

# Finding Place in Nature: 'Intellectual' and Local Knowledge in a Spanish Natural Park

---

**Katrín A. Lund**

**Abstract:** *This paper looks at how nature is conceptualised in different ways by different groups of people in order to problematise the way in which anthropology naturalises populations by 'rooting' them in various geographical places. The ethnography is based on a fieldwork in a village located in the Natural Park of the Sierra Nevada and the Alpujarra, Spain. By locating the ethnographic discussion in a Linnaean system of natural classification, the aim is to show that how people place nature, and place themselves in nature, is depending on how they place themselves amongst others. Furthermore, how people place themselves amongst others, needs to be analysed in relation to how people move differently, and for different reasons, to and from a place as well as within a place in diverse spatio/temporal contexts.*

**Keywords:** culture, nature, historical nature, natural history, travelling, knowledge, engagement, detachment

## INTRODUCTION

RAYMOND WILLIAMS (1976) has famously written about how 'nature' is one of the most complex concepts in the English language. Its ambiguity is enormous, and it is loaded with values and meanings. Yet, anthropologists, and other social scientists have not adequately considered its ambiguity, and

**Katrín A. Lund**, School of History and Anthropology, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast BT7 1NN, UK

### Address for Correspondence

Katrín A. Lund, School of History and Anthropology, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast BT7 1NN, UK.

**E-mail:** k.lund@qub.ac.uk

---

***Conservation and Society***, Pages 371–387

Volume 3, No. 2, December 2005

Copyright: © Katrín A. Lund 2005. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use and distribution of the article, provided the original work is cited.

still tend to take the concept for granted, not examining its complexity of meanings. Milton (2002: 152) writes:

*'Nature' has many meanings which vary with context. In western cultures it broadly refers to phenomena not produced by human beings...*

It is the use of the concept of nature in this context of 'not produced by human beings', that results in the classical division between nature and society being maintained in social science despite recent criticism (e.g., Descola and Pálsson 1996).

Nature, as it appears, is all around us but materialises itself as the surface of the earth which human beings have been planted on, although some people appear as more '*rooted*' than other people. It is in this much used 'botanical metaphor' (see Malkki 1997) that the main argument of this paper lies. The links that connect people to places have been naturalised, and 'people are often thought of, and think of themselves, as being rooted in place and deriving their identity from that rootedness' (Malkki 1997: 56). This is where the natural aspect of the concept of culture appears. By being rooted in place one becomes '*native*' (Olwig 1993), implying stability, immobility and being true to one's origin. This way of perceiving the world has been central to anthropology (Gupta and Ferguson 1997) in the past, assuming 'that the world of human differences is to be conceptualized as a diversity of separate societies, each with its own culture' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 1). In this context we could claim that anthropologists have traditionally imagined a (bio)diversity of cultures.

In this paper I want to problematise the implicit naturalism of discrete cultural difference by addressing contradictory narratives of human–environmental relatedness among a variety of actors. The ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in a village called Bubión and is located in the natural park of the Alpujarra and the Sierra Nevada in Andalusia, Southern Spain (Figure 1). The village is inhabited by a diverse range of inhabitants from different parts of the world, such as France, Germany, England, Ireland, Scotland, Belgium, Sweden, the United States and Canada, as well as some who come from Madrid, Barcelona, Malaga and Valencia. In addition, there are also those who see themselves as of the place, relating themselves to the history of generations that have lived in this place. These people are usually referred to as '*la gente del pueblo*' or 'the people from the village' by themselves and by the outsiders.<sup>1</sup> They are also referred to as 'the locals' by the outsiders. Therefore, what signifies the village as a place is that it is a place that is located in the different histories of its inhabitants (Ingold 2000). What all these people share is that they see themselves as belonging to this place although, as I will explain, the ways they see themselves as belonging are different, depending on their backgrounds.

Figure 1

The Alpujarra and the Parque Natural de Sierra Nevada



The context of different ways of belonging examined here, is that the Sierra Nevada and the Alpujarra were granted a biosphere reserve status by UNESCO in 1986 and shortly after that declared a Natural Park by the Government of Andalusia. The fact that the area is a natural park does have significant influence in how people see themselves as belonging to the place with reference to the concept of nature. The underlying question is about how human beings belong to nature. Thus, the relation between nature and human beings is an ongoing issue in the localised discourse. To look at this, we first have to know what defines nature in different contexts, for different people. I will argue that how people see themselves as belonging to nature is brought out from their backgrounds, histories and ways of moving around in the world. This statement could imply that I will only be writing about those who may obviously be seen as having travelled from other places to settle in the village. I, on the other hand, agree with Clifford (1997) where he sets up the concepts of *rooted* and *routed* together, implying that these are two sides of the same coin and one goes with the other. Travelling is only one way amongst many to move around in the world, and my argument is that the ways in which we place and re-place nature happen through how we move, and have moved, in the world.

