with experience, stating that everyone “[...] is welcome to visit the landscape if one accepts the conditions that the mountain requires. There is in no way a mountain for beginners” (Emtenäs & Gustafsson

2017: 299). The dangerous character exposed here dates back to the late nineteenth century and refers to the north as something astonishing and desirable (Ödmann, Bucht & Nordström, 1982; Andolf 1990). This relates to the classical notion that an experience of northern nature becomes authentic once difficulties surround it—you need to be able to get there on your own, and it should not be easy (Andolf 1990; Emmelin 1989; Lundgren 2011). This picturing of the north as demanding, dangerous, and wild is part of the stereotypical portrayal of northern areas as other and different (Ödmann, Bucht & Nordström, 1982; Maraud & Guyot 2016). Such depictions reinforce the problematic understanding of the north as empty and in need of exploitative discoveries, while in fact it encompasses many spaces that have faced colonial possession and marginalization for centuries (Lundgren 2011; Sörlin & Jørgensen 2013; Maraud & Guyot 2016).

Ordinary Features of the Open and Accessible South

While the northern parks get to represent the extraordinary and sublime, the southern parks represent the ordinary and accessible, but also nature that is commonplace and safe. In contrast to the portrayal of the sublime, which focuses on the disordered, this discursive formation focuses on depicting an ordered and accessible nature, offering “simple” ways of experiencing it. Particularly in the nature conservation material, there is a desire to make the parks available and desirable to the masses, which is visible in many attempts to portray them as accessible and open. It should be easy to visit a national park and experience Sweden’s most exclusive nature:

You do not need to reserve a ticket to get access to the experiences in Sweden’s national parks. Nor buy an entrance ticket. All you need to do is enjoy and let yourself be inspired to explore our most exclusive nature. You can start here and now! (SEPA 2018c)

Captions like this one contrast the Swedish parks with other kinds of parks, such as those in the United States, where visitors must pay an entrance fee. Such statements, together with pictures of toddlers running on footbridges, old ladies walking on graveled paths with their walking frames, or people crossing a wooden bridge in wheelchairs, depict the parks as spaces where everyone is welcomed under any conditions. Services available to tourists are central to this portrayal, highlighting (among other facilities) prepared hiking trails, dining opportunities, and guided tours. It is a corrected and organized version of nature that becomes visible here, prearranged to enable people to visit these kinds of places. The pictures that depict this openness and accessibility are framed in close to medium-distance shots, and instead of being the focus, the surrounding environment functions as the location in which tourists’ experiences and encounters take place. These arrangements reinforce a portrayal of nature as an arena for human interaction. In contrast to the images portraying lone tourists meeting the sublime in an encounter with nature, these pictures depict an ordinary focus on interactions between humans. Together, they eat, hike, converse, and explore while their surroundings serve as a backdrop for meaningful encounters. This depicts the natural environs as suitable for human interactions, but also as something that assigns meaning to such meetings (Rehling 2002).

Another type of accessibility and openness that emerges in this discursive formation is the opportunity to roam freely. Even though most images show tourists walking across wooden bridges or along prepared trails, pictures depicting tourists walking in areas with no sign of trails or similar arrangements are also frequent. In an attempt to illustrate a less structured openness, this relates to a right that has become part of Swed-



Fig. 4. The pictures that relate to this discursive formation focus on human encounters and interactions, but also accessibility. Nature is open to everyone, and it is the close and the simple that is emphasized. Copyright: Martin Fransson.

ish identity—the Right of Public Access (Swedish *allmansrätten*). Briefly described, this gives everyone the right to roam freely across the countryside, to put up a tent on private landholdings, pick mushrooms, or similar (Sandell 1997). The frequent presence of such opportunities in our material stresses accessibility, functioning as an aspect of pedagogy that informs tourists about their rights and opportunities, but also emphasizing something very typical of Sweden because it is described as representing a close and open relationship between Swedes and nature (Sandell 1997). Its strong presence stresses the connection between nature and the nation of Sweden.

