

‘WEIRD’ visions of the Global South

Analysing representations of nature-culture complexes in the Global South in *national geographic magazine* since 1990

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Abstract

In this critical content analysis, relevant articles in *national geographic magazine* are examined to find how nature-culture complexes in the Global South have been positioned since 1990. Following a constructionist epistemology, nature and culture are regarded a fluent whole in this analysis. Indicators signalling orientalism were found in several articles. The indicators include exoticism, stereotyping, negative characterisations, heroic characterisations of western scientists, and exaggerated romantic depictions of the landscape. Consistent trends over time were not found. Multiple nature-culture complexes were identified ranging from articles objectifying nature to articles considering multiple interpretations to a place. Representations seem to depend on the author and their background. *National geographic magazine* tends to highlight overly spectacular segments of a narrative while representing scientist heroically.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Nature-culture complex: the role of representation in popular media	4
2.1 Nature-culture complex in geography	4
2.2 The role of power and the importance of the narrative in representations of nature and culture.....	5
2.3 Hegemonic ideas and the institutionalisation of truth claims	7
3. Global South and the ‘unknown’: orientalism and postcolonialism	9
3.1 Postcolonialism in popular media	9
3.2 Orientalism and gender in popular media	10
3.3 Postcolonialism expressed through stereotyping	12
3.4 Conceptual model.....	13
4. Methodology	15
4.1 1990: a turning point for national geographic magazine.....	15
4.2 The Global South and WEIRD countries and places	15
4.3 Methodology for data-collection and categorisation.....	16
4.4 Methodology for analysis of spatial distribution.....	20
4.5 Methodology for analysis of selected articles	20
5. Analysis Results	23
5.1 Results of analysis of spatial distribution of relevant articles since 1990.....	23
5.2 Results of article analysis for articles published from 1990 to 1999	24
5.2.1 Rain Forest Canopy – The High Frontier.....	24
5.2.2 Malaysia’s Secret Realm	29
5.2.3 Masai Passage to Manhood	31
5.2.4 Amazon – South America’s River Road	34
5.2.5 The Orinoco – Into the Heart of Venezuela	38
5.3 Results of article analysis for articles published from 2000 to 2009	41

5.3.1 The Driest Place on Earth.....	41
5.3.2 Megatransect	45
5.3.3 The Gods Must Be Restless	50
5.3.4 Cruellest Place on Earth	54
5.3.5 Last of the Amazon	58
5.3.6 Deadly Haven.....	62
5.4 Results of article analysis for articles published from 2009 to 2019	64
5.4.1 Defenders of the Amazon – Kayapo Courage.....	64
5.4.2 Life on the Edge	68
5.4.3 The Salt and the Earth	71
5.4.4 Borneo’s Vast Underworld.....	73
6. Discussion	77
6.1 Various nature-culture complexes and truth claims seem dependent of authors	77
6.2 Personalisation and characterisation as popular tools in national geographic magazine since 1990.....	78
6.3 Themes indicating orientalism through exoticism, stereotyping, romantic representations, and heroic characterisations of western protagonists.....	79
7. Conclusion.....	82
7.1 Answer to the main research question.....	82
7.2 Reflection and suggestions for future research	84
8. References	86
9. Appendices	88
9.1 Appendix A – All relevant articles per issue.....	88
9.2 Appendix B – All relevant articles divided per continent.....	95

1. Introduction

The *national geographic magazine* is a popular science magazine and an American institution that has been in print since 1888 (national geographic, 2018). It was founded by a group of “geographers, military officers, cartographers, naturalists, biologists, and engineers” (Parameswaran, 2002, p.288). A good part of the topics in the *national geographic magazine* discuss nature and cultures in the Global South (Lutz & Collins, 1993). Its photographs are described by Lutz & Collins (1993) as “one of the most culturally valued and potent media vehicles shaping American understandings of, and responses to, the world outside the United States” (p.xii).

As an organization, the magazine has changed significantly since its start in 1888. Before 1960, the contents of the magazine were determined largely by the personal interests of one man: Gilbert H. Grosvenor. He edited the magazine for fifty-five years and was a self-proclaimed average American, so according to him, his interests would be interesting to other average Americans too (Beaudreau, 2002). There might have been some truth to this as the organization and its audience grew steadily. When Grosvenor’s son Melville took over in 1970, the magazine was no longer managed according to the vision of one man. Melville Grosvenor modernized the organization and embraced modern changes to the hierarchical structure and technological methods of *national geographic*. By 1990, the *national geographic society* had expanded further and now included tv-shows and documentaries in addition to the magazine. Importantly, the magazine’s vision was now determined by many contributors, including freelance photographers and writers from more diverse backgrounds instead of the vision of one man or group of men (Beaudreau, 2002).

Although the magazine’s target audiences are “global middle- and upper class” readers, the magazine reaches other audiences too (Parameswaran, 2002, p.289). In December 2018, *national geographic magazine* had an estimated reach of over 37 million people, making it the magazine with the tenth largest audience overall and the only popular science magazine in the top twenty in the United States (Statista, 2018). Within this broad audience, many readers will accept the magazine’s articles as a faithful depiction of reality. *National geographic magazine* articles hold power to shape audience opinions on whatever topic is chosen for that article. So, the magazine’s portrayal of nature and culture in the Global South is likely to influence the opinions of the audience on those nature-culture complexes. To elaborate, *national geographic magazine* can shape perceived place meanings through its articles and photographs (Davis,

2005). Davis states that there are no ‘true’ or ‘objective’ place meanings, only meanings that are shaped by what information is available. This shows Davis’s constructionist epistemology; a way of viewing the world that assumes that there are multiple constructed ways of viewing the world and not one single ‘true’ way (Hay, 2016; Hesmondhalgh, 2016). According to Davis (2005), in the hypothetical case that the *national geographic magazine* is the only source of information available on a particular place to a person, the meaning this person attaches to that place may be shaped almost entirely by the magazine and the perceptions of the reader of these articles.

Representations of nature and culture can contribute to the shaping of an audience’s view of this nature and culture. For instance, a photograph showing people dressed traditionally instead of in garments that are considered modern to the audience will shape the audience’s image of the people in the photo regardless whether those are the clothes they would normally wear. Similarly, showing or intentionally leaving things out of a photo can have the same effect. A piece of land that may be labelled as nature has many different meanings for different people. Greider & Garkovich (1994) state that a landscape is inherently meaningless, but individuals or institutions create these meanings and ascribe them to a landscape. Blaikie (1995) explains how the same piece of land can be described differently by different actors. A single piece of land has a range of meanings just as nature and culture will have different meanings for different people. This thesis will assume that nature and culture are a fluent whole and that the two are interrelated. This interrelation will be called the nature-culture complex. Particular nature-culture complexes can be presented as the truth. These truth claims can be made by institutions from their vision and position of power. In the case of a big enough audience a truth claim may influence public opinion.

National geographic magazine is one of those actors who push their own vision. They institutionalize their vision, influencing frameworks of interpretation of people in a society. The audience’s image of nature and culture is shaped through writings and photos. According to the magazine’s website, their strategy is to “be the foremost thought leader, convener and storyteller as well as a catalyst for innovation and impact in the cultural heritage, natural science and conservation spaces” (2018). The magazine’s ambition to be a ‘thought leader’ underlines the influence they can have on their audience (Lutz & Collins, 1993). The *national geographic magazine*’s focus on foreign places (from an American standpoint) including many articles on nature and culture in the Global South make the magazine an interesting case to investigate for this study.

As the *national geographic magazine* is a relevant actor because of its audience and broad societal imbedding, positioning of the nature-culture complex in *national geographic magazine* will be deconstructed for articles covering the Global south through a critical content analysis. The main question of this study is:

How does *national geographic magazine* position the nature-culture complex in its articles covering the Global South since 1990?

This question will be answered through three sub questions. Firstly, how are *national geographic magazine* articles covering the nature-culture complex in the Global South distributed spatially since 1990? Secondly, how is the nature-culture complex represented in text and photos in *national geographic magazine* since 1990? And finally, has the tone or style of articles covering the Global South changed over time since 1990?

As mentioned briefly above, I will be writing from a constructionist (sometimes referred to as interpretivist) epistemology as opposed to a positivist epistemology. This constructionist epistemology fits this research as it is “more concerned with exploring the way in which people make sense of their social world, rather than to establish claims about cause and effect, or to create generalizable knowledge” (Hesmondhalgh, 2016, p.146). In this approach, nature and culture will be seen as a fluent whole instead of two concepts with a sharp division (Castree, 2005).

The structure of this thesis is as follows: after the introduction the literature study will explore the concepts and approaches used to analyse the *national geographic* articles. Important concepts that will be discussed include stereotyping and Said’s (1978) work on orientalism, Blaikie’s (1995) work on truth claims and Greider & Garkovich’s (1994) work on different meanings of a landscape. Power and dominance are important underlying notions that form a common thread between other concepts. Then the research methods will be explained. The methodology will use the work of Tonkiss (2012) on discourse analyses so that clear pointers can be used to analyse text and photographs in *national geographic magazine* articles. After that, the analysis will be presented with individual results for every article. Next the results will be synthesised in a discussion section. Finally, the main research question will be answered in a conclusion section.

2. Nature-culture complex: the role of representation in popular media

2.1 Nature-culture complex in geography

There is no consensus on the meaning of nature and culture among geographers (Castree, 2005). Different understandings between the various fields of geography exist regarding the concepts and their relation to each other. Within geography, physical geography concerns itself with the physical world and so it may be assumed to focus on nature and the interactions between the biotic and the abiotic world more than human geography and cultural geography which are on the other side of the geographical spectrum and focus more on people and their relations with and within the physical world (ibid.). That is, if nature here means the non-human world or “[...] plants and creatures other than man” (Williams, 1983, p.211) which is one of many meanings nature can have. However, as Castree points out, human geographers and cultural geographers may not focus on the way the physical environment works but consider how nature is interpreted by various actors. It is worth mentioning that this dichotomy between physical and human geography is not absolute; there are academics who position themselves on a middle ground. Castree (2005) points out that there is a tendency towards polarisation and that this middle ground is diminishing, but it has not disappeared.

Many human and cultural geographers assume a constructionist epistemology which is a way of seeing the world where multiple interpretations to the same phenomenon are constructed (Hesmondhalgh, 2016). However, many others assume a different epistemology such as the positivist epistemology which looks for a single explanation instead of assuming many different coexisting interpretations. Positivism attempts to objectify empirical phenomena, thus excluding subjective elements, while constructionism claims that knowledge is not absolute but socially constructed (ibid.). These different epistemologies ensure that “within any academic disciplines (like geography), one finds researchers investigating often the same aspects of the world but in radically different ways” (Castree, 2005, p.30). When regarding representations of nature and culture in media outlets from a constructionist perspective, the two concepts are difficult to separate because in many cases nature will be part of people’s everyday life and different actors will regard the two very differently. A positivist scientist may disagree and claim a clear disconnection between nature and culture and give two absolute definitions of the concepts. It is apparent what effect this discussion has on the nature-culture complex: a positivist sees two separate domains, while a constructionist sees a

continuous whole. This thesis will assume that nature and culture are a fluent whole and that the two are interrelated. This interrelation will be called the nature-culture complex.

Castree (2005) sees ideas about nature as a “part of a high-stakes contest whereby multiple knowledge-producers within and beyond universities struggle to have their views on nature heard” (p.xxii). Geography is not the only discipline creating knowledge about nature; many other academic fields do so too. Then looking even further, academia is only one of many domains creating knowledge about nature all with their own goals. Think for instance about writers, charities, governments, media outlets, and knowledge passed down by relatives or acquaintances (Castree, 2005). These knowledges are competing against each other for credibility, each with specific characteristics. For instance, popular media may easily reach a big audience but may have to (over)simplify their narrative, academia has an image of being unbiased (or less biased) but different researchers may not agree with each other resulting in conflicting views (ibid.).

2.2 The role of power and the importance of the narrative in representations of nature and culture

An effective way for knowledge producers to promote their vision on a place is through the making of maps. Bosak, Boley & Zaret (2010) state that maps are socially constructed and have the power to “ascribe and reassert power” (p.467). They analyse maps made by *national geographic magazine* and explain how a large part of the power of maps comes from their perceived objectivity. Maps can influence the audience because “many believe maps to be scientific and void of politics” which gives the map credibility and creates an illusion of objectivity (p.468). Harley (1989) explains that a map can create a ‘mythic geography’ when a place in reality differs from the way it is portrayed on a map. Actors who make a map have the power to highlight or leave out information on that map. A reader will get a certain idea and expectation of a place which may be very different from their experience were they to visit that place. So, maps are not representations of reality but “an art of persuasive communication” (Harley, 1989, p.11). Similarly, photographs or articles on nature and culture are subjective and persuasive too (Davis, 2005; Lutz & Collins, 1993).

Power can also be ascribed and reasserted through photographs and text in a similar way that maps can (Lutz & Collins, 1993). The way an object or person is shown and in which setting they are portrayed influences a reader’s expectations about that place, object, or person. Adding or leaving out information in text or photographs has the same effect. Articles and photographs have the power to create a ‘place myth’. Tetley and Bramwell (2002) explain that:

“it is writers who help to form the place myths that become the symbolic images and meanings that are broadly shared by many people” (p.156). So, a place myth is an expectation of a place which gives a coloured version of reality, highlighting certain aspects in a landscape and hiding others. The audiences’ expectation of that place would likely be proven at least partially untrue if they would visit that place in person (Bosak et al., 2010).

Helpful for explaining the subjectivity of photographs and articles on nature and culture is the statement that space is socially constructed by those in power positions (Lefebvre, 1991). Areas can be excluded or promoted to create a place. Promotion of a place through photographs or omitting information which may be important to local inhabitants are tools for powerful actors like popular media outlets to create place myths. Bosak, et al. (2010) use theory by Thrift (2003) to give a helpful example how photographs can create a ‘place myth’:

The images on the map include pictures of cattle drives, pristine natural areas, historic National Park lodges, wildlife, Native Americans and quaint towns. This creates the ‘myth’ that the Crown of the Continent is indeed a remnant of the ‘old west’, complete with wilderness landscapes, cowboys and historic towns. Such images are an important tool in the representation of places such as the Crown of the Continent because images inform people’s perspectives/conceptions of the world around them. (Thrift, in Bosak et al. 2010, p.473)

According to Bosak, et al. (2010), such a place myth, while untrue, is not necessarily harmful but can actually be useful. Partial information can still have an educational purpose or promote responsible behaviour such as ecotourism (ibid.). However, subjective information may “be created without accurately representing the values of local people and this can potentially disempower local interests [...]” (p.477). This might happen for instance, by highlighting only certain aspects of a place that fit a certain image.

So, like maps, photographs and narratives are not neutral (Davis, 2005; Høeg & Tulloch, 2018; Lutz & Collins, 1993). Besides providing information, media construct representations of people and places through the narrative they choose to convey (Høeg & Tulloch, 2018). In text and photographs, people can be framed in different ways creating a specific portrayal of that person (ibid.). For instance, someone can be framed as a victim by the way they are shown in a photo or the way they are described in a text. Dominant frames may be found and indicate existing power relations between the Global South and Global North (Høeg & Tulloch, 2018).

2.3 Hegemonic ideas and the institutionalisation of truth claims

Landscape is a useful concept to concretise the nature-culture complex. Landscape is a concept in which the overarching discussion of what nature is and how it relates to culture and society manifests itself (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2015). There is a broader academic discussion of the meaning of landscape, in which interpretations range from ‘nature-only’ to constructionist notions that regard landscape as a social construct in which nature and culture are one integrated whole (ibid.). In this thesis, landscapes are considered to be equivocal to uncover underlying power relations and dominant narratives in *national geographic magazine*.

Greider & Garkovich (1994) state that a landscape in itself is meaningless and that it is people who create these meanings. Media outlets can create such meanings through texts and photographs. When the audience is substantial, the meaning created and communicated through photos and text has the power to shape public knowledge about the nature and culture in the article. A magazine like *national geographic magazine* has a hegemonic position for creating nature knowledges in popular media. A hegemonic idea is an idea that has “become ‘common sense’ for the mass of the populace and this is what makes them so effective as tools of control” (Gramsci, as paraphrased in Castree, 2005, p.19). While media outlets may not be directly interested in controlling their audience, they can have a hegemonic position and create hegemonic ideas about nature that over time will become common knowledge giving them power because their publications are taken for faithful depictions of reality. Similarly, media outlets in a hegemonic position can even ascribe power by praising people or places or they could diminish power by criticising people or places (Castree, 2005). Giving attention to a certain interpretation of a place promotes that interpretation to the audience. To elaborate on the different place meanings a landscape can have, Blaikie’s (1995) example is helpful and is provided below (see Figure 1). In short, one single landscape can have different meanings to different people: it may be a home to some, a nature reserve to others, farmers may see agricultural land, and others may see something else entirely. The range of possible meanings is large.

- A patch of land somewhere in the tropics ...**
How can it be described and by whom?
- Ideal site for tourist lodge
 - tour operators, entrepreneurs
 - Reserve of endangered species of birds
 - scientists, hunters, nature lovers
 - State forest
 - bureaucrats, lumber contractors
 - Agricultural land
 - local farmers
 - Forest for indigenous subsistence
 - forest dwellers

Figure 1: Alternative views of a certain landscape and their protagonists (Blaikie, 1995, p.207)

Some meanings may be better known than others, but the point is that there are multiple meanings different people attach to the same nature and culture and that these meanings can and do coexist. Within these meanings, stakeholders make truth claims with different interests in mind. These stakeholders vary in the amount of power and reach they have which they can use to give weight to their truth claim. Blaikie explains how narratives can give the impression of holding the truth. This is something which happens when truth claims are “successfully packaged and promoted” (p.206). Obviously, this packaging and promoting is easier when a stakeholder has a large platform which has a reputation for trustworthiness. A certain narrative promoted by a media outlet can be considered a truth claim and as media outlets sometimes have large, seemingly trustworthy platforms, they hold a great power. So, from this position of power, various institutions can make truth claims regarding nature and culture (Blaikie, 1995). The different truth claims made by different actors influence the audience, and in the case of a big enough audience a truth claim may influence public opinion or even justify power over others (Said, 1978). So, truth claims are unequally powerful, creating dominant narratives and weaker ones. Truth claims of actors in a hegemonic position (like *national geographic magazine*) are institutionalised; their narrative becomes the norm.

3. Global South and the ‘unknown’: orientalism and postcolonialism

Popular media outlets are among the stakeholders producing truth claims within nature-culture complexes. Now, these representations of nature and culture will be discussed in the specific context of nature-culture complexes in the Global South as seen by western popular media. A general reflection on orientalism and postcolonialism will be helpful as a starting point for an analysis of ‘the other’. Orientalism is “a concept symbolising the projections of the colonial West on the rest of the world” (Botterill & Platenkamp, 2012, p.154). Postcolonialism is defined by Botterill and Platenkamp as a situation where “all parties involved have gone through a phase of colonial relationships, awakened from its legacies and built up a new way of understanding the emergent, economic, political and cultural networks around them” (p.152); it is a general perspective for regarding the world and understanding current societal structures (ibid.).

3.1 Postcolonialism in popular media

An understanding of postcolonialism can be helpful for explaining certain existing power structures between colonising states and former colonies. This often means a division similar to orientalism’s east-west division since colonisers were often current-day western countries and the people who were colonised from places that are now part of the Global South. So, there is a clear connection between postcolonialism and orientalism where emphasis lies on the West regarding the East or the North regarding the South. Orientalism in itself is a form of postcolonialism as long as both ends of a particular east-west division between places were once involved in colonialism. Postcolonialism as a research approach is sensitive not only to the effects of physical expressions of power and dominance through violence since colonisation (of which there has been much), but also to the more subtle domination and power in narratives and images (Botterill & Platenkamp, 2012). Power relations can become apparent through the way people, nature, and culture are portrayed. This can be through the way others are talked about, written about, or through art or photographs. For instance, this could be very obvious dominance by portraying slavery, or more subtly by suggesting backwardness through primitive clothing or tools. Popular media are a platform for these portrayals to be heard, read, or seen by a large audience. As such, there is significant power that lies with the various media outlets. Media outlets’ influence increase as their credibility and audience increase. So, postcolonialism is an academic approach that concerns itself with concepts like orientalism in popular media by considering different representations (Ashcroft et al., 1998; Botterill & Platenkamp, 2012).

3.2 Orientalism and gender in popular media

Simplified, Said's (1978) notion of orientalism describes a way of seeing and portraying a foreign location with an emphasis on the West (occident) in contrast with the East (orient). Orientalism is a binary way of seeing the world (Botterill & Platenkamp, 2012). Said (1978) explains that orientalism has been used by colonial powers to assert western hegemony over the orient. Because orientalism creates and reinforces feelings of otherness and feelings of 'us against them', it can even be (and has been) used to justify power and violence (Said, 2003, p.xv). Although Said's 'orientalism' has a Middle-Eastern focus and this thesis has a far broader scope in 'the Global South', Said's ideas of (mis)representation of foreign places are relevant.

Although popular media outlets may be unlikely to be used as a justification for violence, the underlying power relations are significant in itself. The representation of 'foreign' nature and culture in photographs and narratives are a result of these power relations between the East vs. West or North vs. South. Through this portrayal, power dynamics between the western media and the nature and culture of 'the other' can be examined. Perhaps, because the *national geographic magazine's* audience is so vast, power dynamics between the East and the West or the North and the South can even be shaped by the way nature and culture are portrayed. The audience is presented with something in an article that is unknown to them, regarding it and stereotyping it.

