Jones, O. (2017) 'Rethinking rural nature in the era of ecocide', in Choné, A., Hajek, I. and Hamman, P., eds*. Rethinking nature: challenging disciplinary boundaries.* Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 145-157.

This is an Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter published by Routledge in '*Rethinking nature: challenging disciplinary boundaries'* on 15/05/2017 available online at: https://www.routledge.com/Rethinking-Nature-Challenging-Disciplinary-Boundaries/Chone-Hajek-Hamman/p/book/9781138214934

ResearchSPAce

http://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/

This pre-published version is made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the reference above.

Your access and use of this document is based on your acceptance of the ResearchSPAce Metadata and Data Policies, as well as applicable law:- https://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/policies.html

Unless you accept the terms of these Policies in full, you do not have permission to download this document.

This cover sheet may not be removed from the document.

Please scroll down to view the document.

Rethinking Rural Nature in the Era of Ecocide

Summary: This chapter seeks to explore what happens to the rural/urban divide and to notions of CULTURE/nature when (a) the very idea of nature, in the enlightenment/modern world-view, is lost, in two conflicting senses; and (b) the very idea of rural/urban space is challenged by topological systems-based readings of the interconnected world. This is done in the context of the contemporary world being 'urban', and through the concept of ecocide (Guattari, 1989/2000). It is suggested that as the world urbanizes the impacts of ecocide are, in some ways, most obvious in what could be called 'rural' and 'wilderness' areas: as the apparent 'homes' of nature these are where extinction and despoliation of various kinds are most evident. To understand the condition of rural/urban space and nature within them an enfolding of topological and topographical approaches is asked for which can deal with the shifting complexities of rural/urban space and nature. Whatever sustainable futures might look like, and, within them, surviving forms of 'nature', the rural/urban divide might be more of a hindrance than a help, just as the CULTURE/nature divide has been.

Introduction

Tim Ingold writes:

> No-one yet has made the crossing from nature to society, or vice versa, and no-one ever will. There is no such boundary to be crossed. (Ingold, 2005: 508).

The logics behind this statement made by this celebrated anthropologist are compelling and critical in today's era of ecological crisis (as discussed below). But perhaps, when the need to care for nature and the environment has never seemed more pressing and critical to all life on earth, it seems perverse to be seeking to dissolve nature as a concept at the same time. But, as also discussed below, Ingold and related thinkers consider that the ways 'nature' and the environment have been constructed by modernity underpin much of the ecological crisis in the first place.

We need to dissolve the idea of nature in order to save nature. Put simply, nature – as it stands – is 'outside' modern politics, culture, and economy in key ways of value (political, ethical, spiritual). This means it is not protected from the ways *it is in modernity* as realms of resources and commons to be enclosed, exploited, despoiled, and exhausted by extraction and discharge. The approach of eco-system services (Bouma and van Beukering, 2015) to development decision-making is one procedure that has recently emerged as an attempt to change this relationship. Nature is brought more fully into modernity by recognizing hitherto disregarded services it provides to society. (The same goes for the related approaches of environmental and ecological economics.) These new economic based approaches, however, do not venture to challenge the CULTURE/nature divide in terms of ethics, and visions of what humans are and how they are 'in ecology', as do, say, deep ecology, ecofeminism, and related 'ecological self' approaches. That is their fatal flaw.

This chapter seeks to explore the key CULTURE/nature architecture of modernity and its ecological crisis in relation to rural space. To leave a densely built-up city by train, bus, or car and ride out into the countryside, and then maybe on to remoter, wilder areas, is to feel like moving from one kind of space to another. The same goes for taking off from a vast international hub airport (the ultimate in modern space?) and then fly out over rural hinterlands, then maybe oceans and the vastnesses of, say, Greenland and northern Canada. As the view through the window changes from concrete, glass, technologies of communication and transport, images and practices of consumption, to fields, trees, hills, mountains, streams – or from dense, complex, and dazzling patterns of fixed and moving lights to deep darkness – it is difficult not to think that a move from 'culture' to 'nature' is being made.

Indeed trips to the countryside (rural or wild lands) are commonly constructed, and marketed, as trips into nature, as retreats and escapes. Of course this was one of the hallmarks of the Transcendental and Romantic movements in the United States and Europe which did so much to shape modern understandings of nature and its relationships to the urban and to the industrial (Bate 1991). Conversely, trips and migrations the other way, such as from remoter rural areas to the 'city', are often constructed as trips to culture and to 'civilization'. Of course, there are marked national variations in these rural/urban dynamics: for example, the UK's notion of the 'rural idyll' is largely absent in Australia.

