FROM ENVIRONMENT TO NATURE

Psycho-social investigations into practices of relating to Nature

REMBRANDT ERNST ZEGERS

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It is time to wake up to our senses.

Contents

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[2] Founded by Paul Hoggett. Dr Lita Crociani-Winland is its current leader.

A note about the author

Rembrandt Zegers started this project while working for Greenpeace International. Now, having written this thesis, he is a change agent and consultant in private practice and involved in initiatives central to the ideas in this research. He lives in Voorburg the Netherlands with his partner Alison who is a teacher of children with special needs.

ABSTRACT

How might we understand relating to Nature and what potential insights to sustainable leadership practices can be offered from that understanding? Those were the overall aims of this research. As Nature is omnipresent, yet not represented in mainstream culture that largely operates as if humans are split off from Nature, the question is: where has Nature gone in the psycho-social domain? If Nature is paradoxically both omnipresent and yet not consciously present, then where is it hiding? It must have gone unconscious and people must work hard to keep it there. But if that is so what relation is kept, or how does such relation (both omnipresent and not consciously acknowledged) manifest itself? This project puts emphasis on relating to Nature as the key problematique of inquiry. Translating this into researching lived experience, a psycho-social approach using Hollway and Jeffersons interview method was chosen in order to focus on the unconscious aspects of relating to Nature, the relating 'below the surface' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013). This was combined with elements of Gendlin's protocol of 'felt sense' to be able to expand the research to the unconscious aspects of relating to Nature, as Gendlin (and others) base themselves on Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of perception that has introduced the unconscious relating to Nature into psycho-analysis (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015). Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is considered a philosophy of Nature as it emphasises the intersubjectivity and reciprocity of that relation. Through Merleau-Ponty, it is the preconscious role of the senses that is considered the primary area of knowing.

In the empirical part of the project, 15 people's lived experiences within five different practices of working with Nature are distilled. The insights are used to comment on literature, answer the research questions and highlight contributions to psycho-social studies as well as directions for further research. The insights are used to show how relating to Nature is a continuous process of meaning making; a process that enhances a dynamic ecocentric ethics, based on experience. In opening up to the idea of 'preconscious knowing through relating', agency of non-

human others becomes an important source of developing an ecocentric ethics from experience.

In the current sustainability discourse, meaning making is limited to meaning making within existing human culture, which keeps it within the boundaries of neo-liberal thinking and its reproduction[3]. That means people's liberties (without constraints to comfort and material wellbeing) are advocated and enhanced at the cost of the survival of other species and ecosystems. It also means relating to Nature is limited to 'managing the environment'. It is argued that working from a position of acknowledging Nature having agency, will allow for meaning making itself to take central stage, bringing back relating to Nature out of its mental hiding place, into the space of lived experience.

Recognizing the agency of non-human others is therefore crucial in developing ecocentric ethics. It construes relating to Nature as a dynamic process in leadership, instead of a static one based on a list of prescriptions (Fox, 1995). This opens up possibilities for innovations in culture through paying attention to the dimensions of meaning making that start with the senses.

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[3] The widespread sense is that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it (Fisher, 2010, p.2).

1. INTRODUCTION

In this introduction, I will explain how we live in a time when our ideas about the environment are shifting towards ideas about Nature (setting the scene). I will then explain what kind of study this is and why it is needed (as a psycho-social study). Finally, I will state the research questions (gaps in literature), before going on to the literature review.

Throughout the text Nature is written with a capital N except in the chapter and section headings.

1.1 setting the scene: conceptualizing the environment and nature

How come experiencing Nature, relating to Nature is seemingly so far from everyday life, from the jobs, politics, decision-making that impact people's lives, or one's own life for that matter? It is as if it is absent, not part of mainstream conversation in daily news or media. Of course, the climate crisis and biodiversity loss are in the news some of the time (more and more). But such communicating about the very substance that keeps us alive and thriving is done in abstract, calculating ways. While conversations between people, addressing what is going on between them, fill the newspapers and social media. Conversations between people and non-human others are not covered. Yet such conversations exist as well. Paying attention to the environment, though, is more common, and growing. For instance, the 1972 work of the Club of Rome[4] pointed at finite natural resources, a finite material earth, while later on the Brundlandt report[5] drew our attention to a sustainable future and divisions between the rich and the poor. However, both famous reports talked about Nature as if it was no more than people's 'environment'. Where the one is pragmatic about foreseeing an end to the natural resources that industrialised nations use, putting an end to them once those resources are depleted (Club of Rome) the other (Brundlandt) is clearly also addressing ethics, putting the emphasis on justice and inequality in the way

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[4] Club of Rome (1972), The Limits to growth: a global challenge.
[5] World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), Our common future. UN.

Earth's resources are distributed among people. But at that time, it was still an ethics about humans and the distribution of (material) wealth among humans. Pointing at ethics and care in relating to Nature shone through in the Brundtland report, but at that point in time primarily in terms of 'self-care'. It was looking into one's conscience about other humans. It was care for the sake of humans, not care for non-human animals or Nature itself – acknowledging their inherent standalone value. Moreover, Brundtland exported Western values, being concerned about people in non-Western countries needing to develop their wealth as the West had done and was still doing.

Powerful as these reports where, they did not lead to immediate action or change. In 1987, the UN's World Commission on Environment and Development prompted widespread adoption of an anthropocentric view of sustainability, which put human needs and wants —or further human expansion and development — above the survival and development needs of other species (Borland and Lindgreen, 2013).

While these reports created attention globally, being discussed by leading countries and politicians, developments in science were raising an ever-stronger voice, stating that humankind needs to reconsider its path, and not only for selfish reasons. Quantum physics and ecology play their part in stating scientific 'truths' that directly address obsolete Cartesian notions about mankind being the sole thinker, the sole species entitled to exploit Nature.

We see psychology and philosophy now step up in starting to provide strong cultural analysis. Examples are Arne Naess, who started the notion of Deep Ecology, which he developed over several books, demonstrating that ecological thinking needs to go beyond superficial levels of conservation and care, but is (and should) be a matter of developing the self to the maturity of including others and Nature, hence the term 'deep' (Naess, 1988, 1989). Warwick Fox[6], who builds

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[6] Later on, Fox builds an integrative theory on ethics where he includes the built environment into a relational and organisational ethics, pointing at an ethics of the whole (Fox, 2006).

on Naess in his thorough analysis of ecocentric ethics, shows how such a 'transpersonal' position is the core of Naess' thinking. Fox comes to this conclusion through showing how, in the literature on ecocentric ethics so far, Naess is the one who emphasises this psychological developmental perspective of the self-expanding to other selves, including non-human other 'selves' (Fox, 1995). Others after Fox do the same in referring to Naess. For example, Davis emphasises the transpersonal as one of the most important aspects of ecopsychlogy (Davis, 1998), which shows how Naess became a pivotal thinker when it comes to deep ecology, ecopsychology and ecocentric ethics.

Such an ethic is different from anthropocentric ethics, as Patrick Curry has analysed (Curry, 2011) and as we saw Warwick Fox do before him (Fox, 1995). Curry makes a distinction between lighter green and dark green when talking about ethics and in so doing further illustrates how we can look upon ethical thinking and initiatives, while being critical towards light green ethics as not going far enough (Curry 2011). He argues that wider exploring and discussion of dark green ethics would throw light on what we as humans are doing with Nature (and ourselves). In science and ethics, thinking about the environment has shifted to thinking about Nature.

Nevertheless, if we think of ecocentric ethics, we do not yet see much change in attention to our relation to Nature, as roads are still built for more cars, more houses are built, more holiday flight capacity is lobbied for. In other words, concepts and practices of sustainability most of the time do not slow down human impact on and destruction of Nature (Curry, 2011; Hailwood, 2015). Debates about ecocentric ethics do not get stuck into mainstream culture, so to speak.

This means we need to look 'deeper'. Roszak makes an analysis of Freudian psychology. He doesn't contest Freud's genius in having developed a worldview and toolbox that allows undisclosed and repressed feelings and thoughts towards oneself and others to be brought into the open. But Roszak builds another

argument. Rather, he explores how Freud's concepts are connected to the cultural ideas of his time, arguing, for instance, that the reality principle can be traced back to uncritically accepting the opinions and norms of one's parents. According to Roszak, our current time requires a similarly powerful psychology addressing society, this time looking at our environmental problems (Roszak, 2001).

Versions of reports like those from the Club of Rome and Brundtlandt have appeared since. The difference is that the current reports do not predict bad things to happen in the future, they show us impacts and consequences as they happen right now. For instance, the reports of the IPCC and IPBES, the UN Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platforms on Climate and on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, bear witness to impacts on people and Nature as they are happening.

It is noticeable that environmental thinking on how to practice sustainability have become mainstream and part of everyday social and economic practice. Collective attempts now undertaken aim to go beyond research and scientific understanding, towards practical application and shifts[7], that can support the creation of different cultures of relating to 'the environment'. The UN has started to work with Social Development Goals (SDG's) formulated and adopted at UN level. Ideas about economic development, financial wealth and economic growth are, however, still part of such frameworks (Göpel, 2016). Developing and defining new practices also take place on organizational level. For instance, Western has recently developed a concept of leadership that builds on the ecological principle of 'everything related to everything else' (Western, 2013). For example, information in complex systems can be better understood through collective effort. Contrary to what the term suggests, Western is aiming to build leadership

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[7] Matthijs Schouten and others who study the history of human relation to Nature, though, show the meaning and use of language in relating to Nature to be in no way 'linear'. For instance, political and cultural attitudes towards Nature in the Netherlands have moved from the romantic conceptions of 16th and 17th century landscape painters, to conquering land from the sea and making the polders throughout the 17th to 19th centuries, to conservation of Nature reserves as isolated parks in the 20th century (Schouten, 2005).

that is relational, but he does not address environmental sustainability or an ecocentric ethics. At the same time, the literature on leadership and sustainable practice is growing (e.g. Wheatley, 2006; Case, et.al. 2015; Evans, Hicks et al. 2015; Schein, 2015; Wolgramm, et.al. 2015,

Since people like Naess and Roszak have set the scene for deep analysis, more powerful analyses have been undertaken in attempts to explain and address the environmental collapse and the way this is dealt with in our culture and the political and public agenda, as there is still a gap between what people do and what the planet can sustain.

For instance, the psychologist David Kidner has written several books analysing the psyche and its role in cultural alienation from Nature. In 'Nature and Experience in the Culture of Delusion', he shows how our capacity for symbolic meaning making has taken a catastrophic turn as the natural world and the industrial world have become two separate worlds, where the latter parasitizes the former (Kidner, 2012). In his analyses, Kidner makes the point of embodied existence being marginalised by a culture that is no longer able to take in signs from Nature, as it has come to be caught up within its own psychology, its self-created symbolic structures. In an earlier book, he is critical about psychology itself, how psychology has become part of symbolic thinking within industrial society, thereby sustaining it (Kidner, 2001).

Such criticism coincides with work in the natural sciences that for longer now have started to question human exceptionalism following quantum mechanics, cybernetics and systems thinking (Bateson), complexity theory (Prigogine, Stengers) and autopoiesis (Maturana, Varela). Theodor Roszak already provided us with his analysis of cosmology in 'The Voice of the Earth', where he points at the arbitrary cultural position, we have taken considering mind and where mind sits and who has it and who hasn't (Roszak 2001). Once again there is attention for such cosmology away from seeing life and matter as totally different entities. Recent research engages itself with theories that sees consciousness as a

universal phenomenon. In a sense deep, cultural beliefs about the environment and consciousness are challenged and addressed once again, since Marx and philosophers like for instance the Frankfurter Schule have mostly been pushed aside in favour of neoliberalism and capitalism (Latouche, 2010; Kallis, 2011; Venn, 2018). Authors like Karin O'Brien and Daniel Christian Wahl have begun to describe new cosmologies, addressing cultural paradigms that reformulate the role of Nature inspired by quantum theory (O'Brien, 2010, 2015), and principles of 'life producing life' (biodiversity), directly applying them to everyday practice and economy, as used in notions of designing regenerative cultures (Wahl, 2016).

Practitioners follow in training people in work. For example, Carol Sanford introduces the idea of life as an organising principle in business, working with understanding open systems. In doing so, she further builds on relational approaches within organisations, writing about regenerative principles supporting living wholes, bringing back Nature relations into everyday practice (Sanford, 2017).

Some of the 'shifts of meaning' about relating to Nature and how they come about can be more clearly seen from narrative literature, literature that tells stories that have an impact.

It is critical to understand the current interest and shift of meaning from notions about Nature being static and available as a resource - 'the environment' - to Nature being alive and having value, meaning and agency. That is what this study is about, a study into shifts of meaning when it comes to Nature and how they come about, while culturally and collectively the struggle seems to be for Humans to shift from 'using' their environment to 'relating to' Nature.

1.2 a psycho-social study

This is a psycho-social study into relating to Nature against the background of our industrialised culture that exploits and destroys Nature. The first premise is that

exploiting and destroying Nature is not a given, it is not a necessity for humans to destroy the planet, it is the consequence of culture. Nature is a reality as well as a mental construct. The question of whether Nature has gone altogether, or if it is just hiding, leads to the premise that it is 'just' mentally hiding. But in that case, digging deep and finding it is a challenge. Where has it been pushed? Where is it 'hiding'? Evidently, Nature itself is not hiding, but on the contrary is manifesting itself ever more clearly through the ecological crises that can be seen all around the planet. Yet the hiding is taking place in the (collective) psyche. This leads to yet another premise, namely that one needs to look at this from a psycho-social perspective, which is a way of researching what 'culture' does and how it manifests itself with respect to a dominant way of relating to Nature. This analysis has been made before (within ecopsychology literature mainly, e.g., by Roszak), but looking afresh and building it on the basis of empirical psycho-social research is rare.[8] This study aspires to fill that gap and in doing so argues that a psycho-social position adds crucial insights and 'tools' for meaning making that challenge the existing culture in relating to Nature and opens up possibilities for change.

1.3 the research questions

The premise of this project is that doing psycho-social research will help to understand where 'relating to Nature' is hiding in our culture and in the individual. This is close to the project Roszak undertook in following Freud and making the case for connecting psychology to ecology (Roszak, 1993, 2001).

However, I want to further operationalise it, looking for perception and the unconscious in relating to Nature. Psycho-social studies need phenomenology in that respect. It is through investigating lived experience that new openings in our collective conceptualisation of Nature (away from the static Cartesian notion of environment) can appear. It is here that a focus on the body and embodiment

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[8] Towards the end of this study I found out that doing psycho-social research studying our relation to Nature is implied by at least one other researcher before me, eg. see Adams, 2016, but in fact not undertaken empirically.

opens up looking at the relational when it comes to Nature. Non-human others or Nature do not speak human language, while at the same time they do signal. Working with non-human others / Nature goes through the senses, giving access to what is in common with Nature.

The first gap in psycho-social studies is not the relational *per se*, it is the gap where unconscious relating to Nature should be. The field of psycho-social studies and its application (e.g., group relations conferences) has a tradition of being familiar with notions of the unconscious operating in groups, organisations or the social. Bion's famous 'thoughts looking for a thinker', points at experiencing this unconscious as shared in groups, requiring working through in order to make sense – in other words, thinking is never 'fully done' (Bion, 1961). However, relating to Nature has never been explored that much.

Furthermore, ecopsychology (that is studying Nature at a psychological level) so far has done little with notions of reciprocity and non-human animals having agency, that is, Nature as an actor. This is the second gap in literature. The work on cosmology that Roszak has done (Rozsak, 1993, 2001) is a start (putting mind back into Nature), but the notion of mind in Nature can be brought further and made more practical (empirical) by focussing on non-human others as agents, as much as focusing on humans. A third gap in literature I want to address and that I consider equally important, is the notion of a shift of meaning in itself, and the dynamic aspects of an ecocentric ethics. In other words, ecocentric ethics need to be made dynamic. Developing an ecocentric ethic has so far been either a prescriptive job (an 'ought to') following cognitive recognition, or a process of an ever-expanding self (Naess), without much attention to the way such expanding happens, that is, what kind of understanding of the role of shifts of meaning can be developed, in order to make ecocentric ethics a more dynamic option.

The way these gaps can be researched has a lot to do with the way lived experience is captured. Being familiar with and interested in lived experience is necessary, through the capacity to not jump to conclusions. In phenomenology

that is crucial, as the origin of phenomenology is exactly that, trying to capture 'things the way they are'. Husserl as the father of phenomenology emphasised the value of postponing one's judgement (reproducing existing interpretation or judgements) based on his notion of bracketing or epoche (Toadvine, 2009). In the psycho-social community of practitioners this capacity resonates with the term 'negative capability' coined by Keats, in the psycho-social context more often used as the capacity to hold in one's mind more than one meaning at the same time. Doing research with people leading Nature practices will help to understand how interviewees that work directly with Nature experience this hiding of the other-than-human or the splitting between Nature and culture. I have chosen to interview leaders of Nature practices. In having done so I found people that demonstrated to be entrepreneurial with respect to their Nature experiences. It is with reference to their entrepreneurial role acting towards other humans and nature that aspects of leadership are part of the research questions.

It is expected that doing this research, insights can be acquired into shifts of meaning, to what extent there are decisive moments of meaning making, or what it is in general that supports or hinders meaning making from relating to Nature to be integrated into individual practices and mainstream culture. While looking into these questions, it is also expected that the research can help to critically comment on and point at implications for the sustainability discourse in general. Last but not least, it will also provide an opportunity to discuss psycho-social research methods themselves.

Here are five underlying objectives, formulated as research questions, the project set out to answer.

1. What can be said from this study about the development of ecocentric ethics and leadership in the context of Nature practices?
2. What can be said about how leaders of 'Nature practice' navigate culture and Nature?

3. What constitutes a shift of meaning in relation to Nature and how is that consistent with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception, ontology and epistemology of Nature?

4. What is the potential for psycho-social study of the lived experience of 'relating to Nature' within a dominant culture in which Nature is split from culture?

5. What are some important implications for the current sustainability discourse?

1.4 the structure of the thesis

The structure of the thesis is as follows. After the literature review, the position of the study (ontology and epistemology) is highlighted, as well as its design and methods of inquiry. Subsequent chapters give insights from the interviews and their interpretation, followed by discussion, recommendations and conclusion. The appendices give a description of discourses for each of the practices that people have been invited from to participate in the study, as well as the ethical approval, an account of the researcher's journey and a sample of thematic analysis from a transcript.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

If psycho-social research is seen to cover the psychological and social on the one hand and the unconscious at the other, there is not a lot of literature to be found on relating to nature. But then it is exactly these two dimensions that give direction, while I have added a third element namely that of 'shift of meaning'. A shift of meaning is by default the interest of psychology as a transformative practice.

