



MONASH University

**WWOOFing Nature:
A Post-Critical Ethnographic Study**

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Abstract

What is WWOOFers' nature experience? This sociologically oriented post-critical ethnographic study of ten international WWOOFers (i.e. participants in Willing Workers On Organic Farms) in Australia investigates the overarching research problem of developing rich empirically-driven interpretations, conceptual understandings, and theoretical explanations of 'nature experience'. The study is situated within the overlapping fields of ecotourism studies and environmental education. A limited yet needed representation of WWOOFers' nature experience will advance the interdisciplinary knowledge of how participants' experiential meaning-making and informal environmental learning locally occurs in embodied relation to nature within globalising ecotourism phenomena.

In order to engage appropriately with the complex notions of 'nature' and 'experience', the research problem of 'nature experience' is ecophenomenologically disaggregated into three interrelated research questions: (RQ1) What is the WWOOFers' *experience of nature*?; (RQ2) What is the *nature of their experience*?; and (RQ3) What are the ecopedagogical *relations* between the two?

From a post-critical standpoint, WWOOFing may be represented as an 'alternative' tourism experience, but, on rich ethnographic and phenomenological investigation, it may also include other experiential layers shaped by a wider range of humans and other than humans in the environment. In order to access, represent, and explain this ontological complexity of the layered realities of WWOOFers' nature experience, if only partially and contingently, this study (meta-)methodologically employs an interrelated levels of analysis approach to sociologically complex inquiry. There, how the phenomenon of WWOOFing is constituted is investigated through a series of analytical processes that are sensitive to increasing levels of epistemological abstraction, consisting of ethnographic description, hermeneutic phenomenological interpretation, socio-ecological analysis, and poststructuralist (de)theorisation.

The ethnographic fieldwork of approximately 50 days/nights was conducted over a four-month period in 2014 at five geographically and socio-culturally diverse rural WWOOF sites in the State of Victoria, Australia. The ten international WWOOFers who participated in this study consisted of three Britons, three Germans, two Italians, one South Korean, and one Taiwanese. As a researcher/WWOOFer, I

spent approximately one week with each research participant on-site, not only observing and interviewing them, but also working and living with them.

A major finding of this study confirms the significance of the 'alternative' in WWOOFers' nature experience while indicating that it is accompanied and challenged by other types of nature-human relations. In doing so, this study destabilises the assumed anthropocentric understanding and practice of what nature is (or should be). With this key finding, amongst many others, this study recommends a post-critical and less anthropocentric framing of the researched in and with nature so as to inquire into multiple aspects of nature-human relations relevant to educative nature experience.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.



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Date: 9 February 2017

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Two academically significant life experiences over the past nine years have shaped this ethnographic study of Willing Workers On Organic Farms (or, WWOOF, see the next section) and their nature experience in Australia.

The first occurred between 2008 and 2011 when, for my second master's degree (Master of Education), I investigated the experiences of four Study Abroad students who were undertaking an undergraduate, semester-long, outdoor environmental education unit called 'Experiencing the Australian Landscape' at Monash University (Melbourne, Australia). Three publications resulted: (Nakagawa & Payne, 2011, 2015, 2016). That small-scale ethnographic case study can best be summarised as a sociological study of experiential outdoor environmental education.

The second significant experience occurred in early 2013 following the successful completion of that master's degree. Having been awarded an Australian Postgraduate Award scholarship for full time PhD studies, and having resigned from my position as a secondary teacher of Japanese which I had held for over five years, I embarked on a two-month journey to India. The main purpose was to conduct a pilot study of spiritual tourism at an ashram in Rishikesh, 'the yoga capital of the world'. Along the way, on an overnight train, I was robbed. I was very distressed as I was now without a passport or money and had no means of accessing my savings in Australia. This catastrophic experience resulted in the abortion of the intended sociological study of spiritual tourism.

I returned to Australia, dismayed that the spiritual had been personally, materially, and symbolically deconstructed. Phil, the supervisor of my master's study and this PhD study, suggested a local study of WWOOFing, a phenomenon unfamiliar to me but which seemed relevant to my longstanding interest in travel and tourism. WWOOFing brought together my research and sociological interest in (eco)tourism and experiential environmental education.

In the final chapter of this thesis I will reflect autoethnographically on my journey of the 'positioning' (Hart, 2013) and 'transpositioning' (Payne, 2014) of the researcher 'I' over the PhD time-space, in relation to the researched, and my ecobecoming (Payne, 2013) as an eco-researcher.

WWOOF

Willing Workers On Organic Farms (hereafter, *WWOOF*) is an emerging ecotourism phenomenon with a global growth in popularity in recent years, including in Australia. WWOOF involves two major parties: the hosts and the participants (or, *WWOOFers* – also sometimes called ‘volunteers’). Typically, a WWOOFer stays at a host’s property and works for four to six hours a day and in return receives meals and accommodation. Effectively, manual outdoor labour in a rural setting is exchanged for temporarily satisfying basic needs of security and accommodation during a tourist vacation. The daily work may include tasks such as weeding, harvesting, and tending farm animals. The duration of each stay varies from a few days to six months. In Australia, to be a WWOOFer, one must purchase an annual membership from WWOOF Australia (65 Australian Dollars in 2014). The hosts also need to register with the national organisation. Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2 show statistics on the numbers of WWOOFers and hosts from 1981 to 2013, and the nationalities of WWOOFers in 2013.

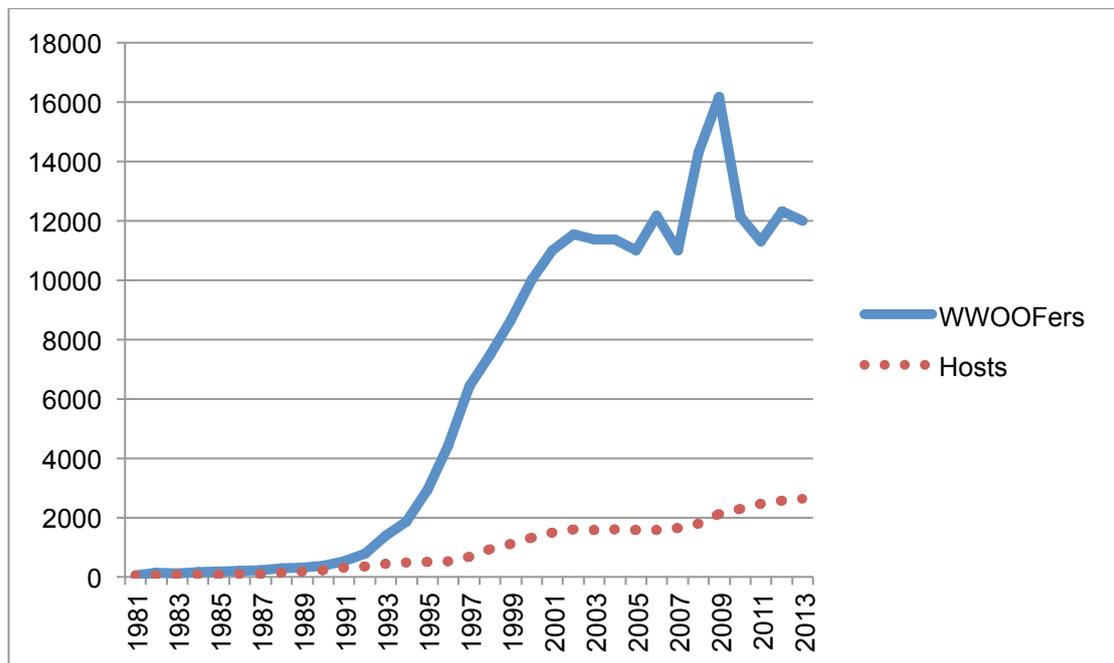


Figure 1.1 Numbers of WWOOFers and hosts registered with WWOOF Australia 1981-2013 (created from WWOOF Australia, Unpublished)

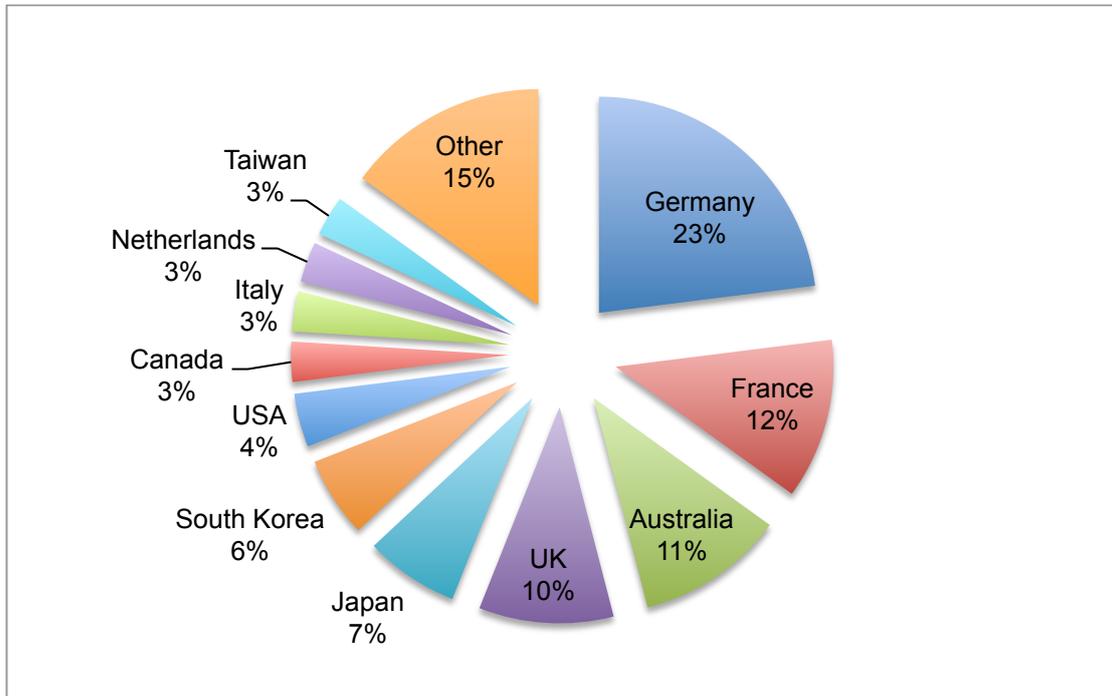


Figure 1.2 Nationalities of WWOOFers registered with WWOOF Australia in 2013 (created from WWOOF Australia, Unpublished)

Due to the participants' (or *WWOOFers*) interaction with organic materials in (more) natural settings, this under-researched ecotourism phenomenon may also be considered as an opportunity for 'informal' environmental education. To investigate the educational potential of WWOOFing, this sociologically oriented ethnographic study of ten international WWOOFers in five rural settings in the State of Victoria, Australia, aims to describe, interpret, analyse, and theorise their nature experience.

The key terms used throughout this study are identified in Table 1.

WWOOF (n)	Refers to ‘Willing Workers on Organic Farms’ or ‘World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms’ (WWOOF Australia adopts the former). It is an international network of loosely affiliated organisations that promotes organic farming through a non-monetary exchange of labour and meals/accommodation, between a WWOOFer and a host.
WWOOF (v)	To participate in WWOOF as a WWOOFer, as in, for example, ‘I <i>WWOOFed</i> in Australia last year’. Its gerund (i.e. <i>-ing</i> form) is also used frequently, as in, for example, ‘I have a mixed feeling about <i>WWOOFing</i> .’
WWOOFer	A provider of labour in the WWOOF exchange. Also called a ‘volunteer’. A WWOOFer is supposed to work for 4-6 hours a day.
Host	A provider of meals and accommodation in the WWOOF exchange. Usually the owner of the property.

Table 1.1 WWOOF glossary

Research Problem and Its Background

The research problem (RP) is *WWOOFers’ nature experience*. How can it be a research problem? By responding to this question, I will introduce the research background and provide a rationale for this PhD study.

The RP may be approached via two critiques: first, ‘nature’ in WWOOFing and, second, ‘experience’ in WWOOFing.

First, ‘nature’ in WWOOFing has not yet been researched in detail although its significance has been indicated in tourism studies (e.g. Lipman & Murphy, 2012). Instead, anthropocentrically pacified and enculturated nature has been simply treated as the background setting for an ‘alternative’ tourism experience (e.g. McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). This first critique of nature in WWOOFing will be fully presented in the literature review undertaken in Chapter 2 (titled Post-Critical Review of WWOOFers’ Nature Experience: Conceptualising, Analysing, and Critiquing).

Second, regarding ‘experience’, WWOOFing has been largely researched as a tourism experience within tourism studies (some recent exceptions may include: Ince, 2015 in geography; Kosnik, 2013 in anthropology). Since WWOOFing usually involves daily interactions with organic materials in natural settings, it is possible that

the experience, if not all, is environmentally educative. However, this assumption has not been examined in scholarly research. Thus, an educational perspective (Stehnik, 2002) about the WWOOFers' educative experience is needed for an interdisciplinary approach, collective and/or individual, to the framing of research about WWOOFing (Kotoůlek, 2012). Thus, in broad terms, this sociological study of WWOOFing is attentive to the intersections of the sociology of ecotourism and the sociology of environmental education (research), as it is located selectively within contemporary social theory and the social sciences of research methodology.

Conversely, starting with the field of environmental educational research, WWOOFing has escaped attention (as far as I know), notwithstanding that environmental education has, occasionally, been viewed as 'deschooled' (Weston, 1996). In fact, in some quarters, there is criticism of the distinction between 'formal'/school and 'informal'/non-school environmental education (Wals, Stevenson, Brody, & Dillon, 2013) where, by implication, tourism phenomena like WWOOFing deserve more serious educational attention (Fletcher, 2015).

(Eco)tourism, therefore, including WWOOFing, is representative of the hybrid contexts of nature and experience where contemporary environmental education might well occur. This study is deeply attentive to that possibility. The 'modified spaces' (Lawton & Weaver, 2001) of WWOOFing are 'entirely populated by hybrids' (Franklin & Crang, 2001, p. 15) of the human and non-human, and WWOOFers may encounter different versions of nature. By bodily interacting with(in) the environments hybridly designed (Payne, 2014), WWOOFers may be able to experience some environmental sensibilities appropriate for contemporary nature-human relations.

Another significance of tourism for contemporary environmental education is its sociological prevalence in everyday life. According to John Urry (1995, p. 148), tourism is such a dominant form of postmodern social relations that its uniqueness has dissolved – hence 'the end of tourism'. If tourism is a valid metaphor of our contemporary ways of living – at least for those who are socially privileged and can afford the mobility (Bauman, 1997; Urry, 2007) – educationally it is important to understand how educative experiences really occur within tourism. In addition, for those fortunate all-the-time-tourists, tourism is 'ordinary', and according to John Dewey (1997, p. 73), it is through the 'ordinary life-experience' that experiential learning most effectively takes place.

To summarise, WWOOFers' nature experience is a valid research problem, and that is because:

- Nature is significant for WWOOFing but it has not been studied in detail to this date.
- Research on WWOOFers' experience requires an interdisciplinary approach, including an educational perspective.
- Environmental education research has not paid attention to WWOOFing at all to this date, although its potential for experiential environmental learning may be of significance.
- As a tourism phenomenon, WWOOFing offers a valuable case to examine how environmental education may occur in hybrid 'ordinary life-experience' for globally mobile learners.

Research Questions

The research problem (RP) of WWOOFers' nature experience is much more complex than it appears, due to the notions of both 'nature' and 'experience'. While 'nature' is a notoriously problematic term in the (English) language (Williams, 1983; see also, for example, Soper, 1995), 'experience' was also interpretively and practically problematised in the discourse of experiential education (Fox, 2008).

Thus, to approach the complexity of the RP requires a more finely tuned approach to help frame, conceptualise, and contextualise this study of WWOOFing in rural Victoria. For that purpose, Ted Toadvine's (2009) 'ecophenomenological' framing of 'nature experience' is tremendously valuable for this study. He wrote:

In its effort to describe and understand the *nature of experience*, phenomenology is inevitably led to investigate the *experience of nature* and, in general, the *relation* between experience and nature. [original emphasis] (p. 8)

In other words, 'nature experience' is ecophenomenologically approached by disaggregating the initial RP into the triad of *experience of nature*, *nature of experience*, and *their relations*.

Accordingly, the RP is ecophenomenologically disaggregated into three research questions (RQs) (Table 1.2).

- | |
|---|
| <p>RQ1 What is the WWOOFers' <i>experience of nature</i>?</p> <p>RQ2 What is the <i>nature of the WWOOFers' experience</i>?</p> <p>RQ3 What are the ecopedagogical <i>relations</i> between the WWOOFers' experience of nature (RQ1) and the nature of their experience (RQ2)?</p> |
|---|

Table 1.2: Ecophenomenological philosophy of nature experience (Toadvine, 2009)

The three RQs are separately investigated in individual chapters: RQ1 in Chapter 4 (titled WWOOFers' Experience of Nature: Ethnographic Impressions of Embodiment); RQ2 in Chapter 5 (titled Nature of WWOOFers' Experience: Hermeneutic Phenomenological Thematic Analysis); and RQ3 in Chapter 6 (titled Ecopedagogical Relations of WWOOFers' Nature Experience: A Socio-ecological Analysis). Chapter 7 (titled Theorising and Detheorising WWOOFers' Nature Experience) re-aggregates the findings to the RQs for a partial theorisation of the RP.

In order to respond as comprehensively (that is, empirically, conceptually, and theoretically) as possible to the RP and three RQs, a sophisticated and flexible methodological framework is required to describe, interpret, analyse, and theorise the problem under investigation. For that purpose, I apply Paul James's (2006) social theory of 'constitutive abstraction (thesis)' in his *Tribalism, Nationalism, Globalism* as an overarching 'post-critical' (meta-)methodological framework for this study (Hart, 2005). The two major components of James's constitutive abstraction are 'ontological abstraction' and 'epistemological abstraction' (see Chapter 3, titled Post-Critical Methodological Double Movements, for an overview of James's methodology, and the opening sections of Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 where contextualised methodology is explained further in relation to the respective RQs/RP). With epistemological abstraction, an analysis of social phenomenon is staged into four methodological levels. In the order of abstraction (from less to more), they are called *empirical analysis*, *conjunctural analysis*, *integrational analysis*, and *categorical analysis* (see Table 1.3).

Empirical analysis	‘involves generating empirical description based on observation, experience, recording or experiment’ (James, 2006, p. 73)
Conjunctural analysis	involves ‘identifying, and more importantly, examining the intersection of various modes of practice’ (James, 2006, p. 75).
Integrational analysis	involves an examination of ‘the intersecting modes of social integration and differentiation’ (James, 2006, p. 76).
Categorical analysis	involves an exploration of ‘modes of being and the dominant forms that they take in different social formations’ (James, 2006, p. 77)

Table 1.3 Four methodological levels of epistemological abstraction (James, 2006)

Each level is further broken down by James into various modes of inquiry and critique. James’s theoretical and methodological levels approach of epistemological abstraction is a valuable (meta-)methodological framework for post-critical explanatory purposes, because it encourages, if not demands, that the researcher employ various theorists across the methodological levels so as to best investigate a phenomenon under study. Understandably, this theoretical and methodological eclecticism may be a concern for traditional researchers in the social sciences who are eager to pursue a straightforwardly neat representation of the phenomenon.

However, following John Law’s (2004) account of the ‘mess’ in social science research and the consequent need for ‘assemblages’ of theories and methods, I believe that contemporary social reality is increasingly complex, and thus its representation has to be complex as well. Hence, in this study, there are three findings chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) each of which deals with an aspect (i.e. RQ) of the WWOOFers’ nature experience with a distinctive method; the RQs are then abstractly and theoretically assembled in Chapter 7. Representation, after all, aspires to a certain ‘correspondence’ between the signifier and the signified, and in this ‘messy’ case, I understand and pragmatically offer such a representational correspondence as a tidier ‘mess’.

The PR and its disaggregated RQs via Toadvine, and the methodological levels via James, are designed to intersect within the methodological structure of this thesis (Table 1.4).

	Toadvine (2009) Ecophenomenological disaggregation of RP	James (2006) Levels of epistemological abstraction	Supporting methodology/theory	Exploratory orientation
Chapter 4	Experience of nature (RQ1)	Empirical analysis	Sensory impressionist tales (Pink, 2009; Van Maanen, 2011)	Describing
Chapter 5	Nature of experience (RQ2)		Existential themes (van Manen, 1990)	Interpreting
Chapter 6	Ecopedagogical relations (RQ3)	Conjunctural analysis Integrational analysis	Ecopedagogy (Payne, 2014)	Analysing
Chapter 7	Nature experience (RP)	(Categorical analysis)	Simulation and symbolic exchange (Baudrillard, 1993)	Theorising

Table 1.4 The methodological structure of this thesis

Among various limitations of this study, a significant one demanding immediate disclosure is my incomplete engagement with James’s final level of epistemological abstraction – categorical analysis. Categorical analysis aims to represent the most abstract level of a social phenomenon, that is, its ontological categories such as ‘nature’ and ‘human’. As James comparatively and historically demonstrated for his theory of contemporary globalism, adequately investigating ontological categories demands greater access and insights into not only the conceptual and theoretical basis of the categories but also relevant politics, ethics, and aesthetics. This demand is beyond the scope of this PhD study. However, as a limited response to James’s categorical analysis, in Chapter 7, through Jean Baudrillard’s (1993) theory of ‘simulation’ and ‘symbolic exchange’, I will partially theorise the WWOOFers’ nature experience to explore potential nature-human relations enacted in WWOOFing.

Research Purposes

By engaging with the research problem (RP), this study more broadly aims to make contributions to relevant academic fields – empirically, conceptually, theoretically, and methodologically. They are:

1. Ecotourism studies: to understand WWOOFing as an ecotourism phenomenon within an interdisciplinary perspective by describing, interpreting, analysing, and partially theorising WWOOFers' nature experience.
2. Environmental education (research): to develop an ecopedagogical method of what will be referred to as environmental design by applying it to WWOOFing as a potential opportunity for explaining what constitutes informal experiential environmental learning.
3. Sociology of nature experience: to explore an aspect of nature-human relations, which are potentially enacted in WWOOFing, with Jean Baudrillard's sociological theory of simulation and symbolic exchange.
4. Qualitative research methodology: to develop and demonstrate a post-critical methodological research framework applicable to ecotourism studies and environmental education research.

Thesis Structure

This section previews the chapters of this thesis.

In **Chapter 2**, I conduct *a post-critical literature review* of WWOOFers' nature experience. Since there is a lack of academically peer-reviewed research on WWOOFing, a working concept of WWOOFers' nature experience is analytically constructed using a wide range of literature interdisciplinarily drawn. It is a 'post-critical' literature review because I review not only empirical studies of similar phenomena in the relevant fields such as ecotourism studies and environmental education (research), but also conceptual and theoretical literature derived from geography, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy, in order to investigate the

multiple levels of abstraction of the phenomenon under study. In relation to the following chapters, this post-critical literature review is a conceptually and methodologically important element in establishing research congruence, a principle recommended in environmental education research (Reid & Payne, 2013).

In **Chapter 3**, I introduce my post-critical methodological framing of this study by outlining a series of *methodological double movements*. As already implied for the post-critical literature review, in the limited context of this study, by ‘post-critical’ I mean the logic of ‘both/and’ (e.g. both empirical and theoretical) as opposed to ‘either/or’. With such a post-critical methodological framing, WWOOFers’ nature experience is expected to be multiply represented as a ‘mess’ (Law, 2004), with both a contextual breadth and a theoretical depth. To methodologically deal with the complexity, James’s (2006) ‘*constitutive abstraction (thesis)*’ is adopted as a (meta-) methodological framework for this study. With his constitutive abstraction (to be precise, ‘epistemological abstraction’), the following four intersecting findings chapters are structured with increasing levels of analytical abstraction, targeting the corresponding research questions.

Chapter 4 investigates the first research question (RQ1) – what is the WWOOFers’ experience of nature? – with an *empirical analysis*, which is James’s first methodological level of epistemological abstraction. Largely based on ethnographically driven participation/observation data, participants’ sensorially *objective* experiences (Pink, 2009) will be described with a sampling of *ten impressionist tales* (Van Maanen, 2011). For the purpose of theorising in Chapter 7, the ten impressionist tales are further abstracted into *three modalities of experience of nature*. They are named reversible experience, proximal experience, and dialectic experience.

Chapter 5 investigates the second research question (RQ2) – what is the nature of the WWOOFers’ experience? – with another *empirical analysis*. Largely based on the on-site, semi-structured interviews with the WWOOFers, the *subjective* experiences they narrated are thematically interpreted with a hermeneutic phenomenological method (van Manen, 1990). *Twenty existential themes* are interpretively generated under Max van Manen’s ‘fundamental lifeworld themes’ of spatiality, temporality, corporeality, and relationality. For the purpose of theorising in Chapter 7, the twenty existential themes are re-interpreted with a two-dimensional coordinate plane consisting of the x-axis continuum (‘humanised’-‘naturalised’) and

the y-axis continuum ('human'-'nature'). As a result, *five categories of nature-human relations* are identified to represent the more generalised nature of the WWOOFers' experience. They are humanised human (Quadrant I); naturalised human (Quadrant II); naturalised nature (Quadrant III); humanised nature (Quadrant IV); and ambiguous 'nature'-'human' (the Origin).

Chapter 6 investigates the third research question (RQ3) – what are the ecopedagogical relations between the WWOOFers' experience of nature and the nature of their experience? – with a *conjunctural analysis* and an *integrational analysis*, which are James's second and third methodological levels of epistemological abstraction. In order to extend James's sociological analysis ecologically, the WWOOFers' social practices and integrations are materially analysed with an ecopedagogical notion of 'environmental design' (Huebner, 1987; Payne, 2014), as it occurred spatio-temporally at micro, meso, and macro levels of bodily interaction and relationality. As a result, this chapter socio-ecologically identifies *three modes of ecological integration* that constitute the ecopedagogical relations of the WWOOFers' nature experience. They are named the original one, the proximal two, and the social three. A particularly important educational concept emerging from the general findings in this chapter is a potential ecopedagogical linking of 'doing' in the environment and 'learning' about the environment.

In relation to James's epistemological abstraction, due to various limitations of this PhD thesis, **Chapter 7** only briefly engages with his final methodological level of abstraction, *categorical analysis*. This chapter has two purposes. First, it re-aggregates the findings to RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 represented in the previous three chapters in order to respond synthetically to the research problem (RP). The synthesis is represented as *the Form of WWOOFers' nature experience* (or, *the Form*, to shorten). Second, the Form is partially theorised by selectively focusing on the reversible experience of the original one, which is located around the Origin on the coordinate plane. That is where the semiotic categories of 'nature' and 'human' approximate to zero. Through a close reading of Jean Baudrillard's (1993) *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, *three strategies* (named suicide, enchantment, and hyperconformity) to detheorise the Form at the implosive point of the Origin are suggested. This theorising and detheorising – or *(de)theorising* – is the final procedure of my post-critical methodological double movements.

Chapter 8, the concluding chapter, summarises the findings, significances and limitations of this study, and recommendations for WWOOF policies/practices and relevant academic fields (including indicators of further research demands emerging from this study). The last section of reflections about the processes of inquiry includes a reflexive critique of James's (meta-)methodology, and an autoethnographic story of my becoming an eco-researcher through a series of positionings and repositionings of the researcher 'I' in relation to the researched Other.

Chapter 2 Post-Critical Review of WWOOFers' Nature Experience: Conceptualising, Analysing, and Critiquing

Introduction: Overlapping

Willing Workers On Organic Farms (WWOOF) is a relatively recent term in the peer-reviewed academic literature. Research into its experience has been slowly growing in tourism studies since around 2000 (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001). While 'WWOOF' usually refers to the organisational structure, 'WWOOFing' means to volunteer and work on organic farms as a participant. The participant is known as a 'WWOOFer'.

A dominant discourse about WWOOFing in tourism studies conceptualises and constructs WWOOFing as an 'alternative' tourism experience that is critically distinguished from the mainstream mass consumption type (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). Academic interest in WWOOFing, particularly its natural organic farming, is relevant for what the back-to-land experience socio-culturally represents in the context of neoliberal capitalism. In addition, WWOOFing is potentially, if not probably, environmentally educative, particularly in terms of the relations between nature and human. Nature matters in WWOOFing. However, nature in WWOOFing has not been explicitly or sufficiently studied either empirically or conceptually.

Since nature occupies a central role in WWOOFing and related educational ecotourism activities both physically and socio-culturally, understanding *what WWOOFers' nature experience is* (the research problem of this study, RP) is crucial to advance ecotourism studies and environmental education research (see Chapter 1). In this sociologically oriented ethnographic study of ten international WWOOFers in Australia, the RP is ecophenomenologically (Toadvine, 2009) disaggregated into three intersecting research questions: (RQ1) what is the WWOOFers' *experience of nature?*; (RQ2) what is the *nature of their experience?*; and (RQ3) what are the ecopedagogical *relations* between RQ1 and RQ2? These disaggregated research questions are approached with Paul James's (2006) sociologically informed (meta-) methodological framework of 'constitutive abstraction (thesis)' (see Chapter 3). His levels approach incorporates different methodological/methodical procedures for description, interpretation, analysis, and theorisation at various levels of epistemological abstraction of the phenomenon under study.

In this chapter, a post-critical review of the literature is undertaken to advance this sociological study of WWOOFing. The review is separated into four main components. These are: (1) defining ecotourism; (2) educational claims made in ecotourism; (3) tourism products in farm/rural; and (4) types of nature in WWOOFing.

The literature directly relevant to this study of WWOOFers' nature experience is limited by a quantitative and qualitative lack of insights and evidence, as will be revealed throughout this review. Thus, to review WWOOFers' nature experience requires a proxy that is similar to the phenomenon under study. With a broader perspective, the proxy may be categorically constructed in *the overlapping areas of ecotourism and environmental education*.

The two seem to overlap in our everyday ecological experiences: if you participate in ecotourism, you would probably learn something about the environment in which ecotourism occurs; and if you participate in an environmental education programme, you will most likely have a 'field trip' type experience to a location in a natural setting. With the shortage of WWOOF academic literature, this overlapping should ideally function as the secondary main body of the literature referred to in this study. In reality, however, although this overlapping has been identified as important from both sides of ecotourism and environmental education, not many studies have been conducted on how those respective foci inform each other, or intersect in an interdisciplinary manner (Fletcher, 2015).

Due to the limited literature on WWOOF studies and the studies focusing on the overlapping of ecotourism and environmental education, this literature review chapter needs to conceptualise an approximation of WWOOFers' nature experience constructively *as well as* to review the directly and indirectly relevant studies from a variety of academic fields analytically. They include, for example, (eco)tourism studies, (environmental) education, geography, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy. In doing those multiple tasks at the same time, this post-critical literature review still cannot be comprehensive and complete, because of the different disciplinary and interdisciplinary ways that the research problem and disaggregated research questions can be contextualised.

The implication of employing James's (meta-)methodology of constitutive abstraction in this study is also relevant for how this chapter is constructed. This post-critical literature review deals with different levels of epistemological abstraction of WWOOFer's nature experience. In other words, WWOOFers' nature experience is

constituted and mediated in a range of abstract ways. James' sociologically inspired epistemological abstraction will provide rich conceptual grounds for how the literature on WWOOFing (and other related phenomena) is also interpreted and represented as multiple levels. Hence, the methodology of the literature review undertaken here aspires to a stronger and richer commensurability with the overarching methodology of the study, as well as the multiple representations of the findings that are associated with a post-critical standpoint (Hart, 2005, see Chapter 3).

In short, the phenomenon of WWOOFers' nature experience, even within the existing literature, is epistemologically constituted with various interrelated levels of abstraction – from empirical 'facts' to theoretical discourse. Thus, another important goal of this chapter is also to analyse the relevant literature with relevant theory, in order to engage with the literature at (more) abstract levels. Again, it is stated upfront that, in this review in particular, and in this study in general, eclecticism and, perhaps, fragmentation of what is represented are inevitable in such a process, if to a degree. For example, notions such as 'ecopedagogy' and 'environmental design' are not extensively mentioned in this chapter (but see Chapter 6), due to the purpose of my critique of the *discourses* in tourism studies and environmental education (research) from *within the very discourses*, a method inspired by what Jean Baudrillard (1993) called 'theoretical violence'.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, WWOOFing is situated in the overlapping of ecotourism and environmental education. To do so, 'ecotourism' is *defined* as a form of nature-based tourism with educational elements. However, because it is uncertain whether, what type of, and how the 'educational' is experienced by the tourists, the 'educational' reflexively problematises the definition itself. This process is crucial to justify my referencing to the literature of various academic fields to conceptualise constructively what WWOOFers' nature experience is. However, to repeat, that construct can only be an approximation.

Second, in order to analyse WWOOFing as a form of ecotourism from an educational perspective, various *educational claims* made about WWOOFing and other similar settings are reviewed, which interpretively summarises the emerging categories of food learning, social learning, and environmental learning. The literature reviewed in this section explicitly mentioned the educational values of ecotourism. As above, strong claims cannot be made, endorsed, or disconfirmed, given the limited nature and partiality of the studies that precede this PhD study.

Third, selected literature on farm tourism and rural tourism is analytically reviewed to investigate their *tourism products*. This process is also important for the overlapping of ecotourism and environmental education, not only because WWOOFing usually takes place in farm/rural settings, but also because the educational is often implicitly assumed in farm/rural tourism that does not necessarily identify itself as ‘ecotourism’. The analytical review suggests that the farm/rural tourism products relevant for WWOOFing are constructed with two major discourses of the Romantic rural idyll and the humanistic work display.

Fourth, by abstracting the interpreted educational claims and tourism products, two ontological types of *nature* that may be experienced in WWOOFing are conceptualised. One is nature known as ‘the Other’ for the ‘alternative’ experience as claimed in the tourism studies literature by some, and the other is nature unknown as ‘it’ for a less anthropocentric environmental experience.

Finally, the major implications of this literature review for the later chapters are briefly summarised.

Figure 2.1 is a summative diagram that previews the key concepts and ideas for the purpose of conceptualisation of WWOOFer’s nature experience in this chapter.

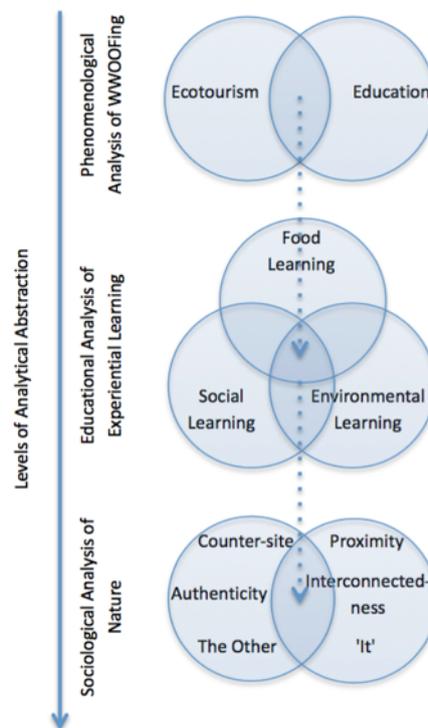


Figure 2.1 Conceptualising WWOOFers’ nature experience

Definitions: Ecotourism and the Ecotourist?

In tourism studies, there are many terms that may be associated with ecotourism. They may be, though not comprehensively: nature-based tourism; sustainable tourism; alternative tourism; ethical tourism; adventure tourism; wildlife tourism; farm tourism; rural tourism; volunteer tourism; and community-based tourism. While those terms do refer to tourism types with particular emphases, they nonetheless share (more than) some characteristics. Rather than drawing lines among those definitions systematically, the purpose of this section is to elaborate critically the notion of 'ecotourism', and relatedly of 'ecotourist', in order to review WWOOFing more flexibly from an educational perspective.

Joseph E. Mbaiwa and Amanda L. Stronza (2009, pp. 333-334) defined 'sustainable tourism' as tourism that aims at three goals of economic efficiency, social equality, and environmental conservation. 'Ecotourism' is 'a sub-category of sustainable tourism' (Björk, 2007, p. 34), characterised with three major components: 'natural, relatively undisturbed areas'; 'minimise the negative impacts on the local communities'; and 'contributes to the conservation of those areas' (Higham & Lück, 2007, p. 119). Apart from the emphasis on natural locations in ecotourism (c.f. see 'urban ecotourism' in Higham & Lück, 2002), sustainable tourism and ecotourism share their emphasis on environmental *conservation* and local *communities*.

'Nature-based tourism', on the other hand, merely describes the location of tourism activities without an emphasis on conservation and communities (Björk, 2007, p. 34). However, since the neoliberal notion of 'sustainable tourism development' is problematic for the ecotourism principles of conservation and communities (Sharpley, 2000), the difference between 'ecotourism' and 'nature-based tourism' is unclear. Tourist practices are also contingent. For example, a long-distance travel particularly by air¹ to a natural location for 'ecotourism' contributes to high carbon emission, which is definitely problematic for the conservation principle from a global perspective (Bows, Anderson, & Peeters, 2009).

In 2015, The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) revised its definition of ecotourism to include experiential *interpretation* as the third principle. Ecotourism is

¹ In 2005, 75% of tourism's carbon dioxide emission is generated from the travel transport, within which air travel is accountable for 40% (World Tourism Organization and United Nations Environment Programme, 2008, p. 9).

‘responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education’ (The International Ecotourism Society, 2015). This newly added interpretation principle is elaborated into educational elements such as ‘sensitivity to political, environmental, and social climates’. According to this revised definition, ecotourism is defined by its educative nature of the participants’ experience. ‘It is education and interpretation that serves as a key element and defining characteristic of ecotourism experiences’ (Blamey, 2001, p. 9). Environmental education is a particularly important element for ‘visitor learning’ in ecotourism (Walter, 2013a).

Do all the participants in ecotourism have environmentally educative experiences equally? That is unlikely, as Larry Dwyer and Deborah Edwards (2000) conceptualised the following continuum of tourist segments in nature: general tourist with no interest in nature; nature conscious general tourist; tourist with special interest in nature; nature-based tourist; and specialist ecotourist. The ‘specialist ecotourist’ is described as the following:

Interest in the environment is the primary driver for travel. An interest and concern for the environment motivate the tourist. They require little infrastructure, interpretive signage or management facilities and their presence is absorbed by existing support systems. Education and conservation play an important role in the experience. (p. 273)

What Dwyer and Edwards implied is that tourists in ‘ecotourism’ can expect and behave non-environmentally and non-educationally, if unknowingly. An equal emphasis on the interpretation principle for the definition of ‘ecotourism’ thus reveals that there is no such a *thing* as ecotourism. Rather, it is a *phenomenon* conditioned by how tourism is organised and how tourists experience. With this phenomenological approach, it is possible to categorise alleged ‘ecotourism’ into four categories: (i) ecotourists in ecotourism (the definition in TIES, 2015); (ii) non-ecotourists in ‘ecotourism’ (can be compatible with the definition in Higham & Lück, 2007); (iii) non-ecotourists in non-ecotourism (compatible with the definition of ‘nature-based tourism’ in Björk, 2007); and (iv) ‘ecotourists’ in non-ecotourism.

The fourth category is an interesting one. Do ecotourists, ‘specialist’ or otherwise, participate in non-ecotourism when they care about the environment in the first place? In reality, it seems possible. It is reported that ecotourists may ‘tolerate’

potentially negative ecological impacts in the natural environment as an inevitable consequence of ecotourism (Haukeland et al., 2013). For example, polar bear viewing in a remote location in Canada as ‘last chance tourism’ is an ironic case (Dawson et al., 2010). Climate change associated with greenhouse gasses is negatively affecting the habitat of polar bears. However, the tourists’ desire, amplified by the long distance (Larsen & Guiver, 2013), to see polar bears on the possible brink of extinction is so strong that the tourists blind themselves from the fact that their traveling and viewing of polar bears produces significant environmental impacts. To compensate for the cotangential environmental impacts, ecotourists may practise their environmental awareness by economic means, such as ‘willingness to pay’ for environmental protection in tourist destinations (Dodds, Graci, & Holmes, 2010) and ‘voluntary carbon offsets’ for their flights (Mair, 2011). Are they really ecotourists?

Ecotourists may indeed share various forms of socio-ecological awareness in general (Puhakka, 2011), such as decommodification of host communities and their natural environments (Fiorello & Bo, 2012; Johnston & Edwards, 1994). However, as the example of ‘last chance tourism’ indicates, their identities are not clear-cut but situationally heterogeneous (Arnegger, Woltering, & Job, 2010). Theoretical knowledge about ‘so-called true ecotourist’ is incomplete (Perkins & Brown, 2012). This may be due to the scarcity of empirical and conceptual research on ecotourists (Naidoo, Ramseook-Munhurn, & Seegoolam, 2011). Perhaps. But the fundamental problem is not the quantity of studies on ecotourists. Instead, the ecotourist – as a conditional component of ecotourism – is not a physical person but is a conceptual archetype ‘qualitatively’ (Wolf-Waruz, Sandell, & Fredman, 2011) performed.

In summary, a review of the definitions of ecotourism and the ecotourist revealed that both are phenomena rather than substances. This indicates that reviewing WWOOFing as a form of ecotourism will benefit from a phenomenological approach – an important methodological consideration addressed here for this study (see Chapter 3, 4, and 5). According to the TIER definition, there are three interrelated lines for such a phenomenological inquiry: (1) conservation of natural environment; (2) empowerment of local communities; and (3) educational opportunities for both the visitors and the hosts. These three are all important for a ‘hard’ ecotourism that maximises the benefit for all the stakeholders involved (i.e. the environment, the local/host, and the visitor) (Coles, Poland, & Clifton, 2015). However, since the research problem of this study is WWOOFers’ nature experience

from an environmental educational perspective, the third line is the most appropriate focus in this context. In the next section, therefore, the educational claims made and/or implied in WWOOFing and other similar settings are analytically reviewed in order to construct a partial picture of WWOOFers' nature experience. Importantly, the deconstruction of the definitions of 'ecotourism' and 'ecotourist' in this current section enables me to refer to literature that does not specifically research on the phenomena.

The Educational Claims in WWOOFing and Other Similar Settings

What types of educational claims are made when WWOOFing is framed as a form of ecotourism? Ideally, this question should be considered by the existing literature directly related to WWOOFing. However, due to earlier 'neglect' of WWOOFing in tourism studies (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001), its academic knowledge in the peer-reviewed literature is still insufficient both quantitatively and qualitatively as of 2016. Therefore, while it is not necessarily WWOOFing, educational claims made in relation to garden settings (including school gardens, community gardens, and botanical gardens) and other relevant ecotourism settings (such as volunteer tourism and community-based ecotourism) are also reviewed in this section in order to enhance conceptually the construct of WWOOFers' nature experience.

WWOOFing

...the WWOOF experience may have the ability to heighten understanding between people from different cultural, social or ideological backgrounds, 'endear' visitors to rural regions in support of wider economic development initiatives, engender or raise appreciation, care and concern for the natural environment, support for the organic movement or an alternative lifestyle, and encourage self-reflection and personal development among visitors. (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006, p. 97)

Alison J McIntosh and Susanne M Bonnemann's (2006) pioneering qualitative case study of WWOOFing in New Zealand is one of the very few comprehensive studies on WWOOFers' experience (see also Deville, 2011 in Australia; Kosnik, 2013 in multiple countries, and Miller & Mair, 2015a, 2015b in Argentina). Based on in-depth interviews with 22 WWOOFers (and 12 hosts), McIntosh and Bonnemann suggested

a useful framework to understand WWOOFers' 'alternative' experience (note: I will keep using a 'scare mark' for this term throughout this thesis, because I believe its meanings are problematic at many practical levels) consisting of four thematics: personal meaningfulness; organics and alternative lifestyles; sincerity; and rurality.

In the following, with a slight modification, McIntosh and Bonnemann's four thematics are used to categorise educational claims made in WWOOFing. They are broadly labelled as three types of learning: *food learning* (from organics); *social learning* (from alternative lifestyle, personal meaningfulness, and sincerity); and *environmental learning* (from rurality). To clarify, they are not mutually exclusive. For example, Mary Mostafanezhad (2015) viewed bodily knowing where food comes from in WWOOFing is a type of 'education related to human-environment relations' (p. 11). Thus, the three learning categories are indicative only and their usefulness is limited to this analysis here.

Food learning. As its name indicates, Willing Workers On Organic Farms (WWOOF) usually, but not always, involves organic farming and food production. Therefore, learning related to food has been a major element in the educational claims made in WWOOFing. Food learning in WWOOFing is both technical and conceptual, as it includes a variety of vocational skills needed to become an organic farmer and the ecological values (such as localism) that organic farming underpins.

Daisaku Yamamoto and A. Katrina Engelsted (2015, p. 978) indicated that the majority of the hosts interviewed in the United States believed that 'learning and teaching organic farming methods' is a priority in WWOOFing. William Terry (2014, p. 102) also pointed out that some WWOOFers interviewed in the United States expressed their interest in practising organic farming as a vocation after WWOOFing, and that their hosts viewed the WWOOFers as 'interns'. Since learning about organic farming was a priority, WWOOFers in Hawai'i expressed their concern when they were asked to do 'mundane tasks or activities such as helping with daily chores – cooking dinner, washing dishes, and sweeping the floor' (Mostafanezhad, Suryanata, Azizi, & Milnep, 2015, p. 130).

In addition to the technical side of food production, engaging in organic farming was considered educative because WWOOFers can socio-ecologically learn about the food they eat. In her brief literature review, Angela Maycock (2008) associated WWOOFing with the local food movement in the United States and the

consumers' desire 'to reconnect with the sources of what they eat' (p. 283), identifying its educational aspects as 'exploring organic farming and alternative lifestyles' (p. 285). With a case study focusing on hosts' perspectives in South Korea, Hyungsuk Choo and Tazim Jamal (2009, p. 448) also reported the hosts' awareness of consumers' increasing interest in learning about food production and food producers, hence their reflexive performance of food for touristic satisfaction.

Social learning. With some anecdotes from Australian WWOOFers, Tom Stehnik (2002) wrote that WWOOFing is a form of informal adult learning that 'builds social capital in number of ways' 'by giving support to growers and encouraging others to learn about it' (p. 225). Some hosts in Hawai'i viewed WWOOFing as giving their WWOOFers guidance to 'spiritual development' (Mostafaneshad, Azizi, & Johansen, 2014, p. 3).

Social learning experience is not only for life enrichment. With the discourse of 'alternative' experience, it also critically problematises mainstream tourism and associated consumptive ways of living. With a mixed method approach inquiring into both hosts and WWOOFers in Australia, Adrian Deville and Stephen Wearing (2013) suggested that WWOOFing is a form of transformative tourism. They identified the authentic engagement, or 'reciprocal exchange', between the hosts and the WWOOFers to be the educationally transformative essence. 'WWOOFing requires "a tourist" to shed that role or identity and become more like a *person*' [original emphasis] (p. 156), Deville and Wearing wrote. The mode of authentic person-to-person engagement in WWOOFing was also emphasised by Elisabeth Kosnik (2013) with the notion of 'fictive kinship' in the WWOOF extended household that allegedly pursues 'the ideal of communal living' (p. 163). According to Kosnik, who conducted an international ethnographic study of hosts and WWOOFers (largely in Austria and New Zealand), the moral centre of WWOOFing is based on 'non-monetary exchange' as 'an inherent criticism of capitalism' (p. 88, c.f. WWOOF as 'alternative capitalist economy' in Mosedale, 2012). Maggie C. Miller and Heather Mair (2015a) also identified the decommodified nature of WWOOFing as 'living in interconnectedness' based on knowledge exchange and 'continual learning', from their ethnographic study of nine WWOOFers in Argentina.

Anthony Ince (2015) agreed that moneyless economy in WWOOFing and consequentially a direct engagement through anarchistic 'collective self-mediation' (p.

833) employs values that go against capitalism. However, Ince quickly reminded us that ‘the most fundamental problematic for an anarchist critique of political economy in WWOOF is that the line between voluntarism (collaborative work practices, mutual learning, sharing) and free labor (voluntary self-exploitation) is decidedly blurred’ (p. 835). In other words, although the ecotopian communities are idealised in WWOOFing, in reality, the relationships between hosts and WWOOFers are often asymmetrical (Kosnik, 2013; Mostafanezhad, Suryanata, Azizi, & Milnep, 2015; Terry, 2014). This is because ‘the object of exchange is of unequal basis’ (Andriotis & Agiomirginakis, 2015, p. 580), meaning that WWOOFers provide labour while hosts provide hospitality. The problem here is that while WWOOFers’ labour is easily translated into quantifiable value/time (as the WWOOF guideline states that a WWOOFer is to work four-to-six hours a day), hosts’ hospitality cannot be quantified. If it is to be quantified, it becomes a ‘service’ commodity, which then reduces the transformative authenticity of the host-WWOOFer relationships for social learning.

Environmental learning. Within the educational claims made in WWOOFing about environmental learning, learning *for* the environment remains very implicit. McIntosh and Bonnemann (2006) indicated that WWOOFers self-transformed after experiencing a sense of “‘rootedness” and “being in touch with nature” that they felt had lost in their life at home’ (p. 94). However, rural nature, represented such as ‘peacefulness’ and ‘participation in farm life and activities’ (p. 91), appears to be the environmental background of the WWOOFers’ anthropocentric experience. Similarly, Miller and Mair (2015a) suggested that ‘harmonizing with nature’ contributes to ‘the potential for consciousness-raising experience’ (p. 198) based on their phenomenological interpretation of WWOOFers’ articulations. While Miller and Mair hinted that a harmonious relationship between nature and humans is key to more conscious living, which may be for the environment as well, they did not elaborate the vague yet seemingly important implication for environmental learning.

Perhaps a more explicit account of environmental learning for the environment is Margo B. Lipman and Laurie Murphy’s (2012) framing of WWOOFing as a type of ‘slow tourism’ in the Australian context. With a mixed method study, Lipman and Murphy found that ‘[s]pending time in rural/natural areas and experiencing rural/farm lifestyles was a (very) important reason to WWOOF for 86% [of those interviewed] and 83% of those surveyed (pre and on-site samples)’ (p.

93). WWOOFing provided the WWOOFers with the opportunities ‘to develop a deeper connection to the land and awareness of how food is produced’ (p. 93), due to the slow tourism principles of travelling less distance and staying longer at one location (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010, p. 90). As Lipman and Murphy pointed out, travelling less also reduces carbon emission for the environment, which is also an important element of environmental learning in relation to tourism.

Relatedly, in outdoor environmental education, ‘slow pedagogy’ was recommended for a phenomenological deconstruction of fast (post)modern life that is heavily mediated with technologies. Pedagogically facilitating the learners’ dwelling and their attachment to a ‘solid’ local place may counter the contemporary ‘liquid’ displacement in the mobile lifeworld (Payne & Wattchow, 2009; see also Bauman, 2000; Nakagawa & Payne, 2011).

Gardens and Other ‘Ecotourism’ Settings

Food learning. Although empirical evidence is relatively scant (Robinson-O’Brian, Story, & Heim, 2009), educational benefits of garden-based nutrition programmes (either at school gardens or community gardens) for primary and secondary school students have been reported, particularly in the United States. Health-related benefits were quantitatively identified as an increase of the learners’ intake of and positive attitudes to fruits and vegetables (Lineberger & Zajicek, 2000; McAleese & Rankin, 2007; Twiss et al., 2003) and nutrition knowledge (Morris & Zidenberg-Cherr, 2002). A South African case study also affirmed the possible benefits of school garden-based programs for children’s physical, mental, and emotional health (Beery, Adatia, Segantin, & Skaer, 2014)

Of particular importance for this study is Rob Bowker and Penni Tearle’s (2007) mixed methods research on an international garden-based education programme for primary and secondary school students called ‘Gardens for Life’ in England, India, and Kenya. It is important because they suggested that what was experientially learnt predominantly in the same international programme differed among the nationally situated contexts (Quay, 2003). That is: the English children tended to learn the aesthetic appreciation of the garden; the Indian children the global food issues; and the Kenyan children practical knowledge of growing food. Thus, Bowker and Tearle recommended the garden-based school programmes to be viewed

globally, with possible international corroborations. This is relevant to WWOOFing, particularly so for this ethnographic study of ten international WWOOFers in Australia who may interpret their organic farming experience differently from one another due to their diverse backgrounds.

Although not limited to learning about food at all, permaculture is an organic farming approach that was suggested to facilitate holistic or ‘universal’ educational experiences through participating in growing food ‘in harmony with the natural ecosystems’ (Rhodes, 2012, p. 427). Conceptually, permaculture (or permanent agriculture) is defined as:

Consciously designed landscapes which mimic the patterns and relationships found in nature, while yielding an abundance of food, fibre and energy for provision of local needs (Holmgren, 2013, p. 3)

In contrast to ordinary agriculture, which is seen as ‘a destructive system’ (Mollison, 2001) in pursuit of money, permaculture is practised by gardeners who consciously design a plant system in their gardens by paying careful attention to: (natural) energy, symbiotic arrangement of animals, plants, and things; local conditions; and necessary human amenities (Mollison, 1979, p. 6). As the above definition suggested, in permaculture, the garden environment is designed as a replication of nature in its ‘original’ state. In observing nature as the great teacher to follow, permaculture may provide participants with engaging opportunities for science and sustainability learning (Lebo & Eames, 2015). While such attentiveness to nature may facilitate an experiential understanding of the local bioregion, or place, the learners may also sense critically their own mis-fitting ecological habitus that has endangered original local nature (Haluzá-DeLay & Berezan, 2013). Importantly, ‘post-modern’ permaculture categorically emphasises the mimesis to nature but how to do so exactly is ‘open to question’ (Holmgren, 2011, p. 22). Thus, while the rhetoric of permaculture emphasises personal behaviour change towards naturally ‘utopian’ and communal ideals, the learning process also values the participants’ agency for their individual decision-making (Stevens, 2009). The selected literature on permaculture indicated a variety of tensions that are potentially relevant for WWOOFers’ nature experience as a postmodern (or, post-critical) tourism phenomenon. They are located between:

mimetic naturalism and socio-ecological criticism; practice and ideal; and individualism and communalism.

Social learning. Emily J. Ozer (2007) reviewed the existing literature on the effects of garden-based education and concluded that it is likely that those programmes facilitate multiple positive outcomes for the learners, particularly their school bonding and community attachment. Other potential benefits include interpersonal skills (Waliczek, Bradely, & Zajicek, 2001), self-efficacy and self-esteem related to academic performance (Hoffman, Thompson, & Cruz, 2004), and leadership quality (Duram & Williams, 2015)

The above educational claims for socio-personal development in the garden-based programmes in the school and college settings may be relevant for WWOOFing. However, perhaps, the more important aspect of social learning in WWOOFing is its politico-economically critical potentials (Ince, 2015). Drawing on public pedagogy (Sandlin, Wright, & Clark, 2011) and social movement learning (Hall, Clover, Crowther, & Scandrett, 2011), Pierre Walter (2013b) reviewed the literature on community gardens and suggested that they could function as counter-hegemonic sites to ‘defend the lifeworld (civil society) against incursions of the system (the state and economy)’ (p. 528). Walter argued for the possibility of community gardens for transformative adult learning. Various educational aspects of ‘counter’ social learning reported in community gardens included: democracy through voluntary association (Glover, Shiness, & Parry, 2005; Levkoe, 2006); community development for a particular cultural identity group (Saldivar-Tanaka & Krasny, 2004); interracial interaction (Shiness, Glover, & Parry, 2004); ‘everyday multiculturalism’ (Shan & Walter, 2015); a collective sense of belonging to community (Corkery, 2004; Pelosi, 2015); and local sustainability in a more wider sense (Holland, 2004).

WWOOFing is a form of volunteering (Miller & Mair, 2015b), thus it qualifies as a form of volunteer tourism (McGehee, 2014). Within the context of volunteer tourism, according to Nancy Grad McGehee (2014, p. 850), transformative learning is a ‘budding area’, because it may improve both the tourists’ experience and sustainable tourism practice (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011). As already reviewed, the significance of transformative learning in WWOOFing was suggested by Deville and Wearing (2013). However, the outcomes of transformative learning in volunteer tourism may differ depending on the participant’s subjective expectations. For

example, some participants are more ‘tourists’ than ‘volunteers’ (Knollenberg, McGehee, Boley, & Clemmons, 2014). This point is important, because it indicates that learning takes place interactively between the participants and ecotourism settings, rather than being automatically ‘downloaded’ into participants (Nakagawa & Payne, 2011). To lessen ‘the broader expansion of market-mediated social justice campaigns’ (Sin, Oaks, & Mostafanezhad, 2015, p. 121) in volunteer tourism, suggestions were made to provide pre-departure debriefing sessions introducing the concepts of global complexity and inequality to participants (Hammersley, 2014), and/or to emphasise the performative and affective aspects of participants (Griffiths, 2015, 2016).

Environmental learning. Michael Bonnett (2003, p. 555) wrote that the fundamental issue in environmental education is to deal with the questions of what nature is and what relations we should have with it. According to Stefan Theimer and Julie Ernst (2012), nature-human relationships in environmental education can be multidimensionally approached as behaviour (e.g. actions), affect (e.g. emotions), and cognition (e.g. knowledge). While these dimensions are experientially translated into each other to form holistic values such as ‘ecological literacy’ (Desmond, Gireshop, & Subramaniam, 2004, p. 23), they are nonetheless useful for categorising the environmental learning claimed in settings similar to WWOOFing.

If the fundamental role of environmental education is to advocate a change for environmental wellbeing (Rennie, 2008), something needs to be ‘done’. Its outcomes need to include or at least trigger some actions and behaviours that physically contribute to the environment. In the context of wildlife tourism (both non-captive and captive) and conservation learning, Roy Ballantyne, Jan Packer, and Lucy A. Sutherland (2011) suggested four levels of visitor responses – sensory impressions, emotional affinity, reflective response, and behavioural response. Behavioural response, which is physical, is ‘one of the desired outcomes’ (p. 775) of ecotourism. To move up ‘the hierarchy’ (p. 777) of the response levels, Ballantyne et al suggested the relevance of experience-based learning, and traced their four response levels onto David A. Kolb’s (2015) ‘experiential learning cycle’, which consists of Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualisation (AC), and Active Experimentation (AE). While the hierarchy of experiential stages remains important in this model, Ballantyne and his colleagues noted the possible significance

of affective emotions for environmental learning experience (See also Rickinson, Lundholm, & Hopwood, 2009).

To add to the experiential learning cycle, Ballantyne and his colleagues (2007) also pointed out the influence of visitors' motivations. In the context of 'free-choice' (Falk, 2005) environmental learning, the participants' motivations may vary significantly and thus need to be incorporated into a consideration of their educative experiences. For example, in an 'elective' tertiary outdoor environmental education unit for Study Abroad students in Australia, the mobile students' motivations did not completely conform with the educators' intentions for place pedagogy, rendering their experiences of the Australian landscape more consumptive and colonialistic (Nakagawa & Payne, 2016). Highlighting the influence of motivations, Ballantyne et al's (2011) visitor experiential learning in ecotourism is still formalised as a linear construct.

Motivation → [Sensory Impression (CE) → Emotional Affinity (RO) → Reflective Response (AC) → Behavioural Response (AE)] → Environmental Change → Motivation... (based on Ballantyne et al., 2011, p. 777)

The linearity of experiential learning, however, is not certain. As Packer (2006) indicated, the correlation between motivation and learning experience is at best complex. Experiential learning may take place when the visitors are not necessarily motivated to 'learn' but primary wanting to have 'fun', although at least for children, 'fun', or relevance to their lifeworlds, may be the educational essence (Kola-Olusanya, 2005). Regardless of the potential significance of 'fun' in experiential environmental learning, Packer's suggestion is important because it reveals possible contingencies in the linearity of the experiential learning cycle. And this may mean that desired behavioural response located at the top of the hierarchy may not be a given in a learning experience. Earlier, Constance L. Russell (1999, p. 123) also questioned the linearity (i.e. Nature experience → Caring → Commitment → Action) of experiential environmental learning in ecotourism.

If physical changes of the environment cannot be teleologically assumed in experiential environmental education in ecotourism settings, different inquiry types other than quantitatively reproducing the grand narrative of the linearity are needed (Kachel & Jennings, 2010). Accordingly, some researchers positioned in/around the

overlapping of environmental education and ecotourism shifted their focuses onto the individual phases of the learning cycle that may each educationally contribute to the environment.

Emotional affinity, or affect, has attracted pedagogical interest in the overlapping fields, and some pedagogical methods have been suggested. For example, Lissy Goralnik, Tracy Dobson, and Paul Nelson (2014) advocated ‘intentional pedagogy’ for their tertiary ‘field philosophy’ unit in a wilderness setting in the United States. The foundation of the pedagogy, according to Goralnik and her colleagues, is an ethic of care for ‘the distant nonhuman cared-fors’, and this is facilitated through a poetic ‘dialogue’ with place (see also Wattchow, 2008, 2012 for an Australian example of ecopoetic practice in outdoor environmental education). Based on their case study of environmental educational programs for primary and secondary students provided by United States Fish & Wildlife Service, Theimer and Ernst (2012) indicated four strategies that may cultivate the learners’ emotional affinity with nature. They are: spending time with adults outdoors; interaction with wildlife; local focus; and the pedagogical integrity of the program. In their experimental garden-based educational project that brought primary school students and elders together in Canada, Jolie Mayer-Smith, Okasana Bartosh, and Linda Peterat (2007) found that intergenerational learning is a powerful pedagogical tool for enhancing the learners’ emotional connection with nature. The learners’ interaction with elder farmers who ‘actually take care of the environment’ (p. 83) was a crucial pedagogical moment, and this is probably relevant in the convivial WWOOF settings as postmodern *oikos* (Payne, 2009).

Reflective response, which requires abstract cognitive processes, is another important component of experiential environmental learning. Ria Ann Dunkley (2016), based on her case study on ‘eco-attraction-based’ environmental education programs (e.g. at a botanical garden) in the United Kingdom, suggested that the program effectively encouraged the participants to question critically their roles in ecological crisis, ‘rather than seeking to establish fixed pro-environmental behaviors’ (p. 7). This non-reproductive yet creative (Leggo & Sameshima, 2014) framing of educational experience may be associated with feminist poststructuralism (Davies, 2013), which challenges the notion of ‘evidence’ in environmental learning (c.f. Rickinson et al., 2009).

Reflective response, on the other hand, may be also focused on the participants' own '(eco)tourist gaze' (Fletcher, 2015) in their environmental experiences. The tourist gaze, according to John Urry (2002), is an embodiment of discourse that is socio-culturally and commercially organised by tourism industries and its professionals. The tourists who have embodied such a gaze seek sign-commodities in ecotourism. Their consumptive attitude may generate a series of economic and socio-cultural problems such as re-colonisation of 'the Other' humans/nonhumans visited.

Semiotic Othering of nature for its consumption is also problematised in environmental education. Phillip Payne (1994) questioned adventure-type outdoor education that potentially colonises, conquers, and consumes nature with masculine modes of movement, often for human sake. Elizabeth Dickinson's (2011) case study on forest conservation program for kindergarten to secondary school students in the United States indicated that the nature/human binary was implicitly reproduced through pedagogical practices, including physical settings such a standing podium to observe nature from a spatially separated and raised point of view. Relatedly, Emily Claire Moskwa and Gary Crilley (2012) analysed botanic gardens in Australia and suggested that the gardens are largely designed with a 'scenic aesthetic' principle in which nature is safely distanced and visually consumed by the visitors.

Semiotic Othering of nature, on the other hand, may be favoured for the purposes of conservation and/or preservation (Nash, 2001), revealing an enigmatic relationship between the Same and the Other(ed). Marcia McKenzie and Andrew Bieler (2016) warned that the tourist gaze that seeks to commodify indigenous land is problematic in environmental education in Canada. Their decolonising effort indicates that the issue is not Othering itself, but how Othering should take place for indigenous land in the particular socio-cultural and political context.

This nuanced Othering for decolonisation purposes is relevant in ecotourism, particularly community-based ecotourism (Walter & Reimer, 2012). Based on their ethnographic study of a tertiary study abroad term-long community-based ecotourism unit in a Brazilian Amazon community, Laura Zanotti and Janet Chernela (2008) reported that empathic interactions with local hosts enabled the students to learn the local environmental interpretations, rather than imposing their own typical Western notions of 'nature' in the Amazon. Zanotti and Chenrela wrote that such experience

enhanced the students' appreciation of the local place, and some students indeed later engaged in environmental activism for the local(e).

Summary

- Three learning types – food learning, social learning, and environmental learning' are relevant for WWOOFing as a form of ecotourism.
- Although each learning type has its particular emphases, they do overlap partially with one another.
- Linearly designed learning outcomes for a particular tourism type may not be experienced due to the participants' diverse subjectivities.
- Particularly, for environmental learning, the notion of 'the Other' is ambivalent, and thus requires a careful educational consideration of the learners' relations to it.

Farm/Rural Tourism Products

WWOOFing usually takes place in farm and rural settings. Although farm tourism and rural tourism may not identify themselves as a form of 'ecotourism', experientially educational elements may nonetheless be implicitly present. At the same time, even when WWOOF is seen as a form of ecotourism, the educational is not always explicitly experienced. This section analytically reviews the relevant literature from farm/rural tourism studies, in order to investigate their 'tourism products' in relation to the potentially 'educational'. As a result, two major types of discursive components associated with the 'alternative' tourist experience in WWOOFing emerge. They are the Romantic rural idyll and humanistic work display.

Definitions

In tourism studies, David B Weaver and David A Fennell's (1997) definition of 'farm tourism' (also sometimes called 'agritourism' or 'agrotourism') as 'rural enterprises which incorporate both a working farm environment and a commercial tourism component' (p. 357) is well accepted (Lane, 2009, p. 356; McGehee, Kim, &

Jennings, 2007, p. 280). Although farm tourism in this definition is a type of rural tourism characterised by a working farm environment, the tourists' active participation in 'authentic' agricultural work is also considered to be an important defining component (Phillip, Hunter, & Blackstock, 2010). The significance of *work* in farm tourism, which is also highly relevant for WWOOFing, is revisited later.

Farm tourism is a branch of rural tourism. What is 'rural tourism'? In Bernard Lane's (2009) simple definition where it is 'tourism that takes place in the countryside' (p. 355), rural tourism is a spatial phenomenon. Rural space, or rurality, is understood by the following factors: '(1) population densities and sizes of settlements; (2) land use and economy, and the dominance of agriculture and forestry; (3) "traditional" social structures and issues of community identity and heritages' (Lane, 1994, p. 10). However, due to the contemporary difficulty of geographically and socio-culturally defining transitional rural space (Neal, 2013), Lane (2009) also proposed rural tourism to be 'an umbrella concept' (p. 356) incorporating various related tourism types, including: ecotourism, nature tourism, farm holidays/agritourism, activity tourism, adventure tourism, sport tourism, equestrian/equine tourism, cultural and heritage tourism, and food and wine tourism.