But what happens to the rural/urban divide and its foundation of 'nature' once the very idea of nature – in the enlightenment/modern world-view – is lost? What does this 'do' to rurality, and what does it do to nature, and to urban space? The 'greening' of modern cities has been a movement based upon bringing tree cover and regenerated waterways, habitats, and species into urban space. Often this is summarized as bringing 'nature' to the city (see Benton-Short and Short, 2008). If the CULTURE/nature divide of modernity needs to be dissolved to save nature – and that means, more or less, preventing the ongoing steep decline in types and extent of habitats, ecosystems, and the biodiversity therein – does the URBAN/rural divide need to be dissolved too? Is it the case that new flourishing forms of eco-social ecology are forming in some cities while the overall pressure from cities in terms of economy and culture are driving an ecocide (Guattari, 2000) that is playing out most violently in what appears to be rural space?

Do the very alarming, existential, threats stemming from the current spatial and ontological settlements of modernity challenge us to really 'start again' in our understanding of how the world is

created in ongoing relational practices? And if so, what kind of spatial and processual analytical units we need to be using?

Losing Nature – Losing the World

Nature is being lost in two conflicting senses. First, in the notion of the 'End of Nature' as famously set out by Bill McKibben in 1990: nature exists only as a separate realm from culture, and once culture has permeated everywhere (e.g. traces of pollution throughout the atmosphere and in the remotest polar ice sheets) nature is no more – all is culture. This notion is challenged by the second sense of losing nature – that it never really existed as the west imagined it (and implicit is McKibben's analysis) in the first place, as is discussed below. But this first sense remains an important idea which is bound up with the eras of the Anthropocene and Ecocide (defined below).

It is quite clear that nature in terms of the biosphere and the communities of life it consists of is being radically altered and degraded. Altered and degraded in relative terms that is. The planet and its biosphere, some other form of Gaia (i.e. the current 'settled' condition of the biosphere), will of course persist despite all human activity and beyond it. But the nature of that settlement – the biodiversity embedded in habitats and ecosystems –is being drastically diminished.

The WWF *Living Planet Report 2014* contains a stark summary:

> This latest edition of the Living Planet Report is not for the faint-hearted. One key point that jumps out and captures the overall picture is that the Living Planet Index (LPI), which measures more than 10,000 representative populations of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish, has declined by 52 per cent since 1970. Put another way, in less than two human generations, population sizes of vertebrate species have dropped by half. These are the living forms that constitute the fabric of the ecosystems which sustain life on Earth – and the barometer of what we are doing to our own planet, our only home. We ignore their decline at our peril. (WWF, 2014: 4)

Nature, or at least much of the biodiverse life of this planet, is being lost. The mapping of this would show the vast majority of this happening, in terrestrial terms, in rural or wild lands space, driven largely by the ongoing conversion of wild-land habitats to economically 'productive' lands; the spread of modernist agriculture replacing traditional farming methods (reduction in domestic plant and animal species); the impact of modern agriculture on the diversity of wild life that can share space with it; and the degradation of soil and water systems through extraction, transformation, and pollution.

The second way in which nature is 'lost', as articulated by writers such as Tim Ingold, Bruno Latour, and William Cronon – is that 'nature' never really existed as a separate realm in the first place. It was and is a construction of certain modern (western) ideologies and philosophies which have been developed and applied in the service of all manner of dubious political and economic enterprises such as colonialization, industrialization, and globalization.

The idea of nature as a 'pure' non-human realm that recedes with the 'touch' of man, has been roundly interrogated by accounts of how non-western/non-modern human societies co-evolved with richly biodiverse ecosystems, which, following colonial invasion, became seen as first wilderness, then wilderness to be exploited and settled, and then, after despoliation, wilderness to be 'saved' by projects such as national parks.

The toxic mega-edifice that is human exceptionalism – conjured up and supported by a range of theological, pre-enlightenment, and enlightenment ideological trajectories – and the challenging thereof, is key in both these senses of losing nature. Not only do we need to be rethinking what nature and culture are, and what rural/urban means, but we also need to define the human/non-human relationship.