First, I have examined the way in which we have thought about Nature and our relations to Nature and how this has changed over time. Secondly, I have investigated the literature about the individual psyche, the self and relating to Nature. I start off with literature on the self in general and then add literature on the self and Nature. Thirdly I have drawn on literature that focusses on the unconscious as a source of knowing. The study of the unconscious – in psycho-social research – so far has been mainly about humans and humans in relation to other humans. In this part of the literature reviews the relation to Nature is added to the more general literature about the unconscious. Fourth is literature on identity as, it is bridging the individual, the group and the social and material world. I am interested in that literature (on identity) and what it says about our relation to nature. Emphasising the unconscious in this study requires a specific research design. The design of the study and who was invited, will be discussed in chapter 2. A disclaimer about the literature review is necessary, as I have not included the vast amount of literature on sustainability, nor on indigenous perspectives (although I make specific reference to some), nor the ecofeminist or intergenerational perspectives, among others. Also, literature on Nature conservation, esthetics, ecosystem services or other areas are not covered. I have focussed on only those that I felt were most relevant for my own research.
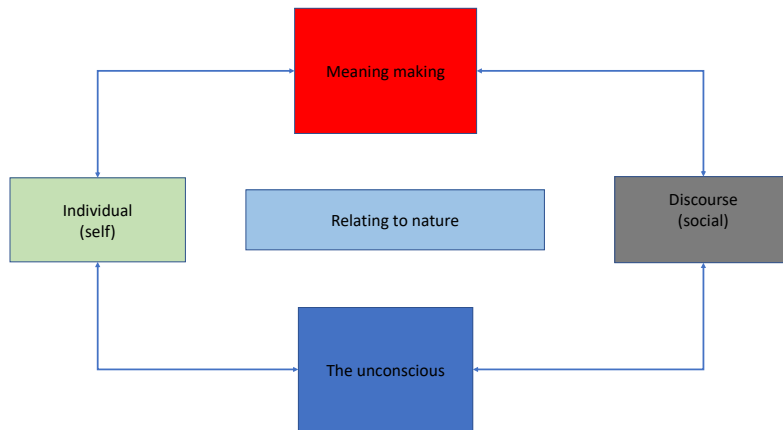
Figure 1. Literature review frame

2.1 thinking about nature

The literature review starts with a closer look at the shifting meaning, when Environment becomes Nature.

The discourse of relating to the environment and Nature the way most of the literature shows, is not the same as looking into lived experience and how that has impacted shifts of meaning with a wider audience. What I want to discuss now is literature that demonstrates the impact on the discourse of relating to Nature, following a historic overview. That means I will now discuss some narratives that are presented as narratives situated in time, while highlighting lived experience. This literature shows particular individuals impacting thinking in society, or being the spokesperson, or seen as the instigators of shifts of meaning, from the start of the dominance of the Cartesian perspective to modern times of now living in the geological era of mankind, the Anthropocene.

The Revolt of Nature[9] by Philipp Blom (2017) is a history of how Nature played a role in the development of modern Europe. Andrea Wulf's *The Invention of Nature* (2016) is the story of Alexander von Humboldt, who became famous for bringing samples, artefacts, pictures, maps of Nature from places far from Europe.

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[9] The original Dutch title is 'De opstand van de natuur'.

Silent Spring by Rachel Carson (1962) doesn't need much introduction. She stopped the production and use of DDT in the US and beyond. *The voice of the Earth, an exploration of Ecopsychology by* Theodore Roszak is a foundational analysis of Ecopsychology, whereas Roszak himself has been such a leading figure influencing environmental and ecopsychological thinking. *The Eye of the Crocodile* by Val Plumwood (2012) reflects on having been attacked by a crocodile, barely surviving. Timothy Morton's *Dark Ecology* (2016) is a philosophy of the Anthropocene, exploring a different way of being ecological.

The Revolt of Nature

The German historian Philipp Blom shows how climate change was a driver of the political and socioeconomic changes of the Renaissance. Harvests lost to climate change threatened food security, changing the culture of the Netherlands from one of slow agriculture to meet domestic need to production creating (financial) surplus. A new group of merchants accumulated wealth and power, without really understanding the causes of climate change.[10] Focusing on financial gain, they knew how to find opportunities to prosper through trade and use of technology (including using force), and managed to do so at the cost of many communities overseas, as well as many farming communities in the Netherlands itself (Blom, 2017, p. 103). Blom's analysis shows some merchants taking matters into their own hands (escaping the doctrine of the church as it was, as part of the Protestant Reformation). But I am not referring to Blom's book because of religious reform, I am interested in Blom, because he connects what happened with the birth of the natural sciences, led by Descartes and others. Descartes' ideas about Nature were instrumental in driving technological innovations that supported mercantile accumulation of wealth. Blom's story is not showing Descartes[11] changing the world in isolation from behind his desk. It is a story of context, where cause and effect of social change are hard to know, but where Nature, and human

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[10] In the middle of the 16th century, temperatures were suddenly several degrees lower than the centuries before and after. Some hypothesise that the cause was the introduction of disease in South America, which caused a dramatic drop in population and therefore less pressure on forest systems. These systems then took more carbon for a while, hence the dropping of temperatures.
[11] Who lived in the Netherlands for some time.

interaction with Nature, were decisive as 'the small ice age' triggered new socio-economic developments, supported by new ideas and believes.

The Invention of Nature

Jumping forward two centuries, Andrea Wulf tells the story of Alexander von Humboldt. His travel stories and collections mesmerised people. Von Humboldt was friends with Goethe, and both were instrumental in the start of German Romanticism. Von Humboldt's way of knowing about Nature was all embracing. Above all he went into Nature himself and made his observations and discoveries accordingly. He made drawings, notes and brought many artefacts home from his travels. Wulf shows evidence of Von Humboldt's participative ways of studying Nature (and cultures) having influence on Darwin, Thoreau, Perkins Marsh, the latter was probably the first to write on human destruction of Nature, and Haeckel, who coined the term 'ecology'. John Muir (founder of the Sierra Club) said he wanted to be 'a von Humboldt' (Wulf, p. 334). It is also true that many elements of the natural world and characteristic elements of earth's geography bear the name Humboldt as they are named after the man. Von Humboldt's holistic way of studying Nature – his way of practicing phenomenology - got lost when natural science developed into fragmented, specialised and detached ways of knowing. But Wulf shows us that longing for Nature and for understanding it in its entirety has never entirely disappeared; a longing finding greater expression today[12].

Silent Spring

At the time, *Silent Spring* was published in 1962, natural science had completely developed into silos. Each silo influenced human conduct in its own way, but from a laboratory perspective. Contrary to that, Carson went back to carefully observe and study in the field, establishing that DDT kills all insects and doesn't break down quickly. As a marine biologist, she had a keen understanding of relations and dependencies in Nature's web. Her writing was refused more than once by

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[12] I think attention for Nature in literature (fiction) and art has shown to be growing recently.

publishers, until she published several articles in the New York Times. In the last chapter of *Silent Spring* she uses her imagination to sketch a city where all life, including human, is wiped out because of DDT. As she knew who she was up against, she included 55 pages of references in the book and a list of names of influential scientists approving its content. DDT was eventually banned from the market. The shift of meaning (or more than one) here was in a new recognition that chemicals impact in unexpected ways – because of the interrelations of everything in Nature. It can also be seen as impacting on the understanding of Nature in governance (J.F. Kennedy read the book and referred to it) and as impacting the general public, creating awareness, and mobilising people to question governance and corporations. Much has been written about Carson (Lear, 1997, Lytle, 2007, Kisfalvi and Maguire, 2011), often emphasising her personal history and her love for Nature (Kisfalvi & Maguire, 2011, p.161, Lytle, 2007).[13]

The voice of the Earth

Theodore Roszak's book 'The voice of the Earth, an exploration of Ecopsychology'(Roszak, 2001), is in the narrative literature review because of two reasons, one is because he started to talk about Eco-psychology, the second is that in introducing Eco-psychology Roszak has had great influence on the discourse on the environment and Nature. The book uses Freud who introduced the unconscious as a way of addressing the culture and its problems on mental health during his time. In the same Roszak makes the analysis of a culture that has lost its way of relating to Nature. Roszak wanted to provide ideas and guidance to find Nature back. Since the book Ecopsychology has become a strand within psychology as he makes such a strong case for connecting ecology to psychology. Psychology should be more than 'the talking cure' of individuals to help adjust them fitting back into dominant culture. Instead ecopsychology aims to restore the relation to Nature. Roszak has had great influence on the environmental

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[13] This is similar to what is said by Wulf about Von Humboldt. They both would have fitted with the research frame, to be interviewed for this research.

movement in terms of showing a deeper understanding beyond strong campaigning against environmental injustice. Part of his argument is discussing a new cosmology that puts mind into Nature, aiming to enchant society to rethink its relation to Nature, no longer putting humans at the stage as the only ones that can think, but alternatively stating that humans are part of a thinking universe.

The Eye of the Crocodile

Val Plumwood was canoeing in the Australian outback when she was suddenly attacked by a crocodile. *The Eye of the Crocodile* (2012) is her book about the experience. The flash of consciousness she had during the attack brought great clarity and moved her away from the Western view of humans as the exception on this planet (and consequently destroying it). Facing the inevitable reality of death and dying:

> In the vivid intensity of those last moments, when great, toothed jaws descend upon you, it can HIT YOU LIKE A THUNDERCLAP that you were completely wrong about it all—not only about what your own personal life meant, but about what life and death themselves actually mean (Plumwood, 2012, p. 11).

Plumwood tries to answer the question of why she took herself into danger. She finds a partial answer in her experience of growing up in an outback, though a different one. She thinks she could have known (cognitively, but also in using her intuition), that this wilderness, where she now was, was different. She also reflects on why she had such great difficulty seeing herself as food for another creature. She formulates several criticisms of Western thinking (of which she knows she is part) for being anti-ecological and primarily for putting humans outside Nature. Plumwood has great influence on environmentalists and contributed a lot to eco-philosophy and eco-psychology.

Dark Ecology

In *Dark Ecology* (2016), Morton describes how humans developed a way of dominating ecology that now turns out to be catastrophic, introducing the word 'agrilogistics'. Other words he uses are ecognosis (ecological awareness that everything is related to everything else), subscendence (the whole is not more, but less than the sum of its parts), uncanny (something totally intimate weirdly jutting into your world). By turning to a different kind of (dark) ecology, a new way of appreciating ecology appears, one that is intertwined, with twists and loops of complexity and crises that appear paradoxical beyond human dominant logic. For instance, viruses and bacteria get much worse ïf you try to get rid of them" (Morton, 2016, p. 91). Trying to be part of (dark) ecology is the challenge. Morton makes other suggestions for changing the dominant logic of agrilogistics, like decoupling 'need' from 'want' (unlimited consumerism) and putting quality of existence above preferring sheer existence (as we keep encouraging an ever-growing number of people). Morton states that the logic of agrilogistics also applies linear solutions to ecological complexity, like proposing to shoot chemicals in the air to block solar heating or building more nuclear power plants to meet the energy demand of our ever growing, people focused societies. Instead he proposes to focus on our interdependency with Nature as an actor. He doesn't believe in 'trying to become better people', but instead proposes the development of ecognosis, connecting to silliness, laughter and play as part of addressing and solving issues.

The books by Blom, Wulf and Carson illustrate shifts in the meaning of Nature over time. The authors appear to call on society to become more self-aware and hence address the problems it has created in its relations to Nature in the hope that this may lead to restoration. Stopping aggressive mercantilism, making natural science more integrated, being more aware of humans as part of the food chain or banning the use of chemicals like DDT – are pinpointed as 'the problems' to be solved. With Roszak and Plumwood a more fundamental criticism appears, that looks critically at Western culture itself. But Morton describes the next level of criticism, in pointing at the need to look at the problem from a completely different perspective a different cultural reality. A reality of being intertwined to

the extent there is no going back or easy repair. This I see as an important statement about Nature and time. There is no easy way out, no guidance as to how to safeguard the future, other than understanding the level of impact (better maybe to call it destruction) and being open to Nature's responses. Morton introduces a truly relational and all-embracing position. Such openness cannot be expected from the agrilogistic mindset. I think certain groups of people already experience 'not knowing'. For instance, those already hit by climate change have lost everything, not only their material belongings, but also their mind as their culture can no longer be relied upon. Now, seeing this on a global scale is unprecedented, and Morton addresses the question of how to think our way through it. He offers a new series of concepts, fitting ecological experience.

The books provide a historical perspective on meaning making about Nature. People inherit both 'real' Nature (Nature in its concrete state, as energy dissipation, diversity, non-human animal behaviour, etc.) as well as Nature 'in the mind' (cultural Nature, ideas about Nature, awareness about Nature). It is with Morton's book that there can be no misunderstanding any more about the need to take such a position of looking at Nature in the mind and our collective 'Nature in the mind'.

This section helps in several ways. First it sets the scene for understanding the role of natural science (born out of Descartes' powerful thinking as to how to 'objectify' Nature). Such thinking enabled Western culture to emerge from its direct experience of Nature. Following Morton, however, the invention of agriculture - as in agrilogistics – should make us careful of thinking that this decoupling from the direct experience of Nature started with Descartes and his peers. Secondly, Nature itself played a role through the rapid cooling of the climate in that era of Descartes' lifetime. Blom's work shows how traders and bankers created a social system that further emphasised this decoupling from our direct experience of Nature, with concepts of ownership and systematic trading of resources (externalising costs that come with destruction) on a scale never seen before. It was a move away from working with Nature in ecologically sustainable

ways – where people live from extracting Nature's surplus, while still 'being part of Nature'. Protestantism and the decline of feudalism were part of these changes in culture. Thirdly relational thinking was still an option (despite technical and financial reform gaining further global momentum), as Wulf showed through the story of von Humboldt's success in explaining Nature, emphasising at the same time how Western culture appreciated the adventure and knowledge, but no longer was interested in integration of such knowledge. Fourth, the shift towards ecological thinking – which is relational thinking – returned with Carson, showing the immediate need for restorative action. Fifth, Morton makes the link to psycho-social thinking (the link to what goes on beneath the surface). His concepts and language point to systemic thinking, but also to unconscious thinking, making the attempt to become aware and explore the 'unknown' that we are part of. It is a process that Nature can help to facilitate if we make the attempt to re-connect to it. According to Morton, such a re-connect requires acceptance, awareness and the development a different language, leading to a different culture based on Nature having agency – just as we have seen emerging with Merleau-Ponty's conception of Nature having meaning in itself.

The fact that information by itself doesn't do the job of bringing about change, will be addressed further in the next two sections of the literature review which focus on the individual and the self and the unconscious.

2.2 the self in relation to nature

In the stories from the previous section (e.g., Plumwood's), people themselves come out being different from who they were – because of being in Nature. What, then, are we talking about when thinking about self and Nature?

Although the idea of self is a central part of Western thinking and language, it is not that easy to comprehend what the word refers to. The above short summary of human engaging with Nature over time could be seen as expressions of self and stories about someone's identity in time. Morton, in *Dark Ecology*, states:

Abjection has been transfigured into what Irigaray calls nearness, a pure givenness in which something is so near that one cannot have it – in fact that obviously also applies to one's self (Morton, 2016, p. 158).

In his analysis of the Anthropocene, Morton questions not only the relation to Nature (that suddenly is no longer acting as a reliable entity, always providing for us), but also 'who we are and how we are living?' The Anthropocene in that respect is hard to grasp, as it no longer allows us to keep Nature at a distance, which means we cannot keep ourselves at a distance. Morton raises questions about the self, he shows how the context is shifting, taking away the background that humans thought to be stable and a base from which to use their 'selves' to develop their identities from. But that background is fast changing now (because of the uncertainties of global warming and biodiversity loss), so what does that do to selves and identities? It is immediately interesting when trying to capture the self, as in Western thinking it needs to be distinguished from identity. But as we will see later (in the Ontology and Epistemology section) understanding the self is shifting and becoming intertwined with other selves as well as intertwined with non-human others (Nature). However, I am not there yet and I will first explore the concept of self in general, then in relation to Nature, before later on when constructing the research frame, the overall 'problematique' of relating to nature will be further introduced and how I chose to study it.

2.2.1 notions on the self

In psychoanalysis, the self is the outcome of a developmental process. Otto Kernberg, for instance, speaks of a learning and adaptive process (Kernberg, 1984). Donald Winnicott observed the possibility of developing two different kinds of selves, a true self or a false self. Winnicott however restricted his theory to the human environment, not the non-human environment (Winnicott, 1965, 1990). The psychoanalyst Harold Searles discussed the role of the environment in self-development, arguing that a healthy development of self is as much a differentiation process from other human beings (usually the mother), as it is a

differentiation from the 'non-human' environment. In fact, he argued that episodes of being one with Nature can be seen to occur in patients suffering from psychoses and schizophrenia (Searles, 1960). Searles also stated that the natural sciences provide knowledge about Nature. The psychologically healthily developed person only has to take notice of those findings (Searles, 1960). He seemed to point at the natural sciences as the authority when it comes to knowing about Nature[14]. This is a strange position as one comes to think of it, as somehow a capable individual is expected to handle life's matters and choices him or herself, but should leave matters of ecological wellbeing and survival and relating to Nature to the experts.

Whereas Winnicott refers to 'true' and 'false' self as diagnostic categories, Thomas Ogden explores a capacity of the self, namely, to express itself in different ways through the voice (Ogden, 2001). The self now relates to a concept within a context, a relational concept, beyond a clinical verdict.

Anthony Elliot describes the self as the control mechanism through which the individual and the social world intersect (Elliot, 2004). By looking at our own thoughts, feelings and attitudes we can interpret the actions of others. In that process, we (our 'selves') create an identity and negotiate identities as part of social groups (Elliot, 2004, p.30). This is also stressed by Peter Bertocci, who argues that each person is influenced (adapting, learning) in his or her unique way. Bertocci stresses agency but within limitations (Bertocci, 1979). He describes those limitations as both real in a general sense and real in a psychological sense of the individual knowing and wanting, also defending. Bertocci describes the person as 'selective'. In his view, experiences add to the forming of the personality, in relation to previous experiences. For that to happen, the person remembers strong experiences he or she had before. That is the way of knowing who one is. One experiences a particular thought, sensation, emotion, or want as 'similar' to one experienced before, and then the experience is recognized as part

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[14] Searles, by the way, was not against relating to Nature, as he acknowledged the benefits of going into Nature and not being afraid of it.

of one's 'self'. In this way, the person is a knowing, wanting, defending and becoming person (Bertocci, 1979). This description could be helpful for understanding non-human animals as well, in the strivings or behaviour of a non-human animal being a wanting, becoming individual.

Naomi Ellemers and colleagues further explore the self in social context (Ellemers et al., 2002). In their model, several levels of threat to personal identity in relation to the level of group commitment are distinguished. For instance, if a group one belongs to is threatened, one tends to want to move out of the group to protect one's identity. Or if one wants to belong to a group – that one is less worried about if it will threaten one's identity - it becomes very important to be accepted by this group. Now, all these insights into the self lead to one question. If the self (or person in Bertocci's concepts) is all about knowing, wanting and becoming, then knowing, wanting and becoming of what? In social human context, this might be obvious (like being socially accepted or developing social status), but would the same hold true in relating to Nature? What is at stake for the self when relating to Nature?