Before going any further however, it will be helpful to look at how human beings were defined as placed within the category of nature by natural science. To do this I will go back to the early-mid eighteenth century when Linneaus was compiling his *Systema Naturae* (Ingold 1999: 250). My argument is that although an almost 300-year-old scientific system of categorisation may be seen as out of date, it still has a great effect on how we place ourselves, as well as others, in nature. The reason why this can be an object of study for a social scientist is the claim of what makes us distinct from other animals; the fact that humans 'are able to reflect upon the kinds of being they are' (Ingold 1999: 250). It is, however, important to consider that how human beings reflect upon their being needs to be contextualised regarding how we place ourselves amongst other human beings.

### *Science, Knowledge and Travelling*

The almost 300-year-old system of categorisation was designed by the Swedish naturalist Linneaus who created the so-called *Systema Naturae*; the System of Nature, 'the world as a botanical garden' (Pratt 1992). *Systema Naturae* was first published in 1735, as a classificatory system designed to categorise and incorporate 'all plants on earth, ... into [a] single system of distinction, including any as yet unknown to Europeans'. The effectiveness of the system appeared through its ability to make an order. What had been a perception of differences between natural kinds based on disparate Biblical, Aristotelian, folk traditional and other criteria of relevance, was systematised and organised. Nature was being created alongside the discovery of natural history. The system soon included classification of minerals and animals and, eventually, the descendants of Adam, including all people living on earth and named *Homo sapiens*. Having overcome the problem of selecting the 'distinguishing characteristics of the genus he had christened *Homo*' (Ingold 1999: 250), Linneaus divided the category into different subspecies which included five categories; 1) the American, 2) the European, 3) the Asiatic, 4) the African and, finally, 5) a wild man. It is worth noting that four out of five categories are located in place without ambiguity while the 'wild man', described as 'four-footed, mute and hairy' (Pratt 1992: 32), appears to be out of place, a rather ambiguously (un)natural figure.

What made the *Systema Naturae* valuable was that it provided a system of order. 'The (lettered, male, European) eye that held the system could familiarise ('naturalise') new sites/sights immediately upon contact, by incorporating them into the language of the system' (Pratt 1992: 31).<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it did not only function as a system of diversity, but also as a system of sameness. Natural entities could be compared and contrasted. Like in a botanical garden, everything was related at the same time as being labelled by diversity. Pratt writes:

*'The differences of distance factored themselves out of the picture: with respect to mimosas, Greece could be the same as Venezuela, West Africa, or Japan; the label 'granatic peaks' can apply identically to Eastern Europe, the Andes, or the American West.'* (Pratt 1992: 31).

The comparative aspect of the system made physical distance irrelevant. The system functioned through its measurability, and differences were measured by their similarities. By including *Homo sapiens*, the system consequently carried the potential to subsume culture and history into nature.

The 'project of natural history' (Pratt 1992: 38) continued, and the fundamental practice for carrying it out was European travelling and travel writing. Thus, the world we live in today has been mapped out as a utopian order (Cosgrove 1999: 15), created through the 'history of colonialism, and the attendant voyages of ... discovery and exploration' (Ingold 1993: 38). The world became a visible entity and it was through the specific movement of travelling that it was created as such. Travelling came to form a scientifically accepted method of conquering and mastering knowledge. There were, however, some who stood outside the 'natural system', namely those who gathered and built the knowledge, the travellers, explorers and the scientists of the European learned genre (Pratt 1992). Their objective view of knowledge was gained from a distance, which meant that the observer required detachment. The scientific aim was about establishing and manifesting facts and in order to acquire a full objectivity, a distance between the observing mind and the matter observed was required.