National Park Nature as National Heritage

Even though conflicting depictions of the extraordinary and the ordinary are strong in our material, they coexist and merge into each other in several ways. Both are portrayed as the national heritage of Sweden, which is constantly depicted as a “country of nature,” having a nature-loving population and offering close connections with the non-human, especially through its national parks:

Nature plays a large role in the Swedish lifestyle. No matter where you are in Sweden, pristine green spaces are never far away. So, it’s not surprising that in 1909, it was the first country in Europe to establish a system of national parks. Nine parks were designated in that first year alone. Currently, Sweden has 30 national parks, all of which are open to the public free of charge. (Visit Sweden 2018a)

The relationship between Swedishness and nature can trace its roots back to the beginning of the 1900s and the moment when the first Swedish national parks were established. Back then, nationalist motives were strong and the “wonders of nature” were seen as national symbols for the country of Sweden, which the parks were intended to both preserve and display (Sundin 1989; Mels 1999). Even though these areas have seen little

tourist focus over their years as national parks (Zachrisson *et al.* 2006; Fredman & Sandell 2014), the initial intention was that they would enable people to connect with the country's nature by functioning as tourist destinations (Mels 1999; Lundgren 2009; Lundgren 2011). Today, such an emphasis is being revitalized and is strongly present in our material. In relation to its national parks, Sweden is described as an ideal tourist destination: "to get close to nature, both tourists and Swedes come up to the mountain areas in the north to get in touch with nature" (Image Bank Sweden 2018a). Through this focus, the parks are depicted as representing Sweden's most precious natural areas, for which they become both representatives and protectors, as well as national heritage. The emphasis on the common interest that they have for Sweden and Swedes is repeatedly stated, and the importance of both the parks and the protection of nature is stressed. The establishment of Swedish national parks is described as "a way to preserve our common natural and cultural heritage" (SEPA 2018d) and the reformation of national parks is described as:

needed in order to make sure that we and future generations will be able to enjoy and be inspired by untouched and interesting nature. SEPA hopes that many people will visit these areas and gently take part in many great nature experiences. (Hanneberg, Löfgren & Arnell 2010: 9)

In other words, these spaces are part of the ongoing recreation of the nation of Sweden, which at the moment is focused on getting people interested in nature protection and making such spaces available to both Swedes and tourists from other countries. Even though both parts of the material display nationalist tendencies, it is emphasized that the national parks also welcome non-Swedes who are interested in nature and Sweden. It almost becomes an urging to get involved and, by visiting any of the parks, tourists are promised not only connections with the non-human world, but also close relationships to Sweden, and the national ethos of Swedishness.

National Park Nature as Elitist and Unique

The national parks are not only portrayed as part of Sweden's pride but also as unique places with characteristics that are found nowhere else. With promises of opportunities to explore and experience the wonders of Sweden's national parks, differences emerge between the nature they represent and other forms of nature. The uniqueness of these areas is constantly stressed and underlined with statements highlighting the exclusive characteristics of the parks: "there would not be anything unique about it, if forests like this one still existed. But forests like this one do not exist. Except for a few, totally unique places" (Emtenäs & Gustafsson 2017: 200), or "one of the world's best places for spotting the northern lights" (Nature's Best 2018), or "one of the mountain world's richest flora" (Abelin [ed.] 2008), or "this is southern Sweden's most extensive forest, nowhere else can you be as deeply embraced by the wilderness. It feels. And it is a liberation" (Emtenäs & Gustafsson 2017: 139). These are only a few examples of this emphasis. Such statements are dependent upon the notion that national parks represent something different than, for example, a nature reserve, or an unprotected area, or even a national park in another country. Even though both parts of the material occasionally refer to the parks as situated in Europe, they are never related to national parks of similar character in countries such as Norway, Finland, or Russia. This reinforces the patriotic orientation and, through this focus, different values are assigned to certain spaces, which is a way of both ordering and controlling the non-human world (e.g. Rutherford 2011; Patin 2012). The national

parks are described as preserving Sweden's finest natural areas, which are not only unique in their characteristics, but also offer their visitors exceptional experiences that other tourism destinations cannot. The national parks are said to offer:

a magnificent whole of different landscapes and experiences. Here, you can wander through leafy beech woods, among imposing mountains, experience coral reefs, rolling sand dunes, magical forests and much more. (SEPA 2018*b*)

Such portrayals depict this kind of nature as exotic and signify it as the closest humans can come to unspoiled and ideal spaces of nature that are really worth longing for. Through the highlighting of their exclusiveness, these national parks are portrayed as being valued more highly than other kinds of nature, which implies a sort of elitism. Both parts of our material contain such depictions, but the nature conservation material (through SEPA's website www.sverigesnationalparker.se) has a specific way of highlighting the exclusive character of the parks:

Our national parks are hosts of Sweden's most scenic nature, consisting of magnificent forests, exotic wilderness, and unique mountain environments. We show this by placing a golden crown in each national park. (SEPA 2018*a*)

The golden crown mentioned above is a three-dimensional extension of a two-dimensional symbol that SEPA has developed to mark the national parks' high value, and the two are frequently visible on the website (Fig. 5). The organization's intention is to place one crown in each park, since "it enhances the whole experience. The golden crown contributes to the feeling and knowing that the national parks represent the finest nature we have" (SEPA 2018*a*). In other words, a stereotypical symbol of power is used to mark the extraordinary character of the parks. The crown has been part of the visual language of the Swedish nation for decades, not least through the symbol of the "three crowns," but also to honor the greatness of the country's monarchs (De Lagerberg 1908).