Said's work on orientalism is relevant and useful when studying representations of places that are considered foreign from a western perspective. Typical processes and characteristics that are summarised under orientalism include: romanticising the Orient, generalising people, exoticizing others (for example by dressing people in photographs in traditional clothing that is more foreign to the western reader (Beaudreau, 2002)), and above all, asserting power of the Occident over the Orient both implicitly and explicitly (Said, 1978).

Orientalism is multi-layered and does not only indicate East vs. West or North vs. South representations, the division can also include men and women. Postcolonial geographies have parallels with gender geographies; they are complementary in a way as they research similar binary representations between east and west or men and women. Orientalism can indicate traditionalism with accompanying gender imbalances. Within the occident-orient divide, popular media can be stereotyping gender balances. Parameswaran (2002) provides a helpful example where the August 1999 issue of *national geographic magazine* is examined. An Indian woman is photographed in traditional pose and attire, next to a photograph of a young girl in a modern, PVC catsuit (Figure 2). In the accompanying article, the author explains that the older woman is a biochemist and the girl a television host and model. While there is an opportunity

here to make a role model of the older woman who became a scientist in a male-dominated field in a country where women have only been allowed access to the most basic education since the 19th century, she was associated with tradition instead of progress or feminism (Parameswaran, 2002). Here it shows that gender should be considered too when thinking about orientalism in representations of the Global South in popular media.

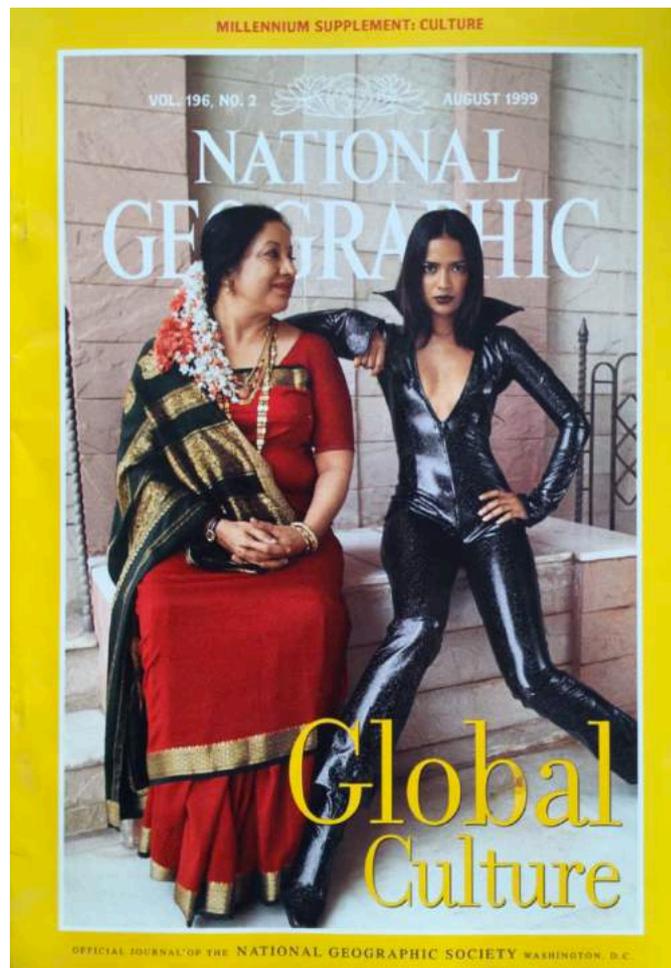


Figure 2: The August 1999 National Geographic cover deconstructed by Parameswaran (2002)

Orientalism in popular media can be found in writing, photographs, art, or film. For instance, Rosenblatt (2009) explains how films such as David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia* give a typically orientalist view of the East where "the lands and culture were depicted as beautiful, mysterious, and sexually alluring, while the inhabitants were barbaric, savage, and tyrannical" (p.61). In other words, foreign landscapes are romanticised while the local people are represented as violent and underdeveloped compared to the West. This reflects perceived superiority from the West towards the East, and it reflects existing power relations too. When

researching the nature-culture complex of an American magazine covering non-western nature and culture, examples of orientalism may be expected.

3.3 Postcolonialism expressed through stereotyping

In practice, postcolonialism can be expressed through stereotyping. Parameswaran (2002) identifies a postcolonial lens through which *national geographic magazine's* articles and photographs can be viewed (p.297). As Parameswaran (2002) explains, images showing black or Asian people performing activities that stereotypically are ascribed to them from a western perspective tell multiple stories. At first glance, such images may seem like a positive representation that counters negative passivity or invisibility of non-western subjects in western media. However, when this activity is viewed through the lens of postcolonialism, the stereotypical nature of the image may be more visible. For instance, depicting black people as athletic or showing eager consumption of western culture asserts the west as superior (p.313). Said (1978) explains how the Orient is often depicted romantically by western sources and that western peoples are or would be disappointed – Said calls this the “typical experiences and emotions” (p.100) – upon visiting foreign places because of the expectations they have based on romantic accounts (for instance created by popular media) they interacted with. The stereotypical people or nature they have read about or have seen depicted in a play or movie may be very different when encountered in real life. In contrast, the places themselves may change to fit the expectations of tourists. For example, Kelly-Holmes & Pietikäinen (2014) provide an example of a reindeer farm in Finland where – in order to receive positive evaluation – the host has to keep to the script that matches the expectations of visiting tourists, which is not how he would normally act. This may seem a harmless part of the host's job in order to maximise profits, but Saarinen (2004) explains how this can have more fundamental effects on a host community. Saarinen states that when places are transformed to better fit the expectations of tourists, local culture starts to conform to the images of tourists instead of local inhabitants:

In the worst case, when the destination and its main attractions and tourism practices are produced through the uneven cultural exchange and the marginalization of local communities, the developing tourism creates landscapes – both physical and cultural – that represent the values, needs and activities of the non-local tourism industry rather than local interests, identities, traditional economies and value systems. (Saarinen, 2004, p.173)

So, sometimes, touristic products shape themselves to match the stereotypical image that is expected of them by foreign visitors. These expectations may be created by truth claims, for instance those seen, read, or heard in popular media. The stereotypes depicted may be reinforced if an individual were to meet a person who meets their stereotypical expectations. Said calls this “a rather complex dialectic of reinforcement” (p.94). Said (1978) uses the example of a fierce lion. If someone was to read that lions are fierce animals and that person was to encounter a real lion, that person will expect the lion to be particularly fierce. When the lion shows fierce behaviour, the notion that all lions are fierce will be reinforced for that person. For them, the confirmation of their expectation gives truth to the truth claim they read or saw beforehand. For this particular reader, the authority of the author who wrote about the lion is reinforced and the author will be trusted sooner when writing about other subjects (Said, 1978). When people read about nature or culture in a certain way, for instance in a text that romanticises the extreme beauty of a landscape, a single beautiful view of that place experienced by a person in real life could confirm the possibly false generalisation that everything there is of a similar beauty.

3.4 Conceptual model

This literature study will be used as a guide for looking at relations that may be found after analysing photographs and texts in *national geographic magazine*. The following conceptual model (Figure 3) is provided to give a schematic overview of lenses and theories that will be employed in the analysis ahead. Figure 3 shows a western audience on the left and nature-culture complexes of the Global South on the right. Text and photographs are produced about nature and culture in the Global South, creating truth claims and place myths; they are expected to include orientalism and postcolonialism which may express itself through stereotyping. The audience of the media outlets from western, educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) countries are the recipients of the articles and thus, the truth claims. Power and dominance are visible as central underlying concepts.

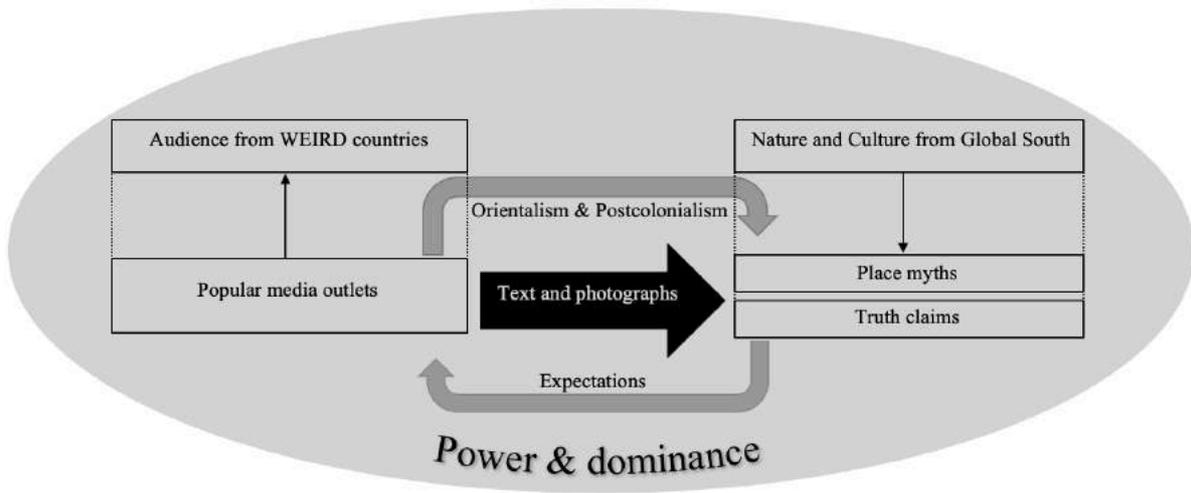


Figure 3. Conceptual model showing the relation of relevant concepts and processes when popular media outlets produce articles on nature-culture complexes in the Global South.

4. Methodology

4.1 1990: a turning point for national geographic magazine

As discussed in the introduction, the *national geographic magazine* has an enormous audience and the power to shape place meanings. The representation they create of the nature-culture complexes in non-western countries influences the meaning of that place for their readers. There is power involved in these representations and researching how this power is used by analysing these representations can shed light on how nature-culture complexes are perceived by the millions of people who are the *national geographic magazine*'s audience. The starting point of this study is 1990 even though the *national geographic magazine* has been in print since 1888 (*National geographic society*, 2018). There are three reasons why this period was chosen. As mentioned in the introduction, 1990 can be considered a turning point for the *national geographic magazine* as the organisation modernised. 1990 was the moment when writers from more diverse backgrounds began to be accepted and freelance photographers were hired instead of in-house photographers (Beaudreau, 2002). By 1990, the magazine was relying more on outside contributors than ever (*ibid.*). The second reason why this study starts in 1990 and not 1888 is practical; the timespan is narrowed in order to save time and avoid this thesis to grow too large for the time available to write it. Finally, the third reason why this research starts in 1990 is to avoid having to analyse many different worldviews influencing the articles since 1888. A changing, post-colonial world can hardly be compared to the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century when geography still partly coincided with explorations.

4.2 The Global South and WEIRD countries and places

Because this research concerns itself with representations of nature-culture complexes in non-western countries, 'the Global South' is a term that is central to this study. Dados and Connell's (2012) conceptualization in *Jargon: Key Concepts in Social Research* explains 'the Global South' as: "[...] regions outside Europe and North America, mostly (though not all) low-income and often politically or culturally marginalized" (p.12). One of the criteria for an article to be included in this research is that the place featured in an article must be located in the Global South. Because every article since January 1990 must be checked for relevance in this research, it is important that clear decisions can be made to determine whether a country is part of the Global South. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, the definition given by Dados and Connell of the Global South is still quite general. For practical reasons in selecting the articles

that will be researched, the concept of WEIRD countries is borrowed from cultural psychology. The concept of WEIRD countries employs five clear criteria that can be used easily for determining whether or not a place can be ascribed to the Global South. A country is a WEIRD country when it is western, educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic (Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan, 2010). For the purpose of this thesis, the WEIRD country concept is useful because it uses multiple criteria creating a stronger selection method for relevant places. However, some nations are still challenging to define as WEIRD or non-WEIRD. Some places (like Brazil for instance) may have been considered not WEIRD in the 1990s but have since experienced developments that may put the country in the WEIRD category. When such places arose, the decision was made to be prudent and consider them WEIRD. Challenging countries that were considered WEIRD include: Brazil, India, South-Africa, China, Russia, South Korea, and Mexico. However, a few exceptions to the WEIRD classification were made. There are certain areas within WEIRD nations that are not WEIRD. In other words, sometimes a scalar level smaller than the national level has been used simply because generalizing everything in a WEIRD country would not be accurate. For instance, certain natures and cultures in northern Canada, Siberia, Brazil, or the Australian outback were not excluded from this thesis even though Australia, Russia, Brazil, and Canada are considered WEIRD countries. The nature-culture complexes found in those areas are interesting for this study as they are non-conventional, remote locations that are outside 'mainstream' global economic networks that often have outspoken natural and cultural characteristics.

4.3 Methodology for data-collection and categorisation

To find raw data which is relevant for this study, I collected all *national geographic magazines* between 1990 and the most recent issues. My father has been a subscriber to the American magazine since before 1990 and has kept most issues. I have sorted his private archive per year and found that some years were incomplete. In his archive, CD-ROM discs were included with digital versions of every issue from 1990 through 1997. For missing magazines in the remaining 23 years, the *national geographic's* online archive was very helpful.

After collecting every issue, I have made a decision tree to decide which articles would be included and which ones would not (Figure 4). Some steps may require further explanation. For instance, '(ancient) artefacts taken out of their original context' could be a mummy taken from a pyramid in Egypt to be analysed somewhere else. Such articles were excluded as representation of the local environment is a necessary component for this study. Articles on politics in a country are dismissed for the same reason. *National geographic magazine* has

published many articles about political or economic situations in countries in the Global South, such as wars or changes in regimes. However informative, such developments are not relevant for this research in itself as they do not provide enough information on nature-culture complexes.

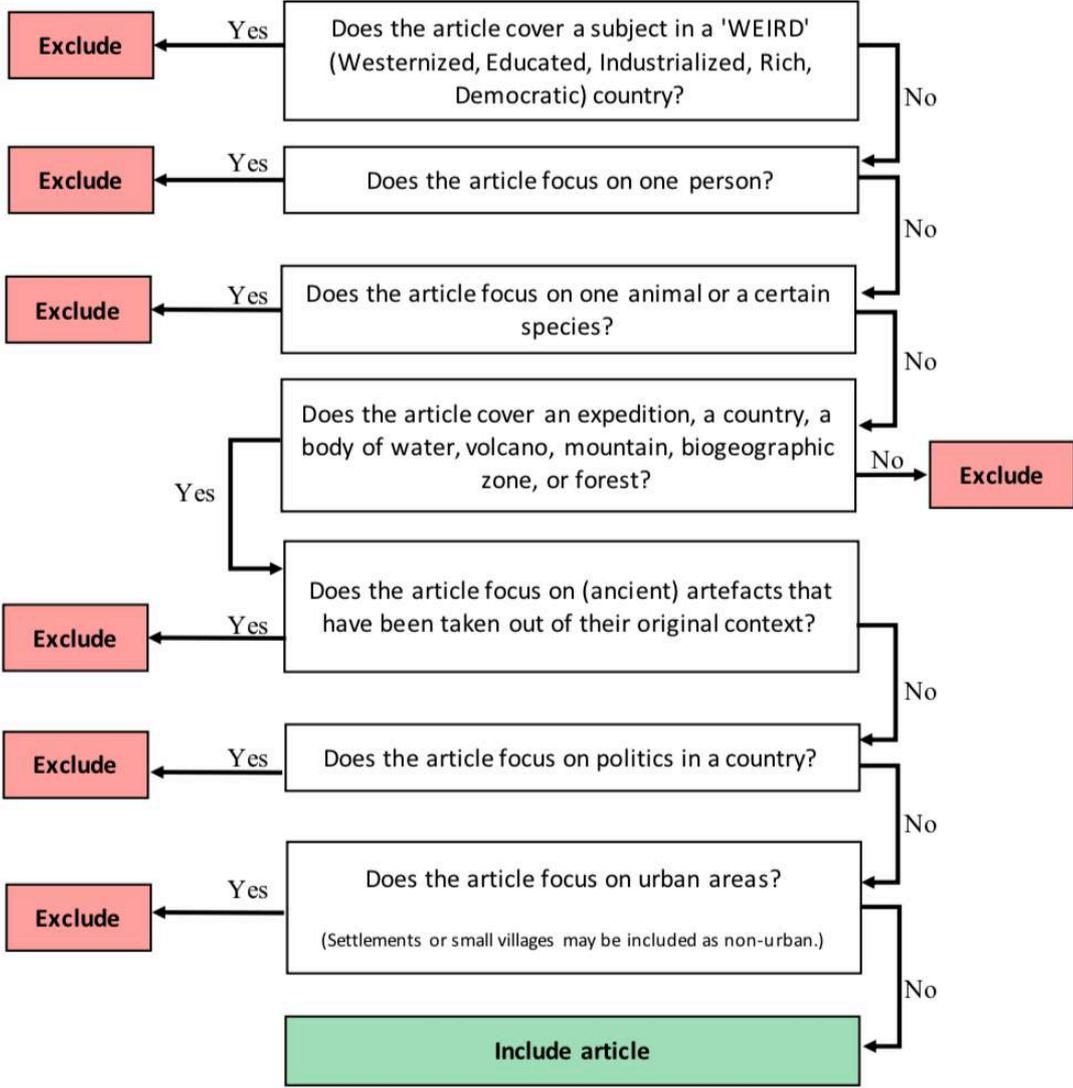


Figure 4: Decision tree used to select relevant national geographic magazine articles.

Using this decision tree, I evaluated for every article in every issue from 1990 until the most recent issue whether or not its scope was relevant. The *national geographic magazine* is a monthly magazine, meaning 120 magazines are released per decade. Since there are seven issues still to be released in 2019 as this document is written, 113 issues were included in the research for the final decade. So, since 1990, 353 issues were checked to see if they contained relevant articles. To find how many full-length articles each issue contains on average, a

random number generator was used to find one random issue for every decade. January 1990 was given number 1 and every issue was allotted a number until number 120 for December 1999 was reached. The same was repeated for the 2000s, and for the 2010s 113 numbers were used. The random number generator found numbers 19, 49, and 66. Number 19 represents the July issue of 1991, number 49 represents the February issue of 2004 and number 66 represents the June issue of 2016 (Figure 5).

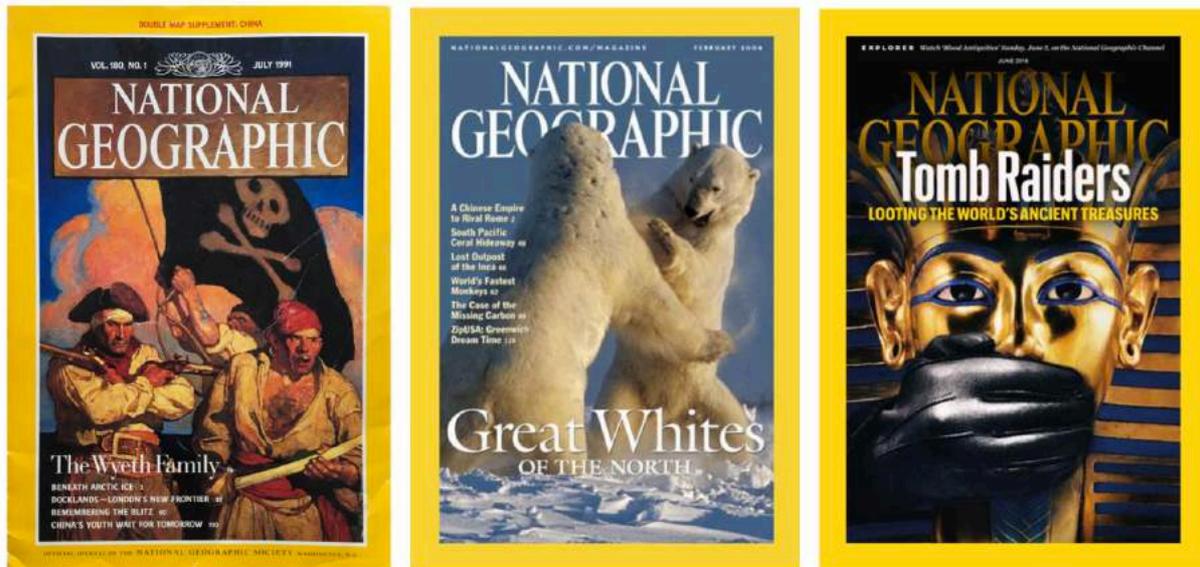


Figure 5: Three issues selected with a random number generator to find the average amount of articles per issue.

It should be noted that in some issues, short articles of one or two pages are included between the full-length articles. These were not included in the research. The *national geographic magazine* calls full-length articles ‘feature stories’. These were used for analysis. The July 1991 issue contained five full-length articles. The February issue of 2004 contained seven full-length articles, and the June 2016 issue featured five full-length articles. From the May issue of 2018 onwards the magazine changed its design and explained that “instead of four or five feature stories of roughly the same length in each issue [...]” they have written two of such articles and one even bigger one accompanied with “several shorter, visual features” (p.6) from there on out (*national geographic magazine*, May, 2018). In their explanation of the redesign, the *national geographic magazine* suggests that four or five feature stories has been the norm up to that point. The three magazines found with the random number generator average 5,66 articles (seventeen articles divided by three magazines) per issue. In order to be prudent and because the *national geographic magazine* claim that they generally feature four or five articles, 5,66 is rounded down to 5 articles per issue. So, 353 issues times five articles

on average means that roughly 1765 articles were tested for relevance in this research using the decision tree: 600 articles per decade for the first two decades and 565 between 2010 and June 2019.