I want to add to this, however, and argue that in order to detach one also must engage. As Ingold (1993: 42) states, there must always be a 'dialectical interplay between engagement and detachment'. Thus, the two processes of engagement and detachment always need to be examined in relation to each other. I therefore argue that travelling is an activity of engaging that also demands detachment. The traveller is engaged in his or her activities and exploration (the micro-environment of constant engagement), while moving over the physical ground, and at the same time s/he needs to look out and across, or detach, to be able to recognise the micro-environment s/he is engaging with. Moreover, to be able to compare and contrast one needs to detach. What is important when it comes to examining how the processes of engagement and detachment work together is that they have to be looked at in relation to how the actual movement, in this case travelling, is carried out.

Travelling is a specific way of engaging with the world and even though we live in different times than the travellers and explorers of previous centuries, people do still travel. Although the activity is no longer carried out with the same mission of exploration and discovery it 'still takes place for the purpose of gain—material, spiritual, scientific' (Clifford 1997: 66). Furthermore, it often 'involves obtaining a knowledge and/or having an 'experience' (Clifford 1997: 66). Therefore, I would claim that the ordered picture of the world,

drawn up through the making of nature, is still in the process of being created, albeit in many different contexts. Where one comes from, and where one is going, and by what means one travels, are all questions that need to be analysed in this context. What is, nevertheless, often overlooked is that travelling is not the only way in which people move, although some people might be seen as more mobile than others in terms of the physical distances they traverse. As stated above, distances are irrelevant when it comes to comparing and contrasting in the system of nature, but comparing and contrasting are determining practices when it comes to locating or placing nature, and oneself in nature. Thus, not everybody might be seen as travelling but nevertheless, we do all move, and the concept of travelling is just one way of defining a type of movement.

### ***Moving and Dwelling***

Before considering how the people who live in Bubión define themselves in relation to nature, I will have to look at how they have moved to the area as well as within it. To do so, I shall re-introduce Bubión, which is one of about 50 villages located in the natural park of the Alpujarra and the Sierra Nevada. There are two main characteristics of the village that need to be emphasised. These characteristics are concerned with the issues of nature on one hand, and belonging on the other. First, the main economy of the village has during the past thirty years moved away from agriculture towards tourism-related activities. The constitution of the area as a natural park is important in this regard, and it is one that all the village's inhabitants are in favour of, so the establishment did not act in opposition to the wishes of the people who live in the area.

The second characteristic concerns the village's population. It combines foreigners, people who have moved in from other regions in Spain, and the so-called local people, who are those who see themselves, and are seen by others, as belonging to the place by having their *roots* in the place. The outsiders, or those who have moved into the village, also see themselves as belonging to the place, but in different ways. Their roots are, at least partially, somewhere else, so they can be seen as being more *routed* than rooted. This is so because being from somewhere else, they are also defined through the activity of having travelled, and even though they have settled in their travels, they are still seen as outsiders. Yet they came from somewhere, and therefore do have roots that become evident when the ways in which they have moved are examined.

When they spoke about how they had travelled, it was often to emphasise the knowledge and experience they had gained in their travels. Often it was to contrast their experience and knowledge to those of the people from Bubión, or from the Alpujarra, who were usually referred to as the locals, indicating a lack of movement. I want to argue that their knowledge and experience often provided them with a status of 'intellectuals'; they were the offspring of the

travellers and scientists of earlier centuries. The Alpujarra and the wider Sierra Nevada also has a history of its own 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century travellers and travel writers, who explored these mountains, then an isolated area, by foot or on horseback.<sup>3</sup> There is therefore a local tradition in place-travel to be associated with. It was, however, the English writer Gerald Brenan who made a mark on the history of travel writing in the Alpujarra, since he, unlike the other travellers and explorers, not only travelled through but also settled. Although he travelled to the Alpujarra in 1920, about five decades before the first outsiders started moving in, his reasons to do so can be seen as resembling the motives behind later outsiders' movements. Brenan outlines his motives in his book *South From Granada* and writes:

*'The England I knew was petrified by class feeling and by rigid conventions as well as, in my case, poisoned by memories of my public school, so that as soon as the war was over and I was out of uniform I set off to discover new and more breathable atmospheres. I took with me a good many books and a little money and the hope that I should be able to keep going for long enough to acquire something I badly needed—an education. After that, I would see.'* (Brenan 1958: x).

After living in the Alpujarra from 1920 until 1934, Brenan felt he knew enough 'to write at some length about it' (Brenan 1958: ix). Brenan, therefore, travelled with a purpose, and what lies behind such purpose is how experience provides one with broader knowledge, which he identifies as education. I want to argue that this assumption that one travels for enlightening reasons stems entirely from western 'intellectual' ways of authorising their types of mobility.