Fig. 5. Top: the three-dimensional extension of the symbol. Copyright: Ida Lundqvist. Right: the two-dimensional version of the symbol. Copyright: SEPA.



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In our material, the crown is used to denote the majesty of Swedish national parks, classifying national park nature as ranked more highly than other forms of nature in Sweden. This, together with statements and depictions focusing on the unique characteristics of national parks, contributes to the formation and enforcement of hierarchies, which in turn contribute to understandings of such places as elevated and peculiar others, while aspects of nature with lower levels of protection, or no protection at all, become marginalized and less valued.

National Park Nature as an Observed Object

In line with studies on the social construction of nature (e.g., Cronon 1996; Soper 1995; Williams 1997; Castree 2014), we identify a separation between humans and non-humans in our material, whereby humans are portrayed as “unnatural” and nothing more than temporary guests within the national park: “Wild beautiful nature, hydropower dams, windmills, power lines, and roads. Nowhere is mankind’s exploitation of natural resources as visible as here” (Emtenäs & Gustafsson 2017: 305). Here, it is apparent that spaces protected through their status as national parks are understood as natural, in which the majority of humans are unnatural visitors rather than inhabitants. Such understandings position nature as threatened by humanity, which is assigned a distanced role. Humans are potential intruders, which relates to the portrayal of the extraordinary, where sublime, wild, and pristine nature functions by providing places to which people can escape in order to be amazed by the non-human world. In the nature conservation material, SEPA writes: “The aim is to preserve a larger coherent area of a certain landscape type in its natural condition, or in substantially unchanged condition” (SEPA 2018*d*). In this way, national parks become spaces that only function if the human presence is bound and controlled. This contradicts the discursive formation focusing on openness and accessibility, as well as the one focusing on national parks as a form of national heritage that people should visit in order to connect with nature, and the nation.

However, this discursive formation contains depictions of one interaction between the human and non-human that reinforces the portrayal of humans as visiting guests and nature as a distanced scene for exploration—the one between humans and animals. This interaction is emphasized as particularly necessary when being a national park tourist, as both sets of material are filled with images of animals and descriptions of rare animals that can be spotted in the national parks. These animals offer insights into the non-human world and all of its wonders. Thus, the primary purpose of animals in these parks seems to be centered around entertaining and educating tourists (Rutherford 2011). They are portrayed as beings through which tourists can connect with the wild. Interactions between animals and humans are rare, and most of the pictures depict lone animals being watched and captured through the lens of a camera. Often, there are blurred details in the foreground, which reinforces the feeling that someone is observing and sneaking up on them from outside.

Such depictions create a separation between the distanced and observing tourists, and the observed animal. The strong emphasis on the excitement of watching and tracing animals, together with the underlining of the non-human as spaces that humans visit rather than belong to, defines nature and its inhabitants as objects to be experienced by the subjects, tourists. This assigns humans a privileged position in relation to the non-human (Rutherford 2011; Tschida 2012), and leaves no space for the agency of non-humans, nor any opportunity to step outside of the normalizing structures that separate the human from the non-human. The traditional understanding of nature as



Fig. 6. The material is filled with pictures of animals being gazed at by humans through the lens of a camera. These distant encounters are an important component of attracting tourists to the parks. Copyright: Sebastian Kirppu.

something to be controlled and that serves the world of humans is deeply rooted. Within this, the truth that nature and humans are disconnected continues to serve as a vehicle through which humans tell stories about themselves (Rutherford 2011). All of the things that humanity claims to know about nature say just as much about ourselves as they do about how we comprehend the non-human (Chaloupka & Cawley 1993; Cronon 1995; Tschida 2012; Castree 2014).