But where does all this leave that feeling, when one travels out of a city into rural spaces, that one is going from culture to nature? What do both senses of losing nature say to us about what we think of as rural space? Is this partly the difference between levels of phenomenological experience and systems-level analysis? To move from a place dominated by other humans and things of human construction to spaces with a richer diversity of non-humans with varying levels of free-living agency is to be resituated in a more-than-human world, even if bears the trace of human influence at varying scales of (in)visibility.

Nature(s) and Rurality(s)

The associations between nature and rural space in western political, economic, and cultural discourses are powerful and persistent. As Raymond Williams puts it in *The Country and The City*, constructions of the country (rurality) come from a contrast to the city – 'here nature, there worldliness [culture]' (1985: 46). And, as Benton-Short and Short (2008: 3) observe, 'cities provide an inevitable contrast to the "natural"'. A consistent strand of thought has sought to place the city as a human invention in opposition to the 'natural', the 'pristine', and the 'wilderness'. These associations between rurality and nature have deep roots stretching back as far as Ancient Greek

thinking, but they came more fully into form through the eras of the enlightenment, industrialization, and rapid, unregulated urbanization.

Despite so much obvious evidence that many flows of process such as food chains, energy chains, water catchments, and waste-disposal systems weave the rural and urban into powerfully seamless systems, the idea of distinctive rural/natural space remains deep, intuitive, and is played out not only in culture but also in political and economic structures.

Culturally, economically, and politically rural areas can still have very different 'identities' operating at the individual and collective community levels which distinguish them from the power bases of urban areas. Consider, for example, the political atmosphere of the American Mid-West, the ongoing political force of the Countryside Alliance in the UK, the very distinctive and assertive agri-rural politics of some areas of France, and the overwhelmingly urban balance of modern Australia where the rural is the 'outback' with little charm and, instead, much danger and a dark history. But through all these differing constructions of rural space run some or other idea of 'nature', and economic, cultural, and political relationships to it held by those in rural space, *and* those, including political and economic elites, in urban centres.

The rural/urban divide is present in just about all national (i.e. nation-state) politics and cultures. Indeed there are approaches seeking to analyse the notion of 'global rurality' in the era of globalization (Woods, 2016). As the relationships between the country and the city change into the 21st century they retain shifting political and cultural purchase. Most modern states still have administrative departments and agencies dedicated to the strategic management of 'rural space' for a range of purposes, such as effective social provision away from large centres of population, the provision of agriculture, landscape conservation, ecological conservation, water catchment management, forest cover management, and so on. These shape not only the rural and nature in imagination and material practice but also the urban in a complex web of dualized interplays.

Scholars of the history of rural studies will know that the subject has waxed and waned as an area of study, and throughout there has been debate on what the rural is and whether it is a legitimate concept of space in the first place. Eminent scholars such as Mormont (1987) have questioned the rural as a category given the degrees of social and political diversity found in rural areas within national settings – let alone between them. In their argument for 'post-rural' studies, Murdoch and Pratt (1993) draw back from the universal concepts of 'urban' and 'rural', prioritizing instead the exploration of local variants of these concepts using the tools of social science.

In popular culture in the UK many national television and radio programmes retain a persistent focus upon rural landscape and lifestyle. They do so in ways in which nature is to the fore as a context, an asset, and sometimes as a challenge. Many accounts and images of rural lifestyles offer affective, emotionally expressive accounts of how individual and collective identities are performed in relation to a rich mix of nature (landscape), animals (domestic and wild), and agriculture crystallized in political movements such as the Countryside Alliance (see Jones 2013).

The shape and feel of history in rural/urban space

The rural/urban divide, albeit differently articulated culturally and politically in differing national contexts, seems to remain one of the main de facto divisions of terrestrial space, particularly so in those societies where all non-urban land has been *very obviously* modified by land use over many centuries, as in the UK and many European countries. Here the rural provides the main 'alternative' form of space to the urban and suburban and thus also the spaces of nature (as in national parks, nature reserves, and other landscape designations). In some other countries, both developed and developing, where large tracts of *apparent* wilderness remain, the distinction is yet more complex with a wilderness–rural–suburban–urban spectrum in play. Here nature in terms of the rural stands against the wilder regions.