I once witnessed a conversation where a German, female, outsider living in Bubión asked one of the young men from there if he intended to go on holiday that year. He responded by saying he might go down to the beach for a short period. She did not really count that as a holiday and asked him if he ever wanted to go somewhere else, for example to other countries. He looked at her with a grin on his face and answered: 'Why should I, I have got a television and the whole coastline of Granada down there', and he pointed down the mountains to the beach. With his answer, he not only made a point about living in a place which other people go long distances to visit, but also that from his point of view travelling is not necessarily about extending one's knowledge. Watching television, on the other hand, broadens one's knowledge. Therefore the actual, physical, movement of travelling or standing still is not of importance, but rather how one positions oneself within one's movements. This resembles Clifford's (1997) discussion about how one dwells in one's movement and, also, how one travels while dwelling. Consequently, what needs to be examined is how people are located while moving, and the dynamics of the acts of engaging and detaching during the process. We should also bear in mind

that people do not only move in space, because moving is a process that also takes place in time, and these two cannot be looked at separately. It is through movement in time and space that people are constantly creating and re-creating themselves and their places in nature and, simultaneously, other people's places in nature. The question here is how this place-making happens in a Natural Park, which brings us back to look closer at the inhabitants of Bubión and their way of rooting themselves in nature.

As mentioned above, the constitution of the area as a natural park is generally favoured by the inhabitants of Bubión. On occasions, however, debates emerged about what a Natural Park should be about, disputing the issue of whose 'nature' was being conserved. Usually, the contested issues concerned knowledge, and who has the right kind of knowledge about the environment, with reference to how people have engaged differently with nature depending on their background, and how they have learned to experience the local surroundings. The local people would refer to their history of engaging with the land through working on it and living from it, although the way in which they engage with the land has changed drastically over the past 30 years, with the introduction of tourism as the main economic activity. Their mountain farmhouses (*cortijos*), where they used to move to seasonally for the summer harvest, have mostly been abandoned for a permanent living in the village itself. The outsiders, on the other hand, can sometimes be seen as engaging more with their surroundings, especially those who have an income by promoting tourism activities in the mountains such as horse riding and hiking. Protecting these sensitive surroundings is high on their list of priorities, and they feel that the people from the village have betrayed their surroundings by abandoning them. The people from the village do not, on the other hand, regard themselves as having severed their relations to the surroundings; the land is invested with their histories and activities, although circumstances have clearly changed. They also live from tourism but tourism that is, nevertheless, differently focused than the tourism that the outsiders promote. Instead of taking tourists to the mountains, they provide accommodation in the village for weekend visitors, mainly from Spanish cities. Through their activities, the local people and the outsiders thus have clearly different ways of relating to the surroundings, which leads to the point that they can be seen as relating to different types of nature. In order to understand these different types of nature, one needs to have an insight into the way in which the people have entered the village at different times and in different social environments.

### ***Historical Nature and Natural History***

Earlier I compared Gerald Brenan's motives for moving to the Alpujarra to the motives of the more recent incomers. Although I claim there was a similar purpose, that of gaining experience and knowledge, the different social environments in which the move took place need to be considered. Thus, to exam-

ine the nature that people are currently relating to, the nature they saw themselves as moving into also needs to be examined. I will here look at two different periods when there was a significant movement of outsiders into the village.

The first group comprising foreigners and people from other parts of Spain who started moving to the area in the mid- and late 1970s, or about ten years before the area was established as a Natural Park. They were not moving into an established Natural Park but, still, into a type of nature I call *historical nature*. These people were in Augé's (1995) words moving into a History with a capital H, back in time, away from Northern Europe and the industrial cities of Spain, and back to their imagined roots, which the 'nature' of the Alpujarra provided. They were moving away from so-called 'modernity', back in time, to where time stood still, and the threat of change was absent. An important part of this picture of nature was what Urry (1995) calls the 'working poor', or the 'natives', who could be seen as being somehow of the land, living from it and in it, in a kind of a '*natural culture*'. An illustration from a tourist brochure provides an image of the picture they moved into, where it says:

*'The pace of life is slow and tranquil. It is not unusual to see sheep and goats herded through the village streets, or senior citizens relaxing on shady corners, watching the world go by.'*<sup>4</sup>

But, as McDonald (1994) points out, cultural expectations are not always fulfilled when it comes to close contact. For example, since the outsiders moved into the area, the people from the village have ceased to be 'working poor' anymore. They live directly and indirectly from tourist-related activities, providing visitors with accommodation and refreshment. This means that the village has expanded in terms of buildings and the rustic and tranquil image is often diminished by the increasing traffic of tourists to the village. The constitution of the area as a Natural Park has, however, placed certain restrictions upon how much construction is allowed, which slows down further changes and keeps the external surroundings unspoilt.