National Park Nature as an Exploration Arena for Education and the Mastery of Nature

In both sets of material, experiences that will bring all of the tourists' senses to life are promised, and there is a major focus on how different experiences feel. However, the majority of these feelings are said to be dependent upon vision and the ability to see different things, which relates to previous studies' emphasis on the importance of the visual in tourists' experiences (e.g. Lübbren & Crouch 2003; Burns, Lester & Palmer 2010; Urry & Larsen 2011). Even though it is possible to smell the scent of a bear who just recently got up from the moss and ran away, the experience is incomplete until the bear can be spotted. This portrayal assigns vision a privileged role in relation to the other senses, which is exemplified in the emphasis and promise of enlightened experiences. Both parts of the material depict national parks as places that offer opportunities for learning, but the nature conservation material has a strong focus on enlightening tourists. Pictures of the technologies (Fig. 7) that are used to display nature, together with descriptions of what tourists can learn, support each other and the idea is prominent that tourists should visit the parks not only to enjoy themselves, but also to be educated and enlightened.

This normalization of learning into a distinct aspect of being a national park tourist generates different subject and object positions (see Foucault 1982). Tourists become recipients of knowledge, while the authorities in charge of the national parks become knowledge producers with the "right" to tell stories about nature. Through these technologies of display, tourists' ways of looking, seeing, knowing, thinking, approaching, and experiencing the non-human world are formed, as the technologies define nature by displaying and describing how it should be (see Rutherford 2011; Tschida 2012). It is not



Fig. 7. The nature conservation material contains many pictures of technologies of display that guide visitors through the parks. Copyright: Tomas Årlemo.

possible to distinguish precisely what kinds of knowledge these technologies of display contain by analyzing the images (or their captions), but it is evident that the parks offer tourists not only a chance to learn but also to see things in nature. In a way, this framing of a specific gaze (see Foucault 1994; Urry & Larsen 2011), focusing on natural scientific information about flora, fauna, and geology, that we found in our material, invokes scientific authority and portrays national parks as agents of science, expertise, and trust:

Pick a national park that seems exciting. Read about the animals, the plants, the geology, and the history of the area. Find out what you can do and take part in practical visitor information. (SEPA 2018c)

Such a focus on the knowledge produced by scientists turns the non-human world into something to be mapped, investigated, and controlled. It also helps to reinforce regimes of truth, because scientists are often seen as experts who not only tell the truth but also have the unquestioned right to do so (Rutherford 2011). By communicating scientific knowledge, national parks attain the same “objective” and truthful agency.

In a way, the technologies of display become ways of interacting and connecting with nature through exploration, but it is important to emphasize that these only offer certain frames for how to explore the non-human world in national parks. These embodied visualities make certain parts of the parks visible, while others are left invisible (Rutherford 2011; Bednar 2012), but they also present an implicit notion and visual grammar that the parks should be experienced primarily through gazing. This firm way of “guiding” tourists provides ready-made interpretations of what nature is, but also of what is worth looking at and what is not, which narrows the tourists’ opportunities for bodily and spontaneous encounters between themselves and their surroundings (Lekies & Whitworth 2011; Rutherford 2011; Lund 2013; Senda-Cook 2013). Thus, the focus on displaying nature is an attempt to govern and order not only the non-human but also the means through which humans interact with it (Rutherford 2011; Tschida 2012).

In comparison with the nature conservation material, the tourist material has a less narrow focus on what tourists “should” discover, and instead presents the exploration value as being more connected to extraordinary experiences of nature, with fewer clues about what to look for. Instead of learning about nature and its inhabitants, there is a focus on other types of knowledge, where achieving personal skills and mastery over nature are central. Tourists are not encouraged to look for or be taught about a specific bird, or a particular biotope, but about how to become a dog sled driver or a fly fisherman. This reveals a less interpreted form of nature by communicating the non-human world as an arena for learning experiences rather than being the tutor.

National Park Nature—For Whom?

The tourists visible in our material have homogenous appearances and represent a certain type of people. Although both seniors and children are visible to some extent, it is middle-aged women and men with fair skin and blonde or brown hair who appear the most. They travel in pairs or groups and are interested in discovering the outdoors. By this, we mean that they enjoy being outdoors and active, and are prepared for the conditions that such elements demand. These tourists take part in outdoor activities such as hiking, and dress in clothes that are customized for out-of-doors-inspired adventures:

The tour, over high mountains, through deep valleys and ancient forests and by meandering rivers, is ideal for anyone with a taste for the outdoors, dramatic sunsets, and fresh reindeer stew. Not to mention sleeping in a warm sleeping bag... while a blizzard is raging outside the tent! (Swedish Ecotourism Society 2018*b*)