The major steps in the development of modern western human societies can be seen to be played out within and through these spatial frameworks. The move from hunter-gatherer to agrarian cultures (which had a series of epochs), and the industrial revolution with its consumerism, globalization, and the acceleration of urbanism to today's predominantly urban world (in terms of settlement, economy, consumption, population) are great movements in the fundamental relationships between humans, land, and natures as articulated in wilderness-rural-urban-suburban space. Of course in other continents beyond the initial reach of the west this history is very different. It could be argued that in places like Australia and the US, once colonization occurred a kind of speeded-up version of this history unfolded that exposed the true violence of it.

Human societies have gone through radical changes in terms of what humans are and how they 'see' their place in the cosmos and in nature. Harrison (1992) suggests civilizations (cities) began – quite literally – as clearings in the primordial forest which grew and connected over time. Rosalind Williams (2008) points out that shifts from hunter-gatherer to pastoral, agricultural, and industrial civilizations provoked cultural and spiritual upheavals and breakdowns which resonated *for*

thousands of years. This model now colonizes the majority of the world's lands, and Williams suggests we are now embarked on yet another period of cultural upheaval and mourning as we enter the 'post-natural era' where globalized society is increasingly urbanized and evermore removed from obvious manifestations of 'nature'. As Ingold puts it, even if the nature/culture divide is an illusion, modern society can become separated from the textures, qualities, and rhythms of natural phenomena, such as the earth, as soil – the medium of life – itself (2011: 124). Obviously this plays out in some sense at least in aspects of rural and urban space.

Clearly all humans are embedded in nature in terms of food and energy chains, the atmosphere, climate, and so on. But it is possible to become increasingly removed from many textures of the non-human even if not the fundamentals of nature itself. Russell Hitching (2010) conducted studies revealing that certain London workers lived in highly 'artificial' indoor environments making up their work, travel, home, and recreation spaces for the vast majority of their waking day. Contact with 'nature' in terms of space – even a city park – was fleeting.

Deep questions about biophilia (affective bonds between humans and natural systems – Wilson, 1984), human health, and well-being (and non-human health and well-being) crowd around this. For example, there is the issue of 'nature deficit' disorder in modern children. This can apply to children in both rural and urban locations as safety fears and the lure of the screen keep them indoors. But children have long been seen to be 'at home' in rural areas because they are 'in nature' (Cloke and Jones 2005, Jones 2002). But the geographies of the rural and urban child still have distinctive characteristics in relationship to space and nature (Ward, 1978, 1990). Key scholars such as Williams, in his seminal *The Country and the City*, have discussed how the loss of the rural and nature, and the longing for them, as in the poems of the celebrated pastoral poet John Claire, is a complex retrospective construction, as much wrapped up in the challenges of time and the self (changing from child, to youth, to young adult, to older adult). Of course, Claire was mourning for the loss of the pre-enclosure rural landscape of his youth and early adulthood but, as his many poems dedicated to the creatures of that land show, forms of nature were integral to that.

In a world of lost nature – in both senses – and in a globalized, hyper-connnected, topological world of networks and flows, does the rural/urban divide have any analytical and governance purchase? Is ecocide more at play in rural or urban space? Where is the greatest biodiversity and where can it best flourish?

'The City is Everywhere and in Everything'

In their book on cities, Amin and Thrift (2002: 1) assert that 'the city is everywhere and in everything'. This is not really so much about the oft-quoted fact that at least half the world's greatly expanded human population now live in urban rather than rural areas; it is more about the extent to which the cultural, economic, political, and bio/material power emanating from urban centres pervades the whole of global society and the planetary biosphere. Put another way, the effects of the global urban in terms of input (energy, water, food, raw materials) and output (waste of various kinds, products, services) pervade the entire planet.

The city is in the fields of all rural areas, for example through long, complex food chains and/or the shaping of commodity prices. The city is in all wilder landscapes as conservation measures and tourist pressures shape how rural and wilderness landscapes are valued and managed. The water, energy, and waste disposal needs of cities all utterly penetrate rural areas. Beyond these there are the more systemic issues of climate change, pollution, and so on, where the global atmospheric/water cycles are transformed and tainted. Clearly these do not, in any way, heed the rural/urban divide in spatial terms, yet political and policy responses still seek to discuss rural sustainability and urban sustainability as if somehow one could, for example, protect the atmosphere – the sky – over rural areas alone.