The second group of outsiders that needs to be defined are people, mainly from the Spanish cities, but also foreigners, who moved to the area at the time it was being established as a Natural Park, in the late eighties. These are people sometimes referred to as 'environmentalists' ('*ecologistas*') by the people from the area. They often have a direct income from tourism like in the case of Javier. Javier came to the area with a special kind of knowledge about the flora and fauna of the area, and to work as a tourist guide. He operates a travel agency that specialises in hiking and biking trips to the mountains of the Sierra Nevada. I argue that when these people were moving into the Alpujarra the attitude towards environmental politics had changed. Rather than moving into a historical nature like the group discussed above, they moved into a *natural history*. This places a different emphasis on the concept of nature.

This nature has a history of its own, regardless of whether it has or has not been inhabited by human beings. The people belonging to this group had a different kind of global outlook since they arrived at a different time. Different times offer different kinds of valuations of the environment. Again a tourist brochure provides an example of the comparison:

*'The many microclimates have given rise to the richest botanical life in Europe, claiming 52 indigenous species and 11 subspecies, more than the entire continent of Europe and Russia together.'*<sup>4</sup>

Although the boundaries between historical nature and natural history may appear to be clear in the way I have illustrated them, they are not. As the people from the village have become increasingly reliant on tourism as the main economy, the image of historical nature has become less compelling, though it has not vanished. The outsiders of the former group have slowly been moving towards living in natural history, but the memories of historical nature do still operate strongly. To have experienced things as they were before is about possessing knowledge of the local past. This is a type of knowledge that is highly respected by those who arrived later and moved into natural history, so the knowledge of what there was, historical nature, extends itself into the period of natural history. The image that natural history evokes does not necessarily include people, but the past image of people having lived in harmony with nature, when they still lived from agriculture, provides cause for regret. By abandoning the past, the people from the village are regarded as having moved away from nature, and therefore the image of natural history does not now include human beings, as it did in the past.

It therefore appears that both groups mentioned above had created *images* of nature into which they moved, which requires a level of detachment; they themselves are not a part of it. They do, however, also engage with nature through their activities and discourses about protection and conservation, through which they *root* themselves in their *routes*.

Simultaneously, they also see the relationship between 'local' people from the village and nature as being one of detachment, but a different type of detachment than their own, because the village people had stepped out of it, having been a part of it before.

These images of nature do not necessarily resemble the 'nature' that the local people see themselves as being part of. When examining the way in which they relate to nature, it is important that they contrast themselves to the outsiders through having their roots in the place. Their roots are also defined through their *routes* in time, or how they relate to the surroundings with reference to their past and their movement into the present, from the mountains and to a permanent settlement in the village. Therefore, the surrounding mountains do play a significant role in how they relate to nature. The Sierra Nevada is the highest mountain range in Andalusia and the only one that car-

ries snow during most of the year. This means that the Alpujarra is almost the only place in Andalusia that always has plenty of water, which is important for all aspects of life, agriculture and tourism. Water has made this mountainous area habitable for past generations as well as present ones. Now local people rarely go up to the Sierra Nevada mountains, as the outsiders frequently point out, or at least not since they turned to tourism, leaving agricultural activities almost completely behind.

If the outsiders have, however, moved into images of 'historical nature' or 'natural history', then a question is raised about what kind of nature it is that the people that have a history of residence in the area are living in? To examine this question I want to enter a discourse surrounding a specific event that took place during the summer of 1995.

### ***A Further Detachment***

The event in question was marked by a step taken in order to further protection of the Sierra Nevada. A barrier was set up on a high road so that tourists would not be able to drive up there, and, instead, have to pay for being transported. The people living in the villages of the Alpujarra were able to go up without having to pay, but, nevertheless, they would have to report to their village council before going. The reasoning for this was to keep the Sierra clean. Javier and the people who worked for him at the tourism agency had complained about tourists leaving waste and rubbish behind, and had for a long time been fighting for something to be done about it.