2.2.2 the self in eco-psychology

Moving into self and Nature, I start by referring to the concept of the ecological self as introduced by the philosopher Arne Naess (1988). Naess talks about the self and the idea of nearness. As the self orients towards others in building identity, Naess states that there is a path towards others 'further and further away' from where one started as a child.

> Higher level unity is experienced: from identifying with 'one's nearest,' higher level unities are created through circles of friends, local communities, tribes, compatriots, races, humanity, life, and, ultimately unity with the supreme whole (Naess, 1993, p. 30).

He conceives of the ecological self as the inherent longing to develop an ever increasing and expanding sense of nearness. Such an ecological self is considered transpersonal. Fox discusses Naess extensively in his wide overview of ecocentric ethics, arguing Naess to be unique among ecocentric ethicists, because of his notion of the transpersonal (Fox, 1995). Davis also focusses on the transpersonal in ecopsychology (Davis, 1998). Christian Diehm criticises Naess, arguing that Naess's ecological self can only become 'transpersonal' if it denies differences between people and between people and Nature (Diehm, 2002).

This issue of self as it is seen by psychologists or by eco-psychologists is somewhat unresolved. Phenomenologists such as Tim Ingold seem more at ease in reflecting lived experience of connection, being less concerned about whether the self is capable of being transpersonal at the same time.

> In the open world persons and things relate not as closed forms but by virtue of their common immersion in the generative fluxes of the medium - in wind and weather. Fundamental to life is the process of respiration, by which organisms continually disrupt any boundary between earth and sky, binding substance and medium together in forging their own growth and movement (Ingold, 2007, p. 19).

Ingold addresses the everyday assumptions that could be said to be key in the connection to Nature, and how these assumptions can be taken for granted. What is taken for granted, or repressed, very often gets pushed into the domain of the (collective) unconscious as unwanted, bad elements. Eco-psychology literature stresses how the state of connectedness with the environment, in other words, our being with Nature, is largely getting lost. Peter Chatalos even speaks of systemic or ecological autism (Chatalos, 2002, p. 40).

This section addresses the research questions in several ways. The thinkers cited above show that identity formation is influenced by Nature, despite how extensively modern life is organised away from it (e.g., as the cliché goes, some

people think milk comes from the supermarket). This leads to a more fundamental question concerning the self in Western culture, within which it is possible to identify more than one orientation between the self and Nature. On the one hand, a 'neutral' detachment from Nature is valued, while on the other, many do want to be connected, valuing the self as 'part of Nature'.

Another way of looking at this is what Morton does, when he talks about weirdness in his analysis of the Anthropocene. He uses the term weird in conjunction with loops, because ecological and biological systems are loops (Morton, 2016, p. 6). I argue that it is fundamental to identity forming and the self, or the person and the personality (using Bertocci's terms) that both are affected by the Anthropocene. It is that which makes the Anthropocene such a difficult experience.

I think these combined orientations can be ontologically resolved by going to Merleau-Ponty - who I will discuss further in the ontology and epistemology section - who is more radical than Naess. While Naess is criticized for his Gestalt ontology, where the self is striving to nearness, reaching out ever more (others, Nature, universe), but losing notions of difference between the individual self and others (Diehm, 2002), Merleau-Ponty's ontology of Nature puts meaning into Nature, Nature itself having meaning. In this way, it could be stated that Nature and all the different actors in it is 'a collection of selves', as Nature and the vast array of actors in it are 'knowing, wanting and becoming entities' (Bertocci, 1979).

2.2.3 the embodied self

The complexity of Merleau-Ponty's ontology is that it understands the self as intertwined with the self of Nature, as much as a person's self is intertwined with the selves of other humans. The intertwining with Nature happens through the senses, through perception (Abram, 1988). Abram says Merleau-Ponty begins then, by identifying the experiencing 'self' with the bodily organism (Abram, 1996,

p. 45). Abram talks of *"the body's silent conversation with things"* (Abram, 1996, p. 49) and of *"perception as participation"* (ibid, p. 57).

Aparicio Parry formulates the importance of consciousness and how it has become split:

> In the past century, quantum theory opened the conventional separation between observer and observed, but mainstream psychology failed to adapt. Ecopsychology, through re-establishing connection to Nature, is a movement in the right direction of dissolving the dichotomous split in consciousness (Parry, 2016).

A similar argument has been developed by Kidner who I have mentioned already, stating that human's capacity to develop abstract language has moved mankind away from Nature (Kidner, 2012).

Keith Tudor shows how elements of being alive or organismic as he calls it, can help us to think further. He stresses two points:

> As such and given the qualities of the organism, which include being holistic, experiential, concrescent (growing together), differentiating, co-regulatory, interdependent, and directional, the organism appears to be a more accurate concept (than that of the self) for thinking about the world beyond individual human – and non-human – beings or organisms.

Further on the same page:

> This repositioning of the self is particularly significant for our current concern as it contributes to the challenge to individualistic notions of human beings and the relocation of us as beings living in a larger relational and ecological context (Tudor, 2014, p. 319).

Tudor also points at another element in his argument that eco-psychology contributes to a humanistic psychology, quoting Andras Angyal:

The biosphere, meaning the realm or sphere of life, in order to convey the holistic entity that includes both individual and environment, "not as interacting parts, not as constituents which have independent existence, but as aspects of a single reality which can only be separated by abstraction" (quoted in Tudor, 2014, p.319).

Tudor thus promotes a framework that does not even have a self at the centre.

2.2.4 the self in indigenous culture; semiotic selves

Through personal communication, I understood that the Alifuru people of the Molokan Islands do not have separate words for culture and Nature. What a self could mean in indigenous culture is ethnographically analysed by more than one anthropologist. In his study that he gave the title 'How forests think?', Kohn (Kohn, 2013) builds a multi-layered picture. For Runa people it is crucial to build a self, to be a subject, but that is considered equally true for the animals in the forest. Being a subject, operating from self is crucial for survival, because if one risks being an object, death is close by. Like animals becoming prey more easily if not reading the signs of the other animals and the forest. Kohn argues being a self is not similar to being an isolated detached person or category. He argues selves to be semiotic selves. (Kohn, 2013, p. 25). Runa people are scarce with names as the point of a self is not to promote individual distinction, it is the capacity to read other selves and be connected. All selves are connected and need to read others as selves. That is the number one condition for survival and the ability to hunt and be successful in foraging in the forest depends on it, according to Kohn in his observations of the Runa people. The whole Runa people culture is built around communication with animals and with the masters, the spirits that hierarchically oversee everything. In the Runa culture dreams and using hallucinogenic substances, are all in service of communication. A self can only exist if it explores and fully develops its semiotic capacity. Its culture is fully developed to help Runa people to do this as it is the way to be alive in the forest being part of the semiotic of the forest. Being a self in Runa culture is not possible if not at the same time being part of the many other (semiotic) selves in the forest. This is how Kohn has

developed his 'beyond human' anthropology to include the non-human. Latour has argued that Kohn, in using Peirce's theory on semiotics, loses some of his ability to introduce semiotics into the realities of (Western) disciplines, leaving little room for negotiation between 'cultures' (Latour, 2014). Nevertheless, using Kohn's description adds to the discussion about Western ideas about the self and how understanding the self can become relational when emphasis is laid upon including non-human others.

2.3 the unconscious in relation to nature

As we saw earlier David Kidner has offered a political analysis of the psyche and our relation to Nature, showing psychology in its position following the cultural split between culture and Nature. He states that psychology promotes this split, by positioning humans above Nature, as if humans produce Nature (Kidner, 2001). An argument that can also be found with Metzner (Metzner, 1995). The literature so far discusses the emotional aspects of relating to Nature, but it is lacking empirical data with reference to lived experience. At the same time psycho-social research mainly looks at individuals within their social 'environments', those environments almost completely being urban and detached from Nature. However, psycho-social studies do research the unconscious (in terms of individual and collective affect, feelings, emotions and undisclosed assumptions) and therefore can shed further light on relating to Nature and its psychological implications, like denial. For instance, knowing based on information from sciences does not seem to influence people to act and address environmental problems (Weintrobe, 2013). Lertzman's in depth psycho-social study shows that an affective form of engagement with a random group of people in an industrially polluted area helps to understand that people are concerned and do care, but operate from a constant state of melancholia about what is lost (Lertzman, 2015). My study is similar in a sense I also am eager to find something that is hidden. In her case it is looking beyond apathy and finding melancholia.

It is only recently that psychoanalysis and research based on psycho-social research methods have started to look at the unconscious in relation to people and Nature. For instance, contributions to this field can be found in a recent volume edited by Paul Hoggett (Hoggett, 2019). Although the topic was raised by Harold Searles (Searles 1960), not much further work has been done. At this point, the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty is illuminating. Although not a psychoanalyst, he showed that, as well as human to human relations being largely unconscious, equally so are the relations of humans with their body and with non-human others and Nature (Merleau-Ponty, 1995; Toadvine, 2009). If the relation to Nature is largely unconscious, then what is its relation to meaning making and in turn the relation to language?

In psychoanalysis as described by Ferro and Civitarese, language expressing meaning comes from a meeting between people engaged in a therapeutic conversation (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015, p. 162), whereas in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of perception, meaning comes first through a bodily shift (Gendlin, 2003). This means two things. First, there is a link between psychic functioning (representational unconscious) and perception (nonrepresentational unconscious). Second, humans process preconscious 'knowing' such that it can become conscious to find its way into expression and human language.

Ferro and Civitarese write about Merleau-Ponty's philosophy as a precursor of the theory of the analytic field (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015).

> Present day psychoanalysis is called upon to take account of intermediacy and intersubjectivism, of the (bodily) forms of implicit memory and of the inaccessible or fetal and hence unrepressed, unconscious. Not everything can be traced back to perception (as we naively imagine) and to consciousness, because there is a fleshy 'perception' that is not representational – a level of sense that can be described as semiotic but not yet semantic (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015, p. 153).

According to them, Merleau-Ponty is primarily interested in the background of intercorporeal, preverbal, or pre-symbolic 'pre-communication' that preceded and then always accompanies linguistic or symbolic communication (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015, p. 155). They argue that this is a different unconscious from Freud's unconscious, in that Freud's is a "representational repressed and dynamic unconsciousness"[15] (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015, p. 155). According to them, Merleau-Ponty "must take the credit for having been the first to demolish the idea of the isolated subject" (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015, p. 159). The concept of counter transference, for example, is not genuinely intersubjective because the analyst's subjectivity is seen as the place in which the patient 'creates' that phenomenon (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015, p. 160). The analyst as a person remains outside it. For Merleau-Ponty, the subject does not arrive, but is "born out of inter-subjectivity" (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015, p. 160). Further, they argue that:

> although the analytic field (as the intersubjective area created by analyst and analysand) could be said not to exist outside the two minds of patient (client) and analyst, that is actually not so. It also includes everything 'that furnishes the place where the physical persons are situated, as a possible source of stimuli, as well as the more or less subtle actions performed by each in order to force the others to accept projective identifications'" (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015, p. 161).

And further on they state that:

> Things too are invested with projections, transferences and magic thought. One will of course react differently to inanimate objects than to a person, because in the former case one's specific reactivity to a fellow human being is lacking – a reactivity that we now know to be based also on specific neurophysiological functions (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015, p. 162).

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[15] Which makes me remember the independent psychoanalysts Faulkes and Winnicott who - as pointed out by Lita Crociani-Windland - are not putting so much stress on pathology in their thinking as compared to other psychoanalysts (Crociani-Windland, 2018).

As a consequence, oscillation between symmetry and asymmetry in the analytic field is a description of the analyst and patient relation, but it can be a description of relation to non-human others as well (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015).

> Interpretation is no longer directed to the patient to modify something in him/her, but instead to improving the narrative capacity of the field, understood as an un/conscious narration a deux (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015, p. 164).

However, adding non-human aspects in psychoanalysis is not widely practiced or studied yet. For instance, Benjamin, who introduces the concept of the third (Benjamin, 2004, Crociani-Windland, 2018), does not go as far as linking inter subjectivity to the very concept of 'flesh' that Merleau-Ponty has introduced, where inter-subjectivity includes the non-human other. Crociani-Windland draws on Henri Bergson, Wilfred Bion and neuroscience to illustrate how important it is to work with affective and qualitative aspects of mind and body. Through these authors and reference to ideas from neuroscience she asks our attention to not only look into "[q]uantitative and material aspects of life" (Crociani-Windland, 2018, p.34). Through referring again to Bergson as well as Deleuze to point at "[t]he imperative to enquire into what could be termed as either unconscious or preconscious aspects of reality", she paves the way to intra subjective, that is relational ways of inquiry. Clearly the body (nature) is included in her thinking, although as she further develops notions of the third (re Benjamin), non-human others (Nature) are not mentioned explicitly.

In moving to phenomenology, Gendlin very explicitly introduces the body as a source of knowing. His book *Focusing* describes a therapy method that uses 'bodily knowing', for which he invented the phrase 'felt sense' (Gendlin, 2003, p. 10). According to Gendlin, a felt sense is not just there, it must form (Gendlin, 2003). "You have to know how to let it form by attending inside your body. When it comes, it is at first unclear, fuzzy. By certain steps it can come into focus and

also change. A felt sense is the body's sense of a particular problem or situation."
(Gendlin, 2003, p. 10)

Gendlin states that the extent to which clients refer to their bodily-felt experience during therapy correlates with 'successful' outcomes as defined by various measures (Gendlin et al. 1968). Clients who can pause and 'check' their words and ideas with the bodily sense of their issue remain grounded in their actual experience – they sense a bodily-felt response when they express how they really live a particular situation (Gendlin, 2003). Gendlin developed *Focusing* as a protocol (a guide) to assist more people to gain direct access to their lived meanings in this bodily felt way (Barnett and Madison, 2012). This is where Gendlin builds on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology.

The dynamic aspects of relating to Nature and the shift from the presymbolic to consciousness are difficult to put into language as they are part of lived experience, as noted above. Wilfred Bion emphasized this through his saying "thoughts are looking for a thinker" (Bion, 2003). This reminds us of Merleau-Ponty making it possible to see the brain being a mere note taker (Liberman, 2007). It also reminds us - again through Merleau-Ponty - that meaning making is culturally seen as belonging to the individual 'thinker' while actually it is a relational activity, which seems to be Merleau-Ponty's emphasis that we can also find with Bion. Bion commented that (the) meaning is already there as part of the collective unconscious but just needs an individual to give it language.[16] Secondly, if shifts of meaning originate from a pre-reflective knowing through the body, then in a field of interaction with human and non-human others (or wider Nature), spoken and written language are not the only media that need to be looked at. For instance, Egyptian hieroglyph language uses pictures of natural phenomena and animals (human and non-human). Again, David Kidner needs to

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[16] However, in current group-analytic thinking, there is emphasis on both the collective and the individual unconscious (Redman, 2018).

be mentioned here as he has written about human culture with emphasis on symbolic language and the very capacity of humans to be symbolic beings. In his analysis he puts emphasis on humans being symbolic beings, preoccupied with language and how such capacity plays a role in splitting mind from body (Descartes) leading to cultures that lost a living relation to Nature. In that process paying attention to Nature as a source of signals, got lost (Kidner, 2012). David Abram suggests that cultures that invented and use alphabets are more prone to developing values in favour of exceptionalism, becoming preoccupied with separating human life from Nature (Abram, 1996). This reminds us of Scheler's theory on human values, where he argues that in a hierarchy of values, Western society has allowed life values to be dominated by utility values reflected in the dominance of industrialism and capitalism (Gunderson, 2017).

Perception can be resisted (Toadvine, 2009), and not only at the level of perception itself (where Nature is 'the unknown other' outside the immediate grasp of human thinking and language), but also because of the social and cultural norms and expectations in everyday life. This is exactly the area of expertise and experience of psycho analysis. Do cultural norms help explain why people don't read the messages of increasing frequency of hurricanes, floods, droughts? Are the cultural norms and individual and collective dealings with identity why people also cannot see the intricate web like relations affected by change in one factor (for instance, when 'just' one species goes extinct)? I referred above to the extent of human denial as Weintrobe points at in analysing responses to climate change (Weintrobe, 2013). But there are more examples of such defences. For instance, Paul Graig and colleagues researched ethics and environmental values in policy making. As they interviewed advisors to governments active in climate change negotiations, they found that the advisors kept their own values separate from their professional role and action, even when these values conflicted with the advice they believed was being asked of them (Graig, Glasser, Kempton, 1993, p. 137).

In this section I have elaborated on the need to study the unconscious in order to find clues about why Nature is hidden and what it takes to bring it back into the open of our collective consciousness and culture in ways that could be acceptable and helpful.

The literature examined historical shifts of meaning about Nature, making it possible to see how Nature became a separate category in human consciousness and how human investigative methods stemming from a Cartesian view increased the pace at which Nature was put at a distance, allowing humans to, for example, see themselves as outside the food chain (Plumwood). As 'Nature' is showing itself (through global warming, and species extinction), Cartesian thinking is critically exposed through phenomenology (Husserl, Merleau-Ponty) and recently further problematised in critical analysis of the Anthropocene (Morton).

The shifts of meaning about Nature in history also show the role of time, as new generations inherit states of Nature (for example, the number of species or areas of 'wild' Nature that are left) as well as cultural ideas about Nature. Still, each generation lives in multiple time loops of past and present. In the current era, individual humans are thought not guilty of ecological problems, but responsible because of what is known about the collective human impact (Morton, 2016). With awareness of Nature and its dynamic, confusion arises as to what kind of knowing should be followed, e.g., is geoengineering the solution? The complexity of being intertwined with Nature and acknowledgement of being part of Nature emphasise the urgency of redefining the relation between culture and Nature. At the same time, current social organisation of our relation to Nature resists redefining and subsequent innovation.

The literature on the self and identity shows different theories (Winnicott, Ogden) on the self relating to others. Including 'relating to Nature' adds more elements to any theory of the self (Searles, Naess). Some literature on self even speaks of the body being an alternative conduit for thinking of the self (Tudor). Negotiations of identity and wider cultural influences on identity are demonstrated through

recent cases of people experiencing Nature's agency (Skogen). Including non-Western views on self and identity will add to understanding 'relating to Nature', as for instance Kohn shows how the emphasis given by the Runa people to developing semiotic selves can be a universal necessity for survival of both humans and non-humans.