This is essentially a topological view of the world where connections and flows between points and processes construct the fabric of space. It sits in some tension with more topographical views of space where the rural and the urban could still be said to exist in terms of material and visual form, culture, and legislation. The question – or challenge – could be this. Which view should shape our understanding of and management of the rural? And of the rural/urban divide? And of nature? Could it be that dualistic views of this kind are zero-sum games in conceptual thinking? In answer I suggest that both these views have purchase. Their consequences might well play out differently in rural/urban terms. For example, in the UK, recent formulations for flood prevention expenditure rest on numbers of household defended per pound sterling. Therefore, those in remote, thinly populated areas are likely to have less money spent on their behalf than those living in larger settlements. Thus, in some ways the rural persists, or emerges, as a challenge even if, in other ways, it dissolves. The challenge is how to effectively enfold topological and topographical approaches through which we can begin to deal with the shifting complexities of rural/urban space and nature.

The Rural/Urban Dimensions of Ecocide

Nature – and the biosphere as configured in the current 'settlement' of Gaia – seems to be crashing around disastrously in waves of 'slow violence' made up of climate change, pollution, species extinctions, and so on. Donna Haraway sums up the crisis:

> It's more than climate change; it's also extraordinary burdens of toxic chemistry, mining, depletion of lakes and rivers under and above ground, ecosystem simplification, vast genocides of people and other critters, etc, etc, in systemically linked patterns that threaten major system collapse after major system collapse after major system collapse. (Haraway, 2015: 159)

This is the era of ecocide (Guattari 1989/2000). As the powerful (urban) cultural and political elites, which include academic scholars in the developed world, 'look down' on the spectacle, the implications are grim not only for the biosphere but for us as individuals and collectives. Isabelle Stengers writes:

> We do, however, know one thing: even if it is a matter of the death of what we have called a civilization, there are many manners of dying, some being more ugly than others. I belong to a generation that will perhaps be the most hated in human memory, the generation that 'knew' but did nothing or did too little (changing our lightbulbs, sorting our rubbish, riding bicycles…). But it is also a generation that will avoid the worst – we will already be dead. I would add that this is the generation that, thirty years ago, participated in, or impotently witnessed, the failure of the encounter between two movements that could, together, perhaps have created the political intelligence necessary to the development of an efficacious culture of struggle – those who denounced the ravaging of nature and those who combated the exploitation of humans. (Stengers, 2015: 10–11)

Does ecocide have a rural/urban dimension and/or speak to how we might continue to understand and practise rural space?

It is not hard to point to 'rural' located acts of ecocide: the use of 'remote' Australian aboriginal lands for nuclear testing by the British government between 1952 and 1957; the ploughing of prairie grasslands in the US in the 1920s, rendering ancient and rich ecosystems to dust in a matter of years; the clearing of Indian lowland forests for railway sleepers in the 19th century – all the ecology, the elephant herds gone. The same story repeats and repeats and repeats: the digging out of sand banks on Indian rivers for building and subsequent loss of nest sites for the river-dwelling gharial crocodiles. For those in the UK and Europe where there are seemingly more 'settled' pastoral, picturesque forms of rural landscape/nature these seem like faraway stories. But here too a 'soft ecocide' is unfolding with many common species of plants and animals in decline.

Here I will set out how ecocide is being defined. We are using Felix Guattari's term (first published in French in 1989) where he claims that ecocide is devastating three sorts of ecology on a planetary scale. These three are as follows: 1) ecology as in biodiversity of habitats, species, etc; 2) ecology as

in cultural diversity of languages, customs, non-modern cultures; 3) ecology as in individual psychic diversity, which becomes eroded by the onslaught of ideologies of consumerism, liberalism, and the oppressive structures of theologies. These three types of ecology flourished in complex interrelations in local regional settings. This can be seen as ‘local distinctiveness’ as Common Ground (an famous UK based Arts and Environment NGO) termed it, or simply ‘place’. Edward Casey (1998) asserts that modernity is hostile to the very idea of place.

All three ecologies are falling under the onslaught that is globalized consumer capitalism coupled to certain neo-liberal ideologies about the human self as exceptional (and above nature). In terms of ecology type it is clear that much of the loss in biodiversity has taken place in rural ‘wilderness settings’ as various forms of land use have devastated species-rich habitats and ecosystems. Indeed the city is the focus of the last main chapter of the WWF *Living Planet Report 2014*, which suggests how cities can be the engine of future sustainability by reducing their impacts. Urban biodiversity is another factor. I return to that shortly.