Checking all these articles against the decision tree presented in Figure 4 resulted in a list of 44 relevant articles in the 1990s, 61 in the 2000s, and 35 in the 2010s. For an overview of relevant articles found per year, Figure 6 has been added below. The trendline in the graph shows that there is a slight decrease visible in the amount of issues found per year since 1990. The number of relevant articles found may seem rather limited; in the 1990s, only 0,37 relevant articles are found per issue (44 articles divided by 120 issues). That number is 0,51 articles found per issue in the 2000s, and 0,31 articles found per issue in the 2010s thus far.

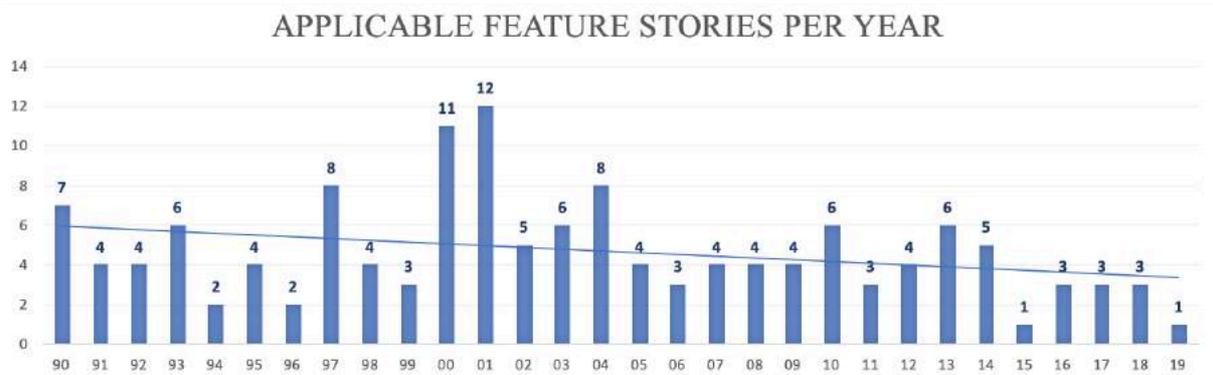


Figure 6: Relevant articles found using the decision tree.

This shows that nature and culture in the Global South is not as popular a topic as one might expect from *national geographic magazine*. However, 140 articles (44+61+35) are still too many to analyse in the time-span of this thesis. For this reason, a selection was made using a random number generator. The articles were divided per decade. They were then numbered and using the random number generator, articles were picked until 10% of the articles were analysed per decade. For a complete overview of articles, article numbers, and articles that were selected for analysis, please review Appendix A. Because one feature story picked in the random number generator (*Malaysia's Secret Realm* in the August 1997 issue) consisted of photographs and captions but no written article, one extra article was chosen for the period between 1990 and 1999, resulting in five articles analysed instead of four. So, 5 articles were analysed for 1990 through 1999, 6 articles were analysed for 2000 through 2009, and 4 articles were analysed for 2010 through 2019.

4.4 Methodology for analysis of spatial distribution

A series of tables presenting the spatial distribution of places covered in the articles is presented in Appendix B. These tables are added to provide background information on the relevant places covered since 1990. For every continent, one table will show the total amount of articles about a place on that continent. Per article, the specific place will be provided on the smallest scalar level possible for that article. In some cases, when an article discusses multiple places on the same continent, the most appropriate spatial level will be chosen that covers all places. For instance, when the Amazon River is discussed in a single country, that country will be named, if the Amazon River is discussed through multiple countries, the indication will simply be: Amazon River. In the results section, a graph (Figure 7) will show the number of relevant articles found per continent per decade. A short reflection on the division of articles is provided there as well. Together, the tables in Appendix B and Figure 7 in the results section should be regarded background information. They provide an overview of the 140 articles that were found relevant, as well as some additional information on the 125 articles that were not selected for individual analysis.

4.5 Methodology for analysis of selected articles

The articles in *national geographic magazine* may make a sharp division between nature and culture and take a deterministic stance. I do not think deterministically in this thesis, which may uncover my own personal bias, but this is necessary in order to find possible bias of *national geographic magazine*. I have not used a word-count or classification scheme for my analysis of the articles as those methods do not fit the constructionist approach used. This research is about uncovering the underlying layer behind the text and photos. Fran Tonkiss's (2012) seminal work on discourse analysis is used as the starting point for the analysis.

In the absence of a classification scheme, Tonkiss (2012) provides helpful guidelines to organise the analysis process. Not every text will be analysed in the *national geographic magazine*'s articles, fragments of articles covering topics outside the nature-culture complex may be ignored. For this reason, I created the decision tree (Figure 4). Whenever doubt occurs concerning segments within a relevant article, Tonkiss's (2012) pointers that are explained below are used to guide me towards interesting content for the analysis.

Tonkiss (2012) identifies several "pointers for analysis" (p.412, p.413). These consist of finding key themes and arguments, considering association and variation, observing characterisation and agency, and recognising emphasis and silences. These practical pointers are helpful in analysis of both text and photographs. Tonkiss (2012) recommends using these

pointers in the order in which they are presented here. Finding key themes and arguments provides a solid starting point for the analysis of articles. Then, the analysis can be continued by looking for associations that are made between a person, group, or nature and a certain stereotype, for instance when a place is associated with roughness or wildness of its inhabitants or nature. In addition to associations, variations can help uncover uncertainties in a narrative. By focussing on these differences “[...] the analyst disrupts the appearance of a coherent or ‘watertight’ piece of discourse [...] (p.414).” To illustrate what is meant with such a variation, Tonkiss (2012) provides an example of a study of Huckin (2002). Huckin (2002) researched a newspaper article covering homelessness and discovered that the causes of the problems identified in the text did not match proposed solutions in that same text: addiction and mental illness are indicated as prime causes while the proposed solutions (charity, volunteering, jobs) do not address those issues.

The next pointer takes possible associations identified in the previous step and looks how they are used to characterise people, groups, or nature. This step examines how the actors are positioned in a narrative. Tonkiss (2012) proposes three practical strategies that a researcher might use to find this positioning. Firstly, a researcher should look for characteristics, problems or concerns connected to individuals or groups in a text. Actors can for instance be personalised (giving family stories) or depersonalised (referring to people as something non-human) or they can be associated with a certain stereotype (Tonkiss, 2012). For instance, in a text about the nature-culture complex, foreign communities may be associated with values like fierceness or primitiveness which would be a characterisation of those people. Using references to natural disasters to describe societal phenomena, such as writing that a place is *flooded* with people, for example migrants, is an example of depersonalisation. Secondly, Tonkiss (2012) suggests identifying the viewpoint or stance of the author. This can be done by investigating the style in which the article was written. The article can for instance be depersonalised by detaching the voice of the writer to give the narrative an air of objectivity. This way, the reader has a sense that this is not the opinion of one person, but this is a group of writers or an organisation (such as *national geographic magazine*) creating a sense of authority. In contrast, the voice of the author may also be personalised which is something often used in political publications because it allows the author to be positioned favourably. Thirdly, Tonkiss suggests looking at the distribution of agency in the text. Here, a researcher looks for problems and solutions in a text and how the different actors contribute to them. Doing nothing may seem to suggest a negative role but can also indicate innocence. In other words, the context is important for drawing conclusions based on actors’ agency or passivity. After attending to these points, it is important

to look for emphasis and silences. Certain roles or behaviours may be emphasised in the text, while others are absent.

The previous paragraphs served as a reference and the strategies suggested by Tonkiss (2012) were helpful for identifying interesting content of the articles. Next to analysing the texts, photographs will play a central role in the analysis of the articles. The way elements are presented in a photo (on the foreground or background for instance), the clothing people wear, the activities people engage in, or the surrounding environment together with accompanying text can be analysed using Tonkiss's pointers too. Most pointers can literally be copied to analyse images, but some wording needs slight changes. For instance, paying attention to *silences* would change to *non-appearance* in an image. That way, elements that are not shown in a photograph can be compared with things that are unsaid in text. During the reading of the selected articles, page numbers, possible (partial) quotes, and ideas were noted, and these preliminary notes were later developed into a complete analysis. Then, the article was read again, and ideas were written down more elaborately. As the text may refer to the photographs, no specific order was given to the analysis of text and photographs. They form the article together and were analysed simultaneously. Only photographs that seemed to provide the most telling examples were added in the analysis. The results of the analyses of photos and text will then be combined to move from individual article analyses to overarching results of the analyses for *nation geographic magazine*. This will be done by looking for common themes or striking differences.

5. Analysis Results

5.1 Results of analysis of spatial distribution of relevant articles since 1990

A complete overview of relevant articles divided per continent is added in Appendix B. The total number of relevant articles per continent is visualised in Figure 7. The *national geographic magazine*'s coverage of nature across the world seems to be wide-ranging as every continent is handled in an article at least once in every period. Topics in Africa have been covered most frequently as Africa was the most popular continent with 43 relevant articles published since 1990. An unequal division of articles per continent is clearly visible in Figure 7, but such differences might be explained simply because Africa or South America provide a bigger supply of phenomena that apply to the *national geographic magazine*'s focus. Although Antarctica is very interesting, the topics that can be covered there are less diverse compared to other places. The small number of articles coming from North America may be explained by the omission of articles about the United States in this thesis, which reduces the size of North America significantly. A clear shift over three decades is not visible but some general observations can be made. Most articles were found between 2000 and 2009. Issues from 2010 to 2019 yielded the least number of relevant articles. However, there are seven issues of the *national geographic magazine* which still have to be released in 2019.

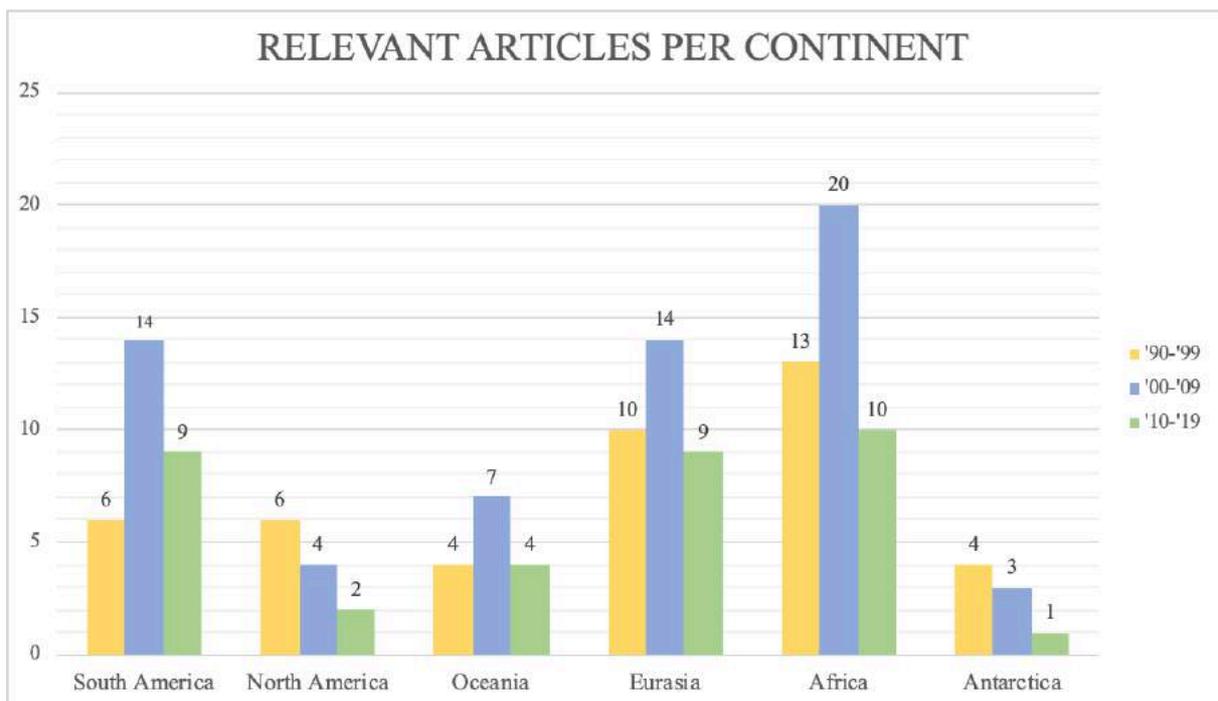


Figure 7: Overview of the spatial division per continent of relevant articles since 1990.

5.2 Results of article analysis for articles published from 1990 to 1999

5.2.1 Rain Forest Canopy – The High Frontier

Random nr. 11, December 1991

This article follows a group of scientists in a forest reserve in Costa Rica, but it also mentions other rain forests across the world. The focus of the article is on the canopy of rain forests in general. The article starts with a description of the rain forest as a strikingly beautiful environment: “[...] I remained aware of a wholly different world a hundred feet above, where brilliant sunlight drenched sprays of vegetation and Babylonian gardens, an errant wind soughed throughout the day, and legions of birds, insects, and other animals specialized for high arboreal life flew and leaped back and forth” (p.80). This romantic description of a foreign rainforest (from an American perspective) is an example of a process that falls under orientalism.

The American positioning of the author becomes apparent when he describes where rain forests are. “The rain forest canopy, an undiscovered continent as naturalist William Beebe called it, is achingly close to the earthbound observer (map, page 84).” When looking at this map (Figure 8), it seems the author means that the forest reserve in Costa Rica seems very close to the United States on a small map of the world. For many other places, rain forests are further away.

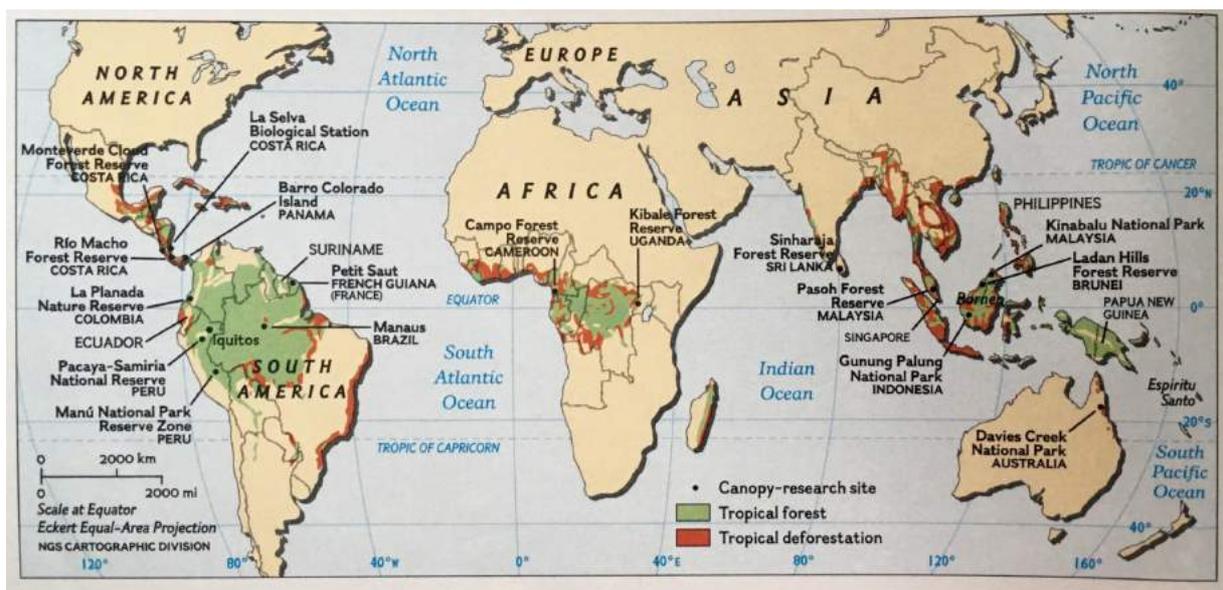


Figure 8

The standpoint of the writer is not a depersonalized account which might distance the author to create authority. Instead, the article is a very personal account as the author is an actor in the article. The author is given authority by mentioning how many times he has undertaken expeditions and listing several specific experiences. (“During 35 years of visits to tropical forests [...]” or “on the edge of a ravine in the Brazilian Amazon, I peered for days through binoculars into tree crowns a few yards away” p.80.) and by stating he is a scientist. On page 84, in a footnote (but in the same font size as the body) his achievements and position as a professional are listed. Scientists are portrayed quite heroically in this article. Emphasis is also placed on physical traits of the scientists, who are portrayed as very fit, strong, and young in the subtitle of the article: “A new breed of scientist risks life and limb to probe the great unexplored world at the top of tropical rain forests” (p.78). Later in the article, this portrayal is emphasised again:

Various teams of hard-muscled young men and women around the world lean booms into the upper branches, travel out in gondolas suspended from building cranes, ascend on ropes, lower supporting nets from dirigibles, nail ladders onto tree trunks, and travel along walkways suspended across the crowns of trees. (p.85)

This portrayal of the young athletic scientists goes against the stereotype of scientists that they are old men in a laboratory. The scientists are presented in various different active poses in the photographs (Figures 9, 12, 13, and 14), including one photo of the author (Figure 10), collecting ants on top of a tower in the rainforest. The scientists look very fit and are represented in acrobatic positions or even presented with a drawn bow and arrow (Figure 9), in order to shoot a rope into a tree that can then be used to climb the tree. This is an interesting representation of a scientist shown using relatively primitive technology linked to traditional jungle hunting techniques while in Figure 10 it shows that an enormous tower has been built too. The roles of these scientists are characterised as very active and positive as they are helping scientific progress. It is even suggested at the end of the article that a cure for cancer may one day be found in the rain forest (p.107).



Figure 9



Figure 10

Another example of scientists characterised heroically shows in the following segment: “How to get to the top? Enterprising scientists always find a way, simple or otherwise. Nalini Nadkarni (below) uses climbing rope and stamina as she gives her son Gus a look at the view in Costa Rica” (p.93). The “(below)” refers to a picture (Figure 11) of a young scientist climbing a tree with her infant son strapped to her back. This is an example of personalising an actor (Tonkiss, 2012). The scientist is given a name, shown as a mother with her son who is also mentioned by his name, personalising both of them creating a stronger sense of connection with the reader. Another striking characterisation is made on page 98, when biologists are compared to Tarzan. “A real-life Tarzan could not have swung from tree to tree with lianas, which are attached to the ground. (And unlike biologists, he would not have been likely to endure the stinging wasps, biting ants, and spines and saw-toothed edges of the canopy vegetation. Tarzan would have stayed on the ground.)” Not only are scientists compared to a fictional character who was raised by gorillas in the rain forest, the author suggests that they are somehow more resilient to discomforts found in the rain forest than this character.



Figure 11



Figure 12

The focus of the article is on explaining how the work of these scientists is uncovering new species, processes and other interesting facts about a difficult to reach environment. It is about “record-breaking surveys” (p.85) and incredible animal diversity. What is happening in the forest is explained in scientific terms. The author tries to paint a vivid image so readers can imagine what the environment looks like. For instance, comparisons are made with situations that might be relatable to a western reader. “Arboreal dragonflies soared and darted over the surface in search of insect prey, just as other dragonflies patrol the surfaces on ponds and lakes” (p.84). In the article, clearing the rain forest for lumber is mentioned once in a way that suggests there is an advantage to cutting the rain forest: the author explains that “the best place to see the complete profile of a tropical rain forest and to put the canopy in perspective is, I am sorry to report, where it is being cleared and destroyed” (p.97). Later, the author does explain how vulnerable the rain forest is.



Figure 13

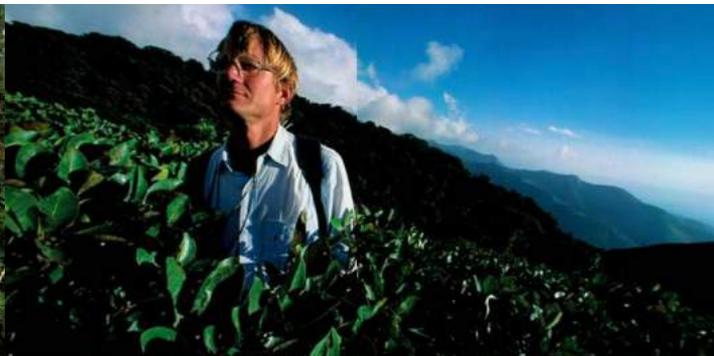


Figure 14

The flora and fauna of tropical rain forests are described in detail. However, there is no mention of people or local communities. This article is written from a scientific standpoint (by a scientist) and portrays the rain forest as a beautiful yet rough environment which is examined bravely by fit scientists. This article describes a situation where western scientists are bravely working in a wild foreign environment. As a scientist, the author is most interested in the flora and especially the fauna of the rain forest. However, there is no mention of the perspectives of others (for instance communities living in the rain forest). In fact, people residing in rain forests are not mentioned at all. The only actors in this article are the scientists working there. There is a mention of the vulnerability of the rain forest in terms of threatened species, the loss of natural heritage, and ecosystems, but not how this might affect local inhabitants. An image is sketched suggesting a situation of man vs. wild nature (of which humans are not a part). Nature and culture are seen as two separate things instead of a fluent whole.