Many of the tourists who are visible in the pictures wear windproof jackets from Tierra, trousers from Fjällräven, and hiking boots from Lundhags while hiking. In other words, the material portrays the national parks as suited to some kinds of tourists—those who can afford to get there, who are dressed “right,” in expensive branded products and enjoy activities of an active character, but also who those know how to “survive” in this kind of nature. Despite some variations, it is an inveterate outdoorsperson who becomes visible. A person with insights into nature and the ways in which humans can interact with it:

Those wishing to visit the park must have considerable alpine experience and the correct equipment and should be used to spending time outdoors. (Image Bank Sweden 2018*b*)

It is obvious that these users of national parks are upper-middle-class visitors who use these areas as their outdoor havens, while there are almost no signs of local inhabitants or other users. Most surprising is the invisibility of the Sami people—the indigenous people of Sweden. Their homeland, Sápmi, encompasses the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and western Russia (Samiskt informationscentrum 2020), which means that several of the Swedish national parks are located within Sápmi. Just like other indigenous people (see e.g., Hollinshead 1996; Lew 1998), the Sami are often stereotypically portrayed and represented within the practice of tourism. In particular, they are frequently visible in representations of northern destinations as exotic and wild (Saarinen 1999; Pettersson 2006), but also as connected to and part of the natural world (Hultman & Andersson Cederholm 2006). This normalized portrayal of the Sami in tourist material stands in contrast to our material, in which the presence of Sápmi is almost invisible. In one way, it is positive that the Sami are not used for commercial purposes, or portrayed in ways that turn them into tourist attractions to be gazed at. However, this invisibility

of the Sami is the product of an exercise of power that assigns them a subject position of marginalization (see Foucault 1982; Feder 2011) because it seems as though they do not exist in these areas. The commercialization of the Sami without their knowledge has harmful consequences (Pettersson 2006), but so does the act of making them invisible.

The invisibility of Sami culture, and of people with other appearances than the ones mentioned above, marginalizes and excludes many people and makes it seem as though the national parks exist only for a white minority of outdoor-oriented people. National parks are often said to be pieces of national pride and made for the people of the nation (e.g., Frost & Hall 2009; Gissibl, Höhler & Kupper 2012), but this reveals the opposite. The targeted approach toward a specific populace is distinct, and it ignores the broader palette of people living in Sweden. Together, they all contribute to the maintaining of the national parks by paying their taxes but, despite this, they are not all explicitly invited.

Concluding Remarks. Heterotopian Neverlands of Nature

Our analysis has identified and made visible how the non-human world in Swedish national parks comes into being through representations in visitor information publications, but it has also offered a problematization of these representations and their productive effects. These representations of the national parks and their non-human worlds affect relations between the human and the non-human (Grusin 2004; Rutherford 2011; Patin 2012; Gisler 2019). There are several tensions in the portrayal and characterization of the non-human world, depicting nature as wild, pristine, and sublime, but also open and accessible. These exist in conjunction with and enclose several hierarchizations. For example, the northern parks get a lot of space in the tourist material, where they represent pristine, wild, and sublime nature that is only reachable by redeemed and experienced outdoor tourists. In contrast, the presentation of the southern parks in the nature conservation material focuses on their accessibility by highlighting their openness and potential to teach about nature. Something that all the parks share, however, whether northern or southern, is their assigned role as being more highly ranked than other forms of nature in Sweden. Here, the non-human world in the parks becomes something that is unique and worth protecting, displaying, and caring for. Functioning as a national treasure that is said to ideally be open to everyone, this world operates as a cultural heritage that is vital for both the nation of Sweden and its identities. But underneath the surface lurks an elitism that depicts these spaces as only open to a delimited group of people rather than a broad mass—wealthy, active, and outdoor-oriented middle-aged women and men with fair skin and blonde or brown hair. Furthermore, there is an evident gap between nature and culture, portraying humans as contemporary visitors who should gaze upon, explore, and be educated by the non-human world. Here, nature and its inhabitants function as objects and an archive of knowledge, which are made tangible through pedagogical technologies of display. Thus, nature in national parks becomes a kind of educational exploration arena for humans, to which they can escape from their ordinary lives and become visitors in a very different space: the non-human world.

The analysis has also shown that there are frequent expressions of longing for a unique form of nature within the discursive formations. Here, qualities such as the finest nature that is of the highest preservation status are assigned, together with promises of an escape from humanity into a world of pure and untouched land, where wild animals

roam, and there are no struggles or dilemmas. In other words, there are tensions between the extraordinary and the ordinary. On the one hand, nature is sublime, always in some sense far away, distanced, and unreachable, almost utopian. On the other, it is transparent and totally illuminated through educational investments. What unites them, and all of our identified discursive formations, are the representations of the non-human world in Swedish national parks as places of otherness.