To consider how ecological biodiversity ecocide sits alongside cultural diversity ecocide we need only to look at global hotspots of habitat loss and global hotspots of language loss. They echo each other and are playing in in rural, wild areas. Other major challenges sit alongside biodiversity loss in rural/wildland space, as Harari (2015) points out:

> The disappearance of wildlife is a calamity of unprecedented magnitude, but the plight of the planet’s majority population – the farm animals – is cause for equal concern. In recent years there is growing awareness of the conditions under which these animals live and die, and their fate may well turn out to be the greatest crime in human history. If you measure crimes by the sheer amount of pain and misery they inflict on sentient beings, this radical claim is not implausible. (Harari, 2015: 159)

The European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2006) can be seen as a mirror image of ecocide, or a response to it, in so far as it wisely understood cultural and biological ecology to be interwoven and co-productive of each other across many rural areas of Europe. It is concerned to conserve remaining remnants of rich locally-distinctive culture-natures where local forms of biodiversity go hand in hand with certain food cultures and other socio-cultural formations. The conversion of wild lands to agricultural production and the spread of modern/industrial farming systems and methods across traditional production spaces mean that ecocide is playing out most powerfully in rural space.

> 10,000 years ago free living animals made up 99% of the biomass – and human beings – we only made up 1% of the biomass. Today 10,000 years later, which is only a fraction of time, we human beings and the animals we own as property, make up 98% of the biomass, and wild free living animals make only 2%. We have basically completely stolen the world, the earth, from free living animals for use for ourselves [and our livestock] (Will Tuttle, 2014 – online video).

Topographically this is driven in large part by the needs of urban areas in terms of inputs and outputs.

In a number of states in the Europe and globally nature conservation bodies are seeking to counter ecocide through f new 'integrated' and 'landscape scale' approaches. They make the important step of seeing the ground for species and habitat conservation as being not based on separated, isolated spaces of special conversation (national parks, nature reserves, sites of special scientific interest). Such approaches seek to join up and make movement zones between areas of conservation and areas where important biodiversities still flourish, or cling on. This is seen as especially important in relation to climate change and the possibilities for species and even habitat migration.

The forces of ecocide are systematic and will wash through these spaces and degrade them unless new practices are adopted. The counter-measures to ecocide *also need to be systemic* and be applied to systems of energy, food, wastes, consumption, and so on.

But the extent to which these approaches can 'deal with' and transverse densely built up urban areas is still open to question. Perhaps, then, the city, as it is now 'in everything', is the key.

Conclusions: 'We Love Cities' (WWF) The city as rural and world future

> An ecological feedback loop is a natural extension of the idea that nature exists in the city, but it requires a change of thinking that is equally profound: There is no difference between urban nature and rural nature. It is all one ecology, adjusting and cross-pollinating in the face of change. This can be disturbing, since local stresses threaten to disrupt wildlife hundreds of miles away. But it is, in fact, a hopeful idea. If New York City's ecology has taught us anything, it is that nature likes intrusions – counts on them, even. Change makes for vibrancy. We are not just a city of bedbugs and rats; we are a wellspring for regional vitality. (Webb, 2010)

It could be surmised that in the relatively (historically) new spaces and assemblages of urban space, new ecologies are forming - urban green space, urban wild life, new forms of food production. Bees, in the UK, are said to fare better in the city these days than they do in much of the countryside. This is because,

> with their webs of non-human life, in mosaics of abandoned and planned spaces such as gardens, parks, allotments, derelict land, transport network verges, car parks, rooftops and underground systems, cities can offer much richer habitats than intensively farmed, but apparently green, rural landscapes. Maxeiner and Miersch (2006) point out that Berlin is in fact the biodiversity 'hotspot' of Germany, being home to 141 species of birds and more types of wild flowers per square kilometre than just about anywhere else in the country [ ]. Norman (2006, p. 16) goes so far as to state that 'the city and not the countryside is the true home of nature' and that 'the bigger the city, the more ecological niches it offers to nature'. (Jones 2009 298)

Of course this is not a simple and happy answer. Even if new forms of urban biodiversity are flourishing in some places this is relative to the chronic decline in the space around them. The overall *bio proportionality* is inevitably drastically shifted to the human centre. Recognising this and trying to ensure a more just and ecologically viable future for life on earth means rethinking biodiversity in relation to bio-proportionality (Matthews 2016).