Consequently, the distinction between 'farm/rural tourism' and 'ecotourism' becomes extremely blurry (c.f. McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). Indeed, Theodosia Anthopoulou and Yorgos Melissourgos (2013) conceptualised rural tourism as 'an alternative form to "traditional" mass tourism' (p. 360) marked by its 'post-Fordist consumption' (p. 365) model where the tourists' desire is directed to non-mainstream tourism experiences. One significant motivation of farm/rural tourists is to experience a 'local' particularity that is contraposed against global homogeneity. Phillip L. Pearce (1990, pp. 344-345) suggested that interaction with local farmers is an important motive for farm/rural tourists visiting New Zealand. In Taiwan, local lifestyle and cuisine are dominant motivations for farm/rural tourists (Chen, Chang, & Cheng, 2010, p. 317). Various benefits of local experience in farm/rural tourism, including educational benefits, such as learning about flora, fauna, rural life, and agriculture, were quantitatively reported in the United States (Dong, Wang, Morais, & Brooks, 2013; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013), South Korea (Park, Lee, & Yoon, 2014), and Spain (Peña, Jamilena, & Molina, 2012). Priorities for motivations and expectations in farm/rural tourism may be influenced by social attributes such as

gender (Xie, Costa, & Morais, 2008), indicating that the tourism products do not appeal equally to everyone universally.

The Romantic ‘Rural Idyll’

On the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence and simple virtue. (Williams, 1983, p. 1)

Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defined among the tiers of shipping and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. (Dickens, 1853/1993, p. 1)

The products of farm/rural tourism are often constructed around the notion of ‘the rural idyll’. Normatively associated with anti-urbanism, the rural idyll idealises escape from the urban everyday. While the rural idyll is increasingly homogenised via the globally commercial mediation, it is also commodified nationally and regionally, referring to the specific ‘local’ histories and geographies (which are nonetheless globally advertised and consumed).

‘One of the most powerful and enduring idea about the rural is that of the “rural idyll”’ (Woods, 2011, p. 21). According to Michael Woods, the rural idyll is made of elements such as anti-urbanism, agrarianism, and a related preference for nature. It became particularly popular in the late nineteenth century Europe and North America after their experiences of intensified modern industrialism. The above quote from Charles Dickens’s *Bleak House* indicates that the industrialised urban space had environmentally deteriorated by the mid-nineteenth century in England. Prior to that, the counter-aesthetics of ‘Romantic pastoral’ against urban industrialism was already emerging in the eighteenth century England (Garrard, 2005, p. 40). As Alain De Botton (2003) wrote, the mid-eighteenth century England for the first time saw a great number of (rich) urban people travelling to the country side ‘to restore health to their bodies and, more importantly, harmony to their souls’ (p. 132). The rural became ‘a necessary antidote to the evils of the city’ (p. 138).

The rural idyll, with a Romantic notion of ‘escape from the city’ and nostalgia for the traditional ways of life, constructs various multi-sensorial tourism products (Urry, 2002, pp. 152-156) for farm/rural tourism today. They include, for example: rural landscapes (Daugstad, 2008 in Norway; Karlsdóttir, 2013 in Iceland; Kastenholz

& Lima, 2013 in Central Portugal; Peréz, 2002 in Spain; Tyrväinen, Silvennoinen, Nousiainen, & Tahvanainen, 2001 in Finland); dated agricultural buildings (Bocz, Pinzke, & Nilsson, 2012 in Sweden); communal heritages (Hodges, 2011 in France); second holiday home (Vepsäläinen & Pitkänen, 2010 in Finland); health and wellness (Rodrigues, Kastenholz, & Rodrigues, 2010 in Portugal); traditional food (Sims, 2009 in the UK); metrosexually appealing hybrid ‘cosmopolitan’ country (Gorman-Murray, Waitt, & Gibson, 2012 in Australia); and countryside walk and leisurely excursions (Edensor, 2000 in the UK; Oppermann, 1995 in Germany).

How the rural idyll is commodified in farm/rural tourism reveals a geography of the rural in local-global tensions. Woods (2011) wrote that there are ‘in practice many different rural idylls, with different cultural and moral emphases’ (p. 22), meaning that what ‘the rural idyll’ signifies differs depending on the geographical and historical context. For example, by analysing three films on Ned Kelly (an Australian bushranger/outlaw in the nineteenth century still popularised as a national hero), Sue Beeton (2004) suggested that the Australian rural idyll represented in those films reflect the environmentally unique value of the semi-arid Australian bush rather than of simply imported greener British or North American rural idylls. The Australian bush landscape and its hyper-masculine characters such as shearers and swaggers were normatively ‘invented’ (White, 1981) to represent a major discourse of Australian national identity (Ward, 1958; Hirst, 1992). Other than in films, the bush discourse is materialised through various media, including paintings (from the Heidelberg School to the World War I paintings of lighthorsemen and diggers – see Sayers, 2001) and home gardens (‘the bush garden’ with native plants became popular in Australia in the 1960s and 1970s – see Caldicott, 1997; Crittenden, 2004).

While the nationally normalised rural idyll was/is a major current of Australian identities, such locality may not necessarily follow the logic of global tourism. As an attractive commodity for the global tourism market, the local is usually smoothed out and standardised (but not completely – as in ‘same same but different’) so that it can appeal to a larger pool of non-local tourists (Craik, 1997). Indeed, the local in the rural idyll may attract various stakeholders, and thus may be purposefully interpreted, performed, and consumed with various contradictions (Frantál & Kunc, 2011; Paniagua, 2012). ‘Inauthenticity’ is condoned and even preferred occasionally (Shepherd, 2003). Shu-Chun Lucy Huang (2013) reported that Taiwanese ‘post-

tourists' (Feifer, 1985; Urry, 2002) tend to favour neatly simulated tourism landscapes to authentically disorganised messy agricultural landscapes in rural areas.

The opposite cases where the expected rural clichés are dramatically and excessively 'misrepresented' are equally possible (Belsky, 1999). In Tamworth, nationally known as the 'country music capital' of Australia, the community was often represented in tourism discourse to be 'predominantly masculine, white, working class and nationalist' in order to match with the typical image of country music (Gibson & Davidson, 2004, p. 387). In the South-eastern United States, African Americans were under-employed in planning and implementation of nature-based and rural heritage tourism. This is due to the colonially unjust history where the access to American Romantic imaginaries was often monopolised by the white population (Gallardo & Stein, 2007). In Norway, it was reported that farmers in farm tourism intentionally performed their expected 'farmer identities' in order to enhance their tourism products such as food, stories, and traditional gender roles (Brandth & Haugen, 2010, 2011). The local does not have to (or perhaps cannot) be authentic for the mass (re)production of the rural idyll as tourism products in farm/rural tourism. As long as they are different enough and same enough within the globalising system of consumption, they function as tourism products. As Umberto Eco (1998) wrote, 'once the fetishistic desire for the original is forgotten, these copies are perfect' (p. 39) in tourism.

In globalising farm/rural tourism where the rural idyll is increasingly becoming a signifier without a signified and its meaning is semiotically generated as a subtle difference from 'the Other' signifier (i.e. the urban), the rural idyll with the European and/or North American Romantic tradition is different enough to reproduce a variation of desirable tourism products for the global market (Barsham & Hitchcock, 2013). This is clearly represented in the following 'generic' description of the rural idyll as tourism commodities.

Visual images, besides architecture, mainly relate to the green landscape and fields, stones, mountains and the river, revealing a particular aesthetic pleasure marking the experience and mirroring the "rural idyll" that strongly appear in the tourists' affective, cognitive and sensorial appraisals of the village. (Kastenholz & Lima, 2013, p. 200)

It is impossible to tell that the above tourism description of the rural idyll is in Central Portugal. It could be anywhere. Through globalising media like television (Mordue, 2009), the rural idyll converges ‘around a thoroughly commodified and even trivialised [form] which disseminates universal nostalgic images... [and] these are precisely the images that are now being consumed by the public’ (Bunce, 2003, p. 24). For the global tourism consumption of the rural idyll, the local difference, say for example, between the British and Australian traditions, is less important than the semiotic difference between the urban and the rural.

The Humanistic ‘Work Display’

Another notion that may be used to justify the significance of rural/farm tourism as a type of ‘alternative’ tourism is ‘work’. As introduced earlier, active participation in agricultural work is an important tourism product particularly in farm tourism (Phillip, Hunter, & Blackstock, 2010). Through their work participation, the tourists help to produce agricultural products, as well as consume work as part of the tourism product. *Production*, economic practice allegedly opposite to consumption in traditional Marxism (c.f. Narotzky, 1997), may provide a *meaningful* experience that is ‘alternative’ to mainstream tourism based on the mass consumption model. Meaningful work and production are highly relevant for WWOOFing where its participants are labelled as ‘Willing Workers On Organic Farms’. In this section, the alleged significance of work and production in farm tourism is analysed based on Dean MacCannell’s (1999) *The Tourist*, an unmissable classic in (post)modern tourism studies.

MacCannell considered *The Tourist* as more than a study of tourists. Instead, his true purpose was to conduct an ‘ethnography of modernity’ (p. 2). MacCannell viewed the tourist as the modern subject par excellence, since tourism is a universal experience of the modern subject. Or, the postmodern subject, as MacCannell later reflected on his writing. ‘Perhaps “the tourist” was really an early postmodern figure, alienated but seeking fulfilment in his own alienation – nomadic, placeless, a kind of subjectivity without spirit, a “dead subject”’ (p. xvi). As MacCannell noted, a major cause of ‘alienation’ is due to the modern spatiality of ‘placelessness’ that has been problematised in humanistic phenomenological geography (Relph, 1976). In this respect, the rural idyll in tourism is a useful trope for ‘fluid’ and mobile (and wealthy)

postmodern tourists to recover their humanity in a 'solid' place, if temporarily (Bauman, 1997, 2000).

For MacCannell, another crucial cause of 'alienation' of the (post)modern subject is his/her 'abstract labour'. According to Karl Marx (1999), production through labour is a fundamental existential condition of humans through which they realise their potential being. However, in the capitalistic economy where its production process is rationally divided and fragmented in pursuit of productive efficiency, an individual works but he/she rarely sees his/her end product. Marx called this separation of labour and product in modern capitalism 'alienation', and this was a huge existential problem for Marx as a humanist (Fromm, 1961). If the postmodern subject is alienated from meaningful work (or 'concrete labour') and thus from his/her 'true' human identity, meaningful work pervasively becomes an object of leisure outside abstracted labour, thus a tourism product. MacCannell (1999, p. 36) called this phenomenon 'work display' where a 'museamisation' of work takes place in the Other space (i.e. exotic locations) and/or in the Other time (i.e. locations devoted to the past, such as museums).

Through a work display, whether actively participating or just observing, tourists may experience an 'authentic' mode of being human. As a 'postmodern' scholar, however, MacCannell embraced the complexity of authenticity in tourism. According to MacCannell, authenticity (not limited to work display) in tourism locations is 'staged'. A postmodern reading of *The Tourist* reveals the double meaning of 'staged authenticity', which is a, if not the, key concept of the book.

One meaning of 'staged' refers to 'multiple levels' of authenticity. MacCannell theorised his staged authenticity based on Erving Goffman's (1959) division of social space into 'front and back regions'. The front region is the public space where people play their social roles, whereas the back region is the private space where the authentic identities of those people are concealed and preserved. Building on the modernist dualism of front and back, MacCannell (1999, pp. 101-102) proposed a postmodern continuum of six stages. They are, from the back to the front: (1) Goffman's pure front region; (2) the decorated front region; (3) the simulated front region; (4) the open back region; (5) the altered back region; and (6) Goffman's pure back region.

While MacCannell's move from the dualism to the continuum indicates his postmodern orientation, the other meaning of 'staged' referring to 'acting out' does so

even more clearly. In tourism, it is not likely that the hosts willingly reveal their most private lives. Instead, what tourists almost always experience is 'a staged back, a kind of living museum' (MacCannell, 1999, p. 99). The tourists do know that what they are experiencing is an inauthentic 'pseudo-event' (Boorstin, 1992) but they are ready to 'laugh off' (MacCannell, 1999, p. 104) touristic inauthenticity as an essential part of their tourism experiences. Here, MacCannell's humanistic tourists approximate, if unwillingly, with 'post-tourists' with a self-reflexive 'second gaze' (MacCannell, 2011, p. 203).

Post-authenticity implied by MacCannell reveals two crucial aspects of work display. First, authenticity in work display (or displayed work) is staged and performed (Edensor, 2009) as well as potentially representing the pre-alienated ways of being human (if such things still do exist). It is a matter of a game as well as a matter of truth (Lyotard, 1984). Tourists may enjoy how the work is (inauthentically) displayed for their participation as well as what the work may display. Second, from a performative perspective, the represented 'what' in 'place' is also interactively and playfully negotiated between tourists and hosts (Sheller & Urry, 2004). As already reviewed, for example, the Norwegian farmers performed their 'identities' to accommodate the tourists' expectations (Brandth & Haugen, 2011).

MacCannell's work display on one hand alludes to a humanistic quality of tourism. On the other hand, with a postmodern emphasis, it reveals the pervasive nature of tourism where even humanistically sacred production becomes a tourism product to be consumed. His insight strongly indicates that production is not critically outside the semiotic system of tourism, but instead is (already) a sign within the system that organises and distributes its meaning as a 'difference'. Production/leisure is 'not the antithesis of daily life but the continuation of it in a dramatized or spectacular form' (Rojek, 1993, p. 212). Hence, probably, there is no escape from alienation in the real sense. Furthermore, even more cynically, when tourists desire leisurely production in a work display, it may be the case that they are in fact working for the tourism system by consuming its products and reproducing its power. The tourism system 'needs' tourists to do their consumption/labour (Baudrillard, 1998, p. 80).

Summary

- An analytical review of farm/rural tourism products pointed to two major discursive components that may be related to the ‘educational’ in WWOOFing as a form of ‘alternative’ tourism. They are the Romantic rural idyll and work display, which are critically and humanistically constructed.
- While the two components aspire to be of counter value to dystopic modern urban living conditions, it is likely that such a quality cannot be naively assumed to exist outside of the increasingly globalising neoliberal tourism system.
- This hyper-critically problematises any insufficiently critical notion of ‘alterative’ tourist experiences, including WWOOFing.

Nature in WWOOFing

Critically, humanistically and ‘alternatively’ conceptualised/constructed social learning and farm/rural tourism products curiously converge around the ideal of nature as a site of resistance against the hegemonic neoliberal mediation of the lifeworld. There, the value of nature for human learners and tourists is found in its alleged outsidership, which is supposed to be less affected by everyday social issues. Such a mode of practice in nature is largely anthropocentric. Although it is possible that tourists may be involved in some ‘voluntary’ projects for nature in tourism, it is unrealistic to deny that the primary instrumental value of nature *for humans* is to escape from their weary urban lives.

On the other hand, less anthropocentrically conceptualised environmental learning implies potential *non-alternative* nature-human relations *for nature* in WWOOFing and in other educational ecotourism settings. By reviewing more abstract and theoretical literature, this section briefly summarises two modalities of nature that have been indicated in the previous sections. They are knowing nature as ‘the Other’, and unknowing ‘it’ (something unnameable). While the former is prominent in the academic (and popular) discourse of WWOOFing, my goal here is to suggest that the latter is also important. By any means, this is not a comprehensive review of what nature is, which is far beyond the scope of this chapter (and thesis).

Knowing Nature As ‘the Other’

Nevertheless, we have to start by asking, what is ‘nature’? Noel Castree (2005, p. 8) responded to this question with a ‘common’ approach simply defining nature as ‘non-human world’. In spite of its simplicity, Castree cleverly revealed two modalities of nature in his definition. One is nature as the non-human world that we can know as the opposite of us. The other is nature as the world that exists beyond the limit of human knowing. The former is within our epistemology (thus, non-human world in the weak sense); whereas the latter (probably) is somewhere transcending our epistemology (thus, non-human world in the strong sense). Knowing nature as ‘the Other’ relates to the former interpretation. ‘The Other’ is semiotic and can be known to us, whereas the absolute Other, the latter, can be only speculated. For clarity, a scare quote is used to signify the non-human world in the weak sense.

Summarising various discourses of nature in the West, Kate Soper (1995) pointed out that the opposition between ‘the natural and the human has been axiomatic to the Western thought’ (p. 37). The nuances of the opposition changed over the course of the history, and important moments include Aristotle, medieval Christian theology, the Enlightenment, and Romanticism (Braun, 2009, pp. 21-22). In modernity, the Enlightened humans with technological advancement began systematically objectifying and subjugating nature, causing its agentic ‘death’ (Merchant, 1989). Nature was turned into a set of resources that was to be rationally managed with a combination of exploitation and conservation (Adams & Mulligan, 2003, p. 5). Romanticism re-emphasised the humanising value of rural nature and critically used it to problematise industrial urbanism. The ‘alternative’ framing of WWOOFing via social learning and tourism products is Romantically ‘ecotopian’ (Kosnik, 2013).

The modernist management of nature fuelled by capitalism sometimes (often?) went wrong, revealing its ‘irrational’ practices (Castree, 1997). This could mean either that the modernist management of nature is fundamentally irrational (thus we must stop it at once), or the modern management of nature is not rational enough (thus we must manage it more rationally). This means that human management of nature may not mean ‘bad’ in itself. An ultra-rational hyper-separationist mixture of preservation and utilisation of nature may better serve nature’s rights (Nash, 2001). In so-called ‘left accelerationism’, it is advocated that ‘maximum mastery over society

and its environment' based on a 'post-capitalist planning' (Williams & Srnicek, 2014, p. 356) is needed to overcome an ecologically irrational phase of the human history. To achieve the maximum mastery, nature needs to be critically separated so that humans can know it and work on it rationally and objectively.

Critical separation of nature is particularly relevant in WWOOFing in relation to its interpreted educational claims (particularly social learning) and farm/rural tourism products. To achieve those effects, nature in WWOOFing is 'Othered' to be an 'alternative' space-time-body-relation from the everyday 'Same'. It is this 'alternative' environment in which WWOOFers can self-critically reflect on their everyday lives, which are heavily mediated by neoliberal individualism and consumerism. Although such an 'alternative' framing of nature in WWOOFing and ecotourism is inevitably anthropocentric, it can also be materially good for nature too, via a range of naturally conserving practices and 'voluntary' projects (Brightsmith, Stronza, & Holle, 2008).

Preferred outcomes of critical separation of nature, and knowing it as 'the Other', are conceptually and empirically possible. Thus, I do not ideologically reject probable 'alternative' tourist experiences in WWOOFing at all. On the contrary, I believe it is a crucial element for the WWOOFers' educative nature experience. My critique, however, is that (1) epistemological separation of nature may coincide with non-preferred consequences for nature; and that (2) environmental learning may benefit from Other epistemological modes as well. My aim here is not to destroy the 'alternative' in WWOOFing, but to deconstruct and destabilise it, in order to incorporate other nature-human relations that are also potentially beneficial, for all of us living in the world.

Unknowing 'It'

For social learning and farm/rural tourism products, critically separated nature known as 'the Other' allegedly provides educationally transformative and 'alternative' tourist experiences. However, for environmental learning (particularly for its affective aspect), separating nature may not be pedagogically effective for urban dwellers for whom 'there is nothing to care about' in the city (Haluza-Delay, 2001). Thus, the reviewed garden-based and eco-attraction-based environmental education programmes in (semi-)urban settings aimed to facilitate the learners' affective

interconnectedness with nature and their appreciation of it (Dunkely, 2016; Mayer-Smith et al., 2007). They indicate another sociological and/or educational aspect of nature in WWOOFing that is proximal rather than separated, and lived with(in) rather than known about (Bauman, 1993). As nature becomes interconnected with and proximate to us, its semiotic identity (which is simulated as a difference from us) is blurred.

Although WWOOFing usually takes place in rural settings (though sometimes in urban settings, such as in a backyard garden), urban efforts to re-introduce and integrate nature in cultural geography (e.g. Zoöpolis in Wolch, 1998), urban design and planning (e.g. biophilic city in Beatley, 2011), and education (e.g. socio-ecological urban ‘place’ education in Cameron, 2003, 2011) are ethically and aesthetically indicative of a nature that is to be not simulated and then separated as ‘the Other’. Since the majority of serious environmental risks originate locally but spread globally (Beck, 2009), an environmental ethic to work with(in) nature ‘here’ is required. Such ‘here’ is a ‘common middle ground’ (Cronon, 1996, p. 89) that is not either nature or culture, but both. A common middle ground is spatially neutral, and thus it can be in the urban, rural, or wild. It is also semiotically meaningless, and thus it cannot be an ‘alternative’ place (Nakagawa & Payne, 2015).

Nature as ‘the Other’ is also politically problematic. Val Plumwood (2003) strongly criticised the modernist ‘hyper-separation’ of nature where nature is ultimately conceptualised as a means for humans:

In anthropocentric culture, nature’s agency and independence are denied, subsumed in, or remade to coincide with human interests, which are thought to be the source of all value in the world... Since the non-human sphere is thought to have no agency of its own and to be empty of purpose, it is thought appropriate that the human colonizer impose his own purposes. Human-centred ethics views nature as possessing meaning and value only when it is made to serve the human/colonizer as a means to his or her ends. (p. 59)

As Plumwood indicated, hyper-separation does not separate symmetrically. There is always a centre (i.e. human) from which the two are separated. And in that separation, it is usually the case that the separator (the half that includes that centre – i.e. human) is privileged against the separated (the half that does not include the centre – i.e. non-human). Hyper-separation is structurally asymmetrical and it is used

to reproduce the structured violence (e.g. the sane/the mad in Foucault, 1988; the Occident/the Orient in Said, 2003). Jean Baudrillard (1993) similarly criticised the semiotic 'simulation' where 'the symbolic' (the original and unnameable) is cut into a binary set of signs, 'the real' (belonging to the separator) and 'the imaginary' (belonging to the separated). The uncritical use of these 'simulacra' not only alienate us from the richness of the original symbolic but also reproduces the power of the simulating system for 'the real' (see Chapter 7).

The asymmetrical hyper-separation of nature as 'the Other' problematises the 'alternative' tourist experience that WWOOFing allegedly offers as its derivative, because it may reproduce the power of the tourism system exploitive of nature. As Michel Foucault (1984) wrote about his hyper-activism, 'everything is dangerous' (p. 343) politically, and that 'everything' definitely includes the 'alternative'. As soon as nature in WWOOFing is normalised to be an 'alternative' place, it loses its radicalness and becomes a tourism commodity (Darier, 1999). It becomes part of the system. In post-industrial societies, what makes a commodity is a semiotic difference (or 'sign exchange value'), rather than what the commodity represents (or, 'use value') (Baudrillard, 1981). The 'alternative', as the opposite of the 'non-alternative', is nothing but a semiotic difference (that is, they are really the same).

A modality of nature indicated in environmental learning may be of help here to lessen systematising/systematised anthropocentrism in WWOOFing and similar ecotourism phenomena. With a feminist poststructuralist framework, Bronwyn Davies (2013) explained that an important purpose of environmental education is to unknow what we know as nature. Reproducing what we already know about nature and pursuing evidence-based outcomes only reproduces the power that controls nature and its value. Instead, environmental education is 'about openness to multiple ways of being, to evolving, of being engaged in a process of differentiation that is never complete' (p. 482).

Phillip Payne (2013) called such an ecologically generative process 'ecobecoming' where nature and the learner interactively co-constitute each other in their moving bodies affecting and affected by the environment and its design (see also Payne, 2014). In affective embodiment, nature ontologically exceeds human linguistic knowing (Payne, 2005). Constance Russell (2005) suggested that such excess of nature may be performatively evoked with a multivocally poetic representation so that the voices of nature may be audible. Embodied multivocality, combined, may be a

valuable tool for a poststructural unknowing of semiotically simulated nature. Similarly, in the context of the sociology of nature, Phil Macnaghten and John Urry (2001) suggested that ‘natures’ are multiplied via contingently coded and coding bodies (see Edensor, 2000 for how country walking bodies are both socially bodied and sensorially bodying).

A limitation of these approaches that relate to the unknowing of nature is that a re-construction of nature will be experientially experimental, meaning that the result may turn out bad for both nature and human. This is because unknowing nature requires our epistemological confession that there is something beyond our knowing, and thus our control. Unknowing nature ontologically transcends (c.f. epistemologically separate) nature as the absolute Other (c.f. ‘the Other’). This is also somewhat contradictory, because we are talking about something we cannot know. Katherine N Hayles’s (1995) named the unmediated entity ‘flux’ and suggested that we humans nonetheless try to interact with it within our epistemological limitation. In doing so, however, at one point (Hayles called it ‘casp’), we claim that we know part of the ‘flux’ in order to make sense the world we are living in.²

Recently, a broadly categorised ‘speculative realism’ has revitalised a similar enigmatic ontology and epistemology of the transcendental. For example, Timothy Morton’s (2013) ‘hyperobject’ (an essential object that transcends our spatio-temporal knowing) and ‘the Rift’ (a meaningful phenomenal appearance of a hyperobject) indicate the gap between the gigantic scale of objective ontology and lame human epistemology. Similarly, Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos (2015) suggested the duality of the real ontological ‘continuum’ and the fictional epistemological ‘ruptures’ from it, and wrote:

...the responsibility in the era of the anthropocene is one of rupture: rupturing the present in order to read it as nonhuman future; rupturing centrality while retaining omnipresence; rupturing ourselves in observer and observed, in order to read our traces... We have reached the continuous rupturing of the continuum. (p. 41)

² Perhaps, this ‘contradiction’ is not ontological but really an epistemological dualism between the to-be-known and the to-be-unknown. Tim Newton (2007) wrote that the difference between society and nature lies in our ‘perception’ of their time. Whereas social time is relatively short-spanned, so that in there we can recognise changes, natural time is relatively long-spanned, where it is difficult to observe changes as a human and thus is perceived as static.

The ontological-epistemological gap identified by Hayles, Morton, and Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos indicates the need of our *double movement for nature*. On one hand, modestly recognising the ‘continuum’ of nature-human, and thus unknowing nature, is an important ethical gesture. On the other hand, since the human impact on nature is greater than ever before in the Anthropocene, we need to re-consider our ‘rupturing’ and knowing of nature with reflexive responsibility. Simultaneously knowing and unknowing nature for nature indicate the need of a post-critical methodological framing of WWOOFer’s nature experience (see Chapter 3).

Summary

- While social learning and farm/rural tourism point to nature that is critically, humanistically, and ‘alternatively’ known as ‘the Other’, environmental learning (particularly with affective and/or feminist poststructuralist emphases) may require unknowing such nature.
- Each of the two modalities of nature has its potential limitations. The former is associated with anthropocentrism, while the latter is experientially experimental.
- Therefore, rather than either/or, both modalities of nature are relevant (and preferred) for WWOOFers’ nature experience from a post-critical environmental educational perspective.

Implications for this Study

This chapter, by reviewing a wide range of selective yet relevant literature, conceptualised, analysed, and critiqued the notion of WWOOFers’ nature experience. At the most abstract level, it was indicated that WWOOFers’ nature experience is potentially a simultaneous double movement of knowing and unknowing nature, particularly when environmental learning is at stake. Knowing nature is predominantly constructed with the discourse of the ‘alternative’ tourist experience, with its derivatives such as social learning (particularly transformative learning) and tourism products of the rural idyll and work display. On the other hand, unknowing nature is derived from less anthropocentric and less linear environmental learning,

which is open to the affective environment. They together importantly suggest that an understanding and theorising of WWOOFers' nature experience requires broader yet systematic approaches, revealing various implications for the following chapters.

- To understand and theorise WWOOFers' nature experience will also require a series of *methodological and methodical double movements*. Thus, in Chapter 3, my methodology for this study is post-critically (Hart, 2005) framed and elaborated.
- To understand WWOOFers' nature experience will require partially unknowing its alleged 'alternative' nature, which is discursively constructed. WWOOFers' nature experience is not only semiotic but also bodily interactive, and thus we cannot fully access epistemologically. This indicates a needed post-critical effort to attend not only to textualism but also to *embodiment* (Payne, 2005) in order to represent WWOOFers' experience of nature (RQ1) empirically (James, 2006). Thus, in Chapter 4, my 'impressionist tales' (Van Maanen, 2011) will try to capture the ten international WWOOFers' experiences ethnographically by paying attention to their bodily and sensory movements in interacting with nonhuman beings and things (Pink, 2009).
- To understand the nature of the WWOOFers' experience (RQ2) more broadly, an empirically inductive approach is needed. A phenomenological approach to *bracket* the 'alternative' will be beneficial for a less researcher-centred understanding of/for the researched and their subjectivities. Thus, in Chapter 5, RQ2 is interpreted with a hermeneutic phenomenological thematic analysis method (van Manen, 1990).
- To unknow the discourse of the 'alternative' partly, an analysis of socio-ecological *practice* (i.e. what is *done*, as well as said) in the WWOOFers' nature experience will be beneficial. Such practice, including learning, materially takes place in relation to the physical and social environments. Thus, in the first part of Chapter 6, the ecopedagogical relations between RQ1 and RQ2 (RQ3) are socio-ecologically analysed with the notion of 'modes of practice' (James, 2006) and 'environmental design' (Huebner, 1987; Payne, 2014).

- Although it is likely that the WWOOFers' nature experience is critically and semiotically constructed with the discourse of the 'alternative' against mainstream tourism and associated consumerism, it is also likely that 'real' WWOOFing is constituted of more than the 'alternative'. Thus, in the second part of Chapter 6, the possible *junctions and disjunctions* between the discursive construct and the ethnographic, phenomenological and practical 'real' are relationally (RQ3) analysed with 'modes of integration' (James, 2006).
- Finally, if both knowing and unknowing nature are crucial for the WWOOFers' nature experience from a less anthropocentric environmental education point of view, then it is also applicable to my own post-critical research practice. Thus, in Chapter 7, while partially *theorising* WWOOFers' nature experience is the priority, a *detheorising* is also attempted with Jean Baudrillard's (1993) theory of 'simulation' for a less anthropocentric intellectual ecology of WWOOFing.

Chapter 3 Post-Critical Methodological Double Movements

Framing

There are... real places... something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. (Foucault, 1986, p. 24)

To think with theory is not only useful, but essential, for without theory we have no way to think otherwise. (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013, p. 269).

What *is* WWOOFers' nature experience? This general research problem is both important and problematic, particularly the word 'is'. It is important, because without defining what something is by drawing semiotic territorial lines against other phenomena, it is unlikely that we can understand or even talk about the phenomenon. On the other hand, it is also problematic, particularly from a poststructuralist perspective, because defining may reduce the richness of the phenomenon by excluding Other elements that may also be relevant and meaningful, not only for WWOOFers but also for nature in this context. A less researcher-centric and less anthropocentric approach to a somewhat de-centred understanding of WWOOFers' nature experience requires *both knowing and unknowing* (of what has been said).

Methodologically, the challenge for empirical purposes is how such a *double movement* may be framed and practised in social research. This chapter engages with this contextualised methodological question from an ecologically aware post-critical standpoint (Hart, 2005). For brevity, given the above concern expressed about defining the 'is' of some thing or some phenomenon (such as WWOOFing and WWOOFers' nature experience), a post-critical standpoint may be loosely conceptualised as an embodied and emplaced position from which a phenomenon might be approached with an appreciation of its ontological and epistemological complexity (and even contradiction), in favour of the logic of 'as well as' or 'both/and', rather than of 'either/or'.

My post-critical standpoint is important for the purpose of deconstructing and destabilising the so-called 'alternative' character of WWOOFing and its experience (MacIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). The literature review in the previous chapter, and

also my own WWOOF (nature) experience with my research participants, indicated that the ‘alternative’ is indeed significant in ideally representing what WWOOFing *should be*, but not necessarily what it exactly *is*. There is much more to WWOOFing. As an embodied and emplaced ethnographic researcher in the field working together with the various participants and numerous nonhuman beings in different body~time~space relations (Payne, 2014), I felt, and feel, a strong moral obligation to extend the scope of my research representation beyond the rhetorical claim of the ‘alternative’. Following Michel Foucault’s (1986) notion of ‘heterotopia’ signalled in the opening quote, I believe that more radical framings of WWOOFing and WWOOFers’ nature experiences in their ‘counter-sites’ are possible through investigating and attempting to represent their processual becoming (Springer, 2012), as I do in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, rather than ‘critically’ reducing them to their potentially ‘alternatively’ Othered being.

I need to re-emphasise here, however, that the ‘alternative’ is needed as theory, or a theoretical representation, through which we can conceptualise the phenomenon of WWOOFing. As the other opening quote of Alicia Youngblood Jackson and Lisa A. Mazzei (2013) advocated, it is probably true that we need some form of conceptual and theoretical representation in order to think.

This representational dilemma informs the crucial basis of my post-critical standpoint for methodological deliberation. Epistemologically, in order to talk about, to think about, and to understand the phenomenon of WWOOFers’ nature experience, we need generalised theory *as well as* a particularised context. The ‘general’ is methodologically limited and problematised in ‘post’ research, yet it is admittedly unavoidable from a post-critical standpoint. If theory is crucial anyway, why not theorise it on my own as a way of contributing to knowledge generation, no matter how limited the general is in such a theorising? Thus, my post-critical methodology aims at both contextualising and theorising the processual phenomenon of WWOOFers’ nature experience. Relatedly, ontologically, the phenomenon then is partially revealed with both horizontal contextual breadth and vertical theoretical depth. A post-critical researcher moves across and up and down within the three-dimensional intellectual space(s). To epistemologically and methodologically orient oneself in such a complex and confusing space, Paul James’s (2006) ‘constitutive abstraction (thesis)’ employed in this study is useful.

Following the need for articulating a research congruence principle recommended in environmental education research (Reid & Payne, 2013), my post-critical methodology is thematically structured around the research problem (RP) and disaggregated research questions of: (RQ1) what is the WWOOFers' *experience of nature?*; (RQ2) what is the *nature of their experience?*; and (RQ3) what are the ecopedagogical *relations* between RQ1 and RQ2? (Toadvine, 2009). The methodological structure is framed with a series of double movements that are interpreted through various constitutive levels of methodological and methodical abstraction. This chapter is divided into two main sections in order to organise those levels clearly.

In the first section, 'Post-critical Research Methodology', my theoretical framework from a post-critical standpoint is outlined with and through James's theory of constitutive abstraction. Constitutive abstraction is a social theory consistent with my disciplinary aspiration for a sociological study of WWOOFing (in relation to the fields of experiential environmental education and ecotourism, as their discourses were selectively reviewed and analysed in the previous chapter). Following that, the post-critical research approach of combining phenomenological and ethnographic methods that intersectionally attends to the demands of intellectual reflexivity and practical embodiment of the research process is explained. This section also mentions the issues of legitimisation and the methodological strengths and limitations associated with the development of my research methodology.

The second section about basic research methods and procedures is more practical than theoretical. There, the methodical aspects of data collection, treatment, interpretation, and representation, and related ethical issues are explained to satisfy the need for transparency of my research practice. At the end of this chapter, how I maintained a series of post-critical double movements across various levels of methodological/methodical abstraction is summarised.

A forewarning. Due to the methodological complexity of this study as outlined above – but in relation to the concerns expressed about the framing, conceptualisation, contextualisation, representation, and legitimisation of what *is* 'accessed' and then 'found' interpretively in this study of WWOOFers' nature experience – only the broader or skeletal methodological and methodical procedures are described in this chapter by referring to James's (meta-)methodology of constitutive abstraction. Early in each of the following findings chapters (Chapters 4-7) dedicated to the

disaggregated RQs of the broader RP of WWOOFers' nature experience, there will be additional specific methodological and theoretical explanations that 'best' fit the descriptive, interpretive, analytical, and theoretical work undertaken. In the final Chapter 8, which draws together the four findings chapter, I will somewhat autoethnographically but reflexively re-engage with the processes of my methodological deliberation.

Post-Critical Research Methodology: Theory, Approach, and Legitimation

Theoretical Framework (1): Postmodern Critical (or Post-Critical) Standpoint

My theoretical and methodological position for this inquiry into WWOOFers' nature experience is described as a 'postmodern critical standpoint' (or a 'post-critical standpoint' to shorten it). From that standpoint, I understand that WWOOFing is constituted discursively and practically as both 'alternative' and 'non-alternative' versions of ecotourism. By implication, as reviewed in the previous chapter, WWOOFing may provide opportunities for informal experiential environmental education. But the idealised (and ideological) notion of the 'alternative' cannot solely explain the complexity of WWOOFing. Such an idealised notion of WWOOFing is probably crucial for us to understand what WWOOFing would and should be as a generalised ecotourism phenomenon, but that does not represent (at least completely) its reality.

My postmodern critical standpoint, in relation to a more ecological positioning of the researcher in environmental education research (Hart, 2005), is shaped with Caren Kaplan's *Questions of Travel* (1996). In this work, which takes a feminist poststructuralist perspective, Kaplan critiqued the humanistic notion of the 'genuine traveller' of the nineteenth-century 'golden age', who had been idealised in Paul Fussell's *Abroad* (1980). According to Kaplan, genuine travellers may have been Enlightened and adventurous, but they were also imperialist/colonialist, elitist, sexist, and consumptively exploiting the prevalent 'political and economic asymmetries' (Kaplan, 1996, p. 62) of the time (see also Craik, 1997; Shepherd, 2003). Based on this historical insight, Kaplan argued that there was no such a thing as a clear-cut divide between a modern traveller and a postmodern tourist. A modern traveller was constituted with both categorical archetypes of the 'traveller' and the 'tourist'. So is a

postmodern tourist. Based on this ontological complexity of the constitution of the social subject already recognisable in the nineteenth-century, Kaplan set her intellectual task in her book as ‘querying the construction and proliferation of modernisms from a *postmodern critical standpoint*’ [my emphasis] (p. 3), by paying attention to geographical and historical ‘continuities as well as discontinuities’ (p. 11).

For the major theoretical framework for this thesis, I apply Kaplan’s post-critical standpoint to understand a social phenomenon with the logic of ‘as well as’ or ‘both/and’, rather than of dividing the categories into ‘either/or’ (e.g. the ‘traveller’ and the ‘tourist’ are completely different) or collapsing them into ‘(n)one’ (e.g. the ‘traveller’ and the ‘tourist’ are pretty much the same, so why do we need those categories?). In the context of this inquiry into WWOOFers’ nature experience, Kaplan’s post-critical standpoint is ecologically and methodologically translated into a series of ‘as well as’ and/or ‘both/and’, some of which were introduced in previous chapters. They are, for example, the continuum as well as the rapture (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2015); context as well as theory (James, 2006); the ‘real’ as well as the discursive (Hart, 2005); embodiment as well as textualism (Payne, 2005); performative enactment as well as interpretive representation (St Pierre, 2013a; Jackson & Mazzei, 2013); deconstructive unknowing as well as (re-)constructive knowing (Davies, 2013); multivocal mess as well as linear clarity (Law, 2004; Russell, 2005); and space as well as place (Massey, 2005). There are probably more related combinations and contradictions that I have not listed here that may emerge throughout this chapter.

Regardless of the forms of manifestation, the methodological interest of the post-critical standpoint is a series of double movements to enact the logic of ‘both/and’ or ‘as well as’. I engage with the post-critical methodological double movements with epistemological modesty and ecological responsibility *for the phenomenon* under study, and also *for the Other* that is possibly beyond the phenomenal horizon. This, I believe, is the key to an ethical posthuman way of researching in the Anthropocene (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2015). Admittedly, my inquiry into WWOOFers’ nature experience may be trivial in comparison with various eco-political urgencies of the Anthropocene, such as climate change. However, what I methodologically suggest from the post-critical standpoint may be partially transferrable, and hopefully even useful, for other studies that deal with those more serious issues.

What I conceptualise as a post-critical standpoint perhaps becomes clearer when compared with an intellectual tradition broadly associated with ‘poststructuralism’. Particularly, I find the notion of (crisis of) *representation* useful to highlight the possible junctures and disjunctures between the post-critical and the poststructural. As a semiotic device, representation works when there is an assumed correspondence between the signifier (e.g. /'kæt/ as a sound) and the signified (e.g. the cat as a notion) within a sign, and between the sign and the referent (e.g. 🐱 a particular cat). Poststructuralism inspired in particular by Foucauldian genealogy attacks the artificiality of the correspondence between the signifier and the signified in a particular time-space, pointing out that such knowledge is historically and geographically contingent. This often leads to a critical accusation that the contingency is manipulatively reinforced by social systems to stabilise and reproduce its internal power asymmetries. Therefore, our ‘unknowing’ of knowledge that is already constructed and/or simulated as the signs is an important poststructuralist political and pedagogical strategy (Davies, 2013, also see the section ‘Unknowing “It”’ in Chapter 2 for a more detailed theoretical background).

Methodologically, especially in qualitative research methodology, the poststructuralist doubts about representation are sometimes translated into *anti-interpretivism*, since representation is a claim that the relationship between the signifier and the signified (and the referent) can be interpretatively accessed by the researcher and that access is reliably repeatable. In recent education research methodology, Elizabeth Adams St Pierre (2013a, 2013b) is a prominent figure who advocated for the move towards ontology of becoming, departing from being associated with the pacified correspondence between the subject/knower and the object/known (Bryant, 2011). From a poststructuralist point of view, knowledge is gained through a mutually performative interaction between the knower and the known (Mazzei, 2013), rather than through a separation of the two.

According to St Pierre (2013a), however, the majority of qualitative social research is usually still trapped in ‘some bizarre combination of interpretivism and positivism’ (p. 224) with a presumption of the researcher’s ability to fix the researched in order to generate an understanding. The interpretivist/positivist researchers ‘make texts to interpret’, yet they ‘treat the words in the written texts

they've produced as brute data' to be representing a single truth. St Pierre saw this as a methodological contradiction.

In order to avoid interpretivist/positivist coding and thematising methods, Jackson and Mazzei (2013) suggested a unique method for education research. In their method, multiple theories were 'plugged' into a single data set to build different knowledge 'machines' of *their own*, of which the researchers themselves were 'parts'. This holistic machine metaphor is appropriate in order to reduce the operational implication of the asymmetrical relationship between the researcher and the researched.

The fundamental question about correspondence remains, however. It is most likely true that *theory*, after poststructuralism, particularly in social science, does not and will not explain a perfect correspondence between a phenomenon and its generalised reality (which is why multiple theories are needed, instead of one, in the case of Jackson and Mazzei). Nonetheless, in order for the knowledge machine to be functional, theory needs to 'work'. The theory-parts may be broken and/or wear off sometimes, but as long as it 'works' consistently *for the time being*, that is fine. What is the 'work' it does? It is, I believe, to represent and explain a correspondence between a social phenomenon and its social reality, given that such a correspondence is only tentative and has a much shorter temporal finitude than the general (or the natural – see Newton, 2007). More importantly, to be used as parts of a knowledge machine, theory needs to be made, either by someone else or himself/herself. Is it not the case that making a theory is to temporarily solidify the correspondence between the signifier (or phenomenon) and the signified (or reality)? In this machine metaphor, the representational is indeed affirmed, if implicitly, and a post-critical standpoint picks it up to value the fragmented temporality that is still meaningful to us humans. On the other hand, I understand that a poststructuralist standpoint is willing to abandon the fragments because they are fragmented. As St Pierre (2013b) rhetorically asked us and herself '*whether we can think reality without representation*' [original emphasis] (p. 650), representation persistently sticks with us humans, regardless of one's aspiration of becoming posthuman (Bogost, 2012, p. 8).

There is no such thing as purely representable correspondence between the researcher and the researched. Thus, the poststructuralist methodological thesis of anti-representation remains ontologically crucial for my post-critical social research. Personally, as a modest being-in-the-world-of-appearance, thinking that we can

directly access the essence of (hyper)objects that exceed the mortal spatio-temporal finitude seems overly humanistic (Morton, 2013). And I am concerned that such human(istic) arrogance may lead to the same ecological mistake our ancestors made for modern industrialism. For more ecological research methodology, anthropocentrism and its related uncritically ‘centred’ positioning of the researcher needs to be modified. We are situated in our own bodies and in the phenomenological level of appearances. Thinking otherwise is a ‘god-trick’ (Haraway, 1991, p. 189). Being positioned, we vitally ‘move’ and ‘transposition’ ourselves in a range of ways in a range of environments (Payne, 2014) that, together, give life to the researcher and the researched.

In addition, *practically*, in the mainstream academic context, what is ‘enacted’ by the researcher (however ‘enactment’ is defined and practised) is ultimately ‘represented’ as *text* (e.g. a journal article) so that an intellectual ‘correspondence’ between the author and his/her readers becomes possible (e.g. my citation of St Pierre at this very moment by ‘interpretively’ using what she wrote). Probably, therefore, it is more ecologically appropriate to acknowledge that most of us humans still live, if not continuously, in the world of representation, and that representation is not perfect (for the purpose of representing the truth), yet it is something we cannot do without. Post-critically, representation is both malfunctional and functional, and I methodologically embrace the complexity and contradiction. Therefore, the question is how to use representation more ecologically, not how to get rid of it (because it is most likely that we cannot anyway).

For some, the *malfunction* of representation renders this world of appearance to be a ‘prison house of signs’ (MacCannell & MacCannell, 1993, p. 125) from which one must be liberated in order to realise his/her ideal human capacity. For others, it is not a tragedy, but in fact a gift with which one can demonstrate the human epistemological limit for socio-ecological justice. For example, Doreen Massey (2005) provided us with a post-critical comfort when she wrote that ‘representation is no longer a process of fixing, but an element in a continuous production; a part of it all, and itself becoming’ (p. 28). Constance L. Russell (2005) recommended multivocality in representation that possibly creates a poetic textual space where voices of the researched Other – including of nature – potentially become more audible. With a less realist emphasis, John Law (2004) explained, in representation, ‘what is being made and gathered is in a mediated relation with whatever is absent,

manifesting a part while Othering most of it' (p. 146). A successful multivocal representation of *A* and *B* and *C* implies the Other non-representational *D*, *E*, *F*, (and more) that are currently absented. By acknowledging the silence that always accompanies an articulation/representation, we may succeed in evoking the more-than-representational without claiming our epistemological access to it. In short, representation may be methodologically used to open up the researched, as well as closing it down.

In another work, relating to (non-)place pedagogy, Phillip G. Payne and I wrote that a post-critical representation is like a listing of multiple and possibly contradictory themes, rather than writing a singular narrative out of them (Nakagawa & Payne, 2016). A critical narrative is intentionally synthesised in order to disclose a socio-ecological issue and then to critique it. A critical narrative is often grim, and it is the grimness that drives the critical researcher to feel compelled to (re)engage in transformative praxis (Latour, 2005). On the other hand, a post-critical list juxtaposes multiple aspects of the researched without overemphasising the problematics the critical researcher may identify. Such a list probably loses the critical edge to deal with urgent issues such as climate change. However, it may open up a representation and enable us to conceptualise other possible future environments with and for nonhuman beings, experimentally, creatively, and even fictionally (Leggo & Sameshima, 2014).

The post-critical standpoint acknowledges our epistemological limit. As (post)humans, we know what we think we know is only partial. With this modest epistemological acknowledgement, we may be able to refrain from an extreme version of anthropocentrism and researcher-centrism in our knowledge production, and instead to invite the Other, if partially, for our mutual ecobecoming in the environment (Payne, 2013). This is a crucial element of my post-critical standpoint throughout this thesis. At the same time, to reemphasise, my post-critical standpoint does not deny our being human. Being human comes with our existential desire for the Other (MacCannell, 1999, 2011), as well as our ecological responsibility due to our increasing environmental impact. For that we need to (re-)construct our knowledge of/for the Other by ensuring we keep 'rupturing' the 'real' 'continuum' (Hart, 2005; Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2015). Methodologically, how can one re-construct while being sensitive to a poststructuralist deconstruction? Paul James

(2006), with his (meta-)methodological thesis of constitutive abstraction, offers a useful framework for that purpose.

Theoretical Framework (2): Paul James's (Meta-)Methodological Constitutive Abstraction (Thesis)

The post-Marxist and critical social theorisation of 'constitutive abstraction (thesis)' was originally conceived by Geoff Sharp (1985), one of the leading scholars for the Melbourne-based social criticism collective Arena (they publish the journal *Arena*). As James (another leading figure of Arena over three decades) explained, a particularly important perspective in constitutive abstraction is that the 'process of abstraction is constitutive of social relations and social being rather than just an activity that occurs in people's head' (2006, p. 320). This points to two sociological principles. First, constitutive abstraction involves *material processes* in addition to psychological processes. Second, describing, interpreting, analysing, and theorising a social phenomenon requires a process of abstraction that focuses on its social constitution beyond empirical appearance and evidence. For that purpose, constitutive abstraction is configured as a '*levels approach*' with a series of analytical abstractions of everyday phenomena.

Paul James's version of constitutive abstraction developed in his *Globalism, Nationalism, Tribalism: Bringing Theory Back In* (2006) is a valuable theoretical framework for (meta-)methodology in social research, particularly when the researched phenomenon is complex and thus requires re-constructing as well as deconstructing, and theorising as well as contextualising. In this section, instead of reviewing the theory of constitutive abstraction comprehensively, I will focus on how the post-critical logic of 'as well as' or 'both/and' is enabled through James's methodology. For that purpose, an understanding of his distinction between '*ontological abstraction*' and '*epistemological abstraction*' is essential. Whereas ontological abstraction is useful to identify what WWOOF 'is' given the complexity and contradiction, epistemological abstraction is beneficial for 'bringing theory back in' social research after poststructuralism.

Ontological abstraction. James defined ontological abstraction as 'ways of being in relation to others and to nature' (2006, p. 95). The plural 'ways' importantly

indicate James's preferred ontology. To analyse the 'ways' sociologically, James used socially relational 'modes of integration' (i.e. face-to-face, object-extended, agency-extended, and disembodied – see 'integrational analysis' in the next section) and how they are socially practised (see 'conjunctural analysis' in the next section). Then, to identify a social phenomenon against others, James referred to a mode of integration that is particularly *dominant* in that phenomenon. That is, an ontological distinction between phenomena is enabled by different dominant modes of integration that constitute those phenomena differently.

For example, James differentiated 'gift exchange' from 'commodity exchange' (which is a major problem in economic anthropology). Gift exchange was defined as:

exchange of goods within a network of exchange relations that carries the "spirit" of *face-to-face integration* between the persons involved in exchange, and which thus require some form of *ritual recognition* or social return [emphasis altered] (p. 105)

On the other hand, commodity exchange:

tends to occur between *abstracted strangers* based on their mutual usually taken-for-granted confidence in an *abstract system* of exchange-value [my emphasis] (p. 106)

In other words, using James's modes of integration, face-to-face integration is dominant in gift exchange, while other modes of integration (particularly agency-extended and disembodied) are dominant in commodity exchange. In reality, however, gift exchange is also constitutive of non-face-to-face integration (e.g. giving money to someone at a charity organisation you do not know in person). Commodity exchange also takes place face-to-face (e.g. buying organic vegetables at a farmers' market). Different modes of integration coexist within a single social phenomenon, and it is the dominant mode that gives its appearance against other social phenomena.

To formulate the logic of phenomenological differentiation in James's ontological abstraction requires these three steps.

First, phenomenon *A* and phenomenon *B* are hypothetically distinguished.

Second, mode of integration *a* and mode of integration *b* are analytically differentiated.

Third, the phenomenological difference between *A* and *B* is confirmed with their different constitutions that unevenly overlay *a* and *b*. That is, *A* is defined as $b < a$ (i.e. *a* is dominant) whereas *B* is defined as $a < b$ (i.e. *b* is dominant). In this way, *A* and *B* are qualitatively differentiated without being exclusively dichotomised.

The strength of James's account of ontological abstraction is that it allows one to define a social phenomenon distinctively while paying attention to its ontological complexity. The significance of James's approach is highlighted when compared against two other forms of logic he called 'Great Divide' and 'collapse'.

In the Great Divide logic, *A* is defined exclusively referring to *a*, whereas *B* is defined exclusively referring to *b*. As such, there is a significant divide between *A/a* and *B/b* (e.g. gift exchange is exclusively based on face-to-face integration, whereas commodity exchange is exclusively based on agency-extended and disembodied integration). Importantly, there is a clear representational correspondence between the signifier (phenomenon) and the signified (mode of integration).

In the collapse logic, *A* and *B* cannot be distinctively defined, because the difference between *a* and *b* is not substantial (e.g. gift exchange and commodity exchange are pretty much the same because the modes of integrations are matters of degree).

The Great Divide logic suffers from simplification, and the collapse logic suffers from its inability to represent a phenomenon to be researched.

James's ontological abstraction understands a social phenomenon as a set of *layers* that unevenly coexist over relational bodies, time, and space. Paying attention to the dominant and the subordinate modes of integration is useful for social research where the phenomenon under study is complex, such as WWOOFers' nature experience. WWOOFing may be (ideally) identified with its 'alternative' character that critically problematises mainstream tourism and its consumerism. While such identification is probably appropriate to a certain degree, as revealed in the previous chapter, it is likely that WWOOFing is not all about the 'alternative'. It is also integrated in the everyday political economy. In other words, it is likely that WWOOFing is constituted with both 'alternative' and 'non-alternative' layers, and it is this unique constitution that gives an identity to WWOOFing as a social phenomenon. A crucial ontological question that comes out of this is whether the 'alternative' is the 'dominant' layer in the WWOOFers' nature experience, and if so,

what other ‘subordinate’ layers are. To investigate this question, an overview of James’s epistemological abstraction is essential.

Epistemological abstraction. James described four interrelated *levels* of analysis required in epistemological abstraction for the purpose of social explanation. They are namely, from less to more abstract: empirical analysis, conjunctural analysis, integrational analysis (already partly mentioned in the previous section), and categorical analysis (Table 3.1).

Empirical analysis	‘involves generating empirical description based on observation, experience, recording or experiment’ (James, 2006, p. 73)
Conjunctural analysis	involves ‘identifying and more importantly examining the intersection of various modes of practice’ (James, 2006, p. 75).
Integrational analysis	involves an examination of ‘the intersecting modes of social integration and differentiation’ (James, 2006, p. 76).
Categorical analysis	involves an exploration of ‘modes of being and the dominant forms that they take in different social formations’ (James, 2006, p. 77)

Table 3.1 Four methodological levels of James’s epistemological abstraction

In James’s epistemological abstraction, the question of the dominant mode as a phenomenal marker raised in his ontological abstraction is translated into the question of its levelled locations. That is, is the dominant mode significant at the level of lived experience, or the level of social and material practice? Or, is it dominant in the ontological formation, or in the ideological discourse of ‘should be’? James’s epistemological abstraction, with its different levels of constitution, is a valuable tool to identify the junctures and disjunctures of the dominant mode *theoretically*.

After poststructuralism and postmodernism, reality is often considered historical and thus mutable, or even constructed (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). This problematises theory as well, because the value of theory is its explanatory capacity

of reality. Having said that, as already stated from my post-critical standpoint, this does not mean that theory is out of date. Richard Johnson, Deborah Chambers, Parvati Raghuram, and Estella Tincknell (2004) advocated:

...we should not – indeed, cannot – avoid universal categories altogether, even while suspecting their hidden partialities... universals... must be held provisionally, with qualifications and particularities that remain to be specified. (pp. 129-130)

Theory provides us with a provisional vantage point to situate ourselves, however that may be (and should be) contextually modified and detailed. To recite Jackson and Mazzei (2013), we need theory in order to think. For this reason, from a post-critical point of view, theory is still crucially integrated within our postmodern lifeworld, and this truism is valid to social sciences, too. James's epistemological abstraction reflexively brings back theory to the fashioned two-dimensional flat world, and I add, rightly so.

Ontological abstraction presumes that a social phenomenon is constituted with horizontally multiple *layers* of the dominant and the subordinate. Epistemological abstraction, on the other hand, presumes that such a horizontal overlaying is identifiable on vertically multiple analytical *levels* (this distinction between horizontal layers and vertical levels is crucial for an understanding of James's constitutive abstraction). Epistemological abstraction allows the researcher to consider both the particular context of the phenomenon and its more generalised theoretical possibility. In doing so, a particular strength of James's epistemological abstraction is that it allows the researcher to apply different theorists and methodologists for differentiated purposes of each level so that he/she can 'best' deal with the phenomenal complexity and its social constitution. Figure 3.1 summarises each level of James's epistemological abstraction in relation to the contextualised theories and methodologies for the research problem (RP) and ecophenomenologically disaggregated three research questions (RQs) in this study.

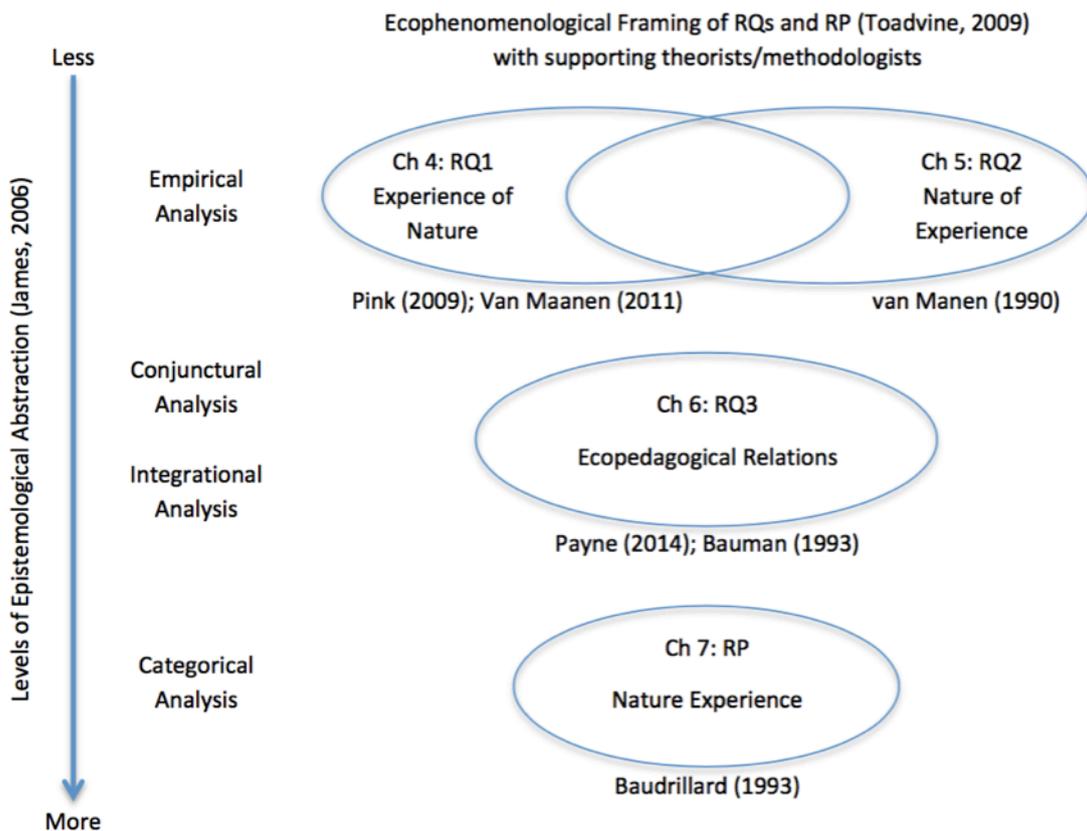


Figure 3.1 James's epistemological abstraction X Toadvine's ecophenomenology

Empirical analysis, the first methodological level of epistemological abstraction, 'involves generating empirical description based on observation, experience, recording or experiment – in other words, abstracting evidence from that which exists or occurs in the world' (James, 2006, p. 73). Empirical analysis largely remains descriptive. Yet, in his/her description, the researcher constantly makes interpretive judgements, if not consciously, of what to include and not to include (van Manen, 1990, p. 180). There are always things, and probably more things, that are not represented in a description. Thus, the representation is already partially abstracted at this stage according to the specific research questions, which is framed by the research problem. In anthropology, such an interpretive approach to description is known as '*thick description*', which James suggested as a crucial method for this level of epistemological abstraction. According to Clifford Geertz (1973), a founder of interpretive anthropology, 'what we call our data are really our constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to' (p. 9). Thus, thick

description is to acknowledge the double reduction of the totality in representation, which Anthony Giddens (1984, p. 284) called a double hermeneutic method.

The second methodological level of epistemological abstraction is called *conjunctural analysis*. In this analysis, James employed neo-Marxist historical materialism to investigate '*modes of practice*'. In traditional Marxist historical materialism, social phenomena were considered to be the superstructure that is reducible to the mode of production as the substructure (Marx & Engels, 1998). In neo-Marxist approaches, however, this economic determinism is relativised and thus becomes contingent on other modes of social and material practice that also shape our lifeworld. James identified five modes of practice for his conjunctural analysis. They are: mode of production, mode of exchange, mode of communication, mode of organisation, and mode of enquiry. With these modes of practice, conjunctural analysis involves 'identifying and more importantly examining the intersection of various modes of practice... or ways of framing the "things in the world" defined in the first level' (James, 2006, p. 75). It is at and around this 'intersection' where the practical and material basis of a social phenomenon is sociologically analysed.

The third methodological level of epistemological abstraction is called *integrational analysis*. With a 'post-classical sensibility', it examines 'the intersecting modes of social integration and differentiation. These different modes of integration are expressed here in terms of different ways of relating to and distinguishing oneself from others – from the face-to-face to the disembodied' (James, 2006, p. 76). In this analysis, a social phenomenon is further abstracted into the relational level of *modes of integration*: face-to-face, object-extended, agency-extended, and disembodied. One important purpose of integrational analysis is to investigate the possible intersections and contradictions between the integrational level and other levels analysed so far (particularly the conjunctural level), because how people want something to 'be' (in relation to other things) may differ from how it is practically and relationally materialised. In the contemporary world, as James pointed out, the dominant mode of integration is globally accelerating towards the disembodied. However, 'people continue to draw heavily upon and yearn for the embodied' (James, 2006, p. 89). Even in WWOOFing, which may be considered 'alternative', it is likely that some aspects are integrated in the more abstract modes of agency-extended and disembodied. James highlighted his conjunctural analysis as integrational analysis as

an important ‘missing middle’ of poststructuralist theory (p. 17) that mediates subjectivist epistemology and structuralist ontology.

The final methodological level of James’s epistemological abstraction is *categorical analysis*. The aim of this level is ‘to generalize across *modes of being* and to talk of *ontological formations*’ [original emphasis] (p. 78). In other words, in categorical analysis, relational modes of integration are further abstracted to ontological modes of being (i.e. temporality, spatiality, embodiment, and epistemology), in order to examine the ontological formation that contains a social phenomenon under study. For example, James (2006, p. 80) suggested four ontological formations of society (i.e. tribal, traditional, modern, and postmodern) through the phenomenon of globalisation throughout the history. Due to the high intellectual demand required by categorical analysis, and the limited time-space of my PhD, I openly admit that this level of epistemological abstraction is beyond the scope of this study. However, to indicate what a categorical analysis would be in the context of the WWOOFers’ nature experience, I will partially engage with it in Chapter 7.

To summarise, James’s constitutive abstraction (thesis), particularly its components of ontological abstraction and epistemological abstraction, offers a tremendously valuable post-critical (meta-)methodological framework for social inquiry, critique, and empirical-conceptual research. Its usefulness is particularly significant when the research phenomenon is heterogeneously complex and potentially contradictory, such as the phenomena of WWOOFers’ nature experience.

Researcher-Researched Approach: Phenomenological-Ethnographic Reflexivity and Embodiment

A particularly important methodological principle to be considered and practised in my post-critical research approach is the ecological ‘continuum’ as well as ‘ruptures’ between the researcher ‘I’ and the researched participants (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2015). The researcher and the researched are together bodily affected by the material real as well as by discursive constructs in the process of doing and knowing (Payne, 2005). While they both point to the phenomenological groundedness within the world, methodologically, the former continuum/ruptures tension may be translated as *reflexivity*, and the latter doing/knowing as *embodiment*.

Using John W. Creswell's (2007) categories for qualitative research design, the basic methodological approach for this qualitative study is most simply labelled as a combination of 'phenomenological' and 'ethnographic' approaches. For the research problem of WWOOFers' nature experience as a *phenomenon*, which was ecophenomenologically (Toadvine, 2009) framed and disaggregated into three research questions, a phenomenological approach is appropriate. However, if the researcher 'I' is also part of the phenomenon and if the participants and I together construct its experiential meanings, our mutual emplacement must be seriously acknowledged in its richness (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 48). This is why reflexive and sensory ethnographic method to spend extended time with the research participants was preferred in this study, although description and interpretation of a *culture-sharing group* is not the primary goal here (hence this study is not an ethnography in a strict sense).

In this study, I attend to reflexivity and embodiment through the mixed approaches where I act the double roles of researcher and WWOOFer.

Reflexivity. In feminist research traditions, reflexivity has occupied an important position. Marilyn Lichtman (2006) explained reflexivity as:

a critical reflection on the practice and process of research and the role of the researcher. It concerns itself with the impact of the researcher and on the system and the system on the researcher. It acknowledges the mutual relationships between the researcher and who and what is studied. (p. 206)

As Lichtman pointed out, reflexivity is a useful tool to consider 'bias' in research that is potentially harmful. With reflexivity, the researcher may self-critique his/her own subjectivities (e.g. emotions and ideologies), which are found problematic in modern Western objectivist social science (Ramazaloglu & Holland, 2002, p. 155). However, it is important to note that 'the careful monitoring of one's own subjectivity... does not have in all situations a potential to keep distortion away' (Wasserfall, 1993, p. 25). This seems true in my own research experiences.

In this study, from a post-critical standpoint, I affirm my subjective role in knowledge generation, while also acknowledging the necessity of being self-critical and analytically objective for the purpose of sociological theory development. My

own bias is in fact a proof of my becoming and learning in the environment (or, ecobecoming – Payne, 2013) with the research participants and others. Therefore, to me, reflexivity is primarily an instrument for knowledge generation, rather than a safeguard against bias. With this understanding of reflexivity, the researcher self becomes ‘not a troublesome element to be eradicated or controlled, but a set of resources’ (Olesen, 2005, p. 250). Michael D. Jackson (1989, p. 4) earlier called this methodological use of the researcher self ‘radical empiricism’ where he/she becomes an experimental (or experiential) subject and treats his/her experience as data.

I prefer a term that contains less positivistic implications, and thus find part of what Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner (2000) called ‘reflexive ethnography’ useful for my research approach. They explained:

Although reflexive ethnographies primarily focus on a culture or subculture, authors use their own experiences in the culture reflexively to bed back on self and look more deeply at self-other interactions...In reflexive ethnographies, the researcher’s personal experience becomes important primarily in how it illuminates the culture under study. [emphasis removed] (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740)

Whether the researcher or the researched, the self in reflexive ethnography is more than an autonomously closed circle. Rather, the self is a knot, an entanglement, of socio-cultural and ecological ‘lines’ ontologically open to others (Ingold, 2007). In reflexive ethnography, ‘the self and the field become one’ (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003, p. 63), or at least intimately related to each other. Thus, a phenomenon that is described and interpreted from the perspective of the researcher self is always relational. And since the point from which the perspective is carried out is only one point among many on the phenomenal field, the researcher self must be responsibly visible in his/her knowledge generation. In this study, my ‘self’ is methodologically represented with a post-critical standpoint.