The problems identified in the article regarding destruction of the rain forest are farming, ranching and logging. A proposed solution is logging in narrow strips which is a way to cut down trees which will make them grow back quicker. This could be seen as a slight variation, as three problems are identified and the proposed solution only solves one issue (Tonkiss, 2012).

5.2.2 Malaysia's Secret Realm

Random nr. 34, August 1997

The article deals with the rain forest in Sabah (Malaysian part of Borneo). Although presented as a feature story, this article is quite short and consists of photos and captions. This was quite unexpected as the article even features prominently on the cover (Figure 15) The author is a Swedish photographer specialising in natural history. The focus in this article is on the author and his team and the photographs they manage to take of animals in the rain forest. Very romantic descriptions of the landscape are included to paint a scene for the audience: “This lush wilderness – worlds apart from the logging sites and oil-palm plantations cut into once pristine woodlands – has changed little in more than a million years” p.122.

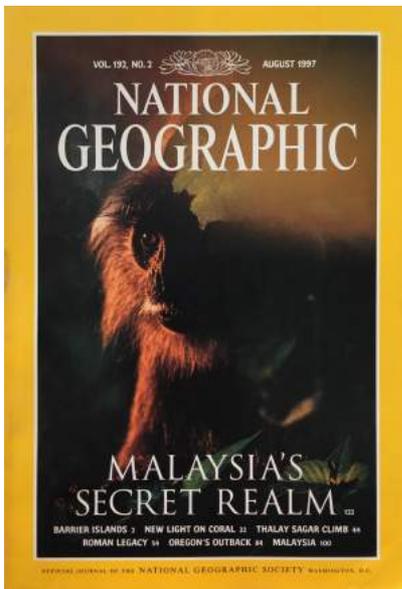


Figure 15

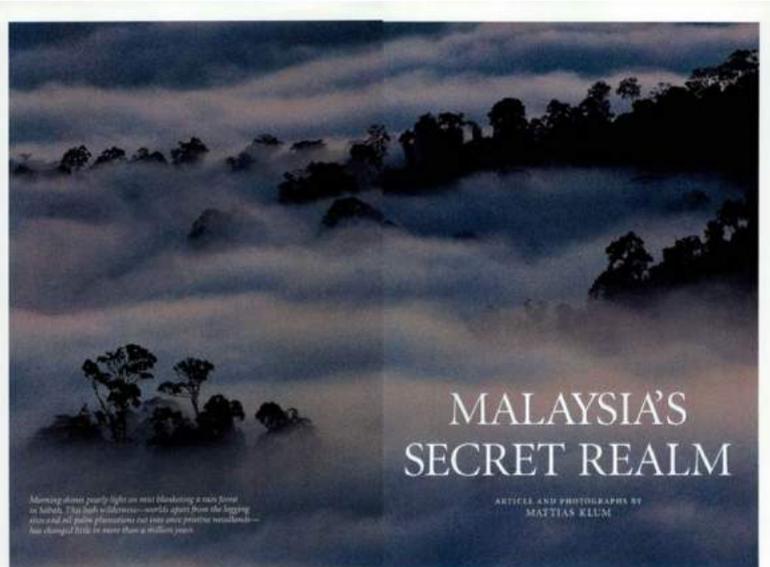


Figure 16

Emphasis is put on the photographer and his team's position in the rain forest instead of the rain forest itself. “My crew and I have only one another for company as we wait for the myriad forms of life to reveal their secrets.” Animals are talked about as if they are very mysterious. The environment is called a lush wilderness. The wording chosen here makes the rain forest sound almost mythical and almost extra-terrestrial. This mystical image is fortified in the first photograph of the article where the rain forest is partly obscured by clouds (Figure 16). To local communities, the rain forest might have a more practical meaning. They are not discussed, however.

The article is written from the personal perspective of the photographer. It is a first-person narrative which is a way to personalise the author's voice (Tonkiss, 2012). Like the article about rain forest canopies in 1991, this article also uses a strategy of characterisation called personalisation. Actors are given a name and a specific anecdote in this article.

Elusive by nature, a king cobra some 15 feet long surprises my assistant, Ola, and me as we wait in a creek-side blind to photograph wild boars. When it glides behind stones nearby, Ola turns pale. "Where is it?" he whispers. "Close," I say. Knowing this largest of venomous snakes will not attack us unless provoked, I wait calmly. The cobra reappears, I shoot two frames, and it's gone. (p.127) (Figure 17)

This segment does not only personalise the actors, it also demonstrates their apparent bravery and knowledge (at least that of the author). The title over Figure 17: "a deadly monarch moves in mystery" further mystifies the nature. The title also indicates who is in charge in this situation: a snake. The men in the anecdote seem out of their element and are represented as passive outsiders. Emphasis is placed on fragility and beauty of the environment. Threats to the forest are not listed in the article. This may be because this particular rain forest is a conservation area already. There is no mention of the communities living in the rain forest on Borneo. To them, this realm is not 'secret' as the title suggests; it is where they live.

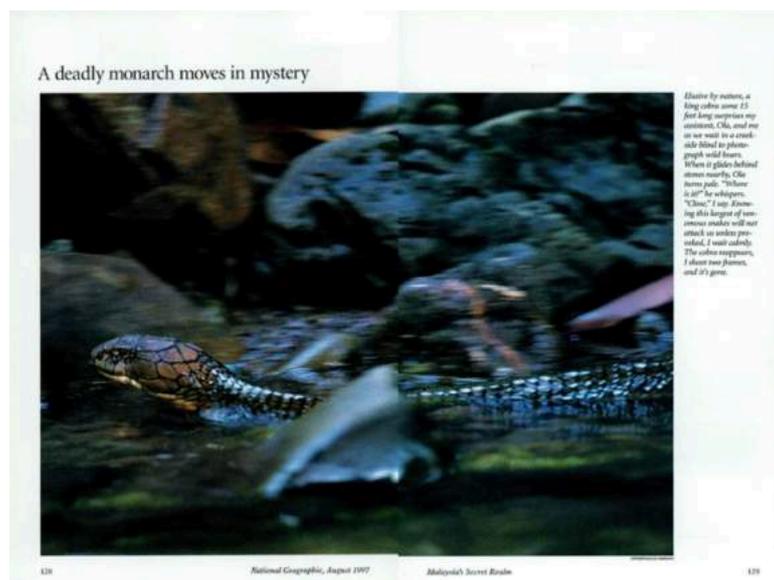


Figure 17

5.2.3 Masai Passage to Manhood

Random nr. 44, September 1999

This article covers a specific ceremony of Masai people on the border region between Tanzania and Kenya. Men from three groups of Masai walk for multiple days to reach a sacred site where warriors' mothers have built huts in a large circle. After the multi-day ceremony, the men walk home and are considered elders from thereon out. The standpoint of the author in this article is depersonalised; the voice of the writer is detached, giving the narrative a feeling of objectivity. It is not the opinion of one writer, but the voice of the *national geographic magazine*, giving the article authority.

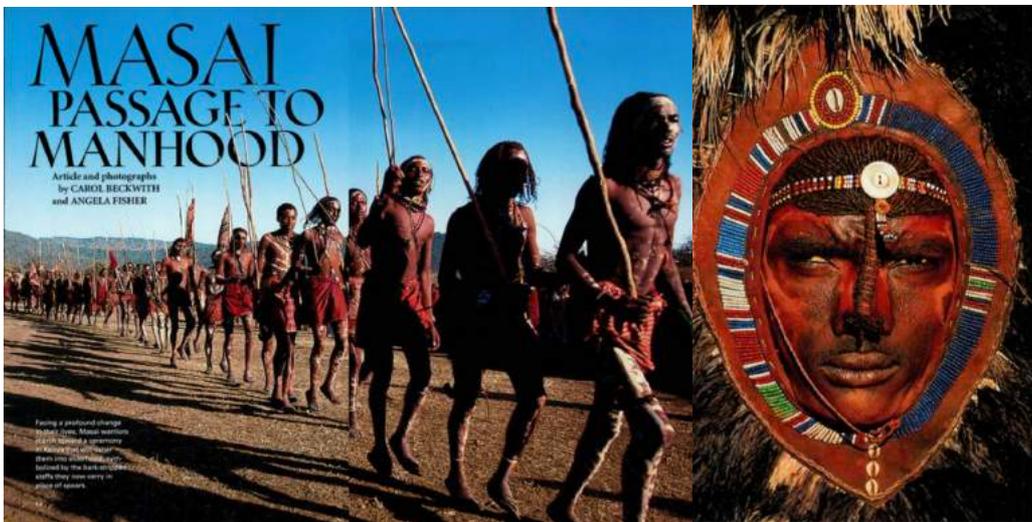


Figure 18

Figure 19

The people in the photographs are all shown in traditional clothes. There are many different attires that are showcased, but they are all traditional. Perhaps this is not surprising since the article is about a specific ceremony which requires traditional attire, hair dress, and rituals. However, other Masai who may be dressed differently are mentioned but not photographed. In contrast, the different traditional headdresses, body paints and robes are photographed in detail, exoticizing the photographed Masai (Figures 18, 19, & 20).

As this is a ceremony for warriors, there is emphasis on weapons, shields, and physicality. The men are constantly referred to as warriors, they are even “marching” (p.53) or “run around” (p.60) with spears and shields (Figure 20) but the writer does not characterise the Masai as dangerous people. The point of the ceremony is to transform warriors into elders and the advice given by senior elders is: “now that you are an elder, drop your weapons and use

your head and wisdom instead” (p.65). This does raise the question if there was no need for the men to use their head before, but perhaps that is not what the senior elder means. There is partial personalisation of the actors in this article (Tonkiss, 2012). The bond between the Masai warriors and their mothers is mentioned multiple times, and the importance of this bond is stressed. However, no warrior or mother is mentioned by their name; they remain anonymous mothers and warriors. So, family stories are given to a certain extent, but real personalisation does not occur because the actors are still anonymous.



Figure 20

The Masai community is characterised in text and photos with an emphasis on physicality and tribal competitiveness. The two general developments that are mentioned that more and more young men go to school to “another world” (p.57) and that raiding cattle from other tribes is becoming widely regarded as theft suggest changes toward a westernised culture. Whether those changes are positive or negative is not explicitly mentioned but the article mentions that the future of the ritual is uncertain. There is no image of the men who are said to go to school in another world, or any other person who is not dressed in traditional ceremonial attire. The Masai are shown in traditional attire performing a ritual that is foreign to a western reader. The author does not suggest that this is what Masai are doing in their daily routines but there is very little mention of what they might be doing when they are not performing this very particular ritual. Outside of this ritual, Masai are “mainly occupied by tending cattle”, which is almost all there is said about daily life (p.55). The full quote is: “The dozen or so Masai groups, united by a common language, are mainly occupied with tending cattle. They occasionally raid stock from each other and from neighboring tribes, but such warring is increasingly seen as theft – and is being prosecuted in government courts” (p.55). So, outside of this ritual there is only mention of tending cattle and sporadic raids for the Masai in this article. Surely there is

more to daily life for the Masai communities that is not mentioned in the article. It should be noted that this article is about a specific ritual and not daily life of the Masai, which may justify the lack of information about other activities.

The focus of this article is on the ritual and the people involved. The physical environment is not mentioned elaborately in the text but can be seen in photographs. Where other articles used adjectives to connect a certain feeling to a place, this article remains more factual by describing the area simply as “a sacred site near the Kenya-Tanzania border” (p.55). The photographs also focus not on the physical environment but the people in the environment. Some trees (Figure 20) and hills (Figure 18) can be seen in the background but are not introduced to the audience in the text. No clear divide between nature and culture can be recognised in this article.

5.2.4 Amazon – South America’s River Road

Random nr. 24, February 1995

The article covers a journey made by the author along the Amazon River by boat (Figures 21 & 22). His route takes him along “[...] what geographers consider the main stem of the Amazon, from Brazil up through the Andes, all the way to its most distant source in southern Peru” (p.14). In this article, the author covers an enormous distance and many actors are presented to the reader. The key theme seems to be the life on and around the Amazon River. The author meets many people like urban dwellers and members of tribes living in the rain forest, but the author suggests that they are somehow united through the Amazon River. “On the Amazon River human life always seems to be working its way upstream, fighting currents of water, economics, law, politics, injustice, disease, heat, and the conflicting demands of northern nations” (p.10).



Figure 21



Figure 22

Tribal children presented in photographs are dressed in traditional clothing, but the author explains that they do this to earn money because people are willing to pay them to see them dance in this attire (Figure 23). The children are presented as members of a global economy who use their own cultural heritage to make a living.

Jaded Yagua children wait to dance for government visitors – and their bodyguards – in Colombia’s Amazon frontier. Like other tribes, the Yagua have discovered that tradition pays. Dances carry a price. “We need the money for sugar, rice, and tobacco,” says a pragmatic villager. Devaluation-prone Brazilian currency isn’t welcome. (p.7)

Similar commodification of local culture can be seen in a photograph where “American salesmen endure a mock tribal initiation near Manaus, courtesy of a New York-based real estate firm that rewards its star agents with exotic excursions” (p.20) (Figure 24). Here, the commodification goes even further; instead of paying locals to perform local culture, the tourists themselves are dressed in traditional attire that has no cultural value to them so they can experience tribal initiation.



Figure 23



Figure 24

This article seems to be much more critical than the previous three articles. The Amazon River is taken as the factor connecting lifestyles, cultures, and tribes. In contrast with previous articles which presented perspectives that may be considered objectivist towards nature, a fluent nature-culture complex is visible here. The author attempts to imagine what the Amazon River means for the different people he meets on his excursion. By doing this, he acknowledges that a place may have different meanings for different people. For instance: the river is discussed as a route of transport for businessmen and women, a source of food for river dwellers, or an interesting highlight for tourists. A photograph in the article shows children playing on ropes (the mooring lines of a boat) over the water of the Amazon River (Figure 25). The title to the caption is “jungle gym” (p.16) which has a double meaning because a “jungle gym” is a brand name for outdoor play equipment and the children in the photograph are climbing in a tropical environment. They do not seem to have access to an actual playground and so they use the ropes instead. “An anthropologist” (p.16) is quoted in the caption saying: “theirs is the world of the river,” life is hard.” “They share.” This fits the narrative of the courageous people living under tough circumstances with the river, but in the photograph the children seem to be having fun, they look care-free.



Figure 25

The author of this article wrote from experience and so the writing is presented in a first-person style. This makes the narrative more personal. In this writing style, the authority of the writer is not as clear as when the article is written in a way that distances the voice of the writer so that the writer becomes the *national geographic magazine*. The author seems to actively want to avoid stereotyping and even gives an example of a situation he assessed wrongly.

[...] I saw a man in a hammock eating an orange while others unloaded 12-foot-long bundles of palm from a boat, and I thought it was lethargy or laziness. I was wrong. As the nature of the river forced me into the same patterns, I came to believe it was the pacing of the long-distance runner, faced with the run of his life on a course that never changes except to move against you. (p.14)

It seems that the author explains to his western audience that his prejudice (which may be the same as his audience's) was unfounded and that the stereotype of laziness of foreign people was untrue and he himself adopted this seemingly lazy behaviour because of the surroundings. People living with the Amazon River in the article are mainly described as determined, courageous, pragmatic, and they are linked with various other positive character traits. "Surely, as human beings try to build life and meaning on the mudbanks beside this inexorable flow, that terrible sameness could only be matched by meeting the river in kind, with an equally

relentless courage” (p.18). Perhaps for a person living there all their life, the feeling would be different as for them this is the reality of daily life.

In this article it seems that the author admires the local inhabitants of the many places he visits during his excursion along the Amazon. Every person is described and photographed without being exoticized, either working (Figure 26) or performing behaviour that is described positively. The people shown in traditional clothing are explained to do so in order to support themselves or are shown quite unflatteringly as tourists paying to undergo a mock tribal initiation. In fact, they are the only people in the article who are depicted in such a way and they are American businessmen.



Figure 26

5.2.5 The Orinoco – Into the Heart of Venezuela

Random nr. 39, April 1998

In this article, the author travels along the Orinoco River (Venezuela) and interacts with multiple local actors like Yanomami tribesmen and ranchers. The author describes danger in the environment but seems to enjoy his experience. “This place, beyond the negative propaganda of the outside world, feels like paradise” (p.11). The landscape is discussed in romantic language like “[...] the stars show themselves with the clarity of chipped diamonds” (p.7). A photograph of brightly coloured birds adds to the romantic image of the landscape (Figure 27). The article states that the Orinoco River “slices Venezuela into two realms: the settled north and the wild south.” (p.10)



Figure 27

The first actors who interact with the author in this article are people of the Yanomami tribe who are said to be “fierce” (p.9) but the author explains that this fierceness is exaggerated. The contradictory key message of the article concerning the Yanomami tribe seems to be that they are peaceful despite their reputation while the author also gives many examples of violence. The Yanomami are constantly emphasised as fierce, violent, warring, and traditional but on the other hand, the author also explains that they were nothing but kind to him. i.e. “[...] my visit with the Fierce People has been nothing but neighborly” (p.11). Also, the writer states that the settlement “feels like paradise” (p.11) to him, while also reporting that sometimes people are killed, and emphasising the violent lives of the locals. There is a variance in the way the author is treated, and the way others are treated by the Yanomami as he himself is welcomed warmly while others were not. There is no explanation provided why this may have happened.

Further in the article, a short history is given of western explorers' encounters with the Yanomami and how the locals falsely acquired a name as dangerous and hostile while in fact they are peaceful in the eyes of the author. This statement is given right after explaining that locals from other tribes travelling with the author were threatened with knives and arrows upon arrival in the Yanomami settlement. The narrative states peacefulness but gives examples of violence. Another emphasised point regarding the Yanomami suggests that they are desperate to learn about western technology. The author bases this first on the way locals react to his western equipment, then asks the village-headman who confirms he would like to learn about medicine, steel, and other materials. The author creates an image of natural paradise inhabited by primitive people who want to become more like him, a westerner. The Yanomami are photographed in traditional clothing without signs of western tools or influences (Figure 28). The stereotype that forest tribes like the Yanomami are primitive is underlined in the way these people are apparently fascinated by western possessions of the author such as his wristwatch, soap, or brightly coloured hammock. For instance, the author writes: "They borrow my soap, whose foamy pleasures fascinate them" (p.11). "While the Yanomami have adopted some modern technologies from visitors, they live as they always have, a source of some impatience in shabonos [a communal log hut] that now catch glimpses of what they're missing" (p.13). The modern technologies mentioned are not shown on photographs and the impatience the author sees with the Yanomami seems to suggest superiority of the West (or North). "Though they may fish with steel hooks [...] the tribe is thirsting for more from the outside world" (p.13).

In the article, further up the Orinoco River away from the Yanomami, the author visits ranchers, who are described differently: "headed for a pasture to meet some of the ranch's rough cowboys, [...]" (p.18) the author calls the ranchers rough and lists some of their experiences to fortify a rough and masculine image. Upon meeting a rancher, the author writes "[...] Ramón is a born raconteur. He has fathered 24 children. He has mixed it up with caimans and has been bitten by piranhas" (p.19). The story then continues with the rancher showing scars of those attacks as well as snake bites and a mark where a stingray impaled him, while smiling. The story continues with the author being invited by Ramón to go fishing. They find an "18-foot anaconda" (p.20) (Figure 29 although it is unclear whether this is the same anaconda) which Ramón encourages the author to grab, which he does, for no apparent reason. The snake escapes and the men go on to fish for piranhas. The entire segment with the rancher seems to be filled with displays of extreme masculinity and expressing superiority over local wildlife.

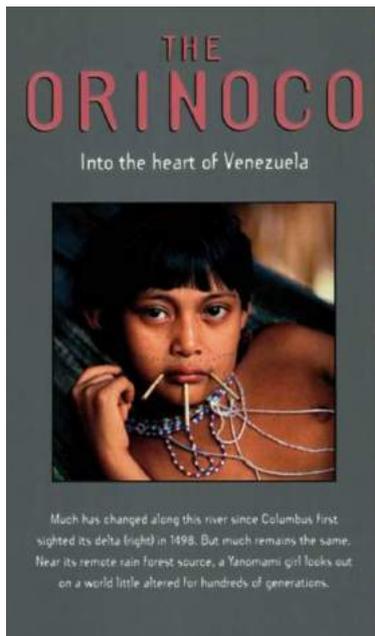


Figure 28



Figure 29

The author acknowledges that different people have different interests in a place. A scientific viewpoint is addressed, the wants and needs of the local tribes are mentioned, and on two occasions, the author mentions bird-watchers and nature-watchers: “[...] during the wet season everything floods, sometimes turning towns and their few stores into islands accessible only by boat. Good news for nature-watchers” (p.18). This quote shows the western standpoint of the author, as the flooding is commented on as good news for visitors (like himself) while local inhabitants might feel differently about the flooding of their town. The Yanomami, ranchers, animals, and tourists are all mentioned, and it is recognised how different people may give different meaning to a place. In this article, the *national geographic magazine* seems to create a place myth of exotic attractiveness which has an undeserved reputation of being dangerous, while simultaneously listing many things that seem very dangerous. Flora and fauna are described in terms that suggest beauty but danger too. Many animals are explained to be lethal and many different animals in the article are killed, captured or harassed either for food or for fun by many different actors such as the Yanomami tribe, ranchers, and even the author himself.