The literature on the unconscious highlights psycho-analytic thinking about a collective unconscious (Bion, 1961), while the developments in field theory are shown to expand that thinking to the more than human (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015). These developments start to bridge the representational to the nonrepresentational unconscious (Merleau-Ponty). At the same time, we are talking about a 'bridging' that challenges the psychology of Western industrial society, one that historically ignores 'relating to Nature', and in fact is considered by some to block the renewal of reorienting ourselves to Nature (Kidner), indicating individual pathologies instead of cultural pathologies (Roszak, Shepard, Metzner).

2.4 identity and nature

I want to take a closer look at identity. Giddens states that if freedom from need and domination is achieved, then politics come to the foreground. Moral debate and choices then must be (re)considered. Because happiness and emancipation achieved through the use of technology and more resources will, eventually, clash with making resources available for others, destroying planetary boundaries (Giddens, 1991). Giddens explicitly notes this in referring to Roszak.

> We live in a time when the very private experience of having a personal identity to discover, a personal destiny to fulfil, has become a subversive political force of major proportions (quoted in Giddens, 1991, p. 209).

But another element to consider is beyond the human realm and once again include the natural world. Paul Devereux suggests a process of cultural amnesia

related to collective trauma. The hypothesis (with plenty of evidence) is that natural events, like meteor assaults, volcanic eruptions and the like, have caused so much trauma that people dissociate from memory (Metzner, 1995, p.61). Such trauma can be one of the reasons our culture moved away from direct experience of Nature. Metzner takes this argument and shows how dissociation can be the explanation for what is called 'vertical separation'. This kind of splitting can, for example, explain the behaviour of Nazi doctors who were responsible for torture and immense suffering in their 'jobs', while at the same time being caring fathers and husbands. Such radical splitting can be seen to have developed in religious beliefs and Western psychology which favour dissociation from Nature (Metzner, 1995, p.64).

When it comes to the social discourse of self and identity, there is currently an opposing argument (or a clash even) between the position of mere self-interest and governance based on individual 'contracts' with others, and a relational position of possibility where dependency and need for others, including Nature and the non-human others in Nature (far beyond material gain) are prioritised. This is a shift from constructing self-identity as isolated, independent, autonomous beings, identifying with wealth and financial power and avoiding accountability, towards identifying with being part of community, sharing with and serving others. This also brings governance at state level into question - as it is supposed to protect us from eachother - against the dominance of Hobbesian ideas.

Modern advertising emphasises happiness from buying stuff and encourages emotionally 'authentic' responses to others through consumer choices. For example, Unilever ads on Dutch television for processed foods or household products end by saying, 'with love'. Consumer goods advertising also claims one can experience Nature through technology enhancing one's senses. Car ads commonly show one cruising through Nature, with a voice telling you about experiencing Nature through the car's enhanced technical sensing functions. Advertising about health enhancing technology like fitbits and other digital health

apps takes this separation further, as they accelerate the process of experiencing one's body without using one's senses, instead relying on the use of digital technology and what industry tells you what health looks like and what one should desire.

In opposing consumerism, ecologists and environmentalists try to enhance wellbeing of a different kind, emphasising a different orientation to social norms and different lifestyle politics through, for example, de-growth initiatives and developing the commons away from individual ownership. With certain ecologists, the concept of a good life means something totally different from the neoliberal consumer agenda. The ecological concept of the good life is about intrinsic happiness, from living a less materialistic life, enjoying conversation with Nature, underpinned by belief that one's self is intertwined with Nature. Reference is often made to indigenous peoples, or cultures like Bhutan's, with its gross national happiness index. Also, cultures from the past are often mentioned like the Ladakh.[17] These cultures have been eradicated or live under threat. At the same time there are examples of indigenous people taking control, or negotiating from their position of holistic relating to Nature with the 'Western style' detached from Nature position. See for instance Amanda C. Thomas her case description about the Hurunui River in Aotearoa New Zealand (C. Thomas, 2015).

Odysseos points to the difference between the paradigm of a self 'in itself enough' - as long as it is protected from other selves (Hobbes) - versus Heidegger's relational position. Anxiety is about opportunity and the possibility of caring for as well as fearing the other (Odysseos, 2002). These insights inform a concrete example of negotiating identity from the work of Ketil Skogen and colleagues. They studied the re-introduction of wolves in France and Norway for over a decade.

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[17] For a description see the work of Helena Norberg-Hodge.

Our analysis has shown that rumours about wolf reintroduction may be seen as 'folk social science' (Campion-Vincent 2005a) or 'hidden transcripts' (Scott 1990) in that they help people make sense of a troubled situation where power structures [institutionalized power]; government decisions and legal rules) are difficult to grasp and seem impossible to confront. The rumours may be taken one step further, to open defiance, and serve as means of cultural resistance, actively challenging the dominant wolf recovery paradigm (Skogen et.al., 2008, p. 130-131).

The authors look into the different intentions of stakeholder groups. Their findings, and how they talk about them, can be interpreted in terms of individuals moving in and out of specific social identities in relation to the wolf debate (Ellemers et al., 2002; Odysseos, 2002). At the same time, Skogen's work illustrates a larger social context of shifts of meaning, like the shift from individual freedom, to ideas more based on valuing the collective and Nature for the sake of Nature. At the same time, this particular example shows how government acts by representing just one position. Skogen and colleagues conclude:

…we need to find out how such knowledge can guide management agencies and policymakers in developing realistic mitigation strategies, and how it can help NGOs overcome the destructive divide that has developed between the environmental movement and many people who live in the areas (Skogen et al., 2008, p. 132).

Against the background of climate change, ecological collapse and different cultures, Western culture is becoming confused about relating to Nature and the self. In terms of leadership in relating to Nature, it is a matter of being comfortable about one's own identity as much as it is about being comfortable with others, while having the capacity to go beyond the human, to include the non-human and Nature as a whole. In the Anthropocene, this means being comfortable with 'not knowing' as well as being open to a different language,

thinking and doing of ecology and possibly 'dark ecology' (Morton), looking to develop a new language of meaning when relating to Nature as an agent.

It may not be fully clear to those involved in the examples described by Skogen et al. what 'the voice' of Nature is in the case of the wolves being re-introduced. Wolves are not spoken to or asked to express their opinion. Are there clearer examples of reciprocity of selves (human, non-human), where Nature is experienced as an actor, or experienced as 'talking back' (dialogue, response)? This is where this section ends and the above question about clarifying 'the voice' of Nature will be dealt with through the design into the study itself, which I will discuss in the next section, wich covers the ontology and epistemology, the research question, the research frame, and the study's method of inquiry.

3. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

As phenomenology is not only an ontology but also an epistemology, I became interested to see how I could research lived experience. This seemed the right way for this study in order to address meaning making and the role of the unconscious from a bodily perspective. Going to the experience itself could be metaphorically seen as the deep dive necessary to understand the psycho-social, where the individual themes of relating to Nature and the societal themes come together, in order to unravel them with respect to the topic and how to understand Nature having become hidden in mainstream human culture (lack of ecocentric ethics) and the split between culture and Nature, so characteristic for Western thinking.

3.1 ontology

In this section, I outline the four ontologies that I draw on. In discussing these ontologies, I shift from Descartes' thinking to Merleau-Ponty's thinking as Merleau-Ponty's philosophy became the anchor for this project.

The ontology of the natural sciences[18] is usually seen as originating from the work of René Descartes. Cartesian ontology states that humans relate to Nature (and to each other) through their thinking, through their mind, their 'cogito', as if the mind works on its own and is capable of finding universal truths, through rigorous empirical method. Those truths guide our being in Nature, as they are considered the way to understand how Nature works and to intervene with it for our benefit.

According to Eric Watkins and Michael Friedman, this kind of natural science has its origin in tool making, observing the use of tools, and improving them (Watkins 2012, Friedman 2013). Theory from natural science gives direction to new

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[18] I found this in my work in the natural sciences. As a biology student, I did two studies under laboratory conditions and two field studies, one concerning energy use of dairy farms and one concerning the impacts of pollution on cattle and the socioeconomic decision making that could help prevent it.

discoveries and new tools (natural science and technology forming a powerful alliance). In relating to our environment, all kinds of examples are to be found using technology based on natural science, varying from housing (solar panels), to transport (electric vehicles) to production (energy efficiency) to energy production (renewables). It is part of natural science to cope with unexpected outcomes, for the method includes disposing of failed hypothesis through testing[19] (Sorrell, 1996). Humankind has come to trust and rely on natural science finding solutions for problems, e.g., the idea that science and technology can successfully shield the earth from the sun's radiation through geoengineering (Shukman, 2014).

Instead of zooming in to a single object with the purpose of reducing complexity, ecology does the opposite by looking into relations and patterns of wholes.[20] The development of an ecological view of Nature only happened when scientists of different disciplines literally started to work together (Borden, 2014). Gregory Bateson was one of the key figures in contributing to the development of ecological thinking, stating that mind or minding is a general phenomenon in Nature, being the product of complex relations (Bateson, 1979-2000). Ecological

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[19] Science begins with the observation of a deliberately restricted range of data in the natural world. Second, it formulates hypotheses (ideally in mathematical terms) in order to express the intelligible relationships of the various elements observed. These relationships may then be correlated with the data of additional scientific experiments and hypotheses so that a comprehensive 'theory' will emerge, such as the Copernican heliocentric theory, I. Newton's (1643–1727) and A. Einstein's (1879–1955) gravitational theories, and C. Darwin's (1809–82) theory of evolution. Third, the method of natural science requires an ongoing process of testing and critical reflection in order to arrive at an accurate judgement as to whether its hypothetical or theoretical understanding in fact corresponds to the observed data. As new data become available, the hypotheses and theories may need to undergo revision. Ref.: Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology
http://search.credoreference.com.ezproxy.uwe.ac.uk/content/entry/cupdct/natural_science/0
[20] The term 'ecology' was coined in 1866 by the German naturalist Ernst Haeckel, broadly denoting 'the science of the relations of living organisms to the external world, their habitat, customs, energies, parasites, etc' (Haeckel, 1905:80). Drawing on the Greek oikos (household), from which the word 'economy' is also derived, Haeckel wanted the term to delineate a specific area of biology at a time when the impacts of Darwinism in science were yielding increased specialization and an explosion of new data and theory However, by emphasizing the centrality of organic relationships, the term also looked back to earlier ideas of the 'economy of Nature' as a system that functioned as a unified whole; indeed, the older phrase was only displaced by Haeckel's term ecology at the end of the nineteenth century, and the extent to which scientific ecology can be distinguished from holist and organicist philosophy remains moot today. Ref.: Barry, J. Gene, E. (2014) International Encyclopedia of Environmental Politics (Taylor & Francis).

concepts are now widely accepted and part of research to better understand and deal with Nature's complexity as well as to manage it.[21]

A second ontology is one of spiritual meaning making[22] (with reference to organised religion as its formal manifestation). I count aesthetic views on Nature for the sake of worship or being impressed 'with the makings of god' as belonging to this ontology. Recently, spirituality is often mentioned in relation to Nature and environmental problems (Rust, Totton, 2012; Duguid, 2010). Plato stated that contemplation is the highest form of knowing and the highest level of being a human being could aspire to. Spirituality survived in the form of religious mysticism. This coincided with less interest in contemplation (Arendt, 1958, 1998). Interest in spiritual contemplation probably came back to the public agenda when people like Fritjof Capra and Gary Zukav cross referenced quantum physics and traditional Eastern philosophy, e.g. the Upanishads and Rig Veda (Capra, 1976, Zukav, 1979). Spirituality needs to be distinguished from religion (Vaillant, 2008, p. 185; Rousseau, 2014; Dewey, 1958 p. 294, 295). Whilst spirituality found its place in psychology through the work of Jung and more recent transpersonal psychology,[23] it is less established in the wider context of social debate and social science. It is pushed back to the realms of organised religion (and therefore isolated from the scientific debate on what to do about environmental problems). Or it is seen as escapism, not taken as serious commentary on modernity and progress (Gray 2002). Interestingly, organised religion has recently started to get involved in environmental problems (Obadia 2011, Pope Francis 2015). Spiritual experience is looked for in Western societies and practiced through Buddhism and the recent booming interest in mindfulness. Spiritual experiences in relation to Nature can also be found in the West, with people adopting Western varieties of Shamanism and in the fast-growing interest in the spiritual practices of indigenous people.

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[21] The number of products, services, publications, marketing campaigns, groups and initiatives labelled 'eco' is endless.
[22] Later in my life I discovered a second ontology which was a spiritual position as I had a period of immersing myself in Eastern philosophy and meditation.
[23] Wilbur, K. most of his works.

The third ontology is ethical, focusing on the rights and wrongs of human conduct, human being in the world. This ontology states that values and norms can be defined and developed which can guide humans in relating to others. Modernity has brought unprecedented material wealth and at the same time unprecedented destruction of the natural environment and depletion of natural resources. For me, a tension starts with the assumption of Nature as a resource, a service (as if going shopping) or - more negatively formulated - a disposable asset. Even when thinking or talking about Nature positively, it is usually about a sense of improvement, a useful application or an experience of pleasure, actively exploited to fit a human purpose or need. So, it seems to me, that what we do with Nature and how we engage with Nature is governed by a frame of thinking that assumes Nature is there for the sole purpose of satisfying humans. This is described by people like Warwick Fox and Patrick Curry as an anthropocentric ethics (Fox, 1995; Curry, 2011), whereby problems are solved for the benefit of people only. Such solutions are often perverse, in the sense that they are solely aiming to generate a higher financial gain. For example, social media run on algorithms that are designed to enhance addiction, as cigarettes have chemical formula that do the same[24]. A lot of the food in the supermarket cannot be considered healthy as it has too high a sugar content. However, an ecocentric ethics can be proposed where humans have the capacity of being moral and being able to serve, not only in a sense of taking care of Nature, but building on the notion of Nature having an intrinsic value, a value of its own that exists independently of human needs and interests.[25] The problem is that ethics can be debated and agreed, but acting guided by ecocentric ethics is a different matter. Part of ethics is the question of number of people, as Western political views subscribe to individualism and consumerism. It is not that a large number of people by definition is a problem,

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[24] FDA Urged to Stop Harmful Changes Made by Tobacco Industry. *June 23, 2014 (ref.* Tobacco Free Kids).
[25] Ecocentric ethics is close to virtue ethics. Love of Nature is another aspect close to morality and has been mentioned and argued as an innate human quality. E. Wilson introduced the term Biophilia for this innate bond to Nature (Wilson 1986). Which leads to the comment that Evolutionists have debated that morality has a genetic base and could be explained as having evolutionary purpose.

but rather the sum impact of individuals all aspiring to have access to an abundance of goods and material comfort.

A fourth ontology is one of perception, instigated by Merleau-Ponty, elaborating on a relational position towards other humans and Nature, with emphasis on the importance of the role and realities of the senses. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach illuminates how the body plays a decisive role in being part of Nature and 'knowing' (which then is not only an ontology but leads to an epistemology at the same time).

Merleau-Ponty had (and still has) a large influence on thinking about Nature. To understand his philosophy, it helps to see what connections he made himself. For instance, he mentions Friedrich von Schelling (Merleau-Ponty, 2003, p. 46), who postulated that the thing in itself and the perceived representation of it are one.

> If the essence of Nature is that it produces the subjectivity which enables to understand itself, Nature itself could be construed as a kind of 'super-subject' (Schelling quoted in Bowie, 2016).

Merleau-Ponty represents the second generation of phenomenology following Husserl. The third generation focusses on the social Nature of perception and states that consciousness is of a social origin. This idea is already present in Merleau-Ponty's texts. The fourth generation of phenomenology is the study of the communality between the world and the subject, the material and the human, also visible in Merleau-Ponty's work.[26]

Merleau-Ponty responded to Descartes. Descartes split the mind from the body in his theory of knowledge (cogito ergo sum). He considered the mind the 'machine' that makes sense of the world by taking in projections of it. In doing so he introduced a logic of exclusion, excluding anything or anybody that was not ratio,

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[26] See the International Encyclopedia of Organization studies, Sage, 2008, accessed online 9 September 2018

not cogito. It is widely held in Western philosophy that Descartes provided the vision and focus that became the foundation of Western modernity. Then other philosophers started to bring back what Descartes excluded from knowing. John Locke and George Berkeley worked on causal relations (the instrumentalists, as they are now called). The idealists, among whom we find David Hume, put emphasis on experience, stating that experience gets its meaning from customary morality, from cultural association. Immanuel Kant acknowledged experience as crucial but claimed that the meaning of the experience was imposed by the mind (the logical imperative). Edmund Husserl made experience dependent on a transcendental perspective, a transcendental intent that gives meaning to experience. Merleau-Ponty resists all of these philosophies and investigates perception, eventually arguing that knowledge comes from the body, which is the most radical answer to Descartes and his followers (Raghuramaju, 2016).

Merleau-Ponty basically says that knowing (supposedly 'Descartes like' mental 'functions', such as awareness and consciousness) is situated in the body through the senses at a pre-reflective level. Pre-reflective knowing originates from the interaction between the body and the world. According to Hubert Dreyfus, Merleau-Ponty was interested in coping (grasping reality) and understanding inter-subjectivity in terms which do not come from an isolated mechanical brain (Dreyfus, 2014). Perception is the start of knowing, not empiricism or conscious observation (Liberman, 2007). Dermot Moran formulates this as 'our embodiment in a world which seems pre-ordained to meet and fulfil our meaning-intending acts' (Moran, 2000, p. 391).

Ted Toadvine researched Merleau-Ponty and his ontology of perception, presenting his research as a philosophy of Nature (Toadvine, 2009). Neither empiricists nor constructivists see Nature as having 'a sense of its own' (Toadvine, 2009, p.15), whereas Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of perception identifies Nature as the 'auto production' of a sense; it has an interior determined from within, preceding our reflective determination. Nature contrasts with the constructed or instituted character of artefacts of culture, including linguistic representations

(Toadvine, 2009, p. 108). At the same time, Nature expresses itself through humans. Paul Cezanne, the French painter, said that 'Nature / the landscape thinks itself in me' (Toadvine, 2009, p.15).

Merleau-Ponty uses the concept of chiasm to describe how the being of Nature and the being of human cross.

The term chiasm comes from the anatomical crossing of the optical nerves. But it is used in more than one way, as it not only points to the crossing of perception (what Merleau-Ponty at some point calls the visible), it also points at the crossing of meaning making (what he calls at some point the invisible) (Toadvine, 2009). Merleau-Ponty uses several examples in his description. For instance, there is the exchange of glances when two people meet. Originally this comes from Paul Valery, who used the term chiasma.

> You are not me, since you see me and I do not see myself. What I lack is this me that you see. And what you lack is the you I see (Toadvine, 2009, p. 110).

After the exchange and reciprocal limitations of glances, a second example is touch.

> My two hands touch the same things because they are the hands of one same body. And yet each of them has its own tactile experience. If nonetheless they have to do with one sole tangible, it is because there exists a very peculiar relation from one to the other, across the corporeal space – like that holding between my two eyes – making of my hands one sole organ of experience, as it makes of my two eyes the channels of one sole Cyclopean vision (Toadvine, 2009, p. 112).