Although the major aim of this study with a phenomenological-ethnographic approach is to investigate WWOOFers’ nature experience enacted and represented by my research participants, from a post-critical standpoint, the clear distinction between ‘ethnographic’ methods and ‘autoethnographic’ methods becomes blurry methodologically. This blurring, however, seems not problematic, because even [a]utoethnographers vary in their emphasis on the research process (graphy), on

culture (ethno), and on self (auto)' (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740). Autoethnography 'has become the term of choice' (Ellis, 2004, p. 40). Thus, I will keep referring to my methods as 'ethnographic', but 'auto' will remain as a crucial 'methodological orientation' (Chang, 2008, p. 48) in my reflexive ethnographic methods. In the final chapter, I will provide a short autoethnographic account of how I became a researcher ecologically, by shifting my 'content orientation' onto myself.

In reflexive ethnographic methods using the researcher 'I', it is crucial to prevent my practice of reflexivity from becoming a narcissistic self-indulgent act (Gentile, 1989). Noted, but more positively, how can I use my own experiences I shared with my participants in order to facilitate my understanding of their experiences? Admittedly, achieving this is not easy in ethnographic practice (Speer, 2002, p. 798). It is particularly so when repeatability of experience is problematic due to the elusive nature of both the subject and the object suggested in new materialism(s) (Coole & Frost, 2010). A single subject or object behaves differently even in similar circumstances due to its agentic vitality (Bennett, 2010). Yet, while it is not ultimately identical, there must be some area where my experience and their experiences overlap, if we are together entangled in the phenomenal field. Put differently, the phenomenal field may be (only) possible and approached in social research through our intersubjectively and interobjectively (Latour, 1996) overlapping experiences.

Embodiment. In reflexive pursuit of the 'inter-' between the researcher and the researched in the environment full of things, the questions are: (1) how I can better access the researched practically; (2) and how that practice can be justified theoretically. Among many ways to approach these questions, I conceptualise my reflexive ethnographic methods with an emphasis on embodiment.

Partly, that is because I am convinced about the importance of ontology in social research by reading less anthropocentric philosophy that is currently gaining traction.³ Ontology cannot be addressed with linguistic epistemology alone (Payne, 2014). But more personally, I methodologically value embodiment because I feel that I empathically 'learnt' the detailed nuances of my participants' nature experiences

³ For example, to name a few, speculative realism (e.g. Bogost, 2012; Morton 2013; Sparrow, 2014), new materialism (e.g. Bennett, 2010; Coole & Frost, 2010), actor-network theory (e.g. Latour, 2005), non-representational theory (e.g. Thrift, 2008), posthumanism (e.g. Braidotti, 2006, 2013) and post-qualitative educational research (e.g. Jackson & Mazzei, 2013; St Pierre, 2013a, 2013b).

through my bodily participation and ‘doing’ (Payne, 2005). I probably could not have gained the rich information simply by conducting detached systematic observation and interview. Sarah Pink (2009), author of *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, wrote that fieldwork is ‘a corporeal process that involves the ethnographer not only with the ideas of others, but in learning about their understandings through her or his own physical and sensorial experiences’ (p. 14). To achieve that sensory ethnographic goal, embodiment is a crucial epistemological tool for the researcher.⁴

Sometimes I asked my participants about what I experienced and felt bodily, which was a good way to gain insight into our shared experience. Other times, what they talked about strongly resonated with me because I knew bodily what they were talking about. These episodes indicate that the relationship between the researcher and the researched is performatively constituted as ‘fully embodied and multisensory events’ (Pink, 2009, p. 53).

The sensorially affective interactions and communications between the researcher and the researched are possible, because our physical bodies are different yet mutually ‘emplaced’ in the environment (Pink, 2009, p. 25). As already pointed out in the previous section, our vital bodies are becoming and environmentally open to others as *zoe*, as well as autonomously signifying its *bio*-logical unity (Braidotti, 2006). For Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1968), therefore, ‘flesh’ of the body is a reversible element of the self and the world. He wrote: ‘[t]he thickness of the body, far from rivalling that of the world, is on the contrary the sole means I have to go unto the heart of the things, by making myself a world and by making them flesh’ (p. 135). Flesh separates the self and the world in the middle in order to enact the two into two perceptual entities. Without flesh, we cannot perceive the world. Without flesh, the world cannot perceive us. Flesh can mediate the two, because it possesses ontologically reversible constitution that is open to the two, or makes the two. If the

⁴ Perhaps an actual example from my fieldwork may help illustrate the methodological significance of embodiment. Manual weeding without using chemicals was a crucial element of my participants’ nature experience when their WWOOFing involved growing organic vegetables and fruits. Many of them did not like the job, because it was ‘boring’ for them. By weeding with them, however, I learnt how weeding was boring and how it was more than boring with my own body. For instance, weeding was boring because manually removing weeds one by one progressed very slowly. Seeing and realising that there was always so much more area to cover made me feel that the job was endless and unachievable. I felt some level of frustration or perhaps anger towards the young plants for which I weeded, but seeing them so small and fragile, I also felt encouraged because they needed my weeding to grow well. Weeding made me realise how much I appreciated the presence of fellow WWOOFers, so much that I cannot represent the magnitude with the word ‘appreciated’. Without our chatting, I could not go through the non-stop weeding in the afternoons and the persistently irritating lower back pain.

body possesses such a wonderful quality, why not utilise it methodologically in social research?

In addition to the enigmatic yet exciting ontology of the body sensorium, the moving body is a social site where the multitude of geographies and histories are semiotically overlaid (Lincoln, 1997, p. 42). This socio-cultural perspective that acknowledges the body's epistemological capacity to self-inscribe its (inter)subjective meanings is an equally important aspect of post-critical embodiment (Nakagawa & Payne, 2016). Thus, methodological embodiment requires a sensitive approach. On one hand, embodiment helps the researcher to recognise the Sameness. On the other hand, it flags the Otherness. From a post-critical point of view, embodiment is an important tool to enact a field-body of complexity and contradiction.

Legitimation: Triangulation and Crystallisation

The post-critical methodological double movement is also relevant for the legitimisation methods in this study. To deal with both the general (or theory) and the particular (or context) requires a double movement in legitimisation targeting at different levels of epistemological abstraction. In this thesis, I use *triangulation* for the general since it has been a typical strategy in modern empiricism (Golafshani, 2003, p. 603), whereas I employ Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth Adams St Pierre's (2005) *crystallisation* for the particular. Postmodern (con)textualism requires some 'transgressions' (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, pp. 208-209) from the standard claim of 'validity', still a persistently haunting notion in qualitative research (Winter, 2000), and crystallisation is an established transgressive method (embrace the contradiction!). To note, although theory that I aim to generate in this study is oriented toward the general, this does not mean that my theory is generalisable. More humbly, I only hope that my theory will, with 'integrity' and 'goodness', be 'credible', 'trustworthy', and potentially 'transferrable' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 300) to similar contexts of nature experience phenomena.

Triangulation has been often employed methodologically in qualitative research in order to align itself with positivist epistemology (which I do not reject, following my post-critical standpoint). Yet, it may also be used more creatively (Flick, 2002, p. 227). To conceptualise triangulation in a less positivistic manner, Norman K. Denzin (1989, pp. 237-241) listed four types of triangulation. They are: data

triangulation; investigator triangulation; theory triangulation; and methodological triangulation. All the types of triangulation except investigator triangulation were implemented in this inquiry. For data triangulation, I used participation/observation data and interview data as the two main sources for this study. For methodological triangulation and theoretical triangulation, following James's epistemological abstraction, I used a variety of methodologists and theorists for the different levels of epistemological abstraction (see the later section 'Data Interpretation and Representation' for the details).

Tri-angulation, strictly speaking, uses *two inanimate points* in order to determine the *one fixated position* of the researched within an epistemological field (with the researcher allegedly being outside). Richardson and St Pierre (2005) argued that such a metaphor is inappropriate in the postmodern complexity in which we are living today. Those points are highly mobile, and fixating them is a methodological illusion. And most likely, the researcher is also emplaced within the field. Thus, instead, Richardson and St Pierre recommended a well-crafted metaphor of crystallisation:

I propose that the central imaginary for "validity" for postmodern texts is not the triangle – a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather, the central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. (p. 963)

To achieve crystallisation in research, Richardson (2000) listed five criteria researchers should consider. They are:

1. **Substantive contribution:** Does this piece contribute to our understanding of social-life? Does the writer demonstrate a deeply grounded (if embedded) human-world understanding and perspective? How has this perspective informed the construction of the text?
2. **Aesthetic merit:** Does this piece succeed aesthetically? Does the use of creative analytical practices open up the text, invite interpretive responses? Is the text artistically shaped, satisfying, complex, and not boring?
3. **Reflexivity:** How did the author come to write this text? How was the information gathered? Ethical issues? How has the author's subjectivity been both a producer and a product of this text? Is there adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgments about the point of view? Do authors hold themselves accountable to the standards of knowing and telling of the people they have studied?

4. **Impact:** Does this affect me? emotionally? intellectually? generate new questions? move me to write? move me to try new research practices? move me to action?
5. **Expresses a reality:** Does this text embody a fleshed out, embodied sense of lived-experience? Does it seem “true” – a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the “real”? [original emphasis] (p. 254)

While they appear to be more like a set of codes of conduct for the researchers rather than actual ‘methods’, they nonetheless reveal some of the methodological priorities in post-critical social research. Table 3.2 summarises my commitment to reflect those criteria of crystallisation in my research practice.

Criteria	Implementation
Substantial contribution	This study will contribute to an understanding of WWOOFers’ nature experience for the sociology of ecotourism and experiential environmental education (research). In addition, partially theorising WWOOFers’ nature experience will clarify potential nature-human relations in similar experiential phenomena.
Aesthetic merit	While my textual representation, particularly in Chapter 4, will suffer from my lack of literary skills in the English language, this limitation will be dealt with sensory aids such as photographs.
Reflexivity	As well as reflexivity is an important element in my research approach and practice, each drafted chapter was carefully edited a number of times to determine how much of ‘I’ should be present in the text depending on the methodological level of epistemological abstraction.
Impact	I have drafted a number of journal articles to share my findings out of this PhD study. Also, more personally, probably due to this study, I significantly altered my eating habits.
Expresses a reality	Having methodologically problematised an access to reality, my text is a method assemblage through which I try to represent reality (while Othering the non-representational) to the best of my ability in multiple ways.

Table 3.2 Implementing crystallisation

Evaluation: Strengths and Limitations

From a post-critical standpoint, I originally yet carefully framed my research methodology. However, every research methodology has strengths and limitations. Following Law (2004) again, whatever positively represented is accompanied by the non-representational Othered. I understand methodology works in a similar way. However, within this general post-critical methodological limitation, James’s meta-methodology of constitutive abstraction of the ‘same’ phenomena makes significant advances in incorporating some of the ‘other’-wise absented non-representational.

Here, both strengths and limitations for my methodological framing are summarised, in order to practise the post-critical methodological standpoint thoroughly.

First, James's account of ontological abstraction will allow a nuanced but more comprehensive (perhaps even ecological, or socio-ecological) understanding of the phenomenon of WWOOFers' nature experience without essentialising it as an 'alternative' tourist experience. The phenomenon may be 'dominantly' constituted of the 'alternative', but probably includes other 'subordinate' elements as well. This anti-essentialist social ontology is definitely useful for my post-critical standpoint. However, a possible problem thus limitation is the practical procedure of how to determine the 'dominance' of a particular mode in the phenomenon, especially in a qualitative study like this. While I refer to the number of codes in Chapter 5 for that purpose, in other places I largely relied on my qualitative judgement to interpret the 'dominant' referring to my embodied/emplaced experiences with the participants.

Second, James's account of epistemological abstraction allows the researcher to engage with both a contextualised understanding of a social phenomenon and a more generalised theorising of it. In doing so, it is encouraged that other theorists and methodologists are selectively and supportively employed at different levels of epistemological abstraction, which in this study are related to the research problem and the three disaggregated research questions. This is a significant advantage of James's constitutive abstraction in social research, because it is unlikely that contemporary complex and even contradictory phenomena can be understood without multiple theories and methodologies. However, this rather non-exclusive commitment to a particular theory or methodology may be considered to be eclectic, and as a result, lacks the 'accuracy' and 'precision' in represented research findings. From a post-critical standpoint, I do not consider this to be a limitation so much, because I understand that representation in social research cannot simply represent reality. Representation lies in tension with the non-representational, mirroring the epistemology-ontology tension that invited post-critical methodological deliberations expressed in this chapter.

Third, by combining phenomenological and ethnographic approaches, I can interpretively investigate the phenomenon of WWOOFers' nature experience by reflexively paying attention to the ethnographic details bodily accessed and gained. This is important for a post-critical standpoint in which experience is constituted with embodiment as well as textualism (Payne, 2005). On the other hand, a limitation in

this combination is the implicit phenomenological transcendence (van Manen, 1990) and thus generalisability, which is at odds with the ethnographic particular. While the distinction between the particular and the general itself may be of an up-to-modern intellectual construct, and perhaps post-critical ‘hybrid’ theory functions somewhere in the middle or margin of the two (Nakagawa & Payne, 2015), I do not have a clear a solution for the methodological dilemma caused by the combined approaches.

Lastly, by practising both triangulation and crystallisation as legitimisation methods, this study post-critically appeals to both modern and postmodern intellectual sensibilities. However, with regret, crystallisation will also be a limitation in this study, especially in relation to its ‘aesthetic merit’. ‘Producing good, well-written poems, plays, dialogues, and messy texts is much, much harder than producing coherent traditional academic descriptions and discussions’ (Atkinson et al, 2003, pp. 181-182). And it has been evidently clear that I do not possess a high command of the English language for literary aesthetics (and probably in Japanese, my first language, either). Chapter 4 particularly suffers from this limitation, although the experimental description method there is methodologically crucial for my post-critical standpoint. To compensate the probable non-literary text, I supplemented my narratives with ‘sensory ethnographic representation’ (Pink, 2009, p. 133) by exhibiting relevant photographs, notwithstanding its representational problematic of mobile body-time-space treated as frozen.

Research Methods and Procedures

Data Collection

The ethnographic data of participation/observation and interviews was collected at five rural Victorian WWOOF sites within a two-hour drive from Melbourne. The five sites included two business farms, two domestic farms, and one spiritual organisation farm. The fieldwork was conducted in August-November 2014, from the end of winter to the end of spring in Victoria, over approximately 50 days and nights. The ten international WWOOFers were opportunistically recruited at the five cooperating hosts’ premises using an emergent sampling strategy (Patton, 2002, p. 240). The nationalities of the participants were: British (one male and two females); German (two males and one female); Italian (two females); South Korean (one male); and

Taiwanese (one female). Their ages ranged from 19 to 31 at the time of the data collection. All participants were planning to extend their 12-month Working Holiday visa (Subclass 417) by WWOOFing.⁵ This international sample highlighted a unique Australian context of WWOOFing that was constructed around the visa extension (Deville, Wearing, & McDonald, 2015, p. 3). A pseudonym was given to each participant to ensure confidentiality, unless a participant directly expressed his/her preference for his/her real name to be used (see the later section ‘Ethics’). Table 3.3 summarises the five fieldwork sites, and Table 3.4 summarises the ten participants in this study.

Site code	Location and direction from Melbourne	Days/ Nights studied	Description	WWOOFers
CV	Central Victoria (North)	19	Small-scale business farm on a drier flat field run by a single male farmer. Growing a variety of organic vegetables mainly for farmers’ markets	Steph Clare Tea
MR	Macedon Ranges (North)	7	Family bird farm on a hill owned by a retired couple selling eggs	Andreas James
GO	The Great Ocean Road (Southwest)	10	Spiritual community farm in a valley with a few residential devotees, organic vegetables and cattle	Moon Frank
LV	Latrobe Valley (Southeast)	10	Small-scale business organic berry farm in a valley owned by a professional couple	Margherita
SG	South Gippsland (Southeast)	7	Family home with a large garden on the coast owned by a professional couple	Anne Ben

Table 3.3 Five fieldwork sites in this study

⁵ At the time of my fieldwork, international tourists were eligible to apply for their Working Holiday visa (Subclass 417) extension by working (including WWOOFing) for 88 days in regional Australia. From 31 August 2015, however, this arrangement changed. As of April 2016, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (2016) now requires the applicants to document their ‘work’ with payslips, ‘in accordance with the Fair Work Act 2009’. Against this legislation, WWOOF Australia deployed online campaigns such as on Facebook and Change.org, since the change was likely to decrease the number of international WWOOFers in Australia and to risk small organic farm businesses by removing the volunteer labour pool (Prendergast, 2015). Extending Working Holiday visa by WWOOFing is now officially unlikely. However, some hosts use a workaround, whereby they post ‘job’ advertisements on the internet (such as Facebook) in which they promise to provide WWOOFers with payslips but only in return for the money to ‘cover’ accommodation, meals, and utilities.

Name	Site	Days/ Nights studied	Nationality	Gender	Age	Description
Steph	CV	7	British	Female	31	Artist, formerly lived in an intentional community in New Zealand, interested in holistic health
Clare	CV	19	Taiwanese	Female	29	Ex-bank worker, interested in learning new 'Australian' recipes using organic vegetables
Tea	CV	12	Italian	Female	27	Ex-office worker, cares about animals, vegetarian, enjoys actively working outdoors
Andreas	MR	5	German	Male	21	Travelling alone to be a 'better man', concerned about the welfare of the birds at the farm
James	MR	7	South Korean	Male	22	Experienced paid fruit picking work in South Australia, wants to improve his English
Moon	GO	10	British	Female	23	A recent law graduate, interested in social justice such as human rights, deciding what to do in her future
Frank	GO	10	British	Male	29	Interested in political activism, teaches yoga, and travels frequently to Melbourne by car on the weekend
Margherita	LV	10	Italian	Female	27	Studied Spanish language at university, very passionate about migrating to Australia
Anne	SG	7	German	Female	28	A master's degree in forestry, surfing around Australia in a self-modified van, has carpentry skills, partnered to Ben
Ben	SG	7	German	Male	30	A master's degree in forestry, surfing around Australia in a self-modified van, has carpentry skills, partnered to Anne

Table 3.4 Ten WWOOFers participating in this study

An emergent sampling strategy was needed for several reasons. First, the number of WWOOF hosts who accommodate more than one WWOOFer at a time is limited around Melbourne. Those sites were required for my accessibility and the methodological purpose of participation/observation as a WWOOFer/researcher. Second, furthermore, in Victoria, many hosts begin accepting WWOOFers around November when the weather becomes warmer for growing plants. In spite of those restrictions, the fieldwork sites and the participants turned out to be diverse, which was preferable for the potential transferability of this study.

However, the diverse samples do not indicate any representability of the selected sites and participants for an investigation of the phenomenon of WWOOFers' nature experience, since WWOOFing is geographically and socio-culturally a 'slippery' phenomenon (Yamamoto & Engelsted, 2015). My fieldwork and collected

data are contextualised spatially (i.e. I could have done my fieldwork at a hazelnut farm), temporally (e.g. I could have done my fieldwork in summer), and bodily (e.g. I could have tried harder to find an Australian WWOOFer to participate) within the constraints of a PhD research project.

The following procedure was used to recruit the five cooperating WWOOF hosts and the ten participating WWOOFers.

- (1) I selected 55 WWOOF sites in Victoria from the list in *The Australian WWOOF Book* (WWOOF Australia, 2013). They were all relatively close to Melbourne and stated that they would accommodate more than one WWOOFer at a time.
- (2) I contacted those 55 WWOOF hosts by email with an Explanatory Form (Appendix I) to introduce myself and my research. In the email, I asked the hosts to accommodate me as a WWOOFer/researcher when they would be hosting another WWOOFer (or other WWOOFers) at their sites. Out of 22 responses gained, 12 hosts agreed to cooperate in my research.
- (3) Within the four months between August and November 2014 set for the data collection period, five hosts contacted me to inform that they were hosting a WWOOFer or WWOOFers at their sites.
- (4) I arrived at their sites, introduced myself to the WWOOFers with an Explanatory Form (Appendix I), and directly asked for their participation in my research. All the ten WWOOFers I met in this way agreed and signed the Consent Form (Appendix II) provided.
- (5) The hosts signed their version of Consent Forms (Appendix II), and I started my WWOOFing/fieldwork.

Participation/Observation. A main data set for this study was generated by prolonged participation/observation with/of each participant for up to two weeks. In total, the number of fieldwork days and nights counted approximately 50 (at some sites, I had more than one participant WWOOFer). During my fieldwork, I acted the two roles of WWOOFer and of researcher.

As a researcher, I followed the research participants as much as possible (i.e. as much as the hosts allowed me) in the field in order to record their movements and actions. I always carried a small notepad so that I could jot down a few words as a

mental note every time I observed something I thought of significance for my research. With the participants' permissions, I also collected short video clips of their working in the field and doing other activities from time to time. Some of the video clips only depicted the participants' movements, while in others I asked them to describe what they were doing and how they were feeling then.

As a WWOOFer, however, I also needed to work as long as my research participants did, sometimes by myself. This meant that it was impossible for me to observe my participants all the time during my fieldwork. In fact, quantitatively, my working time was much longer than my observation time. Due to this constraint, it was difficult to collect observational data systematically. Thus, instead, I employed a 'participating-to-write' approach that prioritises participation. This enabled me to experience 'an intense immersion in daily rhythms and ordinary concerns, increasing openness to others' ways of life' (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 18). With this approach, every night after daytime outdoor work, I retreated to my personally allocated room and I wrote up my fieldwork journal (about 1000 words a night), referring to the jottings in the notepad. Doing so reduced my socialising time with the participants and hosts, but it was crucial in order to record and partially interpret the data while my embodied memory was fresh. Each entry was a mixture of descriptions of the participants' experiences observed and my reflections on my own experiences – some with the participants, other by myself (see Appendix III for an example). Therefore, the fieldwork journal was reflexive and autoethnographic to a certain degree, containing three types of data: external data, self-reflective data, and self-observation data (Chang, 2008).

Acknowledging the methodological significance of participation with my own body, I call my fieldwork method as 'participation/observation' instead of 'participant observation'. This is because participation was equally (or more) important for me as a way of doing and knowing in research (Payne, 2005). By WWOOFing with my research participants, I empathically gained deeper understandings of their sensory engagement with(in) the environment through my body, which is co-emplaced and thus open to others (Pink, 2009, p. 64). The embodied insights were helpful for me to ask relevant questions to the participants during the interviews. They also enhanced my later textual engagement with the interview transcripts.

Interview. As part of the fieldwork data collection, two 60-90 minute semi-structured individual interviews were conducted in English. They were audio-digitally recorded with my mobile phone. During the interviews, I also made notes of some of their words and phrases in order to improvise meaningful interview questions. In total, the recorded interviews exceeded 20 hours.

The interviews were designed with an interview guide approach (Patton, 2002, p. 349), with pre-selected topics broadly related to the research problem of WWOOFers' nature experience. Those topics included: nature experience background; motivations and expectations for WWOOFing; nature experience during WWOOFing; interactions with the hosts; and environmental learning by WWOOFing (see Appendix IV for comprehensive interview topics and questions). However, in order to generate more empathetic interview data that were personally meaningful for the participants (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 696), I also encouraged them to talk freely and extensively about what they thought was particularly important in their WWOOF (nature) experiences.

For the second interview, each participant was asked to bring five photographs to represent their nature experiences during WWOOFing (see Chapter 4 for some examples). This 'photo elicitation' (Harper, 2005) technique was found to be very effective for the participants to recall and describe their nature experience more sensorially and evocatively. It potentially brought the material 'real' of nature more into their discursive representations (Hart, 2005), which was important for my ecologically oriented post-critical methodological framework. All the participants allowed me to keep their five photographs for my research purposes, except: Steph provided me two photographs with the condition that I clearly state her copyright for them in my use; and Moon decided that her photographs were not to be used for other purposes. In total, therefore, I collected 42 photographs from the participants.

Two interviews with each participant were conducted with an approximately one week interval: the first interview at a participant's or my arrival (whichever occurred later) at a WWOOF site; and the second interview prior to the participant's or my departure (whichever occurred earlier). Since some of the topics were possibly sensitive (e.g. experiences with the hosts), the interviews were conducted in a private space, such as a participant's room, to encourage their free and honest ideas and opinions. Where the physical conditions were appropriate, I also conducted some interviews outdoors in order to proximate the interview environment to the

Wwoofing environment. They were assured that the interview contents would not be revealed to the hosts. The majority of the participants possessed high competency in English for describing and explaining their experiences in great detail.

Data Treatment

From a linear point of view, the phase of data treatment is placed somewhere in between data collection and data interpretation, since the treatment is impossible without the data having been collected, and the interpretation is impossible without the data having been collected and treated. However, in reality, these phases may often be recursive in qualitative research (Chang, 2008, p. 122). They were, in my case. While I was collecting my data, I also worked on and with the data (e.g. thinking about potential experiential themes, etc.), which improved my later data collection. Thus, the methodical procedure in this study was temporally messy and certainly not linear. However, in the following, for the purpose of methodical clarification, I try to pull out a quasi-linear timeline out of the mess regarding how the collected data was organised and reduced into the two main data forms – fieldwork journal (including photographs and videos) and interview transcripts. The timeline partly overlaps with the data collection phase and the data analysis and representation phase.

Fieldwork journal. Writing up a one-day experience with my research participants into a fieldwork journal entry at night was a process where their ‘raw’ experience was heavily reduced into around 1,000 words. It was a process of data collection, because my observation and interaction with the participants were materialised as textual data at the time of writing. It was also a process of data interpretation, because in writing, I not only chose ‘some topics rather than others’ (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 159), but also closely ‘understood the human experience’ (Richardson, 1990, p. 65) of my participants and myself. Writing is ‘a method of discovery’ (Richardson, 2001, p. 35). The following shows the procedure of how I treated my fieldwork journal (including photographs and videos that I took during the fieldwork) in this study.

- (1) During the day, I observed and participated with my research participants in work and other activities (e.g. yoga, cooking/eating, and so on). As I did so, I jotted down keywords in my notepad and/or took photographs and videos.
- (2) At night, in a personal space (often in my own, allocated, room), I looked through the jottings and photographs/videos to recall some events that I interpreted significant for my research problem and questions. Writing every night consistently was crucial for me to record the participants' and my experiences appropriately. A fieldwork journal entry often included the participants' speech in our casual conversations. Their speech was reconstructed based on my jottings and memory.
- (3) After fieldwork, at my own home, I read/listened to (using a text speech function of my computer) the fieldwork journal to conduct an 'open coding' where the text was examined 'line-by-line to identify and formulate any and all ideas, themes, or issues they suggest, no matter how disparate' (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 143). Listening to the text read out by the computer gave me a broader impression of the recorded experiences.
- (4) Using the codes, photographs, and videos, I composed an individual narrative of each participant's experience of nature during WWOOFing. In composing narratives, 'the photo/video elicitation' (Harper, 2005) technique I used for the interviews was also helpful for me to relive my embodied experience with the participants. In some occasions, other sensory cues, such as the organic jam the berry farm host had given me as a souvenir, were used to re-live the ethnographic events and their meaning (Pink, 2009, p. 68).
- (5) When I found a topic for an individual narrative that was very significant and if the participant agreed (all participants had been informed that I was going to write their individual narratives as part of the thesis), the narrative was pre-composed at the fieldwork site prior to the open coding. Emplacing myself in the very environment where his/her experience took place (e.g. Steph's narrative in the kitchen, Clare's narrative on the hay roll – see Chapter 4) gave me detailed sensory clues to re-construct the event.

Possible procedural limitations include:

- Ideally, (much) more than 1,000 words for a daily fieldwork journal entry were preferred to decrease the level of reduction. After working outside for seven to eight hours during the day however, it was beyond my physical limit to do so.
- In this research project, the photographs and videos were not systematically used as the main data source due to the limit of a PhD study. The visual-audio data could have enhanced the material aspect of the participants' nature experience. Instead, some photographs are used in Chapter 4 as a representational means.

Interview transcripts. Interview data was treated in the following procedure.

- (1) All the semi-structured interviews with the participants were conducted at the fieldwork sites.
- (2) The interviews were audio-digitally recorded using my mobile phone while I made some notes of key words/phrases to improvise meaningful interview questions. The whole interview events (e.g. the participants' bodily reactions, the environmental settings, and so on) were reduced to audio information.
- (3) After the field trip, using a transcription computer software programme, I manually transcribed the audio records. In that process, I modified semiotically minor details of the participants' speech (e.g. removing excessive colloquial expressions such as 'um...' and 'like') so that the transcripts could be more readable for the later interpretation process. Sometimes, I corrected participants' grammatical errors in their transcripts when they asked me to do so in advance. To the best of my ability, I interpretively tried to maintain the 'original' meaning of their speech (c.f. Taylor, 2013). By the end of the transcription process, I familiarised myself with the textual contents of the interview data.
- (4) By reading the transcripts closely line by line, I coded them with four highlight colours to indicate four existential aspects (or Fundamental Lifeworld Themes, FLTs to be shortened) of human experience: spatiality (green), temporality (blue), corporeality (pink), and relationality (yellow) (van Manen, 1990 – see Chapter 5 for the details).

(5) Using the database function of Excel, I categorised the generated codes into meta-codes and themes under the four FLTs. The interpretive process of coding and categorising, and thematising was cyclic (Hennink, Hutter, & Balley, 2011, p. 237), meaning that I continually worked on them back and forth by engaging with the database and transcripts (finalised in June 2016). This continuous process was particularly important because the four FLTs of human experience are not easily distinguished from one another.

Possible procedural limitations include:

- The interview events as rich ‘social, sensorial and emotive encounters’ (Pink, 2009, p. 83) were regrettably reduced to audio, and then textual data as they were recorded and transcribed. This procedure, however, was needed for a more textually oriented thematic analysis in Chapter 5 as a contrast to a more materially oriented narrative writing in Chapter 4 (see the next section).

Data Analysis and Representation as ‘Findings’

A theorising is needed in order to think about the phenomenon of WWOOFers’ nature experience. At the same time, representing WWOOFers’ nature experience too statically and linearly is problematic, since the phenomenon is complex, and even contradictory to a certain degree. As part of post-critical methodological double movements, the methods of data analysis and representation were designed with James’s levels approach to the phenomenon (i.e. epistemological abstraction). They were also inspired by what Law (2004) called ‘method assemblage’.

Method assemblage, a complex philosophical and methodological notion, may be understood as ‘the enactment of a bundle of ramifying relations that generate representations in-here and represented realities out-there’ (Law, 2004, p. 161). Ontologically, realities out-there are ‘messy’. Thus, to represent such realities in social science research, representation also needs to take a messy form. To practise the bundle or correspondence between the messy realities and the messy representation, Law recommended a range of analytical and representational methods to be assembled and used in an inquiry.

While James's epistemological abstraction offers an analytical framework for my inquiry so that it makes (more) sense, Law's method assemblage allows me to play with the framework without destroying its guidelines. In fact, epistemological abstraction and assemblage may even work symbiotically in my study, for both theorising and contextualising are needed for a post-critical inquiry of WWOOFers' nature experience.

Since each analysis and representation method in this study is circumstantially supported with a range of theories and methodologies, their details will not be elaborated here. They will be explained in the beginning of the corresponding findings chapter, as forewarned at the start of this chapter. Here, instead, I have only indicated the skeletal methodological structure of how James's epistemological abstraction was creatively applied for the data analysis and representation procedure via Law's notion of method assemblage.

The first level of the analytical framework is the level of *empirical analysis*. This level deals with the phenomenality of WWOOFers' nature experience. The phenomenon 'emerges as neither a realist or an idealist concept, but rather somewhere *in between*' [original emphasis] (Trigg, 2012, p. 6). A phenomenological double movement is conducted in order to construct the phenomenon in the centre. One movement is from the objective/realist correlate to the centre, and the other is from the subjective/constructivist correlate to the centre (Ihde, 1983, pp. 119-136). My understanding of the phenomenon, or phenomenality, as an overlapping constitution of the objective and the subjective (or, the realist and the constructivist) is consistent with the ecophenomenologically disaggregated research questions for WWOOFers' *nature experience* in this study (Toadvine, 2009). That is, the phenomenon is approached as the (ecopedagogical) *relations* (RQ3) between the question of the WWOOFers' *experience of nature* (RQ1) and the question of the *nature of the WWOOFers' experience* (RQ2).

The first phenomenological movement, from the objective/realist correlate to the centre, is conducted in Chapter 4. This generates part of the phenomenality of WWOOFers' nature experience – the WWOOFers' experience of nature (RQ1). In Chapter 4, the main data source is the *fieldwork journal*. I consider that this data source is more 'objective' and 'realistic', since it includes more embodied and emplaced 'doing' of the participants (i.e. what they did more than what they said). From this objective/realist correlate underpinned by the participation/observation data,

which was partly accessed through my own bodily ‘doing’, my *description* moves towards the centre with more (inter-)subjective ‘*impressionistic tales*’ (Van Maanen, 2011).

As the counterpart of the first phenomenological movement in Chapter 4, the second phenomenological movement from the subjective/idealist correlate to the phenomenal centre is conducted in Chapter 5, in order to examine the nature of the WWOOFers’ experience (RQ2). There, the main data source is the *interview transcripts* in which the participants reflexively expressed their subjectivities with words. From the subjective/constructivist correlate, my *interpretation* moves to the centre with a series of *existential themes* generated by a hermeneutic phenomenological data analysis method (van Manen, 1990). An existential theme is more ‘objective’ than a tale or a narrative, where the potential ‘essences’ of the WWOOFers’ experiences are each crystallised into a word or two.

The degree of abstraction increases in the next analytical level of *conjunctural analysis*. There, not only the collected and treated data (i.e. fieldwork journal and interview transcripts), but also the *constructed phenomenality* in the previous level of empirical analysis (i.e. tales and themes) is analysed. In the first part of Chapter 6, following James, modes of practice in WWOOFers’ nature experience are *sociologically analysed* in order to identify potential dominant and subordinate modes in production, exchange, organisation, communication, and enquiry. In order to enhance the sociological analysis ecologically, Payne’s (2014) ecopedagogical notion of ‘environmental design’ is added. This enables me to analyse modes of ecological design and their ecopedagogical relations (RQ3) between the social and the environmental (i.e. ‘ecological’ = ‘social’ + ‘environmental’) as well.

The second part of Chapter 6 engages with the next analytical level of *integrational analysis* with an increasing intensity of abstraction. The primary ‘data’ for this sociologically oriented *relational analysis* is the *modes of ecological design* identified in the first part of Chapter 6. Due to the limited space of a PhD thesis, only two modes of ecological design, exchange and enquiry, are selectively elaborated in order to analyse *modes of ecological integration* in the WWOOFers’ nature experience. The analysis refers to theory of economic anthropology and environmental learning, and other overarching social theory of integration and differentiation such as Zygmunt Bauman’s (1993) postmodern ethics. The integrational analysis also corresponds with RQ3, but at a more abstract level.

The final analytical level of *categorical analysis* is theoretically and philosophically demanding, and thus it is unfortunately beyond the scope of this PhD study. However, in Chapter 7, my partial engagement with the potential ontology of WWOOFers' nature experience (which is the research problem, RP, of this study) is expressed as *theory* which synthesises the findings from the previous chapters. Particularly, within the theory, my theorising and self-critical detheorising will focus on enacted nature-human relations in WWOOFing. *(De)theorising* is attempted by largely referring to Jean Baudrillard's major work *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1993). If synthetically constructing theory is post-critically needed for an understanding of WWOOFers' nature experience, deconstructing the theory is also post-critically needed for an inquiry where linearity and related anthropocentric epistemologies are to be problematised with modesty.

Table 3.5 summarises the post-critical methodological approach to data analysis and representation.

<i>Epistemological abstraction</i>	<i>Data source</i>	<i>Analysis method</i>	<i>Representation method</i>	<i>Research question</i>	<i>Chapter</i>
Empirical analysis (1)	Fieldwork journal	Description	Impressionist tales	RQ1	Chapter 4
Empirical analysis (2)	Interview transcripts	Interpretation	Existential themes	RQ2	Chapter 5
Conjunctural analysis	Constructed phenomenality	Socio-ecological analysis	Ecological design	RQ3	Chapter 6 (1st part)
Integrational analysis	Ecological design	Relational analysis	Ecological integration	RQ3	Chapter 6 (2nd part)
Categorical analysis	Previous findings	(De)theorising	Theory	RP	Chapter 7

Table 3.5 The structure of data analysis and representation (RQ = research question; RP = research problem)

Ethics

Ethical issues are 'at the heart' (Bochner, 2000, p. 269) of ethnographic research. This is understandable, since ethnographies often require the researchers to engage in

‘writing therapeutically, vulnerably, evocatively’ (Ellis, 2004, pp. 144-155) about others (and themselves) at a deeper level of their social identities (see also Ellis, 1993). Therefore, my ethnographic methods involved a series of ethical decisions of what to represent and what not to represent. This was a challenge and a dilemma, especially for issues such as exploitation and abuse that were politically and ethically important for the deconstruction of the ‘alternative’ in WWOOFing. When the participants and hosts expressed their wishes for something not to be mentioned, however, I followed their requests regardless of its significance for my research and/or my sense of socio-ecological justice.

Ethical research conduct was a priority in the recruitment of the cooperating hosts and the participating WWOOFers in this research. They received the full information about this project with the Explanatory Form and the Consent Form prior to their decision to cooperate/participate. Although anonymity of the hosts and the WWOOFers was impossible due to my physical presence and interaction with them, confidentiality was maintained by assigning a pseudonym for each individual appearing in this thesis (Babbie, 2008). Exceptions were made when they requested that I use their real names. Since the geographical locations of the WWOOF sites are methodologically important to indicate their environmental diversity, I sought permission from each host to reveal their approximate location (i.e. region) in the Consent Form.

This study, including the procedures of research collaborators/participants recruitment and data collection methods, has been approved by Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC), with the reference project number of CF14/3571-2013001839 (Appendix V).

Summary

In this chapter, I theoretically and practically outlined the framing of my post-critical methodology for a sociologically oriented ethnographic study of the ten international WWOOFers and their nature experience. James’s constitutive abstraction (thesis) is the main theoretical informant for my methodological framing. Major methodological and methodical limitations and limits were acknowledged and will be reflexively scrutinised in the final chapter so as to enhance the integrity of this study. They are briefly summarised in the following.

Methodologically:

- My limited literary skills to represent (eco)poetically the participants' experience of nature (relevant in Chapter 4)
- Identifying the 'dominant' categories/modes interpretively and analytically (relevant in Chapters 5 and 6)
- Under-treated categorical analysis within James's epistemological abstraction (relevant in Chapter 7)

Methodically:

- The limited pool of the cooperating hosts during the data collection period
- More participation than observation in terms of duration
- Various forms of inevitable data reduction
- Non-systematic treatment of the photographs and video data

The key issue deliberated about in my post-critical methodology is the need for a series of double movements. The logic of 'as well as' or 'both/and', rather than of 'either/or', works through James's four constitutive levels of epistemological abstraction. In outlining my post-critical methodology, I identified a series of double movements that are theorised and practised across the various levels of methodology and methods. Table 3.6 summarises the post-critical methodological double movements for this study.

Level of methodological abstraction	Double movement	Theorist / Methodologist
Ontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is likely that the phenomenon of the WWOOFers' nature experience is both 'alternative' and 'non-alternative'. • The intellectual space is with both theoretical depth and contextual breadth. 	James (2006) James (2006)
Epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the phenomenon requires both theorising and contextualising 	James (2006)
Research approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To attend the complexity of lived experience requires both a phenomenological approach and an ethnographic approach. • The research takes place with both the presence of the researched and of the researcher 'I' • The researcher and the researched interact through both linguistic textualism and sensorial embodiment 	Creswell (2008) Ellis & Bochner (2000) Payne (2005) Pink (2009)
Legitimation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The trustworthiness of the research is ensured with both triangulation and crystallisation 	Denzin (1989) Richardson & St Pierre (2005)
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research design considers both the represented merits and the Othered/absented non-representational demerits 	Law (2004)
Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For participation/observation, I acted both as a WWOOFer and a researcher • The conducted semi-structured interviews were both structured and open. 	Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (1995) Patton (2003) Fontana & Frey (2005)
Data analysis / representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The phenomenality was constructed from the both correlates of the objectivist/realist and the subjectivist/constructivist. • Various methods of analysis and representation were assembled to express both the linearity and the mess of the phenomenon under study. 	Trigg (2012) Ihde (1983) Law (2004)

Table 3.6 Post-critical methodological double movements

Chapter 4 WWOOFers' Experience of Nature: Ethnographic Impressions of Embodiment

Methodological Introduction

Be prepared to cast off agency, structure, psyche, time, and space along with every other philosophical and anthropological category, no matter how deeply rooted in common sense they may appear to be. (Latour, 2005, pp. 24-25)

WWOOFers' nature experience, the research problem (RP) of this study, is deceptively complex due to the notions of 'nature' and 'experience'. Both terms are notoriously ambiguous, let alone the different ways they interact with each other. Therefore, as a way of dealing with the conceptual complexity of the RP, what could constitute 'nature experience' is ecophenomenologically (Toadvine, 2009) disaggregated into three interrelated research questions (RQs) as a way of textually accessing the phenomenon under study. The three research questions are: what is the WWOOFers' *experience of nature*? (RQ1); what is the *nature of the WWOOFers' experience*? (RQ2); and what are the *ecopedagogical relations* between RQ1 and RQ2 (RQ3)? As the RQs indicate, Ted Toadvine's ecophenomenology invokes a three-fold approach to describing, interpreting, and analytically explaining the WWOOFers' experience of nature.

The orientations of the next three chapters (including this one) are inspired by this ecophenomenologically framed methodological structure. That is: (1) a (more) objectivist/realist description of 'experience of nature' in this chapter; (2) a (more) subjectivist/constructivist interpretation of 'nature of experience' in Chapter 5; and (3) a socio-ecological analysis of ecopedagogical 'relations' between RQ1 and RQ2 in Chapter 6. As already introduced in Chapter 3, the three RQs also correspond with Paul James's (2006) social theory of 'constitutive abstraction (thesis)', particularly its (meta-)methodological levels of epistemological abstraction: Chapter 4 (RQ1) and Chapter 5 (RQ2) for empirical analysis; Chapter 6 (RQ3) for conjunctural analysis and integrational analysis. Chapter 7 engages with the RP by synthetically reaggregating the three RQs and their findings, and in doing so, will limitedly conduct an categorical analysis, James's final and the most abstract level of epistemological abstraction, in order to theorise the WWOOFers' nature experience in a partial

manner. Visually, the relationship of the RP and its three disaggregated RQs, mediated by Toadvine’s ecophenomenology and James’s epistemological abstraction, can be represented as Figure 4.1.

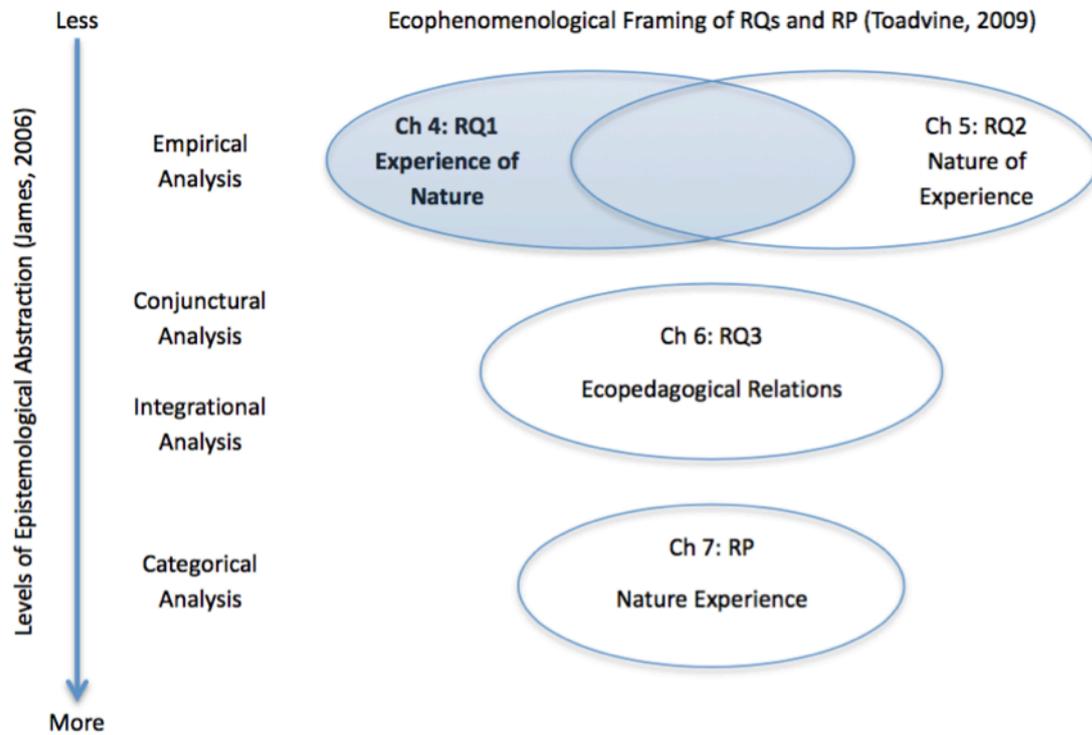


Figure 4.1 Research problem (RP) and research questions (RQs) (based on James, 2006; Toadvine, 2009)

In short, this chapter describes the WWOOFers’ experience of nature into a sample of ten ‘impressionist tales’ (Van Maanen, 2011) as a response to RQ1. The sensory ethnographic description (Pink, 2009) is generated largely based on the participation/observation data I recorded textually and audio-visually during my fieldwork. This descriptive procedure corresponds with James’s methodological level of empirical analysis. However, as explained in Chapter 3 on post-critical methodology, there is a need in each of Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 for further methodological explanation and procedural refinement in responding to the complex intersections of each RQ and each level of epistemological abstraction, within James’s (meta-)methodology. In the rest of this introduction section, I will clarify my methodology for this chapter.

In Chapter 2, with a post-critical literature review of the WWOOFers' nature experience, I indicated that the reviewed phenomenon is probably constituted by more than the critical discourse of/for an 'alternative' tourism experience (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). In Chapter 3, some methodological and methodical priorities were identified in order to deconstruct and destabilise (but not to destroy) the 'alternative' discourse. Following the standpoint I called 'post-critical' that informed those preliminary chapters, the broader purpose of this 'finding' chapter is to deconstruct, and more importantly, re-construct the phenomenality of WWOOFers' nature experience from the objective correlate by ethnographically attending to the process of their embodiment. This is one half of what I called 'phenomenological double movement' in Chapter 3.⁶

The discourse of the 'alternative' in WWOOFing has been well received in tourism studies, but perhaps somewhat excessively. Attending to more than the 'alternative' requires some sort of methodological doubt, and for that purpose, Bruno Latour's (2005) 'Actor-Network-Theory' approach indicated in the opening quote is worth considering. Latour encouraged researchers to slow down like an 'ant', instead of quickly jumping on to a 'critical' conclusion such as WWOOFing being an 'alternative' tourism experience. For Latour, the social is not *a priori* to be re-presented, but an assemblage performatively gathered and constructed. This means that, methodologically speaking, there are multiple ways of assembling the WWOOFers' experience (of nature), in addition to forcefully re-presenting the 'alternative'.

For a slower assembling method, Latour emphasised the essential role of agentic *things*, or 'actants' to mediate and 'translate' the network. Actants, instead of simply 'transporting' meaning or force behind the scene, 'transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry' (p. 39). In other words, 'all the actors [including actants] do something and don't just sit there' (p. 128). They 'might authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on' (p. 72) to translate WWOOFers' nature experience into something other than the 'alternative'. With Latour's network approach, the WWOOFers' experience of nature may be ethnographically assembled

⁶ In Chapter 5, the other half of phenomenological double movement is performed from the *subjective correlate* to the phenomenal centre. Methodologically, that movement is conducted as a hermeneutic phenomenological thematic analysis method (van Manen, 1990) of the WWOOFers' reflexive accounts of their experiences constructed in their interviews.

with agentic things in order to investigate their more objective *embodiment*, as well as their various subjective textualisms ‘socially’ associated with WWOOFing (Payne, 2005). Thus, this embodied approach will help us partly deconstruct and destabilise well re(-)presented aspects of the WWOOFers’ nature experience.

However, suspension of social discourse, not only of WWOOFing but also in general, is not so easily done when research itself is framed within language. Thinking otherwise, and presuming any sort of transcendent, is to me ultra-rationalistic and thus ultra-humanistic. For example, in this chapter, I aim to describe the WWOOFers’ experience of ‘nature’. But what of the experience of ‘nature’ to be described, and what is not to be described? To do this requires a shared base definition of what ‘nature’ is or would be to begin with. Otherwise, it is impossible to identify experience of ‘nature’ against other experiences. Every experience *in* ‘nature’ is effectively also an experience *of* ‘nature’. Thus, although desired, it seems impossible ‘to cast off... every other philosophical and anthropological category’ (Latour, 2005, pp. 24-25) when one investigates something empirically, because that something can only be recognised as something within a social framing. Toadvine (2009) also asked a series of philosophical questions that is related to the challenge posed by Latour:

...what does it mean to understand human beings as a part of nature, and how can we think nature starting from our situation *within* it? How does our situation as immanent to nature compromise – or give us access to – the being of nature? [my emphasis] (p. 7).

Indeed, ‘we are part of that nature we seek to understand’ (Barad, 2007, p. 184). Thus, to understand the WWOOFers’ experience of nature in that onto-epistemic condition requires some tentative ‘ruptures’ (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2015) from that which we are part of. The contextualised methodological question for this chapter, then, is how (much) rupturing is to be conducted in order to describe the WWOOFers’ experience of nature with an emphasis on their embodiment, while possibly avoiding the seductive trap of total textualism?

During my pilot experience and study of WWOOFing within a natural setting, I tried to simulate how ethnographic participant observation would proceed. Then, I realised that I did not know which experience of mine should be recorded in the notepad as my experience of nature. Given that both the notepad *space* and jotting

time were limited, I, an *embodied* researcher, could not possibly describe every experience of mine. Therefore, I needed to choose interpretively (van Manen, 1990). This is a methodologically practical limitation for ‘describing’ the WWOOFers’ experience of nature.

Taking the above limitation into consideration, RQ1 guiding this chapter requires a slight modification in order to acknowledge the interpretively selective nature of my description of the WWOOFers’ experience of nature. That is, instead of asking ‘what is’, perhaps, asking *when* and *in what ways* their experience of nature occurs to be more objectively observable for its description is more achievable. To avoid the excesses of subjectivism, psychologism, and textualism of what the WWOOFers’ experience should be, using ‘when’ and ‘in what ways’ as interpretive methodological tools for an empirical description of their lived experience need to be refined with materially oriented theory.

For ‘when’, I referred to Tim Ingold’s (2011) application of Martin Heidegger’s ontological philosophy of the shift from ‘availableness’ to ‘occurrentness’, suggested by Hubert Dreyfus (1991: 60-87, cited by Ingold). In this quote, Ingold explained the ontological process in an accessible manner:

To the skilled practitioner absorbed in an activity, the things he uses are available and ready to hand. So long as the activity flows smoothly, their objectness melts into the flow. As the practitioner’s awareness becomes one with the activity, he or she does not attend to objects as such. Hammering, the carpenter does not inspect the hammer; fiddling, the musician does not subject the violin to scrutiny. Only when the instrument fails to respond to the demands of the moment does the practitioner run hard up against it, in its brute facticity. The thing, at this point, is no longer available but occurrent. ‘What is this?’ curses the carpenter as the hammer misses its mark; or the musician when the violin goes out of tune or a string snaps... humans alone are haunted by the spectre of the *loss* of meaning that occurs when action fails. [original emphasis] (2011, pp. 80-81)

This philosophical framework for an understanding of how an object occurs to us is helpful for describing the WWOOFers’ experience of nature and the processes of their embodiment for a number of reasons. First, in order to determine ‘when’ their experience of nature occurs, one can focus on the moments when natural objects ‘occur’ empirically at hand to mark ‘failure’ in relation to the object. Second, an occurrence of experience of nature is ‘the *loss* of [full and original] meaning’ of

nature. This philosophically resonates with my post-critical methodological understanding of representation as an inevitable reduction that incorporates Othering of the non-representational (Law, 2004). In other words, describing experience of nature as something meaningful is only possible because experience in nature is not described, or Othered. It is in this reduction to a form of ‘epistemological realism’ (Bryant, 2011), however, that we can partially conceive and represent the various meanings of the WWOOFers’ experience of nature. In short, for ‘when’, it is summarised as that *experience of nature occurs when something withdraws at hand, which reduces the complete availability of experience in nature.*

The question of ‘in what ways’ could be also translated into of how the failure of the full and original meaning of the WWOOFers’ experience in nature occurs. For fieldwork, however, this is too abstract. I needed to be able to observe and describe ethnographically those failure moments of that would seemingly occur at hand, or for that matter, multisensorially at feet, at nose, at mouth, at ear, at eye (Pink, 2009) – being aware that how important a hand was for Heidegger. Theory with a more rigorous approach to the empirical and the sensory was needed. For that purpose, I found Latour’s concept of ‘translation’ by agentic things, or actants, quite useful. *Things do not always innocently appear as available. Instead, they translate the WWOOFers’ experience to let experience of nature occur with a sense of failure.* Importantly, a methodological attention to how things mediate the WWOOFers’ experience of nature may locate its occurrence in their embodiment, as well as in their textualised mind.

It is with the embodied processes of occurrence of the WWOOFers’ experience of nature enacted by things that I indirectly respond to RQ1 in this chapter. To do so, I more descriptively generate a sampling of ten short narratives inspired by what John Van Maanen (2011) called ‘impressionist tales’.⁷ An impressionist tale is usually ‘not about what usually happens but what rarely happens’ (p. 102) in order to evoke the phenomenon ‘as real, if not more real’ (p. 119). Locating the descriptive real in an accidental occurrence within an impressionist tale is in accordance with my methodological framing (with Latour and Ingold) of the WWOOFers’ experience of nature that occurs as failure triggered by things. In addition, an impressionist tale ‘braid[s] the knower with the known’ by ‘keep[ing] both subject and object in

⁷ John Van Maanen located his impressionist tale in between the two ethnographic traditions: realism/objectivism (‘realist tale’) and constructivism/subjectivism (‘confessional tale’).

constant view' (p. 102). This epistemological assumption also matches with my post-critical research approach where my researcher reflexivity is an inseparable element of my ethnographic understanding of the researched (see Chapter 3).

Each impressionist tale representationally unfolds in relation to a particular vibrant 'thing' (Bennett, 2010) that lets a WWOOFer's experience of nature occur. The ten impressionist tales sampled here are rather short due to word limitations of a PhD thesis. Instead of containing a few longer tales, the tales are presented in this manner so that they may reveal a certain abstract 'pattern' of the WWOOFers' experience of nature among them, which is important for theorising purposes in the later chapters. The sequence of the ten impressionist tales is in the order of my fieldwork, seasonally corresponding from late winter to late spring in the State of Victoria in Australia.

The impressionist tales sampled in this chapter were written in reference to the participation/observation data, including the fieldwork journal, photographs, and videos. These research materials were used to prompt my embodied memories with the research participants and our 'sensorial and emotional reality' (Pink, 2009, p. 121). For my interpretive selection of the 'things' featured in the impressionist tales, the research participants verbally confirmed the significance of the events associated with those either in an interview or in an informal conversation. To enrich the ethnographic impressions, each tale is accompanied with a photograph that, hopefully, visually conveys some aspects of their embodiment that are not captured in my text. The photographs may also compensate for my insufficient literary command of the English language for ecopoetic evocation, which was suggested as a crucial research method in (outdoor) environmental education research (Jardine, 2000; Wattchow, 2008, 2012).

Methodologically and methodically, my impressionist tales will be accompanied with a great deal of the non-representational, which is the major limitation of this chapter. In order to enhance the ethnographic impressions of the WWOOFers' experience of nature further, in the section following the impressionist tales, a sampling of the research participants' photographs is exhibited with minimal textualism. Those photographs were originally collected as a type of data for the purpose of facilitating the second interviews where they were asked to describe sensorially their nature experiences during WWOOFing. However, for this chapter, the photographs will also bring in some objective, material, sensorial, and emotional

realities of the WWOOFers' experience of nature that my impressionist tales will not capture.

Ten Impressionist Tales of the Ten WWOOFers' Experience of Nature

Steph: The Rainbow Chards CONNECT Everything



Figure 4.2 Rainbow chards in a glass jug with water on the kitchen table

Steph was not 'a WWOOFer' to be precise. To be sure, she had been WWOOFing here before, but now she was visiting Ralph (the host, pseudonym) as a 'house guest'. This was her fourth stay.

The traces of Steph were easily recognisable in the kitchen. Her artworks decorated the stained white wall. Her own health food – such as rapadura and coconut sugar – occupied a corner of a cupboard shelf. Steph needed them for her chronic health condition.

This afternoon, Steph came to the garden, talked to Ralph briefly, and then disappeared with a bunch of colourful rainbow chards in her hand.

Finishing work and returning home, I found the rainbow chards in a glass jug on the kitchen table. The colours of the stalks – red, pink, yellow, pale green, and white – were lurid in the water, adding a rustic charm to this basic kitchen.

Steph was an artist. Her large collage titled 'Mothers of the Wild' was hung by the kitchen table. Steph made this artwork for Ralph as part of her WWOOF work

when she was too unwell to work in the garden. The unframed white panel displayed two types of photographs. One type was Australian native flowers, of red, yellow, and white. The images were cut by hand, leaving uneven paper edges. The other was of old-fashioned black and white photographs that showed a sequence of a woman's hands planting bulbs in a rectangular pot.

That evening, Steph was cooking buckwheat pancakes for us.

'This pancake goes well with anything. I make these with buckwheat, chickpea flour, cumin, and other spices. And then make different savoury toppings. For example, I've made one with creamy tofu sauce with smoked salmon and red peppers from the garden, and sundried tomatoes, and then had that with some nice greens.'

The bare kitchen was soon filled with the toasty and buttery aroma of the pancakes.

Buckwheat, Steph said, did not make her stomach weak and take energy away from her. Common wheat flour did.

For health reasons, Steph also preferred raw food. The other day, she made us a two-layered raw cake without sugar. The top layer of chocolate mousse was made from cocoa powder, dates, almonds, pumpkin seeds, and water. The bottom crispy base was very crunchy raw buckwheat, dates, cashew nuts, and coconut oil. Clare, interested in learning 'Australian style' cooking, enthusiastically asked Steph for the recipe and wrote it down.

As Steph waited for her pancakes to rise in the pan, she danced with Ralph to the soft music that came out from a tall wooden speaker placed near the cupboard.

To go with the pancakes tonight, the slices of the rainbow chard stalks Steph picked this afternoon were being sautéed in a pan that had lost its Teflon coating ages ago. The chards were all losing their original colours and turning brown, except the red ones.

Clare: The Hay Roll STRETCHES Her Back



Figure 4.3 Overlooking the vegetable garden upside down from a hay roll

In one winter afternoon, turning her back against the warm Central Victorian sun, Clare was squatting on a narrow edge of a baby onion patch. She was wearing purple sleeve covers and a large white flower-patterned hat with a cloth to protect her neck. ‘My friend gave me this for work here. I don’t want to get sunburnt. It’s like an old Asian lady’s hat!’

We had been weeding for more than a few hours. On the other side of the patch that was wide enough to place a plastic crate, I sat on it and faced the sun. Clare preferred to squat. When she moved forwards, I moved too. In that way, we could talk.

The onion patch was about one metre wide. Bending her back, Clare extended her arms to reach the middle ground. Then, she moved her hands over the patch to detect the weeds with her fingers through the garden gloves. Clare took time to remove the weed out of the soil one by one, making sure that the roots were fully attached.

‘In Taiwan,’ Clare told me, ‘we have an old saying about weeding. In English, it’s something like “if you don’t remove the roots, the grass comes back when the spring wind blows.” So, it is important to remove roots, too.’

Clare offered to write the saying in my notepad.

斬草不除根、春風吹又生。

‘You can read it, right?’

Weeding bored Clare but she said it was very important for organic farming. By weeding, she could 'give baby plants much space, energy, and water' so that they could 'grow stronger naturally'.

A few more hours of talking and weeding.

'Doesn't your back hurt?' I stood up in agony.

'I have been here for almost two months now so I have got used to it. Also, every night after dinner, I do yoga with Ralph. It's good for weeding. And he is a good teacher. You should do it too! Anyway, what time is it now? Almost five, isn't it? I have been here long enough to tell time by the position of the sun!'

I looked at my watch, and then at the sun. It was quarter to five, and the sun was over the woods.

Ralph came out and told us to finish.

As we left the onion patch, Clare pointed at the rolls of hay near the garden gate.

'You asked me about my nature experience, and this is very important for me.'

Clare suddenly ran towards the hay rolls and jumped up to the top of one hay roll. Then, she lay down and stretched her back over the soft curve.

'You should do this too. This is good for your back after weeding for a long time!'

I climbed up and lay next to Clare. The hay crushed gently under my body, releasing a sweet dry smell.

We lay there for a while. Clare was gazing into the open sky.

'The sunset... it's so beautiful and relaxing. I like watching the sunset upside down lying here. And you know, the earth is turning around the sun. Looking at the sunset makes me feel the power of nature.'

The sun radiated its last warmth for the day on our skin, which the wind soon took away.

A pair of cockatoos was flying to the west where the colours gradually changed from blue, white, then to orange. In the other direction, streetlights turned on all at once.

Tea: The Bucket COLLECTS Scrap Food for Penny the Pig



Figure 4.4 Tea taking scrap food in the bucket to Penny the pig

A white plastic bucket was under the kitchen table. Ralph told us to put all the organic rubbish from the kitchen into this bucket. Scrap vegetables, eggshells, and teabags with the strings removed. The bucket did not have a lid and attracted flies.

Every morning at eight o'clock, Tea took the full bucket and cheerfully led us to Penny, a pig that lived on the way to the garden. Tea took this task over from Clare as soon as she arrived at Ralph's farm.

Tea told us she was an 'animalist'. She had recently become a pescatarian for her love of animals. First, in 2013, Tea stopped eating lamb and veal. She thought it was too cruel to eat baby animals that were created 'only to be eaten' in a 'machine-like' system. A year later, in the beginning of 2014, she gave up meat all together.

Crossing a small wooden bridge over the dried riverbed separating the house and the vegetable garden, Tea and Clare started calling Penny. The pig rushed out from her pen (an old trailer, with her name painted in pink) wagging her tail and ran to the corner closest to us.

Penny lived there by herself.

As she approached the electric fence, Tea held up her mobile phone and took a video of Penny. Tea and Clare kept calling Penny, and Penny talked back with apparently different tones of 'oinks'. Her small dark eyes perceptively followed Tea

while busily moving her ears forwards and backwards. The foul smell grew stronger, but Tea said she did not mind.

Tea stood so close to the electric fence that Clare and I worried that Penny might bite her. Tea put her mobile phone away into her jeans, then lifted the bucket over the fence and poured out the scrap food in front of Penny's head. Penny immediately dived in. Some mud splashed onto Tea's jeans. She said she did not mind.

'Penny loves pumpkin,' Clare told us.

'Yes, it's true! She is eating the pumpkin first! It's amazing!' Tea observed with excitement.

Clare then pointed to where the scrap food was dumped yesterday. 'Penny doesn't like garlic shoots. Look, she left them there. So now I put garlic shoots into the compost.' Penny apparently had some preferences for food.

Watching Penny eating, Tea started laughing. She thought a white stripe around Penny's chest looked like a 'sport bra' against her black body. 'This is crazy but I like her name Penny, too.'

After the morning work, on the way back to the house, a female worker reminded us.

'Penny is growing big, isn't she?'

A moment of silence.

'What happens to Penny?' Tea asked the worker. Penny was not owned by Ralph but by his landlord. No one, even Ralph, knew what would happen to Penny in the future.

Tea spoke out without her usual cheerfulness. 'I don't blame people who eat meat, but I think we should respect animals. For example, if the farmer looks after this animal and then decides to kill the animal to eat its meat, I don't think that's too bad.'

Penny oinked and asked us for food. But we had none.

Andreas: The Fence MARKS Where Emu Eggs Were Laid



Figure 4.5 A dark green emu egg laid by the fence

At Barbara's (the host, pseudonym) bird farm, collecting emu eggs was part of the morning work routine. Emus were kept in two separate locations: the neatly maintained flat paddock by the front road, and the rocky slope area in the back of the property with an open view of green rolling hills. Andreas was responsible for the front paddock.

A six-foot metal fence surrounded the paddock. The centre was covered with short green grass. Closer to the fence was bare dark brown soil. The emus shared the paddock with some goats but they kept some distance from each other all the time.

From the shed, Andreas brought a large plastic box containing a pile of moulded flatbread. Emus soon surrounded him, making a deep African drum-like sound from their stomach. Putting down the heavy box on the ground, Andreas started to throw the bread one by one like a Frisbee. Emus bobbed along and chased their food. Andreas thought it would be easier for the emus to eat if the bread was separated.

Holding up the empty box, Andreas began to walk along the fence looking ahead. Andreas soon pointed at two tree logs laid in parallel. There, a large dark green egg was shining, only lightly covered with dry eucalyptus leaves. Andreas quickly walked up and put the egg in the box.

We moved on along the fence, and Andreas found another egg by the fence in the distance. This time, it looked like the egg had been just abandoned there.

‘It is easy to find emu eggs here because there is not much grass. The eggs are dark green, so you can easily spot them.’

The egg lay about twenty centimetres from the fence, covered by nothing, but with some linear tracks marked on the hard ground.

Andreas quickly picked up the egg and put in the box. Having walked around the fence, we left the paddock. An emu had been following us along the fence, making the gentle drum-like deep sound.

‘I don’t know why the emus lay their eggs along the fence. My friend who knows a lot about animals said that emus would hide their eggs. But these emus don’t. That’s strange and unnatural. I don’t understand. Why don’t mothers want to protect their eggs?’

The two eggs collided with each other in the box.

‘Barbara sells these eggs for seven dollars each.’

I am the emu who followed you. You noticed me, but you did not give me my egg back. You may wonder why I left my egg there to be easily found by you. You may think that I did not care about my egg. But tell me, what else could I have done? In the grass? You must be joking, goats are grazing there! I laid my egg there by the fence, because it is far from the gate from which you always come in. By the fence, there is nothing to cover my egg with, I know that. Just some useless dried pine needles! So, I thought I would dig the ground with my foot, but the ground there is compressed and very hard. But I tried, you see. So tell me, what else could I have done within this fence? Is it me that is unnatural, or the fence that encloses us?

James: The Stick LEADS Him into the Wild



Figure 4.6 James looking for emu eggs with a stick and a bucket

‘I guess Andreas didn’t want to work hard.’ James told me, somewhat resentfully.

James was about to begin his search for emu eggs in the rough slope area located in the back of the property. The clayish terrain was very slippery, especially after the rain. Large trees burned down by a bushfire were left there lying. Grass was taller and denser. Sharp stones half buried in the ground uncomfortably poked up the thin soles of our gumboots.

Despite those obstacles on the ground, the area offered the most fascinating views from the property. On the right in the distance, cows roamed on the fresh green rolling hills dotted with homesteads. On the left across the valley, there was a gumtree forest. On a cloudy day, the mist would linger on the top of those trees. But James’ eyes were on the ground most of the time, avoiding the obstacles and looking for eggs.