5.3 Results of article analysis for articles published from 2000 to 2009

5.3.1 The Driest Place on Earth

Random nr. 33, August 2003

In this article, the author (Estonian-American Priit J. Vesilind) visits the Atacama Desert (Chili) and writes in first-person perspective about his experiences.

The desert is described as an unforgiving place, in terms that make it sound sinister by using words like ‘haunting’ and ‘eerie’. The landscape is described as: “a science fiction landscape” (p.54). This notion is reinforced by a photo showing the desert at a time of day that makes it look blue and mysterious (Figure 30). “The mountains – which look as if they’ve been skinned, showing vein and sinew – break the eerie flatness (p.54).” The author mentions “[...] the haunting loneliness of the pampas [...]” (p.55). “[...] the otherworldly terrain of the Valley of the Moon” (p.60). Later, the author explains that the terrain has been used to test the Mars rover because of its likeness to the surface of Mars.

We slip between iron-red pinnacles with spines like the backs of prehistoric reptiles. Surely a misplaced landscape, intended for some other world, it lacks the topography and soft edges of erosion that limn most of Mother Earth.
(p.67)

The Desert landscape is positioned as a desolate place. This image is strengthened by the notion that it is the driest place on earth: “At its center, a place climatologists call absolute desert, the Atacama is known as the driest place on Earth. There are sterile, intimidating stretches where rain has never been recorded, at least as long as humans have measured it” (p.52). Then, after describing landscape, the Desert is personified too: “The desert may be a heartless killer, but it’s a sympathetic conservator” (p.55). In the latter quote, the desert is given human traits (killer and conservator), personifying the landscape. Because the traits are killing and conserving, they only add to the sinister image of the desert which is being presented.



Figure 30

An interesting segment in the article shows the author spending a night in the desert. The author wants to make a “homage to the desert by spending a night where life does not exist – in the driest most desolate region of the central Atacama” (p.70). This is explained to have cultural significance for descendants of the Inca, but the author will do the same in order to make homage to the desert while it obviously has no cultural significance for him. Later, at the end of the article, while lying awake in the desert, the author sums up what will happen to the people living in and around the desert.

I lie awake, glad to feel a part of the desert, thinking about the stubborn resilience of life. Above, planets gleam coldly in the void. Like the Atacama, they too are hostile to life. Yet here, in the desert, as long as snowmelt fills the aquifers with fresh water, humans can endure. But will they thrive? Probably not. After they have exploited the land and sea with their industrial prowess and technological savvy, the desert will eventually spit them out. Copper may last another 50 years, but there are no new economic booms in sight. Soon life may be too costly, too arduous, or too brutish, and most of the current inhabitants will sound retreat, leaving their ancestors in the dust, perfectly preserved. (p.72)

For a visitor writing an article about the desert, these seem like very big predictions that are not very firmly based. The author prophesies what will happen to people who have far more experience living in the desert. The segment shows the perceived position of superiority towards the local inhabitants and can be regarded as a clear example of orientalism. Also, the segment describes people as trespassers who can be spat out by the environment. A parallel can be drawn between this article and earlier articles in the rain forest. Here, mining replaces forestry, but both are described as detestable practices ruining nature.

A controversial description of a guide on page 70 makes the reader wonder whether that would be an acceptable description if the guide were an American citizen or a man. “I’m the sole guest on a guided trip from a pricey tourist hotel in San Pedro. My guide, Rosa Ramos, a beauty whose bronze skin stretches smooth and tight across high cheekbones and a classic Inca nose, cheerfully runs through her routine [...]” (p.70). To add to the romantic image already created by the author, emphasis is placed on the way the tour guide looks. No mention is made about her performance as a guide.



Figure 31

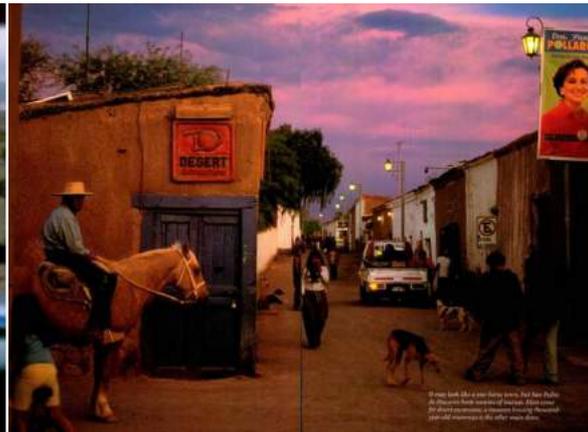


Figure 32

The article shows people in photographs working their daily jobs in mostly modern clothing (Figures 31 & 32). It is noticeable that the people in the photographs are not smiling except for one photo. This photo (Figure 33) include a caption that states “‘They smiled knowing I’d buy a rug,’ says photographer Joel Sartore (He did.) Adapted to thin air, the Mamani family of the Aymara people (opposite) subsist as high-plains herders and farmers just as their ancestors did hundreds of years ago [...]” (p.56). The explanation why the people in the picture are smiling makes them seem less sincere than if the caption would not be included.

AS LONG AS SNOWMELT
CONTINUES TO FILL
THE AQUIFERS,
HUMANS CAN ENDURE
IN THE ATACAMA.



Figure 33

5.3.2 Megatransect

Random nr. 8, October 2000

This is the first part of a story that is stretched over three issues (the third and final part in the August issue of 2001). American conservatist J. Michael Fay's journey of a year on foot through central Africa with the goal to "chronicle the region's still pristine forests" (p.3).

In this article, the tropical rain forest is mentioned in Romantic terms as a beautiful yet dangerous place, i.e. a "[...] glorious tropical wilderness [...]" (p.9). While many plants and animals are encountered by the group in this article, the author lists them quite matter-of-factly without many comparisons that may provide a western audience with a frame of reference. The focus seems to be more on J. Michael Fay's interaction with nature and culture. The author explains encounters with leeches, elephants, chimpanzees, a gorilla, lizards, spiders, plants with sharp thorns, and "a wonderland of unspoiled forest," (p.21) but they are all explained through the expert knowledge and actions of Fay, who never doubts about anything in the article and seems to know how to handle all animals and plants.

Unlike other articles covering similar journeys so far, this narrative is not written in first-person perspective. The author is one of the people undertaking the journey but reports on Fay's perspective and not his own. This gives the article a more objective but less personal feel, but it also allows the author to create a heroic narrative around Fay that could be considered quite arrogant if Fay had written it about himself. This article contains many quotes mentioning Fay in an admiring manner.

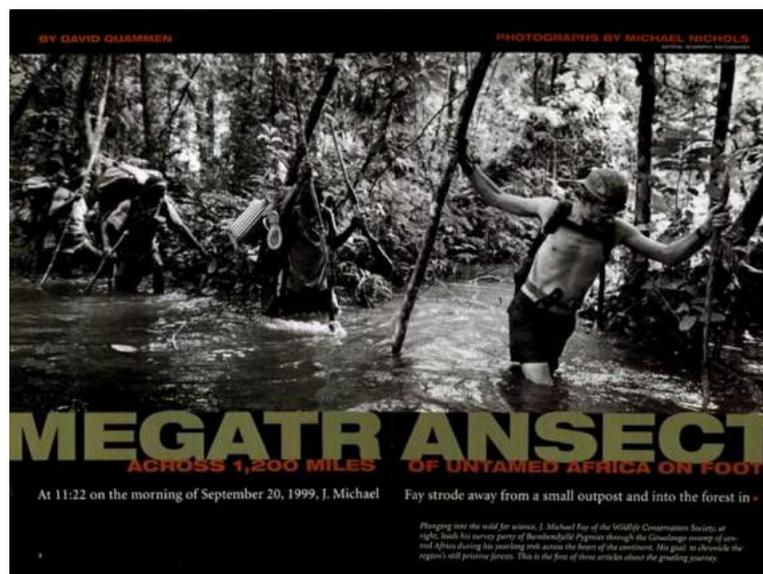


Figure 34

The characterisation of J. Michael Fay in the article is striking. Fay shows no weakness and is photographed in positions that show his leadership and bravery. On the cover photo of the article, he can be seen crossing a creek in the rain forest leading “his survey party of Bambendjellé Pygmies” (p.3) (Figure 34). On page 20, pictures show a Fay helping and looking troubled (Figure 35). The caption explains:

Part doctor, part cheerleader, Fay treats one of his men (center) with penicillin for yaws, a skin disorder rampant among Pygmies in the Congo. Besides collecting data, Fay (far right) also carries the burden of getting 15 souls safely across 1,200 miles of forest. One bad decision could mean disaster, death, or complete demoralization. (p.20)

The caption makes it seem like Fay is carrying physical and mental burdens all by himself, while tending to both the physical and mental health of the team he is with. There is no mention of the strength or bravery of the men with him, while it may be expected that local inhabitants may be somewhat more experienced in handling the conditions they are facing. Also, the use of the word “souls” (p.20) makes it sound like Fay is a captain responsible for people on a ship. Further on in the article, when faced with a wild elephant, a Congolese helper slowly walks to the back of the group out of fear while Fay calmly starts speaking English to the elephant which then moves away. This section suggests that he is braver in such situations than the Congolese men with him. Another aspect adding to the impressive account created for Fay, is the name local Pygmies have given his plane (before the foot journey he conducted aerial surveys over Central Africa); “Ngolio, or great crowned eagle” (p.5).



Figure 35

After describing the clothing Fay will wear for his journey the author writes: “Less determined travellers, in their Wellingtons and bush pants, just don’t get to the places where Fay goes” (p.9). The writer then continues to display Fay’s knowledge:

Fay's command of the botanical diversity upon which big mammals depend is impressive – he seems familiar with every tree, vine, and herb. He knows the feeding habits of the forest elephant (*Loxodonta Africana cyclotis*, the smaller subspecies of African elephant adapted to the woods and soggy clearings of the Congo Basin) and the life cycles of the plants that produce the fruits it prefers. He can recognize, from stringy fecal evidence, when a chimpanzee has been eating a certain latex-rich fruit. He can identify an ambiguous tree by the smell of its inner bark. He sees the forest in its particulars and its connectedness. Now he bends pensively over a glob of civet dung. Then he makes another notation. “Mmm. This is gonna be fun,” he says, and walks on. (p.9, p.10)

It is suggested that it would be very difficult to be more knowledgeable about the flora and fauna of the African rain forest than Fay is. It is easy to believe that this account of Fay may be exaggerated at least slightly. Also, some of his companions are people who actually live in that forest. They might know as much as Fay or even more. Their knowledge is not mentioned. The author also lists character traits of Fay that are favourable on such journeys. They include amongst others: “a certain gift for command” (p.10) and “a level of personal force and psychological savvy that allows him to push a squad of men forward through difficult circumstances, using a mix of inspirational goading, promised payment, sarcasm, imperiousness, threat, tactical sulking, and strong example” (p.10). Even the character traits that may be considered negative under usual circumstances like “threat” or “sulking” are mentioned as useful in this case. “Sulking” is even called “tactical” (p.10).



Figure 36



Figure 37

In this article, the term pygmy is used often while the term might be considered pejorative. In some sentences the pygmy people are discussed in a way that would seem quite strange if one were to replace the term “Pygmy” and fill in “American” in the blanks. For instance: “By his side was an aging Pygmy named Ndokanda, a companion to Fay from adventures past, armed now with a new machete and dubiously blessed with the honor of cutting trail” (p.8). This man is talked about in a quite subservient manner. “Nine other pygmies marched after them, carrying waterproof bags of gear and food. Interspersed among that troop came still other folk – a camp boss and cook, various assistants, Michael “Nick” Nichols with his cameras, and me” (p.8). In this segment, it is striking how the only one of the “troop” who is given a name is the American photographer Nichols. He is now personalised, which gives the reader a closer relationship to the actor (Tonkiss, 2012). The others are all named as part of a group or by their job but not by their name, with the exception of one or two Congolese helpers named later in the article. The pygmy people remain nameless. In the photographs, the Pygmy men are shown wearing traditional loincloths in some photos (Figure 36) and modern clothes in others. In one photo, a man is dressed as a forest spirit during a ritual (Figure 37).



Figure 38

Fay’s journey is explained to have a noble purpose: “Behind this mad lark lay a serious purpose – to observe, to count, to measure, and from those observations and numbers to construct a portrait of great central African forests before their greatness succumbs to the inexorable nibble of humanity. Fay is later called “merely the latest” (p.10) in a list of Victorian

explorers who went on journeys in Congo. The only difference is – according to the author – that he does not work in name of religion or a king, but in the name of conservation. Then the author presents a second motive: “He doesn’t voice it explicitly, but I will: Mike Fay is an untamable man who just loves to walk in the wilds” (p.14). Again, Fay’s character is elevated even more. This is also a clear example of the benefit of writing about someone instead of writing about oneself. Because the author is distanced from Fay, he can make claims that Fay could hardly make about himself.

The article does pay attention to protection of hardwood by local policymakers. Fay explains the value some rare trees may have, suggesting how difficult it is to protect them. Local logging companies are also mentioned later but the article does not express criticism towards the companies or the local policy. Local hunters are also not critiqued in the article. The “little guys” (p.25) like a local man photographed with a monkey he killed (Figure 38) are not a problem according to Fay, professional large-scale hunters are.

This article quite bluntly suggests superiority of Fay over “the Pygmies”, his team and other local inhabitants. This is done mostly by elevating J. Michael Fay to superhuman heights and sometimes by describing situations where locals are scared and Fay is not, or Fay displays impressive knowledge or physical ability. Such segments are found so often that the narrative would make anyone in the Congolese forest seem inferior compared to J. Michael Fay regardless whether they are local, American, or something else.

and social upheaval. [...] in Indonesia, volcanoes are a cultural cauldron in which mysticism, modern life, Islam and other religions mix – or don't. (p.41)

The volcano is given human traits such as: “Merapi is a natural-born killer” (p.38). The author explains how volcanoes can kill in many ways: “searing, lava, suffocating mud, or the tsunamis that often follow an eruption” (p.38). But the villagers living dangerously close to the volcano will not listen to warnings by government officials who want everybody to evacuate because the volcano rumbles severely. They “[...] take their cues from an octogenarian with dazzling dentures and a taste for menthol cigarettes: Mbah Marijan, the gatekeeper of Merapi” (not photographed in the article), who is explained to be “responsible for the fate of villagers [...] and of the 500,000 residents of Yogyakarta, a city 20 miles to the south” (p.38). Figure 41 shows the mountain on the left along with the settlements on the slope surrounded by fertile land.



Figure 41



Figure 42

The author juxtaposes the most scientific way volcanoes are monitored in Indonesia (by the “Centre for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation”), and the most mystical (80-year old Marijan, the gatekeeper of the volcano). In an example, the author explains how Marijan reportedly rescued someone who went missing by making fog disappear so he could be found. Whether that is something that really happened or not is for the reader to decide, but there are no suggestions towards an explanation how he did this and so a reader may find this story difficult to believe. Whether or not it is true, the scientific and mystical method are both important as thousands of people rely on their advice regarding the volcano, the article explains. Marijan is described as a man whose most striking trait are his dentures and his taste for menthol cigarettes. Although he is not specifically mentioned in any negative context, his enormous

responsibility is emphasised and his introduction does not describe him in a way that will give the reader the idea that he is a man capable of handling such a burden. While Marijan is not explicitly said to be incompetent, the reader may wonder whether this man can be trusted to such an important task.

The scientific centre of volcanology is commended for the modern equipment it has and its ability to predict volcanic activity. At the same time, people are mentioned to blame all sorts of disasters on praying for the wrong things or displeasing local deities. For example:

He [a village elder] ‘won’t name any names,’ he says guardedly, but he insists they angered the volcano deity by praying to advance their careers while ignoring Trunyan’s growing disrepair. Others blame the new road, which recently connected the village to the rest of Bali, destroying its isolation and leaving it open to spiritual contamination. (p.45)

The article gives the impression that local inhabitants do not take the governmental warnings seriously. For example: “Overnight, government volcanologists have raised the alert to its highest level. The lava dome might collapse at any moment. Hasn’t Marijan heard? The entreaties leave Marijan unimpressed. The alerts are merely guesses by men at far remove from the spirit of the volcano” (p. 41). This article explains what great scientific equipment the Indonesian government has for predicting volcanic activity and alerting Indonesians. However, there is an absence in the text of people listening to that advice, while there are many examples of people who trust mystical deities more than the scientific research centre. Surely, there must be more Indonesians who pay attention to what the scientifically substantiated warnings say.

In another segment, the author explains that these mystical beliefs are not just for farmers or civilians: “Before running for vice president, one candidate sneaked off to worship at a volcano near Lake Rica, where there is reportedly a helipad for visiting VIPs. The spirits must not have been listening: He was defeated” (p.49). Here, the author is slightly clearer about his opinion on such worshipping; his remark: “the spirits must not have been listening” suggests he is sceptic about these things. Further on in the article, the author notes that “belief in the supernatural persists among even the most modern, high-ranking leaders” (p.48). Then a member of parliament is quoted saying that politicians are hypocrites since they claim to believe in Islam and claim to be rational while they also believe in mysticism in their hearts. As this is a quote from somebody else, the author is distanced from it. However, the narrative of the rest of the article seems to support the point that is made.

Some examples of orientalism show when the author seems to be critical towards Indonesians: “Merapi has settled down. Residents attribute the calm to Marijan’s prayers and presence on the volcano. But calm in Indonesia is about as long lasting as a plume of smoke” (p.56). Another segment that suggests the author’s western standpoint: “Revivalist Hinduism, militant Islam, ancient mysticism: Which will prevail? Perhaps all. Perhaps none. Globalization is sweeping through Indonesia like a monsoon. A young Internet-savvy generation worships not volcanoes, but Asian boy bands and English soccer clubs” (p.57). The author later expresses that this globalisation still has not diminished the importance of volcanoes in Indonesia as he explains that Marijan is introduced as a guest of honour of the Indonesian president, which is an attempt at positive publicity by the president. This shows the importance the Indonesian people connect to volcanoes and mysticism as Marijan represents both.

5.3.4 Cruellest Place on Earth

Random nr. 44, October 2005

This article covers an excursion in the Danakil Desert in the Horn of Africa. The story is written from the personal experience of the writer, who is accompanied by a photographer, guard and guide Edris Hassan, and an interpreter. The men are travelling through the desert with salt merchants (Figure 43) and confronted with “Ugugumo rebels” who are “[...] asking for money, causing trouble [...]” (p.37) in the canyon ahead. The article covers the time between this anticipated encounter and the actual encounter at the end of the narrative. The local people described in the article are all part of different fractions of the Afar tribe.

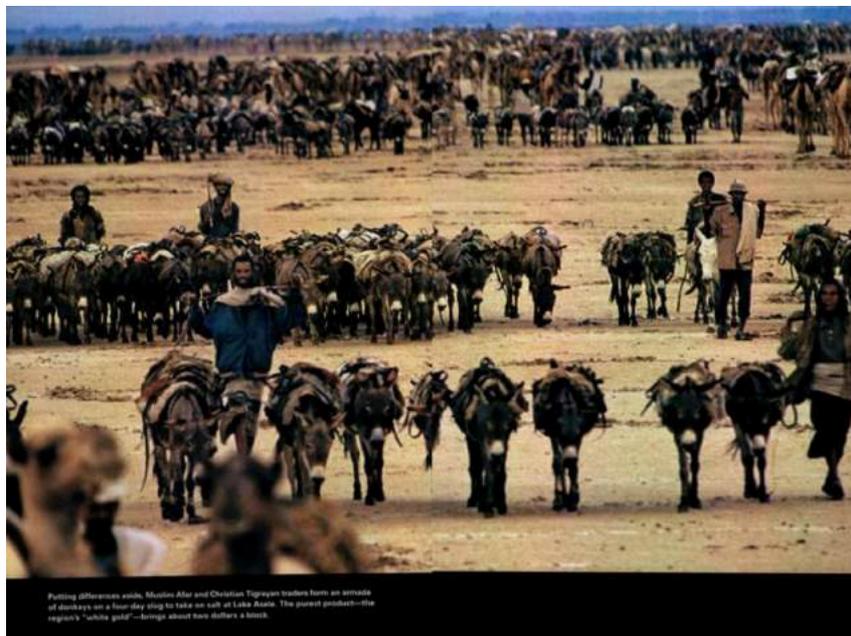


Figure 43

The Ugugumo rebels are considered unfriendly as they are referred to as “the enemy” (p.42). Interestingly, at the end of the article when these rebels are finally encountered, they are unexpectedly friendly and warmly embrace Hassan. This already shows that the Afar’s bloodthirst might be exaggerated. Before this happens, the author explains what he expects of these men:

The Ugugumo: We’d heard rumors about these rebels (the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front) [...]. They were, we’d been told, wild and unpredictable and as hard and unforgiving as the sands of the desert. But

they were also heroes, men of courage, since they were fighting to regain Afar territory that was lost in the early 1990s, when Eritrea defeated Ethiopia and became a separate nation. (p.37)

So, the men are characterised as wild and unpredictable, but the author explains that these are rumours he was told and so he distances himself slightly from the statement. Also, the rebels are compared to the desert itself which is an interesting characterisation. It suggests not only that the men are hard and unforgiving, but the desert is characterised too as having those same traits. Later in the article, the author suggests that the Afar are in fact shaped by the desert.