Toadvine concludes with a third part of Merleau-Ponty's ontology, and again the idea of crossing is central.

The "difference without contradiction" that characterizes the relation between the touching hand and the touched hand, between the sentient and sensible aspects of the body, will also hold true for the relation between sensible and meaningful aspects of the perceived world: the body "communicates to the things upon which it closes over that identity without superstition, that difference without contradiction, that divergence between the within and the without that constitutes its natal secret" (Toadvine, 2009, p. 113).

Toadvine proceeds to argue that Merleau-Ponty's ontology always leaves a gap, and that this should not be understood as a failure, but as the disclosure of the world. It is a dialogue that takes place:

Not outside of us and not in us, but there were the two movements cross (Toadvine, 2009, p. 116).

If I now consider what happened when I met a little blackbird, I can use the idea of the chiasm, the 'crossing' that Merleau-Ponty talks about. I met a bird when seeing it as it is looking back at me. I am acutely aware I am a presence or part of the bird's world as the bird is a presence or part of the world for me. Because it looks at me the way somebody else can look without giving away any expression or emotion, it is an experience in the moment of crossing worlds. I am not thinking about the bird, I am aware of the crossing worlds. It is a moment of seeing that seems to freeze both of us in time. But it is not freezing as in being anxious. It is a moment of being aware of the other in such a way that (I don't know about the bird) I feel forced to reinterpret what is happening, even reinterpret what I think a bird actually is, what kind of being. Realizing there and then I do not have a clue. But suddenly a new experience of a blackbird is introducing itself, a new idea of a blackbird (any bird?) that I had not had before. It is an idea of a conscious (maybe self-aware) creature, and I felt part of its consciousness (self-awareness). This is where I felt a 'unity in difference' or

'difference in unity' that Merleau-Ponty talks about. At the same time, I am aware of this gap he also talks about: in a sense that the moment passes, both the bird and me can be different beings (in the world) after this moment. Merleau-Ponty's ontology is an ontology of experience, which attracted me because of my own 'Nature' experiences and because of my psychoanalytic experience of acknowledging 'the unconscious' in human development and social interaction. The resemblance between Merleau-Ponty's ontology and the ontology that psychoanalytic thinking works with, is striking. On the one hand, an 'unconscious' is playing out on an intra- and intersubjective level between humans, and on the other an 'unconscious' is playing out between humans and non-human others, Nature. Bannon describes the difference of being and beings referring to Heidegger. Following Heidegger, Bannon refers to a distinction in understanding fields as fields of individuals being relational in the world, while at the same time being part of the field of the world itself. (Bannon, 2011).

The unconscious might be revealed to some extent, but never in a definite, absolute or final analysis, as it moves on. I will go into this further in the section on epistemology.

Toadvine points to the dangers of using Merleau-Ponty's ontology as an urging to return to simpler ways of life, e.g., giving up cars and computers. Yet as he puts it:

> A change in our thinking about what is, can lead to an entirely different conception of ethics, one that circles less around principles of moral obligation and that instead concerns our dwelling within the world' (Toadvine, 2009, p. 134).

Our relationship to Nature is usually not described or addressed in 'relational terms'. Phenomenology allows us to address this issue, through putting the way we perceive as the object of study and in doing so acknowledge phenomena through experience.

From this position, the implication for leadership is tremendous, as it shows that cognitive knowing without reference to experience can only produce what is

already known. It also shows that leadership is a relational activity. Merleau-Ponty does not accept the duality of Cartesian philosophy, the duality of the body and mind. With Merleau-Ponty suddenly a whole different perspective is there, the perspective of inter-subjectivity on the level of the body. Merleau-Ponty includes Nature in that he includes non-human animals, plants and the inanimate wider Nature, 'things'. So, Nature is not defined as 'environment', it is defined as the very process of relating, the very process of being exposed to the outside and through experience finding meaning.

Of course, having formulated my position based on Merleau-Ponty, it is clear that the other ontologies I identified are related to or blur into this ontology of perception, as they are about meaning or reflective meaning systems. However, one crucial consequence of positioning myself through Merleau-Ponty's ontology is that the non-human others in Nature become sentient beings, to the extent they are part of or compose sentient systems. By following Merleau-Ponty's ontological logic, there is by default a sensible part (meaning making part) to sentient. That means the non-human others in Nature (or that Nature is composed of) have agency. In other words, those non-human others in Nature / or Nature as a whole can only be understood as actors, not similar to humans (as a separate species) but like humans. Following this ontology is therefore fundamentally different from positivist or constructionist ontologies, that both put humans outside of Nature (Toadvine, 2009). Whereas Merleau-Ponty shows that not only are our awareness and consciousness intertwined with other sense / sentient and sensible meaning systems, that Nature consists of an enormous abundance, but also that they are never fixed. The contents of our pre-reflective knowing emerge through 'being part of' and through interactions. That is, we are not manufactured by our brain. According to Merleau-Ponty, our brain actually is very passive in this process, more like a note taker (Liberman, 2007).

It may be that part of why it is so difficult to establish an ecocentric ethics is that natural science and religion both operate on a hierarchical level, but anonymously. In my experience, they often pass as uncontested authority. It is

possible that Merleau-Ponty interests me because he feels closer to my sense of reality than modern scientific or religious practice. In my position, the relational and the unconscious are central to exploring and looking for meaning through conversation with others. For me this is part of ethics. However, a beautiful scientific outcome or a spiritual connection - as in sharing certain values and feeling connected – are things I also relate to very well. But I am more anxious or ambivalent about it, as happiness and feelings of well-being attached to genuine spiritual experience and connecting to others, can easily be tramped upon or agressively met. Maybe I am sensitive to statements of universal truth coming from hierarchical systems that are anonymous to me.

3.2 epistemology

In this section I describe the second part of my position, my epistemology. I state that new knowing originates from relating. Perception represents a pre-symbolic knowing, an inter-corporeal knowing that originates from relating to one's surroundings (other humans and Nature). One implication for this epistemology, directly coming from phenomenology (as described above) is to see Nature as having agency. That is, to see Nature as a composition of different others (but real others, not built on solipsism).

Despite my position, I am prone to falling for positivist and reductionist ways of producing knowledge, to fit with my background as a natural scientist. Thus, if I don't find a (or the) solution I can feel I am simply not clever enough (perhaps not even belonging to the group of clever people and thus needing to be isolated, accompanied by shame). It feels important, therefore, to emphasise that my main sources for reference to how I shaped this research (psycho-social studies and phenomenology) do comment upon validity and reliability of findings. For example, Wendy Hollway and Tony Jefferson talk about 'scientific knowledge' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013, p. 72). Linda Finlay comments on: 'achieving scientific credibility' (Finlay, 2014, p.133).

From the perspective of psycho-social studies, these aspects of validity and reliability are covered by the principle of 'if something works' (as knowledge in action) and if the way the research is designed and executed can be sustained through the experiences and insights of others, like people participating and other researchers, then it is valid. This means the research needs to fulfil criteria of credibility with respect to how it is done and what it claims as a contribution to knowledge.

From the perspective of phenomenology, how to produce knowledge was a new question for me in this project. Toadvine states that "both sides of the ongoing debate over the meaning or value of Nature, empiricist and constructivist, share the assumption that reality 'is a neutral and valueless matter'", whereas:

> Merleau-Ponty's approach is defined by his conviction that Nature has its own meaningful configuration to which we are oriented at a level more originary than thought, at the level of our bodily engagement with the perceived (Toadvine, 2009, p 131).

To work with this implies belief in the agency of Nature and the necessity of a relational stance as a prerequisite in the process of knowing about the way we know. I believe this aspect of agency of and in Nature goes beyond environmental values, or values about Nature being 'worthwhile'. The aspect of agency is there to be observed and can be seen as real and as part of one's experience. Maybe an insight into the procedural clues that Merleau-Ponty describes himself helps us to understand further how we know or produce knowledge from phenomenology. For instance, Alan Gamage identified the following concepts from Merleau-Ponty's own language. 'Intentional arc' refers to internal purpose and external availabilities, a foreground and background, not a complete free will, because we are bound in the context of the world, but not totally determined either (Gamage, 2016). 'Expression' refers to a transformation that is rooted in our embodied existence, meaning that most of what is said to you comes to you not only through language. Deaf people using sign language appear to have different

internal images of their fingers pointing and different facial expressions, etc. (Gamage, 2016). 'Grasping' reflects how one can see something better, looking for the best position to see, trying to maintain a position of being with another that works best, which relates to options in learning and mastery (Gamage, 2016). 'Alterity' refers to being embedded in a world that is not oneself and as one interacts, one is shaped in return. When one touches, one is touched at the same time. One can never actually reach the difference that forms oneself, there is a gap that one cannot cross (Gamage, 2016). I can add 'flesh' as a concept referring to the medium, as Merleau-Ponty sees it, that can be thought to 'embrace' the seer and the seen and vice versa (Merleau-Ponty, 2014). I can also add 'chiasm' as the concept of the intertwining, the concept of the 'in-between' where the visible and the invisible and the sensible and the sentient come together (Merleau-Ponty, 1964; Toadvine, 2009).

But Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of perception is as elusive as psychoanalysis, as both have the unconscious as their field of study. This means that the production of knowledge is a localised meaning making process (bound by context, bound by place) that happens between actors (human animals as well as non-human animals, even the non-human, non-living environment) and cannot be caught (in the way empiricist approaches do) as if one is separate and or stuck in time. This can be further illustrated through mentioning the work of, for example, Country, B., Wright, S. Suchet-Pearson, S., Lloyd, K., Burarrwanga, L., Ganambarr, R. & Maumuru, D. a mixed group of researchers that have developed their own style of researching the relation to place. In their article 'Working with and learning from Country: decentring human authority' Country et al. describe their way of being open, receiving and working with the messages they get from the country as they engage with it:

> We propose that practising relational research requires researchers to open themselves up to the reality of their connections with the world, and consider what it means to live as part of the world, rather than distinct from it (Country et al., 2015, p 270).

Country et al. present their research as a dynamic enterprise, not only presenting outcomes of research but also doing it in an attempt to develop a more then 'human geography':

> We discuss a *methodology of attending* underpinned by a relational ethics of care. Here, care stems from an awareness of our essential co-constitution as we care for, and are cared for by, the myriad human and more-than- human becomings that emerge together to create Bawaka.

The epistemology of this thesis builds on phenomenological and psycho-social approaches, as psycho-social research is unique in its reference to the human unconscious and affects, while phenomenology could be seen to do the same when addressing the relation of the human to the non-human. Also, these two use similar pathways. For instance, Simon Clarke and Paul Hoggett state that using a psychoanalytically informed research method is a "[l]iving approach to psychoanalysis not just as a theory but as a way of being in the world" (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009, p 22). It is an epistemology of "[m]aking interpretations of the subjective world of lived experience" (Watts, in Clarke & Hoggett, 2009, p. 216). While Toadvine takes a similar position in his analysis of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. He explains the expressive role of reflection that Merleau-Ponty explores in his phenomenology of perception as it (reflection) negotiates the tension between Nature's 'self-unfolding' and its resistance to human interrogation (Toadvine, 2009). He uses different words but is clearly pointing at the task of researching 'lived experience'.

So, researching lived experience can be found in phenomenological approaches as well as in psycho-social approaches of qualitative social research. However, there are differences. While Hollway and Jefferson stress that optimum interview conditions mean that interviewees, while participating in an interview, can come to new insights or meaning making ("think new thoughts") (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p. 151), Finlay gives more stress to talking about lived experience and less

to the interviewee engaged in meaning making (or new thinking) (Finlay 2008, 2011, in Finlay, 2014, p. 123).

As the relation to Nature moves this research project into territory that is fairly novel even in the social sciences, the unique task of phenomenology here is to grasp lived experience of Nature as it is talked about by people in their practices of working with / in Nature. I see the psycho-social perspective as helpful in further looking to understand how, where or to what extent 'meaning making and shifts of meaning' take place individually or with others, including the understanding of people's defences, as Nature is beautiful, but not 'comfortable'. Fear (in relation to concrete events) and anxiety (as a baseline of living one's life) lie hidden in the relation to Nature as well as in the relation to other humans (e.g., authorities or social norms) with respect to how to deal with Nature, including turning a blind eye to the destruction taking place. This is where psycho-social studies offer a unique pathway into understanding the psyche and culture. In other words, I need the psycho-social approach in this research to help with that side of meaning making and confronting it with what is already part of existing social discourse.

Last but not least, both psycho-social research and phenomenological philosophy have distinctive therapeutic fields of application joined to them, namely psychoanalysis and phenomenological explorative practices, for instance, the one formulated by Eugene Gendlin, which he calls Focusing (Gendlin 2003). This is where Gendlin turns from philosopher to therapeutic practitioner (a field he developed later in his professional life). It is the purpose of these fields of application, to work on meaning making and facilitate shifts of meaning. Both fields make intersubjective meaning making central to their therapeutic context. But again, it could be said that the psycho-social and the phenomenological approaches to therapy are different in their focus. The psycho-social operates more in the area of psychological and cultural meanings, as they may already exist in the context someone is operating in (what Antonino Ferro and Giuseppe Civitarese call the representational unconscious) (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015). The

phenomenological approach to therapy focuses on lived experience (with some of its greatest examples coming from the arts) of what Ferro and Civitarese call the non-representational unconscious. But research is not therapy. Although interpretation also takes place in the research encounter, it is not its aim. Hence interpretation is a large part of the research job outside the relation between researcher and 'researched', binding the research method and the analysis of data. The research method needs to be suitable for capturing lived experience, while the way the analysis (and interpretation) is done needs to facilitate reflection upon lived experience. I will now discuss the research frame.

3.3 the research frame

In this section I describe how I constructed the research frame that informed who to invite to participate in the research. The purpose of it is to define the areas of human practice where I would investigate actor's lived experience.

I had a personal experience of being in the dunes, meeting a blackbird. It was a meeting that I found hard to describe in spiritual terms, or in terms of the transpersonal (Naess), as there was no sense of unity or losing or transgressing my sense of self, to suddenly include the environment and the bird. Instead it was a gaze, between the blackbird and myself. It felt like a connection, although even that isn't the right word to describe it; exchange or communication come closer to describing the experience. But how, or what kind of communication, as non-human animals or non-living Nature, like the dunes and the wind, do not talk back in human language?

I contemplated the concept of reciprocity (a crucial characteristic of human communication) for a long time. Is it possible to talk about reciprocity when communication with a non-human other? I found a description of dialogue with Toadvine:

Perception is the discovery of a sense that is not of my making, the response to a demand placed on my body from the outside, a manner of being invaded by an alterity, which is why the figure of dialogue is appropriate (Toadvine, 2009, p. 59).

This is how I started to understand Merleau-Ponty's relational perspective as dialogic. It became even clearer to me that I needed a relational research framework. Then I discovered the work of Donna Haraway about 'response' and was thrilled with her article on agility training with her dog Cayenne (Haraway, 2008). She illustrates how through great effort of practice, observing the relation with her dog, she finally gets it - how to run with her dog without her (and the dog) making mistakes.

The philosophic and literary conceit that all we have is representations, and no access to what animals think and feel, is wrong. Human beings do—or can—know more than we used to know; and the right to make that judgment is rooted in historical, flawed, generative cross species practices. ……Response is getting it that subject-making connection is real. Response is face to face in the contact zone of an entangled relationship. Companion species know this (Haraway, 2008, p. 445).

This was the first time I read someone with credit in the academic world, talking about how she shifted her ideas about dogs, through her own experience of actually being able to team up with her dog. Dialogue, response: I was becoming more confident. Later I found out Haraway is an emeritus professor of consciousness, has a biology background (like me) and studied companion species extensively. I read this article at the same time that my son had been given a puppy dog to keep him company. At training class with the dog, I learned how to give the dog basic human commands, that it followed with the use of a lot of dog cookies. It worked to some extent, but it felt like having been instructed to operate a sophisticated machine with rudimentary tools. Cesar Milan's popular tv series, telling people about how to train their dogs, gave a different perspective,

closer to Haraway's approach. Milan shows how sensitive the dogs are to the behavior of the owners. Fascinated by the wonders this man can bring about when it comes to dog behavior, I could fully appreciate Haraway's story about her dog as a two-way communication. Now I had examples of reciprocity and could link them to my own experience.

Then I discovered another author, Vinciane Despret. She also makes an argument for agency in the natural world. She gives one example of cows that seem to behave mechanically in the daily routine on a farm but suddenly prove they can sabotage by not being cooperative. She sees a parallel with the idea of human agency intervening in society (Despret, 2013). She argues that agency, understood as intentional, rational, and premeditated as in humanist and Christian conceptions of human exceptionalism, has a blind spot in relation to non-human animals and interwoven behaviors in Nature (Despret, 2013, p. 31). She draws attention to a different view that goes back to Darwin himself, when she discusses the work of Hustak and Meyers.

> One could suggest that Hustak and Myers re-enchant what has been disenchanted with narratives of 'an inextricable web of affinities' (as Darwin himself formulated it), stories of connivances, attractions, reciprocal inductions, and also repulsions, that weave their own narratives in the web, and therefore create new connections and affinities (Despret, 2013, p. 35).

From here Despret brings in Deleuze and Guattari's concept of agencement:

> Let us remember that there isn't in any animal's world, any object that can be said to be neutral, without any vital quality. Everything that exists for an organism is a sign that affects, or an affect that signifies. According to Deleuze, each object that is perceived *effectuates a power to be affected*. It is a 'rapport of force'. Each living being renders other creatures capable

(of affecting and of being affected), and they are entangled in a myriad of
rapports of forces, all which are '*agencements*' (Despret, 2013, p. 37).

In doing so, she theoretically underpins the concept of agency in the natural
world.

Indeed, creatures may appear as 'secret agents' as long as we adopt a
conventional definition of agency based on subjective experience and
autonomous intention. However, when reframed in the terms of
'agencement'—an assemblage that produces 'agentivity'— agency seems
to be much more extensively shared in the living world (Despret, 2013, p.
29).

I understand *agencement* as making a difference, influencing a complex of
interrelated relations. Suppose the non-human animal's *agencement* was absent
(which is impossible), but nevertheless then the whole would act differently. In
situations in which these *agencements* are manifested, creatures of different
species become, *"one for another and one with another, companion-agents"*
(Despret, 2013, p. 29). Despret does not mention Merleau-Ponty but does refer to
Deleuze and Guatari's concept of assemblages. For me this resonates with
Merleau-Ponty's concept of the flesh. Agency then becomes the individual
expression:

of what the being part of the world's flesh, the ever-renewed bringing to
voice of what the things in the world strive, in the ferment of their silence,
to say (Toadvine, 2009, p.135).