After dumping a wheelbarrow-full of moulded flatbread in one spot for the emus to eat, James picked up an arm-length wooden stick at the gate. James kept his stick there and he always took it with him for his emu egg search. In this rough environment, James used the stick in many ways: to climb up and down the slope; to move tall grass aside to see if an egg was hidden there; and to push his way through ‘prickly’ branches and leaves.

‘Eggs are usually by the fence... but not always,’ James told me.

From the gate, James walked around the fence clockwise. He asked me to walk anticlockwise, so that we could meet at the half way point.

‘Have you found any?’ I asked. James shrugged his shoulders with his lips tightly shut. His eyes were kept on the ground.

The white plastic bucket James held in his left hand never contained an emu egg during my one-week stay.

‘This is my least favourite job,’ said James. It was ‘hard’ to find eggs when he could not see them in the distance. James, however, knew emu eggs were ‘important’ for Barbara to sell for money. He felt he had to try ‘harder’.

To the right of the slope was the bush where emus also roamed occasionally. Having completed his search around the slope, James entered the bush holding the stick in front of him. Densely covered with leaves and branches at the height of our heads, the inside was dark and damp.

‘Oh!’ James suddenly screamed.

‘Did you find an egg?!’

‘No... a dead emu!’

It was like a murder scene. The body was strangely twisted. A huge red gape was at the bottom of the bird’s long neck. The blood was already dried and did not smell much. The feathers – brown, khaki, and ivory – were scattered everywhere, indicating a violent chase and hunt.

‘We have to tell Barbara!’

James put his stick and bucket down, and took his mobile phone out from a pocket of his work pants. Tightly holding the phone in his shaking hands, James walked up to the bird. I stayed back and looked into its hollow dark eyes.

‘Barbara told me that foxes attack emus sometimes. It’s like Africa, you know, lions killing other animals. The wild!’

We completely forgot about emu eggs and quickly walked out of the bush. Within a minute, we arrived at the house.

Moon: The Logs ALLOW Her to Become a Full Woman



Figure 4.7 Moon carrying a log to the bulldozer

When I arrived at this spiritual community farm, the valley was still shrouded in the thick morning mist. The red brick farmhouse was on a small hill. A male devotee came out and greeted me, leading me into the quiet house. Sweet incense lingered in the warm air.

Across the dining table, Moon and Colin (the host, pseudonym) were talking over a cup of caffeine-free rooibos tea. I joined them, and asked about what WWOOFing was like here. Colin mentioned about the gender ratio.

‘About fifty-fifty, but a bit more females, perhaps. But women can be easily isolated in this kind of environment, so we need to be extra careful. It’s not good for a woman to be by herself. Women need to be protected by men and their husbands, you know.’

Moon, a proud recent law graduate, obviously did not know that, and assertively looked into Colin’s eyes.

‘Well, women, generally, you know. Not all women obviously!’ Colin corrected himself, quickly moving his eyes off from Moon.

One morning, as we were coming down from our accommodation building on another hill, we heard the brutal howl of a chainsaw. When we arrived at the farmhouse, Colin had already cut down two trees. We were all going to work together to clear the ‘weed’ trees today.

The logs and branches were on the wet ground for us to move. Moon, wrapped up in a black waterproof jacket and a thick grey wool scarf, started picking up logs indiscriminately and carried them to the bulldozer. Her breath was white.

The stumps were too heavy to lift up, so three of us together tackled them one by one to roll them into the bulldozer scoop. Moon soon took over as the leader.

‘Ok, let’s lift this up a little and turn it over this way.’ ‘Colin, can you drive back a bit and change the angle?’ ‘Keep pushing it guys, I think it will fit in.’

The two trees were completely removed within a few hours. Their pieces were carried away and dumped behind the farmhouse. Colin told us we were going to cut down all the trees tomorrow, and more at the dam after that.

Later in the evening, she was making a rhubarb crumble in the accommodation kitchen. I asked her if she liked physically hard work.

‘If it was just me, without Frank, there is no way I could have done that. So in that sense, I’m falling into the female stereotype... but that was just physically impossible.’

A few days later, around 7 am, Moon’s heavy breathing from the lounge woke me up. I waited until it became quiet and came out of my room. Moon and Frank were on the floor finishing a yoga session. During breakfast, Moon told me that she managed to do some ‘impossible positions’ this morning. She thought she had gained her muscle strength from work.

We were running a little bit late. When we arrived at the farmhouse, Colin was standing by the cow paddock fence.

‘Good morning guys! You can do weeding in the vegetable patches this morning and have the afternoon off!’

‘But you said we have more trees to cut down. We can do that if you want us to!’ Moon was determined.

‘Well, they can wait, I guess. Besides, I have to go to my daughter’s parent-teacher interview this morning.’

‘That’s a pity, because I’m full of energy this morning!’

‘You are full of energy are you? Oh well!’ Colin giggled.

Frank: The Branches SCRATCH Him Back



Figure 4.8 Frank proudly presenting red marks on his arms

At the dawn, Frank would spend time alone outside. Through the trees, thin white rays of sunlight gently landed to illuminate the dew in the grass. A mob of red kangaroos hopped around in silence.

The chainsaw told us it was already 9 o'clock.

'We will get there when we get there.' Frank finally came out his room in a cowboy hat he had found somewhere in the accommodation.

Down the hill and up to the farmhouse at the usual pace. Colin greeted us without showing any frustration for our being late (again). He had already cut down two trees in front of the house and was now about to cut the trees into pieces that we could carry.

Frank found a large log that had not been completely cut. He quickly picked up a double-edge axe resting on a stump and walked up to the log. With no hesitation, Frank took a giant swing. The axe blade went so far backwards that it almost touched his back. I froze. Next to me, Moon quickly took out her mobile phone to capture Frank exerting his force. With a few clean strikes, Frank succeeded.

Colin came back in his bulldozer with the arms attached to the front scoop. 'It's so much warmer than this time last year!' Colin told us. 'This is not like winter at all.' Frank put his jacket on the ground. He was only wearing his t-shirt now. The temperature was rising up quickly that morning.

Frank and Moon lifted up heavy logs together and neatly piled them onto the attached arms of the bulldozer. Having made a solid base of the logs in the scoop, Frank went off by himself to collect top parts of the trees with many branches. He forcefully dragged them one by one to the bulldozer and threw them on to the pile. Some were too large so I went and helped. ‘One, two, three!’ The branches spun in the air and whipped Frank’s face. His sunglasses protected his eyes and concealed his pain. Frank pressed the branches down with his bare hands to stabilise them on the pile.

Colin was about to cut down another tree. The chainsaw sank into the trunk with an explosive noise. The tree gradually reclined to the other side. When it could not hold itself any longer, with a rustling in the branches, it fell down elegantly. Frank, by my side, recorded this scene with his mobile phone.

Next morning, as Frank was preparing his tea in the kitchen, I noticed many red marks on his forearms.

‘It looks like I’m suicidal doesn’t it? These are from yesterday’s logging!’

I asked him if I could take a photograph of his arms outside. The kitchen was too dark. He laughed and extended his arms proudly.

‘Seeing yourself reflected in that environment, seeing yourself in that landscape, just knowing that you are part of it’, Frank told me, was a meaningful nature experience for him. The trees cut down and his arms scratched were such reflections for him.

Margherita: The Kneepads KEEP Her on the Ground



Figure 4.9 Margherita kneeling and weeding in the raspberry patch

‘The weeding will be okay today. It’s not too hot, and I don’t have to do this by myself.’

Margherita told me, as she was putting a kneepad on.

‘We have only two, so one for each.’

She passed me the other one of the pair. It was too tight for me, and I already felt some sweat running in the back of my knee, so I suggested she should use both. Margherita also put on a pair of red garden gloves and a thin black leather belt to keep a pair of secateurs around her waist. She was ready.

We headed to the area called ‘The White Room’. Eric (the host, pseudonym) had told us to remove ‘every cultivar but raspberries’ from the patches. This was where, according to Margherita, Eric did some experimental projects with raspberries. The white net covered the entire area to protect the raspberries from birds. Bees buzzed around the white small flowers at the height of our shoulders. Tiny green bugs crawled around the red fruits not yet sweet. (‘You have to wait for a few more week!’) The mushroom compost filled the air with an earthy organic aroma. No blues rock music was played loud from large outdoor speakers today, because Eric was away.

Margherita knelt on the ground to get close to the patch. Her left hand searched for the weeds while her right hand supported her bodyweight. The kneepads

allowed Margherita to remain in this position more comfortably for an extended period.

‘You have to be careful, because it gets confusing sometimes if the plant is small. So have a close look and don’t pick raspberries!’

Margherita told me we had all day so we did not have to hurry anyway.

As we continued on weeding, the path was slowly covered with the removed green grass, which worked like a thin cushion for us to rest on occasionally.

We weeded the two sides of a row at the same pace so that we could talk face to face. Margherita said it was good to have me here, because otherwise her ‘thoughts’ would ‘overtake’ her. Having had arrived in Australia only a month ago, Margherita anticipated a long-term stay because she wanted a new life. Second year Working Holiday visa, business sponsorship after that, and then all the other plans. But they were with uncertainties, and worried Margherita.

The temperature was rising. ‘Time never flied’ during weeding, especially when it was hot. Margherita would often check time with her mobile phone, hoping that we had weeded for at least an hour. Each time, she only found thirty minutes or less had passed.

‘So you are leaving tomorrow, right? I will you take you to the lake this evening. It’s very close, just off the property, and it’s very beautiful, I think. I went there with three Singaporean girls who also WWOOFed here before. There are wallabies and birds, and the water is very clear. We take the water from there for the berries. It’s boring to be alone in nature. I need to share the experience with somebody.’

Another thirty minutes or so in the same kneeling position. Suddenly, Margherita screamed.

‘Look, Yoshi, this is the insect that I was talking about! It is so beautiful. This is my favourite insect here! Come!’ Margherita’s face was almost touching the ground.

I walked around the raspberry row and kneeled down next to Margherita. By a young raspberry plant, there it was. The insect looked like a giant ant, about three centimetres, and its body shined with vividly dark ‘petrol’ colour. Its legs were red, similar to the colour of raspberry. We did not know its name.

‘It’s beautiful, isn’t it? When I’m weeding alone, this insect, and bees... they keep me company.’

Ben: The van TAKES Him to Australian Surfing Beaches



Figure 4.10 Ben and Anne's self-modified camper van

‘I have to show you my wooden surfboard I made by myself!’

After his first interview, Ben took me outside. The surfboard was standing against the house wall in a silver puffy cover. Ben opened the cover and took out the surfboard on a bench. The surface was so shiny that it reflected my face. The curve was smooth and even.

‘And I painted this. I found this design online and thought really cool!’ Anne added proudly.

Ben preferred to surf with his own board, not only because he made it by himself, but also because the heavy weight let him move ‘elegantly’ in the waves.

Next morning, the last day with good weather for surfing for a while according to the weather news, Ben and Anne asked the host if they could have a day off to go to a nearby National Park. They had already surfed at one of the beaches there a couple of times. Once, they stayed there overnight in their van. Clear cold water, white sand, green bush, blue sky, warm sun, ocean waves, smell of salt, quietness, and all alone. It was their ‘favourite place’.

With the host's permission, they started packing their van. It was a modest-looking Toyota Hi-Ace probably made in the 90s.

‘Show him inside,’ Anne smiled at Ben. Ben opened the back door to surprise me. It was almost like a proper camper van: a foldable bed, a kitchen bench, a sink

with running water, a refrigerator, a wineglass rack, and numerous shelves. A Native American dream catcher and small spherical multi-colour paper lanterns decorated this tiny space. The van was their cosy home on the road. On the roof, they had even installed solar panels to supply electricity.

Ben and Anne did all the modifications on the van by themselves for their one-year-long surfing holiday around Australia. This trip was very special for them, having completed their master's degrees in forestry in Germany.

'When the bed is up, it's actually spacious. We invested more than 1000 dollars to modify this van. We bought this van for about 3000 dollars, but one guy offered us 9000 dollars!' Anne told me proudly again.

Ben mounted their surfboards on top of the van and started the engine. I saw them off.

Around 8 pm, when the sun had almost settled in, they returned.

After a shower, at the dining table, Ben and Anne were looking through their *WWOOF Book* together to decide their next WWOOF sites. They told me that they wanted to leave here as soon as they had completed the terrace they were building for the host.

In the margin of the book, Anne marked three types of symbols to indicate their options: 'tree' for a property with a forest; 'horse' for a horse farm; and 'wave' for surfing. They were planning to stop along the Great Ocean Road for a while, and then to continue on westward to South Australia, with their van.

Anne: The Terrace LETS Her Enjoy the View



Figure 4.11 Anne carefully measuring a deck board for the terrace

Anne and Ben's major task during their WWOOFing was to build a raised level terrace attached to one of the property buildings. They had been working on the terrace for two weeks by the time I arrived. The basic structure (e.g. pillars and beams) had been built by previous WWOOFers.

Anne was good at carpentry. Back in Germany, when she was studying forestry, Anne made her own loft bed for her small city apartment.

In addition to their actual building, Anne and Ben also managed the project. They independently scheduled their daily work plan and how much time they wanted to spend for each task. They were also allowed to order materials from a small hardware shop in the town.

The major tasks to be completed included installing the deck boards, adding the fence, and securing the structure with crossbeams. As long as the terrace was completed by their departure, which was in a week time, Anne was sure the host would be 'happy'.

One morning, the deck boards Anne and Ben had ordered from the local shop arrived. 'These deck boards are good quality.' Anne showed me the surface treated with a narrow wavy pattern.

By the terrace, Anne knelt down on the grass and started measuring the deck boards. From both ends of each board, Anne used a metal tape measure and marked

the required length with a pencil. Then, using a set square, she drew a straight line at the marked length. Each board would make two panels, leaving some part in the middle.

‘We don’t have an automatic saw, so at least we want a clean cut on one side facing the front, to make the terrace look better. It’s very difficult to cut straight with a chainsaw.’

Keeping her head down, Anne ensured that each deck board panel was the same length. For Anne, it was important to do ‘a good job with no mistakes,’ although she knew that no one would notice the finer details. ‘It’s actually more for myself.’

The sun, the sea breeze, the fresh green, the cows, the birds, and the flies – nature receded to the background as Anne was focused on the task at her hand. But it was those perfect lines that would make a terrace in the garden for the host to enjoy.

By the last day of my fieldwork at this site, the terrace had been almost completed. In the evening, the three of us climbed up the terrace and sat there to celebrate. I brought some bottles of sparkling wine from the car. Ben brought some strawberries he just picked from the garden.

‘You are researching nature experience, right? Well, this is my nature experience, I think. As a result of building a terrace, we can enjoy the great view drinking champagne!’ Anne told me.

From this raised point, nothing lay between the National Park and us, except the calm silvery bay water. Far over the mountain there, a grey storm was gathering against the evening gradation of peach and orange.

The WWOOFers’ Photographs

This section exhibits nine photographs. The research participants provided these photographs for their second interviews where they were asked to describe sensorially their nature experiences during WWOOFing. With the methodological and methodical limitations in textually representing the WWOOFers’ experience of nature, these photographs will hopefully evoke their less textualised realities.

In addition, exhibiting participants’ photographs will enable them to ‘express their emplaced, sensory and emotional experiences and ways of knowing’ (Pink, 2009, p. 112) by themselves. It is important to note, however, that the total number of the photographs collected was 42, meaning that I reflexively yet reductively selected

them down to nine (one photograph of each WWOOFer).⁸ In doing so, however, I tried to sample the ones that may enhance the ethnographic impressions of the impressionist tales presented in the previous section.

Although the photographs are a physically visual medium, they may also function as ‘a route into the more complex multisensoriality of the experiences, activities and events’ (Pink, 2009, p. 101). The bodily senses are interactive rather than independent to each other (Ingold, 2011). In order to facilitate the multisensory evocation, I interpretively added a few words to their photographs. In some, I bodily experienced those senses with the participants. In others, I sensorially imagined from what they told me.

⁸ Except Moon who chose not to submit her photographs. Steph also chose to submit only two photographs.



oink • faeces • electricity

Tea



light bulb • wet hay • flux

Andreas



soil • intertwining • wonder

Frank



darkness • dampness • mystery

James



headphones • pause • solitude

Margherita



colours • calling • chainsaw

Anne



dew • calmness • moisture

Steph

copyright belongs to Steph,
and the right of reproduction remains with her



conversation • wattle • crunch

Clare



waves • salt • breeze

Ben

(Further) Abstraction

Being true to the purpose of this chapter – that is, to describe the WWOOFers’ experience of nature with some key sampled impressionist tales –, any sort of ‘conclusion’ may be unnecessary or even inappropriate. Nonetheless, from a broader point of view of my post-critical (meta-)methodological structure framing this study (James, 2006), what is ‘found’ about the first research question (RQ1) with an empirical analysis at the initial level of epistemological abstraction in this descriptively and objectively oriented chapter needs to be further abstracted, in order to provide a more meaningful connection to the following chapters and their respective but interrelated RQs and RP.

As a way of further abstracting this chapter, therefore, the sample of ten impressionist tales is analytically categorised to represent *three modalities of the WWOOFers’ experience of nature*. They are named *reversible, proximal, and dialectic*. Following Sarah Pink (2009), I understand the term ‘analysis’ in this context as ‘a process of *abstraction*, which serves to connect the phenomenology of experienced reality to academic debate’ [my emphasis] (p. 120) of WWOOFers’ nature experience. As Pink explained, it is impossible to provide a systematic method for a sensory ethnography analysis. Thus, my analysis here is more holistic and reflexive, being informed not only by the research materials (i.e. impressionist tales and photographs) but also by my own emplaced experience with the research participants. However, even with the limitations of scientific objectivity, some themes nonetheless emerged.

Table 4.1 analytically summarises the ten impressionist tales in this chapter. There, a great deal of their experiential details disappear so that they can reappear in different ways in later chapters that interpret, analyse, and theorise the WWOOFers’ nature experience with different methodological emphases.

Although the impressionist tales are individually categorised to correspond to one of the three modalities, this does not mean that a WWOOFer’s experience of nature during his/her WWOOFing was exclusive to such a modality. For instance, as it will be implied in the following chapters, it is likely that Steph had a reversible experience and a proximal experience, in addition to a dialectic experience.

Reversible experience. In reversible experience, the categories of ‘human’ and ‘nature’ became confusing and contestable. For Tea, Penny the pig was the deconstructive agent. Penny was both a ‘human-like’ pet and a natural ‘object’ to be raised and probably slaughtered. By feeding Penny every morning, Tea became part of Penny’s ontological ambivalence in the farm. Andreas initially thought that organic farming was something ‘natural’. However, after witnessing the emu mothers ‘unnaturally’ abandoning their eggs, he noticed that farming, organic or not, was an ‘unnatural’ practice after all. The category of ‘natural’ was critically questioned in Andreas’s experience. For Frank, the reversibility of ‘nature’ and ‘human’ was physically manifested as/in the environment. The trees were cut down by Frank and left the scars on his arms, indicating their environmentally mutual becoming-in-the-world. Reversible experience took place in the chiasm (Merleau-Ponty, 1968), right in the middle of ‘human’ and ‘nature’ where ‘humanising’ and ‘naturalising’ occur simultaneously. The photographs of Tea, Andreas, and Frank are associated with this modality.

Proximal experience. Proximal experience indicated nature’s co-presence with the WWOOFers at their WWOOF sites. In this modality, their experience was affected by nature despite their efforts to maintain human order in the environment. Clare prevented sunburn by squatting and turning her back against the sun, but this made her body sore and later led her to the hay roll to stretch. This experience positioned her body to lie down and gaze into the beautiful sunset. James brushed off branches and grasses with the stick to distance himself from nature, but the stick eventually led him to the ‘wild’ bush where the emu had been violently killed by foxes (allegedly). Margherita used the kneepads to avoid direct contact with the ground, but at the same time, they kept her on the ground for an extended duration allowing her to find a beautiful insect she established an emotional connection with. Anne built a terrace, an act of establishing human spatial order in nature par excellence, only to enjoy a more sublime view of the nearby National Park. Proximal experience emphasises the agentic vibrancy of nature informed by new materialism type ontology (e.g. Bennett, 2010; Coole & Frost, 2010). Humans may think that they control nature (or themselves in nature), but our control is always incomplete and open to other proximal beings that vitally cause surprises. The photographs of James, Margherita, and Anne are associated with this modality.

Dialectic experience. In dialectic experience, the WWOOFers experienced nature as something extraordinary, which possibly altered and/or improved their being. This modality best corresponds with the ‘alternative’ framing of WWOOFers’ (nature) experience. Meanings of the extraordinary differed among the WWOOFers. For Steph, nature connected many things she valued and this facilitated her perception of becoming healthy. For Moon, nature provided an opportunity to demonstrate that she was not going to be restricted to her gender roles as rural Australian culture would stereotypically portray her. For Ben, after studying in Germany and working in a hostel in Sydney for a long time, nature was a time-space of freedom to travel through and to enjoy his surfing holiday. Dialectic experience is closely associated with Dean MacCannell’s (1999) humanistic ‘tourist’ who wishes to escape the everyday alienation into a place of authenticity in order to realise his/her existential potential. The photographs of Steph, Clare, and Ben are associated with this modality.

In the next chapter, while remaining within the empirical level of epistemological abstraction, the nature of the WWOOFers’ experience (RQ2) is investigated by using a hermeneutic phenomenological analysis method.

Modality	WWOOFer	Background	Thing	Movement with thing	Translation by thing	Occurrence 'at hand'
Reversible experience	Tea	An animalist who recently became a pescatarian. Tea enjoyed interacting with Penny the pig by giving her scrap food collected in the bucket.	Bucket	Delivering the bucket of scrap vegetables to Penny every morning. Calling Penny on approach to which Penny answered with various oinks.	Bucket collected scrap vegetables to let Tea interact with Penny closely and to let the pig grow larger.	Giving food to Penny rendered what Penny was at the farm problematic for Tea: a human-like pet animal to be loved, or farm stock to be possibly slaughtered in the near future.
	Andreas	Collecting emu eggs in the flat paddock with less visual obstacles as a daily routine task. Easy to find eggs along the fence.	Fence	Walking around the fence to collect eggs. Being able to locate the deep green eggs against the brown ground in the distance.	Fence surrounded the emu enclosure. Fence marked where emu eggs were laid to help Andreas to collect them.	Andreas critically experienced the emus' 'unnatural' behaviour allegedly caused by 'unnatural' farm environment.
	Frank	'Weed' trees were cut by the host with his chainsaw to clear the landscape. Frank's task was to clear the cut logs and branches lying on the ground	Branches	Moving cut logs and branches to pile them up onto the scoop of a bulldozer. Working hard, Frank was wearing only a t-shirt.	Branches posed a challenge for Frank to achieve his task, then (ap)proved his intervention into the environment. Branches scratched and marked him in return.	In his scars and the fallen trees, Frank saw a mutual constitution of the environment where he and nature interacted (or intra-acted).

Modality	WWOOFer	Background	Thing	Movement with thing	Translation by thing	Occurrence 'at hand'
Proximal experience	Clare	Clare did not like weeding but she knew it was very important for organic farming. For weeding, Clare wore a large hat to avoid getting sunburnt.	Hay roll	After squatting and weeding for baby onions for an entire afternoon (2-5pm), stretching her sore back on the hay roll.	The hay roll stretched Clare's sore back after squatting for a long time. The roll also set her body in a relaxed pose where she was able to better enjoy the sunset.	Clare felt her body naturally relaxing, by stretching her back, and by watching the sun go down.
	James	As a daily routine, James searched for emu eggs on the rough slope with rocks, grass, and fallen trees. The search continued into the bush. It was very difficult to find eggs.	Stick	Climbing up and down searching for emu eggs in grass with a wooden stick, in the physically uncomfortable environment full of sharp rocks and prickly branches/plants.	Stick cleared the path for James by moving the obstacles aside. Stick led James into the bush, and to the dead emu.	Encountering the 'wild' death of the emu in the vicinity of the house.
	Margherita	In weeding, Margherita made sure that raspberries were the only cultivar left in the patch. She did weeding usually alone, often all day, in the unusually hot November weather.	Kneepads	Kneeling and weeding the raspberry plants, being careful not to remove raspberry shoots.	Kneepads kept Margherita's knees comfortable and clean during her weeding for an extended duration. Kneepads kept the distance between her and the ground close during the weeding.	The proximity with the soil helped Margherita find a beautiful insect that delighted Margherita.
	Anne	Building a terrace was her main task. Anne enjoyed the work because she loved and was good at carpentry. Anne and Ben were planning to leave upon the completion of the terrace.	Terrace	Carefully measuring deck boards into the same length, then cutting them with a small chainsaw.	Terrace established a family space next to the house. Terrace let Anne enjoy the clear view of the National Park without obstacles in the foreground.	Sitting on the nearly completed terrace and celebrating with sparkling wine and with the sublime landscape.

Modality	WWOOFer	Background	Thing	Movement with thing	Translation by thing	Occurrence 'at hand'
Dialectic experience	Steph	Suffering from a chronic disease, Steph sought for a holistic healing in nature. The city disconnected and fragmented Steph, causing her to be ill.	Rainbow chards	Picking rainbow chards fresh in the garden. Keeping them in a glass jar to decorate the kitchen. Simply cooking them to eat.	Rainbow chards connected the things Steph valued: land, art, food, company - and therefore health.	Steph experienced the connectedness as holistic health.
	Moon	A recent law graduate, Moon rejected the female stereotype, facilitated by a spiritual teaching to take care of women and/or by a misogynic culture of rural Australia she had observed.	Logs	Moving logs and branches to pile them up onto the scoop of a bulldozer. Leading other WWOOFers (i.e. Frank and Yoshi) to move giant stumps together.	Logs allowed Moon to engage in a physically demanding task. Logs encouraged Moon to prove she was more than a 'woman' disempowered.	Moon recognising that she gained muscle strength in the morning yoga session, feeling full of energy.
	Ben	Having completed his master's degree in forestry, Ben came to Australia for a year-long surfing holiday. After working hectically in a Sydney hostel for a while, he purchased and modified an old van into a camper to travel around Australia.	Van	Driving his camper van to a nearby National Park. Surfing with his self-made wooden surfboard. Planning to move to another WWOOF location near a surf beach.	The van took Ben (and his surfboard) to surfing beaches, and sometimes accommodated him for a night there. The van enabled Ben to travel around Australia.	Ben experienced his freedom of movement due to the van, which he knew not every WWOOFer could enjoy. This freedom gave him a sense of holiday in nature, in contrast with working in Sydney and studying in Germany.

Table 4.1 Three modalities of the WWOOFers' experience of nature

Chapter 5 Nature of WWOOFers' Experience: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Thematic Analysis

Introduction

The research problem (RP) of this post-critical ethnographic study is *WWOOFers' nature experience*, and that is ecophenomenologically (Toadvine, 2009, p. 8) disaggregated into three interrelated research questions. They are: (RQ1) what is the *WWOOFers' experience of nature?* (investigated in Chapter 4); (RQ2) what is the *nature of the WWOOFers' experience?* (investigated in this chapter); and (RQ3) what are the ecopedagogical *relations* between RQ1 and RQ2? (will be investigated in Chapter 6). The disaggregated research questions also correspond with the methodological levels of Paul James's (2006) epistemological abstraction. That is, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 for 'empirical analysis', and Chapter 6 for 'conjunctural analysis' and 'integrational analysis' (and Chapter 7 for 'categorical analysis' but in a partial and selective manner due to various limitations of this PhD study. Figure 5.1 represents the (meta-)methodological framing of this study and the methodological positioning of this chapter.

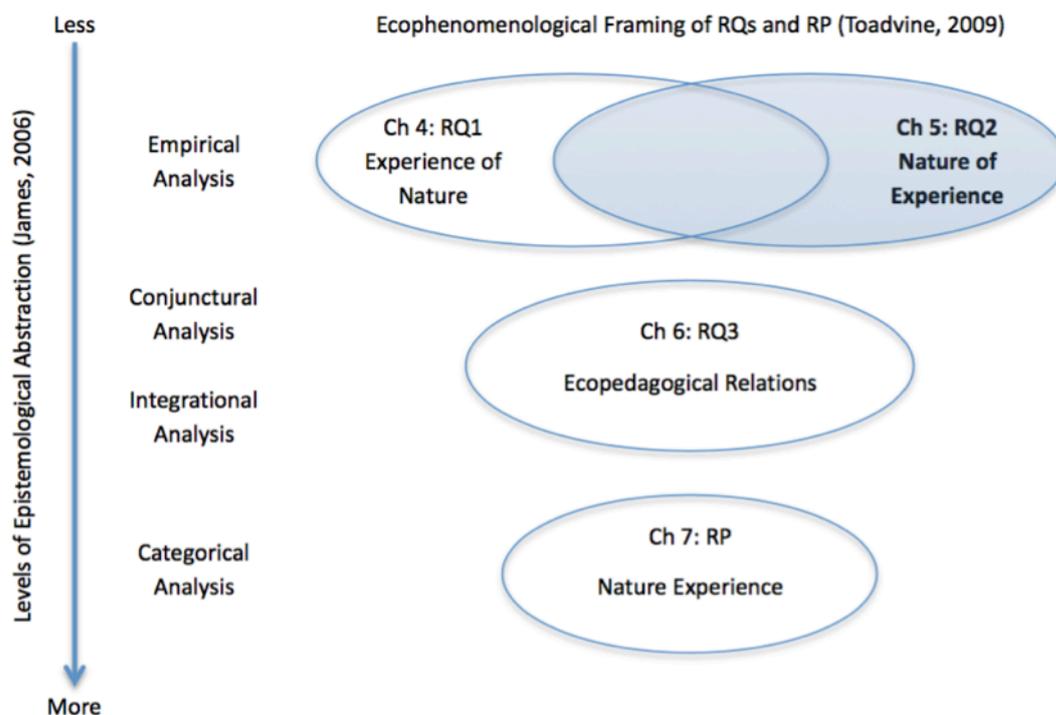


Figure 5.1 Methodological positioning of Chapter 5

This chapter focuses on the second research question (RQ2) by interpreting the semi-structured interview data generated with the ten research participants. To do so, a *hermeneutic phenomenological thematic analysis* method (van Manen, 1990) is employed. A hermeneutic phenomenological interpretation is needed in order to gain the participants' *subjective* insights into grounded understanding of the nature of the WWOOFers' experience in a more inclusive way. The phenomenological 'bracketing' provides a different empirical means of testing the grounds of the claims made for WWOOFing acting as an 'alternative' tourism experience that is seemingly accepted as a 'natural attitude' within academic tourism research (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). This chapter constitutes the other subjectivist/constructivist half of the phenomenological double movement for the methodological level of empirical analysis.⁹ The findings about the phenomenality of WWOOFers' nature experience from previous and current chapters will be sociologically analysed in the next chapter.

The interpretive pivot in this chapter is 'nature'. Given the problematic complexity of the term in the (English) language (Williams, 1983, p. 219), I will textually distinguish *nature* and *Nature* in this chapter only. The former, *nature*, is used to refer to a more epistemological aspect of 'the essential quantity and character of something' (as in, for example, 'The *nature* of this substance is unknown.'). The latter, *Nature*, refers to a more ontological aspect of 'the material world' and its 'inherent force' (as in, for example, '*Nature* gives us everything we need.'). This tentative distinction aims to clarify the interpretive text to a certain degree. However, the phenomenological interpretation in this chapter is precisely aimed at the confusion, since as a being-in-the-world we phenomenally experience both *nature* and *Nature* simultaneously.

Thus, ultimately, I cannot methodologically separate ontological *Nature* and epistemological *nature* either. Therefore, by the nature of the WWOOFers' experience in RQ2, I mean both *the nature of their experience* and *Nature that they experienced*. Put differently, my phenomenological interpretation in this chapter is aimed at the potential linking between the ontic and the epistemic, potentially revealing a certain level of transcendental 'ruptures' (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos,

⁹ In Chapter 4, a chapter devoted for the other half of the phenomenological double movement, the WWOOFers' experience of nature was more descriptively represented with a sample of ten ethnographic impressionist tales (Van Maanen, 2011), mainly based on the participation/observation data. This was conceptualised as a phenomenological movement from the objective collate towards the phenomenal centre of the WWOOFers' nature experience.

2015) within the localised context of WWOOFing. Put more directly, my phenomenological interpretation does not orient itself towards the ‘essence’ of WWOOFers’ nature experience (c.f. Creswell, 2007). Doing so is improbable in this study. The physical, geographical and socio-cultural settings of WWOOFing are tremendously diverse and variable (Yamamoto & Engelsted, 2015) even within the State of Victoria in Australia. However, I do hope that my ethnographically localised findings in this chapter will be partially transferrable to WWOOFing and other types of nature experience in similar (eco)tourism and environmental education settings.

Max van Manen’s (1990) hermeneutic phenomenology, if not completely (p. 10), de-emphasises the role of essence in phenomenology by acknowledging that every description is fundamentally interpretive (p. 180). Thus, it is compatible with the methodological framing of this chapter. His hermeneutic phenomenological thematic analysis considers that lived experience is constituted with four existentials, or what he called ‘Fundamental Lifeworld Themes’ (FLTs). They are spatiality, temporality, corporeality, and relationality.¹⁰ These four FLTs are the basic elements of human lived experience, and they provide a useful set of interpretive categories under which *existential themes* are generated.

The existential themes (20 in total) were generated in the following process.

1. I transcribed the audio-recorded interview data (approximately 98000 words).
2. I coded the transcript line by line, using four colours (one colour for one FLT).
The total number of the codes was 1014.
3. I created a database using Excel and entered the codes.
4. I generated meta-codes (or subthemes) by grouping the codes.
5. I generated existential themes by grouping the codes.

The structure of this chapter is organised with FLT. Each FLT section includes five existential themes to reveal part of the nature of the WWOOFers’

¹⁰ Max van Manen (1990) defined four FLT as the following: spatiality refers to ‘felt space’ (p. 102); temporality refers to ‘subjective time as opposed to clock or objective time’ (p. 104); corporeality refers to ‘our physical or bodily presence [that]... both reveal[s] something about ourselves and... conceal[s] something at the same time’ (p. 103); and relationality refers to ‘the lived relation we maintain with others in the *interpersonal* space that we share with them’ [my emphasis] (p. 105). As this definition indicates, ‘others’ are primarily limited to ‘other human beings’ (p. 185), revealing potential anthropocentrism at the methodological level. Ecologically, and less anthropocentrically, I believe that it is quite possible to ‘develop a conversational relation’ (p. 105) with, say, a cat, a tree, or nature. Therefore, in this chapter, relationality is extended to include non-/more-than-human.

experience (and Nature that they experienced). Each theme is elaborated with key participants' quotes from their interviews (# in each quote indicates its code number). In order to represent the feel of their speech, even if a little bit, I have maintained their original forms (including pronouns and tenses) as much as possible.

In conclusion, those existential themes are interpretively re-organised into five categories that potentially represent the diverse nature-human relations in WWOOFing. To preview the findings from the hermeneutic phenomenological thematic analysis of the nature of the WWOOFers' experience, Table 5.1 lists the existential themes.

FLTs	Existential themes
Spatiality	Mobilities, Authentic place, Non-human space, Farming space, Borderland
Temporality	Fast time, Slow time, Circular time, Linear time, Irregular time
Corporality	Self-growth, Becoming the Other, (Dis)comfort, Power/Skill, Sensing
Relationality	Boss/Worker, Sharing, Agentic nature, Resource, Enigmatic connection

Table 5.1 Existential themes of the nature of the WWOOFers' experience

In summary, this chapter interprets the interview data by using a hermeneutic phenomenological analysis method to generate existential themes as a response to RQ2. This interpretive procedure corresponds with James's methodological level of empirical analysis.

Spatiality

FLT Spatiality included five existential themes. They were *mobilities*, *authentic place*, *non-human space*, *farming space*, and *borderland*. Table 5.2 summarises the spatial existential themes with their subthemes.

Spatial existential themes	Subthemes
Mobilities	Free movement, Daytrips, Urbanised expectations
Authentic place	Home, Real Australia, Beautiful rural, Escape, Close to food
Non-human space	Non-human beings, Omnipresence, Sublime
Farming space	Working outside, Spatial modification
Borderland	Close to city, Accessibility to nature

Table 5.2 Spatial existential themes and their subthemes

Mobilities

I think you would value the [WWOOF] place more if it lets you go off to have these adventures. (Moon, #91)

The WWOOFers appreciated their mobilities with which they could WWOOF in different locations. Visiting more WWOOF sites meant gaining ‘other experiences’ (Andreas, #50). And if something was not acceptable, ‘I can just change my place’ (Tea, # 664). Having a car gave the WWOOFers ‘a lot more freedom’ (Frank, #203) to travel independently, thus affording greater mobility. Even better an option was Anne and Ben’s modified camper van, which provided them with ‘a place to live and sleep and everything’ (Ben, #105) without relying on their hosts much. By not having a car, on the other hand, some WWOOFers felt ‘fenced in... the middle of nowhere’ (Moon, # 30) at their WWOOF sites. For some WWOOFers who were taking their Working Holiday visa extension ‘really seriously’ (Margherita, #795), WWOOFing around Australia (i.e. changing hosts) was not an easy option.

The WWOOFers also had Nature experiences during their daytrips on their off days. For Anne and Ben, choosing a WWOOF site ‘that comes with surfing’ (Ben, #841) was a priority. They were satisfied with their WWOOF site nearby a National Park where ‘the water is extremely clear, very cold too, but [with] very nice blue and the white beach’ (Anne, #123). The WWOOFers without their own means of transport were occasionally taken ‘to great spots’ (Steph, #288) by their hosts or fellow WWOOFers ‘to get away into Nature’ (Steph, #299).

Mobile WWOOFers not only appreciated the spatial diversity they experienced in Australia. They also brought certain spatial expectations they had been accustomed to into the WWOOF domestic space, such as tidiness and personal space.

The WWOOF domestic space was sometimes perceived as ‘just chaos’ (Steph, #267) with ‘so much stuff around’ (Andreas, #365). Particularly, ‘stuff’ like ‘spiders and mice’ (Ben, #854) and ‘dust’ (Anne, #934) presented a challenge to the WWOOFers. The WWOOFers also felt that having their personal space was very important. Sometimes, ‘it was very challenging to share [their space] with people coming and going’ (Steph, #293). Anne and Ben chose their WWOOF site partly because their host had advertised that WWOOFers could have their ‘own place’ (Anne, #941) in the studio accommodation separated from the main house. Anne and Ben were working on their job applications and thus appreciated that they ‘can take your time and space if you feel that you need to’ (Ben, # 847).

Authentic Place

They [kangaroos] are wild animals... which are, in this case, indicative of the country. It’s on the country’s crest. This is the national animal. It’s quite significant. (Frank, #140)

The theme ‘authentic place’ is composed of various subthemes, including ‘real’ Australia, home, beautiful rural retreat/escape, and proximity to food. These seemingly various subthemes indeed share a common theme, which is natural ‘authenticity’ semiotically constructed as the opposite of artificial ‘inauthenticity’. That is: ‘real’ Australia against touristic kitsch; home against a hostel dormitory bed; rural retreat/escape against busy urban lives; and proximity to organic fresh food against easy access to overly processed food in the supermarket.

The international WWOOFers very much appreciated the notion of ‘real’ Australia. Sometimes their WWOOFing took place at ‘very remote and very beautiful’ (Ben, #827) locations ‘off the road’ (Anne, #920) where ‘you wouldn’t be if you wouldn’t do WWOOFing’ (Ben, #831). WWOOFing took them ‘away from the guidebook’ and to give them ‘a real experience’ (Moon, #47) of Australia with ‘real Australians’ (Anne, # 938). By living with ‘real’ Australians, the WWOOFers experienced ‘the real life in Australia’ (Clare, #554). The significance of ‘real’ Australia was enhanced by the WWOOFers’ bodily interactions with the indigenous fauna and flora. These included marsupials such as kangaroos (Andreas, #401; Frank, #140) and wombats (Anne, #975, exotic colourful birds (Andreas, # 352; Anne, #996; Ben, #872), temperate rainforests with ‘rich vegetation’ (Ben, #881) that was like ‘a

jungle’ on ‘a different planet’ (Moon, #110), and the bushfire landscape (Andreas, #420) with a ‘burn-off’ to prevent its possible threats to humans (Anne, #919; Ben, #832).

The notion of home was also important for the international WWOOFers who had been travelling around Australia for some time or who had just arrived in Australia and were thus feeling insecure. Being able to feel at home in Australia was part of positive WWOOF experience. The long nationwide list of WWOOF sites contained in *The Australian WWOOF Book* made Margherita feel that ‘you don’t feel lost’ (Margherita, #714) in Australia because ‘you know you have a place’ (Andreas, #368) to stay wherever they would go.

WWOOF home was ‘a good place to calm down’ (Ben, #837) on the road partly because of its rural setting. The WWOOF sites visited for this study were usually accompanied with beautiful landscapes in which ‘all fits very much together’ (Ben, #880) – the sunset in the vast sky (Clare, #569), green rolling hills with cows (James, #507; Anne, #921), and carefully well-maintained gardens (James, #480; Anne, #950). Frank described beautiful rays of morning sunlight coming down onto the misty ground through the trees as ‘Nature porn’ (Frank, #157). Living in the beautifully rural environment was like going to ‘a retreat’ ‘in the middle of’ Nature (Andreas, #348) ‘to escape their life’ (Moon, #21), ‘being away from the city, from the pollution, from people, from a lot of things that annoy me when I live in the city’ (Anne, #997)

Perhaps an aspect of ‘authentic place’ that is particularly unique in the context of WWOOFing was the spatial proximity to raw organic food. ‘It’s just five minutes from the garden to the kitchen’ (Steph, #258), and ‘you can just eat it, just pick from the garden and you can eat it’ (Tea, #649). The spatial integrity of home and garden made Clare felt that she was ‘living in the garden’, which she interpreted as ‘the original way’ (Clare, #589) of human living.

Non-human Space

You can see the light in this photo, really incredible intense ethereal fiery light, one of those fiery gold sunsets, especially with the eucalyptus trees around... I think it’s just ethereal, kind of other-worldly light. (Steph, #278)

Despite the rural/farm settings, which were indeed artificial to a degree, the WWOOFers sometimes perceived the WWOOF space as ‘the wild world’ (James, #483) ‘in the middle of nowhere’ (Margherita, #719). This was partly due to the omnipresence of a variety of non-human beings. ‘Nature is coming in and you are very close to Nature’ (Anne, #989): a ‘beautiful’ butterfly that Clare had never seen ‘up that close’ (Clare, #608); tiny blue-headed birds that ‘really pop up everywhere I look’ (Ben, # 871); and being ‘surrounded by... loads of wildlife’ (Moon, #35) and ‘by berries’ (Margherita, #774) in the patch under the net. In the WWOOF space, ‘most of the things you see around is just Nature’ (Tea, #686). Nature was also experienced during the WWOOFers’ daytrips to ‘somewhere I can’t see any houses or roads or hear any traffic and there are very few people’ (Steph, #286). Such Nature was felt ‘pure’ (Ben, #849), continuing to ‘exist without human involvement’ (Moon, #108).

The WWOOFers described the aesthetics of ‘non-human space’ in the following terms associated with a grand physical scale: ‘5000 acres’ (Andreas, #1010); ‘in the far distance you see the [National Park]’ (Ben, #873); ‘the huge paddock, the huge horses, the huge trees, the huge sky’ (James, #69); and ‘huge landscape’ (Tea, #674). They pointed to a spatial scale that exceeded their accustomed urban ways of being, evoking a sublime sense of awe. As Steph described in the opening quote, her experience of the grandness of Nature was enhanced by vivid ‘unreal’ (Anne, #976) colours of Nature. In the harshness of Australian Nature, the sublime was also experienced through a drought landscape where everything was ‘dry and cracked’ (Moon, #141).

Farming Space

The ecosystem on those fields is not really with a lot of animals living there. Not many plants can live there. It’s very monoculturalistic. All the natural Australian great plants and animals don’t have any space anymore, which is pretty sad. (Anne, #983)

Unsurprisingly, the WWOOF space was also constituted with various artificial infrastructures. They, for example, roads and fences, required maintenance against natural threats and obstacles. The roots of the weed trees would ‘just keep going as long as there is soil... [and] ultimately... overtake the whole of the environment’

(Frank, #137). For the WWOOFers, workspace was a significant aspect of the WWOOF space. By working outside ‘all the time’ (Tea, #655), and by modifying Nature, they contributed to production of goods, and maintenance and extension of human infrastructures needed for that primary purpose.

Reflecting on his terrace building during his WWOOFing, Ben felt that his work did not contribute to his Nature experience much, because he was aware that building a terrace would have an ‘impact on Nature’ (Ben, #888). Similarly Andreas felt that the farming was a human practice ‘taking the space from the animals’ ‘in the end’, even when ‘you can call it organic, you can call it biodynamic’ (Andreas, #425). By intervening in Nature, and/or witnessing interventions in Nature by other humans (e.g. the hosts, the locals, and the industries), the WWOOFers perceived the ‘unnatural’ (Andreas, #415) quality of the WWOOF space. They critically understood such a quality in the environment when they saw, for example, a cage with ‘a lot of chickens’ ‘to make money’ (Andreas, #415, 425) and ‘dairy land’ which looked ‘almost [entirely] green [with] all the trees... cut down’ (Ben, #874). In relation to the next theme of ‘borderland’, the WWOOFers’ critical reflections on what is (or should be) ‘natural’ and what is (or should be) ‘unnatural’ sometimes led to a confusion of and possibly a problematisation of those categories themselves.

Borderland

I love being immersed in Nature, I suppose, but for me it was about accessibility, and I’d rather be somewhere like here. I find it so easy because I can walk to public transport to go somewhere, yet I can be in the house and then in four minutes I can be by the river. And I would go and lie down by the river, and all I would hear is the sound of the river and the sound of the wind and trees. So, yes, it’s right next to the road, but I definitely had the experience of being in Nature. (Steph, #288-290)

As opposed to stood in the distance looking at the landscape... being part of the landscape and being one with it, interacting with it, you know, communicating with it. So yeah, seeing yourself reflected in that environment... just knowing that you are part of it... actually is quite important for me. (Frank, #169)

I had two crucial quotes for this theme of ‘borderland’ for which I could not choose one over the other. Steph’s quote literally describes the theme: that for her, the

WWOOF space was experienced as the best of both worlds, natural and urban. Along with the spatial proximity to the city enabled by transportation, the WWOOF space included natural features such as woods, rivers, and even an artificial ‘lake’ (Margherita, #780) for farm irrigation.

To clarify, the five WWOOF sites researched in this study were all located ‘pretty close to the city’ (Andreas, #337), within a two-hour drive from Melbourne (however, a longer travel time for the WWOOFers without a car). For the WWOOFers who had friends and partners in Melbourne, accessibility to the city was important so that they could ‘catch the train’ and ‘spend two nights in the city’ ‘every weekend’ (Margherita, #772). On the other hand, the WWOOF sites were natural enough, located within the administrative rural area to qualify as ‘the Second Year visa catchment’ (Moon, #51). The WWOOFers would ‘check the postcode [of the WWOOF site], and the government tells you what postcodes are available for and what are not for the Second Year visa’ (Clare, #548).

In the second quote, Frank described his experience of removing weed trees. There, for Frank, the WWOOF space was an immediate area where he felt that his self was directly ‘interacting’ with (or intra-acting within) the environment through his integrating/integrated ecological act. Frank understood the WWOOF space to be co-constitutive of Nature and human, rather than simply ‘unnatural’.

Temporality

FLT Temporality included five existential themes. They were *fast time*, *slow time*, *circular time*, *linear time*, and *irregular time*. Table 5.3 summarises the temporal existential themes with their subthemes.

Temporal existential themes	Subthemes
Fast time	Visa, Working fast
Slow time	Extraordinary time, Long stay, Relaxing, Easy work
Circular time	Daily cycle, Seasonal cycle
Linear time	Progress, Completion, Preparation
Irregular time	Accidental, Unusual

Table 5.3 Temporal existential themes and their subthemes

Fast Time

Just the amount of hours that I had to do to get my work permit done... so just really for me was keeping going... literally I was ticking off each day and feeling like 'shit!'... knowing that I was getting closer to the visa. (Steph, #260)

The WWOOFers perceived that time was passing fast when they were enjoying their work. Moon felt 'the day just disappeared' when she was 'chatting and chatting' (Moon, #81) with Frank while working. Margherita felt that time 'just flie[d]' when she was feeling 'relax[ed]' (Margherita, #757) by sawing a berry patch net. Tea felt time 'running faster' (Tea, #661) when she was doing a job that required active and faster movements, which she much preferred to weeding that hurt her knees. The WWOOFers also experienced fast time when they immediately noticed a change in the environment that was caused by their work. Tea enjoyed washing parsnips with a high-pressure water hose because 'it's really quick and... you can see the soil is going away' (Tea, #659). Removing weed trees and modifying the farm landscape gave Moon a sense of 'immediate gratification' (Moon, #156), in comparison to her demanding undergraduate law studies she had just completed in England.

As Steph's opening quote indicates, many WWOOFers in this study wished that their WWOOF time would pass as fast as possible so that they could meet a major condition for their second year Working Holiday visa (Subclass 417). All of the ten participants in this study were planning to apply for the visa extension with the rural working days earned from WWOOFing. Margherita was taking her WWOOFing 'really seriously' (Margherita, #793) for that reason. Some WWOOFers wanted the visa 'to stay here one more year' (Clare, #547) in Australia, while others were planning 'to come back' (Andreas, #374) in the near future for another adventure. For the WWOOFers intent on obtaining the visa extension, choosing WWOOF hosts that could give them 'as many days as possible' (Moon, #56) was crucial so that they could meet the visa condition 'very soon' (Clare, # 550). The number of the days done and remaining was a great concern for the WWOOFers. Frank accepted the offer from his host because it was 'just the first thing that came along'. He was 'running out of time' (Frank, #153) for his application, as his first year Working Holiday visa was soon to expire.

Slow Time

I'm starting to think that maybe here it's not necessary that it go really fast... I always thought that if you work, it's really hard to enjoy while you are working. So, you want it to go faster and you want it to be done as soon as you can. But here, it's not like that... because I'm happy and I like it. You can go a little bit slower and that's fine. (Tea, #663)

For the WWOOFers who had had a busy work/study life in their own countries and/or had been travelling at a fast pace in Australia, WWOOFing provided an opportunity to slow down and relax. For this reason, in comparison to everyday fast time, slow time was experienced as extraordinary time. For Tea, her WWOOFing was 'time living now', not about 'work, work, work, and earn money, money, money' (Tea, #691) for the future. For Ben, slow time was 'relaxing' with 'a lot of leisure time' (Ben, #844) for surfing at the National Park nearby. For Clare, it was 'time to enjoy life' (Clare, #605), after resigning from her work as a bank clerk in Taiwan.

As part of their Working Holiday, the WWOOFers often expected their work to be slow and they would not have to work in a hurry. 'If you get money for it, you would work faster' (Anne, #1011). 'Nobody is in a rush' (Margherita, #733). For Ben, building a terrace for the host was enjoyable because 'I could take as much time as I thought I need to do it properly' (Ben, #859). By working slowly, the WWOOFers neutralised negative meanings associated with work in the city, such as 'time pressure' (Ben, #859). Work became 'fun' (Anne, #1004) where they could take time and enjoy. Growing food took time as well, and it was not like 'the supermarket and buy a bit of meat... then maybe I'm paying five dollars' (Andreas, #428).

Slow time was also associated with their relatively long stay at a particular WWOOF site, which gave them a sense of attachment with the local environment. By staying for more than a month, James felt he would 'miss' the garden where he would work 'every day'. (James, #479). 'The more time you spend in Nature, the more you would appreciate [it]' (Frank, #178) Moon understood her relationship with Nature was something 'that can grow very slowly all over time' (Moon, #97). Steph and Tea appreciated their WWOOFing because they had 'a real home for a while' (Steph, #311) 'to feel family with other people' (Tea, #667).

Circular Time

Even if it rains, you still have to do weeding or picking or planting something. It's terrible. Very terrible. The rain comes in even if you have a raincoat. Sometimes you get wet, and get cold. Now it's winter, so you feel cold when it's raining. (Clare, #579)

Circular time in WWOOFing appeared in two units: daily and seasonal. The daily cycle was organised both naturally and socially. Working all day outside made the WWOOFers physically exhausted at night. 'I sleep at 9 o'clock in the night and wake up early in the morning' (Tea, # 700). The hosts would 'eat dinner at a different hour' (Margherita, #726) while it is still bright outside. Their body clocks were becoming tuned to the daily circular rhythm of the sun, rather than their temporal experience in the city where electric lighting is omni/ever-present. Daily repetitive thus cyclic work was often perceived negatively as one of the greatest challenges in WWOOFing. Clare felt that 'weeding for eight hours' everyday was 'terrible' and 'boring' (Clare, #577). Margherita was 'fed up' with 'doing the same things for two days' (Margherita, #794) because 'time never ends' (Margherita, #753). 'We are always doing the same things' (Andreas, #392).

WWOOF work was well reflected in the circular rhythm of the seasons as well, with the growing seasons for organic vegetables and fruits dictating the kinds of work needed during their stay. Seeing the berries starting to become red in late spring (November), Margherita was excited that 'we are close to the picking season' (Margherita, #772). Growing food was a natural 'circular process' (Moon, #104) and thus meaningful for the WWOOFers' experience of Nature. 'You may have just weeded those and you are harvesting them and someone is eating them. It was like a real connection' (Steph, #263).

Linear Time

Last week, I planted with [the host], new berry plants, and I said, well, next year I can come back here for a visit, and I'm going to see what I planted, a huge plant, you know, and that's thanks to me. (Margherita, #745)

Linear time is marked with progressive and future tenses. As Margherita's quote indicates, she understood the meaning of her present work in relation to the future (i.e. for the future).

Being able to recognise a work in progress was particularly important for the WWOOFers who were involved in a larger project. Building a terrace was one prominent example in this study, which took Anne and Ben nearly a month. Ben was 'always happy... seeing the progress' (Ben, #821), and Anne was satisfied in finishing 'the things that we said we were going to finish' (Anne, #956) every day.

Progress eventually leads to completion. Selling organic vegetables they had grown at farmers' markets was a highlight for some WWOOFers, because that indicated 'the end of your work and it makes me kind of proud' (Tea, #43). Clare felt a sense of 'achievement' (Clare, #593) at the farmers' markets by talking about her personal experiences with the vegetables to the customers.

On the contrary, being unable to see an end to one's work resulted in great dissatisfaction. After removing 'ten trailers of stones' and seeing 'no difference' (Andreas, #398) in the landscape, Andreas felt his work was 'like nothing' (Andreas, #385).

When the WWOOFers could not see a completion of their work during their time of WWOOFing, they sometimes imaginarily located it in the future for others, as indicated in Margherita's quote. If not for others, the WWOOFers understood their present experience as a learning opportunity for their futures. Tea wanted to 'make my [organic] garden' 'by myself' when she went 'back to Italy' (Tea, 635). Ben now had a 'view for the future' to build his own terrace 'once I own my property' (Ben, #861).

Irregular Time

Nature inherently is absolutely different, you know. Those carrots that we saw, we will never see them again. Every snowflake is different. For me, that's the beauty of Nature. It is around at this moment. (Frank, #194)

An aspect of irregular time in WWOOFing was viewed critically as a local manifestation of strange global weathers and climates. Their work was sometimes affected by extreme weathers. Frank experienced early zucchini planting in August

due to ‘an early summer and a long summer’ expected in that year, which was ‘a little bit unusual’ (Frank, #212) according to his host. Anne and Ben received days-off ‘on the hottest days’ (Anne, #990) in October (i.e. mid-spring), because the host judged that it was not suitable for them to work outside.

More fundamentally, irregular time was associated with the WWOOFers’ enigmatic encounters with Nature. The WWOOFers may have experienced something ‘irregular’ or abnormal in Nature according to their human sense (e.g 1 in 100). In a greater temporal scale, such as of Nature, however, the irregular for human is perhaps a regular occurrence (e.g. the unit of 100 happens all the time). To Frank and Moon, ‘twin carrots’ were such an object to represent the ‘myriad of wonder’ (Moon, #101) of Nature. As Frank explained in his quote, the carrots strangely intertwining with each other profoundly suggested the enigmatically long stretched finitude of Nature in which a seemingly strange occurrence to humans was not strange at all for Nature. The beauty, perhaps Romantically, Frank experienced in the twin carrots was derived from the temporal gap between the human shorter finitude and the more-than-human longer finitude. In a similar episode, Steph ‘just intuitively played with my camera’ trying to ‘capture the mood of the morning’ in the garden, (Steph, #257), which accidentally gave her a favourite photograph. Perhaps, to human Steph, the beauty of Nature was an accidentally irregular event.

Corporeality

FLT Corporeality included five existential themes. They were *self-growth*, *becoming the Other*, *(dis)comfort*, *power/skill*, and *sensing*. Table 5.4 summarises the corporeal existential themes with their subthemes.

Corporeal existential themes	Subthemes
Self-growth	Solitude, Self-realisation, Self-sufficiency, Competences
Becoming the Other	Farmer, Health, Less consumerism
(Dis)comfort	Pleasure, Physical demand, Pain, Risks
Power/Skill	Empowerment, Techniques
Sensing	Vision, Sound, Smell, Taste, Touch

Table 5.4 Corporeal existential themes and their subthemes

Self-growth

So here, you are like in the middle of nowhere. All my friends said yeah it's fantastic... But if you are alone, it's totally different. But I think it's a good way to understand who I am. And sometimes, it's stressful, especially physically, especially for women, I think, but I'm able to do everything. I think you can grow in WWOOFing. (Margherita, #720, #721, #722)

Sometimes, WWOOFing was demanding, both physically and mentally. As Margherita indicated in the above quote, a 'solitary feeling in Nature' (Steph, #283) being separated from their everyday familiar environments for an extended duration was perceived as an important catalyst in their self-growth. By travelling and WWOOFing alone in Australia, Andreas felt that he 'got a different view on things' and became 'a better man' (Andreas, #439). For Tea, to 'feel that I can be alone' (Tea, #690) without relying on her friends and family was a personal achievement.

The ways the WWOOFers grew and realised their selves in their WWOOFing varied. After an earlier departure of Andreas, whom he 'was counting on', James suddenly felt that he needed to 'change [his] mindset' to be in charge of his daily work. This empowered James to 'enjoy' his WWOOFing (James, #513). For Anne, 'concentrating' (Anne, #965) on wood to build a terrace was satisfying, because she could see the natural object turning into something useful as a result of her work. For Moon, self-realisation was associated with her personal challenge against 'misogynic' Australian rural culture. By voluntarily 'being physical' in 'hard work', Moon was determined to show to her host 'what a woman can do' (Moon, #75).

Developing cultural competences was also important for some WWOOFers. The international participants whose first language was not English considered 'getting better at English' (James, #1013) as an important objective in their WWOOFing. By talking with his host, Andreas's English 'really improved, extremely' (Andreas, #347). Clare, passionate about food and Australian culture, was pleased to 'learn how to cook the food Australian people love' (Clare, #552).

Becoming the Other

So what we need as a person? Water, heat, shelter, food, pretty much. Honestly, and a bit of social contact. (Moon, #148)

Wwoofing was a great opportunity for the Wwoofers to experience something unusual temporarily. Thus, it is important to note that ‘the Other’ here means a semiotic difference that was given within the social system of differences, rather than the ontological Absolute Other to which one does not have direct access.

For example, the Wwoofers temporarily became organic farmers. Clare thought ‘being a farmer is important for me because we don’t have that chance in Taiwan’. In the future, she would ‘feel thankful’ when she would buy vegetables because she now knew farming was ‘so hard’ (Clare, #612).

Becoming an organic farmer, however, meant more than an experience of an unusual and/or unfamiliar occupation. As the Moon’s quote in the above indicates, Wwoofing was also a socio-culturally critical practice ‘alternative’ to their everyday lives. One theme of such critique was consumerism. Steph explained that a great teaching in Wwoofing was that one can arrive with ‘one little bag’ but can have ‘food’, ‘a shelter’, and ‘meaningful work’, and then ‘leaving with nothing again’ (Steph, #310). Similarly, Tea began ‘to think that [she] really [does not] need’ (Tea, #629) much to ‘feel good’ (Tea, #639). Frank at the spiritual retreat site strongly felt that ‘material desire’ was ‘not the greatest’ (Frank # 201) human quality.

Another important aspect of critically alternative values associated with Wwoofing was a healthy lifestyle. Eating ‘natural food’ (Clare, #600) and ‘really good meals’ (Margherita, #789), and working outside all day were felt to be ‘more healthy... than everything’ (Andreas, #334). Doing ‘something physical’ and simple, such as ‘shovelling the dirt’, gave Moon a ‘Zen space’ and ‘peace’ (Moon, #40). Living with a chronic illness, Steph thought Wwoofing was ultimately ‘holistic ways of healing’ her body through her ‘connection with Nature’ (Steph, #226).

(Dis)comfort

The stones are heavy, and you are always on the ground. You put the stones in the bag, you lift the bag and bring it to the trailer, you lift the bag at the trailer to get the stones out. I think it’s hurting a bit. (Andreas, #399)

Working outside, the Wwoofers sometimes felt their bodies ‘relaxed and kind of free’ (Tea, #653). It was ‘really fun’ (Tea, #672), especially when ‘the weather is good’ (James, #485). This, of course, depended on the types of work and natural

object they interacted with. Andreas in the above quote was talking about his work with James to dig out ‘very heavy’ (James, #496) stones and rocks and then using them to fill potholes in the driveway. ‘A physical challenge’ (Frank, #165) made the WWOOFers ‘feel good and satisfied’ (James, #506) when it was completed. At the same time, it left them ‘feeling so dead’ (Steph, 275) at the end of the day and sent them ‘straight to bed’ (Margherita, #758).

In dealing with physically demanding tasks, the WWOOFers reported a variety of discomfort in their bodies. For instance, in weeding, to ‘keep the same posture for eight hours’ (Clare, #578) ‘down on [their] knees’ (Tea, #657) was uncomfortable and painful. Even with gardening gloves, weeding for an extended duration caused ‘sore fingers’, which ‘really freaked me out’ (Margherita, #769). In addition to pain, the WWOOFers also perceived risks in working with/in Nature. A ‘crazy’ ‘huge rooster’ (Andreas, #416) attacked Andreas again and again when he cleaned his pen. Weeding in the dense berry bush where poisonous snakes were present (according to the host), Margherita was worried that they ‘can bite me and I can die’ (Margherita, #770).

Power/Skill

Before I came here, I couldn’t catch a chicken, but now I can. (James, #862)

Working on Nature, the WWOOFers sometimes exercised their physical power. Part of the daily routine for James and Andreas was to look after farm birds (e.g. chickens, ducks, geese, and emus) and maintain their pens and enclosures. When the chickens were misbehaving, James needed to grab them and put them away to do his jobs. Grabbing them ‘with both hands’, chickens became ‘usually silent and relaxed’ (Andreas, #419). This experience with chickens gave James and Andreas a sense of empowerment. Another notable example of the WWOOFers’ execution of their physical power observed during the fieldwork was landscape clearing. By cutting down and removing ‘weed’ trees, Frank felt ‘satisfaction’ because he was ‘changing and having an impact’ (Frank, #166) on the environment. Moon also felt ‘satisfaction’ in ‘seeing the trees fall... and thinking manpower... physically altering the course of Nature’ (Moon, # 84).

To exercise human power over Nature and to modify it, the WWOOFers used various skills often mediated by technologies. Tea stated that ‘to learn from the

farmer' about 'agriculture and everything' (Tea, #633) was one of the important objectives in her WWOOFing. Margherita was excited to learn 'a Chinese technique' (Margherita, #786) from her host where two cut plants were put together to grow a new plant. The WWOOFers also applied the skills they had already possessed as well. In building an outdoor terrace, an act of claiming a human space in Nature, Ben was pleased that he could 'work independently and apply [his carpentry] skills' (Ben, #856) using various 'tools' (Ben, #820).

Sensing

...once you actually get into the soil, you realise quite quickly that you pull [the weeds and they] snap. You have to dig. So, finding and walking around and learning the behaviour of the weed, and discovering its own nature. And then adapting to it. That's a very pleasurable experience... (Frank, #209)

The WWOOFers reported that they had become more aware of their senses to perceive Nature during WWOOFing. 'Real colours' (Margherita, #778) were a powerful element in the WWOOFers' visual experience, such as 'all the different colours' in 'big salads' (Steph, #261) and 'such a clear and deep red and such a clear and deep blue' (Ben, #883) of lorikeets. 'Quiet[ness]' (Ben, #875), 'stillness' (Moon, #90), or 'silence' (Tea, #688) was described as 'the sound of Nature' (Margherita, #688). The smells were seldom filtered at the WWOOF sites. The 'fresh air' (Margherita, #746) 'cleanse[d]' (Frank, #188) by trees, 'the mix of soil and water and pig' (Tea, # 1012), 'horse dung' (James, #490), and 'smell of cow' (Margherita, #776) all lingered around. Fresh 'beautiful' (Steph, #262) organic vegetables and fruits allowed them to appreciate the 'real' (Tea, #650), 'pure' (Andreas, #343), and 'original taste' (Clare, #599).

The WWOOFers also mentioned a heightened sense of touch to perceive Nature. Clare felt the harsh(er) winter in Central Victoria when she was exposed to the 'wet and... cold' (Clare, #580) during her extended weeding. Steph 'soak[ed] up the sunset' (Steph, #280) on top of the hill where her host took her for meditation. Moon felt 'the cow saliva in my hand and the leathery tongue, really strong kind of determined black tongue... that feels really sharp' (Moon, #105) when she fed pieces of molasses to a young cow. Ben enjoyed working with wood because it was 'organic

material, almost living’ (Ben, #822) in his hands. In the above quote, Frank suggested that by touching/being touched by the weeds, he ‘adapted’ to the nature of the weeds. His weeding took place in the environmental chiasm of Nature (the weeds) and human (Frank), possibly indicating their ontologically enigmatic reversibility within the touch.

Relationality

FLT Relationality included five existential themes. They were *boss/worker*, *sharing*, *Agentic nature*, *resource*, and *enigmatic connection*. Table 5.5 summarises the relational existential themes with their subthemes.

Relational existential themes	Subthemes
Boss/Worker	Business, Asymmetrical power, Fair exchange
Sharing	Family, Community, Conversation, Meals, Work
Agentic nature	Power of nature, Threat, Provider, Reciprocity, Caring
Resource	Unnatural behaviour, Power struggle
Enigmatic connection	Anthropomorphism, Enigmatic nature

Table 5.5 Relational existential themes and their subthemes

Boss/Worker

I see her point, and the point is she is the farmer, so this property is hers... [The host] is making money out of this, and if you are making mistakes... (Andreas, #393)

The WWOOFers’ relationships with their hosts were sometimes of boss/worker. A boss/worker relationship became particularly visible when money was involved. Clare felt that she needed to sell as many vegetables as possible at the farmers’ markets so that her host could ‘get more money and he will be happy’ (Clare, #597). Similarly, James felt ‘important’ to collect eggs so that his host ‘can sell them and eat them’ (James, #509), although he occasionally felt sorry for the birds. Margherita described her host as a ‘professional boss’ (Margherita, #766) and she understood her WWOOFing as ‘a job even if you are not paid’ (Margherita, #712). Being part of the

business, Margherita felt she needed to be responsible: ‘you have to do the right things, because if you get wrong, everything gets wrong’ (Margherita, #790).