[...] it [the desert] would shape us too if we stayed long enough, Edris said. Then we would come to know it not simply as a place of harsh rocks, gravel, and lava but as a shelter, a home, an open stretch beneath the sky that offers all a man and his family need: grass for the livestock, palms for weaving the thatch of a home, special shrubs for making a toothbrush or curing a stomach ache, and canyons with deep, cool water holes. (p.52)

This sounds appealing perhaps to the Afar people living in the desert, but it will sound foreign and primitive to a western audience. The meaning of the environment to the Afar is given attention here, explaining how the local communities interact with the physical environment. Instead of suggesting that the Afar have adapted to the environment, this article suggests that the environment shaped the people. This makes the Afar passive actors. The character traits they are given relate to the desert too. Repeatedly, terms like fierce, ferocious and wild are used to describe the Afar. “And when we fight, we use whatever we have: guns and knives, rocks and sticks. We will even bite with our teeth. You use everything when you fight against your enemies” (p.46). The aggressive traits of the people are in line with the unforgiving image created for the landscape. Further in the article, the author imagines what it would be like to be shaped by the desert: “We would become, like the Afar, independent and self-reliant, a people who regard strangers warily. We would trust no one but other Afar and, even then, only those in our *kedo*, our clan.” Another reinforcement of the characterisation of danger in the text is given in Figure 44, where a young child is shown holding a fake gun.



Figure 44

In the following segment, the author describes the dangers of the environment. Similarities between the author's description of the people and this description of the environment are easily found.

[...] in the Danakil, a place of dry sands and even drier gravel beds, rocky lava flows, active volcanoes, burning salt flats, temperatures that often top 120°F, winds that choke you with dust, and suffocating days of no wind at all. Even worse, this place where rain falls sparingly at the best of times was now in the grip of a bad drought and the half-mummified carcasses of camels and goats lay strewn across the sands. [...] Why would anyone want to fight over this hellacious place? (p.40)

The association with hell is reinforced by a photo showing rock glowing brightly red in a dark environment, similar to a classic image of hell (Figure 45). The many references made to danger in the environment reflect the danger that the author ascribes to the people. The author describes the desert not only as a landscape but as a way of life that affects anyone living there long enough.



Figure 45

5.3.5 Last of the Amazon

Random nr. 50, January 2007

This article is very critical of actors who are destroying the Amazon rain forest and aims to convince the reader of the magnitude of the problem: “In the time it takes to read this article, an area of Brazil’s rain forest larger than 200 football fields will have been destroyed” (p.42). The claim is fortified by adding a photo showing Manoki Indians who are standing in an empty plot in the forest. These people are not covered elaborately in the text, but the image shows them looking lost (Figure 46). Also, their nakedness is used to emphasise their vulnerability. Emphasis is placed on the actors who are responsible for the breakdown of the rain forest. These actors are very negatively framed: “[...] their [people living in the forest] lives threatened by those who profit from the theft of timber and land. In this Wild West frontier of guns, chain saws, and bulldozers, government agents are often corrupt and ineffective – or ill-equipped and outmatched. Now, industrial-scale soybean producers are joining loggers and cattle ranchers in the land grab, speeding up destruction and further fragmenting the great Brazilian wilderness” (p.43).



Figure 46

This quote includes a list of actors who are blamed for actively destroying the rain forest directly (loggers, ranchers, soybean producers) and actors who are passively destroying the rain forest indirectly (incompetent government officials). The soybean producers are shown working in a photo (Figure 47). A man in the foreground looks in an angle towards the camera but his eyes are not visible through the shade of his hat, giving him a closed expression. The landscape is called: “the great Brazilian wilderness” which suggests to the reader that it is a beautiful and impressive environment, but there are many groups identified who are ruining it

according to the author. The Brazilian government is depicted as incompetent to handle these issues as government officials are either “corrupt” or “ill-equipped.” The problems identified in the article are not limited to the destruction of the rain forest, the author also explains that actors trying to protect the rainforest are murdered. For example, a photograph on page 48 (Figure 48) shows a child mourning the death of a 73-year old nun who “dedicated her life to saving the forest [...]” (p.48) The caption explains that she was killed by hired gunman after attempting to stop ranchers clearing land. The caption and photo emphasise innocence of the victims (a child and a nun) and add to the characterisation of the evil ranchers and loggers. To fortify this characterisation even more, the article explains that in a single state 772 people have died in land wars. Later in the article, on page 61, Dorothy Stang’s (the nun) death is reconstructed in the text.

Her last mission, to save a remote tract of jungle known as Lot 55, ended on the morning of February 12, 2005, when two gunmen confronted the petite 73-year-old nun on a secluded jungle path. A conversation ensued, overheard by a witness who later testified at the men’s trial. Stang admonished them – the land was not theirs, they had no right to plant pasture grasses for livestock. “So you don’t like to eat meat?” one of the assailants taunted. “Not enough to destroy the forest for it,” she replied. “If this problem isn’t resolved today, it’s never going to be,” the man snarled. Stang saw him reach for his gun. She opened her Bible to Matthew and read from chapter five, ‘*Bem – aventureados os que tem fome e sede de justiça, pois serão satisfeitos* – Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.’ As she turned to go, Rayfrán das Neves Sales levelled his revolver and squeezed the trigger (p.61).

This reconstruction is a strong example of personalising the actors, so the reader feels closer to them. Combined with the photographs and other personal stories, the author attempts to evoke emotion with the audience: hatred towards seemingly evil actors and compassion towards victims of violence involved with logging and ranching in the Amazon rain forest. This personal approach also shows in the first-person perspective in which the article was written.



Figure 47



Figure 48

The local people living in the forest are depicted in two ways in this article. Either as “committed stewards” (p.43): actors who are actively protecting the rain forest, or as quite passive, in a role of the innocent bystander. As Tonkiss (2012) explains, a passive role does not have to be negative; it is not negative in this article. Both roles are talked about positively by the author. Then towards the end of the article a third perspective is added, that of the poor farmer who is forced to sell illegal timber to survive. Here again, innocence is suggested (despite the illegal timber selling) by photographing the farmers’ young son in a photograph (Figure 49). The caption includes a quote from the ten-year old son: “I hope for better days [...] here in the forest it is not so good” (p.71).



Figure 49

The key message of this article is to convince the audience of the ruthlessness of various actors destroying the Brazilian rain forest. The author appeals to the morality of the reader by demonstrating the innocence of victims and emphasising criminal acts of the ranchers, loggers, soybean producers, and the gunmen they hire. The author does this through photos of actors portrayed as either innocent (children) or guilty (the soy producers) and text through personal narratives that speak to the emotions of the reader such as the final sentences of the articles when the author joins farmer Pimentel to the destroyed house he grew up in. “My grandfather planted this one [a large cut-down mango tree] a hundred years ago,’ he said, looking out across a desolate, empty field. Pimentel buried his face in his hands and began to weep. ‘It was beautiful here,’ he said. ‘You should have seen it.’” (p.70) Pimentel is personalised by giving this very personal, vulnerable family story.

5.3.6 Deadly Haven

Random nr. 16, May 2001

This article discusses a cave emitting toxic fumes in southern Mexico. The cave is called Villa Luz and the toxic gas is hydrogen sulphide. The article is relatively short and explains how scientists work there and how this remarkable environment houses animals that are different from their counterparts outside the cave: “Poisonous to humans, hydrogen sulfide sustains bizarre microbial life-forms that oxidize it and create sulfuric acid, which in turn dissolves rock and enlarges the cave” (p.74). This article is very factual, explaining the chemical processes in the cave and how the cave originated. Much information is also provided about the various creatures living in the cave and how they differ from similar creatures living on the surface.

The author is detached from the narrative and so the reader feels like the author is not a single person but *the national geographic magazine*, giving the voice of the author more weight and authority (Tonkiss, 2012). The author seems to be taking no standpoint in the article and shows no sign of a particular opinion towards the cave. The text merely presents the audience with the facts of the cave and its peculiarities. Some articles that were analysed so far have included adjectives coaxing the reader towards a standpoint, but this article refrains from that. In this article, there is no mention of extraordinary skill of the researchers, only of the quality of their equipment. “[...] since 1997, no serious accidents have occurred, in part because all three dozen team members have used electronic monitors to measure gas levels” (p.79). This is the first article analysed thus far covering western scientists in foreign places that does not elevate them to heroic heights. There are photos included of the scientist, but they are not shown in particularly acrobatic poses. They seem to be doing their work calmly and safely (Figures 50, 51 & 52).



Figure 50



Figure 51



Figure 52

There is no information given concerning policy by the Mexican government or whether the cave is vulnerable or not. The reader does not know whether the cave is protected or if there is any policy whatsoever concerning cave management.

On the final page of the article, a short segment explains how local villagers visit the cave once a year:

During Holy Week hundreds of people make a fishing pilgrimage called La Pesca to the cave. Some are Zoque, descendants of the ancient Olmec. Villagers collect cave fish [Figure 54] using candlelight to illuminate their surroundings [Figure 53]. Men sprinkle a paste of lime and the root of the toxic barbasco vine into a cave pool [Figure 54] making the fish stuporous and easy to collect. (p.84)

The men in the narrative are shown in traditional clothing, but the woman holding the candle is not. She is dressed in modern attire and wears an earring. Judging by the picture, it would be impossible to tell where she is from as she looks like a member of the global economy. Here, the cave is explained to have different meanings for different people (local communities and scientists) and both meanings are represented as equally important. A final slightly critical note that should be made is that the scientists are shown with high-tech tools while the local woman uses a candle.



Figure 53

Figure 54

5.4 Results of article analysis for articles published from 2009 to 2019

5.4.1 Defenders of the Amazon – Kayapo Courage

Random nr. 20, January 2014

The article is written in a first-person perspective; the author writes from experience about a journey to the Kayapo tribe in Brazil, giving this narrative a personal feeling. The environment is described as remote, which the author emphasizes in the narrative: “The plane clawed through the haze of forest fires around the Brazilian frontier town of Tucumã. After half an hour heading south and west at a hundred knots, we crossed the twisting course of the muddy Rio Branco, and suddenly there were no more fires, no more roads, no more ragged clear-cut pastures stippled with herds of white cattle, nothing but trackless forest wreathed in mist. Below us lay Kayapo Indian country, five officially demarcated tracts of contiguous land that in sum make up an area about the size of Kentucky” (p.34). The comparison with Kentucky demonstrates the American focus of the magazine; to people outside the United States the size of Kentucky may not be common knowledge.

Interestingly, it seems like there are some resemblances between the situation presented in this article and the situation presented in the January 2007 – *Last of the Amazon* article about ranchers, loggers, and soybean producers destroying the rainforest. The Kayapo tribe was not mentioned in that article. The loggers and ranchers are mentioned in both. In this, more recent account, miners and rubber tappers are added to the list, but they are not characterised as evil as they were in 2007. Here, they are blamed for bringing indigenous tribes in contact with “measles and other diseases”, killing people because they have no natural immunity (p.35). This comment places the tribe outside society and characterises them as primitive and remote.



Figure 55



Figure 56

“The Amazon tribe has beaten back ranchers and gold miners and famously stopped a dam. Now its leaders must fight again or risk losing a way of life.” (p. 31) This quote suggests defiance from the Kayapo tribe. The Kayapo are characterised as traditional but aware of the world around them. They are photographed in traditional dress but the text explains they wear western clothes when the team meets them. This indicates that that is what they might wear in daily life. Figure 58 shows a group of men in elaborate headdress but also wearing western shorts. The children shown in Figure 55 are elaborately dressed in traditional clothing but the caption explains that these are things worn for specific ceremonies, again suggesting that they would not wear this in their daily lives. The Kayapo are reported to live according to tradition but are also shown in modern environments (for instance a supermarket, Figure 59) with modern tools (like glasses, (Figure 56) and outboard motors). Also, their chief Pukatire (Figure 56) speaks some English. “[...] the village chief, Pukatire, a middle-aged man wearing glasses, shorts, and flip-flops. ‘*Akatemai,*’ he said, shaking hands, and adding the bit of English he’d picked up on a trip to North America: ‘Hello! How are you?’” (p.35)

Interestingly, the person introducing the author to Pukatire is Barbara Zimmerman, “the director of the Kayapo Project for the International Conservation Fund of Canada and the United States-Based Environmental Defense Fund.” So, in a remote tribal village in Brazil, introductions are made by an American official where a Brazilian official may be expected. Another suggestion towards familiarity with western people and culture is made when the article describes a striking amount of modern equipment in the village considering the cover photo (Figure 57) and expectations the reader may have after being ensured by the introduction that this place is difficult to reach and “one of the last great bastions of indigenous culture, chronically jeopardized but still vital, intact, unvanquished.” (p.34). However, some families have televisions and there is a schoolhouse built by the Brazilian government with a toilet that flushes.

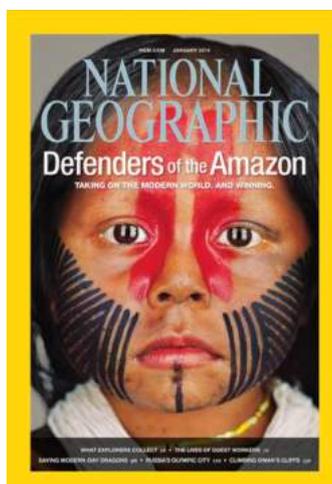


Figure 57

Flora and fauna are described as exotic and beautiful, and the narrative is quite romantic when mentioning the landscape. “Eight degrees south of the Equator, the blood orange sun sank quickly. Howler monkeys roared over the dial-tone drone of the cicadas and earthy odors eddied onto the night air” (p.35). “At first glance, Kendjam seems a kind of Eden. And perhaps it is” (p.35). At the end of the narrative, the author even expresses a slight envy towards a four-year old Kayapo boy: “[...] it seemed hard to imagine a more perfect life for a kid his age than to be a free and footloose Kayapo at home in the forest” (p.53). A photo showing a view of the local landscape adds to that romantic setting by displaying sunny rain forest from above (Figure 58).



Figure 58

This article characterises the Kayapo people as an interesting group of people living in a combination of tribal tradition and modern tools, clothing, and education. The introduction to this article and some of the photos suggest the Kayapo culture is “unvanquished”, but they have been introduced to modern consumer culture according to the rest of the narrative. Two clear examples of this contrast are seen in the text and the images. Firstly, the contrast between tradition and modernity are nicely displayed in the photograph showing Kayapo men with a caught peacock, next to a photo of a Kayapo man visiting a supermarket as he lives close to a town (Figure 59). Secondly, the contrast is captured in a part of the narrative where the author

joins a Kayapo hunting party and is very impressed with their knowledge and skills: “We picked up a faint game trail. Meikãre pointed to the scat of a collared peccary, a small wild swine, and then just off the trail, a trampled area where the peccary had slept. It was as obvious to Meikãre as the meat department of a Stop & Shop would be to me. [...] Fifteen minutes later a shot rang out, then two more. When I caught up, a collared peccary lay dead on a bed of leaves. [...] He slung the load over his shoulder, moving with 30 pounds of peccary on his back as if it were no heavier than a cashmere shawl. [...] They started a tidy wood fire on the riverbank with Bic lighters and cooked the lunch on freshly whittled skewers” (p.44, p.45).



Figure 59

Pukatire himself expresses concern in the article for losing the Kayapo culture: “If we start copying white people too much, they won’t be afraid of us, and they will come and take everything we have. But as long as we maintain our traditions, we will be different, and as long as we are different, they will be a little afraid of us” (p.48). The author presents his point of view to counter the argument that cultures can be lost by introducing technology: “[...] cultures evolve opportunistically like species – the Plains Indians of North America picked up their iconic horses from the Spanish – and strong traditional culture will privilege themselves, making the accommodations they think will ensure their futures. We can question whether a man dressed in a parrot feather headdress and penis sheath is more valuable than one in a Batman T-shirt and gym shorts, But who can be blind to their knowledge of forest plants and animals or to the preeminent values of clean water, untainted air, and the genetic and cultural treasure of diversity itself?” (p.53). The example seems to be a call to the western reader to embrace diversity and an appeal to people with traditional cultures to not fear change.

5.4.2 Life on the Edge

Random nr. 30, October 2017

The article covers a trip to the Nenets people in northern Russia, who herd reindeer (Figure 60). The standpoint of the author is detached as the narrative is not told from a first-person perspective. This gives the story more a more credible feeling since *national geographic magazine* is seen as the author.



Figure 60

The article characterises the Nenets as resilient people, holding on to their land and culture. The situation that is outlined in the article explains that the Nenets are threatened by the changing climate and by gas pipes. The tone of the article suggests admiration for the Nenets is appropriate as they live under tough political and physical circumstances. The hardship the Nenets have to endure is blamed on climate change and Russian policy. “The Nenets are one of the most resilient indigenous groups in the Arctic” (p.114). “[...] they’ve managed to sustain their language, their animist worldview, and their nomadic traditions” (p.114).

No obvious bias can be detected in the representation of the Nenets people but the article does express a critical view of Russian policy. From very outspoken disapproval to Soviet regime and everything that came before it, to more subtle criticism of current Russian rule. “[...] under Soviet rule, the Nenets endured decades of forced collectivization and religious persecution. They survived centuries of Russian rule before that” (p.114). Later, the author states that: “[...] climate change isn’t even the greatest threat to the Nenets. Development is.

Russia's quest for new sources of hydrocarbons has encroached on pastures that were already tight for the estimated 255,000 reindeer and the 6,000 nomadic herders that live on Yamal" (p.115). Although communication between the herders and Gazprom (the Russian state-owned gas company) exists in the article, Gazprom are also said to make changes to the environment without contacting the Nenets.

Later we discover a new feeder line parallel to the road: connecting a gas well to a compressor, it cut across our next campsite. Neither the road nor the pipe were here three summers ago, when the brigade [the Nenets herd] last passed through. The Nenets hadn't been alerted to their construction. They shouldn't be there, Nyadma says. (p.124)

This does not reflect positively on the Russian state and later the possibility of a positive relationship between the Nenets and Gazprom is questioned by the author: "And from this vantage point, the notion that the Nenets reindeer herders can coexist in a 'balanced' way with oil and gas development – an idea I heard consistently from Gazprom officials, the regional government, NGOs, and the herders themselves – seems an illusion" (p.125).

The article does not explain much about the landscape apart from changes made to the landscape by Gazprom and climate change. The area is said to be barren and "the end of the world" which has an apocalyptic implication. The Nenets' ability to survive here gives agency to them which contrasts with the increasing dependence to Gazprom. What the area looks like is not described extensively in the narrative. The photos accompanying the article do give an idea but also mainly focus on the relation between the Nenets and Gazprom (Figures 61 & 62) The photo of a young girl dressed up as a princess (Figure 63) includes a caption explaining how Gazprom provides transportation for children to go to school. However, the girl and other kids do not seem to like it. "The eight-year-old says her happiest time is summer, when a helicopter sent by Gazprom and the regional government brings her and other kids home from school to their migrating families. In fall, when the chopper returns, some kids hide in the tundra" (p.129). Something that may be used as a very positive example of Gazprom policy is presented very negatively. As seen before in other articles, young children are photographed and introduced to the audience to give the article a more personal meaning.



Figure 61



Figure 62



Figure 63

5.4.3 The Salt and the Earth

Random nr. 10, January 2012

In the October 2005 issue, this place was called *The Cruellest Place on Earth*. In this article a different angle is highlighted, and emphasis lays more on the environment than on the people living there. “In Africa’s Afar depression, pastoral tribes and salt traders survive amid a surreal landscape of fissures, faults, and a boiling lake of lava” (p.116). Instead of the entire Danakil Desert, this article covers the Afar depression, which is a smaller place within the Danakil Desert.



Figure 64



Figure 65

The introduction makes the environment sound very inhospitable. In this article, the Afar desert is shown as a deadly and dangerous landscape. The photographs (Figures 64 & 65) make the desert look strange or even extra-terrestrial. In the text, the author explains that the landscape may seem placid: “But the Afar’s timeless visage hides its true nature. Below the

surface, Earth's rocky rind is ripping apart, and underground chambers of magma are fueling 12 active volcanoes as well as steaming geysers, boiling cauldrons, and a fiery lake of lava” (p.120). The tectonic processes are described in a way that emphasise their potential danger.

Unlike the 2005 article where Afar herders were described as dangerous and fierce people, the Afar herders in this article are characterised quite passively. “In September 2005 Afar herders in northern Ethiopia watched in amazement as the Earth yawned open and swallowed their goats and camels. Chunks of obsidian burst from subterranean caverns and flew through the air, said one local, ‘like huge black birds’” (p.120). Their characterisation is passive in the way that an innocent bystander is passive. Their passivity is not suggested to be something negative. The Afar herders in the article are only shown in an aerial photograph (Figure 66). Their absence from the photographs does suggest that they are not considered as interesting as their desert environment. As in other articles where tundra or dry landscapes are described, the local inhabitants are described as resilient. The narrative suggests that living in this environment is hard. “This ‘white gold’ [salt] has long been an important source of income for the Afar people who remain fiercely loyal to this extreme land despite summer temperatures that can soar above 120 degrees Fahrenheit” (p.120).



Figure 66

The apparent trend that scientists are depicted as strong and impressive reappears in this article. However, in this article scientists are spoken about positively more subtly compared to other examples in 1990s or 2000s articles: “Fly over it [the Afar desert] in an airplane – or in a one-person motorized paraglider, as photographer George Steinmetz did countless times – and it may appear as frozen and still as Arctic ice” (p.120). “Scientists brave the desert’s hardships for a different reason” (p.121).