Such contradictory features are typical of heterotopias; namely, spaces of social worlds that are constituted by their constructed difference from other social worlds, where the notions, interpretations, and understandings of the surrounding society clash. Unlike traditional utopias, heterotopias represent real places that exist in societies and function as counter-sites to other places (Foucault 1984; Hetherington 1997; Storbjörk 2001). In one way, they function as “enacted utopias in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (Foucault 1984: 24). In one sense, the non-human in Swedish national parks is harmonious, free from conflicts, available to everyone, and open. But it also represents extraordinary places of unique character where humans can escape from everyday life, encounter the sublime, connect with the great wonders of nature, and interact with non-humans. It is the purest, most pristine, and genuine nature, to some extent beyond reach, and impossible to fully comprehend. In this portrayal, both sublime and utopian features become visible and appear closely interlinked. Both concern the longing for something perfect located far away, something that is not reachable but only sensed. On the other hand, nature in the national parks is so much more. It works as a place for recreation and for pedagogical activities, where people go for educational purposes. All this takes place within the utopian, almost dreamlike, imaginary of nature within Swedish national parks. The sublime features portray nature as more significant than humanity itself and transform nature into an eternal utopian thread. It becomes grander than humanity itself and invites us to superhuman experiences, but will always be too comprehensive to understand fully. Thus, accumulations of and tensions between understandings constituted by the social world(s) from which the heterotopian one is different characterize the representations of the non-human world.

Traditionally, utopias and utopian thought have been described as places of harmonious and neutral character, where conflicts and severe problems no longer exist (Jameson 1971), but we argue that these reflect ideas about existing principles and power relations in contemporary societies, as they express the ethos of their time (Marin 1993). Thus, heterotopias are fundamental reflections of our time that take shape in relation to external spaces instead of only being internal, like traditional utopias (Foucault 1984). As representatives of the nature of natures—of untouched lands representing the core of the natural world, national parks feature in many of the contemporary discussions and debates about land-use policies and environmental change, and are often seen as establishments of pure environmentalist orientation (e.g., Bednar 2012; Patin 2012; Tschida 2012). Like the fairytale of Peter Pan and his Neverland that enables an escape from aging, national parks in Sweden offer an escape from environmental degradation, places to which people can go to experience “real” nature and pure evidence of environmentalism. In other words, these spaces of heterotopia have a compensating function in relation to other areas, offering a perfect and organized world that stands in sharp contrast to the ill-constructed, disordered, and chaotic spaces outside of them (see Foucault 1984). In Peter’s Neverland, time stands still, none of the children grow up and, in a sense, the non-human world in the national parks is portrayed in these ways. Unlike Peter’s Never-

land, these neverlands of nature do not offer the opportunity to stay young, but they are nevertheless also assigned an enclosed time (at least theoretically). The aging of nature is desired and should be able to occur without the intrusion of humans.

Alarm about deforestation, species extinction, and environmentally damaging procedures are all examples of occurrences against which national parks are said to stand in opposition. With their strong focus on preservation, national parks represent pieces of the non-human that appear to be enclosed in its original shape, in an attempt to save it from the developments and degradation taking place in the surrounding social worlds. But national parks are just another example of the colonization of the non-human world, places where it is ordered and governed according to the premises of the human world. This is particularly reinforced by the strong desire to display nature through technologies of display, as influenced by natural scientists. These provide visitors with an encyclopedia of what nature is and how it should be apprehended, but they also stress the threat posed by humanity to the non-human world and emphasize nature's need for protection.

Encouraging tourists to travel to Swedish national parks becomes a kind of environmentalist activism focused on consumption, which renders the non-human world into a commodified product that offers its visitors experiences of rare nature threatened by destruction (see Rutherford 2011). In other words, this green governmentality represents heterotopias of compensation (see Foucault 1984), which are situated as perfect in comparison to other societal spaces. They provide practices and methods to channel the desires that are present in all ideologies of what a brighter and better future could be (see Jameson 1971; Jameson 1994). Here, the national parks and their non-human worlds become such a dream, or rather a node for basically contradictory dreams created out of the tension between a genuine world that always lies beyond human comprehension—the sublime—and readymade interpretations created through the experts' gaze, which are fully, scientifically stripped of enchantment (see Foucault 1984; Hetherington 1997).

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