Another aspect of the boss/worker relationship was the asymmetrical power between the two parties, which the WWOOFers often accepted as part of the deal. Fundamentally, the WWOOF properties belonged to the hosts and they were the ones who let the WWOOFers stay. Anne felt ‘unfairly treated’ when I was joined into her and Ben’s studio accommodation, despite the host’s original promise that they would have their own privacy. Anne, however, ‘couldn’t say anything against it’ because it was ‘their decision’ (Anne, 968). Moon endured working like ‘essentially a slave’ (Moon, #32) for a while in a remote New South Wales WWOOF site in order to earn rural working days for her Second Year visa.

Although the boss/worker power relation was in place, the economic transaction between the hosts and the WWOOFers remained as non-monetary. This inconsistency sometimes resulted in dissatisfaction for the WWOOFers. They felt that they were working hard ‘for free’ (Margherita, #792). Various measures were applied in order to avoid possible confrontations. For example, it was important for Ben to keep his work ‘five hours five days a week’ and ‘not too hard’ to achieve a ‘fair’ (Ben, #895) WWOOF exchange. When such a negotiation was difficult, which was often the case especially without having a car, the WWOOFers expected other forms of returns in the exchange with their hosts. Those forms included good meals, reasonable accommodation, and an arrangement to work ‘independently’ (Ben, #855) so that ‘both sides have benefit’ (Anne, # 1001).

Sharing

During the morning, which is five hours non-stop, so if you have company, you can talk with somebody. So you don’t think about how time goes. But it’s still that, “Oh my God, it’s still ten o’clock”, for example, but you can share this with somebody. (Margherita, #754)

For the WWOOFers, experiencing some form of family or familiar feelings with their hosts was an important part of WWOOFing. ‘Travelling’ ‘alone’, ‘some people that are nice to me and [to] feel comfortable with... and feel like a family’ (Tea, #665) were highly valued. Andreas established an emotional bond with his previous WWOOF host at a kiwi farm who was like his ‘grandfather’ (Andreas, #337). James

‘liked this place because of [the host]’ (James, #494). The WWOOFers often expected to be treated as ‘a person rather than a commodity’ (Moon, #55). Hosts who were ‘just having WWOOFers for working for them’ (Ben, #843) were felt inappropriate.

If not a family, a ‘sense of community’ (Frank, #162) with ‘people that you wouldn’t meet by just travelling’ (Ben, #830) was also valued. The international WWOOFers were often ‘in the same boat’ for the second year Working Holiday visa and this made them feel that they were ‘part of the group’ (Margherita, #760), which made their WWOOFing ‘more fun’ (Tea, #634). Andreas chose the bird farm as his WWOOF site because the advertisement ‘said they would accommodate one to four people and this means usually that they have other WWOOFers there’ (Andreas, #376). The WWOOF community was often international, and to ‘make foreign friends’ (James, #1014) was important to James.

The WWOOFers found that sharing, either with the hosts or other WWOOFers, was a fundamental aspect of WWOOFing. Three activities were prominently associated with sharing in the interviews. They were conversation, meal, and work. The WWOOFers appreciated ‘really meeting people’ (Tea, #668) and having an ‘awesome chat’ (Moon, #80) to get to know each other. Conversations often took place at the dinner table. The WWOOFers and the hosts ‘cook[ed] together something’ (James, #475) and then had ‘dinner all together’ in a ‘family-like’ (Andreas, #362) environment. Steph found that ‘to cook for people... who really deserve that food, just working hard’ (Steph, #260) was extremely rewarding. Sharing a meal gave the WWOOFers a sense of ‘a bit more involvement into the family and life of the host’ (Anne, #1002). Another crucial moment of sharing was when the WWOOFers were ‘all working together for one cause’ (Frank, #164). Clare ‘like[d]’ working with the host, his employees, and WWOOFers in the garden because they were ‘happy and easy going’ (Clare, #561). As Margherita explained in her quote, sharing sometimes made the ‘boring’ work tolerable.

Agentic Nature

... it makes me aware that although at times we may feel like we are in charge of Nature, like felling one tree or four trees, but when you see that many kangaroos, you realise just how

many kangaroos are out there, how many trees there are to cut down. And how Nature would always come back. It always regrows. (Moon, #121)

The WWOOFers felt the force, power and moods of Nature in a variety of ways, such as: vivid colours (Margherita, #750); bushfire landscape (Ben, #882); the sunset (Clare, #571); and its capacity to regrow, as Moon indicated in the above quote. Sometimes the WWOOFers interpreted the power of Nature as invasive and threatening. Bandicoots and rabbits could ‘go through’ (Ben, #868) the vegetable patch wall and vandalise the crops. A ‘scary’ goose would bite ‘something out of my leg’ with her ‘open mouth and you can see those teeth... and this huge tongue’ (Andreas, #408). Other times, Nature was a generous provider and ‘gives us a lot’ (Clare, #611) in order to grow vegetables in the garden. The sun was the ‘source of all energy’ (Frank, #186). When working in the garden alone, Nature would ‘talk to you’ to keep Margherita company and give her a ‘sense of peace’ (Margherita, #735).

To reciprocate, the WWOOFers took care of animals and plants. Tea ‘love[d]’ to ‘stay in touch with an animal’ and ‘feeding Penny [a farm pig]’ (Tea, #678) every morning. Similarly, Margherita enjoyed ‘look[ing] after the berries’ and ‘plant[ing] new berry plants’ (Margherita, #744) for the future harvest. Worms in the garden were carefully treated because they ‘eat soil and digest and put out better soil so... good for the plants’ (Tea, #735). Moon looked after cows with ‘respect and love’, because ‘you can drink the milk and you can make cheese and curds, and you can use their dung if you dry it... as fuel’ (Moon, #735).

Resource

[Three chickens] were under [a metal panel] and couldn’t move, and another one just sat on it and shitted on them. It was like, seriously?... I don’t know if it’s really Nature. I can’t imagine. Usually they have a lot of space. There, inside the shed, too many chickens. (Andreas, #414)

As humans, ‘to survive, we need to change Nature’ (Frank, #170). In the process of changing Nature as part of their work, the WWOOFers sometimes instrumentally perceived Nature as a set of resources. Primarily treated as farm stocks, those chickens in Andreas’s quote were effectively and efficiently confined to the sheds and, as he noticed, they sometimes behaved erratically. James’s way to justify his

instrumental treatment of the birds was to see them as non-intellectual. ‘When I steal an egg from a brown chicken, sometimes I feel sorry for them... But... brown chickens don’t think anything, I think. So it’s ok for me’ (James, #508).

In modifying Nature into resources, especially in physically demanding tasks such as clearing weed trees, the WWOOFers experienced ‘a power struggle’ between the ‘domination of Nature’ and humans who were ‘capable of destruction’ (Moon, #100).

Enigmatic Connection

I think when people connect with Nature... they are more human. (Moon, #59).

The theme ‘enigmatic connection’ included two main subthemes: anthropomorphism and enigmatic nature. By being in Nature all the time during their WWOOFing, the WWOOFers felt morally close to Nature. One way to express such a feeling was anthropomorphising. The insects flying and crawling in the vegetable gardens were felt ‘like our friends...we are together. We are living in the same earth right now’ (Clare, #610). Frank ‘love[d] dearly’ a farm English Sheepdog, which was ‘ever present daily’ and exhibited ‘human traits’ such as being ‘lovely’, ‘cute’, ‘energetic’, and ‘intelligent’ (Frank, #182). Moon was ‘fascinated’ to see ‘the humanness’ of the ‘people-sized’ (Moon, #130) kangaroos in the WWOOF property.

Beyond anthropomorphism, Moon’s opening quote indicated that the notions of ‘Nature’ and ‘human’ as binary opposites were problematic. Nature started to appear as ‘a vague thing’ (Steph, #285), something ‘we don’t know... but [is] beautiful’ (Margherita, #781). Nature was felt to be ‘constant’ (Moon, #96) as well as ‘a chaotic order’ (Frank, #177). Nature became something unrepresentable with words and thus enigmatically mysterious. And Nature was mysteriously fun. Tea found ‘picking turnips and beetroots’ interesting because it was impossible for her to tell their bulb sizes ‘until the end’ (Tea, #660). ‘You wouldn’t have known that this was going on underneath the surface until you pulled out’ (Frank, #175).

(Further) Abstraction

The hermeneutic phenomenological thematic analysis revealed that the nature of the WWOOFers' experience was variable, complex, and often contradictory. So was Nature that was experienced by the WWOOFers.

In this final section, as a way of abstracting the findings for further analyses in the following chapters, the twenty existential themes derived from interpreting the nature of the WWOOFers' experience are, again, interpretively re-organised into five categories to represent potential *nature-human relations* enacted by the participants in WWOOFing. Each emergent category is composed of all four FLTs (i.e. spatiality, temporality, corporeality, and relationality). In this further abstraction, the nature of the WWOOFers' experience is more relationally understood as how Nature phenomenologically appeared in their perceptions of experiences. Since the ontic and the epistemic are relationally intertwined in the phenomenon (Trigg, 2012), probably it is now appropriate to halt the distinction between 'N' and 'n'.

In order to re-interpret each category of nature-human relations and their relationships with one another, a *two-dimensional coordinate plane* was used as an analytical abstraction device (Figure 5.2). The x-axis indicates the continuum of 'humanised' (+) and 'naturalised' (-). The y-axis indicates the continuum of 'human' (+) and 'nature' (-). The coordinate plane created five areas: (from the top right) Quadrant I ('humanised human'), Quadrant II ('naturalised human'), Quadrant III ('naturalised nature'), Quadrant IV ('humanised nature'), and the Origin ('ambiguous nature-human') at the intersection of the x-axis and the y-axis.

Furthermore, Table 5.6 below re-summarises the findings from the hermeneutic phenomenological thematic analysis in relation to the nature-human relations. Each existential theme was interpretively placed on the coordinate plane. Table 5.6 also shows the numbers of codes that are thematically related to the five categories of nature-human relations. While I refrain from making any positivistic claim based on my (re-)interpreted findings, the number of codes in Quadrant II (n = 281) may nonetheless confirm the relative dominance of the 'alternative' (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006) nature of WWOOFers' experience. Indeed, casual conversations with the research participants during my participation/observation also qualitatively supported this characterisation. However, although with this possible

dominance of Quadrant II, my assertion here is that *other categories of nature-human relations are also important aspects of the nature of the WWOOFers' experience.*

A methodological limitation in this further abstraction is potential over-reduction of the participants' complex and heterogeneous lived experiences. However, to repeat, such a process is needed to move out of the empirical analysis phase that has described and interpreted the phenomenality of WWOOFers' nature experience, to the next methodological levels of James's epistemological abstraction.

In the following, each category of nature-human relations is summarised. To clarify, the categories are not mutually exclusive. As they are mapped on the coordinate plane of the continuums, they do overlap with each other to a degree.

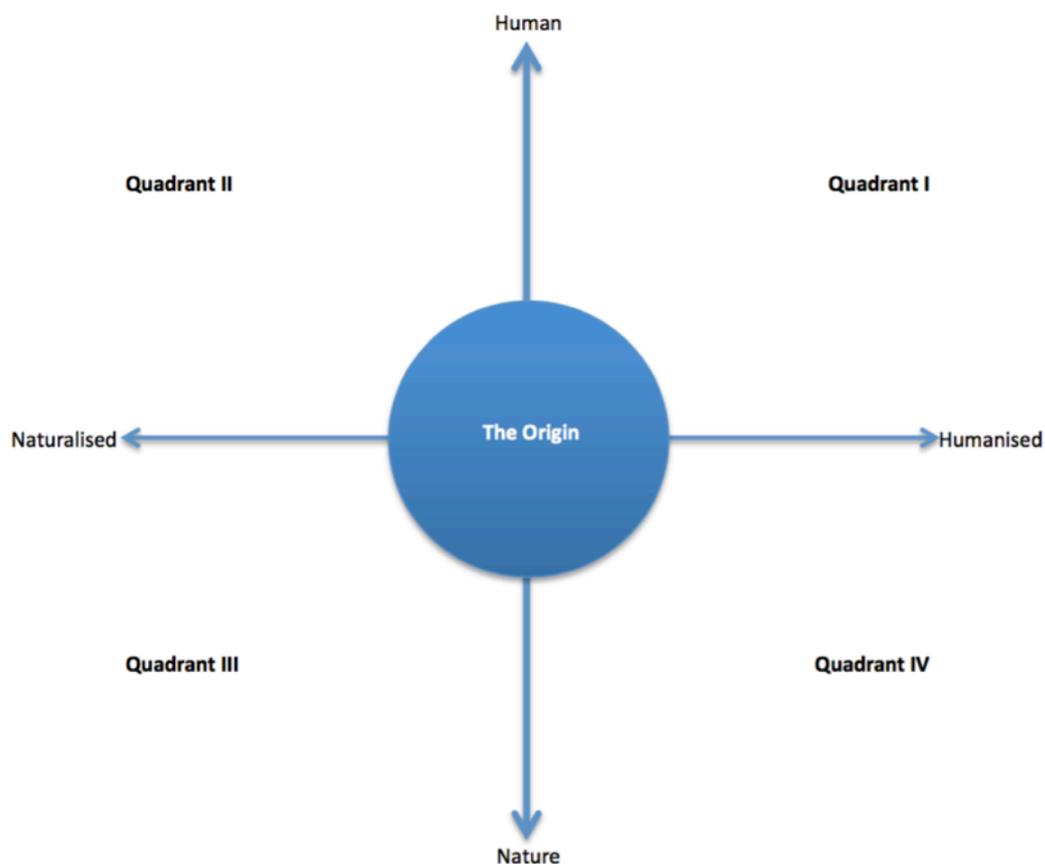


Figure 5.2 Coordinate plane of nature-human relations in WWOOFing

Category	Nature-Human relation	Spatiality	Temporality	Corporeality	Relationality	Number of codes
Quadrant I	Humanised human	Mobilities	Fast time	Self-growth	Boss/Worker	178
Quadrant II	Naturalised human	Authentic place	Slow time	Becoming the Other	Sharing	281
Quadrant III	Naturalised nature	Non-human space	Circular time	(Dis)comfort	Agentic nature	247
Quadrant IV	Humanised nature	Farming space	Linear time	Power/Skill	Resource	123
The Origin	Ambiguous nature-human	Borderland	Irregular time	Sensing	Enigmatic connection	185
Total						1014

Table 5.6 Nature-human relations as the nature of the WWOOFers' experience

Quadrant I: Humanised Human

Existential themes: Mobility – Fast time – Self-growth – Boss/Worker

For the ten international WWOOFers, WWOOFing in and around Australia was an extraordinary opportunity to live abroad. Travelling in *fast time* provided them with the *mobile* diversity of tourism spaces to explore and consume. The WWOOFers perceived their new experiences, particularly when accompanied with challenges, as opportunities for *self-growth*. This means that the extraordinary nature of the WWOOF time-space was perceived in reference to their existing everyday values. For the majority of the participants in this study, gaining 88 days of rural work for the second year Working Holiday visa (Subclass 417) was a major goal in WWOOFing. Completing the needed rural working days and gaining the hosts' signature for their visa applications was a priority. Due to this asymmetrically contractual implication, the WWOOFers sometimes viewed their relationships with their hosts as similar to one of *boss/worker*.

Quadrant I (humanised human) is characterised with the ritualistically touristic quality of nature as an opportunity for self-growth, measured from the reintegrating synthetic standpoint of the everyday (Turner, 1974). Nature in WWOOFing, sometimes appearing as something extraordinary to be collected and consumed for a touristic purpose (Nakagawa & Payne, 2011), also (re)humanised the WWOOFers in their everyday logic of progress.

Quadrant II: Naturalised Human

Existential themes: Authentic place – Slow time – Becoming the Other - Sharing

The international WWOOFers felt that being continuously mobile on the road in Australia was exhausting as well as liberating. By WWOOFing, the WWOOFers settled in to relax in *slow time*. The WWOOF home was also an *authentic place* off the beaten track of mainstream tourism. It offered them the experience of ‘real’ Australia through ‘real’ Australian lifestyles. The WWOOF home was largely, if not always, based on the principle of *sharing* where the WWOOFers lived as quasi-family members. As an ideally constructed home surrounded by rurally idyllic nature, WWOOFing also provided the WWOOFers with an opportunity to escape their busy urban lives by *becoming the Other* than their usual selves, if only temporarily.

Quadrant II (naturalised human) is characterised with the ‘alternative’ quality of nature as an opportunity for escape with transformational possibilities (Deville & Wearing, 2013, p. 151). In comparison to Quadrant I, Quadrant II is more critical of the everyday human conventions and establishments (e.g. neoliberalism and its related tourism forms).

Quadrant III: Naturalised Nature

Existential themes: Non-human space – Circular time – (Dis)comfort – Agentic nature

The WWOOFers sometimes experienced nature as *non-human space*. Non-human space was more than a relative and semiotic construct as a result of the anthropocentric binary of ‘human’ and ‘non-human’. In the WWOOF non-human space, the WWOOFers felt a sublime sense of awe, which implied nature’s potential transcendence from the artificial binary. WWOOFing was temporally marked with *circular time*, a more cosmologically archaic form of temporality. The WWOOFers’ daily work time was daily and seasonally scheduled with the circular natural rhythms. Regularly working outside with organic materials, the WWOOFers felt the vitality of *agentic nature* that was both giving and taking. To deal with the vitality, the WWOOFers protected themselves with various measures, such as garden gloves. However, nature (b)reached into their bodies, affecting sensations of *(dis)comfort*.

Quadrant III (naturalised nature) is characterised by the vital quality of nature that affected the WWOOFers' bodies (Bennett, 2010). The Otherness of nature in this quadrant is partly semiotic and partly real, appearing more directly in the WWOOFers' embodiment.

Quadrant IV: Humanised Nature

Existential themes: Farming space – Linear time – Power/Skills - Resource

In the WWOOF *farming space*, the WWOOFers' work was fundamentally to work on nature. That is, nature, as *resource*, was modified for the purpose of production. Weeding was a primary example of such work in WWOOFing. The temporality of production is forward, meaning that the products are materialised in the future, which is teleologically positioned from the present in *linear time*. To manage the linearity in nature, the WWOOFers needed to learn various organically related technological *skills* and to exercise their *power*.

Quadrant IV (humanised nature) is characterised with the passive quality of nature. Nature in this quadrant is systematically pacified, managed, and perhaps exploited by the human WWOOFers with various technologies (Merchant, 1989). Nature is primarily the resource pool for organic farming, no matter how sensibly and sensitively it is used.

The Origin: Ambiguous Nature-Human

Existential themes: Borderland – Irregular time – Sensing – Enigmatic connection

Sometimes, nature in WWOOFing appeared ambiguous to the WWOOFers. What nature was became uncertain as the semiotic binary of 'human' and 'nature' was blurred through their embodied lived experiences. Spatially, the WWOOF sites in this study were all located in the rural *borderland*, somewhere in between natural and urban spaces. For the WWOOFers, the borderland sometimes meant the best of both worlds, sometimes the wild tamed and the tamed re-wilded. This spatial juxtaposition possibly triggered the WWOOFers' reconfiguration of nature as they knew it (and also human) into something else. Nature appeared as a problematic term that the

WWOOFers could not fully explain with language, but something to be perceived through their bodily *sensing*. Some WWOOFers felt an *enigmatic connection* with nature in chaotic *irregular time*, which transcended their orderly human understanding that was limited to their immediacy of here and now.

The Origin (ambiguous human-nature) is located at the intersection of the two axes on the coordinate plane. Nature at that point is characterised with the originally enigmatic quality of nature-human flux. It is original because it predates the semiotic simulation of the categories of 'nature' and 'human' (Baudrillard, 1993).

With the phenomenological findings about the WWOOFers' experience of nature and the nature of their experience that have been empirically gained in Chapter 4 and this chapter, Chapter 6 will sociologically analyse the WWOOFers' ecological practice and integration with increasing levels of abstraction.

Chapter 6 Ecopedagogical Relations of WWOOFers' Nature Experience: A Socio-Ecological Analysis

Introduction

This chapter builds on the findings in the previous two chapters and investigates the third research question (RQ3), that is, what are the *ecopedagogical relations* between the WWOOFers' experience of nature and the nature of their experience? RQ3 is part of an ecophenomenological (Toadvine, 2009) disaggregation of the research problem (RP) of WWOOFers' nature experience.

In the previous two chapters, WWOOFers' nature experience was ethnographically and phenomenologically described and interpreted with two forms of 'empirical analysis' (James, 2006): (1) the ten impressionist tales (Van Maanen, 2011) of *the WWOOFers' experience of nature*, and their three modalities as an analytical abstraction (Chapter 4, RQ1); and (2) the twenty existential themes (van Manen, 1990) of *the nature of the WWOOFers' experience*, and their five categories of nature-human relations as an analytical abstraction (Chapter 5, RQ2).

Applying James's sociologically oriented methodology of '*conjunctural analysis*' and '*integrational analysis*', with increasing methodological levels of epistemological abstraction, this chapter analyses the *relations* between RQ1 and RQ2. To do so, the phenomenality of WWOOFers' nature experience that has been de-/reconstructed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 will be socio-ecologically abstracted and analysed with a particular emphasis on the practical and relational aspects (Figure 6.1). To extend James's methodology ecologically, this analysis is supported with Phillip Payne's (2014) educational concept of '*ecopedagogy*', a practice theory that emphasises the materiality and intercorporeality of human and 'other' or 'more' than human experience now demanded post-critically for more ontologically oriented environmental education (research).

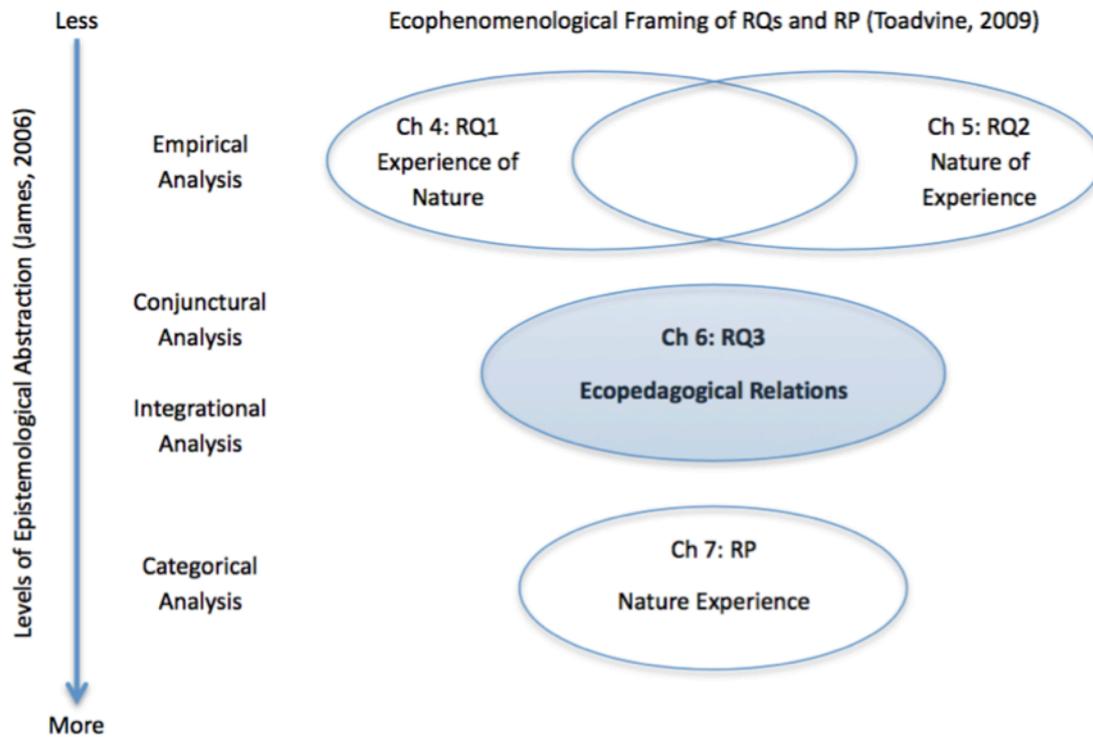


Figure 6.1 Methodological positioning of Chapter 6

Within James's (meta-)methodological framework of four interrelated levels of epistemological abstraction, conjunctural analysis occupies the second methodological level, and integrational analysis the third. For brevity sake, conjunctural analysis investigates '*modes of practice*' with a neo-Marxist materialist emphasis (James suggested five modes of practice: production, exchange, communication, organisation, and enquiry), whereas integrational analysis investigates '*modes of integration*' with post-classical sociological sensibilities (James suggested four modes of integration: face-to-face, object-extended, agency-extended, and disembodied – see Chapter 3 for more details).

Related more emphatically to RQ3, there are two major purposes in this chapter. The first purpose, continuing from the previous chapters, is to deconstruct and destabilise the notion of the 'alternative' in WWOOF tourism experience that has been (over)emphasised in the discourses of tourism studies (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). In this chapter, I attempt that deconstruction by socio-ecologically analysing the WWOOFers' *practices* and how they are *relationally* integrated with or differentiated from nature within the *material* environment of WWOOFing.

Particularly, I am interested in the possible disjuncture between what is ideally said about WWOOFing and what is really *done* in WWOOFing.

Using Pierre Bourdieu's (1977, pp. 16-22) terms, the former may be called 'discourse of practice' while the latter is actual 'practice'. How is the practice of WWOOFing already structured by the discourse of practice and its 'objectified' forms (Berger & Luckmann, 1966)? How (much) does the practice reproduce its discourse (i.e. practice of discourse)? Is there a less structured or not-yet-structured practice that occurs more spontaneously and interactively within the materiality of the environment? Practice is an analytically useful concept to deal with those complex sociological questions, and the combination of conjunctural analysis and integrational analysis will be helpful in revealing the possible relations between what is said/claimed and what is done/practised in the WWOOFers' nature experience.

The second purpose is to analyse and explain the emergent notion of 'ecopedagogy' in environmental education (research) – a central educational concept in this study. This second purpose is closely tied with the first purpose, for they both understand that material interaction in the environment is a crucial element of socio-ecological practice, including educative experience. My conjunctural analysis in this chapter will reveal some of the key conditions of the '*environmental design*' (Huebner, 1987; Payne, 2014) of WWOOFing, as well as its '*social design*' (based on James's modes of practice). In doing so, the analysis will provide corporeal, material and physical insights into educationally experiential ways of embodied doing, learning, and 'ecobecoming' in this informal yet nonetheless designed form of environmental education (Payne, 2005, 2013).

From an ecopedagogical point of view, education or learning does not take place in the fixated centre of one's mind. Rather, it occurs in his/her body on the 'move' that actively interacts with other bodies or things in fluid time-space – or non-place (Payne, 2014; Nakagawa & Payne, 2016). The analytical 'movement' between the conjunctural and integrational levels (while being informed by the empirical level) in this chapter is to increase my methodological mobility so that I can catch up with the dynamic ecopedagogical relations of WWOOFers' nature experience.

In short, a major objective of this chapter is to demonstrate the practically and relationally complexity of WWOOFers' nature experience by paying attention to what is really done in the WWOOF material environment. And to do so, I will analytically move between James's methodological levels, mainly between the conjunctural and

integrational levels. The key analytical concepts are ecological *practice* and integrational *relations* when sociologically framed, and *ecopedagogy* when educationally framed. In this chapter, however, I understand that they share a similar, if not the same, materialist emphasis on WWOOFers' nature experience.

Ecopedagogy and Environmental Design

Ecopedagogy is a needed educational manifestation of contemporary socio-ecological complexity. Through the analysis in this chapter, this emergent notion will reveal the ontological and epistemological complexity of WWOOFers' nature experience as environmentally educative experience (Payne, 2014). This ecopedagogical methodology aims to attend to the moving tensions of ontological and epistemological concerns and will be important in developing a post-critical approach to environmental education research (Hart, 2005; Payne, 2005). It will be particularly so in the areas of curriculum theory and pedagogical development (Payne, 1999), be it through formal schooling or, in this instance, a form of ecotourism.

With the empirical findings represented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, it may be reasonable to speculate that WWOOFers' nature experience, if not all, is environmentally educative. Particularly, from a feminist poststructuralist perspective, they revealed creatively diverse modalities and categories of nature experience that cannot be reproductively contained within the 'alternative' discourse (Davies, 2013). However, how the educational occurred in the research participants' nature experiences remain uncertain at this stage, requiring a materially oriented socio-ecological analysis with increasing levels of abstraction.

According to John Dewey, a founder of the modern experiential education movement (Smith et al., 2011, pp. 1-9) who is sometimes associated with outdoor and/or environmental education, experience is a crucial medium through which genuine education takes place. Yet, 'experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some, experiences are mis-educative' (Dewey, 1997, p. 25). Thus, richer understandings of educative experience demand keener insights into the curriculum design.

Payne's ecopedagogy recommends that the curriculum design should be viewed as part of the environmental design in which experiences occur. In doing so, the conditions of environmental and/or socio-ecological learning are made more

accessible within the ontological-epistemological tension. Hence, an ecopedagogical hypothesis: if WWOOFers' nature experience is educative, such experience is educationally enacted, even if unintentionally, due to the environmental and social design of the WWOOF site. Too often, the intersecting *relations* of the physical and the socio-cultural are avoided in environmental education research, curriculum theory and pedagogical development (Payne, 2014). The relational question of RQ3 dealt with in this chapter assertively incorporates how the environmental design as the curriculum design invokes a potential practice of ecopedagogy in WWOOFing.

I have been using the term 'ecopedagogy' so far by employing Payne's version. As is indicated in this statement, there is no such thing as *the* ecopedagogy, but instead *ecopedagogies*. *Ecopedagogies* are plural. In order to clarify what I mean by 'ecopedagogy', other versions need to be summarised briefly.

Sometimes, the term 'ecopedagogy' has been used as a synonym of education for sustainable development (ESD) (McNaughton, 2010). Other times, however, its origin has often been identified with the legacy of Paulo Freire's (1996) critical pedagogy for emancipation. As 'a relatively new sub-field of critical pedagogy' (McLaren & Jandrić, 2014, p. 813), Freirian ecopedagogy 'starts from a planetary consciousness' or 'planetary citizenship' that recognises 'the earth as a single community' (Gadotti, 2011, pp. 20-21) including non-humans. To overcome the potential geopolitical gaps between the global/singular and the local/plural in ecopedagogy (e.g. Bowers, 2004; Hung, 2014) or rather, to achieve 'the best of both worlds' (Gruenewald, 2003), Richard Kahn (2010) attempted to synthesise the two dialectically as his version of ecopedagogy. Ecopedagogy, in Kahn's 'holistic' and 'comprehensive' (Davis, 2013) view, is not only inclusive but aims also to be critically transformative. However, the poststructural and postcolonial question remains regarding how to overcome the gaps practically and by (and to an extent, for) whom. Will dialectic ecopedagogy 'replicate some of the very problematic assumptions and imperatives of settler colonialism' (Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014, p. 15)? Can it really take both 'traditionally marginalised human and non-human populations' (Ryan, 2012) into account relying on (Western) humanism that may still preserve privileged 'quasi-essentialist categories' (Heise, 2008, p. 5) in the critical theory?

Elsewhere, Payne and I (Nakagawa & Payne, 2015) post-critically suggested a spatial expansion of the gap between the global/singular and the local/plural (or

‘splace’ – a neologism of space and place) for a milieu of ecopedagogy, accepting its ethically complex challenges due to the persistent centre/periphery tensions and their various ‘partnerships’, among humans and also between humans and non-humans (Lummis, 2002). Complexity may indeed disorient the learner. However, such weird or ‘queer’ disorientation may also provide him/her with a (post-)critically reflexive learning opportunity to experience the ‘uniqueness and diversity among ourselves, each other, and the more-than-human world’ (Russell, 2013, p. 24). It is this experimental possibility that Payne and I expressed with the term ‘critical place’.

Payne’s version of ecopedagogy is a philosophically and educationally inspirational framing, particularly for making additional sense of the relationality of WWOOFers’ nature experience. To simplify, his ecopedagogy is circumstantially disposed to a body~time~space moving form of ecocentric relationality. It is ecocentrically oriented, because it politically, ethically, and (som)esthetically attends to the more-than-human (Abram, 1996) at a phenomenologically de-/re-constructive level of inquiry and critique. It is relational, because as a being-in-the-world, our ‘feral’ nature experience is mutually constituted of humans and more-than-humans (Fawcett, 2009, 2013).

A major objective of Payne’s ecopedagogy is to encourage the participants to feel, do, and become someone/something other than who/what they currently are, if only temporarily. In doing so, potentially socio-ecologically oriented and ecocentrically disposed relationality may be partially accessed. Ecophenomenological guidance such as ‘phenomenological deconstruction’ (Payne & Wattchow, 2009) may invoke the participants’ ‘imaginary of becoming other/more-than-what-we-are-now’ (Payne, 2013, p. 426) – the process Payne called ‘ecobecoming’.

For ecobecoming, Payne (2014) recommended Dwayne Huebner’s (1987) notion of ‘environmental design’ for a less anthropocentrically reconceptualised approach to curriculum theory and design and their practices. For Payne, the possible contribution of environmental design to ecopedagogy, and education in general, primarily serves as a means of reintroducing the ontological significance of the embodied spatio-temporal in experiential environmental education, which, he argued, is often (over)epistemologically driven. Educative experience does not occur solely in reference to the past legacies and future ideals that are pedagogically remembered and aspired to. Rather, it is underpinned within the temporal flow that is materially spatialised as the present environment. For Huebner (1987), therefore, environmental

design was a means to ‘explain man’s conditionedness, the patterning of his behavior’ (p. 326) in one’s learning. ‘The responsibility of the curriculum person, then, is to design and criticize specialized environments which embody the dialectical relationships valued in a given society’ (p. 329).

Huebner’s contribution to phenomenologically reconceptualised versions of curriculum theory is significant (Pinar, 2004). However, his notion of environmental design also implies seemingly modernist forms of behaviourism, dialectic linear temporality, and conservatism in his inevitable selection of values (Hodge, 2015, p. 96), which may now be dated for the contemporary hybrid learning spaces in uncertain times (Wals et al., 2013). In addition, environmental design as an ‘effort to impose meaningful order’ in space is both ‘conscious and intuitive’ [emphasis removed] (Papanek, 1984, p. 4), meaning that it is a contingent process.

Therefore, while environmental design is a useful material shaper for an emergent notion of ecopedagogy to work on the ontological basis of educative experience, the notion requires some cautions. How environmental design appears to us (both the researcher and the researched) in the environment is materially and socially contingent. This socio-ecological complexity reflects the web of our experiential relationality made of various elements, such as world views, nature, architecture, technology, economics, society, art, religion, and so on (Skolimowski, 1981, p. 103).

Hence, in addition to incorporating the notions and practices of environmental design, I reiterate that social design is also required for a more ecologically oriented curriculum design in ecopedagogy. I call the hybrid form ‘*ecological design*’. And with this notion of ecological design, I aim to bridge the sociologically textualised methodological spaces of James’s conjunctural and integrational analyses to a more ecological representation of the ecopedagogical relations in WWOOFers’ nature experience – the overarching research problem with which this study is concerned.

To summarise, WWOOFers’ nature experience is constituted of a complex conjuncture of environmental and social design elements, and they are ecologically integrated in heterogeneous ways. Importantly, given this relational complexity, it is probably not possible or appropriate to develop a linear ‘cause and effect’ relationship between a particular environmental design and a particular educative nature experience in WWOOFing. At a general level, however, with the limited knowledge analytically constructed in this chapter, it is plausible to conclude that potential

educative nature experience, or even perhaps more self-reflexive ‘environmental learning’ (Rickinson, Lundholm & Hopwood, 2009), did occur as a result of WWOOFing, and that the process was partly conditioned by its environmental design.

Method(ology)

As indicated in Chapter 3 on post-critical methodology, more contextually detailed methodological explanations are required for each of Chapters 4 to 7, given the independent yet intersecting levels of epistemological abstraction in James’s (2006) (meta-)methodological framework. Following the above clarification of how responses to RQ3 may be socio-ecologically and educationally enhanced by highlighting practical and relational notions such as ecopedagogy, the major task in this chapter is to clarify analytically the material processes of WWOOFers’ nature experience. For that purpose, James’s (2006) conjunctural analysis and integrational analysis are employed as the method(ology) to navigate RQ3.

Conjunctural analysis is for ‘identifying and, more importantly, examining *the intersection* of various modes of practice... or ways of framing the “things in the world” defined in the first level [i.e. empirical analysis]’ [original emphasis] (James, 2006, p. 75). James listed five major ‘*modes of practice*’. They are production, exchange, communication, organisation, and enquiry. Those modes of practice form part of *social design* in WWOOFing. To James’s five modes of practice, in full view of the preceding account of ecopedagogy, three extra modes are added to emphasise the physical affect of *environmental design* on WWOOFers’ nature experience. Those three modes indicate spatial modes of *micro*, *meso*, and *macro*. Each spatial mode refers to the ‘distance’ between an environmental design element and a WWOOFer’s body. In the micro mode, an environmental design element is an *object* on his/her body. In the meso mode, an environmental design element is a *setting* proximally around his/her body. In the macro mode, an environmental design element is a *scape* that encompasses his/her body together with various objects and settings. These different but converging spatial modes of environmental design at micro, meso, and macro levels are not clear-cut. They are for indicative and analytical purposes only.

In my conjunctural analysis, the eight modes of *ecological design* (i.e. environmental design + social design) for WWOOFers’ nature experience are first individually analysed. The elements for those modes are interpretively selected based

on the generated codes from my participation/observation and interview data, and, where appropriate, the findings from the previous chapters. The purpose is to identify a dominant feature for each mode of ecological design, and I attempt to do so by interpretively describing the material and practical processes of the research participants' nature experiences. Those material and practical processes were uniquely conditioned and contextualised in each researched WWOOF site (Table 6.1; see also Figures 6.2-6 for their environmental designs at the meso/macro modes). Due to limited space, however, it is impossible to represent all the processes that I experienced with my research participants here. Thus, this analytical representation is inevitably selective and reductive, which is a major method(ological) limitation of this chapter. Nonetheless, even with the selected ecological design elements, without generalising, the analysis will reveal certain thematic characteristics of the ecological design in WWOOFing.

Code	Location and direction from Melbourne	Description	WWOOFers
CV	Central Victoria (North)	Small-scale business organic vegetable farm on a flat field	Clare Steph Tea
MR	Macedon Ranges (North)	Family bird farm on a hill raising emus, ducks, and chickens for their eggs	Andreas James
GO	The Great Ocean Road (Southwest)	Spiritual community farm in a valley growing organic vegetables and raising cattle	Frank Moon
LV	Latrobe Valley (Southeast)	Small-scale business organic berry farm in a valley	Margherita
SG	South Gippsland (Southeast)	Family home with a large garden on the coast	Anne Ben

Table 6.1 Codes of the five WWOOF sites in this study

The WWOOF ecological design will be then abstracted further with an integrational analysis. Integration analysis, according to James, examines ‘the *intersecting* modes of social integration and differentiation. These different modes of integration are expressed here in terms of different ways of relating to and distinguishing oneself from others – from the face-to-face to the disembodied’ [my emphasis] (James, 2006, p. 76). My contextualised integration analysis serves two purposes.

First, it will elaborate the modes of WWOOF ecological design by adding a sociologically relational account. Only modes of exchange and enquiry were selected

for this detailed elaboration due to limited space. Mode of exchange was selected because ‘exchange is the key’ (WWOOF Australia, 2013, p. 4) in WWOOFing (see also Kosnik, 2013, 2014; Mosedale, 2012). Mode of enquiry was selected due to the educational emphasis on ecopedagogy in this chapter.

Second, perhaps more importantly, I understand conjunctural analysis and integrational analysis are mutually supportive for an analytical identification (or abstraction) of their own intersections. That is, integrational analysis is useful to identify the intersection of modes of practice, and conjunctural analysis is useful to materialise the intersection of modes of integration. As stated earlier, to deal with RQ3, I must ‘move’ analytically with my research participants in the (research) environment, and this perhaps non-orthodox ‘move’ across the methodological levels of James’s epistemological abstraction is needed for a more ecological approach to WWOOFers’ nature experience. With this methodological movement, my conjunctural and integrational analyses are visually previewed and summarised as a cross table (Table 6.2).

The integrational analysis in this chapter is supported by a wide range of theories, such as economic anthropology, environmental education research and environmental learning, and particularly Zygmunt Bauman’s (1993) sociological theory of postmodern ethics. At the end of this chapter, as a way of further abstracting the intersections of my conjunctural analysis and integrational analysis, three *modes of ecological integration* in WWOOFing will be suggested for the purposes of partially and selectively theorising WWOOFers’ nature experience in Chapter 7.

Finally, the methodological limitations in this chapter must be addressed beyond what has already been outlined above. First, in either the conjunctural analysis or the integrational analysis, the analytical content is not comprehensive but only indicative of the complex whole. Again, however, the major purpose of the two analyses in this chapter is to indicate the practical and relational complexity of the WWOOFers’ nature experience rather than to represent its totality (if such a thing is still possible, after going through so many forms of ‘post’ – Clifford & Marcus, 1986). Second, the two analyses will not positively determine any educationally causal relationship between particular ecological design elements and particular accounts of environmental learning. Put simply, I will not take the ‘if you build it, they will come’ approach (Robinson, 1989) for ecopedagogy, although such practical knowledge may be urgently needed for an ‘optimal’ outcome in (environmental) experiential

education (Beard & Wilson, 2013, p. 93). Instead, more modestly, by acknowledging the practical and relational complexity of WWOOFers' nature experience, I will only indicate some possible criteria of ecological design to be considered in curricular design of environmental education, and possibly ecotourism.

		Conjunctural analysis		Integrational analysis				
		Mode	Description	Touch-to-touch	Face-to-face	Object-extended	Agency-extended	Disembodied
Ecological design	Environmental design	Micro	Designed with organic <i>objects</i> that were directly perceived by <i>touch</i> and <i>taste</i> .	Ecological integration <i>The original one</i> <i>The proximal two</i> <i>The social three</i>				
		Meso	Designed with farm <i>settings</i> that were proximally mediated by <i>smell</i> and <i>sound</i> .	Design scale <i>Micro (objects)</i> <i>Meso (settings)</i> <i>Macro (scapes)</i>				
		Macro	Designed with rural <i>scapes</i> that extended <i>visually</i> and <i>imaginarily</i> .	Sense <i>Touch/Taste</i> <i>Smell/Sound</i> <i>Vision</i> <i>Discursive</i>				
	Social design	Production	In addition to <i>foodstuffs</i> for immediate consumption, <i>commodities</i> were also produced for sale.	Production <i>Foodstuffs for eating</i> <i>Commodities for selling</i>				
		Exchange	In addition to <i>sharing</i> and <i>barter</i> , exchange in WWOOFing included <i>market exchange</i> , exchange around <i>visa regulation</i> , and <i>trans-temporal exchange</i> .	Exchange <i>Sharing</i> <i>Barter</i> <i>Market exchange</i> <i>Visa regulations</i> <i>Trans-temporal exchange</i>				
		Communication	In addition to <i>face-to-face conversation</i> , the WWOOFers frequently used <i>electronic technologies</i> to communicate with family and friends.	Communication <i>Face-to-face conversation</i> <i>Electronic technologies</i>				
		Organisation	In addition to a shared household based on a <i>fictive kinship</i> , WWOOFing was also organised on a <i>business-like</i> utilitarian principle and through an <i>online community</i> .	Organisation <i>Fictive kinship</i> <i>Business-like</i> <i>Online community</i>				
		Enquiry	Experiential environmental learning took place in the forms of <i>symbolic</i> , <i>transpositional</i> , and <i>transformative learning</i> .	Enquiry <i>Symbolic learning</i> <i>Transpositional learning</i> <i>Transformative learning</i>				

Table 6.2 Conjunctural and integrational analyses of the ecopedagogical relations of the WWOOFers' nature experience



Figure 6.2 Meso/Macro modes of environmental design at CV



Figure 6.3 Meso/Macro modes of environmental design at MR



Figure 6.4 Meso/Macro modes of environmental design at GO



Figure 6.5 Meso/Macro modes of environmental design at LV



Figure 6.6 Meso/Macro modes of environmental design at SG

Conjunctural Analysis of the WWOOF Ecological Design

Environmental Design

The modes of environmental design are spatially categorised into ‘micro’, ‘meso’, and ‘macro’. In WWOOFers’ nature experience, the elements of the environmental design are sensorially mediated and perceived, revealing *a potential association between the spatial and the sensorial*.

Micro mode. The micro mode of environmental design is sensorially perceived as an object via *touch* and *taste*, which required a direct ‘encounter between bodies human and non-human’ (Bennett, 2010, p. 47). They are the ‘arch-sense’ (Bauman, 1993, p. 93) to perceive the environment.

Soil. ‘Weeding is boring but [the host] told me that it is important to give all the space, energy, and water to baby plants so that they grow stronger. But it is only for babies. In that way, the plants grow naturally well’ (Clare, informal conversation).

Soil was a predominant element of the environmental design in WWOOFing. All the researched WWOOFers worked with soil across the five sites, whether

weeding, planting, harvesting, or simply digging. Weeding was a major task for the WWOOFers. While weeding did not require any particular skill (hence suitable for the WWOOFers in general), it was crucial for organic farming that did not rely on chemicals. Manually removing weeds with their roots attached one by one was extremely time consuming and kept the WWOOFers on soil, and soil on the WWOOFers, for an extended duration. One had to be particularly careful when he/she was weeding for young plants, as Clare did, because their visual appearance was not that different from the young weeds to be removed. To see them clearly, the WWOOFers needed to get closer to the soil. To maintain their minimal distance to the soil for a long duration, when possible, the WWOOFers used a variety of items for their comfort and cleanliness: garden/rubber gloves, kneepads, and plastic crates or polystyrene board to sit on. At CV, Clare spent a lot of time weeding during the rainy winter months, sometimes eight hours a day. Clare did not like getting wet, cold, and muddy, but she was well aware of the importance of her work for growing the vegetables.

Organic Food. *'You can just eat it, just pick from the garden and you can eat it. That's amazing. I think there are a lot of people who don't know that. They still think that you pick it at the grocery store or the market, and then you have to go home and wash it a lot. And then peel... But it's not like that here'* (Tea, interview).

Organic vegetables and fruits were grown at all the five researched WWOOF sites. At some sites, they were exclusively for domestic consumption. At others, the produce was primarily for their businesses. Those vegetables and fruits were freshly picked, and they and provided a supplemental, if not the main, source of the daily diet in the WWOOF households. At GO, Moon was excited to dig out white carrots that were immediately cooked for a ceremonial lunch; At LV, Margherita collected 'second grade' oddly shaped strawberries not suitable for sale but delicious to eat (we were lucky to be there in November, which was the beginning of the strawberry season); and at SG, Anne regularly picked salad leaves in the garden to add to dinner that was delivered by the host in a basket every night. Sometimes the WWOOFers picked vegetables and fruits to eat as they worked. At CV, where many types of organic vegetables were commercially produced, the selection was abundant: baby carrots, broccoli, kale, and salad leaves, to name a few. Those raw organic vegetables

from the garden were something immediately consumable into the body due to the non-presence of chemicals, which pleased Tea very much.

Meso mode. The meso mode of the environmental design is also identified in relation to bodily senses. A meso design element is not necessarily in the immediate vicinity of the WWOOFers' body but rather appears as an environmental setting. This level is identified with physical traces (e.g. by-product of use, adaptation for use, display of self, public messages, etc.) and physical settings (e.g. props, spatial relations, etc.) that are spatially arranged in the environment. Those design elements are perceived not only visually but also via *smell* and *sound*, to enact simultaneously 'connections and separations between people' (Zeisel, 1984, p. 130) and, more importantly in this context, between humans and non-humans.

Organic smells. *'I was just excited because at that time I thought "wow, horses are at this place!" And the horses were eating something on the ground. Yeah, I was excited, and that's it. I smelled horse dung' (James, interview).*

It is a common experience that an unfamiliar smell makes us feel that we are in an unfamiliar location. A smell connects and/or disconnects people to/from the environment. The researched WWOOF sites were full of unfamiliar organic smells for the urban WWOOFers. Typically, from winter to spring during which my fieldwork was conducted, there were intense smells of wet soil, hay, and pollen. Other particular (or peculiar) smells included: horse manure compost (CV); the mud pool around Penny the pig (CV); the mixture of moulded flatbread and malt for bird food (MR); bird faeces in the pens (MR); horse dung (MR); cow dung (GO); mushroom compost (LV); and, while this was quite pleasant, the special homemade sandfly repellent lotion with eucalyptus scent that the host recommended us to put on our bodies (SG). James clearly remembered his exciting encounter with the horses on his arrival at MR, accompanied by the smell of their dung. The smell was a significant element of the WWOOF environmental design for James to feel the beginning of his new experience in the unfamiliar location.

Boundaries. *'Farming means, for me, of course you can call it nature, you can call it organic, you can call it biodynamic, but in the end you are taking the space from the animals' (Andreas, interview).*

One prominent physical element in the WWOOF environmental design visually observable across all the sites was the infrastructure needed for production. By establishing boundaries between nature and human, the latter controlled the former to maximise their gain. At CV, Clare and I stretched wires along a broad bean patch to support the beans vertically for greater yield. At MR, fences enclosed emus, ducks, geese, and chickens. At SG, garden beds were raised and walled-in to prevent bandicoots from vandalising crops. At LV, large nets were used to protect berry patches from birds. Andreas remarked that farming was fundamentally an act of artificially designing the environment for production, often at the expense of nature. At the same time, working within those boundaries, the WWOOFers also observed disorder. The broad beans did not fit themselves between the wires neatly. The birds (often) died and were killed by unknown predators within the fences. The bandicoots dug holes to access the raised garden bed at night. And some birds evaded the berry nets and became trapped inside. The disorder was relatively minor, yet indicated nature's vital agency.

Macro mode. At the macro level, the WWOOF environment is designed as a scape. The ruralscapes at the researched sites allowed the WWOOFers to experience both the natural and the human at the same time, *visually* and *imaginarily*. Spatially, with a means of transport, their nature experiences during WWOOFing extended beyond the actual WWOOF sites.

Borderland. *'In four minutes I can be by the river, and I would go and lie down by the river, and all I would hear is the sound of the river and the sound of the wind and trees. So, yes, it's right next to the road, but I definitely had the experience of being in nature' (Steph, interview).*

The WWOOF sites researched in this study were all within a two-hour drive from Melbourne. Due to the relative proximity to the large city, most sites were conveniently accessible by car. CV was located right next to a major road that ran through a regional town with a population of approximately 6,000. The road was particularly busy with cargo trucks in the evening. SG was on an interstate highway that connected Melbourne and Sydney. At both sites, the WWOOFers often heard the traffic. However, the natural elements were also abundant at those sites. CV had a

river where Steph found ‘a power spot’ to meditate. SG had a magnificently open coastal view facing a National Park at the doorstep.

Excursion. *‘It’s just a beautiful place. I mean, the water is extremely clear, very cold too, but very nice blue and the white beach... And there were not many people around so pretty lonely there, which is very nice. No disturbing annoying people’ (Ben, interview).*

The WWOOFers, especially those with their own cars, experienced nature beyond their WWOOF sites. Those excursions also provided them with a meaningful interaction with nature during their WWOOFing. At GO, Frank drove Moon and me to a nearby waterfall in a temperate rainforest to explore. On the way back at night, we stopped at a beach on the Great Ocean Road. There, they had a quick dip in the cold water to experience ‘the Antarctic Ocean water’. At SG, on their non-working days, Anne and Ben would often drive their van to the nearby National Park for surfing. A major reason why Anne and Ben chose SG for their WWOOFing was the good surfing beach there.

Social Design

In order to analyse the WWOOF social design, James’s (2006) sociologically oriented five ‘modes of practice’ are applied: mode of production, mode of exchange, mode of communication, mode of organisation, and mode of enquiry. This analysis indicates that WWOOFers’ nature experience is *not limited to the ‘alternative’ ideals of WWOOFing but instead overlaid with various social practices and their values.*

Mode of production. The proximity to food source, and its production and consumption, is a significant element of the WWOOF social design (Maycock, 2008; Stehlik, 2002). Other design elements related to mode of production are of commodity and landscape. Those products marked a temporal completion of the WWOOFers’ work and thus provided them with a sense of achievement.

Commodities. *‘Jam making! I like to cook. It’s my favourite because it’s the final product of your hard work’ (Margherita, interview).*

As well as growing food for eating, the WWOOFers also involved in producing food commodities when their hosts were operating agricultural business. At CV, the WWOOFers picked organic vegetables for the roadside shop located right next to the farm and for various farmers' markets in/around Melbourne. At MR, Andreas and James collected bird eggs (emu, duck, goose, and chicken) for the host to sell them to a distributor. At LV, in November, Margherita picked the first seasonal strawberries for a local farmers' market. Margherita also helped her host to make jam in a small commercial kitchen next to the house. The jam was made from various organic fruits produced at the farm (e.g. strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, boysenberries, and so on). These were kept frozen in large industrial freezers so that the host could make jam throughout the year. The jam was sold at the farmers' market, the visitor centre within in the property, and in supermarkets via a distributor, contributing to half of the total income from the berry farm business. Margherita found the jam making job particularly satisfying, because the jam represented 'the final product' of her hard work that had begun with planting, weeding, and mulching.

***Building and clearing.** 'It's really nice that you are building something and that you have something you made and it's going to be there... Also for us at the end of our time here, when we finish this, we can have a nice evening there, yeah, enjoying the view' (Anne, interview).*

The WWOOFers felt a sense of achievement in their re-making of the environment by building and clearing as well. They were commodities in WWOOFing as well as acts to facilitate production of commodities. At CV, Clare and I built a wire trellis for a broad beach patch in one afternoon. We felt very proud when the job was done by sunset. At SG, the major task for Anne and Ben throughout their entire WWOOFing was to build a raised level terrace adjacent to one of the house buildings. As well as improving her carpentry skills and enjoying the process of building itself, Anne reported that her most significant on-site nature experience took place as a result of (near) completion of the terrace. In my last evening at SG, we sat on the terrace drinking sparkling wine (with strawberries freshly picked from the garden) overlooking the magnificent coastal view. At GO, Moon and Frank were involved in clearing the weed trees. While Moon was sad for destroying the lives of those trees, she also felt empowered by seeing a human-induced change in the landscape.

Mode of exchange. Jon Mosedale (2012) suggested that the *barter* between hosts and WWOOFers was the exchange practice indicative of the ‘alternative market economy’ in WWOOFing. Indeed, bartering is a core WWOOF exchange principle as written in *The Australian WWOOF Book*: ‘Exchange is the key word. You will be expected to exchange between 4 and 6 hours per day... of your time and energy for your food and accommodation’ [emphasis removed] (WWOOF Australia, 2013, p. 4). In addition to this institutionalised barter, other exchange practices in WWOOFing included *sharing* within the household (Kosnik, 2013), *monetary exchange* at the farmers’ markets, and *visa regulations* centrally mediated by the state. Mode of exchange will be analysed in detail as part of the later integrational analysis.

Mode of communication. The ideal WWOOFer, according to *The Australian WWOOF Book* (WWOOF Australia, 2013), ‘[i]s an ambassador for their home country, sharing their culture with their Hosts and other WWOOFers while they learn about the Australian way of life’ (p. 5). As well as at the dinner table sharing a meal with the host (Kosnik, 2014), one of the optimal occasions for such communication occurred during my fieldwork was during weeding. In addition, mobile communication with family and friends back home was important for the international WWOOFers who were often travelling alone in Australia.

Weeding and talking. ‘During the morning, which is five hours non-stop, if you have company, you can talk with somebody. So you don't think about how time goes. But it's still that, oh my god it's still ten o'clock, for example, but you can share this with somebody’ (Margherita, interview).

All the participants and I agreed that the best way to survive weeding was to talk. The act of weeding, bending one’s body forward to carefully remove the weeds one by one with their roots attached, was painfully slow work. Talking with each other significantly reduced the boredom that could last up to eight hours a day. As a solo WWOOFer at LV, Margherita told me that weeding alone for an extended duration was the biggest challenge in her WWOOFing. On the positive side, weeding in a group provided a great opportunity for the WWOOFers to get to know each other. In my fieldwork, it was during weeding that most conversations between my participants and I took place. To be frank, I felt emotionally closer to the participants with whom I did weeding. Sometimes, we talked about where we came from, what we

did, and who we were. Other times, we confessed various worries and concerns in our private lives. Occasionally, as it happened with Moon and Frank at GO, we discussed about philosophical topics relevant to WWOOFing and other alternative lifestyles, such as the difference between ‘need’ and ‘want’.

***Mobile phones.** ‘The mobile phone paradox. By not having the signal inside the house, I think I’m in nature. By going out somewhere open to get the signal, I sense nature all around me’ (My fieldwork journal entry).*

Mobile phones remained essential for the WWOOFers during their WWOOFing, including when they were working outside. Typically, they texted their friends in Australia and their home countries, listened to music with or without headphones, and took photographs of objects, landscapes, and themselves to upload to their Facebook pages. After work, back in their own rooms, they Skyped with their friends and did some more Facebook. Some hosts complained to me that the WWOOFers used their mobile phones too much, both during and after work. According to them, during work, mobile phones would lower their work productivity. After work, the WWOOFers did not spend as much time with their hosts as the hosts expected, which they believed was an important aspect of WWOOFing. At GO and LV, located in the valley, the mobile signal was very weak. Being disconnected from the mobile network at ‘home’ was a strange experience for the WWOOFers. This gave them a sense of isolation, particularly when they were alone without fellow WWOOFers. Moon had an interstate boyfriend and it was very important for her to be in regular contact with him. Inside the accommodation every night, Moon would try to find a spot by the window for a better signal. If that was not working, she would go out to the top of a nearby hill, a place the host recommended. There, as well as with a stronger signal, the night sky was bright with the Milky Way.

Mode of organisation. Elisabeth Kosnik (2013) wrote that family-like ‘fictive kinship’ was the ideal organisational principle in WWOOFing, and the WWOOFers in this study attested to this value. Despite the ideal, in reality the WWOOF household is organised with other mechanisms that sometimes generated tensions both between the hosts and the WWOOFers, and between the WWOOFers.

Boss/Worker. *‘Yelling at me was out of reason. I didn't like this really. But of course, I see her point, and the point is she is the farmer, so this property is hers... When some of the chickens die, and it doesn't have to be a WWOOFer's mistake in this case, but... [the host] is making money out of this’ (Andreas, interview).*

The host-WWOOFer relationship was not always symmetrical as ideally designed with the barter exchange arrangement. Sometimes, the WWOOFers were treated as workers (with the hosts as their bosses). For Margherita at GO, WWOOFing was fundamentally a job, and she felt the term ‘Working Holiday’ was an oxymoron. On one hot evening at the dinner table, after she had worked hard all day in the berry patch, the host drank white wine by herself without offering Margherita a glass, which she thought was ‘very rude’. At the same time, she also justified the event, because ‘work and alcohol don’t mix’. At MR, Andreas felt the inequality in the host-WWOOFer relationship when he was yelled at by the host for a mistake he had not made. The host also yelled at James (for things he did and did not do). James tolerated this treatment, he told me, in order to gain his second Working Holiday visa, which required the host’s signature for the document to be submitted to the Immigration Office. Otherwise, James would have just left. The visa arrangement, while allowing the international travellers to stay in Australia longer, contributed to a more transactional and utilitarian organisation of the WWOOF ‘household’.

Work allocation. *‘I like being physical. I'm absolutely even more determined now to do the work. So just have that thought go out of their mind, you know, “ok you two do this, you can do this, you should just go and kneel down by the flower bed and do this.” I won't have that. And I think if I can iron out that, and have that ready for the next girl to come in, even if she wants to be treated more prissily, I think it's good for the girl to have the exact same treatment’ (Moon, interview).*

As well as the host-WWOOFer relationships being asymmetrical, the WWOOFers themselves were sometimes treated unequally, at least for the purpose of work distribution. At GO, Moon felt that she was discouraged from participating in physically demanding work due to her gender. At CV, on the contrary, I, as the only male WWOOFer, was given more physically demanding tasks (such as digging a trench for a sprinkler pipe, while Clare and Tea planted seeds in the seedling trays in the greenhouse). At MR, I observed that James was not treated by the hosts as respectfully as they did Andreas, perhaps due to his ethnicity, or/and perhaps due to

his lack of language skills to negotiate or complain. For example, James was asked to work with the host around a firewood chopping machine that continuously made an explosive noise during operation. James did that without safety goggles and ear protection. Andreas refused the work. At SG, due to my relative lack of carpentry skills in comparison with Anne and Ben, I was given a load of weeding and garden maintenance tasks to be completed alone. The host told me: 'Building a terrace is a two-person job as far as I'm concerned'. This was despite my pre-agreed request to allow me to work with the other WWOOFers for the purpose of data collection. The hosts' unequal treatment of the WWOOFers possibly based on their gender, ethnicity, and skills generated tensions, not only between the hosts and the WWOOFers, but also between the WWOOFers.

Mode of enquiry. By doing, sensing, feeling, knowing, being (Beard & Wilson, 2013, p. 120), and (eco)becoming (Payne, 2013), the WWOOFers reflexively reported in their interviews and informal conversations that they experientially 'learnt' not only particular knowledge and skills but also abstract values during WWOOFing. Adrian Deville and Stephen Wearing (2013) suggested that *transformative learning* was a significant element of WWOOFing. They wrote that by 'interacting and connecting with people and places' and developing 'new skills, both practical and personal', WWOOFers 'can enhance self-understanding and self-development that in turn can generate important life changes' [emphasis removed] (pp. 162-163). My participants verbally affirmed some 'evidence' of transformative learning in their nature experiences. In addition, other forms of experiential learning, perhaps less anthropocentric, also seemingly took place. They are named *symbolic learning* and *transpositional learning* for analytical purposes. Mode of enquiry will be analysed in detail as part of the later integrational analysis.

Summary of Conjunctural Analysis

In summary, the conjunctural analysis of WWOOFing indicated the following.

- The analysis of WWOOF environmental design, which is categorised into three spatial scale modes (i.e. micro, meso, and macro), revealed that each mode partly corresponded with a certain mode of sensuous/bodily engagement.

That is: **micro** for a direct encounter with an object via touch and taste; **meso** for a mediated perception of a setting via smell and sound; and **macro** to describe experiencing a scape visually and imaginarily extended.

- The analysis of WWOOF social design, via James's five modes of practice (i.e. production, exchange, communication, organisation, and enquiry), revealed that social practices in WWOOFing were at best heterogeneous, instead of being exclusively an 'alternative' tourist experience. **Production** included market commodities, as well as foodstuffs for immediate consumption within the household. **Exchange** operated as a market exchange and a means to extend the WWOOFers' Working Holiday visas, as well as institutionalised WWOOF bartering and sharing. **Communication** was mediated by mobile technologies, as well as in person. **Organisation** was at times akin to business with the boss/worker relationship, as well as based on fictive kinship. **Enquiry** involved various learning types, in addition to anthropocentrically framed transformative learning.
- This conjunctural analysis of ecological designs indicates that WWOOFers' nature experience is materially and practically layered with various and sometimes contradictory design elements.
- Table 6.3 summarises the possible connections among the modes of ecological design in practice, some of the existential themes of the nature of the WWOOFers' experience interpreted in Chapter 5, and some of the impressionist tales of the WWOOFers' experience of nature described in Chapter 4.

	Mode	e.g. Design element	e.g. Existential theme (Ch 5)	e.g. Impressionist tale (Ch 4)
Environmental design	Micro	Soil	Sensing	Margherita
		Organic food	Sensing	Steph
	Meso	Organic smell	Agentic nature	Tea
Boundaries		Farming space	Andreas	
Macro	Borderland	Borderland	Anne	
	Excursion	Non-human space	Ben	
Social design	Production	Foodstuffs Commodities	Becoming the Other Resource	Steph
	Exchange	Sharing	Sharing	
		Visa regulations	Fast time	
	Communication	Weeding and talking	Slow time	Clare
		Mobile phones	Mobilities	
Organisation	Fictive kinship Boss/Worker	Authentic place Boss/Worker		
Enquiry	Transformative learning	Self-growth	Moon	
	Symbolic learning	Enigmatic connection	Frank	

Table 6.3 Connections among the modes of ecological design and their design elements, existential themes, and impressionist tales.

Integrational Analysis (1): Mode of Exchange

The conjunctural analysis has identified the practical heterogeneity of WWOOFers' nature experience that operates across the variety of ecologically designed conditions, both environmental and social. In this section, I conduct an *ecologically relational analysis* of the identified practical heterogeneity by referring to James's (2006) four *modes of integration: face-to-face, object-extended, agency-extended, and disembodied*. Due to limited space, as indicative examples, the modes of *exchange* and *enquiry* from the conjunctural analysis are selected (but in conjuncture with other modes of ecological design). The purpose here is to demonstrate how WWOOFers' nature experiences are ecologically integrated (and differentiated) in diverse ways via those modes of practice.

This first section of integrational analysis re-investigates the mode of exchange. While the analysis reveals *various modes of integration* that constitute the exchange practices in WWOOFing, it also detects *the reproduction of the semiotic meaning of face-to-face integration* practised by the WWOOFers and the hosts in

order to maintain the naturalistic ideals of WWOOFing. In doing so, my aim is to demonstrate that, in reality, the notion of the ‘alternative’ associated with WWOOFing is relationally contingent rather than exclusive.

Face-to-Face Integration

Paul James (2006) defined ‘face-to-face integration’ as ‘a social relationship grounded in the importance of embodied presence’ (p. 84), which is often constructed around the notion of ‘blood’, both biologically and metaphorically. If not real blood, Kosnik (2013) argued that the ethos of WWOOFing is ‘open household’ based on ‘fictive kinship’ where WWOOFers are encouraged to become part of the family temporarily (see also Payne, 2009 for his notion of ‘postmodern oikos’ in the context of environmental education research). There, living together, without being differentiated based on social categories (e.g. the host, the WWOOFer, the worker, the guest, etc.) – or *personas* (masks) –, the hosts and the WWOOFers ideally share the ‘convivial’ (James, 2006, p. 85) moral proximity of the ‘two’ ‘faces’ (Bauman, 1993; Levinas, 1985) with the economically symmetrical principle of ‘generalised reciprocity’ (Sahlins, 1972). It is not clear, however, whether the household, which is essentially a closed group (Polanyi, 2001, p. 55), can really be opened up to the others who do not share blood, and if it can, how that opening up of the household is practically implemented in WWOOFing.

The WWOOFers in this study indicated that they experienced ‘sharing’ (Kosnik, 2013; WWOOF Australia, 2013) based on face-to-face integration, which was representative of the ‘alternative’ (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006) WWOOF socio-cultural values. Prior to coming to SG, Anne and Ben had WWOOFed at a coastal location in New South Wales with a senior couple. Anne said that the best part was sharing work and meals with the couple (see also Kosnik, 2014). ‘We were not there only for work... they were not our boss... we were the workers but we were on the same level somehow and working together... we were talking a lot with them and really getting to know them. It was really like friends talking together’ (Anne, interview). Other participants similarly reported their sharing of work, meals, space, cultures, activities, and emotions with their hosts and other WWOOFers as an important element of their WWOOFing.