Haraway and Despret were amazing 'discoveries' for me and helpful inputs for my
project. I had found the overall element of my research frame, the element of
relating to non-human animals through looking at non-verbal exchange. While
Merleau-Ponty points at the philosophical terms, Haraway and Despret illustrate
the point in practical terms, through the examples of agility training with a dog

and of cows being either cooperative - fitting in with the human idea of being automatons - or not cooperative, showing surprisingly high levels of agency. I could now understand connecting to Nature (and non-human animals in particular) as a non–verbal exchange (no human language involved), yet meaningful in terms of reciprocity (as in dialogue and response).

Meanwhile, I had spoken to several people, all professionally interested and somehow related to Nature. It was the purpose of these conversations to further inform the framework. From these conversations, I started to identify other elements to build the research frame. One of these elements was place, as it seemed such an important aspect in the conversations. When it comes to place, my thinking started with Zygmunt Bauman quoted in Whitney Bauman. His is a reference to material surroundings, manifest in a physical 'place' that coincides with those who do not have the means to travel 'the global mobiles and the immobile locals' (Bauman, 2011, p.790). Bauman uses *worlding* (Martin Heidegger's *Dasein*, or being in the world) in describing how global warming can only be meaningfully analysed if one goes beyond a general global position, towards a specific local focus (Bauman, 2011). Communities in the Alps, for example, are affected because of less snow falling in the winter season. This means that, locally, a new relation with Nature must be found, as less money can be made from tourism. Skiing places can use artificial snow machines or find new sources of income; both strategies acknowledge the changing ecology. In England, communities are affected by extreme floods. In some places, artificial man-made technical measures are taken, in others 'natural' ways of dealing with floods are chosen. Both are human led, but the second approach requires thinking about the human - Nature relation very differently. This diversity in relating to Nature depending on place, localised thinking, can be found with those that comment on meaning systems as if 'one size fits all'. Bauman specifically critiques those calling our era the Anthropocene, as a one-sided, standardised and globalised view and ethic of the problem of human planetary influence (Bauman, 2015). Such attempts at meaning systems with global impact are not neutral, as we can see in the work of Brad Evans and Julian Reid. They show how the idea of resilience (the

need to adapt to danger), translated to global policies, externalises responsibility for Western industrialism induced climate change onto vulnerable states, like Bangladesh, requiring them to develop the resilience needed to cope with problems not of their making (Evans and Reid, 2013). Bauman is not arguing that humans (certain humans that is, more than others) have not influenced the climate, for they have. However, wider dominant meaning systems (both religious and scientific, including the term Anthropocene) legitimise continued inaction by those doing the polluting, as political processes and policies are not differentiated and local. Introducing local concerns to global meaning systems allows developing local agency to engage with problems and supports active work with Nature in a particular place.

Another aspect for the framework coming from the conversations had to do with the values and experiences of other humans (human animals as I would like to now call them) at work, as most organisations and commercial ones in particular, are arenas of human culture with little interest in Nature (other than making a profit from it). This area of the research frame and its potential for researching leadership and relating to Nature became clearer when I realised that, even in my own experience, many people working in corporate environments feel that they miss something. This is talked about on different levels: perhaps in terms of lacking meaning, or a lack of interest from peers in who one is as a person, or a lack of responsibility for the organisation's negative impacts in society. As corporations prioritise the balance sheet and continuous growth, many find there is little or no room for emotions or other concerns. Some people resolve the problem by moving from the corporate world to NGOs, hoping to work in environments where different values are expressed, with more open, sharing leadership and where the mission is to 'do good' for society from a wider perspective. I define this element as shifting values through shifting environment, from corporate to NGO, making a paradigm jump from one sector in society to another.

In the above several elements for exploring relating to Nature are discussed: relations to non-human animals; place; and people looking to join an NGO in order to experience a better match with their values and aspirations for themselves and the world. But now I also started to realise that any attempt to itemise our various ways of relating to Nature is rather arbitrary as paradoxically when 'everything is relational' then what does it mean to isolate or to categorize? This follows from Merleau-Ponty, but it also follows from modern thinkers in complexity theory and ecology. Gregory Bateson, for instance, illustrated this point of 'everything connected to everything' (Bateson, 1979). Bateson helped me to work with the concept of splitting, as it is known in psychoanalysis, to also think about this human way of psychic functioning among themselves when it comes to relating to Nature. This guided me to consider two more ways of people and their practice of 'relating to Nature', that carry meaning in the context of society and leadership. One is going into Nature. This is the activity of Nature retreats and Nature quests. The other is the practice of protecting Nature, which can be very practical, like restoring Nature, or it can be about protest or advocacy on behalf of Nature. I now had five areas of loosely defined practices of 'relating to Nature' that made sense and that I could distinguish and investigate further in terms of 'lived experience'. They are:

- **going into Nature** to deliberately experience a different environment, different from the everyday living environment.
- **engaging with non-human animals**, which is probably the most explicit experience of otherness.
- engaging with **place**, the place of habitation, which is the experience of Nature as it manifests itself in a place or a geographic area, that provides resources, food, income. People experience changes in the environment that are becoming critical for wellbeing and survival.
- being Nature's advocate or **doing advocacy** (protecting, regenerating), educating, negotiating, confronting fellow humans and/or working to prevent, diminish or restore damage done by humans.

- supporting **different values in the work environment**. People move through different social worlds as they seek to work with different values and with others who share.[27]

In practice, as we know from Bateson (and others[28]), these distinctions are a construct, but a workable one, as they provided categories through which to select my sample of people to be interviewed.
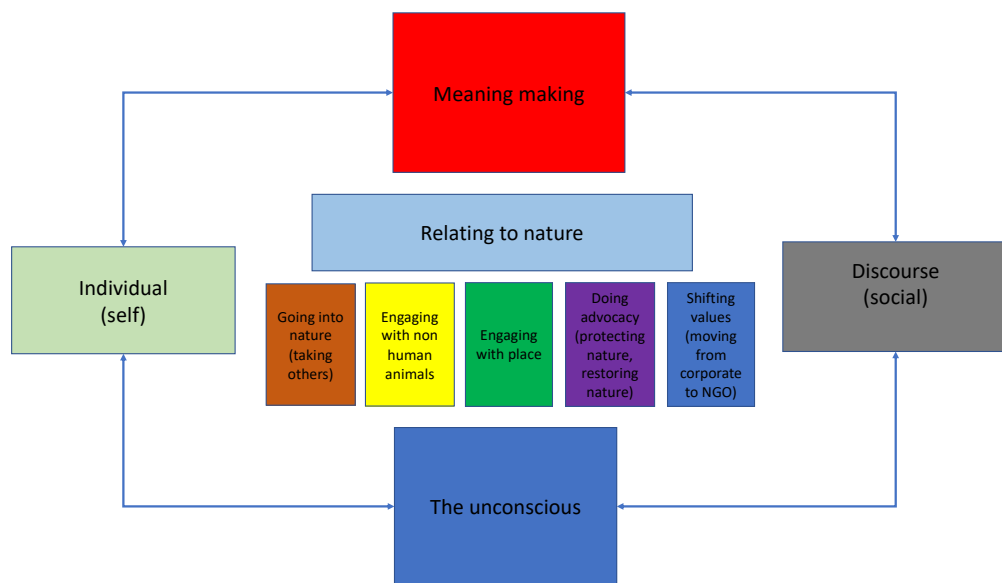
Figure 2. The research frame.

In the previous section I have described how I conceive of the research framework. Each of the areas, the loosely defined Nature practices are described in more detail in the appendix.

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[27] For instance, one of the persons that I interviewed during the pilot phase had been a director with an oil and gas company, before moving to an NGO.
[28] In the field of Quantum Mechanics and research of Ecology.

3.4 method

In this chapter I describe how I invited the people I interviewed, and give an overview of who they are. I also explain the design of the interviews and finally how I analysed them.

3.4.1 the research sample

The five areas of the frame had made it easier to identify Nature practices and people in leadership within these practices to seek out for interviews. Questions remained like, 'Which person to invite to the research?' 'How to approach interviewees?' 'How many interviewees to include in the research?' Several approaches combined resulted in a sample of 15 people. I looked for people who were leaders or change agents, first from within my own network. I also contacted people I did not know, actively seeking them out and asking if they were willing to be part of the research. Finally, I used a snowball method of getting in touch with a couple of people through referrals.

In the view of Greg Guest et al. (2006), data saturation can occur within the first 12 interviews and after that very few new phenomena are likely to emerge. In the view of Carlos Gonzalez (2009), when undertaking research that is reliant on a phenomenological approach, sample size is usually driven by the need to uncover all the main variants within the approach. He suggests that small survey samples of fewer than 20 are common. Finally, John Creswell's view (2011, 2013) is that it is typical "to study a few individuals or a few cases" (2011, p. 209) for qualitative research. This is why I stopped at 15 interviewees, with a total of 36 interviews. I expected this to be enough, but this would only become fully clear further along in the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Table 1. Interviewees

Interviewee	Male/Female	Nr. of Interviews	Function	Specifics	Category of the frame	Interview situation
John	M	3	Team leader	Takes adults on welfare aid into Nature	Nature	Office / home
Pete	M	3	Director of NGO	Takes adults from different NGOs and social services into Nature	Nature	Skype
Fons	M	3	Former director of University	Takes adults from MBA education into Nature	Nature	Skype
Jane	F	3	Horse coach and trainer	Organises workshops for leadership teams using interaction with horses	Non-human animals	Farm
Iris	F	1	Philosopher, author and artist	Researched animal languages and politics	Non-human animals	Office
Michael	M	2	Senior staff member	Herder / NGO	Non-human animals	Home
Leslie	M	3	Executive coach and organiser	Focuses on social and economic transition of local areas and regions	Place	Home / walk
Daniel	M	2	Consultant / interim manager	Former director of environmental NGO	Place	Home
Gunther	M	1	Director/ academic	Tourism higher education	Place	Café
Frank	M	3	Director of state agency / professor	Teaches and works with others on ecosystem restoration	Advocacy	Home
Drew	M	2	Director	Working on circular economy	Advocacy	Office
Mark	M	3	Director	Ecosystem restoration	Advocacy	Office / skype
Kathrine	F	3	Director of communication	Moved between corporate and NGO sectors, currently working on circular economy	Work Organisation	Office / café
Ellen	F	2	Former director consultancy	Recently retrained in ecological farming	Work organisation	Skype
Steven	M	2	Director/ entrepreneur	Eco resort and ecological farm	Work organisation	Skype

The majority of interviewees have an academic degree, two to doctorate level. Two were trained as ecologists. This means that most have an intellectual understanding of relating to Nature in addition to that gained by experience. Four of the interviewees mention Eastern religion and meditation practice as part of their reference and training. Two actively orient themselves towards Buddhism. Two interviewees tell me their fathers were priests. One was a political refugee at some point in life, and another is a descendant of political refugees. One interviewee is familiar with Shamanism, regularly following workshops in a Western kind of Shamanism.

3.4.2 interview method and protocol

A psychosocial way of doing research is described by Clarke and Hoggett among others (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Todres, 2007; Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 1993). The key notion as I take from them is to understand the individual interviewee to be part of his or her life world and while making inquiries into individual people's motives or choices, first see those in relation to social, wider held ideas and notions, second be aware of unconscious not directly accessible elements in people's answers. The latter require careful design and execution of one's research method (as well as analysis and interpretation). In *Doing Qualitative Research Differently,* Hollway and Jefferson describe how they invented the Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) as a way of doing qualitative research that does right to humans as whole beings, while at the same time not immediately taking answers at face value. Central to their approach is the idea of what they call defended subjects (2013). As they say, "all research subjects are meaning making and defended subjects, they will very likely have different meaning frames from the researcher, protect vulnerable aspects of self and will have limited insight into why they experience or feel as they do" (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013, p. 24). An interview in the spirit of FANI will step outside the question and answer mode of interviewing where the interviewer sets the agenda and is in control of the information produced. Stimulating narrative is a core element of FANI; Hollway and Jefferson state, "narrative is the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful." According to Polkinghorne "it organises human experience into temporally meaningful episodes" (quoted in Hollway and Jefferson 2013, p.29). Hollway and Jefferson argue that story-telling stays closer to actual life events than methods eliciting explanations. Another core element in FANI is association. Hollway and Jefferson argue that association elicits a particular kind of story, that "is not structured according to conscious logic but according to unconscious logic, that is, the associations follow pathways defined by emotional motivations, rather than rational intentions" (2013, p. 34). As they show, it is important to understand what the overall research questions produce for the interviewee, or she/he could reproduce the frame instead of being helped to speak his/her own frames. They show how open questions (e.g., can you tell about your story or your experience during this time in your life?) can generate a

story rich in themes. In addition to describing interview technique, they expand to a full circle of research discussing data analysis and interpretation as well, emphasising the inter-subjectivity of the research relation and the importance of triangulation and use of others to be able to analyse and interpret beyond one's countertransference. One of the important possibilities of using an interview approach based on FANI is analysis and interpretation of underlying meaning as it comes through themes in conversation (discourse). As the idea of the defended subject is a key idea in following Hollway and Jefferson, I want to emphasis some nuance to this idea. First it is important to lift the idea of the defended subject out of the danger of becoming clinical, as if it is a diagnostic (mental health kind of concept). My first premise is that interviewees are eager to learn and develop, hence are not candidates for therapy. Nevertheless, as the concept of defended subject is used both pointing at personal history, intrapsychic development and how a person identifies with social discourse (as defence against anxiety) it is interesting to understand interviewees story and how he or she expresses relating to Nature. Because Nature is such a complex and, in many ways, contested concept, where relating to nature is not only desirable or esthetically 'nice', but also politically loaded and not without consequences for once identity or social wellbeing even. Second and I want to point at Crociani-Windland again the concept if the defended subject is shifting within thinking about how meaning is 'produced'. As she shows it is no longer pointing at the way Freud explained transference and countertransference as a doctor patient relation, where a patient can regress while the therapist stays completely rational providing the patient with all the right interpretations to cure. Being subjective for both client and therapist is considered more real these days, (both in therapy and in research), which means that knowledge is produced through the relation, while the researcher uses his or her subjectivity (intuition, emotional response, not knowing) in the interview engagement as well as in the subsequent analysis and interpretation, in the task to disclose and add to knowledge. This is important as it opens up the very notions of the unconscious or preconscious aspects of reality (Crociani-Windland, 2018) as implied in the study of relating to nature, as this project wants to do.

As I mentioned in the introduction, I also looked into ways of interviewing based on phenomenology. Gendlin's *Focusing* describes a therapy method that uses 'bodily knowing', for which he invented the phrase 'felt sense' (Gendlin, 2003, p. 10). A felt sense is not just there, it must form. "You have to know how to let it form by attending inside your body. When it comes, it is at first unclear, fuzzy. By certain steps it can come onto focus and also change. A felt sense is the body's sense of a particular problem or situation." (Gendlin, 2003, p. 10)

The extent to which clients refer to their bodily felt experience during therapy correlates with 'successful' outcomes as defined by various measures (Gendlin et al., 1968). Clients who can pause and 'check' their words and ideas with the body sense of their issue remain grounded in their actual experience – they sense a bodily-felt response when they express how they really live a particular situation (Gendlin, 2003). Gendlin developed *Focusing* as instruction in order to assist more people to gain direct access to their lived meanings in this bodily felt way (Barnett and Madison, 2012). This is where Gendlin builds on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology.

Where Hollway and Jefferson build on psychoanalysis and stay within the realm of research, Gendlin was a philosopher and researcher before developing a therapy method. However, both approaches mention a shift as a core idea. In psychoanalysis and psycho-social studies, such a shift as described by Ferro and Civitarese is a shift in meaning, whereas in Gendlin's therapy method the shift is referred to as a bodily shift first before it captures meaning through language (defining the felt sense). The key elements from both interview designs combined, lead to the following principles:

- Narrative (autobiographical)
- Association, associative engagement
- Senses, bodily knowing, bodily cognition

- Shift, either in a field of meaning, or through bodily awareness, followed by construction of meaning
- Discourse

I started to identify the following characteristics of interviewing and the way to do it. Overall, I aimed to allow for a narrative (autobiographical) response from the interviewees. Another element became to work through encouraging associations and sharing my own associations as well. Thirdly, the interviewing became a way of being aware of the senses and accounts of how not only emotions but also bodily responses (affect) are involved or talked about. Together, these interview characteristics aimed to uncover lived experience as well as the way a person described what that meant, not only cognitively (with reference to knowledge about Nature) but with reference to experience. Having identified these interview elements helped me to have confidence in my interview technique. In the next section I describe how I analysed the transcripts to uncover 'lived experience' and the meaning of the life stories, both for the individuals and across the sample of stories.

First, though, two more elements of the interview design need elucidating. The first came from Tom Wengraf (2001), who suggests putting an opening question that invites someone to share his or her life story (or particular episode of it) as a narrative. His idea of the gestalt of the interview process helped me to understand how a relation with an interviewee is shaped around the way an interviewee shares his or her story. This is important, as an interviewee has his or her own interest as to what he or she thinks is relevant (Hollway and Jefferson) but also has stored his or her experience and memory according to an internal coherence and timeline that makes sense to the interviewee. As an interviewer, it can be most productive to use a second and third interview to follow how a story is presented and probe accordingly. Wengraf sees it as a missed opportunity (and big mistake) if an interviewer does not allow a Gestalt to develop and make 'use' of it. In this way, a story is over when it is over. Stopping or breaking a story up by not respecting its timeline will break an interviewee's stream of consciousness.

This is very helpful for ensuring a story is told to 'completion'. I started to understand what it meant when an interviewee does not add more elements to a story. I now knew I had to be prepared for every interview to be different, and that some people would need to be interviewed several times when, for others, once would be enough (Wengraf, 2001). Interviewing like this potentially becomes a longer relation in time, which means that interviewees develop their stories and ways of contributing to the research as well. Interviewee and interviewer have 'travelled' together. Analysis in between interviews allowed me to formulate questions to probe deeper into somebody's story (usually in the second interview), and identify what questions remained still to ask in addition to the interviewee's life story (usually during the third interview). In Wengraf's protocol, the opening question should invite a person to start telling a story, begin his or her Gestalt.