5.4.4 Borneo's Vast Underworld

Random nr. 35, March 2019

This article covers the work of two cavers exploring caves on Borneo. The caves are referred to as “otherworldly” (p.103) and “underworld” (p.100), suggesting thrilling and slightly dangerous places. The author was present during the journey, writing from experience in a first-person perspective. Emphasis is placed on the people exploring the caves instead of the caves themselves. “Explorers are revealing the secrets of some of the biggest, most mysterious coves on earth” (p.100).

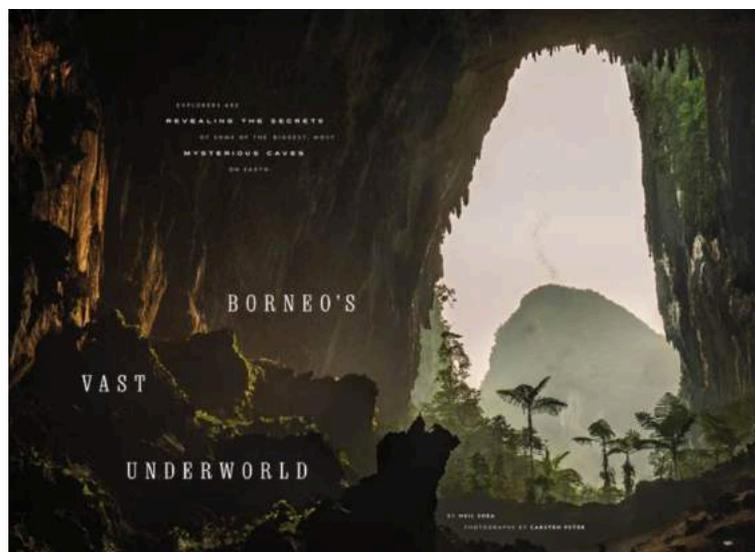


Figure 67

The protagonists in the narrative are not scientists but cavers and caving is referred to as a sport and not a science. Similar to other articles that were analysed previously, the central figures are positioned as impressive men in the article. The article talks about their work in terms that suggest great bravery from the cavers. Especially in passages such as: “Late on a sweltering morning in April, two slim British cavers named Frank and Cookie lowered themselves into a slick, humid pit deep below Borneo’s rainforest” (p.109). Or for instance: “If you are the type of explorer who enjoys crawling down into wet, hot darkness in order to find more, wet, hot, darkness, Borneo is a dreamland, a Disneyland, and a Neverland, all in one” (p.109). The author describes a very unappealing image and then suggests that it is what the cavers love. Surely, the high moisture levels, high temperature, and lack of light are not the appealing parts of the job of the cavers, even to them. To emphasise how much the cavers like this, the next segment describes how they do their work. “Now, imagine them down there, Frank and Cookie, mud smeared and grinning, on the verge of joining two cave systems into a

single, immense whole. Not your thing? Well, for cavers, it's *the* thing" (p.109). The emphasis on their names personalises the narrative for the reader (Tonkiss, 2012). The author suggests that the cavers undergo hardship and enjoy it, adding to their characterisation of very impressive, brave, slightly crazy men. They are trying to find or create (with drills and hammers) a passage to another cave which would mean they "make history" (p.109) because that would create "one of the longest subterranean labyrinths on the planet" (p.109). This possibility seems like a more obvious reason why the men might be happy and grinning.

The author explains his position while the cavers are drilling, which uncovers a variation in the narrative. "Not far above them, I sat in a large gallery, listening for their drills. The gallery was pristine; it had been discovered only days before and I was one of the first to enter it" (p.109). If the environment is "pristine" it is in other words spotless. It seems strange that the author describes the unspoiled nature of the cave while in the same sentence explaining that he is listening for drills attempting to connect the cave to another cave rendering the cave no longer pristine, in a sense. Also, the Gunung Mulu National Park, in the Malaysian part of Borneo, is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The article explains that it is protected; the drilling, bolting, and hammering done by the cavers seems contradictory considering the protected status of the caves.

While the cavers are characterised as athletes, the author displays his own courage too. He is waiting alone in a part of the cave which

[...] was alive with other sounds. [...] overhead – thousands of swiftlets – tiny black birds that spend much of their lives in the pitch-black chambers – twittered and clicked and echolocated toward nests made of saliva, moss, and mud. [...] Sometimes all you can do is wait to see what the darkness reveals. So I lay back, turned out my light, and listened as the swifts swooped low, coming so close I could feel wingbeats on my cheeks. (p.110)

The meaning of this action is not quite clear, it seems the author only does this because he wants to. This animal encounter has parallels with the earlier example of an author grabbing an Anaconda in Venezuela without any apparent reason.



Figure 68, caver is visible in the bottom-right corner.



Figure 69

The article seems to focus not on the landscape in the Bornean caves, but the cavers in that landscape and more specifically: their search for records such as the deepest, longest, or biggest cave. The author is characterising the cavers as very remarkable men who must almost be crazy to perform such punishing tasks. Another example of this is the meeting with another caver, Philip Rowsell, on page 117 who is known as “Mad Phill”. “His nickname apparently had come from a canoeing stunt during his university years, but Mad Phill was known for climbing cave walls that no one else would even attempt” (p.117). The photographs feature the landscape of the caves (Figure 67), but the most striking photographs (Figures 69, 70, & 71) are centred around the cavers who are photographed in very active poses, performing their sport. Another quote that exemplifies the focus on the cavers and not the cave is found on page 116: “‘Up to that point we were all just simple English cavers,’ he said. ‘Mulu transformed us’”. This is said by one of the cavers who remembers a former expedition where they set a record: they explored “some 30 miles of passages” (p.116). This is just one of many examples where the cavers are in awe of each other’s or their own achievements, increasing their perceived superiority to each other and the reader.

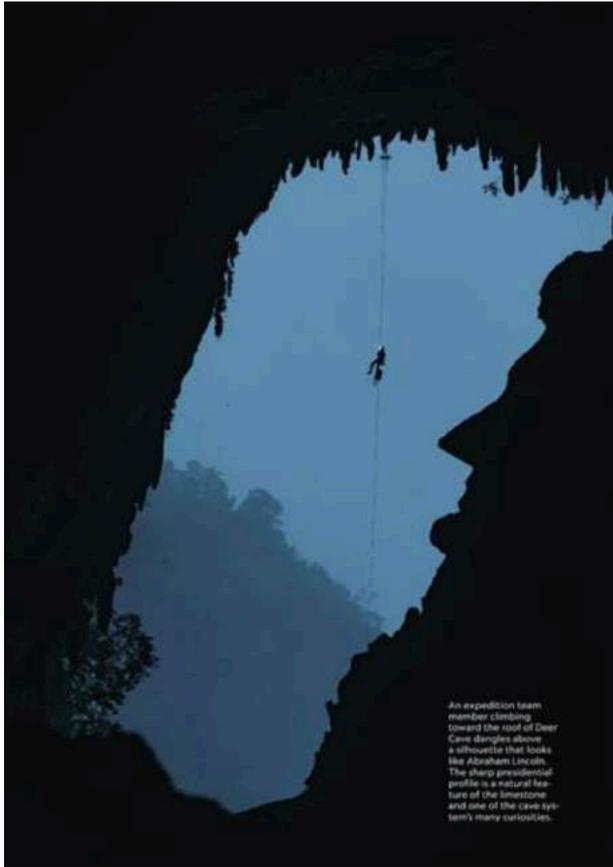


Figure 70



Figure 71

The only mention of local inhabitants is to explain their role in the caving sport on Borneo. “Over three months in Mulu, with the help of guides from the nearby Penan and Berawan tribes, the cavers came upon a score of entrances leading deeper into the region’s ancient limestone” (p.116). They are not shown in photographs. In contrast with the 2001 article about a cave in Mexico – where multiple meanings of the cave were presented equally – this article gives only one type of knowledge of the landscape: that of the cavers. Other possible interpretations of the landscape are not included.

6. Discussion

6.1 Various nature-culture complexes and truth claims seem dependent of authors

One of the sub questions to this thesis was whether the style of relevant articles changed over time. As can be read in the individual analyses of the articles, their focus and style differ a lot but no particular development over time is apparent. It seems that the different backgrounds of the authors who write for the *national geographic magazine* influence the style more than the time. The authors seem to have quite a lot of freedom in their writing as the articles can hardly be compared to one another in terms of writing style and the way the nature-culture complexes and truth claims are represented. It is interesting to note how different the styles and focusses of the articles are. There is variety in the way people are talked about. For some articles, understanding why nature-culture complexes were presented as they were, became easier when the author's background was considered. For example, the first analysis (canopy of the rainforest, 1995) mentioned no people other than scientists, went into great detail to describe the local flora and fauna, and depicted the scientists as very fit, young, energetic people. The writer was present as contributor and scientist and even featured on photographs himself. The author's personal background in this case greatly influenced his focus in the article.

There was no single representation of the nature-culture complex in the articles that were analysed. Both the objectified meaning of nature and the "middle ground" between nature and culture mentioned by Castree (2005, p.xix) could be found in the articles, creating different nature-culture complexes for different articles. For the articles that presented nature and culture as two separated worlds such as the *Megatransect* article in 2000, the place myths and truth claims created are not very nuanced and give a very selective western image of a nature-culture complex. Examples of more neutral place myths and truth claims were found as well. Some articles (such as the 2001 article about a Mexican cave, the 2014 article about the Amazon or the 2017 article about northern Russia) describe multiple place meanings respectfully, creating a more inclusive and subjective place myth. Such truth claims give a western audience a different image of a place; one that includes different place meanings for different actors. Across the articles, it seems that three dominant truth claims can be identified, all with ample information from a scientific perspective and with varying degrees of attention to other perspectives. The most singular dominant truth claim does not mention other perspectives besides the scientific domain, a second dominant truth claim mentions other perspectives but presents them as subordinate to the scientific domain, and a third dominant truth claim presents multiple, equal positions. The presence of three different dominant truth claims found after

analyses of articles in one single magazine further underline the apparent freedom of authors writing for *national geographic magazine*.

6.2 Personalisation and characterisation as popular tools in national geographic magazine since 1990

A recurring theme that was found in most articles since 1990 is personalisation of the actors. People discussed in articles are given a name, family bonds are explained, or personal stories are presented so that the audience feels more connected to the narrative. Similarly, children are often photographed to indicate an actor's innocence and personalise the story. In some articles, personalisation occurred for western actors while non-western actors remained nameless which makes the audience feel more connected to the western actor instead of the local inhabitant. Examples were also found where local communities are not mentioned at all, for instance: The Costa Rica rainforest canopy article in the December 1991 issue or the August 1997 article covering the rainforest of Borneo do not mention locals at all while there are communities living there. Some of the articles lack any mention of local inhabitants or mention them only very swiftly.

There are interesting accounts of westerners performing indigenous cultural activities in two articles. In the 1995 article on the Amazon River, American businessmen undergoing a mock tribal initiation are photographed unflatteringly in headdress and body paint. They are shown performing a ritual which has no cultural significance to them and paying for it so they could experience what they may consider an authentic tribal ritual. In the 2003 article featuring Chile's Atacama Desert, the Estonian-American author spends a night in the desert which is explained to have cultural significance to local inhabitants. He supposedly does the same out of respect for the Desert. The two accounts are very different in that the 1995 article presents the Americans as harmless tourists while the 2003 article presents the action as a noble homage to the Desert. The notion of the Americans who seem quite ridiculous in the article seems a modern criticism of tourist culture while the author of a younger article presents a similar undertaking as something interesting and refined.

A theme that was found in every article was the suggestion of danger either of the environment or coming from local inhabitants, or both. Fierceness and resilience were characterisations that were found in almost every article. In contrast, some local inhabitants are characterised in some less impressive ways. Some of the more negative characterisations range from slightly clumsy, to dangerously incompetent. Marijan, the man in the 2008 article on volcanoes on Indonesia is characterised as slightly strange, the Afar people in the October 2005

issue are explained to be unable to find strong leaders amongst themselves, and Brazilian officials in the January 2007 issue are said to be either corrupt or ill-equipped to save the Amazon Rainforest. Criticism is also aimed at Russian policy makers in the October 2017 issue.

6.3 Themes indicating orientalism through exoticism, stereotyping, romantic representations, and heroic characterisations of western protagonists

Clear differences between the articles are found regarding stereotyping or exoticism, but no development in time is apparent. In the February 1995 article about the Amazon River, stereotypes were denounced by the writer as he describes how the humid and hot environment forces a person to change their rhythm and that the people he meets are not lazy (as he suspects westerners will assume). In the April 1998 article about the Orinoco River, stereotypes were embraced by the author as he explains how fierce and aggressive tribal people are and how they long to adopt western technology. No verdict can be given on either progress or deterioration in this matter based on only two articles. However, it is apparent that stereotypical characterisations are present in some articles. The difference in characterisations also shows the apparent freedom authors have in their writing of articles for the *national geographic magazine*.

One clear example of orientalism that was found in most articles was the overly romantic representation of the landscape. Descriptions of landscapes often compared a place to paradise, Babylon, hell, heaven, diamonds, stars, Eden, or the end of the world. The exaggerated romantic depiction of a landscape is a clear indicator of orientalism. Places are also often described as the quintessential example of something. For instance, places are described as the cruellest, driest, highest, deepest etc. This seems to be a tactic to draw the readers' attention as these descriptions can often be found in the titles of the articles.

Across the articles, indigenous people are often photographed in traditional clothing. On some occasions this is done without explaining whether this is considered daily attire for these people (and so these articles suggest that it is), but most articles do include explanations in their text on why certain clothes are worn. Articles that give no such explanation do mention rituals or customs which may suggest that daily attire is different. Examples of such articles are the September 1999 article about Masai warriors, or the April 1998 article covering the Orinoco River. Although explanations or suggestions towards the use of western clothing add nuance to the narrative, the photographs still exoticize native people which indicates orientalism.

Local inhabitants' agency differs across the articles, where some articles describe local communities as active people with agency – for instance in the articles about the Amazon in 2014 or a Mexican cave in 2001 – while other articles portray people as passive. The two articles

about the Danakil Desert (2005 & 2012), mention the same community differently. In 2005, the focus is on the active local people who are fierce and potentially hostile while the 2012 article mentions them only very briefly and passively. The latter article shows the local community in a more neutral way and focusses almost exclusively on the physical environment. In contrast, the earlier article covers the environment only in relation to the people living there. Despite the claim to objectivity made by *national geographic magazine*, this example shows the selective provision of information in the articles because two articles covering roughly the same place characterise the same people very differently.

One remarkable example of orientalism was found which seems like it might not be published if the article would be delivered in 2019. In the August 2003 article about the Atacama Desert, the section where the writer describes his female guide shows similarities with Parameswaran's (2002) example of a focus on female physicality while professional talents are not commented upon. The author describes "[...] a beauty whose bronze skin stretches smooth and tight across high cheekbones and a classic Inca nose, cheerfully runs through her routine [...]" (p.70). Although striking, this is the only example found of such writing towards women in one of the articles and so no trend can be established based on this single finding.

Another recurring theme that points to orientalism is not that the articles make local people or communities look negative, but they do tend to make the authors, scientists, and photographers look exceedingly positive. This is the most noticeable and perhaps the most striking theme found in the analyses. Across the analyses there were examples where western people were elevated to superhuman heights. Their heroic bravery, kindness, strength, energy, was mentioned on multiple occasions, often while facing ferocious predators, unforgiving landscapes or dangerous setbacks. For instance: in the 1995 article on rain forest canopies all the researchers in the article are constantly praised and performing activities that even Tarzan would not be able to perform according to the author. In the August 1997 article on Malaysian rainforests, the photographer's bravery is highlighted during a confrontation with a king cobra. In the article about the Orinoco River in the April 1998 issue, the author is presented as someone who seems indifferent to danger as he gives contradictory accounts of the unfairly violent reputation of Yanomami tribesmen while giving many examples of violent behaviour on their part. In the same article the author grabs a wild anaconda because a local rancher says he can. No other reason for this action is given in the text. Another seemingly illogical action displaying apparent bravery is included in the March 2019 article about caves in Borneo where the author waits in the dark while he allows birds to fly close to his face. Then in the October 2000 *Megatransect* article, the most prominent example of this theme is presented. J. Michael Fay,

the American leading the foot journey through Central Africa, is characterised in terms that make him look almost superhuman. His knowledge, strength, and determination are emphasised constantly in a long article that seems to be more about him than the journey he is on. In the most recent article that was analysed (March 2019 – *Borneo's Vast Underworld*), the cavers in the narrative are said to achieve remarkable records and perform courageous acts in terrain that is explained to be dangerous and exotic. Nature is only discussed in relation to them and no alternative meanings of the landscape are mentioned. When considering how this relates to the different disciplinary approaches for regarding nature identified by Castree (2005), it seems that such articles objectify nature instead of looking for subjectivity. As other knowledges about nature – for instance local knowledge – are not discussed, the subjectivity of nature is in fact ignored. In such articles, nature and culture seem disconnected.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Answer to the main research question

In this thesis, I researched the positioning of nature-culture complexes in the Global South in *national geographic magazine*; a media outlet which has a substantial audience whose opinions are influenced by the information presented in the magazine's articles. Through a critical content analysis of selected articles in the period between 1990 and 2019 I examined how *national geographic magazine* represents nature-culture complexes in both text and photos. The most important results show that between 1990 and 2019, no clear development can be found in the style or content of articles of *national geographic magazine*. Instead of finding one recurring representation of the nature-culture complex, many different nature-culture complexes were identified. Some articles objectify nature while other examples were found that presented nature and culture as a subjective whole. The *Megatransect* article of 2000 is a clear example of an article that presents an objectified image of nature which can supposedly only be understood through empiricism. Impressive knowledge of the American expedition leader is constantly showcased while local knowledge is ignored. The 2019 article about cavers in Borneo is another clear example that takes a one-sided approach. In that article, nature is only discussed as an interesting environment for western cavers and the experience of others is not mentioned. In contrast, some articles do highlight multiple approaches, for example the 2001 article about a cave in Mexico where besides a scientific standpoint, local traditions are explained too. One critical note to that article is that scientists are shown doing their work with modern tools, while a local inhabitant is shown with a much simpler candle, but both interpretations are discussed respectfully. In such articles, different forms of knowledge – local and scientific – are shown to coexist in the same location without suggesting one is more interesting or valuable than the other. This may be the best example of a middle ground of narratives competing for credibility discussed by Castree (2005) and a good example of the nature-culture complex: nature and culture seen together as a fluent whole.

In *national geographic magazine*, authors seem to have some freedom in their representations of nature and culture in narratives and photography. Three different recurring truth claims were found in the articles:

- The separate worlds of natural science and another perspective (often local knowledge) are discussed as equally important parallel domains

- Both natural science and another perspective are mentioned but the photography and narrative elevate the value of the scientific domain over the other
- Only the scientific perspective is mentioned

The most dominant truth claim was found in those articles presenting (subtle) hints towards technological, cognitive, or physical superiority of the western scientist elevating scientific knowledge over local knowledge. The most obvious examples are the *Megatransect* article of 2000 or the 1998 article about the Orinoco River. The 1991 Costa Rica article is a clear example of an article mentioning nothing but the scientific perspective. The best example of an article presenting a balanced truth claim based on a subjective nature-culture complex is the 2005 article on a Mexican cave.

Generally, *national geographic magazine* articles seem to have a tendency to highlight the most spectacular narrative possible by applying some recurring strategies. Firstly, by stating extremities that are linked to a place, such as remoteness, hotness, coldness, dryness, height, or depth. Secondly, any potential danger of the landscape, animals, or the local inhabitants are emphasised. These dangers are often faced either by indigenous peoples who are characterised as resilient or fierce, or the article features a seemingly daring performance of a western scientist. These scientists are represented heroically; bravely working in beautiful but dangerous environments.

Indicators of orientalism in representations of the nature-culture complex include exoticism, stereotyping, and romantic representations of landscapes. Sometimes authors choose to contradict stereotypes while other articles give clear stereotypical descriptions of local inhabitants. Again, this seems to depend on the author and examples of both ends of this spectrum can be found in every decennium. The provision of information in the articles is selective, this can be observed clearly in the two articles about the Danakil Desert in the Horn of Africa (2005 & 2012) which have a completely different approach. One focusses on natural phenomena, the other is a narrative focussing on the supposedly dangerous inhabitants.

Although the western orientation of *national geographic magazine* is obvious, the educational value of the *national geographic magazine* should not be underestimated. The *national geographic magazine* presents its audience with excellent photographs and an enormous amount of information on an equally giant range of places across the world (and even beyond the earth in articles about outer space and the solar system). However, this information could be far more neutral because many articles present truth claims of a very one-sided view of nature-culture complexes in the Global South.

7.2 Reflection and suggestions for future research

After establishing that there is no clear line in representations of the nature-culture complex in the Global South in *national geographic magazine*, it might be interesting to include other media outlets in future research. Instead of researching many places in the Global South through one magazine, I suggest studying multiple sources covering the nature-culture complex in one place. Such a project could find a range of representations and truth claims people are presented with. To keep such an undertaking manageable, I would recommend looking at media-outlets who share an audience in a single region or a country. It would be interesting to see the range of truth claims and place myths created for the same place. As a follow-up, people could be interviewed to see to what extent their feelings towards that place comply to the range of place myths found in the media analysis. If *national geographic magazine* is included in the research, it would provide interesting additional information regarding the influence of its truth claims.