As Zygmunt Bauman (1993, p. 89) wrote, however, the moral proximity of face-to-face integration may ambivalently generate loves and hatreds at the same time. Meaning, as a semiotic difference, requires a sufficient distance. The positive meaning of moral proximity, therefore, is only possible from outside, from a *third* point of view. In other words, one can only recognise the *meaning* of proximity when he/she is not proximal to the being.¹¹ Similarly, Marshal Sahlins (1972, p. 219) noted that ‘generalised reciprocity’ may function to normalise an asymmetrical power relationship within a traditional social group (e.g. social rank and wealth), indeed enabling ‘negative reciprocity’¹² to occur at the heart of moral proximity (Ingold, 1986). Accordingly, in her ethnographic study, Kosnik (2013) pointed out the existence of ‘reproductive’ (Narotzky, 1997) ‘shadow work’ (Illich, 1981) in WWOOF exchange (e.g. cooking, cleaning, and babysitting, and so on). They were often unnoticed under the shadow of ‘productive’ work and imposed on ‘family member’ female WWOOFers, in addition to their daily four-to-six hour labour for the institutionalised barter.

During my fieldwork, I too observed shadow work being imposed on both male and female WWOOFers. Without any intention of condoning this practice, however, I must note that they did not necessarily complain about this extra work. At CV, after working all day in the vegetable garden, the WWOOFers and the host took turns to cook dinner for everyone. At LV, Margherita was expected to help the host to cook dinner every night. At MR, James helped the host cook dinner while Andreas went out for jogging. James told me that he appreciated his ‘experience of living with’ (James, interview) the host, because not only could he learn Australian culture and practise his English, but also he could feel like at home. The face-to-face moral proximity is a fine ethical line of devotion and exploitation, and perhaps remaining silent about this fine line is a crucial condition of the ideal WWOOF household.

¹¹ This distinction between *meaningless* face-to-face integration (which is experienced within the moral proximity) and *meaningful* face-to-face integration (which is semiotically simulated from the outside of the moral proximity) is crucial for my later argument.

¹² Negative reciprocity is defined as ‘the attempt to get something for nothing with impunity, the several forms of appropriation, transactions opened and conducted toward net utilitarian advantage’ (Sahlins, 1972, p. 195). Objectively, it manifests as a series of ‘one-way economic transfers’ (Hunt, 2005). However, it may be problematic to understand exchange purely on the objective basis, because ‘the things’ being exchanged may entail the immaterial (Carrier, 2005, pp. 3-4), such as emotions.

Object-Extended Integration

Object-extended integration refers to the mode of integration ‘through networks of mediation that are carried by exchangeable or symbolically placed things... but one that no longer requires the particularity of anybody’s embodied self to stand behind the network of value’ (James, 2006, pp. 86-87). James identified money as a pre-eminent example of the type of objects at this level of integration.

In WWOOFing, the ‘alternative market economy’ operates as an institutionalised ‘barter’ practice, in which daily four-to-six hour labour is exchanged with accommodation and meals (Mosedale, 2012). This does not exclude, however, the presence of a monetary market economy and its relevance to WWOOFers’ nature experience. From this level of integration and onwards, a significant distinction from face-to-face integration is the introduction of ‘the third’ category that gives a definitive social meaning to exchange (Bauman, 1993, p. 111). In object-extended integration, each exchange makes sense to everyone because they all agree (or disagree) with the terms and conditions of the exchange, mediated by common currencies.

Across the researched WWOOF sites in this study, the local ‘exchange rates’ for the WWOOF barter were predetermined, depending on each host’s interpretation of the WWOOF guidelines and the governmental requirements for the second year Working Holiday visa (see the next section of agency-extended integration for more about the visa arrangement conditions of the WWOOF exchange). For example, at CV, the WWOOFers worked from 8 am to 1 pm (with a 15-minute morning tea break at 10:30), and then 2 to 5 pm, from Monday to Friday. Approximately 40 hours a week was counted as 7 working days for the visa application. At SG, the daily work schedule for the weekdays was from 9:30 am to 11 am at which the WWOOFers had a 15-minute morning tea break, and then to 1pm. After 1-hour lunch, the WWOOFers worked from 2 pm to 3:45 pm (approximately 30 hours a week, also counted as 7 working days for the visa application). When Anne and Ben were occasionally invited to join their hosts for dinner in the main house, they were expected to wash the dishes afterwards. In return, they would begin their work at 10 am the following morning, instead of at 9:30 am. Washing dishes was precisely equated to their 30-minute labour.

On the other hand, the WWOOF barter exchange rate was sometimes flexibly negotiated, case by case, or on a ‘face-to-face’ basis. At MR where the WWOOFers

were expected to work for six hours, seven days a week to look after the birds (approximately 42 hours a week, counted as 7 working days for the visa application), Andreas and James sometimes received an afternoon ‘off’ to visit Melbourne, because ‘they deserve it for their hard work’ (the host, informal conversation). This occasional arrangement was her attempt to re-introduce the moral proximity of a face-to-face relationship into the WWOOF barter exchange mechanically based on object-extended integration.

In addition to the WWOOF barter, the WWOOFers were also part of a larger monetary exchange system, particularly when their hosts ran a farm business (CV, MR, and LV). The value of commodities that the WWOOFers bodily produced was exchanged for money at an abstracted price. The abstraction of their ‘face’ into a ‘price’ was experienced with mixed feelings. For Tea, selling vegetables at a farmers’ market was satisfying because money objectively indicated her WWOOF work achievement. There, the value of Tea’s work of growing organic vegetables became triangularly quantifiable with the money exchanged, although such quantification may cut out her non-quantifiably rich experience (Simmel, 1991).

At a farmers’ market in Melbourne, Clare sold a bunch of candy stripe beetroots to a female customer for four dollars. As James explained, in object-extended integration, whoever is behind the exchange, the exchange is not affected (e.g. I sold another bunch of candy stripe beetroots to another customer for the same price). The exchange value of four dollars did not require either a seller or a buyer. It did not represent any particular thing, not even Clare’s work involved in the candy stripe beetroots. Rather, the price of four dollars was competitively determined by the host, in relation to the prices of vegetables at other shops (thus, the value of the candy stripe beetroots turned into ‘sign exchange value’ – Baudrillard, 1981). Furthermore, this monetary exchange was asymmetrical because of the greater ‘purchase power’ of money (Furihata, 1996) than of the beetroots. At the farmers’ market, a customer with four dollars could always purchase one bunch of candy stripe beetroots as long as it was still available. Inversely, however, Clare could only purchase four dollars with one beetroot bunch when the customer agreed.

Object-extended integration via money at the farmers’ market asymmetrically ‘masked’ Clare as a ‘seller’ with a specific yet limited ‘role’ in the abstracted exchange. In resisting this masking to her ‘face’, Clare added some behind-the-scene (or behind-the-mask) information to the vegetables sold, which only she could

provide because of her unique bodily experience: that it was *Clare* that had picked those beetroots on the previous day; that it was *Clare* that had eaten them with a delicious salad recipe; and that it was *Clare* that had learnt the recipe from another WWOOFer.¹³

Clare's additional information was not only to assert her 'face' in the exchange but also to care for the customer. 'I feel happy, because they realise how to cook those vegetables when they bring them home and how to eat those vegetables the best' (Clare, interview). This may indicate that, while monetary exchange at a farmers' market based on object-extended integration was an objective reality of exchange in WWOOFing, Clare and other WWOOFers also tried to maintain their and others' 'faces' in order to preserve the moral proximity ideally associated with WWOOFing.

Furthermore, perhaps, following Maurice Godelier (1999), the moral proximity of two 'inalienable' faces in the WWOOF household may have been only relatively possible because other 'alienable' objects (such as money and labour time) were also in circulation. In other words, money is not 'bad', but instead, a reference point from which the 'pricelessness' of the face-to-face becomes meaningful within the social landscape. This points to that, in examining exchange in WWOOFing, (and probably other elements of the ecological design) a more relative or overlaying approach is needed, rather than simply over-emphasising the significance of face-to-face integration.

Agency-Extended Integration

Agency-extended integration (or institutional integration) occurs where 'relations are carried through agents and institution of agency' (James, 2006, p. 87). 'These relations no longer depend primarily on the genealogical particularity of the embodied person, but rather on their skills, aptitude, training, or realizable capital' (p. 88). An exchange based on agency-extended integration is more abstract than one based on object-extended integration. In the latter, as we have seen, exchange takes place through the mediation of an object such as money, or a quasi-object such as labour

¹³ Clare admitted that she also did this to promote the sale. In the farmers' market, 'face' too becomes a commodity. This indicates that 'face' gains its value, or meaning, in an exchange that operates in a more abstract mode of integration (Bauman, 1993).

time, where the individuality of a WWOOFer (or his/her ‘face’) becomes less visible and relevant (thus partially ‘masked’ and/or ‘*persona*-lised’) behind the object. In an exchange based on agency-extended integration, *personal* attributes (such as labour force) themselves become the transactional goods whose values are institutionally and socially distributed and determined.

The WWOOF barter, which is specified to be an exchange of daily four-to-six hour work exchanged with accommodation with meals, is institutional. Furthermore, when WWOOF Australia promoted the possibility for the second year Working Holiday visa by WWOOFing in various entries on their Facebook page and *The Australian WWOOF Book* (2013), the institutional nature of WWOOF exchange, including a link with the state, became clearer.¹⁴ In fact, the majority of the participants in this study decided to WWOOF, at least initially, in order to gain their second year Working Holiday visa. At MR, as he cleaned a bird shed with invasive odours, James quietly confessed to me that he did not like WWOOFing but he was ‘only doing this for the second year visa’ (James, informal conversation). And in order to gain the visa, ‘the government says that I need to work for eight hours five days a week’ (Margherita, informal conversation) in the rural area. Clare chose CV as her WWOOFing site partly because ‘if you work here five days a week, [that] counts as seven days for the visa. And if you go to a farmers' market on the weekend, you can get eight days. So, for us, for me and [her friend who had left], we thought “wow, eight days, we will be getting the second year visa very soon!”’ (Clare, interview).

Anne at SG was critical of this overemphasis on the visa aspect of Australian WWOOFing. She felt that WWOOFing had so many positive possibilities, some of which she had experienced. In addition, Anne pointed out a potential power imbalance due to this institutional arrangement. ‘There are people [i.e. hosts] who are taking advantage of getting cheap labour without a positive thinking of doing something nice... Just using this little power that they have at the moment and over

¹⁴ In order to gain a second working holiday visa under Subclass 417, a WWOOFer was required to work for ‘a minimum of 3 months (88 days in total) in a specific field or industry in a designated area of regional Australia’ (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2014). WWOOFing was usually applicable to ‘plant and animal cultivation’ specified in Form 1263, the government document that detailed the process of employment verification for the second year Working Holiday visa (Subclass 417). Other industry fields included: fishing and pearling; tree farming and felling; mining; and construction. Submission of this Form required the employer’s (i.e. the host, in the case of WWOOFing) signature. However, this arrangement to include WWOOFing for Subclass 417 was terminated in 2015. My fieldwork was conducted in 2014 when this visa arrangement was still in place.

the people [i.e. WWOOFers] who are in the shitty situations that they can't change because they want to stay longer, another year. That's pretty sad' (Anne, interview).

In those sad cases, the WWOOFers were institutionally and instrumentally transformed into 'cheap labour'. The value of one's labour force in WWOOFing was not only replaceable but also pre-determined referring to his/her social attributes, such as gender, ethnicity, and skills. In the section on 'mode of organisation' in the conjunctural analysis, this was identified as the practice of work allocation. It was a type of 'body politic' (James, 2006, p. 87) where the value of a replaceable subject was socially 'given' so that his/her labour power could be managed to maximise its utility (Foucault, 1990). This Foucauldian governmental 'subjectification' (i.e. one becomes a *subject* by *subjugating* to the system) was sometimes resisted, as when Moon actively sought physically demanding tasks in order to protest against the typically 'misogynic' (Moon, interview) Australian rural culture.

Disembodied Integration

James (2006) described disembodied integration as 'social relations [that] are stretched across time and space in a way that no longer (formally) depends upon the embodied relations of known or institutionally-related others' (p. 88). Disembodied integration does not formally require a central medium (e.g. the state) to solidify the homogenously vertical subjugation of the individuals. Disembodied integration is decentralised and fragmented, but nonetheless is 'fluidly' (Bauman, 2000) (dis)organised by and operated with the 'dromospheric' (Virilio, 2010) speed of mobile technologies.

Part of the exchange in WWOOFing also occurred in disembodied integration. Its predominant form was the exchange of information using mobile communication technologies. As mentioned in the conjunctural analysis section of 'mode of communication', the WWOOFers used their mobile phones to communicate with their family and friends 'across time and space': texting, telephoning, Skyping, and uploading photographs and videos onto their Facebook pages. The host at CV also had a Facebook page to promote his farm business, where he and his past/future WWOOFers communicated. Before Tea came to CV, the host had directed her to his Facebook page so that she could get a better picture of what it would be like to WWOOF there. 'The best information was that he was travelling. Like, he had been

to Japan, and he had been to other places to travel, and to learn other things about organic agriculture, so I thought, oh my god, he really likes it!' (Tea, interview).

In addition to mobile communication technologies that worked at/on now, there were also slower media that disembodied and mediated the WWOOFers across different times-spaces. For example, winter vegetables take time to grow. Thus, the seasonal harvests are a collective result of WWOOFers' (and other workers') work, who have never met and will not meet each other in their bodily presence. At CV, for example, harvesting, selling, and/or eating the vegetables became a temporally meaningful point of completion for Steph, Clare, and Tea. That was possible because bodily unknown WWOOFers in the past had previously worked on the vegetables. In return, the vegetables Steph, Clare, and Tea grew would be picked by bodily unknown WWOOFers in the future, providing them with similar meaningful points of completion. The relationships of those WWOOFers in the past, present, and future are temporally and spatially abstracted and mediated by the vegetables. The vegetables, which are 'hyperobjects' (Morton, 2013) with a longer ontological finitude, collectively materialised the sacred ecotopian cohesion (Durkheim, 2001) and/or an 'imagined WWOOF community' (Anderson, 2006).

At CV, on the wall of the living room, there was a large world map. On the map, Polaroid photographs of the 'faces' of the past WWOOFers were pinned around their countries of origin. At MR, on the dining table, three message books were piled up for the current WWOOFers to browse through the past WWOOFers' experiences. Next to the message books, some photographs of the host's favourite WWOOFers were displayed in frames. Although the WWOOFers of the past, present, and future from all around the world would never meet 'face-to-face' with each other, their 'faces' were still present, simulated in a disembodied form. James (2006) observed: 'As the dominant social form became more abstract, we became more and more obsessed by making the content more palpable, more embodied, more "real"' (p. 89). This seems to resonate with the ideal of WWOOFing where the discourse of the 'alternative' in face-to-face integration was practically reproduced despite its not-so-alternative, or at least not-exclusively-alternative, ecological design.

Summary of Integrational Analysis of the Mode of Exchange

In summary, the integrational analysis of the mode of exchange in WWOOFing indicated the following:

- The mode of exchange was mediated through **diverse modes of integration**.
- **Face-to-face** integration was based on the principle of moral proximity, and the exchange on this mode of integration brought about conflicts (e.g. shadow work) as well as emotional connections between the WWOOFers and the hosts.
- In **object-extended** integration, the exchange was mediated by the ‘third’ objects (or ‘general equivalents’), such as money and work time. Those objects validated the meaning of exchange.
- In **agency-extended** integration, the exchange was also mediated by the ‘third’ category of the social. However, in this level of integrational abstraction, it was predominantly the value of personal attributes (e.g. labour force) that was institutionally pre-determined and circulated.
- In **disembodied** integration, the exchange of information took place predominantly via electronic telecommunication media. Disembodied exchange also occurred via ‘hyperobjects’ with longer ontological finitudes, facilitating an ‘imagined WWOOF community’ across time and space.
- In the above three modes of integration, sometimes the exchange was semiotically and thus meaningfully **approximated to a face-to-face integration** both by the WWOOFers and the hosts, in order to practise the ‘alternative’ discourse of WWOOFing reproductively.

Integrational Analysis (2): Mode of Enquiry

The second part of the integrational analysis focuses on a conjunctural interface of the ecological design in WWOOFing to identify some potential ecopedagogical implications. To do so, I analyse the three heuristic types of environmental learning (i.e. *symbolic learning*, *transpositional learning*, and *transformative learning*) in the mode of enquiry, particularly how they may relate to the spatio-sensorial modes of environmental design. This more physically oriented analysis will reveal *a potential ecopedagogical pattern between the types of environmental 'learning' and the spatio-sensorial modes of 'doing'*. Through this, I will suggest the ecopedagogical necessity to consider an additional mode of integration, which I call '*touch-to-touch*', to be added to James's four modes of integration.

The integrational analysis in this section was conducted in the following procedures. First, from the entire interview transcripts, the participants' accounts of their sensory environmental 'learning' were searched with the relevant keywords (i.e. each bodily sense and 'learn'). There were 36 accounts in total, and each was re-numbered (i.e. they are not the original code numbers used in Chapter 5) (Appendix VI). Second, those accounts were interpretively categorised into the three heuristic types of environmental learning. Third, the same accounts were interpretively categorised into the three spatio-sensory modes of the environmental design. Fourth, they were cross-analysed to reveal a potential ecopedagogical relation. Lastly, the ecopedagogical relation was analysed in relation to the five modes of integration, including '*touch-to-touch*'.

Figure 6.7 shows the result of the cross-analysis of the potential ecopedagogical relation. Each number in Figure 6.7 represents a participant's account and is interpretively located in relation to the modes of environmental design and the types of environmental learning.

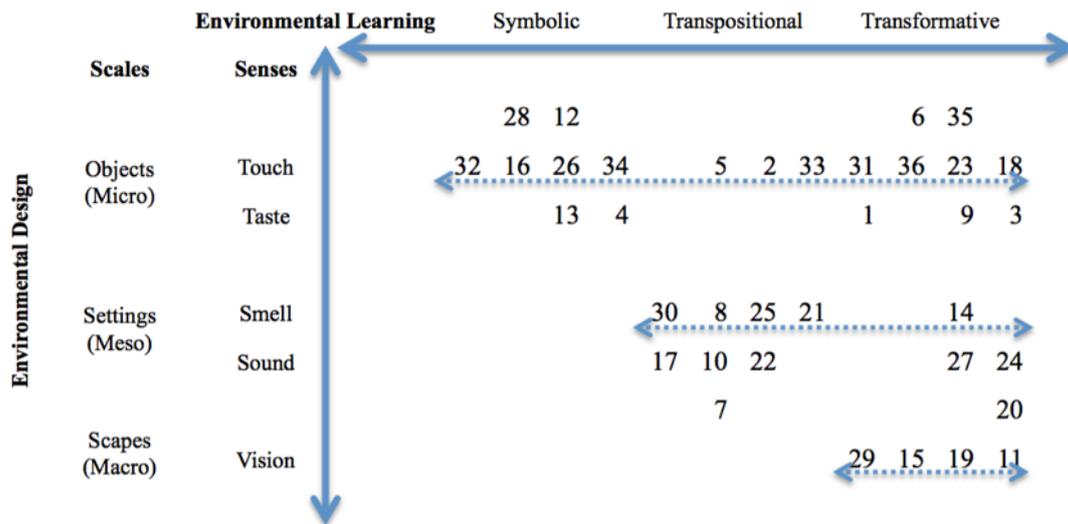


Figure 6.7 Cross-analysis of the WWOOFers' environmental learning and the WWOOF environmental design

The WWOOFers' discursively reflexive accounts of their environmental learning indicated *what the WWOOFers thought they had learnt* in their WWOOFing (Rickinson, Lundholm, & Hopwood, 2009). This probably does not equate to *what they actually had experienced*, both quantitatively and qualitatively (Payne, 2005). Thus, a major limitation of this analysis is that it is impossible to know what their educative experience really was. Their discursively reflexive learning is only a part of their educative experience, and the latter occurs in the level Anthony Giddens (1984, p. xxx) called 'practical consciousness'. Giddens argued that revealing this practical consciousness in human action and interaction was a priority in social science. Therefore, it needs to be noted that the potential ecopedagogical implications generated in this analysis are limitedly analysed within the discursive 'said'. However, this is probably the epistemological limit of 'learning', hence part of the methodical limitation is derived from the very notion of 'learning' itself (Payne, 2014). Nonetheless, I believe that this analysis is a worthy attempt to bring embodiment (even as a discursive form) into environmental learning.

Symbolic Learning

The term 'symbolic learning' was adopted from what Jean Baudrillard (1993) called 'the symbolic' (see Chapter 7). It refers to a process where the ontological distinction

between a human subject and a natural object becomes relationally blurry through a course of direct sensory experience in the environment, especially involving touch and taste. The physical distance in the sensory chiasm enacted in this learning type is extremely minimised, shorter than the one in the mode of ‘face-to-face’ integration. This indicates an ecological need to add an extra mode – ‘touch-to-touch’ – to James’s four sociological modes of integration.

Symbolic learning is inspired by what Michael Bonnett (2013) called ‘holistic learning’ in the context of environmental education. According to Bonnett, ‘derefication of the self’ is a crucial element for holistic learning. There, the self is ‘understood as not simply contingently in some greater whole but ontologically as an individual in indissoluble relationship with it’ (p. 91). This means that the self, an ontological unit, is both open *and* closed. With this enigmatic ontology, holistic learning ‘invite[s] a different way of being in the world to that which currently holds sway’ (p. 91). Symbolic learning is a form of environmental learning, because it provides the learner with ‘fictional’ yet ‘creative’ imagination (Leggo & Sameshima, 2014) that may experimentally facilitate more environmentally aesthetic, ethical, and political nature-human relations.

In the deconstructive moment of symbolic learning that swings toward being open to ‘some greater whole’, nature temporarily ceased to be the semiotic Other (Cronon, 1996). At the same time, the human Same, the mirror image of the natural Other, is fictionalised (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 133) and equipped with a capacity to creatively become something other than one currently is (Nakagawa & Payne, 2016). Symbolic learning in this instance is experimental rather than teleological.

Spatially, symbolic learning takes place in the environment as an interface where human and nature are mutually emplaced into one body/unit. Frank’s account of his tactile weeding, already introduced in Chapter 5, is an excellent example to illustrate an enigmatic invitation to a different way of being in the world.

Once you actually get into the soil, you realise quite quickly that you pull and snap. You have to dig, so finding and walking around and learning the behaviour of the weed, and discovering its own nature. And then adapting to it. That’s a very pleasurable experience, you know, you feel you are accomplished, sense of accomplishment, you learnt something, if you like... You know, pull out the whole network of grass by following it and by being patient (Frank, Interview, 32).

At a quick glance, it may read like Frank was talking about a subtle manual technique for weeding that required tactile sensibility. However, I believe that he was saying something much more interesting than that. Forcefully pulling the weed did not work, because it would ‘snap’ and leave its roots in the ground. In order to do weeding well, Frank needed to learn ‘the behaviour of the weed’ and ‘discover its own nature’ by digging the soil with his hands and fingers. Importantly, Frank emphasised the need of ‘adapting’ himself to ‘the whole network of grass’, which happened as he touched the weed and was touched by the weed. In other words, it may be said that Frank became (like) the weed.

If not, dereification of the self for Frank still seemed to take place in the environmental interface of the fingers/weed, or touching/touched, where Frank’s being and the weed’s being became temporarily reversible (to him). It is an enigmatically intertwining ontology. There, the distinction between human Frank and the natural weed was tactilely minimised within the chiasm of the environment, or what Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1968) called ‘flesh’. In this context, Frank used his touch as a means to perceive a flesh/field where the two beings met and collided into one another. For Frank, that was an ‘accomplishment’, probably in the sense that he had learned a potentially different way of being and becoming in the world.

Transpositional Learning

Transpositional learning is more ethically explicit and less ontologically experimental than symbolic learning. It is more ethically explicit because intimate interconnectedness with nature is a major objective for the learning experience. It is less ontologically experimental because, although nature appears in a physically and morally proximal distance of ‘face-to-face’, nature and human are understood as fundamentally separate entities no matter how they are interconnected within the environment. Using Bonnett’s expression in the previous section, the human self is more ‘an individual’ with his/her own face and has ‘an indissoluble relationship’ with nature for this learning type.

The term ‘transpositional’ is adopted from one of Payne’s (2014) thematic categories to describe his students’ experience in a tertiary outdoor environmental education unit. By transpositional, Payne meant the generatively ‘heteronomous’ (p. 58) capacity of the students to (eco)become with nature. That is, their identities

changed as they moved and were transpositioned into another body~time~space environment, even if temporarily. Transposition is ethical because one's 'subjective' position *to* 'objective' nature based on Cartesian dualism is nomadically decentralised to be *with* nature.¹⁵ Thus, transpositional learning is 'an embodied and emplaced process – slowly, experientially, co-constructively, and democratically... [with] the partial reconfiguration and reconciliation of inner, social, and outer natures' (p. 58). The reconfiguration and reconciliation are facilitated when the learners experience their embeddedness in the environment. This is possible because the environment is inclusively 'feral' (Fawcett, 2009) and its system is made of the 'interconnectivity of all life' (Peters, 2013, p. 503) in/of nature. Pedagogically, transpositional learning may be implemented as an educational facilitation of 'ethics of care' for nature (Goralnik, Dobson, & Nelson, 2014). However, such an ethical priority usually cannot be identified as *what* to do for nature, because that would prioritise *ontology* of nature over ethics instead (Levinas, 1985).

The natural Other sometimes appeared to the WWOOFers in the moral proximity of face-to-face. Because of the proximity, the WWOOFers may have not recognised the semiotically mediated meaning of the face but morally embraced its presence. Part of transpositional learning is a process to appreciate such a mysterious face of the Other, or what Emmanuel Levinas called (1985, p. 86) 'signification without context' and 'meaning all by itself'. An ecopedagogically designed environment may facilitate this mysterious yet ethical encounter with the Other, encouraging the learners' '(eco)being for' (Payne, 2009) and '(eco)becoming with' (Payne, 2013) nature.

An example is this quote from Andreas describing his learning while working with geese on the bird farm.

¹⁵ In *Transposition*, which Payne (2014) referred to, Rosi Braidotti (2006) wrote that 'nomadic subjectivity' does not 'represent a metaphorical stand-in for empirical or qualitative process... The flows of becoming rather mark a qualitative process of structural shifts in the parameters and the boundaries of subjectivity. This shift entails an ethical dimension, in so far as it makes the subjects into transversal and interconnecting entities, defined in terms of common propensities' (p. 148). In other words, while Braidotti's nomadic subjectivity, though attending to ethical *interconnectedness* between subjects, the ontological difference/distance between the two subjects seem to be critically maintained, possibly for her preferred link between 'post-structuralism and ethical norms or values' (p. 7). Braidotti's critically self-reflexive nomadic subjectivity is important, because it is often that 'poststructuralist theory constructs a "no-man's land" that permits the erasure of the subject position of the critic in the formation of theory' (Kaplan, 1996, p. 66). Critically erasing a subject, which is nonetheless needed to make a critique, is hypocritical from a feminist perspective.

Before, I thought, when geese or other animals made a really loud sound to me, they wanted to attack me. What I learnt here was like, ‘ok yeah, she is not attacking me’, and this was a surprise... So, it’s not always that bad when they are making a huge sound. They are not trying to get you out or something. It’s more like you are part of nature and they understand. I think they do. I see them as part of nature. (Andreas, interview, 17)

Part of Andreas’s morning routine was feeding the birds (emus, geese, ducks, and chickens) and collecting their eggs. Thus, Andreas had regular interactions with the birds, and sometimes he was indeed ‘attacked’. However, by being with the birds and closely observing their nature, Andreas ‘learnt’ that ‘a huge sound’ those birds sometimes made did not necessarily mean to ‘get him out’. Sometimes, the birds simply meant to acknowledge that he was there, as ‘part of nature’. Andreas experienced the semiotically unmediated ‘face’ of the birds in their loud sounds. It was *both* a threat *and* a welcoming, not either/or. Hence, it was semiotically meaningless, but according to Bauman (1993), it was this meaninglessness that emplaced both Andreas and the birds in the moral proximity. Feeling a connection with the birds, Andreas sometimes did not collect their eggs on purpose (despite the host’s instruction), particularly when the mother birds were still holding them under their stomach.

Transformative Learning

Transformative learning in this context is defined as ‘a process that helps each individual to understand the world in a way that may challenge their experiences, change their behaviours and influence their values, ultimately leading to individual and social transformation through the changed perspective’ (Nowaczek, 2013, p. 169). If individual transformative learning leads to ‘social transformation’, however, that usually happens some time in the future. This means that what can be interpreted as ‘transformative learning’ in the WWOOFers’ reflexive accounts is limited to potential discursive signs of their individual transformation, probably not even their ‘behavioural change’ (Ballantyne, Packer, & Sutherland, 2011) in a material sense.

Adrian Deville and Stephen Wearing (2013) suggested that transformative learning is significant in WWOOFing, and often induced by life change experiences through authentic engagement with both the hosts and the environment. The previous

chapters indicate that it was likely that the WWOOFers experienced ecologically ‘authentic’ events, such as Steph (re-)connecting with fresh food sources to (re-)humanise herself (Steph, interview, 1 – see also Chapter 4), and Moon realising her self by altering the environment through physically demanding work (Moon, interview, 36 – see also Chapter 4).

As pointed out in Chapter 2, however, from a post-critical standpoint, it is likely that the notion of ‘authentic’ in WWOOFing, like ‘alternative’, is semiotically constructed as a difference from ‘inauthentic’. This means that while the meaning of authentic is derived not only from what the term represents, but also by the systemic arrangement of the terms of which ‘authentic’ is part. Particularly in the latter modality, the meaning of authentic is abstractly mediated with visualised signs in the landscape (Baudrillard, 1981). James’s reflexive account of his gaze on the Australian ruralscape may indicate his potential ‘transformative learning’, which was mediated semiotically/systematically as well as materially/representationally.

I wanted to start something new, and I wanted to speak English more and learn new culture. I wanted to meet foreign people, so yeah I decided to move to another place and that’s why I came here. I thought if I WWOOFed, I would be able to feel Australian culture, and to have Australian food, and to make foreign friends... (James, Interview, 19)

While James’s account indeed incorporates a series of multi-sensory engagements in the environment (e.g. ‘to *speak* English’, ‘to *meet* foreign *people*’, and ‘to *have* Australian *food*’), their sensory significance seemed overpowered by the ideas of abstract differences that were socio-semiotically generated. ‘New’, ‘English’, ‘culture’, ‘foreign’, ‘another’, and ‘Australian’ – the WWOOF environment was constructed as a set of signs. Those differences were important for James, because he wished to broaden his personal horizon through his experience.

While James’s account seems to correspond thematically to a humanistic understanding of travel as an educational process of self-discovery (MacCannelle, 1999, p. 5), it also implies some level of consumerism because he seemed to accept the touristic signs rather uncritically. According to John Urry (2002), in tourism, vision is socio-culturally and commercially organised by the tourism industry and its professionals into a ‘gaze’. A gaze is embodied within tourists to determine what is worthwhile to look at and what is not. Particularly, ‘[t]he tourist gaze is directed to

features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience' (p. 3). Those features appear extraordinary because they are advertised as being different from ordinary everyday scapes.

The tourist gaze is not limited to tourism. In environmental education, particularly for pedagogies that prioritise eco-social justice such as Land-based education, a concern was expressed that potentially 'the nuances of place become reduced to objects of experiential or visual consumption' (McKenzie & Bieler, 2016, p. 77). A similar concern has been expressed for international Study Abroad students who studied in a tertiary outdoor environmental education unit in Australia (Nakagawa & Payne, 2011).

Summary of Integrational Analysis of the Mode of Enquiry

Table 6.4 summarises three heuristic types of the WWOOFers' environmental learning identified for the mode of enquiry, in relation to the spatio-sensory modes of the environment design, and the modes of integration.

Distance between a WWOOFer and a natural object

Close ----- Far

	Symbolic learning	Transpositional learning	Transformative learning
Theme	Becoming like the natural Other here and now through de-reification of the self (Bonnet, 2013)	Becoming with the natural Other here and now, for a reconciliation of inner, social and outer natures (Payne, 2014)	Becoming a better self in relation to the natural Other, which may be linked to a potential collective environmental transformation in the future (DeVillie & Wearing, 2013)
Episodic example	Becoming like a weed (Frank)	Being for the birds (Andreas)	The Australian ruralscape (James)
Dominant mode of environmental design	Micro/object Touch/taste Direct encounter	Meso/setting Smell/sound Physical mediation	Macro/scape Vision/sign Semiotic mediation
Dominant mode of integration	Touch-to-touch	Face-to-face	Abstraction of touch and face

Table 6.4 Ecopedagogical relation of the WWOOFers' environmental learning

(Further) Abstraction: Modes of Ecological Integration

As a way of further abstracting the findings of my conjunctural analysis and integrational analysis for a theorising purpose in Chapter 7, here they are analytically synthesised as *three modes of ecological integration* in order to explain the WWOOFers' integrational relations to nature. They are called: *the original one*, *the proximal two*, and *the social three*. These integrational relations are practically affected by the elements of both the environmental design and the social design in WWOOFing.

The original one refers to a mode of ecological integration where the ontological distinction between a human WWOOFer and a non-human being (or nature) is felt uncertain. It is 'original' – or 'the symbolic' –, because it ontologically precedes the artificial and semiotic simulation of 'human'/'the real' and 'non-human'/'the imaginary' (Baudrillard, 1993). The symbolic original unites the two into one inseparable enigmatic entity that we cannot name. Symbolic learning is an ecopedagogically experimental process in which various anthropocentric simulacra (e.g. 'human' and 'nature') are temporarily upheld in a direct physical encounter between beings. Frank's weeding experience is illustrative of the process where the ontological distinction between the WWOOFer human Same and the natural Other was blurred at the tips of his fingers. In the 'archaic' (Bauman, 1993, p. 93) and primordial knowing, Frank felt symbolically that he became the weed. This ontological de-reification (Bonnett, 2013) of Frank (and the weed) is of course fictional. However, it may well be the 'fictionality' that symbolically 'make or shape' (Leggo & Sameshima, 2014, p. 541) less anthropocentric values much needed for our relationships with nature.

The proximal two refers to a mode of ecological integration where a WWOOFer is in the physical and moral proximity of face-to-face with another being, both human and non-human. With humans, such proximity was experienced in a less mediated and abstracted modes of practice, such as 'sharing' with the hosts and other WWOOFers within the household of 'fictive kinship' (Kosnik, 2013). The proximity with the non-human beings in the WWOOF settings was experienced via sensory mediation, particularly of smell and sound. The spatio-sensory and moral distance of face-to-face between a WWOOFer and another being phenomenologically manifested here and now *should be* semiotically meaningless (Bauman, 1993, p. 86). Sharing in

Wwoofing not only gave the Wwoofers more authentic experiences beyond the institutionally recommended barter, but also took their additional ‘shadow work’ time outside the barter in order to maintain the idealised notion of family. Transpositional learning is (eco)being for (Payne, 2009) and (eco)becoming (Payne, 2013) with other beings in the environment by accepting and appreciating their ‘faces’ – or ‘sounds’ in the example of Andreas – whose sole meaning *should be* that they exceed any ontological and semiotic reduction, except that they signify the Otherness (Levinas, 1985). The proximal two is primarily a mode of integration with the Other(s) for co-existence in the given environment through a less anthropocentric and self-centred ethical framing.

The social three refers to a mode of ecological integration whereby a Wwoofer and another human or non-human being, and their experiences are mediated by semiotic meanings, or signs. The language (*langue*), as a social structure, is a third entity that incorporates beings and experiences in order to be meaningful. It is crucial to note that in this more abstract mode of ecological integration, the original element of touch and the proximal element of face are *recycled* to become meaningful ‘terms’ (Baudrillard, 1993, see also Appadurai, 1996 for his similar understanding of the globally contextualised ‘local’). Whereas touch and face were only significant in themselves in the original one or the proximal two, they become *meaningful as differences* in relation to other terms in the social three. For example, Clare utilised her ‘face’ to increase the value of organic vegetables she sold at the farmers’ market. Her host displayed the ‘faces’ of his past Wwoofers on the large world map on the wall. In transformative learning, nature (including its material dimensions and their sensory perception) was primarily an instrumental means for the Wwoofers to achieve their personal growth (DeVill & Wearing, 2013). Transformative learning took place when there was a visible distance that separated a Wwoofer and nature, and the distance was triangularly recognised from a view of the third. This third point was the dialectically synthesised future self, towards which the current self (thesis) and nature (antithesis) interacted in the present environment (Huebner, 1987). It was the double time-space distances (one between the thesis and the antithesis in the present space, and the other between the thesis/antithesis in the present and the synthesis in the future) that generated the meaning of the Wwoofers’ transformative learning experience. The spatio-temporal distance to be overcome between the current self and nature in the present, and the temporal distance between the present self and

the future ‘better’ self are mediated by a variety of signs, such as the *values* of health, less consumerism, solitude, and other cultural capacities.

Ecopedagogical Advancement

The findings about some of the ecopedagogical relations of the WWOOFers’ nature experience, via the conjunctural and integrational analyses, reveal the tensions between ontology and epistemology also relevant in experiential environmental education (research). While ecopedagogy probably will not resolve those revealed tensions, they will nonetheless indicate some potential stepping stones towards a less anthropocentric framing of experience and its positioning in environmental education (research).

- By analytically adopting Payne’s (2014) ecopedagogical perspective, I suggest that WWOOFers’ nature experience (including their social practice such as environmental learning) is materially affected by the ontological and relational complexity of the ‘designed’ environment. This means that educative experience and/or experiential education cannot be reduced to psychological constructs such as ‘routine patterns’ or ‘learning cycles’ (Kolb, 2015; see Seaman, 2008 for a critique). Rather than autonomously occurring in one’s mind, educative experience takes place practically (Giddens, 1984) – and perhaps subconsciously and/or unconsciously (DeLay, 1996) – through an ‘interaction with other things’ (Dewey, 1929, p. 175) in the physical environment and its affordances in movements.
- Three heuristic types of environmental learning (i.e. symbolic, transpositional, and transformative) that potentially occurred among the WWOOFers were identified. Those types were materially conditioned, if partly, by the spatial modes of natural object (i.e. micro, meso, and macro) and the modes of their sensory engagement (i.e. touch, taste, smell, sound, and vision). This pattern may be useful for environmental curriculum design for ecopedagogy.

- The above categorisation is my limited empirical-conceptual response to ‘an urgent need’ (Rickinson et al., 2009, pp. 104-105) for understanding the experiential processes of environmental learning. Although the evidence of learning was sought in the WWOOFers’ reflexive accounts of their own experience (i.e. what they said), those types nonetheless partially incorporated their sensorial interactions with the physical environment within the limitation of textualism and its non-representational (Payne, 2005). Perhaps, more importantly, those types of environmental learning are not exclusively based on particular knowledge or skill outcomes against a certain set of criteria, but more openly understood as potential experiential catalysts for ecobecoming (Payne, 2013). From an ecopedagogical point of view, it is an educative experience if a learner is inspired with ‘a sense of one’s location in relation to others and the world, and indeed... different ways of knowing and being human’ (McKenzie et al., 2010, p. 147).
- The notion of ‘environmental design’ is an important addition to the theory and practice of curriculum design that is more ontologically informed and less anthropocentrically oriented. However, due to the contemporary ecological complexity encountered in this study, ecopedagogy via environmental design will encounter at least two challenges. First, as my integrational analysis has indicated, environmental design and its elements (particularly touch and face) may be socially abstracted into a set of signs to work in an unintended way. Second, even when the social abstraction is minimised by advanced educational engineering, it is questionable if the educator’s value categories that are materialised in/as the educational environment design are self-evidently appropriate (c.f. Huebner, 1987). Environmental design cannot avoid the fundamental questions in environmental education: ‘what *is* nature and – crucially – what should be our relation to it?’ [original emphasis] (Bonnet, 2003, p. 555). My analyses cannot provide the answers to them.
- Acknowledging the challenges, however, an application of environmental design as part of curriculum design possesses a great potential, particularly in today’s postmodern educational environment, where the formal and the

informal are increasingly blurred (Wals et al., 2013). Education now takes place in a variety of spaces without formally documented curriculum, such as at a WWOOF site. Environmental design offers an experiential means to access education in those spaces, if in a limited way, and this potential needs to be fully acknowledged at both the theoretical and practical levels in environmental education research. Particularly, with a theoretical focus on physical-semiotic conjunctures and their nature-human integrations, ecopedagogy via environmental design seems to qualify as a ‘new niche area’ of environmental education curriculum and learning research as an ‘open-ended reflexive process’ (Lotz-Sisitka, Fien & Kethoilwe, 2013, p. 198). As the authors rightly pointed out, however, such ‘open-ended reflexive process’, as relationally and perhaps relativistically represented in this chapter, may encounter the anxiety and frustration of critical environmental educational researchers. Should we be more critical, or should we be experimental instead? Again, the familiar philosophical and political problem underpins education.

By now, the research problem (RP) of WWOOFers’ nature experience has been indirectly investigated through multiple methodological levels of abstraction. Following James (2006), the findings are located across the levels of the empirical, the conjunctural, and the integrational, in accordance with responding to the three disaggregated research questions (RQs 1-3). With these findings now assembled across Chapters 4, 5 and 6, in the next chapter, I attempt a partial theorising of the RP, WWOOFer’s nature experience. This will demonstrate selectively how James’s final level of categorical analysis is anticipated by the three preceding levels.

Chapter 7 Theorising and Detheorising WWOOFers' Nature Experience

Introduction

The major purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how the key ideas and emerging themes about the *WWOOFers' nature experience* – the research problem (RP) of this study – in the preceding three chapters can be selectively theorised in a more 'categorical' (James, 2006) manner, in order to explain the RP in a partial and limited way. This sociologically inspired RP has persistently demanded a theoretical consideration of the complexity of the nature-human relations that were enacted in the WWOOFers' lived experiences. The significance of the RP, via its ecophenomenologically (Toadvine, 2009) disaggregated three research questions (RQs), has been broadly located within the overlapping fields of the sociology of ecotourism and experiential environmental education.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 each investigated one RQ using the first three of Paul James's (2006) four meta-methodological levels of epistemological abstraction. In Chapter 4, with an 'empirical analysis', RQ1 (what is the WWOOFers' *experience of nature*?) was descriptively approached. In Chapter 5, with another 'empirical analysis', RQ2 (what is the *nature of the WWOOFers' experience*?) was interpretively approached. In Chapter 6, with a 'conjunctural analysis' and an 'integrational analysis', RQ3 (what are the ecopedagogical *relations* between the WWOOFers' experiences of nature and the nature of their experiences?) was analytically approached.

By re-aggregating the findings to the three RQs, this chapter pursues a theoretically synthetic response to – or *theorising* of – the RP itself. This theorising aims to illuminate selectively the conventionally used 'categories' of 'nature' and 'human' and, in doing so, to correspond with '*categorical analysis*', James's final and most abstract methodological level of epistemological abstraction (Figure 7.1).

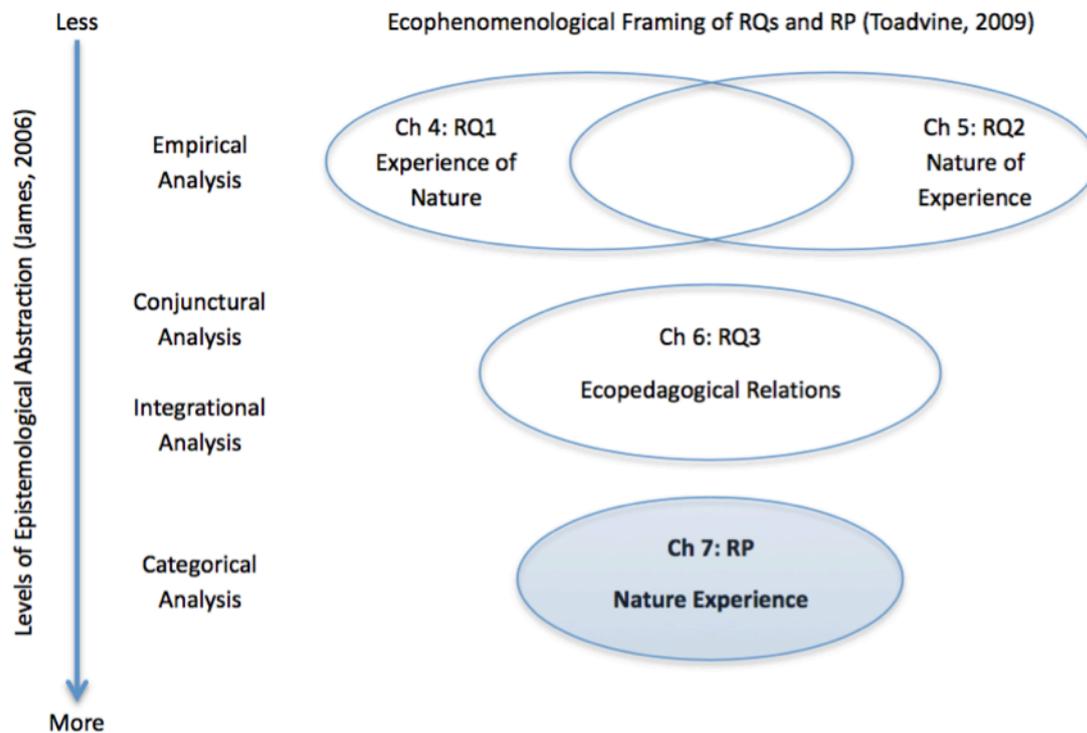


Figure 7.1 Methodological positioning of Chapter 7

It is important to note, however, that my engagement with James's categorical analysis is limited, due to (1) the sheer conceptual and empirical magnitude of this 'case' study, (2) the subsequent difficulties of confidently asserting, or claiming, a more concrete political-ethical 'outcome' of WWOOFing (which is an important component of categorical analysis), and (3) the word limitations of this PhD thesis.

Therefore, proposing a full or general theory of WWOOFers' nature experience will not be pursued here. Instead, for illustrative purposes only, I will selectively theorise an aspect of the RP, that is, potential nature-human relations enacted in WWOOFing. The task of this chapter, in other words, is to attempt a *modest* theory building so as to elaborate the empirically based conceptual insights read into the original RP in a more abstract manner.

My modest theorising demonstrates how the thematic finding of '*reversible experience of the original one*', one of the *three modes of experiential movements* synthetically theorised in *the Form of WWOOFers' nature experience* (Figure 7.2), can be used to deconstruct and destabilise the semiotic categories of 'nature' and 'human'. To do so also involves a process of *detheorising* (since the Form is based on these categories). For this purpose, I will refer to Jean Baudrillard's (1993) *Symbolic*

Exchange and Death to identify three possible pedagogically experiential and experimental strategies. The theorising and detheorising – or *(de)theorising* – constitute the final phase of my post-critical methodological double movements for this study.

As introduced in Chapter 3 on post-critical research methodology, a key attraction of James's meta-methodology is that it encourages the dynamic use of relevant theory and methodology/methods so as to conceptualise and investigate the social phenomenon under study across the multiple levels of epistemological abstraction. As the focus of this chapter shifts to the final level of categorical analysis, Baudrillard is selected as the main theorist. Other influential theorists in educational research, such as Michael Foucault or Gilles Deleuze, might well have been employed here in order to theorise a response to the RP of this study in different ways. However, for the purpose of (de)theorising, the key to my selection of Baudrillard is his radical theoretical reflexivity – or 'theoretical violence' (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 2) – that recommends one's own theory to be 'turned against' itself. To me, that resonates with the purpose of my modest theorising, in acknowledgment of 'epistemologies of doubt' and/or 'doubt of epistemologies' (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2015), for a less anthropocentric and less researcher-centred, thus more ecological knowledge generation.

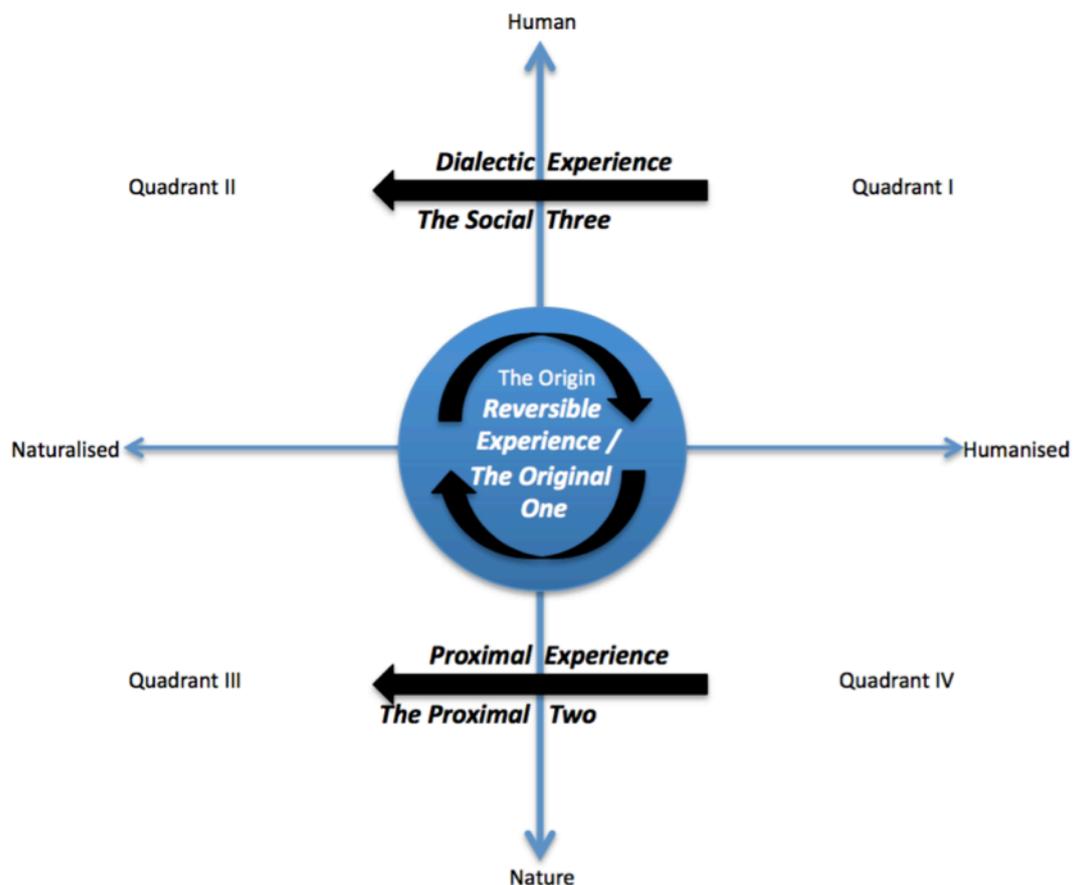


Figure 7.2 The Form of WWOOFers' nature experience

Method(ology) of (De)theorising

In order to theorise the research problem (RP) of WWOOFers' nature experience selectively and modestly, first, the disaggregated research questions (RQs) and their findings need to be synthetically re-aggregated into a single representational dimension. I call this representational dimension *the Form of WWOOFers' nature experience* (sometimes shortened to '*the Form*'). The Form (Figure 7.2) incorporates the three modalities of the WWOOFers experience of nature (from Chapter 4) and the three modes of ecological integration (from Chapter 6) within the coordinate plane of categorical nature-human relations (from Chapter 5). It is this visual representation that I aim to (de)theorise in this chapter.

The previous three chapters, Chapter 5 in particular, indicated many themes that can potentially be theorised for the overall development of a sociological theory of WWOOFers' nature experience. For example, these themes may be of particular

interest in the context of WWOOFing: authenticity of place and escape; spatial overlaying of the urban, the rural, and the natural; embodiment of slow and/or circular time; ecopedagogical sensory immersion in organic experience; tourist rituals of self-growth; sharing and other economies in the open WWOOF household; and so on. It is beyond the scope of this chapter, and indeed this study, to theorise all of those important themes comprehensively and then how they interact and interrelate with each other. Identifying and selecting the Form as a means of analytical abstraction of potential nature-human relations in WWOOFing, therefore, automatically imposes a theoretical limitation in this chapter.

The Form is constituted of various thematics generated across various methodological levels of epistemological abstraction. To be specific, the Form incorporates more the discourse and its practice of WWOOFing associated with an ‘alternative’ tourist experience (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). With this post-critically oriented ontological understanding of WWOOFing (James, 2006) developed through the three RQs, the Form indicates two crucial elements to deconstruct and destabilise the ‘alternative’ in WWOOFing. First, the ‘alternative’ experience represented as the experiential movement from Quadrant I (QI) to Quadrant II (QII) is a probably dominant – or, at least crucial – mode of WWOOFers’ nature experience. And second, other modes of experiential movements also constitute WWOOFers’ nature experience. *These two points are equally important for the Form.*

The Form visually represents *three modes of experiential movements* on the coordinate plane:

1. Dialectic experience of the social three (QI → QII)
2. Proximal experience of the proximal two (QIV → QIII)
3. Reversible experience of the original one (around the Origin)

A comprehensive theoretical elaboration of the Form requires a theorising of each experiential movement. Due to limited space, however, only *reversible experience of the original one* is theorised, revealing another crucial limitation of this chapter. On the other hand, what I call dialectic experience of the social three has already been relatively well researched in the WWOOF academic literature (see Chapter 2). In addition, as suggested in Chapter 6, the ethical significance of ‘(eco)being for’ (Bauman, 1993; Payne, 2009) and ‘(eco)becoming with’ (Payne,

2013) in what I call proximal experience of the proximal two have been suggested by Phillip Payne (2014) for his ecopedagogy. This ethical-ontological line of inquiry is tremendously important, as indicated sharply in James's (2006, p. 82) explanation of the purposes of categorical analysis, and thus is recommended for theorising nature experience in WWOOFing, but also in other contexts of the sociology of ecotourism and environmental education (research).

Despite my own recommendation, there are two reasons why reversible experience of the original one needs to be selected as a target of my theorising in this chapter. First, reversible experience of the original one is as important as proximal experience of the proximal two for the Form, but what the former implies is relatively under-researched and perhaps deemphasised in the relevant fields. Second, and this is more methodologically significant, a theorising of reversible experience of the original one may lead to a partial detheorising of the Form at the Origin where the coordinate plane theory of 'nature'-'human' relations implosively melts down. The point of the Origin signifies the original state of pre-'simulation' of the two categorical 'terms' (Baudrillard, 1993). Thus, theorising reversible experience of the original one simultaneously incorporates a detheorising of the Form – thus (de)theorising – which is crucial as the final phase of post-critical methodological double movements that have framed this study (see Chapter 3).

A (de)theorising of reversible experience of the original one is demonstrated with Jean Baudrillard's theory of symbolic exchange and simulation. While other theorists may be helpful, if not equally, Baudrillard's contribution to my theorising is important and even compelling for these reasons.

- Baudrillard developed his concept of 'the symbolic (exchange)' that is tremendously relevant to what I have found about the significance of the reversible experience of the original one.
- Baudrillard suggested multiple strategies to practically achieve the symbolic. Strategies are particularly useful to deal with the symbolic, because the symbolic is pre-simulated and thus difficult to conceptualise with language.
- Baudrillard theorised the symbolic in order to transcend the semiotic system. This means that, while reversible experience of the original one is

incorporated within the Form, the symbolic may provide a clue for a potential detheorising of the Form.

- Baudrillard articulated his theory of simulation (particularly, ‘the third order of simulacra’ and ‘the real’/‘the imaginary’). It helps to explain why achieving reversible experience of the original one is preferred yet challenging in WWOOFing.
- Baudrillard was one of the most prominent philosophers in the late twentieth century associated with postmodernism and poststructuralism. His philosophy of anti-representation is crucially informative for the currently debated ontologically oriented philosophy, such as speculative realism, post-humanism, and new materialism.
- Despite his philosophical significance, Baudrillard’s theory has not been sufficiently applied in the area of ecotourism and environmental education (research). By selectively utilising aspects of Baudrillard’s theory, some original sociological contributions may be made to those fields under scrutiny in this study.

In the following, the three experiential movements in the Form of WWOOFers’ nature experience are first summarised by synthesising the findings from the previous chapters. Second, reversible experience of the original one is selectively theorised, partially to detheorise the Form. For a (de)theorising of the WWOOFers’ nature experience and potential nature-human relations enacted in WWOOFing, three pedagogical strategies are identified in Baudrillard’s (1993) major work *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. They are, namely, *suicide*, *enchantment*, and *hyperconformity*.

Theorising the Form of WWOOFers’ Nature Experience: Three Modes of Experiential Movements

In this section, the three modes of experiential movements on the Form of WWOOFers’ nature experience (Figure 7.2) are summatively elaborated. They are reversible experience of the original one, proximal experience of the proximal two, and dialectic experience of the social three. These experiential movements are heuristically generated by synthetically re-aggregating the findings about the

WWOOFers' experience of nature (Chapter 4), the nature of their experience (Chapter 5), and their ecopedagogical relations (Chapter 6).

Reversible Experience of the Original One

This experiential movement around the Origin on the Form is characterised by WWOOFers' perception of the enigmatic nature of 'nature'. There, 'nature' temporarily ceases to be a 'term' whose meaning is semiotically simulated as a difference from 'human'. In what I called '*reversible experience*' in Chapter 4, the WWOOFers experienced the limit of the semiotic, both conceptually and intercorporeally, by interacting with various beings and things that existed in the micro WWOOF environments. Conceptually, Andreas and Tea critically identified the ontologically problematic positioning of farm animals that were neither 'nature' nor 'human'. Intercorporeally, Frank felt the reversibility of the weed and his self through a chiasmic field of touch (Merleau-Ponty, 1968).

In reversible experience, the moral and physical distance between a 'human' WWOOFer and a 'natural' being is extremely minimised to enact an ecological integration of what I called '*the original one*' in Chapter 6. Due to the minimal (or non-) distance, the semiotic non-identifiability of 'nature' is then symmetrically retuned to 'human', the mirror image of 'nature' (Baudrillard, 1993). In reversible experience, what is experiencing/experienced and knowing/known is always negotiated due to the ontological reversibility. This encourages a dereified self (Bonnett, 2013) to experience other ways of being/becoming with the environment (McKenzie, Russell, Fawcett, & Timmerman, 2012). Part of such *symbolic learning* requires one to unlearn certain pre-existing ecological categories and their terms and conditions (Davies, 2013), including of 'nature' and 'human'.

Reversible experience of the original one is supported by the existential themes of the nature of the WWOOFers' experience that were located around the Origin of the coordinate plane in Chapter 5. Spatially, the WWOOF sites in this study were all located in the rural *borderland*, somewhere in between 'natural' and 'urban' spaces. For the WWOOFers, the borderland sometimes meant the best of both worlds, sometimes the wild tamed and/or the tamed re-wilded. This processual 'heterotopia' (Foucault, 1986) at the WWOOF sites also possibly triggered the WWOOFers' reconfiguration of 'nature' as they knew it into something else. 'Nature' appeared as a

critically problematic term that the WWOOFers could not fully explain with language, and became something to be directly perceived through their bodily *sensing*. Some WWOOFers felt an *enigmatic connection* with ‘nature’ in a chaotic order of *irregular time* of hyperobjects (Morton, 2013), which transcended their understandings of here and now bounded by their limited ontological finitude.

Reversible experience of the original one will be further theorised with Baudrillard’s (1993) *Symbolic Exchange and Death* in the section ‘(De)theorising of/with Reversible Experience of the Original One’.

Proximal Experience of the Proximal Two

This experiential movement from Quadrant IV (QIV) to Quadrant III (QIII) on the Form is characterised with the agentic vitality of nature and WWOOFers’ physical and moral proximity to it. It differs from reversible experience of the original one, because the ontological distinction between a human WWOOFer and a natural being is more clearly maintained. In what I called ‘*proximal experience*’ in Chapter 4, WWOOFers experience nature around (c.f. in or on) them while they are moving, with an appreciation (sometimes of awe, or a sense of fear) of their mutual presence in the environment.

In proximal experience, the proximity between a human WWOOFer and a natural being enacts a mode of ecological integration I called ‘*the proximal two*’ in Chapter 6. The proximal two is closely related to James’s (2006) sociological mode of integration, the ‘face-to-face’. Ecologically, nature is sensorially mediated and perceived (often via smell and sound, but sometimes via vision) in the meso WWOOF environmental settings. In the proximal two with nature, WWOOFers possibly have an ecopedagogical experience I called ‘*transpositional learning*’ following Phillip Payne (2014). There, WWOOFers, if temporarily, ‘ecobecome with’ nature by moving and materially interacting with the various elements designed into the WWOOF environments. To repeat, in ‘ecobecoming’ associated with proximal experience of the proximal two (i.e. Payne’s version), ontological distinction between nature and human is normatively maintained to form the dual ‘face-to-face’ relationship. As Zygmunt Bauman (1993) wrote: ‘Paradoxically, being *with* means being *apart*. “He is but the not-me, the place he occupies is a place where I am not.” The separation, the distance between us will never vanish’ (p. 70). Being or becoming

with nature ethically presupposes an ontological distance from nature, but a meaningful learning experience occurs when the distance is optimised to of the ‘face-to-face’. For example, when Clare physically worked in the open field *with* bees and butterflies around, she morally felt close to nature as a ‘friend’. A similar episode took place for Margherita working in the raspberry patch all alone but *with* petroleum-coloured giant ants (see Chapter 4).

Sometimes, proximal experience of the proximal two did not make semiotic sense. An important example from this study is the chickens’ loud sound (see Chapter 6), which Andreas felt was both ‘welcoming’ and ‘threatening’. It was despite this semiotic ambivalence that Andreas felt morally close to the birds and took care of them every morning. According to Emmanuel Levinas (1985), Andreas’s non-understanding of, yet caring for, the birds was truly ethical, because an ontological relation from which meaning is deductively generated was secondary in his experience. Instead, an ethical relation was primary, which is not *something* knowable because it is not a *being*. Levinas (1979) called such a pre-ontological ethical relation a ‘relation without a relation’ (p. 80, cited in Davis, 1996, p. 45), because it normatively (not chronologically) precedes the ontological/semiotic relation.

Based on Levinas’s ethics as first philosophy, Bauman (1993) suggested an ethical relation of *being for* as an alternative of *being with*. *Being for* comes before *being with*, not in a chronological (thus ontological) order, but as a moral priority (p. 72). For Bauman, *being for* is possible only by deconstructing modern moral universality (i.e. a foolproof ethical code) and foundation (i.e. social engineering for establishing, convincing, and enforcing the code) (p. 8). What Bauman called postmodern ethics is, therefore, ambiguous and ambivalent by nature (p. 78). And it is in this (natural) ambiguity and/or ambivalence of the ethical relation that one has absolute obligation to for the Other. Therefore, this is not a moral relativism (p. 12). Instead, *[t]he moral self is a self always haunted by the suspicion that it is not moral enough* [original emphasis] (p. 80).

In environmental education, emphasising the intergenerational educational role of family or *oikos*, Phillip Payne (2009) translated Bauman’s ethical notion of *being for* as one’s unconditional environmental responsibility for ‘the service, self-sacrifice, and good for the *other*’ [original emphasis] (p. 317). Payne wrote this to indicate ‘a renewed hope in our own postmodern *being* of a moral sensitisation or impulse *for* the ecological’ [original emphasis] (p. 317), admitting that the ethically

proximal ambivalence will provide some challenges to identify what exactly is to be done. An ethical sacrifice of human ‘me(-ism)’ and *being for* nature, via Levinas, Bauman, and Payne, importantly suggests another possible route for deconstruction and detheorising of the ontological Form of WWOOFers’ nature experience by prioritising ethics over ontology. Unfortunately, due to limitations of a PhD study, this possibility is only indicated for further research.

Proximal experience of the proximal two is supported by the existential themes of the nature of the WWOOFers’ experience that were located in Quadrant IV (QIV) and Quadrant III (QIII) of the coordinate plane in Chapter 5. The experience is expressed as a transposition of a WWOOFer from ‘humanised nature’ to ‘naturalised nature’. Spatially, it is from *farming space* to *non-human space*. Temporally, it is from *linear time* to *circular time*. Corporeally, it is from *power/skill* to *(dis)comfort*. And relationally, it is from *resource* to *agentic nature*.

Dialectic Experience of the Social Three

This experiential movement from Quadrant I (QI) to Quadrant II (QII) on the Form is characterised with the ‘alternative’ (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006) meaning of the WWOOFers’ nature experience. The meaning of the ‘alternative’ is generated as a semantic difference from the ‘non-alternative’ (e.g. mainstream, consumptive, and so on), as well as a representation of natural objects, settings, scapes, and ways of living. A semiotic difference is systematically mediated in relation to other differences (i.e. signs), whereas a representation allegedly maintains a more direct and objective correspondence between its signifier and signified, and a referent. The semiotic order is more abstract than the representational order, and the former often incorporates and recycles the latter (Baudrillard, 1993). In what I called ‘*dialectic experience*’ in Chapter 4, WWOOFers experience nature as the antithesis of the everyday, in order to grow and realise their truer synthetic selves. For example: Steph healed herself in nature as a body-space-time that reconnected the everyday fragments of her urban life(style); and Moon actively moved in nature to challenge the socio-cultural misconception of her gender that limited the potential of her self.

Dialectic experience is a form of empowerment, and (the meaning of) empowerment is (will be) evaluated from the synthetic point linearly located in the future. Spatially and temporally, dialectic experience is composed of the three phases

that are similar to anthropological rites of passage (Turner, 1974): separation (past, city, thesis), transformation (present, nature, antithesis), and re-integration (future, city, synthesis). Importantly, such an empowering experience does not occur simply here and now, but is mediated to other times and spaces by materials and ideas. Put bluntly, dialectic experience requires mediation, and it does not mean anything without it. In chapter 6, I called this mode of ecological integration ‘*the social three*’, because the meaning of dialectic experience is socially constructed with the embodied here and now, in relation to other (third) disembodied reference points. One of those points, in the context of the mode of enquiry and environmental learning was called ‘transformative learning’ (DeVile & Wearing, 2013). In transformative learning, nature is primarily conceptualised as a means of self-transformation in the present, and its alleged outcomes, including potential social transformation triggered by one’s behavioural change, are always delayed and measured in the future.

Dialectic experience of the social three is supported by the existential themes of the nature of the WWOOFers’ experience that were located in Quadrant I (QI) and Quadrant II (QII) of the coordinate plane in Chapter 5. The experience is expressed as a dialectically transformative movement of a WWOOFer from ‘humanised human’ to ‘naturalised human’ – and possibly to ‘(re-)humanised human’ in the near future. Spatially, it is from *mobilities* to *authentic place*. Temporally, it is from *fast time* to *slow time*. Corporeally, it is from *self-growth* to *becoming the Other*. And relationally, it is from *boss/worker* to *sharing*.

To summarise the Form, WWOOFers’ nature experience is synthetically abstracted and theorised into three modes of experiential movements. (Table 7.1).