The decision was highly disputed among the people in the village, and the local people argued strongly against the decision in contrast to the outsiders who were generally in favour of it. The tension was high and wherever one went there were discussions, and sometimes severe arguments occurred. People who had usually been able to engage in friendly conversations, either argued or did not speak at all. I was aware that Javier felt isolated and when I spoke to him he acted defensively. Some of the local men who often liked discussing the situation of the land in the mountains with him, when he returned from his trips, did not even acknowledge him. He accused them of having abandoned their land and of never going up there. Why should they now be upset, as the barrier was not going to affect their daily life? Javier by contrast went up there at least once every week, and saw himself as having intimate relations with the surroundings. From his point of view, it showed that he cared about the surroundings in a way that the people from the village now did not.

One day a rumour spread that someone had driven a truck through the barrier. The outsiders assumed it had been one of the local 'savages',<sup>5</sup> which had now become a common terminology among them to define the people from the village. As I shall illustrate below, this use of terminology hints at how the outsiders had, at least temporarily, found a place in the village for Linneaus'

‘wild man’. On occasions when I tried to soften their harsh attitude, I was told I had not been long enough in the area to really know how hostile and savage the people from there could be.

The arguments and discussions dominated the village. One evening, when I was on the way to my house I was stopped by a local man, Miguel, wanting to discuss this with me. He was one of my main informants during fieldwork and it was important for him. He saw himself as someone who usually expressed the local view towards what took place within the village. He was sitting outside his house when he stopped me, enjoying the fresh air of the evening. He invited me to sit down with him and he brought up the discussion by asking me what I thought about the situation. I turned the question back on him. He shook his head and expressed his opposition by saying: ‘This is supposed to be a natural park but this action is just making it into an artificial park’. He said that the people in the village did not understand this action.

He was worried about this, because it was not only the Sierra Nevada but the Alpujarra, that was included in the area defined as the natural park. What came through during the conversations was the fact that he lived in a park; a park for him was not necessarily only a recreational site. He lived in the park and saw himself as a part of its nature, that had already been there before the park was established.

It was getting chilly and he invited me inside his house. We entered the ground floor which had been a stable about 25–30 years ago. This was Miguel’s family house and he was proud to tell me that he had done it up for his parents. When they had stopped keeping animals, this part of the house was converted into a lounge.<sup>6</sup> At the end of the lounge there was a door into a much smaller room, but a long one, and there were about five beds in a row. It was as if the new way of life in the Alpujarra had taken over here; instead of having animals living in the best part of the house, it was now designed for people to stay in. At the other end of the living room, near the entrance, was a small kitchen he had fitted, and off the kitchen there was another room where they kept the food. That had been where they had kept the firewood before. He was very proud of his work and showed me a photograph of the room when it had been a stable with nothing but bare stone walls and mud floors. At the centre of the photo, his father was standing beside his mule. The photo told me as much about his father and the mule, the ways in which they lived in the past, as it told me about Miguel’s history, his personal, lived experience.

He pointed out the stonework he had laid on the floor and the lower parts of the wall, which were all made from flat stones found in the Sierra. I asked him if he had done this all by himself and he said: ‘Yes, and look, this is nature’ (*‘Si, y mira, esto es la naturaleza’*), as he pointed directly at the carved stone wall. He repeated this action by pointing first in the direction of the Sierra before pointing at the wall again. Then, he stressed his point by saying: ‘That is not nature, it is artificial [the Sierra], this [the wall] is nature’ (*‘Eso no es la naturaleza, es artificial, esto es la naturaleza’*). By stating this, he empha-

sised that he and his family had not moved away from nature when they stopped agriculture, rather that nature had moved with them. The carved stone wall signifies the nature that the people from the village have engaged with for centuries. The Sierra as a place was, on the other hand, to become artificial as a result of restricted traffic to it.

It appears that Miguel is describing a type of historical nature, which is different from the image of historical nature the outsiders moved into, because it is not an *image*. Miguel's nature includes human beings, not as scenery, but rather as people who live in it, engage with it and create it. Augé (1995: 55) writes: 'The inhabitant of an anthropological place does not make history; he lives in it'. I would counter this that it is exactly because the inhabitant of a place lives in it that he makes its history. While he lives it, he makes it and to make it, a level of detachment is needed to get a view into the past.