During the writing of this thesis, other aspects were found which may be worth pursuing. The random number generator that was used to find the specific articles selected two articles about the same place by chance. The two articles – about the Danakil desert in the Horn of Africa – were found to have very different outlooks and represented nature and culture very differently, proving the selective nature of the information presented to the audience. It would be interesting to find more articles in *national geographic magazine* covering the same place to see whether more striking changes in characterisation and representation can be found. It would be interesting to see whether this finding is repeated or whether other grouped articles show more consistency. If other groups of articles show similar differences, the reliability of *national geographic articles* may be questioned which would be relevant given that millions of people read the magazine yearly.

The methods used for selecting and analysing the articles were generally quite effective. Devising a list of relevant articles was tedious work but the decision tree worked well and the magazine issues could be checked for relevant articles quite quickly. While writing the list I made the mistake to use pen and paper to list relevant articles. I underestimated the amount of writing and in retrospect I would write the notes on a laptop immediately to avoid having to write everything twice. After this list was made, the use of a random number generator for selecting articles was easy and fast. The initial plan was to make a map that showed the locations of the articles. While this might have been an attractive way to present the data, a table was decided to be clearer as many articles would be close together on the map. The tables in Appendices A and B seem to be effective in presenting an overview of locations in the articles. The methods used for analysing text and photographs seemed efficient too; methods that may

seem complementary such as a word-count seemed unhelpful as this research was about the underlying layer behind text and photos. The work of Tonkiss (2012) proved very helpful in achieving this. The choice for *national geographic magazine* was made because of their big audience, hegemonic position, and the automatic societal relevance of their publications. Also, their focus on photography in addition to written text was beneficial as analysis of images was an interesting addition to the research. This thesis is about the way in which media shape a specific way to look at reality and the interaction between representation and different place meanings. *National geographic magazine* is a media outlet that proved very suitable to research such interaction. As a result of this thesis, new information on dominant truth claims and the plurality of nature-culture complexes in *national geographic magazine* were found. Areas that remain unknown include possible spatial division of nature-culture complexes in *national geographic magazine* and representation of nature-culture complexes in WEIRD countries. These may be considered for future research and could be compared to the findings in this thesis.

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9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix A – All relevant articles per issue

This table shows every relevant article found since 1990. Articles that were analysed are indicated with a green background.

#	Article Title	Place
1990		
May		
1	<i>Africa's Great Rift Valley</i>	East Africa
June		
2	<i>New Moche Tomb</i>	Peru
3	<i>Dominica, Difficult Paradise</i>	Dominica
October		
4	<i>Mali's Dogon People</i>	Mali
5	<i>A Raft atop the Rainforest</i>	French Guyana
November		
6	<i>Six Across Antarctica</i>	Antarctica
December		
7	<i>Okavango Delta</i>	Botswana
1991		
January		
8	<i>Mystical Faces of North-West Australia</i>	Australia
May		
9	<i>Bhutan, Kingdom in the Clouds</i>	Bhutan
November		
10	<i>Zaire River</i>	Congo
December		
11	<i>Rain Forest, The High Frontier</i>	Costa Rica
1992		
March		
12	<i>Sacred Peaks of the Andes</i>	Andes
July		
13	<i>Spell of the Trobriand Islands</i>	Papua New Guinea
December		
14	<i>Volcanoes: Crucibles of Creation</i>	Philippines
15	<i>Gatekeepers of the Himalaya</i>	Nepal
1993		
February		
16	<i>The Mekong</i>	Mekong River
April		
17	<i>Island of Quiet Success</i>	Mauritius
June		
18	<i>When the Water Comes</i>	Bangladesh
September		
19	<i>New Sensors Eye the Rainforest</i>	Belize

November		
20	<i>The Desert Sea</i>	Red Sea
21	<i>New Light on the Olmec</i>	Mexico
1994		
February		
22	<i>Return to Hunstein Forest</i>	Papua New Guinea
April		
23	<i>Chile's Uncharted Cordillera Sarmiento</i>	Chile
1995		
February		
24	<i>The Amazon: South America's River Road</i>	Amazon River
March		
25	<i>Journey to Aldabra</i>	Seychelles
July		
26	<i>Ndoki – Last Place on Earth</i>	Congo
October		
27	<i>Mexico's Desert Aquarium</i>	Mexico
1996		
February		
28	<i>Irian Jaya's People of the Trees</i>	Indonesia
29	<i>The Fractured Caucasus</i>	Caucasus
1997		
January		
30	<i>Imperiled Nile Delta</i>	Egypt
31	<i>Beneath the Tasman Sea</i>	Tasman Sea
April		
32	<i>Borneo's Strangler Fig Trees</i>	Borneo
August		
33	<i>A New Light in the Sea</i>	Red Sea
34	<i>Malaysia's Secret Realm</i>	Malaysia
September		
35	<i>A Dream Called Nunavut</i>	Canada
October		
36	<i>Down the Zambezi</i>	Zambezi River
November		
37	<i>Nepal's Forgotten Corner</i>	Nepal
1998		
February		
38	<i>Queen Maude Land</i>	Antarctica
April		
39	<i>The Orinoco</i>	Venezuela
September		
40	<i>Borneo's White Mountain</i>	Borneo
October		
41	<i>Antarctic desert</i>	Antarctica

1999		
February		
42	<i>Under Antarctic Sea</i>	Antarctica
March		
43	<i>Journey to the Heart of the Sahara</i>	Sahara Desert
September		
44	<i>Masai Passage to Manhood</i>	Kenya
2000		
February		
1	<i>On the Edge of Empires</i>	Russia/China
March		
2	<i>Madidi</i>	Bolivia
April		
3	<i>Chiquibul Cave</i>	Belize/Guatemala
May		
4	<i>New Caledonia</i>	New Caledonia
June		
5	<i>Suriname</i>	Suriname
6	<i>Pilgrimage trough Sierra Madre</i>	Mexico
August		
7	<i>Temples of Ankor</i>	Cambodia
October		
8	<i>Megatransect (1/3)</i>	Central Africa
November		
9	<i>Putorama Plateau</i>	Siberia
10	<i>Inside the Volcano "to Hell"</i>	Vanuatu Islands
December		
11	<i>Blue Nile</i>	Ethiopia
2001		
February		
12	<i>In the Shadow of the Andes</i>	Andes
March		
13	<i>Megatransect (2/3)</i>	Central Africa
14	<i>Treasured Islands of Palmyra</i>	Palmyra Atoll
May		
15	<i>Black Sea Mysteries</i>	Black Sea
16	<i>Deadly Haven</i>	Mexico
June		
17	<i>Probing Chile's Wild Coast</i>	Chile
August		
18	<i>Russia's Frozen Inferno</i>	Kamchatka
19	<i>Megatransect (3/3)</i>	Central Africa
September		
20	<i>Wildlife Without Borders</i>	Southern Africa
October		
21	<i>Rainforest at Night</i>	Thailand

November		
22	<i>Kenya's Mzima Spring</i>	Kenya
December		
23	<i>Frozen Under</i>	Antarctica
2002		
January		
24	<i>China's Unknown Gobi</i>	Gobi Desert
February		
25	<i>Cuba Reefs</i>	Cuba
June		
26	<i>The Great Northern Forest</i>	Northern Russia
July		
27	<i>Hotspot: The Philippines</i>	Philippines
December		
28	<i>Surviving the Sahara</i>	Sahara Desert
2003		
January		
29	<i>Strangest Volcano on Earth</i>	Tanzania
March		
30	<i>Hotspots: Islands of the Pacific</i>	Micronesia/Fiji/Polynesia
April		
31	<i>Caves of Oman</i>	Oman
August		
32	<i>Into the Amazon</i>	Brazil
33	<i>The Driest Place on Earth</i>	Chile
September		
34	<i>Saving Africa's Eden</i>	Gabon
2004		
January		
35	<i>Patagonia: The Wild Wild South</i>	Patagonia
February		
36	<i>South Pacific Hideaway</i>	Phoenix Islands
March		
37	<i>Rio's Backyard Rainforest</i>	Rio de Janeiro
July		
38	<i>Temple of Doom</i>	Peru
August		
39	<i>Crossing Patagonia's Ice Field</i>	Patagonia
40	<i>Land of the Surfing Hippos</i>	Gabon
November		
41	<i>Fiji's Rainbow Reefs</i>	Fiji
December		
42	<i>Africa's Miracle Delta</i>	Botswana
2005		
February		
43	<i>The Empty Quarter</i>	Rub al Khali Desert

August		
44	<i>Brazil's Wild Wet</i>	Pantanal
September		
45	<i>Who Rules the Forest?</i>	Congo
October		
46	<i>Cruelest Place on Earth</i>	Danakil Desert
2006		
February		
47	<i>Heartbreak on the Serengeti</i>	Kenya/Tanzania
May		
48	<i>River of Spirits</i>	Myanmar
December		
49	<i>Icy Underworld</i>	Sandwich Islands
2007		
January		
50	<i>Farming the Amazon</i>	Brazil
March		
51	<i>Wildlife Haven</i>	Chad
May		
52	<i>Valley of Life</i>	Zambia
October		
53	<i>Latin America From the Sky</i>	Latin America
2008		
January		
54	<i>The Gods Must Be Restless</i>	Indonesia
April		
55	<i>The Sahel</i>	Sudan
July		
56	<i>The Altiplano</i>	Bolivia
November		
57	<i>Borneo's Moment of Truth</i>	Borneo
2009		
January		
58	<i>Fragile Russian Wilderness</i>	East Russia
July		
59	<i>Answers from Ankor</i>	Cambodia
November		
60	<i>Stone Labyrinth</i>	Madagascar
December		
61	<i>Resurrection Island</i>	South Georgia
2010		
February		
1	<i>Protecting Patagonia</i>	Chile
June		
2	<i>Foja Mountains Fauna</i>	New Guinea
July		
3	<i>Dazzling Brazilian Dunes</i>	Brazil

August		
4	<i>Deep Dark Secrets</i>	Bahamas
5	<i>A Grassland Kingdom</i>	Kazinanga Park
September		
6	<i>Sands of Time</i>	Fraser Island
2011		
January		
7	<i>Conquering a Cave</i>	Vietnam
April		
8	<i>Nyiragongo: The Volcano Next Door</i>	Congo
June		
9	<i>Africa's Super Park</i>	Namibia
2012		
January		
10	<i>Hyperactive Zone</i>	Afar Desert
June		
11	<i>Yemen's Legendary Island</i>	Yemen
October		
12	<i>Amazing Mesoamerican Reef</i>	Belize
13	<i>The Sky Caves of Nepal</i>	Nepal
2013		
January		
14	<i>Rain Forest for Sale</i>	Ecuador
February		
15	<i>Heaven and Hell on Earth</i>	Afghanistan
May		
16	<i>Siberian Sanctuary</i>	Wrangel Island
June		
17	<i>Miracle in Mozambique</i>	Mozambique
September		
18	<i>Climbing Untamed Antarctica</i>	Antarctica
November		
19	<i>Kimbe Bay: Paradise Revisited</i>	Papua New Guinea
2014		
January		
20	<i>Kayapo Courage</i>	Brazil
April		
21	<i>A Tale of Two Atolls</i>	Europa (Island)/Bassas de India
June		
22	<i>Untouched</i>	Peru
July		
23	<i>Empire of Rock</i>	China
September		
24	<i>A World Apart</i>	Line Islands
2015		
October		
25	<i>Lifeblood</i>	Congo

2016		
March		
26	<i>Return of the Seychelles</i>	Seychelles
June		
27	<i>Peru's World Apart</i>	Peru
July		
28	<i>The Battle for Virunga</i>	Congo
2017		
February		
29	<i>Modern Amazonia</i>	Brazil
October		
30	<i>Life on the Edge</i>	North Russia
November		
31	<i>The Rush to Save Okavango</i>	Botswana
2018		
February		
32	<i>Where Wildlife Reigns</i>	Falkland Islands
September		
33	<i>Passage to Another Time</i>	Afghanistan
October		
34	<i>Threatened by the Outside World</i>	Brazil/Peru
2019		
March		
35	<i>Borneo's Vast Underworld</i>	Borneo

9.2 Appendix B – All relevant articles divided per continent

#	Article Title	Place
South America		
1990 – 1999		
1	<i>New Moche Tomb</i>	Peru
2	<i>A Raft atop the Rainforest</i>	French Guyana
3	<i>Sacred Peaks of the Andes</i>	Andes
4	<i>Chile's Uncharted Cordillera Sarmiento</i>	Chile
5	<i>The Amazon: South America's River Road</i>	Amazon River
6	<i>The Orinoco</i>	Venezuela
2000 – 2009		
7	<i>Madidi</i>	Bolivia
8	<i>Suriname</i>	Suriname
9	<i>In the Shadow of the Andes</i>	Andes
10	<i>Probing Chile's Wild Coast</i>	Chile
11	<i>Into the Amazon</i>	Brazil
12	<i>The Driest Place on Earth</i>	Chile
13	<i>Patagonia: The Wild Wild South</i>	Patagonia
14	<i>Rio's Backyard Rainforest</i>	Rio de Janeiro
15	<i>Temple of Doom</i>	Peru
16	<i>Crossing Patagonia's Ice Field</i>	Patagonia
17	<i>Brazil's Wild Wet</i>	Pantanal
18	<i>Farming the Amazon</i>	Brazil
19	<i>Latin America From the Sky</i>	Latin America
20	<i>The Altiplano</i>	Bolivia
2010 – 2019		
21	<i>Protecting Patagonia</i>	Chile
22	<i>Dazzling Brazilian Dunes</i>	Brazil
23	<i>Rain Forest for Sale</i>	Ecuador
24	<i>Kayapo Courage</i>	Brazil
25	<i>Untouched</i>	Peru
26	<i>Peru's World Apart</i>	Peru
27	<i>Modern Amazonia</i>	Brazil
28	<i>Where Wildlife Reigns</i>	Falkland Islands
29	<i>Threatened by the Outside World</i>	Brazil/Peru

#	Article Title	Place
North America		
1990 – 1999		
1	<i>Dominica, Difficult Paradise</i>	Dominica
2	<i>Rain Forest, The High Frontier</i>	Costa Rica
3	<i>New Sensors Eye the Rainforest</i>	Belize
4	<i>New Light on the Olmec</i>	Mexico
5	<i>Mexico's Desert Aquarium</i>	Mexico
6	<i>A Dream Called Nunavut</i>	Canada
2000 – 2009		
7	<i>Chiquibul Cave</i>	Belize/Guatemala
8	<i>Pilgrimage through Sierra Madre</i>	Mexico
9	<i>Deadly Haven</i>	Mexico
10	<i>Cuba Reefs</i>	Cuba
2010 – 2019		
11	<i>Deep Dark Secrets</i>	Bahamas
12	<i>Amazing Mesoamerican Reef</i>	Belize

#	Article Title	Place
Oceania		
1990 – 1999		
1	<i>Mystical Faces of North-West Australia</i>	Australia
2	<i>Spell of the Trobriand Islands</i>	Papua New Guinea
3	<i>Return to Hunstein Forest</i>	Papua New Guinea
4	<i>Beneath the Tasman Sea</i>	Tasman Sea
2000 – 2009		
5	<i>New Caledonia</i>	New Caledonia
6	<i>Inside the Volcano "to Hell"</i>	Vanuatu Islands
7	<i>Treasured Islands of Palmyra</i>	Palmyra Atoll
8	<i>The Great Northern Forest</i>	Northern Russia
9	<i>Hotspots: Islands of the Pacific</i>	Micronesia/Fiji/Polynesia
10	<i>South Pacific Hideaway</i>	Phoenix Islands
11	<i>Fiji's Rainbow Reefs</i>	Fiji
2010 – 2019		
12	<i>Foja Mountains Fauna</i>	New Guinea
13	<i>Sands of Time</i>	Fraser Island
14	<i>Kimbe Bay: Paradise Revisited</i>	Papua New Guinea
15	<i>A World Apart</i>	Line Islands

#	Article Title	Place
Eurasia		
1990 – 1999		
1	<i>Bhutan, Kingdom in the Clouds</i>	Bhutan
2	<i>Volcanoes: Crucibles of Creation</i>	Philippines
3	<i>Gatekeepers of the Himalaya</i>	Nepal
4	<i>The Mekong</i>	Mekong River
5	<i>When the Water Comes</i>	Bangladesh
6	<i>Irian Jaya's People of the Trees</i>	Indonesia
7	<i>Borneo's Strangler Fig Trees</i>	Borneo
8	<i>Malaysia's Secret Realm</i>	Malaysia
9	<i>Nepal's Forgotten Corner</i>	Nepal
10	<i>Borneo's White Mountain</i>	Borneo
2000 – 2009		
11	<i>On the Edge of Empires</i>	Russia/China
12	<i>Temples of Ankor</i>	Cambodia
13	<i>Putorama Plateau</i>	Siberia
14	<i>Black Sea Mysteries</i>	Black Sea
15	<i>Russia's Frozen Inferno</i>	Kamchatka
16	<i>Rainforest at Night</i>	Thailand
17	<i>China's Unknown Gobi</i>	Gobi Desert
18	<i>The Great Northern Forest</i>	Northern Russia
19	<i>Hotspot: The Philippines</i>	Philippines
20	<i>River of Spirits</i>	Myanmar
21	<i>The Gods Must Be Restless</i>	Indonesia
22	<i>Borneo's Moment of Truth</i>	Borneo
23	<i>Fragile Russian Wilderness</i>	East Russia
24	<i>Answers from Ankor</i>	Cambodia
2010 – 2019		
25	<i>A Grassland Kingdom</i>	Kazinanga Park
26	<i>Conquering a Cave</i>	Vietnam
27	<i>The Sky Caves of Nepal</i>	Nepal
28	<i>Heaven and Hell on Earth</i>	Afghanistan
29	<i>Siberian Sanctuary</i>	Wrangel Island
30	<i>Empire of Rock</i>	China
31	<i>Life on the Edge</i>	North Russia
32	<i>Passage to Another Time</i>	Afghanistan
33	<i>Borneo's Vast Underworld</i>	Borneo

#	Article Title	Place
Africa		
1990 – 1999		
1	<i>Africa's Great Rift Valley</i>	East Africa
2	<i>Mali's Dogon People</i>	Mali
3	<i>Okavango Delta</i>	Botswana
4	<i>Zaire River</i>	Congo
5	<i>Island of Quiet Success</i>	Mauritius
6	<i>The Desert Sea</i>	Red Sea
7	<i>Journey to Aldabra</i>	Seychelles
8	<i>Ndoki – Last Place on Earth</i>	Congo
9	<i>Imperiled Nile Delta</i>	Egypt
10	<i>A New Light in the Sea</i>	Red Sea
11	<i>Down the Zambezi</i>	Zambezi River
12	<i>Journey to the Heart of the Sahara</i>	Sahara Desert
13	<i>Masai Passage to Manhood</i>	Kenya
2000 – 2009		
14	<i>Megatransect (1/3)</i>	Central Africa
15	<i>Blue Nile</i>	Ethiopia
16	<i>Megatransect (2/3)</i>	Central Africa
17	<i>Megatransect (3/3)</i>	Central Africa
18	<i>Wildlife Without Borders</i>	Southern Africa
19	<i>Kenya's Mzima Spring</i>	Kenya
10	<i>Surviving the Sahara</i>	Sahara Desert
21	<i>Strangest Volcano on Earth</i>	Tanzania
22	<i>Caves of Oman</i>	Oman
23	<i>Saving Africa's Eden</i>	Gabon
24	<i>Land of the Surfing Hippos</i>	Gabon
25	<i>Africa's Miracle Delta</i>	Botswana
26	<i>The Empty Quarter</i>	Rub al Khali Desert
27	<i>Who Rules the Forest?</i>	Congo
28	<i>Cruellest Place on Earth</i>	Danakil Desert
29	<i>Heartbreak on the Serengeti</i>	Kenya/Tanzania
30	<i>Wildlife Haven</i>	Chad
31	<i>Valley of Life</i>	Zambia
32	<i>The Sahel</i>	Sudan
33	<i>Stone Labyrinth</i>	Madagascar
2010 – 2019		
34	<i>Nyiragongo: The Volcano Next Door</i>	Congo
35	<i>Africa's Super Park</i>	Namibia
36	<i>Hyperactive Zone</i>	Afar Desert
37	<i>Yemen's Legendary Island</i>	Yemen
38	<i>Miracle in Mozambique</i>	Mozambique
39	<i>A Tale of Two Atolls</i>	Europa (Island)/Bassas de India
40	<i>Lifeblood</i>	Congo
41	<i>Return of the Seychelles</i>	Seychelles
42	<i>The Battle for Virunga</i>	Congo
43	<i>The Rush to Save Okavango</i>	Botswana

#	Article Title	Place
Antarctica		
1990 – 1999		
1	<i>Six Across Antarctica</i>	Antarctica
2	<i>Queen Maude Land</i>	Antarctica
3	<i>Antarctic desert</i>	Antarctica
4	<i>Under Antarctic Sea</i>	Antarctica
2000 – 2009		
5	<i>Frozen Under</i>	Antarctica
6	<i>Icy Underworld</i>	Sandwich Islands
7	<i>Resurrection Island</i>	South Georgia
2010 – 2019		
8	<i>Climbing Untamed Antarctica</i>	Antarctica