Mode of experiential movement	Modality of experience of nature (Chapter 4)	Mode of ecological integration (Chapter 6)	Category of nature-human relations (Chapter 5)	Existential themes of the nature of experience (Chapter 5)
Reversible experience of the original one	Reversible experience	The original one	Ambiguous nature-human	Borderland
				Irregular time
				Sensing
				Enigmatic connection
Proximal experience of the proximal two	Proximal experience	The proximal two	Humanised nature to Naturalised nature	Farming space to Non-human space
				Linear time to Circular time
				Power/skill to (Dis)comfort
				Resource to Agentic nature
Dialectic experience of the social three	Dialectic experience	The social three	Humanised human to Naturalised human	Mobilities to Authentic place
				Fast time to Slow time
				Self-growth to Becoming the Other
				Boss/worker to Sharing

Table 7.1 Theorising the Form of WWOOFers’ nature experience

(De)theorising of/with Reversible Experience of the Original One: Jean Baudrillard’s Three Strategies in *Symbolic Exchange and Death*

In this section, reversible experience of the original one (hereafter, ‘reversible experience’) is selectively theorised in order to indicate a possible development of the Form. To theorise reversible experience sociologically, I employ Jean Baudrillard’s notion of ‘the symbolic (exchange)’ theorised in his *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1993, originally in French, 1976 – hereafter referred as *SED*), and identify *three pedagogical strategies* to facilitate possibly what I called symbolic learning in WWOOFers’ nature experience (see Cramer & Foss, 2009 for a somewhat similar approach to environmental communication practices). These three pedagogical strategies aspire to concentrate the nature-human relations in the Form onto the Origin where the simulated categories of ‘nature’ and ‘human’ approximated to zero and potentially together implode – hence a partial engagement with James’s (2006) categorical analysis. With this potential implosion of the two categories and thus the coordinate plane, I attempt to (de)theorise the Form as the final phase of my post-critical methodological double movements.

SED is most likely Baudrillard’s masterpiece (Butler, 1999, p. 4; see also Gane, 1993; Imamura, 1992), and its radical relevance to this study will be explained

in more detail shortly. On the other hand, Baudrillard has often been considered as a ‘high priest’ of postmodern nihilistic melancholy (Kellner, 1989, pp. 117-121). Perhaps due to this negative interpretation, his philosophy and social theory have not attracted sufficient attention in critically oriented academic fields such as education and environmental studies (notable exceptions include Norris, 2006 in education; Bartram & Shobbrook, 2002; Biro, 2002; Clark, 1997; Conley, 1997; and Cramer & Foss, 2009 in environmental studies). When Baudrillard was occasionally referred to in education and environmental discourse, it was usually in the context where his ‘nihilistic’ philosophy and social theory were morally condemned. For example: that the students should not be seen as ‘consumers’ in education (Norris, 2006); and that the environment is not just made of ‘simulacra’ (i.e. signs) and the real materiality of nature should be maintained in criticism (Conley, 1997, p. 25). These critical concerns about Baudrillard may be justified, particularly for his later ‘postmodern’ (Lane, 2009, p. 25) and controversial writings, such as *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (Baudrillard, 1995 – see Norris, 1992). However, I maintain that Baudrillard, at least around 1976 when *SED* was written, can be interpreted and applied as an ‘ultra-leftist’ (Kellner, 1994, p. 6) theorist following the radical Durkheimian tradition via Marcel Mauss and George Bataille (Gane, 1991, p. 4; see also Hegarty, 2004; Merrin, 2005; Pawlett, 2007). Particularly, I find his notion of ‘the symbolic (exchange)’ as a critique of the rise of the simulation in contemporary societies is a valuable addition to a post-critical theorising of nature-human relations, and how that might proceed at James’s final methodological level of categorical analysis.

In this section, I interpretively read Baudrillard’s *SED* (and other theorists selectively where relevant) to identify three potential pedagogical strategies for the symbolic and/or symbolic learning associated with reversible experience of the original one. These are named *suicide*, *enchantment*, and *hyperconformity*. By elaborating the three strategies, I attempt to (de)theorise the Form of WWOOFers’ nature experience in a limited way. Before identifying the three strategies in *SED*, however, Baudrillard’s key concepts of ‘the real’, ‘the imaginary’, and ‘the symbolic’ require brief explanation so as to provide a basis for my (de)theorising.

The Real, the Imaginary, the Symbolic

The three pedagogical strategies for reversible experience of the original one all inspire radical thinking for ‘the symbolic’ (or ‘symbolic exchange’), which is ‘the basis of Baudrillard’s critique of contemporary societies’ (Gane, 2010, p. 211). In *SED*, the symbolic was conceptually distinguished by Baudrillard, at least initially, from ‘the real’ and ‘the imaginary’.

The triad of the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic may be immediately associated with Jacques Lacan, but Baudrillard used them in a distinctive manner. For Baudrillard, the real and the imaginary are in an oppositional relationship, sharing the same ontological field of simulation. Baudrillard conceptualised simulation as a social system of signs, which he called ‘simulacra’. In other words, for Baudrillard, the real and the imaginary are equally simulated as simulacra within the social system. Like signs in structural linguistics, simulacra are differences in the system, and their meanings are given in relation to each other. ‘The *effect of the real* is only ever therefore the structural effect of the disjunction between the two terms’ [original emphasis] (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 133).

This means, for example, in this structural model, ‘nature’ and ‘human’ are said to be in an oppositional relation, and the meaning of ‘nature’ can be given as ‘non-human’ (and ‘human’ as ‘non-nature’). The important point here is that, for the system, the real and the imaginary are indeed the same (although they appear to have the opposite meanings to us), because they are equally generated by the same semiotic principle. Thus, analytically, the real and the imaginary are the same, and expressed as ‘the real/imaginary’. Their oppositeness is only a secondary effect, and it is through this effect that the system distributes meaning and value to stabilise its power reproductively. Baudrillard called this semiotically systematic political economy the ‘third order of simulacra’, which is ‘the current code-governed phase’ of the system where ‘simulation is the dominant scheme’ operating on ‘the structural law of value’ (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 50).

In the case of nature and human, nature, as the imaginary, is Othered (or hyperseparated) and subjugated (Plumwood, 2003) so that human, the real, is satisfied. It may appear from this that the system is human friendly, or the real is friendly. However, according to Baudrillard, the essence of ‘Othering’ lies in its *doubling*, for it is through a duopoly that the system perfects itself: ‘power is only absolute if it is

able to diffract into various equivalents, if it knows how to divide in order to become stronger' (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 69). Thus, according to Baudrillard's critique, the third order of simulacra does simply prioritise human/the real, but entices us to be complicit in the duopoly of nature/the imaginary *and* human/the real. This means that as long as we are trapped within the current 'terms' and conditions of the real/imaginary and the Same/Other, we are doing a favour to the system, which is probably not friendly either to nature, human, or the environment. This offers a strong criticism of systematic and semiotic thoughts, such as the 'alternative' (i.e. generated as the opposite of the 'non-alternative'), in WWOOFing.

On the other hand, the symbolic belongs to 'a higher order' (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 4) to the system of the third order. It is 'the strategic site' from which the real/imaginary is to be *ex-terminated* and 'everything is called into question again' (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 15). 'The symbolic is neither a concept, an agency, a category, nor a "structure", but an act of exchange and *a social relation which puts an end to the real...* and, at the same time, puts an end to the opposition between the real and the imaginary' [original emphasis] (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 133). This means that, for Baudrillard, the symbolic is not a sign, or a *term*. The symbolic is something we cannot name and talk about but nonetheless believed to exist non-representationally. It is similar to what N. Katherine Hayles (1995) called 'flux', an enigmatic entity that is beyond our linguistic epistemological horizon.

'The symbolic demands meticulous reversibility. Ex-terminate every term, abolish value in the term's revolution against itself: that is the only symbolic violence equivalent to and triumphant over the structural violence of the code' (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 5). The symbolic critiques the structurally simulated real/imaginary by liquidating those 'terms' into the original state of continuous exchange of 'meaning' and 'value'. Thus, we cannot really talk about what the symbolic is. It is an *act* of exchange, but what is exchanged there is always changing (or, becoming). This is the reason why I focus on the pragmatic *strategies* as a way of theorising the symbolic and/or symbolic learning for reversible experience.

As will be indicated, however, throughout *SED* the relationship between the simulated real/imaginary and the symbolic do not remain coherent, resulting in a serious confusion for readers of Baudrillard. (Did Baudrillard intend this for his theoretical practice of reversibility?) It is through this confusion, and perhaps contradiction, that the three pedagogical strategies emerge interpretively. Due to the

fluid relationship between the imaginary/real and the symbolic, the three strategies identified are more indicative than determinative (that is, they are not always clear cut but may overlap sometimes). In the following, however, to the best of my ability the three strategies are temporarily solidified (perhaps against Baudrillard's intention) for a theorising of reversible experience of the original one, and for a (de)theorising of the Form of WWOOFers' nature experience.

Strategy #1: Suicide, or Rejecting the Simulation

Once you actually get into the soil, you realise quite quickly that you pull and snap. You have to dig, so finding and walking around and learning the behaviour of the weed, and discovering its own nature. And then adapting to it. That's a very pleasurable experience, you know, you feel you are accomplished, sense of accomplishment, you learnt something, if you like... (Frank, interview)

...through suicide, the individual tries and condemns society in accordance with its own norms, by inverting the authorities and reinstating reversibility where it had completely disappeared, while at the same time regaining the advantage... [Suicides] become political in this sense (*hara-kiri* by fire [sic] is only the most spectacular form of this). [original emphasis] (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 175)

Suicide is a pedagogical strategy to reject the simulation and the system that simulates (defined here as the structure of the real/imaginary signs). It is the major subversive strategy that Baudrillard indicated in *SED*. To simulate signs, the system draws lines between the real and the imaginary to establish a duopoly over the two. With those lines, the system reproduces '*the forms of social relations*' [original emphasis], which Baudrillard (1993, p. 28) called 'capital'. While the line between 'nature' and 'human' is the contextually important one in this study, Baudrillard argued that the most fundamental line that simulates the modern Western world is the one divides 'life' and 'death'.

'At the core of the "rationality" of our culture, however, is an exclusion that precedes every other, more radical than the exclusion of madmen, children or inferior races, an exclusion preceding all these and serving as their model: the exclusion of the dead and of death' (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 126). According to Baudrillard, rigorously separating death and life into two mutually exclusive opposites is the fundamental

mechanism of the Western modernisation and its power, which he called '*death power*'.

Death power repressively controls death. Death becomes something to be avoided at any cost. Death becomes the imaginary for life so that life can be real. However, because life as the real in this way is simulated and thus is equally imaginary (hence the imaginary/real), death power also ironically 'facilitates the shift towards the repressive socialisation of life' (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 130). Life, as the real/imaginary (no difference at this point for the system), is tamed. Life is given to us so that we can live certain forms of social relations, according to terms and conditions of capitalism. Our life is controlled via death – or to be precise, a duopoly of life and death. For Baudrillard, what Michel Foucault called 'biopower' (1990) is a result of death power. The terms and conditions of the capitalistic system include certain meanings of 'nature' and 'human' to be lived.

In order to complete the duopoly of life and death, both signs need to be stabilised and put under control. Yet the system must deal with the fact that death as a biological event will occur, and it is sometimes unexpectedly early. It deals with this unpredictable inevitability by naturalising death into a socially acceptable form: 'natural death'. Death power ensures that we survive other forms of death so that we can achieve a natural death. According to Baudrillard (1993, p. 174), social security services are an example of a measure to prevent other forms of death, rather than based on humanism. And neither need it be economically productive, because the purpose of the third order of simulacra is to stabilise the system by reproducing the forms of social relations, rather than pursuing the maximum production of utility (this purpose is associated with his 'second order of simulacra'). 'In any case, you will no longer be abandoned, since it is essential that everyone be a terminal for the entire system, an insignificant terminal but a term none the less' (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 14).

The death power of the capitalistic system gives, instead of takes, as Foucault emphasised in his notion of biopower. Life/death is given to us, and this includes how to live/die (non-)environmentally for capitalism. One way to reject such life/death is to return '*death deferred*' to the system and live '*non-deferred death*' [original emphasis] (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 40). Suicide, in this context, is a politically counter strategy. According to Baudrillard, sacrificial non-deferred death is symbolically superior to 'naturally' deferred death. When an individual gives back non-deferred death by suicide as a *counter-gift*, the system has to match its price. Baudrillard hoped

that the price would be the system's own death, according to the rule of symbolic exchange found in Marcel Mauss's (1990, pp. 39-44) anthropological theory of the gift. According to Mauss, the gift is a 'total service', because it generates three social obligations: to give, to receive, and to *reciprocate*.

As indicated in the opening quote that symbolically aestheticised 'harakiri', Baudrillard did imply that suicide as a subversive strategy sometimes requires one's biological life. Baudrillard (2002) declared 'let us be immoral' (p. 12) beyond good and evil, which are equally simulated within the system. Regardless of whether 'biological life' and 'good' are signs or not, negating their 'real' value is absurd when we are indeed living in 'the real' world (Norris, 1992). If not morally, suicide is certainly educationally problematic. Therefore, although this most likely de-radicalises Baudrillard's thought, suicide needs to be treated metaphorically (i.e. biological death not included) to be considered for a pedagogical strategy to facilitate symbolic learning for reversible experience of the original one.

With the above clarification of Baudrillard's key notions such as the system, capital, death power, and counter-gift, a pedagogical strategy of suicide in the context of environmental learning is elaborated as the following. In suicide, one is encouraged to unlearn the life he/she has learnt to live in the environment (Davies, 2013). That learnt way of living under capitalism is most likely problematic for the environment, supported by ontological 'hyperseparation' of the subject/human and the object/nature, and rationalisation of the asymmetrical power relationship between the two (Plumwood, 2003). Suicide pedagogically facilitates one's rejection of such an (un)environmental way of living given, and by doing so, he/she may not only pursue a more original and holistic life less semiotically mediated, but also politically challenge the existing forms of social relations.

Frank's episode, quoted in previous chapters, is very indicative of how suicide could be applied as a pedagogical strategy. When Frank felt the weed at the tips of his fingers and was 'adapting' to it, it may be said that Frank as a human subject simulacrum 'died'. But it was in his death that Frank felt the pre-simulated and original 'pleasure' of becoming one with the natural being, or of living symbolically. More direct and thus less semiotically mediated bodily senses, such as touch and taste, may physically shorten the distance between the real and the imaginary, if temporarily, which is usually *ocularcentrically* simulated in the modern Western perceptual field as a *common sense* (Jay, 1999). Thus, promoting sensorially more direct encounters

with natural beings and less semiotically mediated ways of living in the world can be politically subversive.

Practically, to induce symbolic learning experiences, Payne's (2014) ecopedagogical framing of environmental design as curriculum design will be an important guideline. As suggested in Chapter 6, such experiences may occur more frequently by interacting with natural objects in the micro environments. They may more effectively bridge what he referred to as 'the unreal' that proposes in environmental education (re)search for the real that is not real, and 'the not real' that is real within the significances of reimagined and restored human-environmental experiences (Reid, Payne, & Cutter-Mackenzie, 2010)

Tactility, an important sensorial element in the WWOOFers' nature experience, may generate a symbolic effect by momentarily minimising the ocular distance between the subject and the object, or the real and the imaginary. However, it may not deliver the symbolic in the pure sense, because it is likely that simulation persistently penetrates even into the 'symbolic' chiasm (Hagerty, 2009; Silverman, 2015). The fact that Frank reported his tactile experience with the weed as his 'nature experience' is indicative of that concern. That is, the symbolic of tactility can be also termed to simulate 'pleasure' at a more abstract semiotic dimension of human experience.

Baudrillard's position with tactility and more broadly the role of the body is ambivalent. At one point, he wrote optimistically that the body possessed a symbolic quality of 'irreducible difference' (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 114) evasive of the systematic simulation – hence the body is a potential pre-semiotic base for subversive actions. On the other hand, more cautiously, Baudrillard also wrote that the body is 'a field of *tactile* and *tactical* simulation where the message becomes a "massage"' [original emphasis] (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 65). Baudrillard's concern is valid particularly when the non-representational affectivity of the body is increasingly simulated and commodified with techno-capital advancements for our convenience and pleasure (Thrift, 2008). Unlike Marshal McLuhan (2003) who positively thought that the technological medium would massage the human body to extend its capacity, Baudrillard was more reserved, because the techno-semiotically mediated body may provide the corporeal capital with another avenue of governmentality (see Payne, 2003, for a similar argument in the context of environmental education). The body now may be caught up within the system of the real/imaginary and placed at its

terminal. And what if ‘the symbolic’ is already *termed* too? Jean-François Lyotard (1993) remarked that it is likely: “‘symbolic exchange’ is also an exchange in the sense of political economy’ (p. 110). Or, as William Merrin (2005) pointed out, ‘[t]he simulacrum is more powerful than he [Baudrillard] supposes, containing the power to unground his critique and expose the limitations of the symbolic as an opposing force’ (p. 42).

Strategy #2: Enchantment, or Utilising the Simulation

Farming means, for me, of course you can call it nature, you can call it organic, you can call it biodynamic, but in the end you are taking the space from the animals. (Andreas, interview)

...the *trompe-l'oeils* are always the most beautiful, those painted walls that create an illusion of space and depth, those that ‘enhance architecture with imagination’, according to one of the artists’ formulas. But this is precisely where their limits lie. They play at architecture without breaking the rules of the game, they recycle architecture in the imaginary, but retain the sacrament, of architecture... (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 81)

Enchantment, as a pedagogical strategy, utilises the simulation to reveal its inherent contradiction. For this second pedagogical strategy, Baudrillard’s understanding of the system and its simulation changed significantly. Simulation is something that cannot be negated, being true to his own theory of the third order of simulacra. Most likely, for Baudrillard, there is no promised transcendence from the simulation. If so, rather than ‘signs must burn’ (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 163), as he argued prior to *SED*, the signs must be utilised to interrupt the system. Charles Levin (1996, p. 128) observed that this significant change in Baudrillard’s thought occurred sometime between *Symbolic Exchange and Death* in 1976 (1993) and *Seduction* in 1979 (1990). While enchantment may be associated more with his subsequent works (particularly *Seduction*), Baudrillard already hinted, this new strategy in *SED*.

For a clear strategic guideline to utilise simulation, Baudrillard distinguished two types of simulation in *Seduction* (1990): ‘Disenchanted simulation: pornography – truer than true – the height of the simulacrum. Enchanted simulation: the *trompe-l’oeil* – falser than false – the secret of appearance’ [original emphasis] (p. 60). Enchanted simulation seems to be Baudrillard’s preference in *Seduction* (although this is also ambiguous). It is a means to uncover the falseness of the real and to re-

introduce the symbolic. *Trompe l'oeil* (i.e. trick art, directly translated as ‘deceive the eye’) was Baudrillard’s favourite example for enchanted simulation also mentioned in *SED* (see the opening quote of this section).



Figure 7.3 A *trompe l'oeil* of an optical illusion hole (from Wikimedia Commons)

Trompe l'oeil belongs to ‘the first order of simulacra’, which is the dominant schema of simulation in the “classical” period, from Renaissance to the Industrial Revolution’ [original emphasis] (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 50). In the first order of simulacra, a counterfeit is created as a result of simulation. A counterfeit ‘presupposes the dispute always in evidence between the simulacrum and the [original] real [c.f. the

real/imaginary]’ (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 54). A counterfeit is an incomplete simulacrum that does not claim to represent the original real but is satisfied with being a playful fake copy. Such a fake copy, as in the *trompe l’oeil*, is nonetheless seductive.

Rex Butler (1999) explained seduction as both ‘the distance between the original and the copy that allows their resemblance... and the distance that arises when this space is crossed’ (p. 72). The fake presupposes a distance from the original (otherwise it cannot be ‘fake’), and this means that the original real is not present here and now but does exist somewhere and sometime else. The fake ontologically assures the original real. ‘A copy, no matter how many times removed, authentic or fake, is defined by the presence or absence of internal, essential relations of resemblance to a model’ (Massumi, 1987). In other words, in a counterfeit, the relationship between the copy and the original is safely preserved, even though (or because?) the former cannot represent the latter. It is in this metaphysical guarantee of the original real, or the symbolic, that the simulation becomes enchanting.

Andreas’s critical understanding of the emu’s unnatural behaviour narrated in Chapter 4 is illustrative of the process of enchantment (see also Tea’s interaction with Penny the Pig in Chapter 4). There, Andreas found it strange that mother emus abandoned their eggs on the ground to be easily collected every morning. He thought that their behaviour was unnatural, because naturally mothers should care about their babies. However, after a considered reflection, Andreas understood that the reason why the mother emus behaved unnaturally was not because there was something wrong with them, but because of the unnatural environment they were forced to live in. The emu, a defective natural being, provided him with a critical opportunity to think about what farming does to the animals. The birds were not only systematically exploited for human profit, but also alienated and distanced from the originally real naturalness they could have realised otherwise.¹⁶

As a pedagogical strategy, enchantment purposefully utilises a defective natural being in order to evoke the normative distance between the originally real naturalness and itself. Whereas the originally real naturalness distanced gains a

¹⁶ Payne (2013) makes a similar point in his four kangaroo narratives that, allegedly, represent a relationship of human and other/more than human in socially constructed (dis)place. As with this study, Payne’s framing of ontological-epistemological-methodological inquiry is partly indebted to the movement to an ecophenomenology, a dimension of his account of ecopedagogy in the particular scape of his home dwelling shared with various species, including kangaroos. Payne’s narratives were concerned with anthropogenic global warming and climate disruption, as experienced and lived in the dynamic relationships of kangaroos, Payne, and their ecologies.

symbolic value, the fake naturalness distanced at the same time reveals a quality to be critiqued. Symbolic learning in enchantment takes a critical conceptualisation of fake nature. The emus, as an enchanting simulacrum, provided Andreas with a symbolic learning opportunity to reflect upon the ethical limit of the simulated real/imaginary of nature, and then to conceptualise the original real of nature that should not be disturbed by anthropocentric simulation.

For this pedagogical strategy, however, a crucial question remains. If everything is a simulacrum in the third order of simulacra, and if we are inside of that order, how is it possible for us to make a critical distinction between the ‘enchanted’ and the ‘disenchanted’ here and now in order to pursue the symbolic effect? Doing so properly requires a critical reference point external to the field of simulation.

Andreas thought that the mother emus abandoning their eggs were unnatural because, in addition to his common sense understanding of the mother, his friend who knew much about animals told him so. But this zoological knowledge is also a simulacrum, according to Baudrillard. Therefore, in this case, and possibly in others too, the ‘critical’ is not an external point of transcendental judgement of the difference between enchantment and disenchantment, but merely *defers* the process of the semiotic incorporation through which the *difference* is perceived at the level of appearance (Derrida, 1981). Strictly speaking, therefore, it seems near impossible for us to tell their categorical difference. Only time can tell retrospectively, as Andreas did in his reflection.

This phenomenological critique of enchantment indicates Baudrillard’s possible double standard, again due to the pervasiveness of the semiotic, signs, and/or simulacra (see the previous section about suicide). Enchanted simulation presupposes an *outside* location from which it is critically distinguished from disenchanted simulation. At the same time, Baudrillard set the human epistemological limit to be *inside* the semiotic system, the third order of simulacra. This is obviously contradictory, and thus may reveal his theoretical vulnerability, as already indicated by Lyotard and Merrin. Or, perhaps not, if (post)human epistemology is indeed contradictory and doubtful in the first place, and the best we could do as ecologically responsible (post)human in the Anthropocene is to keep epistemologically ‘rupturing’ from the ontological ‘continuum’ (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2015)? Perhaps, from a less anthropocentric and less purist point of view, Baudrillard’s double

standard regarding enchantment may be re-interpreted as an important theoretical informant for the post-critical methodological double movements.

Strategy #3: Hyperconformity, or ‘Accelerating’ the Simulation

Well, because of the visa. That's it. I was looking for any kind of work that would count towards the second year visa, so yeah WWOOFing just happened to be the first thing that came along. Actually work was my first priority but at the same time I was willing to take anything that came along. (Frank, interview)

... we didn't have a lot of money. Without money, Australia is a really hard country. We were just talking with other people, and some of them said 'yeah we did nice WWOOFing there and there.' So we started to think about this. (Andreas, interview)

The graffitists went further in that they opposed pseudonyms rather than names to anonymity. They are seeking not to escape the combinatory in order to regain an identity (which is impossible in any case), but to turn indeterminacy against the system, to turn indeterminacy into extermination... SUPERBEE SPIX COLA 139 KOOL GUY CRAZY CROSS 136 means nothing, it is not even a proper name... (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 78)

Hyperconformity is a pedagogical strategy to ‘accelerate’ the semiotic system by actively consuming (or ‘hyperconsuming’ – Merrin, 2009) its signs. By doing so, according to Baudrillard, at a certain point the system will eventually reach its ultimate perfection. It is at that extreme point that the system implodes and ends by itself due to its perfection, since ‘[i]dentity is untenable: it is death’ (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 4). In the context of the WWOOFers’ reversible experience of the original one, this ‘strategy’ may have been in place when their symbolic learning occurred contingently as a result of other ‘consumptive’ purposes such as gaining a Working Holiday visa extension (Frank in the above) and travelling around with little money (Andreas in the above).

Throughout *SED*, Baudrillard pursued the possibility of the symbolic to be a higher order transcending of the system of simulation. The main strategy was to resist the system with a frontal assault, at the cost of every simulacrum – including one’s life that was given by the system. By the end of *SED*, however, it seems that Baudrillard had conceptualised an alternative strategy ‘through semiotic processes, escalating these to create reversible forces within the semiotic system or cause its

collapse at the point of its perfection' (Merrin, 2009, p 61), perhaps due to the double standard 'problem'. The symbolic is not the outside of the semiotic simulation, but it is likely to be inside. In the Preface of *SED*, which was probably written at the completion of the book (Imamura, 1992), Baudrillard recommended us to read his text in a certain way, which is more associated with his new understanding of the location of the symbolic.

...the only strategy is catastrophic, and not dialectic at all. Things must be pushed to the limit, where quite naturally they collapse and are inverted... *Simulation must go further than the system...* a radical tautology that makes the system's own logic the ultimate weapon. [my emphasis] (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 4)

A new strategy indicated in this passage is not of the counter-gift of violent non-deferred death with a suicide, but of a catastrophic 'consequence' attempted with the radical tautology of the system. In his *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities* (2007, pp. 62-66), which was written in 1978 in French after *SED*, this new strategy of 'hyperconformity' is made front and centre. There, Baudrillard's heroes are not the hot-blooded resisters who gambit their own lives but the cool silent masses that passively absorb and consume the simulation to the point of systemic implosion. Hyperconformity as a pedagogical strategy targets non-engaged learners, rather than eager ones, for their contingent learning experience, which may possibly lead to the deconstruction of the very cause of their non-engagement.

In *SED*, a prominent example associated with hyperconformity is urban graffiti. Baudrillard wrote: 'The urban matrix no longer realises a *power* (labour power) but a *difference* (the operation of the sign): metallurgy has become semiurgy' [original emphasis] (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 77). This means that the (post)modern city reproduces signs (i.e. 'semiurgy') in order to reproduce a certain form of social relations (i.e. capital). The signs in the third order of simulacra are empty, only meaningful in relation to other signs (or signifiers, to be precise). Accordingly, the (post)modern city reproduces empty subjects without identities, without the signified. In urban space, according to Baudrillard, the graffitiists accept their namelessness and hyper-practise the identity deprivation in order to cause a disruption. For Baudrillard, graffiti is an aesthetic and political act.

Benjamin Noys (2014) broadly associated Baudrillard's hyperconformity with the post-Marxist re-theorisation of what is now referred to as 'accelerationism' (i.e. critical theory should actively ferment capitalism's implosion), a currently debated political theory. Baudrillard's accelerationism, according to Noys, is 'terminal accelerationism' where 'a catastrophic and entropic negativity... floods back into the system causing it to implode' (p. 4). Its dynamics is sought in the uncontrollability of the 'catastrophic' 'flood'.

I wrote that Noys's association was broad, because accelerationism is indeed accelerationisms, with various conflicting agendas and methods (Reed, 2014). For instance, Robin Mackay and Armen Avanessian (2014) defined accelerationism as 'the instance that the only radical political response to capitalism is not to protest, disrupt, or critique, nor to await its demise at the hands of its own contradictions, but to accelerate its uprooting, alienating, decoding, abstractive tendencies' (p. 4). Mackay and Avanessian's interpretation is largely aligned with Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek's (2014) *Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics*, which stated that the intellectual 'post-capitalist planning' (p. 356) for 'maximum mastery over society and its environment' is the key guideline for accelerationism, to progress from capitalism to a next stage of human history. In other words, Williams and Srnicek's accelerationism is something to be ultra-rationally planned in order to remove contingency as much as possible. On the other hand, for Nick Land (2014), a specific guideline in accelerationism is problematic all together, including Williams and Srnicek's 'post-capitalist planning' (which may well be a 'capitalist planning' indeed). To this date, there is no consensus about what it means to 'accelerate', and '[w]ho or what does the accelerating' (Reed, 2014, p. 530).

Within this brief account of accelerationisms, Baudrillard's hyperconformity is perhaps more closely associated with Land's 'right-accelerationism' in the sense that Baudrillard emphasised the catastrophic power of the masses' non-reason. When WWOOFing is materially and practically caught up in a capitalist economy with its signs such as 'visa', 'cheap/free labour', 'tourism', 'fun' (Packer, 2006), and even the 'alternative' carefully planned and designed, hyperconformity may be utilised as a powerful pedagogical strategy to push them to their limits. As the opening quotes of Frank and Andreas indicate, their understandings of WWOOFing were initially framed with their 'hyperconsumptive' motives. However, they contingently ended up

learning symbolically about and for the environment and problematising the semiotic differences between ‘nature’ and their ‘human’ selves.

Probably, as a pedagogical strategy, a major challenge of hyperconformity is that it cannot be rationally planned. In the case of Frank and Andreas, they, and I, retrospectively interpreted that environmentally symbolic learning had occurred. But this does not mean that the same can be applied to other cases. Furthermore, although Baudrillard predicted a positive catastrophic collapse in the *end*, in this limited context for environment learning, there is no way for us to know if that is really going to happen, or when it happens. Or, indeed, has an accelerated implosion of the hegemony of neoliberalism already happened (Baudrillard, 1994; see also Bartram & Shobrook, 2000 for a related argument on the environment), and is it just that we cannot (or do not want to) perceive its effects? Can hyperconformity and hyperconsumption continue even after the end? Hence, longitudinal (but how ‘long’ is long enough?) studies of this sample and other participants in WWOOFing are preferred to test the significance, or otherwise, of the life experiences (Chawla, 2001), which may clarify the validity of hyperconformity as a pedagogical strategy.

If there is no end, capitalistic signs are continuously consumed, contributing to the originally real risks of irreversible ecological catastrophes. Therefore, perhaps, hyperconformity and its acceleration should not be taken lightly. As Noys (2014) cautioned: ‘Instead of accelerating into destruction, we have to think destruction as an intimate and on-going possibility’ (p. 92). ‘Our task today is to collectively sustain forms of struggle and negation that do not offer false consolation, either of inbuilt hope or of cynicism and absolute despair’ (p. 103). Noys’s caution makes sense particularly when humans can cause significant environmental impacts on the planet (and beyond) in the Anthropocene.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated selectively how one theorist, Jean Baudrillard, amongst many, through his masterpiece *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1993), can be categorically applied to theorise the findings from the previous chapters at different methodological levels of James’s (2006) epistemological abstraction.

By theoretically critiquing Baudrillard’s *SED*, I have identified three potential pedagogical strategies for the symbolic and/or symbolic learning associated with

reversible experience of the original one. Analysing their strengths and problems was my limited theorising of reversible experience of the original one, which is a crucial part of the Form of WWOOFers' nature experience. At the same time, reversible experience of the original one located at the Origin of the coordinate plane Form where 'nature' and 'human' intersect is fundamentally deconstructive. Therefore, theorising reversible experience of the original one was intended to partially detheorise the Form. Table 7.2 summarises my (de)theorising.

Pedagogical strategy		Method	Possible challenge	Example from WWOOFing
Reversible experience of the original one	Suicide	Rejecting the simulation	The pervasiveness of the semiotic that may simulate even the symbolic	Frank became like a weed by tactilely adopting to its nature.
	Enchantment	Utilising the simulation	Selecting an enchanting simulacrum within the simulation	Andreas critically problematised the notion of 'nature' in farmed emus.
	Hyper-conformity	'Accelerating' the simulation	Planning and designing for desired outcomes	(Hyper)consumption contingently activated their environmental learning in the end.

Table 7.2 (De)theorising the Form with the reversible experience of the original one

What is particularly curious in this (de)theorising is that, while I believe that reversible experience of the original one is an important pedagogical agenda for environmental education to problematise the current systematic status quo of 'nature' and our 'human' relationships with it, it seems that it is not a silver bullet without its own theoretical and practical issues. Through a critical reading of Baudrillard's *SED*, their potentials and problems were summatively represented so as to advance our understanding of this rather enigmatic mode of ecological integration. They also revealed part of ontological categories of 'nature' and 'human' in our pedagogical engagement.

Importantly, if reversible experience of the original one is promising yet problematic at the same time, this may suggest the probable importance of other experiential movements of the Form, including dialectic experience of the social three

associated with the 'alternative' in WWOOFing. The final chapter will briefly consider this co-constitutive character of the Form from an ethical point of view, as well as conclude this study.

In the meantime, what the post-critical (de)theorising in this chapter demonstrated and recommended is epistemological modesty. Ecologically, such modesty in my theory of WWOOFers' nature experience was expressed as the symbolic indeterminacy of the categories of 'nature' and 'human', and the inclusivity of the experiential movements in WWOOFing, which is not limited to an 'alternative' tourism experience (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006) critically constructed with idealised discourses (such as 'authenticity' and 'transformation').

If any knowledge (including theory) after the poststructural 'crisis of representation' is politicised and thus becomes performative in 'post-qualitative' (St Pierre, 2013b) social research, the political value of theory is at stake as well as its representational value. This means that a theory opens up a particular intellectual space while closing others. In my (de)theorising, with Baudrillard, I tried to re-open the Form within which I closed other possibilities of the WWOOFers' nature experience. However, with Baudrillard, I also closed other important aspects of the Form. However, the point, from a post-critical point of view, is not to generate theory that opens up everything perfectly at the same time. Rather, as an epistemologically limited researcher, all I can do is a continuous double movement of open, close, open, close, open... one at a time, with a particular theorist (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013). That is, I believe, a more ecological way of knowing, and I hope I demonstrated such a process with my (de)theorising in this chapter, given various limitations.

Chapter 8 Conclusions, Recommendations, and Reflections

Introduction

Willing Workers On Organic Farms (WWOOF) is an emerging global ecotourism phenomenon. Due to its allegedly organic nature and activities, it is probable that participating in WWOOF (or WWOOFing) makes an educational contribution to one's experiential understanding of the environmental significance (and, perhaps, insignificance), and potentially, the complexity of nature-human relations. However, in the sociologies of ecotourism and experiential environmental education, there is a paucity of research that informs the fields' theoretical and methodological developments of what the participants' (or WWOOFers') nature experience during WWOOFing is. To add assertively to the literature, this sociologically driven, ethnographic study sought description, interpretation, analysis, and partial theorisation of WWOOFers' nature experience.

This qualitative ethnographic study investigated ten international WWOOFers' individual and collective nature experiences across five sites in rural Victoria, Australia, over four months in 2014. The extensive participation/observation (including informal conversations) and formal semi-structured interviews required the researcher to live and work on-site as a fellow WWOOFer for one to two weeks with each research participant. The young adult participants (21-31 years old) in this study consisted of three Britons (one male, two females), three Germans (two males, one female), two Italians (two females), one South Korean (one male), and one Taiwanese (one female). The international participants in this experiential version of environmental learning or education can be described as 'mobile' within a fluid/liquid sociological interpretation (Nakagawa & Payne, 2016). The majority of the participants in this study WWOOFed at the researched locations for extended periods of time (up to three months), in order to fulfil (part of) their 88-day rural work – a requirement for the second year Working Holiday visa under Subclass 417 (this arrangement is no longer officially available as of June 2016).

To investigate *what WWOOFers' nature experience is* as the overarching research problem (RP) at sufficient depth for this study, the notion of 'nature experience' in the RP was disaggregated into three interrelated research questions

(RQs) to be dealt with in individual chapters, following Ted Toadvine's (2009) ecophenomenological philosophy of nature. They were:

RQ1: What is *the* WWOOFers' *experience of nature*? (Chapter 4)

RQ2: What is *the nature of the* WWOOFers' *experience*? (Chapter 5)

RQ3: What are *the* ecopedagogical *relations* between the WWOOFers' experience of nature and the nature of their experience? (Chapter 6)

The ethnographic and phenomenological richness of the research participants' nature experiences highlighted by the RP and RQs, demanded a comprehensive methodology capable of examining and representing the phenomenon under study. Paul James's (2006) 'constitutive abstraction (thesis)', a (meta-)methodological framework of post-critical inquiry in social science, was deemed most appropriate for sociological explanations and theorisation of contemporary complex environmental phenomena such as WWOOFing.

Epistemologically, James's constitutive abstraction methodology encourages an analysis of a phenomenon at four interrelated levels of abstraction. They are the actors' lived experience (empirical analysis), social practice (conjunctural analysis), social relation (integrational analysis), and ontological formation (categorical analysis). James breaks down each of these levels into aggregations of 'modes' in order to sharpen the analyses (i.e. modes of practice, modes of integration, and modes of categorisation). A major advantage of James's methodology is that different methodologists and theorists can be selectively incorporated into each methodological level of epistemological abstraction to better inform a credible explanation and plausible representation of a phenomenon under investigation, as framed here by the RP and RQs 1-3. Due to limits of a PhD project, this study focused primarily on James's first three levels of epistemological abstraction, as represented as findings in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. Further study is required to theorise the final level of categorical analysis, although certain aspects of categorical theorisation have been selectively demonstrated in Chapter 7.

Four findings chapters of this thesis (Chapters 4 to 7) were structured with James's (meta-)methodological framework. In Chapter 4, an 'empirical analysis' was conducted to describe the WWOOFers' experience of nature (RQ1), generating sensory impressionist tales (Pink, 2009; Van Maanen, 2011). In Chapter 5, another

type of ‘empirical analysis’ was conducted to interpret the nature of the WWOOFers’ experience (RQ2), generating existential themes by using a hermeneutic phenomenological thematic analysis method (van Manen, 1990). Chapter 6 dealt with the next two methodological levels of James’s epistemological abstraction, ‘conjunctural analysis’ and ‘integrational analysis’, for RQ3. In those analyses, the WWOOFers’ material practices and ecological integrations were sociologically analysed in relation to its affective environmental and social design from an ecopedagogical point of view (Huebner, 1987; Payne, 2014). Chapter 7 synthetically re-aggregated the major findings that emerged from the previous three chapters so as to represent an empirically plausible and credible response to the overarching RP. This synthetic theoretical construct, which I called the Form of WWOOFers’ nature experience (or, simply, the Form), potentially indicated various nature-human relations enacted in WWOOFing. Then, as my limited adaptation of James’s ‘categorical analysis’, a selective (de)theorising of the Form was achieved by largely referring to Jean Baudrillard’s (1993) sociological theory of simulation and symbolic exchange. Table 8.1 summarises the methodological structure of Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7.

While James’s methodological levels of epistemological abstraction move from less abstract to more abstract, that does not simply mean that the findings in this thesis progress teleologically towards a deep theoretical core of WWOOFers’ nature experience. The findings from each chapter are significant in themselves as well, indicating the experiential richness of the complex phenomenon. Following John Law’s (2004) inspiration of ‘mess in social science research’, I understand that a social phenomenon is assembled in a complex manner. It is through my assemblage of WWOOFers’ nature experience as a socio-ecological phenomenon that the findings in this study, individually and synthetically, become ‘messy’ and can be related to various intersecting fields, such as the sociology of ecotourism, environmental education research (particularly its environmental and social design for ecopedagogical ‘doing’ and ‘learning’), and the ethics of nature-human relations.

Firstly in this chapter, my responses to each RQ are briefly summarised based on the findings presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. They are then re-aggregated to respond to the RP in a limited, yet illustrative, theorising manner as demonstrated in Chapter 7. Then, drawing on those findings, the remainder of the chapter provides a series of emergent conclusions: (1) reiteration of the overall significances and

limitations of this study; (2) recommendations for WWOOF policies and practices, and for further research development in the sociology of ecotourism and experiential environmental education (research); and (3) reflections on methodological issues raised in this study, including the affect of James’s constitutive abstraction, and an ecopedagogically framed short autoethnographic story of my PhD journey. I intend, with those ‘messy’ contents, to close down and open up this PhD study simultaneously.

	Toadvine (2009) Ecophenomenological disaggregation of RP	James (2006) Levels of epistemological abstraction	Supporting methodology/theory	Explanatory orientation
Chapter 4	Experience of nature (RQ1)	Empirical analysis	Sensory impressionist tales (Pink, 2009; Van Maanen, 2011)	Description
Chapter 5	Nature of experience (RQ2)		Existential themes (van Manen, 1990)	Interpretation
Chapter 6	Ecopedagogical relations (RQ3)	Conjunctural analysis Integrational analysis	Ecological design (Payne, 2014)	Analysis
Chapter 7	Nature experience (RP)	(Categorical Analysis)	Simulation and symbolic exchange (Baudrillard, 1993)	Theorisation

Table 8.1 The methodological assemblage of the WWOOFers’ nature experience

Findings

Research Question 1: What Is the WWOOFers’ Experience of Nature?

RQ1 was investigated in Chapter 4 with a particular emphasis on James’s (2006) ‘empirical analysis’ using Sarah Pink’s (2009) sensory ethnography as best described and represented through John Van Maanen’s (2011) impressionist tales. Based on my sensory ethnographic participation/observation of/with the participants, *ten impressionist tales* were generated to describe the WWOOFers’ experience of nature, with a particular phenomenological attention to *things* they interacted with ‘at hand’ (or, at the micro mode of environmental design – see Chapter 6). As a way of further abstracting the ten tales given the representational limits of Chapter 4 and this study, the tales were then thematically categorised to indicate *three modalities of the*

WWOOFers' experience of nature. They were named *reversible*, *proximal*, and *dialectic*. Table 8.2 summarises the three experiential modalities.

Modality of experience of nature	Short description
Reversible experience	Nature is experienced as something both 'natural' and 'human' at the same time, appearing in a single body.
Proximal experience	Nature is experienced as a being co-presenting in the environment, regardless of the WWOOFers' intervention and modification.
Dialectic experience	Nature is experienced as a means to rejuvenate, realise, and improve the WWOOFer selves through their temporary removal from the everyday.

Table 8.2 The modalities of the WWOOFers' experience of nature

- The thematic finding of *reversible experience* refers primarily to an enigmatic experience, from a common-sense point of view. It was enigmatic because things associated with nature appeared to the WWOOFers as something neither 'natural' nor 'human' but possibly both as a flux at the same time – hence 'reversible'. *Penny the pig* was both farm stock and a pet, confusing a WWOOFer's moral engagement with this animal; the *mother emus* that abandoned their eggs were felt not normal thus unnatural (naturally, they were supposed to be looking after the eggs), possibly due to the artificially enclosed environment; and the *cleared landscape* without weed trees was engraved on the collective body made of nature and a WWOOFer – destroyed branches and logs bulldozed up behind the shed, and red scratches and scars on his arms. In reversible experience, nature was experienced as something more than 'pure' nature (or something less than 'pure' nature), due to the inseparability of nature and human as co-constitutive of the environment. In comparison with proximal experience, the inseparability in reversible experience was corporeal rather than spatial. That is, the inseparability appeared within a single body *as* the environment, rather than as the minimal distance between two bodies *in* the environment.
- The thematic finding of *proximal experience* refers to surprises and wonders that the WWOOFers experienced due to nature's co-presence perceived in the WWOOF environments. Despite various efforts to protect themselves from nature with things such as gardening gloves, nature persistently penetrated the

WWOOFers' moving and working bodies mediated by those things. For example: a sore back from weeding was stretched by a *hay roll* to position a WWOOFer's body to gaze into the sunset; a *wooden stick* brushed off the prickly grass and branches to lead a WWOOFer into the bush where he found an emu wildly hunted down by foxes (allegedly); *kneepads* protected a WWOOFers' knees from dirt and discomfort during her weeding, while also keeping her close to the soil to find an insect friend; and a *terrace* was built to claim a human family space in the garden, providing a magnificent natural view of a National Park across the bay. In proximal experience, due to things' attributes and affordances, nature was experienced in a novel manner as something resiliently co-present, regardless of human intervention and modification.

- The thematic finding of *dialectic experience* refers to an experience where the WWOOFers perceived various things in nature as a lived source with an extraordinary or subjectively elevated value, as opposed to the ordinary and mundane of the routinised everyday. For example: *fresh organic vegetables* for holistic health in nature; intense physical labour removing *weed trees* to modify not only the environment but also a host's presumption about gender roles; and the availability of a *van* for free and independent travel in a relaxing holiday space. The oppositeness of/in nature and the escape from the normatively constraining everyday was meaningful for the WWOOFers in rejuvenating and, more importantly, realising their sense of, or identifications with, truer selves. Dialectic experience is closely associated with a modernist and humanist notion of tourism (MacCannell, 1999, 2011) where the exotic Other is temporarily visited (even 'dwelled' – if dwelling is problematic in the urban everyday) and dialectically synthesised to the tourist selves. In dialectic experience, nature may be experienced instrumentally in an anthropocentric manner of colonising.

Research Question 2: What Is the Nature of the WWOOFers' Experience?

RQ2 was investigated in Chapter 5 through a related 'empirical analysis', this time focusing on the nature of the WWOOFers' experience using Max van Manen's (1990)

hermeneutic phenomenological thematic analysis method. With this method, the nature of the WWOOFers' experience was interpretively represented with *twenty existential themes*. The existential themes were generated under the four 'Fundamental Lifeworld Themes (FLT)' of spatiality, temporality, corporeality, and relationality. As a way of abstracting the existential themes further, given the limitations of this thesis and study, they were re-interpreted in a two-dimensional coordinate plane (with the x-axis representing the 'humanised'-'naturalised' continuum, the y-axis the 'human'-'nature' continuum) which then revealed *five categories of nature-human relations* (Table 8.3). Table 8.3 also shows the numbers of codes that are thematically related to the five categories. While I do not make any positivistic claim based on this qualitatively interpretive thematic analysis method, those numbers counted in coding may nonetheless indicate the possible dominance of Quadrant II (n = 281) to characterise the claim on the 'alternative' nature of the WWOOFers' experience (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006).

Category	Nature-Human Relation	Spatiality	Temporality	Corporeality	Relationality	Number of codes
Quadrant I	Humanised human	Mobilities	Fast time	Self-growth	Boss/Worker	178
Quadrant II	Naturalised human	Authentic place	Slow time	Becoming the Other	Sharing	281
Quadrant III	Naturalised nature	Non-human space	Circular time	(Dis)comfort	Agentic nature	247
Quadrant IV	Humanised nature	Farming space	Linear time	Power/Skill	Resource	123
The Origin	Ambiguous nature-human	Borderland	Irregular time	Sensing	Enigmatic connection	185
Total						1014

Table 8.3 The nature of the WWOOFers' experience

To reiterate the major findings for RQ2:

- It is likely that *Quadrant II (naturalised human)* dominantly characterises the nature of the WWOOFers' experience. This finding confirms other important studies on WWOOFing that emphasised various 'alternative' qualities of WWOOFers' tourism experience.

- However, more importantly, the nature of the WWOOFers' experience is constituted with *various nature-human relations* interpretively represented by various existential themes. In other words, nature was not simply experienced by the WWOOFers to naturalise (and then re-humanise) their human selves in an 'alternative' manner.

Research Question 3: What Are Their Ecopedagogical Relations?

RQ3 was investigated in Chapter 6. The chapter adopted the sociologically analytical procedures of 'conjunctural analysis' and 'integrational analysis' that James described in his *Globalism, Nationalism, Tribalism* (2006). The analyses were conceptually, theoretically, and methodologically supported by Dwayne Huebner (1987) and Phillip Payne's (2014) curriculum notion of environmental design. In order to analyse the ecopedagogical relations of WWOOFers' nature experience, James's sociological procedures were ecologically extended with an ecopedagogical emphasis on the affectivities found in the WWOOF micro, meso, and macro environmental designs. Table 8.4 re-presents a summary of the conjunctural analysis and integrational analysis, which together revealed *three modes of the WWOOFers' ecological integration*. They were named *the original one*, *the proximal two*, and *the social three*. Table 8.5 shows a potential educational application of the findings gained from the two analyses.

To reiterate the major findings for RQ3:

- The ecopedagogical relations of the WWOOFers' nature experience may be methodologically approached with modes of practice (conjunctural analysis) and modes of integration (integrational analysis). Broadly, these analyses indicated that the ecopedagogical relations are materially and practically constituted as *a complex overlaying of ecological integrations that shift in-between environmentally and socially*.
- While the ecopedagogical relations were integrationally complex, the WWOOFers (and the hosts) tended to naturalise the complexity into *the mode*

of face-to-face integration in the meso environment for their preferred nature experience.

- *The touch-to-touch* was added to James's original four modes of integration in order to explain the WWOOFers' nature experience better. This was particularly important for the micro mode of the WWOOF environmental design, the mode of production, and the mode of enquiry.
- In elaborating the mode of enquiry in relation to experiential environmental education, three types of *environmental learning* were heuristically identified. They were: *symbolic learning*, *transpositional learning*, and *transformative learning*.
- The WWOOFers' reflexive accounts on their environmental learning in their interviews indicated *a potential ecopedagogical relation between their spatio-sensory 'doing' in the environment and their conceptual 'learning' about the environment*. In the context of experiential environmental education, this indicates the possible significance of the environmental design for learner's educative experience.

		Conjunctural analysis		Integrational analysis				
		Mode	Description	Touch-to-touch	Face-to-face	Object-extended	Agency-extended	Disembodied
Ecological design	Environmental design	Micro	Designed with organic <i>objects</i> that were directly perceived by <i>touch</i> and <i>taste</i> .	Ecological integration				
		Meso	Designed with farm <i>settings</i> that were proximally mediated by <i>smell</i> and <i>sound</i> .	Design scale				
		Macro	Designed with rural <i>scapes</i> that extended <i>visually</i> and <i>imaginarily</i> .	Sense				
	Social design	Production	In addition to <i>foodstuffs</i> for immediate consumption, <i>commodities</i> were also produced for sale.	Production				
		Exchange	In addition to <i>sharing</i> and <i>barter</i> , exchange in WWOOFing included <i>market exchange</i> , exchange around <i>visa regulation</i> , and <i>trans-temporal exchange</i> .	Exchange				
		Communication	In addition to <i>face-to-face conversation</i> , the WWOOFers frequently used <i>electronic technologies</i> to communicate with family and friends.	Communication				
		Organisation	In addition to a shared household based on a <i>fictive kinship</i> , WWOOFing was also organised on a <i>business-like utilitarian principle</i> and through an <i>online community</i> .	Organisation				
		Enquiry	Experiential environmental learning took place in the forms of <i>symbolic</i> , <i>transpositional</i> , and <i>transformative learning</i> .	Enquiry				

Table 8.4 The ecopedagogical relations of the WWOOFers' nature experience

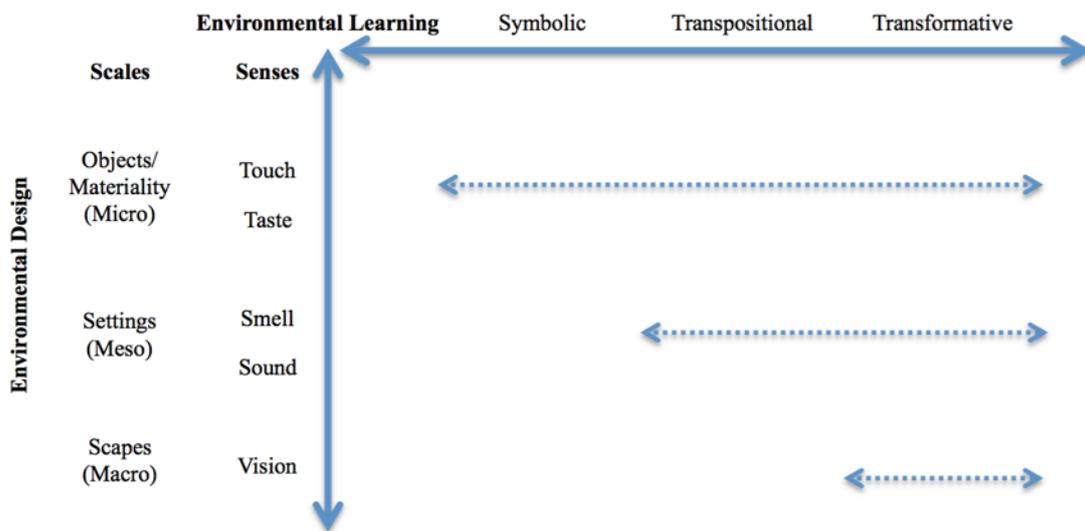


Table 8.5 Ecopedagogical linking of ‘doing’ and ‘learning’

Research Problem: What Is WWOOFers’ Nature Experience?

To respond to the RP, the general problem of this study and its purpose, the findings from RQs1-3 were synthetically re-aggregated in the first part of Chapter 7. Figure 8.1 selectively and visually re-presents the re-aggregation as *the Form of WWOOFers’ nature experience*. The phenomenological basis of the Form is the coordinate plane from Chapter 5. Onto this coordinate plane, the three modalities of the WWOOFers’ experience of nature from Chapter 4 and the three modes of the WWOOFers’ ecological integration from Chapter 6 are contoured to indicate *three experiential movements: reversible experience of the original one* as the circular movement around the Origin; *proximal experience of the proximal two* as the movement from Quadrant IV to III; and *dialectic experience of the social three* as the movement from Quadrant I to Quadrant II.

So, what is tWWOOFers’ nature experience within the parameters of this study? In one word, it is complex. However, by disaggregating and re-aggregating RQs 1-3, some insights into the complexity may be summarised as the following:

- WWOOFers’ nature experience is primarily constituted through three types of experience of nature: reversible, proximal, and dialectic.

- Each experience of nature is associated with a certain nature-human relationship and ecological integration.
 - Reversible experience to deconstruct and/or destabilise ‘nature’ and ‘human’, largely based on the ontologically original oneness within the enigmatic chiasm of the touch-to-touch, often at the micro mode of environmental design.
 - Proximal experience to naturalise nature, based on the spatio-moral proximity of the face-to-face of the two, often at the meso mode of environmental design.
 - Dialectic experience to naturalise and, more importantly, re-humanise the WWOOFers, based on the social and semiotic mediation of the three, often at the macro mode of environmental design.

- Dialectic experience is likely to be the dominant type of nature experience to characterise the ‘alternative’ identity of WWOOFing.

- Proximal experience and reversible experience are subordinate yet crucial elements of WWOOFers’ nature experience. Thus, *they should be all adequately represented* at the level of theory.

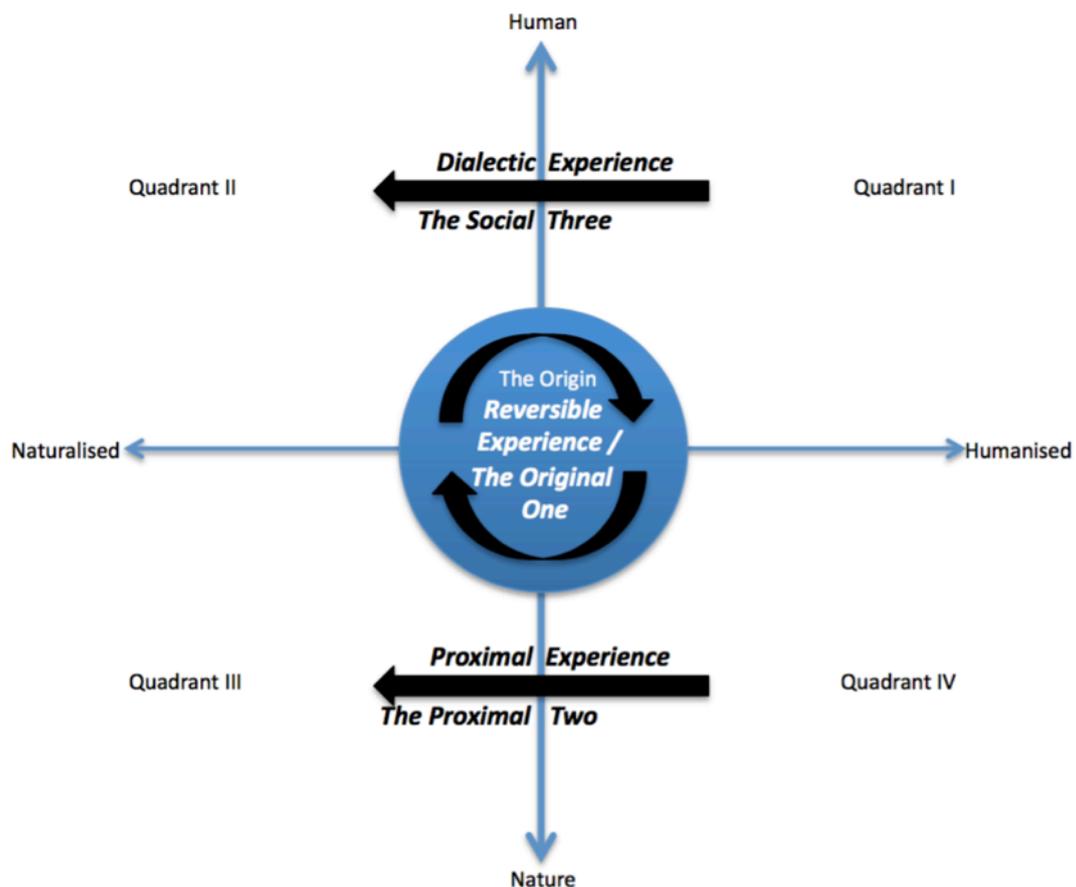


Figure 8.1 The Form of WWOOFers' nature experience

Significances and Limitations of the Study

Significances

Within the usual legitimisation 'problems' of qualitative research (e.g. validity, generalisability, reliability, and so on – Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and emerging methodological issues such as the 'correspondence' problem between ontologically accentuated realities and their epistemological representations (e.g. Bryant, 2011) and associated 'non-representational' problems (e.g. Thrift, 2008), this empirically, conceptually, (meta-)methodologically, and theoretically 'assembled' study of WWOOFers' nature experience nonetheless aims to contribute sociologically to knowledge generation in multiple academic fields. They include:

- Methodologically, this study originally indicated the plausible application of James's *constitutive abstraction (thesis)* in ecotourism and environmental educational research. While James's main concern in his book *Globalism, Nationalism, Tribalism* (2006) was contemporary globalisation, his unique (meta-)methodology deals assertively with the complexity of ontology and epistemology in social theory, which is highly beneficial for inquiries into nature experience. This is particularly so when it is combined with, for example, Toadvine's (2009) ecophenomenological conceptualisation of nature experience where that ontology-epistemology-methodology tension is enacted in the three disaggregated research questions
- In doing so, this thesis adopted a *post-critical* framing (Hart, 2005) with a series of methodological *double movements*, which were crucial for representing the messy realities of WWOOFers' nature experience at multiple levels of epistemological abstraction with multiple methods (Law, 2004). They included ethnographic description, hermeneutic phenomenological interpretation, eco-sociological analysis, and poststructuralist theorisation. In a wider sense, this study was an attempt to deal empirically with the complexity of the social phenomenon without abandoning the possibility of theoretical representation. Hopefully, as a result, what has been represented as WWOOFers' nature experience appeared complex (i.e. not overly simplistic or reductive) yet meaningful and relevant.
- This study originally contributed to the literature on WWOOF in two aspects. First, as far as I can tell from the literature, this is the first research project on WWOOFers' *nature* experience. This is significant, since intimate and probably educational interactions with nature are crucial elements of WWOOFing as an ecotourism phenomenon. Second, this study provided a *detailed ethnographic and phenomenological understanding* of the participants' (nature) experiences, which does not extensively exist in published research to this date (c.f. Miller & Mair, 2015b). This study also adds to the needed emergent literature on the hybrid of the touristic and the educational (Fletcher, 2015).

- This study acknowledged the significance of *ontology* to be considered in curriculum theory and practice in the context of experiential environmental educational research, by employing *environmental design* as an analytical concept (Huebner, 1987). I suggested that the notion of ‘environmental design’ across its micro, meso, and macro modes in WWOOFing needed to be combined with ‘social design’ into *ecological design*. In doing so, a potential *ecopedagogical link of ‘doing’ and ‘learning’* was identified. It casts light on educational concerns with epistemologically (over)weighed environmental learning (Payne, 2014).
- This study synthetically constructed the Form of WWOOFers’ nature experience as a *theory* for the sociology of ecotourism and environmental education (research). Compatible with James’s overlaying ontology, the Form indicates that WWOOFers’ nature experience is *simultaneously constituted with various nature-human relations*. Based on the Form, in a partial and limited way, conditions and strategies for reversible experience of the original one were theorised with Baudrillard’s (1993) theory of simulation and symbolic exchange. The purpose was to assert the significance of reversible experience of the original one for both *theorising and detheorising* the potential nature-human relations enacted in WWOOFing. *Employing Baudrillard’s theory* was also a contribution in itself, since his work has hardly been mentioned in the sociology of ecotourism or environmental education (research), despite his philosophically and sociologically valuable insights. James (2006) highlighted the need for ‘bringing theory back in’ – the subtitle of the text that (meta-)methodologically informed the framing of this study.

Limitations

The above significances of the completed study need to be considered together with the various methodological limitations and associated methodical/procedural limits of this study, which have already been identified in the preceding chapters. Table 8.6 summarises them.

Chapter	Limitation	Circumstance
Chapter 2	A comprehensive and complete literature review was improbable	A relative lack of preceding studies on WWOOFing and the interdisciplinary orientation of this study
Chapter 3	Rigorously determining the 'dominant' modes was impossible	Qualitatively and conceptually exploratory nature of this study
	Potential eclecticism of theory and methodology	James's epistemological abstraction encourages researchers to selectively employ various theorists and methodologists to 'best' match and explain the phenomenon under study
	Possible disjuncture between the ethnographic and phenomenological approaches	The problem of the phenomenological transcendental versus the ethnographic particular
	Sampling of WWOOF sites and WWOOFers	A limited data collection period and the impossibility to represent the phenomenon of WWOOFing completely
	Difficulty of systematic observation of the WWOOFers	I needed to participate (i.e. work) as a WWOOFer for an extended duration, sometimes by myself
	Partial nature of the fieldwork journal entries (about 1000 words a night)	My physical limitations due to demanding outdoor work during the day
	Reduction of the interview data into a textual form	Transcription was needed for a more systematic thematic analysis
	Non-systematic use of visual-audio data also collected	The fieldwork journal and the interviews were sufficient for the purpose of this PhD study
Chapter 4	Insufficient aesthetic merit of writing for crystallisation	My lack of literary skills in English (as my second language)
	An interpretive lens was needed for a description of experience of nature	Phenomenological impossibility of distinguishing experience of nature from experience in nature
	Sampling of short ten narratives rather than some full ones	The limited chapter space, as well as for further abstraction
Chapter 5	Reduction of the WWOOFers' subjectivities into themes and then into categories of nature-human relations	Reduction was needed as a means to further abstract the findings for the following chapters
Chapter 6	Selective nature of environmental and social design elements in categorical analysis	It is impossible to list all the design elements even of the five WWOOF sites
	Selective nature of integrational analysis limited to mode of exchange and mode of enquiry	The limited chapter space; however, I indicated the links to other modes of environmental/social design
	The analyses do not positively identify specific environmental and social design elements for specific outcomes	Methodologically, this study separates itself from mechanic approaches associated with behaviourism
	For the mode of enquiry, the WWOOFers' reflexive 'learning' represented their educative experience	It is impossible to know fully what the WWOOFers' educative experiences were, and thus the need of reduction

Chapter	Limitation	Circumstance
Chapter 7	Categorical analysis was only conducted in a limited and partial way	An intellectual demand beyond the scope of this PhD study
	The Form of WWOOFers' nature experience is not a 'general' theory of WWOOFing	In this study, theorising is conceptualised as a way of abstraction, and abstraction was partially conducted on the Form
	Theoretical elaboration of the Form was limited to reversible experience of the original one	Due to the limited chapter space, however, reversible experience of the original one was selected for a possible (de)theorising of the Form.

Table 8.6 Limitations of this study

Throughout the study, if not solved, I have managed to deal reasonably with various limitations summarised in Table 8.6. However, *the fundamental tension between the ethnographic/particular and the phenomenological/transcendental* remains a significant methodological conundrum with which I could not fully engage in this study. This research project is framed as an 'ethnographic study', and strictly speaking, my findings and claims are limited to the 'cases' that I investigated during my fieldwork. However, for RQ2, I employed a hermeneutic phenomenological method for an 'empirical analysis' in Chapter 5 in order to understand the 'nature' of the WWOOFers' experience. This inevitably indicated thematic transcendence to a degree (van Manen, 1990). In addition, although it is 'selective', my theorising of WWOOFers' nature experience in Chapter 7 also implied a certain level of transcendental explainability. All I can say is that by focusing on the specific ethnographic contexts of international WWOOFers at the five sites, this study interpretively facilitated an understanding of its phenomenological significance.

Perhaps a significant limitation not listed on Table 8.6 but that must be addressed here, is that I could not fully engage with *the ethics of nature-human relations* in Chapter 7, as anticipated in James's final 'categorical' level of epistemological abstraction. This is partly because the ethics is not directly related to the research problem. Instead, my theoretical priority was to construct the Form of WWOOFers' nature experience, which was more ontologically oriented. The ethics remained implicit, as I only suggested that the Form of WWOOFers' nature experience *should* acknowledge all the three experiential movements in order to best explain the phenomenon. Furthermore, this deconstructivist implication was enhanced with a (de)theorising of the Form via Baudrillard (1993)'s theory of symbolic violence to *ex-terminate* the simulated categories of 'nature' and 'human'. However,

important unanswered ethical questions remain. Is acknowledging all the three experiential movements *really good for the environment*? Is deconstructing the categories of ‘nature’ and ‘human’ *really good for the environment*? I feel it is (see my limited response in the later section ‘Reflections’), but I cannot adequately engage with those fundamental ethical questions in this study.

In summary, although with limitations, I believe that this study made appropriate contributions to: the sociology of ecotourism via WWOOFing; environmental education (research) via experiential learning in the environmental design (or ecopedagogy); and post-critical research methodology for human experience in ecotourism studies and experiential environmental education (research). Based on these contributions and limitations, the following sections consider recommendations and reflections arising from completing the study.

Recommendations

Policies and Practices of WWOOFing

While this study is an empirical and conceptual study of WWOOFers’ nature experience, several normative elements worthy of further consideration have come to light. This section presents some general recommendations for the policies and practices of WWOOFing, based on the study findings and my experiences with the research participants.