The second element relates to a crucial concept in psychoanalysis, namely 'countertransference' which I mentioned before. Psycho-social research methods address countertransference in research. In therapy, countertransference is the process of conveying thoughts and/or feelings to a client that the therapist him or herself is not aware of and which arise from the relationship between the two. That points at the need for self-reflecting work by the interviewer, during and after an interview and in preparation for any subsequent interviews. If unspoken, unexplored or undiscussed, mental development processes of the client (or the interviewee, in case of research) can become problematic, as misunderstanding or enhancing unhelpful ideas within the relation can result. It is of course crucial to be aware of those elements that can be 'put on' an interviewee by the interviewer. Therefore, I kept a reflective diary to capture my feelings and thoughts on interviewing as well as on the research as a whole. This helped me to pay attention to how I felt during an interview, or to look back at the flow of an interview and consider if I influenced it in any particular way. Figure 2 shows the interviewee interviewer engagement in a schematic way.
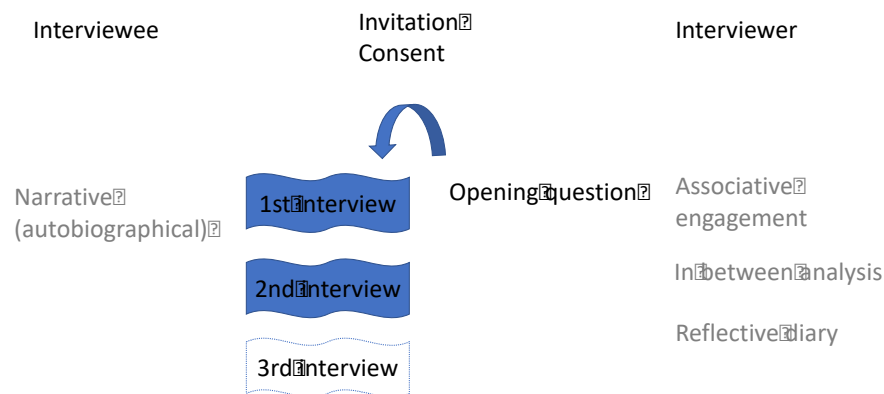
Figure 3. Interviewee engagement and interview technique

Now it can be seen and must be stressed that the research questions were not the same as the interview questions. The interviews always started with the question 'Can you tell me the story of how you got to do what you are now doing?' During the interview, other questions were asked in an associative manner, fitting in with the flow of the way the interviewee was telling his or her story. Examples of those types of questions were 'Can you say a bit more?' or 'How did you experience that?' when it felt to me that more information would help to grasp the story's meaning. In following the gestalt of the story, a second type of question made an association to a previous aspect of the interview to explore further and invite the person to make links or reference to what was NOT yet told already, or to make an association to a social context, to explore the wider discourse. These were questions like 'Last time you spoke about… can you tell me what that meant to you at the time?' or 'I thought about what you told me and it made me think of an experience I had, namely….' or a statement like 'What you told me gave me an association with ….'. Another type of question could be to ask how the person felt about a part of the story, or how he or she felt in his or her body. 'How would that feel in your body?', 'Where did you notice or feel that?' are examples, or offering an association myself like, 'What you describe resonates with me, I can feel it in ….

(mentioning a body part).' I used Gendlin's protocol of felt sense, in this soft and non-directive way.

Interviews were conducted in either English (eight) or Dutch (seven). Of all the interviewees, three were native German / Swiss speakers. Half of the transcripts were done by a professional editor (before re-reading by the researcher), the other half by the researcher. All translation into English was done by the researcher, after which the whole text of the thesis was proofread by an experienced proofreader and native English-speaker.

3.4.3 method of analysis

In the research I adopted different but complementary methods of analysis. I have not chosen one specific discourse, context or practice for this study. The overall and general one is 'relating to Nature' that at the same time can be seen to not really exists as a disourse because 'not relating to nature' is the general defence for most people. This was one of the reasons for looking at different nature practices. Hence, following Hollway and Jefferson I have chosen to analyse my interview encouters (and transcripts) with five people from each of the five Nature practices. In doing so more specific analysis of individual life stories has been possible. With enough participants in each of the Nature practices (namely 3 for each of the practices) there is another opportunity for analysis. That is to compare the practices. I have done so in a second part of analysis where I have followed Thematic Analysis to identify shifts of meaning (as the theme to look for in analysis) for each of the Nature practices. In other words, is there something specific about a practice that creates particular shifts of meaning compared to other practices. Finally, a third way has been to analyse across all cases and categories in applying Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as a way to come as close as possible to capturing lived experience of relating to nature of all the research participants. I explain each of these three approach to analysis in more detail below.

analysis of five individual people's stories

Analysing individual life stories, I wanted to know how a person expresses his or her relating to nature. Here I draw on Hollway and Jefferson (defended subject), mainly with keeping lived experience in mind (Finlay, 2014) as well as looking at moving elements in time (Wengraf, 2001), as I interviewed all participants more than once. One expectation of doing this combined 'deep dives' into individual stories was to find examples of people talking about or non-verbally expressing Nature having agency or examples of non-human others as agents, while building trust in the interview engagement to be able to hear socially contested ideas about nature. Because engaging with nature is not mainstream and nature lovers and 'greens' are quite often seen in a particular way in (Western) society.

The following table addresses the analysis of individual people's life stories.

Table 2. Approach to the analysis of individual life stories

Psycho-social Lens: An interpretive analysis of the person's intra psychological awareness (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013) in relation to his or her practice of relating to Nature (discourse). Attention is paid to: psycho-social aspects beyond tell it like it is; the whole context, utilizing theory; using reflexivity; making links between fragmented data.

Phenomenological Lens: An interpretive analysis of meaning making, awareness of the world (Finlay, 2014) in relation to practice of relating to Nature. Attention is paid to: essential features of the experience (beyond the person); evoking the lived world; examples and quotation from the data illustrating experience; potential for transformation, with reference to the body (physicality).

Gestalt Lens: An interpretive analysis of the person's gestalt (based on Wengraf, 2001) in relation to his or her practice of relating to Nature. Attention is paid to: the way somebody makes contact, presents him or herself; foreground and background of awareness of a person; a gestalt that can emerge through more than one interview.

analysis within the categories of the research frame

In looking within categories I wanted to know If the analysis would point at particular shifts of meaning as expressed by more than one interviewee within a same category of Nature practice. In other words, does a certain category of Nature practice come with certain kinds of shifts of meaning about relating to Nature. The concept of shift of meaning is described in the literature in both psychoanalytic therapy (Ferro and Civitarese) and Gendlin's therapeutic approach of 'felt sense'. A shift of meaning can also occur collectively, in which case it is a shift in social discourse. In other words, a shift of meaning can be expressed by the individual as belonging to him or herself, but also as belonging to a group or wider collective that somebody picks up on or is influenced by. Nevis talks of level of system in this respect, the individual, group or larger collective (Nevis, 1987).

For the actual analysis of shifts of meaning, I used the guidance of thematic analysis as described by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This is done through analysing data elements one finds to be dominant in a transcript. The procedure of analysis requires detailed analysis of the occurrence of words and expressions. In this way, thematic analysis is more bound to the text of a transcript (what is actually said). Table 3 summarises this part of the analysis.

Table 3. Approach to the analyses of shifts of meaning

Using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) as a guideline, I focus on identifying shifts of meaning with the following questions in mind:
- What striking experiences of Nature are presented as a shift of meaning?
- Does the individual see this occurring to him, herself (intra psychic) or at a group level (inter psychic) or at a collective (cultural) level?
- What is impacted, what does the person do with the experience / shift of meaning coming from the experience?

Thematic analysis (based on Braun and Clarke, 2006), means going through phases:
- Familiarising oneself with transcript.
- Generating initial codes through identifying particular words.
- Searching for themes.
- Reviewing themes.
- Defining and naming themes.

analysis across all interviewees

For analysing lived experience that can be seen to emerge across all interviewees, I used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as described by Jonathan Smith and Jonathan Smith and Mike Osborn (Smith, 2017, Smith & Osborn, 2007, 2015). IPA operates with a double hermeneutic that we already acknowledged in the epistemology section and that is equally agreed to by psychoanalytically informed psycho-social researchers. This requires close attention to detail, "looking in detail for experiential themes case by case" first before interpreting more overall themes (Smith, 2017, p. 303). I have added India Amos and particularly her idea to apply the researcher's felt sense to the main themes coming out of the analysis (Amos, 2016). Amos took IPA and added Gendlin's subjectively felt sense. This is not similar to countertransference (referring to unconscious representations within the therapist's psyche) as it points at the body responding (referring to the unrepresented unconscious.[29] In doing so, she describes an added step to the procedure of IPA, consisting of checking if the emerging themes feel as having been put in the right wording. Through applying Gendlin's method of focusing, Amos shows that this wording can be worked through to become closer to lived experience through engagement of the researcher's body (Amos, 2016). Table 4 shows the approach of analysis of the emerging themes across more than one interviewee.

Table 4. Approach to the analyses of themes across interviewees

Smith (2009)	Amos (2016)
Double hermeneutic, making sense of the interviewee's sense making. Descriptive, linguistic, conceptual. Look for patterns, build thematic structure. 4- 6 stages procedure:	Emotionally receptive forms of understanding. Adding Gendlin to IPA procedure Using one's bodily response to find the words that match.

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[29] See for discussion of different kind of unconscious Ferro and Civitarese, as discussed on p.30 and 31).

-Initial response, Emergent themes, Super ordinate themes, Protocol repeated for each case (like number of people interviewed) -Establish patterns across cases, documented in master table -Review -Transform master table into narrative account, supported by verbatim extracts from participants The latter is written down. Followed by discussion, with reference to questions and literature on major clues, concepts (existential issues).	84
I summarise the task of the analysis to be to describe the collective themes that are the felt sense of interviewees' sense making of their relating to Nature.	

I will now describe the insights from analysis.

4. INSIGHTS

4.1 insights from analysis of individual life stories

Below I present one person from each of the areas of my research framework. These are analyses, conducted as described in the method section, of individual life stories and how relating to Nature played out in each one's life in its unique way.

4.1.1 john: going into nature

At a young age, John was diagnosed with ADHD. This is a decisive element in his relating to Nature. He discovered after finishing secondary school that he loved traveling and going into Nature, and that it helped him to understand who he was as a person with this condition. Back in the Netherlands, he followed more study (an intensive course in coaching skills) and started to work as a leisure event organiser as he expected with his coaching skills to help people make sense of their Nature experience. But he found the job too managerial, too much 'in his head'. As he wanted to make more use of his Nature experiences, he started his own business offering Nature retreats, being sure such retreats could help others, as going into Nature had helped him. His company did not provide him a stable income for his new family. During the period of the interviews, he had just accepted a new job with a government agency, working with men who are offered day care and guidance for various reasons, as they are not able to acquire a 'normal' career. This job gives him the best of both worlds: providing a stable income for his family as well as bringing certain people into Nature, helping them to benefit, the way he discovered he had benefitted himself.

John called his first phase in life learning about himself and his ADHD 'my journey of self-destruction'. He gives several examples. On one occasion, traveling on a bus in South America while knowing the route would be going through a dangerous neighbourhood, every passenger had to run for their life because of a shooting. He told me this story without giving me the impression he was finding

this exceptional, or that he was very fearful when it happened. On another occasion, he was at a beach with some of the highest waves on the planet. Never having surfed before, he went in the water and had a near-death experience, almost drowning. He shared this event as an illustration of his recklessness. He told me he felt pulled into doing it, identifying himself with the people who could do it, seeing them out there. A sense of looking for recognition, finding something he could do better than others, being cheered at maybe even came over me, when John told me about these examples of his 'journey of self destruction'. I still wonder what he was destroying or what it was that needed destroying.

He told me about his father, who wanted to help him. He was expecting his father, a psychologist, to know how to do that, dealing with ADD or ADHD (as John uses both abbreviations). But his father didn't know how, according to John.

John: Psychologists always look back instead of into the future.

This could point at some tension in that relationship. It can also be taken as evidence that John learned to work 'through his body' and finds meaning through his body and less directly through language (as maybe his father was trained to do). Or perhaps his father expected his son to use his 'cognition' in the way our Western culture functions. These ideas could be part of the answer to the question of what needed to be destroyed, or what needed to be left, in order to find something real, something John wanted to become that he didn't not feel helped with (neither by his father nor society). Substantial research exists on 'being' with ADD/ADHD and building one's identity. Maureen Kaplan draws attention to the fact that health care professionals often lack the time to work with youth diagnosed with ADHD (2006). Sheila Jones and Morton Hesse state that "Youth with ADHD moving from childhood to adulthood need support for identity development." (2018, p. 92). Sciberras et al. report that "It is important to elicit the report of both parents and children for understanding the functional impairment of children with ADHD" (Sciberras, Efron, Iser, 2011, p. 321).

John: When I had already looked at situations from different sides, then he (RZ: John's father) came up with so many new ones ... He is a very clever man. But I think that I started to link psychology to 'being in your head and thinking', while I am more a man of practice, experiencing and doing. I saw more of my future in coaching.

John and I did not explicitly explore his reference to ADD / ADHD, neither can his narrative and my interpretation be taken as a clinical diagnosis of any sort or shape. However, it seems clear it is core to his identity and very relevant in how John related to Nature, to himself and the world. At some point he confessed telling me he had 'checked me out' in the first interview if I was not being to intellectual and if I had my heart in the right place. It felt he defended his identity having found comfort through going in Nature and accept his energy, his doing style of going through life and not seeing risk the way other people might. And how he John had found his purpose and niche in society relying on himself and Nature. Paul Shepard states modern society is troubled in not providing the extensive ontogenesis into healthy adulthood that traditional cultures provided (Shepard, 1995). This resonates with Ralph Metzner stating:

> There was no possibility of entering into a communion relationship. Western humans became autistic in relation to the surrounding world. "Like autistic children, who do not seem to hear, or see, or feel their mother's presence, we have come blind to the psychic presence of the living planet and deaf to its voices and stories, sources that nourished our ancestors in preindustrial societies. This situation can be remedied only by "a new mode of mutual presence between the human and the natural world" (Metzner, 1995, p.59).

Did John intuitively look for and repaired his own ontogenesis? Because of his travels and being in Nature he recognized better what happened to him in an office situation, where he would get distracted, restless and make mistakes in jobs requiring cognitive discipline. He stated he had more control and trust knowing

what helped him because of Nature. He found that, coming back from Nature, his tranquil state and his sense of his self as whole usually lasted for several weeks, before restlessness would kick in. He also learned that Nature is a different 'thing' for different people and that his clients were interested in Nature for different reasons. He first thought that Nature quests should be physically challenging, as he had learned from his first Nature teacher who had been a body guard for the Dalai Lama and experienced himself on his first endeavour. Despite his physical endurance on that first trip. He told me that first trip he was totally unprepared and did not have any of the right clothes or gear, suffering being soaked and freecing cold for days, while other participants went home. Later he became gentler in how he offered going into Nature and what he expected his clients to endure. He also was at peace that 'results' can only be had with a few people. Here John seems to explain to me a mix of disourses about Nature. On the one hand the idea with some Nature guides that going into Nature is like an initiation, a transition (like the indigenous rituals of becoming a man). While at the same time he tells me something about modern people not being interested in hardship or knowing Nature (and themselves) like that, but are more interested in the pleasures of going into Nature, the beauty and tranquillity, the peace. He was proud to take some of his clients (men who know about living on the street) and help them gain self-esteem and sometimes even making transitions into different lives. John tells one story of taking successful entrepreneurs alongside less successful men with experience of street homelessness on a retreat in the desert, with nomad guides. The entrepreneurs insisted on going through a storm, against the guides' advice. The entrepreneurs realised they made a mistake.

John: Those entrepreneurs were actually scared like children. Some were really panicked. And then back in that camp. That was so impactful, so deeply impactful. My guys, who are used to harsh conditions on the street, they could take it. Suddenly you saw the status shift of all the people in that group.

Afterwards, the entrepreneurs who had taken on the challenge of the trip were impressed by how skilled the men from the street were in such harsh conditions. Some of the 'street' guys were offered jobs by these financially successful entrepreneurs. Through this story John shares his world view with me of how he indirectly disagrees the world valuing money and cognitive cleverness (reference to his father), while himself and the men living of the street exhibit a different cleverness that is culturally under appreciated, the cleverness of working through ones intuition, one's body.

John recently travelled in a large group of tourists with educated Masai. He talked about eating from a ritually killed goat. He told me he was fascinated and did eat the meat – despite being somewhat shocked, being a direct witness of the killing - , as he felt the Massai to be so respectful of non-human life. John also told me that he observed the Masai men expecting submission from Masai women as well as the women in the group of travellers[30].

John: Putting them in their place.

Was John in agreement with that interpretation or accepting it as part of a different (disappearing) culture? During the third interview, when at his home, I witnessed him multitasking, witnessed him keeping an eye on one daughter who went to her daddy every few minutes, while he fed his newborn. All the while he talked to me, being interviewed. I was pointed toward the kitchen to make the tea myself. That made me feel better about his comments about the Masai and the way they treat women. Although I could have 'read' this differently namely as being 'ordered' to make my own tea so to speak. But it was not like that, it was invitational, gentle.

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[30] The Masai way is one interpretation of being in Nature and what is expected of men. In traditional Masai culture women have no possession, the men own the animals and they consider wives as part of their wealth (Curling, 1974).

With the lens of gestalt, it is clear that John presented many transitions to me. Over one year (three interviews), he had moved from being an entrepreneur to working for an agency, and a second child had been born into his family. He was content at now being able to provide a stable income to his family, and enjoyed having learned to handle responsibility, for himself and for his clients. Long after the interviews, I learned that John's company still existed, but transformed into a membership-based one, with different service packages for different fees. This worked well, capturing modern life's self-management, while enjoying Nature 'on demand'. John had solved his marketing problem and through this membership, he safeguarded going into Nature when he needed it for himself as well. It also seemed to fit the logic of John's intuitive ability and joy in making connections to others and acting on a level of confidence in himself. This is self that he discovered and that he had started to understand and appreciate through travel and being in Nature.

I paid particular attention to John's experience of Nature and to what extent he himself would talk about Nature as having agency. Once, when he was by himself, he noticed a herd of moose getting closer. John saw a white one and described to me in detail how he slowly approached it, while being aware that the moose saw him. According to John, the moose 'decided' to let him come close and be at arm's length. Here, John talks about this moose as being an individual that made up his or her own 'mind' in meeting him.

But John did not become an environmentalist in the sense of starting or joining an environmental organisation. His experience of Nature seemed to be primarily helpful in developing himself. He valued Nature but not for the sake of Nature's agency. In many ways, Nature helped John – and still seemed to do so – to go through transitions, becoming a 'natural man', who engages in intuitive ways, while Nature is exactly 'the place' where being like this can be developed. Nature helped him to learn who he was, having experienced being different from an early age because of his ADHD. His enjoyment and self discovery through being in Nature helped him to adapt and find his role in society. But John did not

problematise society for its alienation from Nature, neither did he organise social change in that broader sense, although he (again intuitively) found his niche in working with people that are helped by such intuitive pathways and finding confidence and self esteem. I would love to interview John again now years later and see how he has further developed in his role in the agency.

4.1.2 jane: engaging with non-human animals

Jane was brought up in the countryside. Both her parents were very engaged with the world. Her training as a journalist gave her access to a large environmental NGO. During a sabbatical, she re-found her interest in horses. She started a business working with horses and people. She kept connected to the people that provided her training, translated their books and organised events that promote the ideas of leadership training in their way of engaging with horses.