In this example, an inhabitant in Bubión, Alpujarra, showed me what his history and his nature were, by showing me and telling me about the history of his house, and therefore how the house was a part of an Alpujarrenian landscape. For him it was a part of this nature because it was Alpujarrenian. It was Alpujarrenian because it belonged to his family and his family was Alpujarrenian, and the house had also been built from an Alpujarrenian material. Even though the changes had been made to the house, it did not stop being Alpujarrenian because life in the Alpujarra had changed. The house had an Alpujarrenian history as he had illustrated to me. Therefore, this is a historical nature, which does not only focus on the past but rather on movement from the past to the present through continuous activities, and engagement in a changing environment. But, as I shall illustrate in the discussion below, this history needs to be examined in relation to the ongoing discourse of the present.

## DISCUSSION

To illustrate how nature is placed and re-placed, I have focused on how different groups of people do so through placing themselves in relationship with nature. What these people have in common is that they live in the same place, which is in a natural park. They define the nature of the place in relation to how they experience it, and have learned to experience it through engaging with it. It is thus knowledge gained through moving through different spatial and temporal environments, which determines how they place nature and themselves in it. It is also evident that people not only place themselves in nature, but also situate other people in relation to it, and this establishes boundaries between groups. The lives and histories of people are placed in the environment according to who they are and where they come from.

Ingold (1992: 51) writes:

*'Enfolded within persons are the histories of their environmental relations; unfolded within the environment are the histories of the activities*

*of persons. Thus, to sever the links that bind any people to their environment is to cut them off from their historical past that has made them who they are.'*

The relations between people and their environment are based in the past as much as they are created in the present. But to complement my argument I want to take issue with the statement that people can be easily 'cut off from their historical past', since I have shown that it is not only the past that moves with people, but also their environments. Furthermore, as much as the environment is created in the present, so is the past. Or as Augé (1995: 9) states:

*'...the informant, whether old or not, is somebody having conversation, who tells us less about the past than what he knows and thinks about the past. ... The informant's account says as much about the present as it does about the past.'*

In the case of the Natural Park of the Sierra Nevada and the Alpujarra, this past is not created within a vacuum. A universal framework of the idea of nature is apparent in terms of how the place has been defined as a natural park, and at the same time various groups define the nature of the natural park differently, depending on how they locate themselves in it. While I have emphasised that how they locate themselves within it is rooted in their movements, it is also important that how people move is a practice that is shaped by a long history of how other people have moved. Travellers, explorers and scientists continued travelling in the 'natural history' compiled by Linneaus, and these travellers, explorers and scientists are, although distant and long since dead, the outsiders' ancestors. They may be moving in a nature that is constantly changing but they still relate to it from the 'intellectual' perspective their movements are rooted in. Eric Wolf writes:

*'There is too much talk about agency and resistance and too little attention to how groups mobilize, shape and reshape cultural repertoires and are shaped by them in turn; how groups shape and reshape their self-images to elicit participation and commitment and are themselves shaped by these representations.'* (Wolf 1994: 6).

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, what came to define the category of *Homo sapiens* in the system of nature, what made them distinct from animals, was that they could reflect upon the 'kind of beings they are' (Ingold 1999:250). It is evident, however, that how they reflect upon themselves also happens through the act of defining what kind of being 'other' people are. When Linneaus categorised different races he did so as much by reflecting

upon who he was, as who he was not. When the outsiders and the people from the village confront each other in disagreement about their place in nature, they reflect upon themselves in terms of who they themselves are not, in order to locate each other outside of their own image of nature. The people from the village emphasise their *roots* in the history of the place that are 'natural', and that are of the sort that the outsiders cannot claim to have; they are outsiders. The outsiders, on the other hand, use a different terminology to make the local people distant from the environment, by calling them 'savages'. As Linneaus established the category of the *wild man* who did not have a location in the system of nature, the *savage* person does not have a location in the contemporary context of nature protection. Moreover, the savage person violates nature. This brings me back to the incident when a truck was driven through the barrier. In the beginning it spread as a rumour, but later the identity of this savage person was discovered. It had been a local shepherd feeling angry that he was not able to get to his flock without permission from the village council. This did soften the accusation of 'savageness'. His behaviour was seen as less inappropriate by the outsiders, especially since being a shepherd made him one of the few local people who still maintained the old habits and lived in close connections to the surroundings. Still, his impulsive action was used to underline how the local people were capable of behaving; as savages. Or as Olwig (1993: 317) illustrates:

*'The word nature, as a statement of the inborn character of something, implies a norm. It is natural to conform to that inborn character, unnatural to deviate from it. Nature, in this sense, has been said to be the most powerful normative concept in western thought. A culture, whether it be that of a field, nation or organic yoghurt, is thus natural and normal when it conforms to the natural generative creative principle and abnormal, and unnatural, when it does not.'*

Therefore in considering how nature is placed and replaced, we have to look at the context in which it is created by people, who do so in the process of placing themselves in it. At the same time, they simultaneously construct a discourse that locates or dislocates other people within or apart from their ideal nature.