- **Second year Working Holiday visa (Subclass 417).** The visa was a, if not the, major ‘pull’ factor for the majority of the research participants (at least eight out of ten) to WWOOF in Australia. By working (including WWOOFing) for 88 days in regional Australia, international tourists were eligible to apply for their Working Holiday visa extension. From 31 August 2015, however, this visa arrangement changed (the data for this study was collected in 2014). The Department of Immigration and Border Protection (2016) now requires the visa extension applicants to document their ‘work’ with payslips, ‘in accordance with the Fair Work Act 2009’. WWOOF Australia deployed online campaigns such as on Facebook and Change.org against this legislation, since the change in visa policy was likely to decrease

the number of memberships, and to put at risk small organic farm businesses by removing the ‘volunteer’ labour pool (Prendergast, 2015, 13 May). This new visa arrangement involves many serious issues such as local employment opportunities and protection of vulnerable international tourists from potential exploitation and abuse (which I observed and heard about during my fieldwork). Therefore, I refrain from suggesting a simplistic recommendation for this complex problem. However, solely from the point of view of the WWOOFers’ educative nature experiences, the visa arrangement prior to 31 August 2015 was an important bureaucratic and legal factor in rendering their experiences complex. The prospect of acquiring the visa extension gave the WWOOFers a sense of achievement in their WWOOFing, but the complexity through the visa also potentially problematised the ‘alternative’ significance of WWOOFing. This problematisation will educationally point to a more (post-) critical view on the environment where the relations between nature and human are also socially and institutionally integrated (see Chapter 6). *Future government policy development should consider reintroducing the second year Working Holiday visa by WWOOFing, not only for WWOOF Australia and small organic farming businesses, but also for WWOOFers’ educative nature experience.*

- **Work hours.** Labour is exchanged in the WWOOF barter. That is, a host provides daily meals and accommodation, and in return a WWOOFer provides ‘4 to 6 hours of organic gardening/farming type work’ (WWOOF Australia, 2013, p. 10). In my fieldwork, the hosts usually interpreted the working hours to be (towards) six hours in their own favour. Work was rarely four hours a day. In 2014, in order to meet the requirement for the visa extension, five hours of work a day was deemed sufficient (WWOOF Australia, 2016). In order to protect WWOOFers who tend to be less empowered in this asymmetrically institutionalised barter, the exchange ratio should be fixed to allow less ambiguity and exploitation. It may possibly be set as five hours, or perhaps four hours, now with the visa requirement being less relevant officially. *Future WWOOF Australia policy development should consider fixing WWOOFers’ working hours.*

- **Work activities.** The section of ‘WWOOF Host Guidelines’ in *The Australia WWOOF Book* states: ‘We ask that you [i.e. hosts] try to provide a variety of jobs... [and] do not isolate them [i.e. WWOOFers]’ (WWOOF Australia, 2013, p. 11). This should be more strictly enforced because work activities are a significant element for WWOOFers’ experiential environmental learning. This is important if WWOOFing is also to be an educative experience for WWOOFers, rather than a source of free/cheap labour for hosts. A support system for WWOOFers to report the hosts who violate this principle should be established and/or reinforced. For example, it is helpful if the section of ‘Guidelines on WWOOFing’ in *The Australian WWOOF Book* clearly states the WWOOFers’ right to report inappropriate hosts and encourages such actions. An online evaluation system whose results are open to the members is a potential option (like TripAdvisor), especially now that WWOOF Australia has its own ‘app’. At one WWOOF site, I was isolated from my fellow two WWOOFers/participants when they were building a terrace. Instead of working with them, I was instructed to complete a long list of weeding and garden maintenance tasks alone all day for consecutive days. The host told me: ‘Building a terrace is a two-person job as far as I’m concerned’. This excessively utilitarian practice seemed against the organic philosophy of WWOOFing, and I felt it was unacceptable. *Future WWOOF Australia policy development should consider establishing a more extensive support system for WWOOFers to avoid potential mistreatment by hosts.*
- **Organic farming skills and knowledge.** The majority of the research participants in this study expressed interest in, and motivation for, learning organic farming skills and developing appropriate knowledge. For this reason, it is also very important that hosts provide a variety of work activities directly related to growing food. Growing food is also a cyclic process where not only multiple bodily senses (particularly touch and taste for a direct encounter with natural beings in the micro environment – see Chapter 6) but also various social relations are ecologically integrated: seeding, planting, weeding, maintaining, harvesting, and eating or selling at farmers’ markets. The WWOOFers found the wholeness of growing food experience very

meaningful for their nature experience. *Future WWOOF Australia policy development should consider a stricter guideline for host registration based on the ability to provide WWOOFers with a wide range of opportunities to engage in organic farming.*

- **Learning English.** Some of the research participants in this study prioritised improving their proficiency in the English language as an outcome of their WWOOFing. For the urban WWOOFers in this study whose first language was not English, understanding the hosts' instructions was difficult at times, particularly ones related to farming tasks with which they were unfamiliar. Hosts should understand empathetically and patiently the communicative difficulty international WWOOFers may face. For example, as well as helping them to improve their English, hosts can physically model and demonstrate to WWOOFers how to do a specific task. *Future WWOOF Australia policy development should consider developing hosts' strategies to deal with the needs of international WWOOFers with limited English communication ability.*

The Sociology of Ecotourism

In this section, some recommendations for the sociology of ecotourism are suggested, largely based on the key findings in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. Those findings indicated that the WWOOFers' nature experiences are diverse and multiple due to their complex ecological constitutions, as revealed primarily through James's methodological levels of epistemological abstraction framing this study. That, I believe, is an important insight into ecotourists' experience and the sociology of ecotourism. The recommendations are summarised in three points: empirical, performative, and methodological.

- **Empirical.** A significant finding of this study is that WWOOFers' nature experience was constituted through various material and practical relations. This means that their experience was not only 'alternative' (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006) to mainstream (i.e. consumptive) tourism. WWOOFing was found to be much more than an ideally and/or ideologically constructed

‘non-commercial volunteer tourism’ (Miller & Mair, 2015a) or ‘slow tourism’ (Lipman & Murphy, 2012) in an ‘ecotopia’ (Kosnik, 2013). Although those elements may indeed characterise a generalised identity construction or simulacra of WWOOFing, in reality, WWOOFers’ nature experience revealed in this study is also utilitarian, commercialised, and fast practices, particularly in relation to the imperatives of attaining the second year Working Holiday visa extension in the uniquely Australian context. Even within the ecotopian conceptualisation of WWOOFing, an anthropocentric tendency or motivation is implicit where nature is instrumentally utilised as a way of escape or ‘transformation’ (Deville & Wearing, 2013) for/of the human self. Based on this finding, this study recommends further empirically driven ecotourism studies of WWOOFing in other settings to pursue the possible complexity of WWOOFers’ (nature) experience. An important (and provocative) research question, for example, may be: *Is WWOOFers’ (nature) experience really ‘alternative’? If so (or not), in what ways?*

- **Performative.** Although ‘escape’ into ‘the Other’ semiotically constructed may be a seductive essence of travel/tourism (MacCannell, 2011; Rojek, 1993), deconstructing the ‘alternative’ discursively and experientially is important for ecotourism to keep itself vital and enchanting. Once ecotourism is reified as ‘alternative’, it immediately becomes a tourist commodity and loses its potentially critical value. Ecotourism will become a ‘dangerous’ (Foucault, 1984, p. 343) ‘place’ where the critical is finally incorporated or subsumed within the touristic. There, ecotourism will be completely socially organised and ‘gazed’ (Urry, 2002). Ecotourism even becomes labour where the ecotourists’ duty is to consume its various products (Baudrillard, 1998). To avoid this irony, the space of ecotourism (including WWOOFing) needs to enjoy its current status of ‘heterotopia’ (Deville, Wearing, & McDonald, 2015). Heterotopia might simply be understood as simultaneous spatial expressions of diverse socio-cultural identities and practices. Elsewhere, in the context of environmental education, Phillip Payne and I (Nakagawa & Payne, 2016) recommended experiential spaces be kept open as ‘non-place’ for environmental education, for a similar reason. There, we recommended that the social researcher should consider the method of ‘post-critical listing’. A

post-critical listing problematises a critical narrative (e.g. the ‘alternative’). Instead, it encourages a juxtaposition of various (and sometimes contradictory) experiential themes in order to destabilise and open up the spaces creatively. In the context of this study, the ‘alternative’ is only one, even if dominant, experiential theme. Based on the possible multiplicity of WWOOFers’ nature experience empirically and theoretically considered, this study recommends further performatively deconstructivist research for the sociology of ecotourism. The continuation of generating and listing other experiential themes, faster than the speed of commercial representation and narration (Thrift, 2008), is crucial *for truly (post-)critical ecotourism*. A useful future guiding research question, for example, may be: *What are the multiple experiential themes of an ecotourism phenomenon and in what way can they be listed?*

- **Methodological.** In order to list multiple experiential themes of ecotourists, including WWOOFers, a nuanced and detailed understanding of their experiences is crucial. For this reason, I advocate the importance of post-critically framed qualitative interpretive research in the field of ecotourism studies. Two ecophenomenological layers (Toadvine, 2009) within the post-critical methodology employed in this research were particularly beneficial for providing an empirical basis: the objective embodiment of the WWOOFers’ experience beyond textualism (Payne, 2005) in Chapter 4; and the subjective multivocality of the WWOOFers in which multiple natures appeared, potentially pointing to its non-representational essence (Russell, 2005) in Chapter 5. Embodiment and multivocality effectively problematise WWOOFers’ (nature) experience ecophenomenologically, which have been often simplistically re(-)presented in other studies, either quantitative or qualitative. Doing traditional qualitative research, uncritically mixing positivism and interpretivism (St Pierre, 2013a), may result in anthropocentrism and researcher-centrism, which I find problematic for ecotourism (studies). A useful future guiding research question for less anthropocentric post-critical methodology, for example, may be: *What are other methodological ways to problematise an anthropocentric representation*

of nature (experience)? And, I may add, being pragmatic in the persisting academic context: *on paper and/or with text?*

Experiential Environmental Education (Research)

Some recommendations for further research and theory building in experiential environmental education (research) are suggested, based on the key educational findings from Chapter 6. The findings refer to the potential ecopedagogical linking of spatio-sensory ‘doing’ and conceptual ‘learning’ in the designed WWOOF environment, which is re-presented in Table 8.5. The recommendations are summarised in three categories of practical, empirical, and philosophical.

- **Practical.** Assuming that Table 8.5 might partially or selectively be transferrable to other ‘formal’ and/or ‘informal’ settings for experiential environmental education, this study merely suggested its possibility. For Table 8.5 to be applied in the practice of experiential environmental education, it requires ecopedagogical curriculum and methods of: (1) modifying and/or utilising existing environmental design elements and their various qualities and characteristics to optimise the learners’ sensorial engagement over a range of micro, meso, and macro environmental affordances, spaces and flows; and (2) designing and implementing experientially educative activities that selectively emphasise a particular sensorial engagement for desired types of environmental learning. While those top-down efforts by educators and educational researchers to theorise curriculum are crucial for practice (Huebner, 1987), anticipated challenges may include: the ‘situatedness’ (Quay, 2003) of individually lived experience that may not follow the formal logic of experiential learning; and the potential (new) material vitality that does not ontologically promise the mechanical causality between the objective environment design and the subjective environmental learning (Coole & Frost, 2010). With those potential postmodern challenges that require a stronger ecologically interactive view of inquiry and critique (Payne, 1999) in mind, this study recommends further practical studies for ecopedagogical approaches and practices of experiential environmental education research, with a research question of, for example: *How can the learners’ sensory engagement*

with aspects of nature (and its various social histories and geographies) be selectively optimised by designing the educational environment and related curriculum?

- **Empirical.** Without assuming that Table 8.5 holds absolute value, the suggested ecopedagogical linking of spatio-sensory ‘doing’ in the environment and conceptual ‘learning’ about the environment may be insightful but is only indicative, or even hypothetical at this stage. The linking is bounded in the localised context of WWOOFing, which probably consists of a particular interrelated ecological set of spatialities (e.g. rural or the ‘borderland’), temporalities (e.g. a semi-long term up to three months), corporealities (e.g. various sensory engagements and interactions with the organic mediated by farming technologies), and relationalities (e.g. both a worker and a temporary quasi-family member). Therefore, the alleged ecopedagogical linking requires some empirical verification in other environmental and social contexts designed differently, in order to further establish its ecopedagogical potential. Pursuing various ecopedagogical relations enacted by various environmental and social designs is worthwhile for educational research, because environmentally educative experience now occurs increasingly in the everyday ‘hybrid’ contexts, both inside and outside school (Wals, Stevenson, Brody, & Dillon, 2013). Importantly, such a recommended inquiry into the learners’ experiential processes (Rickinson, Lundholm, & Hopwood, 2009) should include a pre-reflexive aspect of eco/soma/esthetic affect to moving bodies (Payne, 2013, 2014). For that purpose, the potential ecopedagogical relation re-presented in Table 8.5 may serve as one reasonable starting point among many to advance experiential environmental education (research) within the framing of ecopedagogy. This study recommends further ecopedagogical educational research, with a research question of, for example: *What ecopedagogical relations can be identified in different environmental (and social) designs, and how do the learners sensorially interact with(in) the natural environments?*

- **Philosophical.** In the integrational analysis of the mode of enquiry in Chapter 6, three types of environmental learning were heuristically identified (i.e. symbolic, transpositional, and transformative). They were then sociologically associated with three modes of ecological integration (i.e. the original one, the proximal two, and the social three). My post-critically informed position on those various types/modes of environmental learning and ecological integration is that all are theoretically needed, because I believe theoretical complexity will bring about experiential creativity for nature. I am fully aware that this is my political, ethical, and aesthetic preference, and it needs to be intellectually justified beyond this study. However, in the meantime, a rhetorical question may assist: If that is merely my subjective preference, what preference for environmental learning and ecological integration is really good for the environment? Although it is likely that there is no definitive answer for such an axiomatic problem, this question clearly indicates that doing environmental education and its research demands the fundamental question of ‘what *is* nature and – crucially – what could or should be our relation to it?’ [original emphasis] (Bonnett, 2003, p. 555). Based on this processual finding, or insight, this study highly recommends further ethical investigations for philosophically oriented environmental education research, with a prospective research question being, for example: *What nature-human relations are good for the environment, in education and experiential environmental learning, and why?*

Of course, this philosophical question also demands greater access and insights into the conceptual and theoretical basis of not only nature but also ethics, noting the significant shift in contemporary philosophies ranging across various movements of thought such as new materialism, posthumanism, speculative realism, and so on. They all raise various questions about the tensions in experiential environmental education research, such as of ontology and epistemology, ecocentrism and anthropocentrism, and non-human and human, and consequent methodological deliberation (Payne, 2016). How the researcher is positioned in this new intellectual demand awaits further challenges about opening up and navigating the ‘terrain’ of the researcher self, (Hart, 2013), which leads to the next section. There, I begin the onerous but stimulating task

of reflexively examining how this PhD has affected my development as a post-critical eco-researcher through this ethnographic study.

Reflections

The Affect of James's Methodology

James employed his methodology of 'constitutive abstraction (thesis)' for his book *Globalism, Nationalism, Tribalism* (2006). There, constitutive abstraction was treated as *a priori*, with an ontological presumption about the complexity of everyday social phenomena (i.e. ontological abstraction) and epistemological methods to analyse the complexity that exists across multiple levels of abstraction in social inquiry, explanation and theory building (i.e. epistemological abstraction). By adopting James's constitutive abstraction as the methodological framing in this study, my theorising of the Form of WWOOFers' nature experience may have been framed to (re)produce James's methodological presumptions. Thus, in this section, I will reflexively analyse my own theorising in relation to James's methodology. This methodological reflection will re-engage with (de)theorising (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 7), the final phase of my post-critical methodological double movements preferred for a less anthropocentric approach to social research.

In James's own words, constitutive abstraction:

...puts the emphasis on the lived process of intersecting levels of abstraction. As one way of giving this approach more specificity I have attempted here to distinguish different levels of epistemological abstraction (from empirical generalization through integrational analysis to categorical analysis) and different levels of ontological abstraction (from the face-to-face to the disembodied). (James, 2006, pp. 316-317)

James's constitutive abstraction requires a concise understanding of these terms: ontological abstraction, epistemological abstraction, and ontological formation. With constitutive abstraction, James presumed that *ontological abstraction* (i.e. horizontal overlaying of the face-to-face, the object extended, the agency extended, and the disembodied) can be analytically accessed at different vertical levels of *epistemological abstraction* (i.e. empirical analysis, conjunctural analysis,

integrational analysis, and categorical analysis). The major analytical purpose here is to identify a theoretical pattern of ontological abstraction (or, an *ontological formation*) over the four levels of epistemological abstraction. In *Globalism, Nationalism, Tribalism*, James historically represented four ontological formations, or historically layered epochs, as his theory of globalisation. He named these ontological formations the tribal, the traditional, the modern, and the postmodern.

James admitted his methodology possesses a ‘systematizing quality’ (James, 2006, p. xi). This is probably due to its tautological procedure where an ontological formation is both a given and a result, and ontological abstraction and epistemological abstraction are complicit in the methodological cover-up. For example:

1. An ontological formation ‘the tribal’ is different from other ontological formations (a given).
2. This is due to a particular pattern of ontological abstraction.
3. Epistemological abstraction identifies ‘the tribal’ pattern of ontological abstraction as the dominance of the face-to-face over the different analytical levels.
4. The face-to-face is dominant in ‘the tribal’ and not in other ontological formations.
5. ‘The tribal’ is differentiated from other ontological formations (a result).

Realising the potential limitation of James’s methodology is important, because the poststructural ‘crisis of representation’ requires the post-critical researchers to be reflexively aware of their subjectivities and research practices (McKenzie, 2005; Hart, 2013). Methodology too has a value, thus situating the researchers in particular subjective positions (Haraway, 1991). Hence, ‘objective’ knowledge becomes problematic as the distinction between ontology and epistemology is blurred in this paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). As well as representational, ‘onto-epistemic’ knowledge is performative (Barad, 2007), politically, ethically, and (soma)esthetically (Payne, 2014). Because of this alleged performative nature of knowledge, post-critical researchers are encouraged to be accountable for the methodological ‘ends-means congruence’ (Hart, 2005, p. 394) in social research, meaning that generated knowledge is inseparable from methodology of (subjective) choice.

However, I wonder if interrogating a subjective/personal/psychological question of why I chose James's constitutive abstraction as a (meta-)methodology to frame my study would lead anywhere other than a regressive self-justification.¹⁷ Perhaps it is more sociologically fruitful to accept the fate of my choice *responsibly* and provide 'a normatively reflexive account' (Reid & Payne, 2013, p. 538) of how my theorising of the Form of WWOOFers' nature experience was potentially an affective *response* to James's methodology.

My reflexive hypothesis here is that James's methodology does not only provide a set of analytical thus epistemological methods. In addition, perhaps more importantly, it may affectively presume and reproduce a certain ontological form of theory. This may be seen as an 'ontological fallacy' where epistemology (including methodology) is grounded in ontology, and thus generated knowledge 'does not do much more than repeating the (a priori) ontological stance' (Van Bouwel, 2003, p. 91). However, in my view, this is not really a problem when knowledge is post-critically understood to be performative as well as representational. Accordingly, I disagree with Van Bouwel's exclusive proposition that 'the job of the social scientist [is] to investigate the "nature" of social reality' (p. 85). The creative job of the social scientist includes more (e.g. Law, 2004). The problem, however, is not ontological grounding itself, but how such grounding is affectively facilitated by methodology without a clear awareness of the researcher regarding his/her position in framing the inquiry – as it happened initially in this study.

Methodology has affect. Affect is 'not specific to humans, organisms, or even to bodies: the affect of technologies, winds, vegetables, minerals' (Bennett, 2010, p. 61) also requires consideration in a less or non- anthropocentric posture, or positioning of the researcher in relation with things around us. Methodology is one of those 'things' for the researcher. Methodology does not just sit there to be used. Instead, it affectively 'assembles' other things or matters, such as James, his book,

¹⁷ James's methodology contains a strong deconstructive moment where the identity of an ontological formation is sought in the 'dominance' of ontological abstraction, rather than its 'essence'. For example, while the face-to-face is the dominant feature of the tribal, it is also a subordinate yet important element for the postmodern. I must admit that, when I decided to employ James's methodology, I must have been intuitively attracted to the deconstructive with which I wanted to destabilise the 'alternative' in WWOOFing (over-)represented both institutionally (WWOOF Australia, 2013) and academically (e.g. McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). During my fieldwork, as a researcher/WWOOFer, I (auto)ethnographically observed that my participants' and my own nature experiences were much more than what can be simply and ideally labelled as an 'alternative' experience. And why is that important? And what is that important?

myself as a researcher, the researched WWOOFers, the hosts, farm animals, organic vegetables, and so on. Then, it ‘translates’ them into theory for this thesis (Latour, 2005). While I am socially responsible for my theory, it did not come about under my total control. As Nigel Thrift (2008, p. 242) indicated, my researcher body had to make an ‘effort’ to deal with the affective methodology. But the uninformed, confused, vulnerable and fatigued body of a PhD student could not always make such an effort, so that the affective methodology took charge sometimes, albeit partially. By affect, I mean this vital capacity of James’s methodology that worked on (and/or instead of) my body for my (?) theorising.

Therefore, an ‘ontological fallacy’ may occur not only because of the researcher’s psychology, but also because of the affect of methodology. My aim here is to reflect on that process, which probably took place in this study. For brevity, James’s constitutive abstraction possesses a particular tautological form of affect to facilitate four methodological steps: (1) a presumption of a systematically uneven ontological overlaying; (2) an epistemological verification of the ontological overlaying; (3) a theoretical re(-)presentation of the ontological presumption; and finally (4) the ontological presumption as an ethical solution. Although my theory is in no way a match for James’s theoretical breadth and depth, working with James’s methodology nonetheless generated uncanny similarities (Table 8.7).

	James's theory of contemporary globalism	Nakagawa's theory of the Form of WWOOFers' nature experience
Ontological Presumption	Contemporary globalism is constituted by a systematically uneven overlaying of different levels of ontological abstraction.	WWOOFers' nature experience is constituted by a systematically uneven overlaying of different nature/human relations.
Epistemological verification	Empirical (lived experience), conjunctural (modes of practice), integrational (modes of integration), and categorical (modes of categorisation)	Empirical (impressionist tales and existential themes), conjunctural (ecological design), integrational (ecological integration), and categorical ('nature' and 'human')
Theoretical re(-)presentation	The disembodied is dominant in contemporary globalism, while other modes of ontological integration are subordinate yet (increasingly) important too.	Dialectic experience of the social three is dominant in WWOOFers' nature experience, while other experiential movements are subordinate yet important too.
Ethical solution	According to the theory of contemporary globalisation, morality should be also extended. This means that we should care about the disembodied there, as well as the embodied here (James called this 'ethical abstraction').	According to the Form, the subordinate experiential movements should be also maintained as a crucial part of the WWOOFers' nature experience in order to indicate other potential nature-human relations in WWOOFing.

Table 8.7 Affect of James's constitutive abstraction

The fourth step of ethical solution has been only hinted at so far, and thus requires some further elaboration. For James, globalism is increasingly intensifying in the contemporary world, creating the conditions for various social and environmental problems. What can we do? Critically transforming the ontological formation of contemporary globalism (that is, the dominance of the disembodied) may require a politically forceful option, if at all possible. However, suggesting that will lead to the self-destruction of his ontological formation theory, and that does not suit James's intellectual purpose of 'bringing theory back in' (the subtitle of his book in 2006) into social research. Instead, a potential solution for the contemporary social and environmental problems *should be* theoretically corresponding with the ontological formation of contemporary globalism. For this reason, in James's theory, criticality is compromised in the ontological level. Put simply, the dominance of the disembodied must be maintained for his theory to be able to explain contemporary globalism systematically. Instead, a critical quality of James's theory is situated within the epistemological level of human agency, conceptualised as an ideal approximation of ethics to the system/theory.

Thus, if the contemporary globalising world is ontologically structured as a gigantically systematic uneven overlaying to mediate and incorporate the

disembodied unknown others all around the world (including non-human and non-organic), our epistemology, including ethics, *should* reflect that reality. This means that we *should* be able to care about not only the embodied known here in the near, but also the disembodied not-yet-known there in the far. James (2006) wrote: ‘like other social practices, the nature of different deontological systems are patterned upon the nature of the society in which they are lived and contested’ (p. 92). James called this globalised moral system/theory ‘ethical abstraction’, which simultaneously overlays ‘particularizing ethics’ (i.e. towards the face-to-face) and ‘universalizing ethics’ (i.e. towards the disembodied): ‘embodied reciprocity is more easily conducted the closer one gets to home, but in theory (and practice) it is possible across the reaches of social extension from the immediate locale to the other side of the globe’ (p. 313). If the systematic uneven overlaying needs to remain as a theoretical given, our ethics theoretically need to catch up with the given so that living well collectively in the contemporary globalising world can become possible.

A major strength of James’s constitutive abstraction is its ability to describe and explain contemporary societies and their social phenomena without compromising on their annihilating complexity. Rather than simplifying the complexity, James systematically understood globalisation as a process that incorporates different integrations of spatialities, temporalities, corporealities, and relationalities. In doing so, James was also able to theorise the ontological formation of contemporary globalism with the dominance of the disembodied, while acknowledging that the present world also incorporates nationalism and tribalism as its subordinate yet essential elements.

Following James’s post-critical ethics, an ‘alternatively’ anti-modern obsession with the ‘solidity’ (Bauman, 2000) of the ‘rural’ (Bunce, 2003) ‘place’ (Relph, 1976) and an escapist desire for ‘authentic’ being (MacCannell, 1999) observable in the WWOOF discourse (see Chapter 2) are not necessarily reactionary ideologies to be dismissed. They may indeed indicate some real aspects of WWOOFing, although they may be contested with a series of ecophenomenologically, materially, practically, and sociologically analytical critiques (as I did in Chapters 4-7). James’s post-critical type methodology defies the seduction of ‘either/or’ argument and is increasingly important for social research in dealing with contemporary complexity, including nature-human relations (Nakagawa & Payne, 2015, 2016).

On the other hand, a potential limitation of James's constitutive abstraction may be its theoretical stability which seeks to conserve the intra-systemic power relations between a dominant ontological mode *overlaying* and the others *overlaid*. Contemporary globalism relies on the disembodied, and in order to maintain itself, it cannot allow a structural revolution by the embodied. The embodied must be managed inside the system/theory. In the approximation of the explanatory capacity (or knowledge) and the governmentality (or power) (Foucault, 1990), constitutive abstraction may reduce its critical value and instead reproduce the current status quo (Baudrillard, 2007). Does this structural stasis for the system/theory also mark a significant political and ethical limitation of post-critical methodology? If it does, what can post-critical researchers do for that?

(De)theorising with Baudrillard

Towards the end of Chapter 6, I was increasingly aware of the question concerning the affect of James's methodology on my doing of my research. Therefore, I made an effort not to be completely framed by it, and not to re-frame my research participants and their experiences accordingly. In my reflection, the greatest challenge in Chapter 7 where I demonstrated a selective theorising of the Form of WWOOFers' nature experience, was the post-critically needed balance between the task of representing theory to make partial sense of WWOOFers' nature experience, and the task of not to be completely consumed by James's constitutive abstraction (thesis) through my own theorising.

To work on the balance, in the second half of Chapter 7, my theorising of the Form was selectively targeted at one experiential movement on the Form – reversible experience of the original one (hereafter 'reversible experience' to shorten). I selected reversible experience because of its particular location on the coordinate plane of the Form – the Origin. Reversible experience theoretically constitutes the Form as a subordinate yet crucial experiential movement around the Origin. It is at the Origin where the 'categories' of the Form (i.e. 'nature' and 'human') approximate to zero. Partially theorising the Form via reversible experience was thus ambivalent. It was a way of theorising, because reversible experience is part of the Form. It was also a way of detheorising, because reversible experience implodes the categorical terms that

constitute the Form at the Origin. I called this post-critical double movement ‘(de)theorising’.

My (de)theorising in Chapter 7 was largely conducted with reference to Baudrillard’s (1993) theory of simulation and symbolic exchange. Baudrillard’s theory was useful for indicating possible strategies for deconstructing, destabilising, and detheorising the Form of WWOOFers’ nature experience. Table 8.8 re-presents three potential pedagogical strategies to facilitate reversible experience assertively in/out the Form. Theoretically, reversible experience via those strategies pushes the Form beyond its potentially tautological and reproductive affect.

Pedagogical strategy		Method	Possible challenge	Example from WWOOFing
Reversible experience of the original one	Suicide	Rejecting the simulation	The pervasiveness of the semiotic that may simulate even the symbolic	Frank became like a weed by tactilely adopting to its nature.
	Enchantment	Utilising the simulation	Selecting an enchanting simulacrum within the simulation	Andreas critically problematised the notion of ‘nature’ in farmed emus.
	Hyper-conformity	‘Accelerating’ the simulation	Planning and designing for desired outcomes	(Hyper)consumption contingently activated their environmental learning in the end.

Table 8.8 Three pedagogical strategies for reversible experience of the original one (based on Baudrillard, 1993)

This (de)theorising process was a limited adaptation of James’s ‘categorical analysis’ to consider the ‘categories’ of ‘nature’ and ‘human’ in the WWOOFers’ experience, although word limits prevented me from fully incorporating it into this study. As well as my (de)theorising intending to refine the Form of WWOOFers’ nature experience, ontologically deconstructing those categories also implied some normative significance. That is, while the categories of ‘nature’ and ‘human’ should be constructed so that humans can rationally theorise their relations with nature, they should be also simultaneously deconstructed so that they remain open ontologically.

Keeping ‘nature’ (and in return ‘human’) open is ethically important for at least three reasons. Firstly, simulating, differentiating, and hyperseparating ‘nature’ and ‘human’ is always done to privilege the latter asymmetrically (Baudrillard, 1993; Bhabha, 2004; Plumwood, 2003). Categorical meanings, or signs, are inseparable

from political economy of power, and it is this power that has been causing many serious anthropogenic problems in the world. Secondly, by unknowing or fictionalising what we know about the signs of ‘nature’ and ‘human’ underpinned by industrialism, capitalism, neoliberalism, and anthropocentrism (Davies, 2013), we may be able to maintain our creative and environmentally interactive possibility of (eco)becoming someone else, possibly a more ecological being than what we are now (Payne, 2014; Sameshima & Leggo, 2014). Lastly, doubting our epistemological capacity to simulate (or ‘rupture’) is not only to be ecologically modest in the alleged ontological ‘continuum’, but also to fulfil our role for the environment with greater responsibility in the Anthropocene (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2015).

If a simulacrum should remain incomplete for the above ethical reasons, the Form of WWOOFers’ nature experience, which is also a simulacrum that theoretically stabilises the potential relations between ‘nature’ and ‘human’, should require a deconstructive scrutiny. To do so, in a limited way, I attempted what Baudrillard (1993) called ‘theoretical violence’ against the Form, to turn Nakagawa against Nakagawa. Particularly, by selecting reversible experience of the original one, I tried to demonstrate the theoretical ‘reversibility’ of the Form of WWOOFers’ nature experience. The Origin in the coordinate plane, where ‘nature’ and ‘human’ semiotically implode to zero, was a suitable point to speculate about the potential ‘outside’ of the Form while remaining inside the Form.

By all means, the Form is a modest theory of WWOOFers’ nature experience, due to my limited intellectual capacity. The modesty, however, I would like to think, was also derived from my ethics of (de)theorising, which responsibly aimed for a less anthropocentric and less researcher-centric understanding and abstraction of WWOOFers’ nature experience, and what that may indicate about ‘nature’ and human’ in WWOOFing.

Autoethnographic PhD Journey: Becoming an Eco-researcher with the Other(s)

Reflecting on this study, the post-critical methodology, which I outlined in Chapter 3 and implemented in each of the four findings chapters in relation to the research problem and questions, was an original effort. My post-critical methodology dealt with what might empirically be interpreted and represented, even if partially and contingently, given that the Other most likely exists yet withdraws from my

experience (Harman, 2016). By the Other, I mean everything that I may be connected with in the research process but nonetheless is not me. The Other includes, for example, nature, WWOOFing, my research participants, and the people and things they encountered in their WWOOFing in various ecopedagogical environments.

Post-critically speaking, a representation of the Other is always partial. Thus, representing the Other involves a necessary process of reduction, as was signalled by ecophenomenologically disaggregating the broad research problem into three manageable and plausible research questions. The findings were then re-aggregated to represent a partial (de)theorising by applying the (meta-)methodological framework of James's constitutive abstraction thesis.

In problematising the status of representation in a post-critical manner in the research context of WWOOFers' nature experience, I practised two methodological principles throughout this thesis. First, although a representation does not capture the whole truth of the Other, it does nonetheless provide a certain understanding of the Other that matters to us for the time being. Representation still works, albeit imperfectly, as persistently acknowledged throughout the study. Thus, abandoning it altogether as a humanist illusion seems methodologically utopian to me. The posthumanist researcher is still a human, and this simple and practical point cannot be denied. A good example is that you are reading this textual representation of mine and can make some sense out of it, although your sense may be slightly different from mine, but not completely. I still convey meaning by writing. The meaning in this textual communication is not reducible to your performative reading of this text, either to my representational writing. The reader brings his/her own experiences into his/her reading.

Second, if representation still matters in research, if on a limited basis, it should be carefully crafted to the best of one's ability, methodologically and methodically. James's (meta-)methodology of constitutive abstraction thesis is a useful framework to work on and work with representations of the Other that enigmatically appears and withdraws in a post-critical inquiry. His (meta-)methodology systematically allows various theorists and methodologists to be selectively applied for multi-level analytical abstraction of a phenomenon and its realities (i.e. descriptive, interpretive, analytical, and theoretical – as attempted in Chapters 4-7). This holistic yet internally flexible (meta-)methodology was found tremendously helpful to access, represent, and theorise the realities of WWOOFers'

nature experience while organising their complexity. The various realities intelligibly represented can be communicated to various audiences, notwithstanding the various limitations and limits of such an undertaking summarised previously (Table 8.6).

Analytical abstraction as a meaning-making process is unavoidably reductive in empirical work, but it is necessary to work on and with the real of the Other. For the research fields where the Other is problematic, yet too important to give up its realities – such as nature in environmental education and ecotourism studies – James’s constitutive abstraction thesis provides a valuable (meta-)methodological framework to engage intellectually with the Other. Here, I am not aiming to represent the real completely, or even at a 90 or 95% confidence level. I am interpreting the realities of WWOOFers’ nature experience, in context, to the best of my ‘knowing’ while leaving the Other open.

As indicated earlier, however, James’s systematic (meta-)methodology may affectively (re)produce a certain form of knowledge that is suitable for an ontology and epistemology (including ethics) already presumed. To deal critically (post-post-critically?) with the systematic tendency, I applied Baudrillard’s theory of the symbolic exchange with which I attempted to deconstruct the post-critical form of the knowledge that I had been generating. The (de)theorising of the Form of WWOOFers’ nature experience was indeed a bold move at the expense of a further theorising by applying other notable theorists, but I believe it was necessary to push the post-critical methodology forwards.

Probably, what could have been improved in my methodological implementation may be the balance of the performative and the representational. I must admit that the primary purpose of this study was – and still is – to understand and make sense of WWOOFers’ nature experience theoretically, and thus the representational was accentuated. As a result, however, the performative was somewhat compromised. Chapter 4, which described the WWOOFers’ experiences of nature and how they were translated by things at hand, could have focused more on those ‘things’ rather than the emerging narrative themes aided by the subjects’ voices.

What is done is done. And I will move on, with the following short autoethnographic story of my PhD journey. This story is to conclude this thesis by illustrating how the researcher ‘I’ was repositioned throughout my PhD study over three and a half years. Moving and interacting with various people and things in various environments, the body~time~space relationalities of researching

WOOOFing itself was an ecopedagogically educative experience for me (Payne, 2014). It is a more personalised version of my methodological reflection in the above.

Obviously, it is impossible to summarise my PhD ‘journey’ in the following five pages. Therefore, I need to emphasise that this is not a summary, or even a proper conclusion. Rather, it is a selectively reflective story among so many.

This particular story is written around the notion of ‘the Other’. It is about how my understanding of the Other interactively shifted during my research process. I chose this story because the concept of the Other was a key notion in this study, and I thought it would be helpful to include a description of how I became an ‘eco-researcher’ by interacting with various Others. By eco-researcher, I mean a researcher who is mindful of the intricate relationships between nature and human, the researched and oneself, and the Other and the Same, for knowledge generation. In generating knowledge, an eco-researcher usually has to objectify the Other and represent it to make sense of his/her research and to communicate with readers. Nonetheless, with reflexive modesty, various side effects of the objectification and representation may be minimised. And that, I believe, will contribute to ecological research practices of, and for, the Other.

The idealised Other. For my PhD, I was originally planning cultural studies of spiritual tourism with autoethnographic methodology. In January 2013, inspired by Elizabeth Gilbert’s (2006) bestseller autobiographical book *Eat, Pray, Love*, I went to Northern India for two months to pilot a proposal. I spent the first month in hectic sightseeing. In the second month, I was going to stay at an ashram (i.e. a spiritual monastic community) in Rishikesh to experience what spiritual tourism would be like. This India trip was special for me because it was a celebration to mark the end of my part-time four-year Master of Education, and the six long years of my secondary school teaching.

Rishikesh is famous for ashrams. Many ashrams there indiscriminately host devotees and tourists from all around the world. It ferments a globalised form of spirituality. With the refreshing higher altitude air and the Ganges River running through the middle of the town, Rishikesh was an ideal place for spiritual tourists, including myself, to escape, not only from their first world problems, but also from other bustling tourism places in India.

Well, it was supposed to be. On the overnight train to Rishikesh, my bag I kept under my head was stolen while I was sleeping. It had literally everything of importance to my tourist life: my passport, bank cards, credit cards, all my cash, iPhone, and Lonely Planet Guide. I was deeply distressed.

A young Indian couple who happened to be in the same carriage, Deepak and Monika, generously invited me to their home for a few nights and then gave me money to return to Delhi to get my passport re-issued.

After one week of waiting (and familiarising myself with Bollywood music on television in my backpackers room), I got my new passport. The passport tempted me to go home on the earliest flight I could arrange. Instead, with the money my friend Brendon sent me through Western Union, I headed to Rishikesh again, this time by bus. I thought, if I returned home, I would probably never do backpacking again, given the devastation of being robbed materially as well as spiritually. This thought was much more troubling than missing out on Rishikesh.

During my shortened three-week ashram stay, I learnt yoga and meditation. I did not feel anything ‘spiritual’. I tried. Perhaps, I am not that spiritual to begin with. That may have been a good quality for doing spiritual tourism research more ‘objectively’.

The problem was that I was not enjoying being there. I noticed that my enjoyable experience, ‘spiritual’ or otherwise, would only have been possible with the security of being able to access my material wealth. I got my new passport and limited cash. But I did not have my bank cards and credit cards – a sense of tourist security.

I talked about this to a senior American teacher who had been living in the ashram for some time. She said I needed to let my sense of possession go in order to be spiritual. But how could I, as a tourist? I needed my possessions, and I had my real life to go back to.

Then, one evening, immersing my feet in the cold stream of the Ganges, a revelation came to me. I realised I could only enjoy the spiritual in tourism as long as it was temporary. I came to realise that I did not want to be the spiritual Other. I needed a new research topic.

The persistent Other. For my PhD, I now wanted to study something more substantial than what I thought of as a wealthy person’s part-time escapist life

enrichment (I know this is severely one-sided, but this was how I experienced Rishikesh). So, I decided to go back to the 'environment' in which I had written my dissertation for a Master of Arts (the indigenous landscape in the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne) and for a Master of Education (tertiary international students' outdoor experience of the Australian landscape). As well as that being relatively familiar territory, I thought studying about the environment was good for the world, not just for wealthy people who can afford to travel. I still do.

But still, my interest in tourism persisted. Although I was disillusioned with spiritual tourism in my own way, my sociological intuition kept telling me that tourism was a crucial key to understanding our contemporary living and human-nature condition. So, why not ecotourism? But which ecotourism? I could not decide. More conceptually and theoretically interested in the environment and/or nature, I did not know much, to be honest.

Then, out of the blue, my supervisor Phil suggested 'WOOOFing'. I looked up this weird word on the internet, and understood that it would provide a participant with an 'alternative' mixture of tourist, environmental and educational experience. Promising! But then, I also realised that WOOOFing was mostly about 'doing' organic farming. I hate big insects. But I needed to decide my research topic as soon as possible, so I pushed myself to make a commitment.

In constructing the research problem for my now more empirically oriented ethnographic study of WOOOFing, I instantly and instinctively selected the notion of 'nature experience'. Thinking back now, I know exactly why I did so. I was still Romantically interested in escape into nature, the Other.

The blurred Other. WOOOFing was decided upon and my PhD candidature was confirmed at the end of 2013. After a pilot WOOOFing study/visit in early 2014, I selected about ten WOOOF hosts from *The Australian WOOOF Book*. I liked their self-descriptions there and they were all located near Melbourne. In accordance with Monash University Ethics Committee guidelines and approval, I sent each of them a research invitation. I received no affirmative responses. I sourly concluded that my research was also dependent on hosts and WOOOFers, the Others.

By geographically widening the recruitment catchment, I gained a sufficient number of hosts to cooperate with my proposed research by July 2014. Because it was winter then, not many hosts were having WOOOFers. But I wanted, no, needed to

complete my data collection by the end of 2014. Also, in winter, not many big insects would be active or alive. I picked five hosts who had WWOOFers staying at their sites and immediately began my fieldwork. The five WWOOF sites turned out to be very different from one another, which was lucky for me.

For the next four months, as a researcher/WWOOFer, I was in the field with my research participants. I observed and worked with the WWOOFers during the day (up to eight hours), and wrote up my fieldwork journal at night. I overestimated my physical ability. Soon, I started coughing and I could not stop. My GP told me that I had bronchiolitis. In a way, bronchiolitis materialised the blurring of my researcher self and the WWOOFer self within my body. If I had just WWOOFed and slept enough at night without drinking cups of strong coffee to stay awake, I would have been fine. I pushed my physical limit a bit too much. But in doing so, the Other WWOOFer self crept into me, causing bronchiolitis as a blurring symptom.

More significant blurring occurred with my research participants. Initially, I was very careful to maintain a professional researcher-researched distance, by not disclosing too much about myself to them. However, living and working with them everyday for up to two weeks meant that methodological distance started to appear like an impossible textbook convention. Especially during weeding, for an extended period (sometimes all day) face-to-face with a research participant or two, how could I avoid talking about myself?! So, I did. So did the WWOOFers.

We talked about so many personal topics: holistic sustainable living, animal welfare, Australian culture, relationship problems, future uncertainties, and so on. Some WWOOFers confessed to me that the only reason they were WWOOFing was to extend their Working Holiday visas so as to experience further travel in Australia, and stay longer with their boy/girlfriends. Having lived and worked with them for up to two weeks, they came to mean more to me than just research participants. The researcher-researched asymmetry inevitably blurred, if partially. As an aspirational eco-researcher, I feel this is one of the methodological achievements in my research.

Then I experienced another type of blurring of the Other during my fieldwork. At one WWOOF site owned by a professional couple, I was separated from my fellow WWOOFers building a terrace. I was given a long list of weeding-related tasks to complete alone for the next few days. 'Building a terrace is a two-person job as far as I'm concerned'. This is exactly what the host stated. I was very disappointed.

But why did I feel disappointed?

Utilitarian actions are everywhere in the real world, and I think they are needed to a certain degree. Then, I realised that it was disappointing only because it was against the 'alternative' ideal of WWOOFing. That incident reminded me that WWOOFing is in fact a continuation of the everyday, although it may critically negate such ordinary values. WWOOFing is not completely the Other place.

Certainly, there were many kind and inspiring people I met during my fieldwork. But the point is that, in WWOOFing, not surprisingly, people may behave based on utilitarian individualism, too. In the real world, people may behave based on fraternity, too. In WWOOFing, there may be something 'unnatural', too. In the real world, there may be something 'natural', too.

In effect, ontologically-epistemologically-methodologically within the body~time~space relationalities of this ethnographic, phenomenological and, now, reflexively attuned autoethnographic partial conclusion, the 'blurring' I refer to appeals to, and mirrors, how the researcher is positioned, repositioned, and transpositioned as a process of inquiry in relation to the researched that also 'moves'. How can I represent empirically and theoretically my movement and their movement at the same time?

Representing the Other. Meanwhile, at that WWOOF site owned by the professional couple, while weeding, all I could think about was finishing my data collection as soon as possible and leaving. In the absence of the hosts, on my last day there, the fellow WWOOFers showed me how to bake bread in the kitchen. They had learned the method from the host. The host thought baking her own bread was important in being more self-sufficient and for reducing the use of plastic bags. I mixed coriander and cumin seeds into my dough, as the WWOOFers recommended. The bread baked well.

Next morning, upon my leaving, the WWOOFers handed me the bread that I had baked on the previous day. I did not want it because it reminded me of the host. They insisted. As I was driving off, I was so tempted to throw the bread away out of the car window, thinking some birds would eat it. I almost did, not once but twice.

To this day, I bake my own bread, following that learnt method.

This bread comes to mind when I think of how to represent the Other as an eco-researcher. Baking one's own bread means probably an 'alternative' sustainable practice for many people. However, the people who bake their own bread are not only

sustainable. They can also be as utilitarian as everyone else. They are different but the same simultaneously. From this lived experience of mine, I bodily learnt that representing the Other as an eco-researcher may be to represent the Otherness in the Same, and the Sameness in the Other.

I imagine becoming an eco-researcher is an embodied process of blurring the Other and the Same, within the researcher and researched. And it is in this blurring that we can truly interact with the Other, if only partially. As the Other is blurred, the Same is blurred as its mirror image. And that, I believe, is a crucial opportunity for (eco)becoming and learning. Otherwise, we are either to colonise the Other completely to our disenchantment, or to alienate ourselves forever in a solipsism of the Same.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Explanatory Forms



EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

On-site WWOOFer

Project: WWOOFing nature: An ethnographic study of ecotourist experience and subjectivity

Chief Investigator

Phillip Payne

Faculty of Education

Phone: 03 9904 4416

Email: phillip.payne@monash.edu

Student Researcher

Yoshi Nakagawa

Faculty of Education

Email: yoshifumi.nakagawa@monash.edu

My name is Yoshi and I am conducting a research for my PhD with my principal supervisor Associate Professor Phillip Payne in the Faculty of Education at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis that is the equivalent of a book.

You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate in this research. This Explanatory Statement is for you to keep. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of this project, you are encouraged to contact Yoshi (preferred) or Phillip via the phone number or email addresses listed above.

What does the research involve?

The aim of this research is to understand WWOOFers' nature experience. Participation in this research project is voluntary. Each participant will be asked to have **two 60-minute interviews** with Yoshi. The interview will be arranged at a mutually convenient time and place during your WWOOFing. The interviews will be audio recorded. Also, Yoshi would like to use the information from informal **conversation** and non-intrusive **observation** of your experience. No visual or audio record of your experience will be obtained, unless you give permission to Yoshi to do so. In addition, Yoshi may ask you to take photographs (a camera will be provided) of your WWOOFing as a data source.

Why were you chosen for this research?

You have been contacted by Yoshi because you are WWOOFing at a farm whose owners have agreed to participate in this research project.

Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing from the research

Participation in this research project is voluntary. If you agree to participate in this project, please read the Consent Form that will be provided at the beginning of the first interview. After signing the Consent Form, please return it to Yoshi. Even after you have agreed to

participate in this project, you are not obligated to answer any question you feel too personal or intrusive. You are also able to withdraw from the project at any time until the end of 2014 by informing Phillip or Yoshi.

Possible risks to participants

Due to the nature of the project, no physical and psychological risk for the participants is anticipated.

Confidentiality

The information gained from your interviews is only for Yoshi's research purpose, and it will not be disclosed to or used by anyone else. In Yoshi's thesis and other publications, instead of your real name, a pseudonym will be used to protect your identity.

Storage of data

Storage of your interview data will adhere to the university regulations and it will be securely kept on university premises for 5 years.

Use of data for other purposes

The information gained in the interviews will be used in Yoshi's future publications (for example, journal articles, book chapters, and books) as well as in his PhD thesis. It is assured that only aggregate de-identified data will be used for those projects.

Results

Yoshi will notify you when publications are available. If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please let Yoshi know. The PhD thesis is planned to be completed by the end of 2016.

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC):

Executive Officer
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee
Room 111, Building 3e
Research Office
Monash University VIC 3800

Phone: 03 9905 2052
Fax: 03 9905 3831
Email: muhrec@monash.edu

Thank you.



Phillip Payne



Yoshi Nakagawa



EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

WWOOF Host

Project: WWOOFing nature: An ethnographic study of ecotourist experience and subjectivity

Chief Investigator

Phillip Payne

Faculty of Education

Phone: 03 9904 4416

Email: phillip.payne@monash.edu

Student Researcher

Yoshi Nakagawa

Faculty of Education

Email: yoshifumi.nakagawa@monash.edu

My name is Yoshi and I am conducting a research for my PhD with my principal supervisor Associate Professor Phillip Payne in the Faculty of Education at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis that is the equivalent of a book.

You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate in this research. This Explanatory Statement is for you to keep. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of this project, you are encouraged to contact Yoshi (preferred) or Phillip via the phone number or email addresses listed above.

What does the research involve?

The aim of this research is to understand WWOOFers' nature experience. Each participant will be asked to have two 60-minute interviews with Yoshi during his/her WWOOFing. As a WWOOF host, I would like you to:

- **Host** the student researcher (Yoshi) as a WWOOFer at your property. Yoshi is eager to learn about organic farming too!
- Allow Yoshi to **conduct research with other WWOOFer** staying at the same time. Their participation is voluntary.
- Allow Yoshi to use the information gained from **informal conversation** with you. Your ideas and opinions are very important in this research project.
- Allow Yoshi to conduct an **interview** with you (Up to 60 minutes, audio recorded).

Why were you chosen for this research?

Your property has been selected from *The Australian WWOOF Book* due to proximity to Melbourne and capacity to host more than one WWOOFer at a time. Or, your property was recommended by our mutual acquaintances.

Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing from the research

Participation in this research project is voluntary. If you agree to participate in this project, please read the Consent Form that will be provided upon my arrival. After signing the Consent Form, please return it to Yoshi. Even after you have agreed to participate in this project, you are not obligated to answer any question you feel too personal or intrusive. You

are also able to withdraw from the project at any time until the end of 2014 by informing Phillip or Yoshi.

Possible risks to participants

Due to the nature of the project, no physical and psychological risk for the participants is anticipated.

Confidentiality

The information gained from informal conversation with you is only for Yoshi's research purpose, and it will not be disclosed to or used by anyone else. In Yoshi's thesis and other publications, instead of your real name, a pseudonym will be used to protect your identity.

Storage of data

Storage of the data will adhere to the university regulations and it will be securely kept on university premises for 5 years.

Use of data for other purposes

The information gained from informal conversation with you will be used in Yoshi's future publications (for example, journal articles, book chapters, and books) as well as in his PhD thesis. It is assured that only aggregate de-identified data will be used for those projects.

Results

Yoshi will notify you when publications are available. If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please let Yoshi know. The PhD thesis is planned to be completed by the end of 2016.

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC):

Executive Officer
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee
Room 111, Building 3e
Research Office
Monash University VIC 3800

Phone: 03 9905 2052
Fax: 03 9905 3831
Email: muhrec@monash.edu

Thank you.



Phillip Payne



Yoshi Nakagawa

Appendix II: Consent Forms



CONSENT FORM

On-site WWOOFer

Project: WWOOFing nature: An ethnographic study of ecotourist experience and subjectivity

Chief Investigator: Phillip Payne

Student Researcher: Yoshi Nakagawa

I have been asked to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement and I hereby consent to participate in this project.

I consent to the following:	Yes	No
I consent to be interviewed by Yoshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to allow the interviews to be audio recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to allow my informal conversation with Yoshi to be used as data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to allow Yoshi to use what he observed as data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to allow Yoshi to take photos or videos of me while WWOOFing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to provide Yoshi with pictures of my WWOOFing I will take	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to make myself available for a further interview if required	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to allow my de-identified information to be used in the researcher's future research projects (e.g. journal articles and book chapters)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please read the following and tick:

- I have read the Explanatory Statement provided by Yoshi
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can choose not to participate in part of all of the project, and that I can withdraw until the end of 2014.
- I understand that any data that Yoshi extracts from the interviews, informal conversation, and observation for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.
- I understand that I will be given a transcript of interview concerning me for my approval, if I wish, before it is included in the write up of the research.

Name of Participant _____

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

CONSENT FORM

WWOOF Host

Project: WWOOFing nature: An ethnographic study of ecotourist experience and subjectivity

Chief Investigator: Phillip Payne

Student Researcher: Yoshi Nakagawa

I have been asked to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement and I hereby consent to participate in this project.

I consent to the following:	Yes	No
I consent to allow Yoshi to WWOOF at my property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to allow Yoshi to research at my property. This includes: taking non-intrusive photographs around the property and interviewing other WWOOFers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to allow Yoshi to interview me (audio recorded)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to allow my informal conversation with Yoshi to be used as data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to allow my de-identified information to be used in Yoshi's future research projects (e.g. journal articles and book chapters)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please read the following and tick:

- I have read the Explanatory Statement provided by Yoshi
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can choose not to participate in part of all of the project, and that I can withdraw until the end of 2014.
- I understand that any data that Yoshi gained for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

Name of Participant _____

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix III: An Example of Fieldwork Journal Entry

Saturday 16 Aug 2014

Farmers' Market in Hawthorn

Today is Saturday, and we have a farmers' market in Hawthorn. We wake up at 5:00. It is really cold but I have got used to getting up early – actually it is quite surprising that people can get used to the cold fairly quickly. I also learnt eating breakfast is very important at this place where WWOOFers work for 5 hours in the morning from 8 to 1, you need to get some energy to keep working for long hours. But not today, probably because I ate too much yesterday. Last night I taught Clare how to make sticky date pudding – I was worried if the oven works properly because it looks old and not reliable. 'This doesn't work properly, you know, this is Ralph's stuff, so you have to see and check.' Clare asked me to show her how to make sticky date pudding as a typical 'Australian style cooking', and I really had been enjoying WWOOFing with her, so I thought I would return favour. I think my WWOOFing experience at Ralph's significantly became better because Clare was there. She was nice, cheerful, genuine, and I kind of associate those people with WWOOFing. Anyway, I'm full, and it is too early for me to eat breakfast, so I don't eat anything at all.

Clare gets up a little bit earlier than me and prepares the lunch bag, which is on the kitchen table. The kitchen is already heated up with the electricity heater brought from the lounge. At the farmers' market, a WWOOFer can buy his/her lunch (or breakfast... today, we arrive before 7 am in Hawthorn, and the market starts from 8 am. Ralph is away for a yoga retreat this weekend with Steph), so I ask what she usually eats at the market. 'I usually eat sausage on bread... because Ralph tells us that we can only spend \$10. You know, if you buy some drink, you can only get that. [Assistant] is nice and she tells me that we can spend more than \$10.'

At the market, I observe four things: arranging vegetables (particularly pumpkins); Clare telling how to cook candy strip beetroots to customers with the salad recipe that I used on the previous day ('We are lucky to have Clare here because she is a natural seller!', says [Assistant]); Clare cleaning up the old carrots and parsnips to join them in the main crate; and bartering veggies and cheese with [Assistant].

Arranging vegetable

Before the market opens, I ask Clare what she does in the market. 'We arranged the vegetables nicely so that they look good and customers will buy them.' Arranging vegetables are an important part of the setting up the stall. Inside the U-shape stall, crates are put up towards the customers to give them a better view of the produce – rocket, mixed salad leaves (purple mizuna, cos lettuce, etc.) carrot, and parsnip. In between and in front of those crates, we put bunched vegetables: beetroots (purple, golden and pink, candy stripe), broccoli, Chinese broccoli, garlic shoot, spring onion, turnip, radish, fennel, and so on. Very colourful. On the corner right next to the market entrance is the pumpkin section. The assistant says 'I want these pumpkins seen by people coming into the market but also by people looking at the stall from the front.' It is strategically an important point. Clare started to pile them the corner. She picks up pumpkins of the size of her head from the orange crate on the ground to the stall table one by one. Larger pumpkins on the bottom, and on top of that cut smaller pumpkins. Clare arranges those smaller pumpkins so that the bright colours are

exposed to different directions. The arrangement is rustic yet careful, different from the supermarket where pumpkins are placed either in a row of shelf/rack or simply put in an area in a geometrical way. Then the Assistant intervened 'I think it looks better in this way... Can I change it?' the Assistant started to re-arrange them. Clare's eyes dropped, indicating her disappointment. The Assistant is IN CHARGE, and Clare is allowed to be creative within the Assistant's power TO DECIDE. Given that the Assistant is working for Ralph and getting paid, she is the boss here. This kind of tells me the position of the WWOOFers in WWOOFing, in relation to other people involved.

Candy Strip Beetroot

This is something you don't see at the supermarket. I have been asked by many customers about what they are and if they are indeed beetroots (I don't have a picture of that... I NEED TO TAKE A PICTURE OF CANDY STRIPE!) One middle-aged Caucasian woman approached Clare asking about candy stripe beetroot. Clare explained that it is a type of beetroot. Also, she makes a suggestion about how to eat. 'It is very good in a salad. You can shred this beetroot and mix with kale, sultanas, and oranges with olive oil and balsamic vinegar. It is a very good salad. I had it yesterday.' This is the salad that I made for her on the previous day for dinner. She hadn't eaten beetroot raw before so she wasn't keen on the idea ('I like roast beetroot, but raw... hmmm...'), but she finished the salad full in a bowl. Learning new dishes and using the knowledge to sell the vegetables to customers. Interesting, because it is kind of a mixture of production of vegetables and selling them, and the action (production and exchange – vegetable/money) is mediated by her cooking knowledge that she identified as one of the most important WWOOFing 'nature' experience contextualised also as 'the Australian style.' Oh, also related to this, golden beetroot, Clare was saying to the same customer that they are good for pickles... which she had eaten Ralph's place before. Clare says 'when I was 10 or 12, I used to help my father selling his lunchbox, so I'm good at selling things. I like to promote something I like.' This suggests, she cares (and this is evident from the interview) about the vegetable she has helped to grow.

Cleaning up the carrots and parsnips

This is kind of similar to the theme that I indicated in the previous anecdote. Isn't this capturing something?! (I have pictures of this process.)

- cold gust
- cold wet tea towel (I offer to help Clare so that she can serve the customer which I think she seems to enjoy a lot – I don't want to take that opportunity away from her, although it gets busy sometimes and I needed to be involved in selling the vegetables from time to time)
- While I am cleaning old carrots and parsnip from a plastic bag and putting into the main crate, the Assistant told me 'Leave them aside. We will deal with them later when the main one is gone.'
- Clare goes back to clean those veggies: 'I know [Assistant] told us to leave these.'
- I immediately think this is important in relation to the idea of 'not making waste' Clare was talking about in the interview, so I take a picture of Clare doing this.

- The Assistant saw this, and tells me ‘That is not a usual experience of a farmers’ market!’ Clare smiles softly.

Barter: Goat blue cheese (\$12) – carrots (\$8/kg, more than 1.5 kg)

While Clare keeps the shop, the Assistant takes me to a regular cheese seller with whom she usually barter. ‘We exchange our vegetables with other producers here, and this is one important part of the farmers’ market. For example, we get eggs here for 4 dollars a dozen. Ralph sells those eggs for 8.5 dollars a dozen at the roadside shop. We can only sell our produce in this farmers’ market but at the roadside shop, we sell other things too.’ At the cheese stall, the guy who has ‘a permanent chill feet’ (thus shaking his body constantly – he shows us a wood panel on which he stand on so that he can avoid the direct coldness from the ground) offers me three types of cheese on display for tasting. Very tasty. ‘How much is this goat blue cheese?’ ‘12 bucks, and that’s the last one.’ ‘Do you want to exchange?’ ‘What vegetables do you have?’ ‘We have... A LIST OF VEGETABLES’. ‘I always like your carrots, so that will do.’ (I insert myself: ‘They are very sweet aren’t they.’) ‘We don’t have much left.’ ‘I will come over with you now.’

At our stall, this cheese guy puts all the leftover carrots (I think this will be more than \$12 – it was heavier than 1.5 kg I think) into a paper bag. ‘This will do.’ He says, and leaves. Why am I writing this? Because the idea of ‘organic’ ‘exchange’ closely associated with the farmers’ market (and perhaps a more ‘natural’ way of conducting doing business/exchange) is nonetheless mediated by ‘price’ or monetary value that is set for the customers!

I continue talking with the Assistant. She feels complex about WWOOFers (she was once a WWOOFer herself), because ‘they take jobs from the local people’. As a local person, she gets paid \$20 per hour by Ralph. She explains. This farmers’ market usually makes about \$1000 a day for Ralph. In order to grow vegetables, Ralph hires A for 2 days, B for 2 days, C for 1 day, and the Assistant for 1 day a week. So, 6 persons in total a week, times \$160 a day/8 hours (total, for just the people, \$960). Without out WWOOFers Ralph has to pay more. So, while the Assistant feels that WWOOFers are taking jobs away from the local people, she also feels that it is impossible to do an organic small business without WWOOFers. If the WWOOFers are not there, the business isn’t there anyway, so, it is complex, she says.

Appendix IV: Interview Topics and Questions

Onsite WWOOFer FIRST Interview Questions (60 mins)

Pseudonym Gender Age Nationality Occupation

8 Nature Background

Can you tell me about your most memorable nature experience that occurred in the past?

Can you talk about anything related to nature or the environment that you do or care about on a regular basis?

2 Past WWOOFing Experience

(Have you done WWOOFing before here? If yes...)

Can you talk about your past WWOOFing?

(To begin with, ask to choose the most memorable one)

(Probes: description of the site, setting, year, season, duration, activities/work, etc.)

What did you like the most and least about your past WWOOFing?

3 Motivations and Expectations for WWOOFing in Australia/here

Why did you think of doing WWOOFing in Australia?

Why did you decide to do WWOOFing here particularly?

What do you think is particularly attractive about this WWOOFing farm?

Onsite WWOOFer SECOND Interview Questions (60-90 mins)

4 Highlight vs Least Favourite

What did you like most and least about your WWOOFing here?

What was your most and least favourite work here?

5 Nature Experience via Non-representative Materials

(E.g. photos, poems, sketches, objects – requested to bring to this interview)

What does the word ‘nature’ mean to you?

Can you talk about what you brought here?

In what ways do they express your nature experience?

6 Interpretation of My Participant Observation

I observed that you... Can you tell me...?

(E.g. I observed that you were not really keen on chopping wood. Am I right? Can you tell me what you were thinking then?)

We did... together didn't we? What did you think of that?

7 Interactions with Hosts

Can you tell me about the most memorable interactions or communications with your hosts? (both positive and negative)

In what ways do you think your hosts influenced your WWOOFing experience? (both positive and negative)

8 (Environmental) Learning

What are the import things that you learned from this WWOOFing experience?

In what ways has your understanding of nature and the environment changed?

In what ways has your understanding of WWOOFing changed?

Is there anything else you would like to say about your WWOOFing experience that we didn't talk about?

(This is very important to invite the Otherness in, so be persistent!)

Appendix V: Monash University Research Ethics Committee Approval Letter



MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

This is to certify that the project below was considered by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Committee was satisfied that the proposal meets the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and has granted approval.

Project Number: CF13/3571 - 2013001839

Project Title: WWOOFing Nature: An (Auto)Ethnographic Study of (Eco)Tourist Experience and Subjectivity

Chief Investigator: Assoc Prof Phillip Payne

Approved: **From:** 11 December 2013

To: 11 December 2018

Terms of approval - Failure to comply with the terms below is in breach of your approval and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must include your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Require the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

Professor Nip Thomson
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Mr Yoshifumi Nakagawa

Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia
Building 3E, Room 111, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton
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ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C

Appendix VI: The WWOOFers' Accounts of Sensory Environmental Learning

Code	WWOOFer	Scale	Sense	Sensing	Env. Learning	Meaning
1	Steph	Micro	Taste	Fresh vegetable	Transformative	Connection with nature
2	Steph	Micro	Touch	Weather	Transpositional	Non-controlled environment
3	Clare	Micro	Taste	Australian food	Transformative	New experience for self-growth
4	Clare	Micro	Taste	Fresh vegetable	Symbolic	The organic vitality
5	Clare	Micro	Touch	Rain	Transpositional	Getting wet but good for plants
6	Clare	Micro	Touch	Working as a farmer	Transformative	Natural living
7	Clare	Meso	Sound	Bees buzzing around	Transpositional	Proximity to nature
8	Tea	Meso	Smell	Pig	Transpositional	Relaxing with/in nature
9	Tea	Micro	Taste	Organic vegetables	Transformative	No chemical for health
10	Tea	Meso	Sound	Different noises in the garden	Transpositional	Different beings in nature
11	Tea	Macro	Vision	Naturescape	Transformative	Solitude for self-growth
12	Tea	Micro	Touch	A knife to kill kangaroos	Symbolic	Ethical human role in nature
13	Andreas	Micro	Taste	Eating a kiwi without peeling	Symbolic	Biodynamic nutrition
14	Andreas	Meso	Smell	Sweet kiwi scent	Transformative	Nature retreat
15	Andreas	Micro	Vision	Different WWOOF sites	Transformative	New experience for self-growth
16	Andreas	Micro	Touch	Collecting emu eggs	Symbolic	Unnatural mother emus
17	Andreas	Meso	Sound	Geese making a loud noise	Transpositional	Geese communicating
18	Andreas	Micro	Touch	Grabbing a chicken	Transformative	Empowerment
19	James	Macro	Vision	Australian culturescape	Transformative	New experience for self-growth
20	James	Meso	Sound	English-speaking environment	Transformative	Improving English
21	James	Meso	Smell	Horse dang	Transpositional	Being in the rural and/or nature
22	James	Meso	Sound	Noisy birds	Transpositional	Recognising the birds' presence
23	James	Micro	Touch	Grabbing a chicken	Transformative	Empowerment
24	Margherita	Meso	Sound	Silence	Transformative	Solitude for self-growth
25	Margherita	Meso	Smell	Plants	Transpositional	Relaxing with nature
26	Ben	Micro	Touch	Burn-off work	Symbolic	Living with bushfire
27	Anne	Meso	Sound	Quietness	Transformative	Escape from the city
28	Anne	Micro	Touch	Exploitation in WWOOFing	Symbolic	Human extension into nature
29	Frank	Macro	Vision	Spiritual culturescape	Transformative	New experience for self-growth
30	Frank	Meso	Smell	Fresh air	Transpositional	Trees cleansing the air
31	Frank	Micro	Touch	Weeding	Transformative	Patience as work ethic
32	Frank	Micro	Touch	Feeling the weed	Symbolic	Becoming like the weeds
33	Frank	Micro	Touch	Seeding and planting	Transpositional	Farming according to seasons
34	Frank	Micro	Touch	Unusually early summer heat	Symbolic	Anthropogenic climate change
35	Moon	Micro	Touch	Simple nature of work	Transformative	Happiness
36	Moon	Micro	Touch	Pushing physical limit	Transformative	Self-realisation through work