Of course there are many progressive alternative assemblages in rural areas as well as in urban but it is hard not to think that hard ecocide is harvesting many rural areas of their ecological and cultural diversities.

We need a deep shift towards understandings and practices of multi-species citizenship across space. The in cities the hope might be that engaging in urban wildlife conservation helps city dwellers to understand the wider social-ecological systems they're a part of and hence to care more about their impact on urban and wild places. In rural space the illusion of 'nature' might still be a problem.

Acknowledgements

I am greatly indebted to the editors for their patience, support, and guidance in the creation of this chapter, to Professor Kate Rigby for a number of insights, and to Penny Rogers for her skilled editing.

References

Amin, A. and N. Thrift (2002) *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*, Cambridge: Polity.

Bate, J. (1991) *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*, London and New York: Routledge.

Benton-Short, L. and J. R. Short (2008) *Cities and Nature*, Oxford and New York: Routledge.

Bouma, J. and P. van Beukering (eds) (2015) *Ecosystem Services: From Concept to Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Casey, E. S. (1998) *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*, University of California Press: London.

Cloke P., and Jones O., (2005) '"Unclaimed Territory": Childhood and Disordered Spaces(s)', *Social and Cultural Geography*, 6, 3, pp 311-323.

Council of Europe (2006) *Landscape and Sustainable Development: Challenges of the European Landscape Convention*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Cronon, W. (ed) (1996) *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, New York: W. W. Norton.

Guattari, F. (1989 orig. French; 2000) *The Three Ecologies*, London: Athlone Press.

Harari, Y. (2014) *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, London: Harvill Secker.

Haraway D. (2015) Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin, *Environmental Humanities*, 6: 159–65.

Harrison, R. P. (1992) *Forests: The Shadow of Civilisation*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hitchings, R. (2010) Seasonal Climate Change and the Indoor City Worker, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 35, 2: 282–98.

Ingold, T. (2005) Epilogue: Towards a Politics of Dwelling, *Conservation and Society*, 3, 2: 501–8.

Ingold, T. (2011) *Being Alive, Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*, London: Routledge.

Jones O. (2002) 'Naturally Not!' Childhood, the Urban and Romanticism, *Human Ecology Review*, 9, 2: 17–30.

Jones O. (2013) The Animality of Rural Landscapes in Affective Registers. UK. *Landscape Research Journal*, special edition on Animals and Landscape, 38, 4: 421–42.

Latour B. (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester/Wheatsheaf.

Mathews. F. (2016) From biodiversity-based conservation to an ethic of bio-proportionality, *Biological Conservation,* 200, pp. 140–148.

Maxeiner, D. and Miersch, M. (2006) The urban jungle. In J. Norman (ed.), Living for the City. London: Policy Exchange, pp. 52–67.

McKibben, B. (1990) *The End of Nature*, London: Penguin Books.

Murdoch, J., & Pratt, A. C. (1993). Rural studies: Modernism, postmodernism and the 'post-rural'. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 9(4), 411-427.

Mormont M. (1987) Rural Nature and Urban Natures, *Sociologia Ruralis*, 17: 3–20.

Norman, J. (2006) Introduction living for the city. In J. Norman (ed.), Living for the City. London: Policy Exchange, pp. 13–20.

Stengers, I. (2015) *In Catastrophic Times Resisting the Coming Barbarism*, Paris: Open Humanities Press.

Tuttle, W (2014) speaking on film "Impact clips" by First Spark Media at https://vimeo.com/93874570

Ward, C. (1978) *The Child in the City*, London: Architectural Press.

Ward, C. (1990) *The Child in the Country*, London: Bedford Square Press.

Webb, S. (2010) *Urban Versus Rural Nature,* Sarah Webb Science Blog, http://www.webbofscience.com/2010/09/14/urban-versus-rural-nature/ (accessed 07/09/2016).

Williams, Raymond (1985) *The Country and the City*, London: Hogarth Press.

Williams, Rosalind (2008) *Notes on the Underground: An Essay on Technology, Society, and the Imagination*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wilson, E. O. (1984) *Biophilia*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Woods, M. (2016) Family Farming in the Global Countryside, *Anthropological Notebooks*, 20, 3: 31–48.

WWF (2014) *Living Planet Report*, http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/all_publications/lpr_2014/index.cfm/ (accessed 10/10/2016).