### **Acknowledgements**

I thank Ben Campbell for all his hard work and constructive comments on this paper. Several people, also, provided me with encouraging comments that were much appreciated: Michael Bravo, Penny Harvey, Tim Ingold, Kay Milton and David Murray for encouraging comments. I am grateful to the anonymous referees for a helpful feedback.

### Notes

1. I will use this term as collective word for all those who have moved into the village from away. The term that the people from the village use is 'forastero' which literary means stranger but can also translate as 'outsider'.
2. See also Pálsson, G. (1996: 77) who states '... with the discovery of the laws of perspective and the triumph of visualism, science became a passionate and aggressive search for truth and knowledge'.
3. See Titos, Manuel (ed.) 1992a and 1992b, and Alarcón, Pedro A. de 1991 [1874].
4. Global Spirit Ctra. De la Sierra, s/n, 18412 Bubión, Granada, Spain.
5. Most of the outsiders were English speaking and they used the term 'savages'. When the savage actors were spoken about in Spanish the usual term used was 'bárbaros' ('barbarians') or 'salvajes' ('savages').
6. I was sometimes told by the people from the village that the best part of the house had been where they kept the animals. This part is the ground floor which is best insulated from the heat of the summer. Today the ground floor usually serves as a lounge or a living room.

### REFERENCES

- Alarcón, P.A.de. 1991 [1874]. *La Alpujarra: Sesenta Leguas á Caballo*. Editorial Don Quijote, Granada.
- Augé, M. 1995. *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. Transl. J. Howe. Verso, London.
- Brenan, G. 1958. *South from Granada*. Readers Union Hamilton Press, London.
- Clifford, J. 1997. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Cosgrove, D. 1999. Introduction: Mapping Meaning. In: *Mappings* (ed. D. Cosgrove), pp. 1–23. Reaktion Books, London.
- Descola, P. and G. Pálsson (eds.). 1996. *Nature and Society: Anthropological Perspectives*. Routledge, London.
- Gupta, A. and J. Ferguson. 1997. Culture, Power, Place: Ethnography at the End of an Era. In: *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology* (eds. A. Gupta and J. Ferguson), pp. 1–29. Duke University Press, Durham.
- Ingold, T. 1992. *The Appropriation of Nature*. Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- Ingold, T. 1993. Globes and Spheres: The Topology of Environmentalism. In: *Environmentalism: The View from Anthropology* (ed. K. Milton), pp. 31–42. Routledge, London.
- Ingold, T. 1999. Human nature and science. *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 24(4):250–254.

- Ingold, T. 2000. *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. Routledge, London.
- Malkki, L.H. 1997. National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialisation of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees. In: *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology* (eds. A. Gupta and J. Ferguson), pp. 52–74. Duke University Press, Durham.
- McDonald, M. 1994. The Construction of Difference: An Anthropological Approach to Stereotypes. In: *Inside European Identities: Ethnography of Western Europe* (ed. S. Macdonald), pp. 219–236. Berg, Oxford.
- Milton, K. 2002. *Loving Nature: Towards an Ecology of Emotions*. Routledge, London.
- Olwig, K. 1993. Sexual Cosmology: Nation and Landscape at the Conceptual Interstices of Nature and Culture; Or What Does Landscape Really Mean? In: *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (ed. B. Bender), pp. 307–343. Berg, Oxford.
- Pálsson, G. 1996. Human–Environmental Relations: Orientalism, Paternalism and Communalism. In: *Nature and Society: Anthropological Perspectives* (eds. P. Descola and G. Palsson), pp. 63–81. Routledge, London.
- Pratt, M.L. 1992. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. Routledge, London.
- Titos, M. (ed.). 1992a. *La Suiza Andaluza*. Caja General de Ahorros de Granada.
- Titos, M. (ed.). 1992b. *Sierra Nevada en los Viajeros Románticos*. Caja General de Ahorros de Granada, Granada.
- Urry, J. 1995. *Consuming Places*. Routledge, London.
- Williams, R. 1976. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Fontana, London.
- Wolf, E. 1994. Perilous ideas: race, culture, people. *Current Anthropology* 35(1):1–11.