As a child, she longed for the safety of knowing what she could do to get appreciation, is what she told me. Her mother was one of the founders of the political party that, in the current landscape, now calls itself Green Left, trying to save the world from nuclear weapons and stop people destroying Nature. Jane told me that in her mother's stories she felt a sense of "destruction" associated with the weapons and human conduct towards Nature.

Jane: If people make war against Nature, it will eventually cost us our lives, my mother said.

This is a complicated message to digest when growing up as it refers to a real thread and at the same time presents the world as a very unsafe place because of 'grown ups' being hostile for reasons that are hard to understand. She felt more at ease in Nature than at home. If at home, she preferred to do her schoolwork in the attic. She also described her parents as avoiding discussion about the relational issues that needed talking about, and as emotionally neglecting her. I

felt puzzled as I felt her parents (although she mainly addressed her mother) could have been engaged in politics in trying to protect her (Jane) and others from the world's existential threats. But the picture of her parents not engaging emotionally between themselves and with their children also made me wonder about their own history or if they experienced being overwhelmed with stress themselves. Whatever the situation, as Jane did not clarify and I felt her to be very vulnerable and protecting herself, mostly exercized compassion (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013, p. 164), she stated she felt other people's parents were more helpful. Not being restricted by her parents to go out with friends, she found more warmth and emotional support with parents of friends at school. One friend had a pony, and Jane immediately wanted to have her own. She further told me that in early adolescence, the family disintegrated, as she put it. On top she got severely ill and then needed to focus on finishing school. In all of this, horse riding got lost.

I will now follow the timeline of meeting her three times as it so clearly built up to me working with her in a session with a horse. While at the same time it is such a clear example of how trust was built between her and me and I learned a lot because of meeting her several times. I do want to emphasise that Jane had a considerable understanding of her youth and how traumatic it was.

During the first interview, she told me a lot about the theory of working with horses, including how horses need to be kept in the company of other horses. Upon leaving, she explained that experiencing horses is a much better way for me to find out what she does, than talking about it. It seemed a good idea for me to work with a horse and on agreeing to meet again, I was expecting that would happen. I also felt assessed, as in diagnosed to be in my head and offered a cure for it. Another idea came to me how horses (non-human others) are discovered to be transitional 'objects' (Winnicott) for ones development, similar to John having learned about himself through Nature. But the non-human others can also be 'used' as allies, helpers or protectors against the outside world, the ones that bring trauma upon the world, emotional ones or real physical events that can also cause trauma.

It is with regards to both personal development and the development of teams and leadership, that equine facilitated approaches are described in literature. Keren Bachi, among others (eg. Carlsson, 2017; Burgon, et.al, 2018, Flora, 2018) has researched equine facilitated psychotherapy, or EFP (2013). Bachi makes the connection to attachment issues and trauma, and to the holding environment. Other important elements of EFP, according to Bachi, concern the non-verbal and the body, the immediate affective mirror in the response of horses and the element of touch. She points to EFP as a safe way of working for therapists as well, for instance because the horse may be a *source of comfort* for the therapist (Bachi, 2013, p.194).

In her job with an environmental NGO early experience was joyful for Jane; the camaraderie, working towards results, fighting the external world. Her mothers influence in choising journalism as vocation and later wanting to work for an environmental NGO stays undiscussed with me. The camaderie and high energy lifted her spirits, she told me. Feeling unsafe, however, like in her family, came back when she moved into managerial positions. As she gives me examples of how she seems to lose energy and, in the end, feels lost in the NGO, I get a picture of the lonely Jane again that she was with her parents. She in particular describes several instances of confrontations between her and the top leadership in the NGO, which as she lets me know at that point in time is predominantly male.

Cheryl Meola, Rebecca West and Riina Koris among others describe research on EFP executive, or staff training (Meola, 2016, West, 2015, Koris et al, 2017). West researched setting up practices for equine supported leadership programmes. Although her research is not psycho-socially informed, her analysis is informative and relevant to Jane's story, emphasising a lack of attention to emotional leadership skills in many organisations (West, 2015). Mary Flora subscribes to that point, as she researched building emotional resilience grounded in the human - horse interspecies relationship, especially feminine equine relationship and individuation. In this way, she emphasises gender issues and cultural dominance of 'male values' in the workplace (Flora, 2018).

She then started to take horse riding lessons. At first, she was very disappointed, as she and the horses did not seem to go that well together. Horses look out for safety and respond to people's energy. This was a shock to her. When someone asked her how nervous she was when preparing a horse for riding, she had to admit to a high score (on an imaginative scale of nervousness). She realized she had to look at the emotional state she was in. She left the NGO. Eventually she found access to knowing herself differently, with help of others and doing an extensive training with horses and learning to work with horses and people. She seemed surprised by how long she had been able to stay in the NGO, surviving, having found ways of contributing in managerial roles, but never finding the same joy and sense of participation that she had in the beginning. She observed that she was repeating the patterns she learned as a child in her managerial positions. These included wanting to be on top, defending, intimidating others or drawing away from a situation, patterns that were enlarged by the organisation's culture and the people it attracted. As she started to develop herself, she also developed an analysis of human (work) cultures, commenting on their lack of emotional support. Her vision of leadership became part of her motivation to work with clients, offering her skills of how to be with and learn from horses.

I did not discuss with Jane the composition of the groups she trained, but it's clear she worked with men as well as women. While I do not argue that Jane started her business because of Western culture failing to meet the needs of women in (large) organisations, I pick up here on her experience of leadership when she felt it was working and successful and when not. The work in the early days of the NGO job was collective work, perhaps more in touch with feminine values and practices, of doing things together and looking after each other. When she moved to more hierarchical and competitive management roles, she went into 'survival mode', as she described it. She connected these feelings to how she felt as a child in her family. She even used the word psychological neglect, abuse and trauma (see above).

As we drove away, I still had questions. What was it she was learning at the moment; how did she see her development? She had spoken of using her experience of work in large organisations as a way to understand what her managerial clients are experiencing. She was now also looking for sound business advice herself, to help create a marketing strategy for the next phase of her business. Although she knew intellectually what she could do, she was finding it difficult to develop concrete activities and move up a level. It was as if the last 10 minutes of our meeting brought together crucial elements in her story. They seemed to illuminate how she wanted to work from her unique strength, the identity she had developed for herself, while at the same time looking for insights from the managerial world, a world where her interventions for wellbeing and better communication are needed but easily get lost.

Upon arrival at the second interview, I found Jane working with two boys. Jane again and again asked the taller of the two, whose turn it was, to see if he could make one of the horses move, or move with him. The boy kept going at it, but at best could only get the horse to make a few steps. He patiently wondered but could not find clear answers. I felt he was looking for instructions that he could cognitively understand, but didn't receive other than notions of using his 'energy', his body, not thinking but doing. Jane asked him not to stop when moving to the horse – which made him almost crash into the stationary horse. He tried all kinds of ways. I wondered what Jane was trying to achieve. I was not interfering, but I felt for the boy, who kept trying, to mentally grasp what was going on, how to do 'it' (mobilizing the horse, making it walk with him). Eventually, Jane stepped in and was indeed able to have the horse walk with her, without shouting or using a whip. So how did she do it? It was not clear to me or the boy, even as she tried to explain. It seemed to be something about using one's body and one's energy and determination. She commented to me about the boy's apparent lack of confidence. I could see and feel that myself, as the way he ran to the horse lacked presence, for lack of a better word. But I was wondering if this was his 'problem' (being used to cognitive ways of learning) or hers (struggling to find a connection with the boy, struggling to make a connection, as this assumed lack of confidence

might very well be a shared lack of confidence. I could see that Jane had not many options left in her teaching. At the same time, I was puzzled how to help somebody when there are not so many words to describe what it is about, or rather if the words cannot transmit immediately, how to do the teaching.

Jane said that she had learned to trust her body. (She experienced me, her interviewer, as being in my head.) She explained that she was mostly interested now in the simplicity of a relation, not so much in the complexity of political activism that the NGO she worked for took on (as had her mother) and that had given her a very unsafe start in live. She also talked about how she kept working on herself and her self-development, not neglecting emotional issues that she experienced, but taking responsibility for looking into them and taking emotions as valuable information.

During the third interview, it was my turn to work with a horse. I was asked to pick the horse I wanted to work with from three horses quietly standing in a field. I picked the one that was slightly limping and behind the others. One of the three was very curious, active and in the front, the third horse seemed alert, but not in the front, more in the middle. Jane asked me why I picked the slightly limping one. To my surprise I found myself saying that I go for the 'underdog', and because these are big horses and the slightly limping one is less intimidating. Jane brought the horse I chose from the field to the paddock. She asked me to walk to the horse from about 10 - 15 meters away. It didn't move away from me. Jane explained she can see if a horse accepts a person. It didn't look at me, in fact didn't seem to respond at all. In discussing this exercise, I was told that the horse, being a prey animal, checked me for safety, probably not for the content of my kind whispers. My need to establish an exchange at this moment with this horse through language, whispering my good intentions to it, was considered by Jane a total projection of my needs to be loved, to be seen as nice. That was a shocking comment, but revealing. Such learning is what horses provide, being projection screens. Jane asked what I wanted to do next.

In the meantime, the horse lay down. I had an idea, an urge to lie with it, not necessarily touching, curious how that would be and if I could stay relaxed. I did, lying down close to the horse, and after a while felt my body and started wondering what to do next. I wanted to stand up again and felt the energy to ask the horse to stand up as well. The feeling came out of my body, I did not think about it. However, I felt determined and before I knew it the horse got up and we started walking, me and the horse. I sensed a connection, a presence, as the horse responded to me. I felt absolutely not alone, and I was aware of encountering the energy of another, namely, the horse.

To my surprise, I was able to make the horse move within a relatively short time. I was proud. I sensed how to do it (with some suggestions from Jane) by using my body. I was no longer talking to the horse, I was directing it by starting to run, from a distance behind the horse. I found out that it is not about banging into the horse, but more like almost passing the horse in a parallel movement but keeping behind it from an angle. I could even start to use the fence of the ring and myself with the horse in between, to make it go the wider circle of the fence, or let it make a short cut, when giving it more space to turn. I was getting the feel for the distance to keep from the horse, the pace and the right angle to keep it moving. When talking about this exercise, I started to find it plausible that the horse was responding to my energy, and me in turn to its energy and responses, as I felt clearly in the lead but in an interaction as well. It is barely possible to explain on paper. It felt as if I was *being* with the horse, the horse and me in a dance (a word used in popular movies or non-human animal tv shows), not me against it. The horse was running with me, as I was with the horse. Jane explained she was excited I could do it and said it had to do with allowing myself to 'go out of my head' – not 'thinking' or 'reasoning' as in human conversation. I felt I had learned something about myself and horses and about the work Jane does.

Jane, like John, had clear experience of Nature's agency. But with Jane it had become more like a deliberately chosen constant factor in her life, as the horses constantly present such otherness. Jane had found a way of offering her learning

to others, but issues of integration (in herself and of her work into Western culture) were present in her story. She helped people understand more of themselves and what is unknown or suppressed. At the same time, the question of integration remained. Jane was still trying to figure out how to create a structure of routine in her work, and how to create an effective marketing strategy, managing her business to flourish and have enough clients. I don't see that as a failure. I take that as a reality of Western culture, where splitting happens (between relating and cognition), that asks constant attention and cannot be solved easily by an individual person. Looking at dominant discourse about nature, Jane is in the centre of engaging with the agency of non-human others and making the experience of it available for her own 'healing' as well as of her clients, that look for such learning. As I found out recently Jane is still operating her business and recently moved to the East of the Netherlands, telling me she is doing well and that in the East there is more physical space of working with the horses.

4.1.3 daniel: engaging with place

Daniel was brought up in Zurich. His elder brother participated in the student revolts of the late sixties and early seventies. Daniel himself did not, but he followed the developments and debates. Together with a friend, he became a herder as his summer job. This led to an unexpectedly long time of herding in the summer and being a journalist during the rest of the year. At some point, he was confronted with a threat to the alp he was then living on and he became the lead campaigner to preserve it.

Daniel had a different life as a boy compared to his peers, as his father worked for an airline company and they frequently had holidays abroad. He had seen more of the world with a sense of freedom of travel as a boy, than most others probably in a life time. He told me he had loving parents and at the same time bound by a strict Protestant ethic and ideas about citizenship. He also told me his parents

were committed to not accepting injustice (his father being anti-Nazi and his mother supporting women's emancipation). A story of his dad's moral compass Daniel shared with me was when already much later in life he once (only once he smiled) consulted his father on a delicate matter. This was in an hour of despair where he contemplated on staying with his partner or not. His father left the decision to him while at the same time stating that,

Daniel: A man is responsible to follow through his duties.

This confused him and was totally unexpected, as he was on his way to finding out who he was emotionally (and later in life he did find another partner).

In this way both his parents were ethical people. Not accepting not accounted for injustice, was part of the family. So was Daniel as he confessed he had a history of standing up to teachers who expected their pupils to do as they were told. As he felt this to be unfair he refused to comply. He was expelled from school. I felt Daniel's relation to his brother was an important part of his sense of identity, being inspired by the student protests, liberating oneself from authority. Another element in the decision to become a herder was that Daniel and his best friends were inspired by a person who was an icon of living an ecological life in the mountains. Going into the Alps was about living different values, as well as a statement of independence, a statement against unethical authority. I wonder to what extent his family was a collection of persons doing the same and if or how swiss culture can be understood through that lense.

His first season as a herder he came close to collapse. Having learned to value responsibility in his family (his father's saying about duty), his loyalty towards the farmers helped him to keep going, take care of the livestock and make a good product. But it was something else happened as he started to shift gear, again a moment of despair, this time because of physical collapse caused by Nature. At that point he realised he needed to accept the learning from the farmers and the non-human animals themselves, through observation, through learning to relate

to Nature. He started mastering some skills and learning about managing cows, how cows behave and how Nature behaves through the seasons. His perseverance helped, the same perseverance that would later help him as a campaigner. Once mastering the basic skills allowed for the start of wanting to do something original and different. He genuinely enjoyed the lifestyle, getting attached to life on the alp, to Nature. He was observing all the time, writing articles and handing them over to passers-by, to post at the next village. He made drawings and later wrote, with several others, the first practical handbook of the skills of herding high up in the Alps. This reminds me of the boy in Jane's story and myself learning to be with a horse. The despair, frustration and confusion of not knowing how to be with Nature, how to read and understand Nature, how to find different parts in one self, learn to develop one's capacity to be with Nature.

Daniel: Every morning my arms were totally lame. They were paralyzed from doing that strong work. To be able to bring the cows home. Every morning at 4 o'clock I had to go first to the well to put my arms into the cold water to bring the feeling back to my fingers (laughing). It was a Sunday evening and I realized it is too much, I cannot bear it. And then a voice to my back said, "Oh, you will see. After one month, it will be much better." I didn't realize that a young farmer came up to me and he must have stood there, for a while, seeing me cry.

He told me the story of moving – long after his herding career had stopped - from the city to a little mountain village. As the new house was smaller, Daniel was very concerned his shepherd tools and materials (like poles to make fences) would not fit. Although he had not been on an alp as a shepherd for some years, he was not able to let go of his tools. These objects were part of his identity, promising that going back to the mountains was still possible. Only when most of his tools where moved to the new house could he relax.

Chia-Chin Lin and Michael Lockwood show aspects of attachment to place through their research in two areas of Tasmania (Lin & Lockwood, 2014). They propose two different types of place attachment, localised and generalised. In the localised

sense of place, personal and family identities are important. In generalised sense of place, historical and aesthetic values of these places underlay the formation of a cognitive place attachment (Lin, Lockwood, 2014, pp. 80, 81).

There is another element. He learned that not attending to the cows meant more work later on. It can also put the cows at risk and consequently yourself. He recalled how during the first season when still learning herding, the rhythm of the work, the physical challenge and the unpredictability of the weather and the cows' behaviour made him aware of depending on his herder friend and colleague. Disputes between them changed in character, became pointless as there was no time, seemed futile at the end of a day's work to go into them. Daniel had more stories about bonding. One day, for example, when he was with his son (who also became a herder), he predicted the weather wrong. It meant both of them having to work through the night to get the cows safe. He was very grateful to his son, not complaining, just getting up in the half dark of the early morning, as he emphasised their bond. These experiences are visible in the proposition of the consulting firm he recently started, emphasising joined discovery and cooperation.

A twist in the story comes when Daniel became a campaigner to conserve Nature. During the fifth or sixth year, he and his first wife – who had started to join the summer herding - were on a new alp. Usually herders like to build a relation and go to the same alp for several seasons, so they know the terrain, which helps in keeping the cows or sheep safe. This time they were on a new alp, rather remote and vast. One day a local farmer told him about the rumour of a dam to be built in the area. The next season on the same alp, he spotted a group of engineers measuring the mountain slopes. He asked what they were doing, and found it was a team gathering information in preparation for dam building. They were making small explosions in order to find out about the composition and strength of the rock, for that part of the alp was to become a lake with a power station, producing electricity. Daniel gave a lively account of him protesting and demanding to see the bosses as he told the story. He felt they had no right to destroy this beautiful

alp, 'his' alp, that he loved so much and knew every corner of. He explained how, after initial uncertainty, felt he had to organise the locals to prevent this dam building. As Daniel told me many details, what he emphasised was the reluctance of the farmers and local villagers to protest, even if they did not support the build. They felt it was not possible to oppose the authorities, a very powerful electricity board, operating in large parts of the country, that also supported communities directly in many ways, sponsoring football teams, etc. Later in his life, when he applied to manage a project, he was recognized as the campaigner and was refused the role. Daniel told me one person in particular still remembered how he organised protest and held it against him having been successful in the end in stopping the dam to be built.

Daniel was aware of Nature having agency. For instance, he told me how important the help of a dog is. Dogs are not as powerful as machines, but they can do things that humans or machines cannot. The best dogs read situations (they are all different according to Daniel, like cows). They can swiftly get to remote places and they can learn to follow instructions even from a distance (hearing your voice, your whistle or even reading a gesture from you changing your posture).

Daniel used the expression 'being in the middle'. He refers to the movie 'Little Big Man', a story of living between cultures with a young Dustin Hoffman. He meant it in two ways. One is the way that, in ordinary conversation people, can say they are 'in the middle' of something, meaning being busy. But Daniel also meant it in a different way, to describe his sense of being in between people and Nature, as if being in separate worlds at the same time.

Daniel: After three months on the alp, you sit in your VW bus with all your boxes of belongings. You drive to your 'I don't know where house' in the city. Before, anyone that showed up was important, because it was a farmer or hiker and then it was quite interesting to have half an hour's talk. Now suddenly there are a hundred thousand people because it is rush hour.

> Daniel, you tell yourself, stop watching at everybody's face. Makes no
> sense. It is another world; you need filters and fast or you will become
> crazy.

Being in the middle is a theme Daniel expresses in many ways, talking about his senses coming back from the alp into the city, talking about working with the cows and the dogs (being in the middle of them, all being different) and in talking about negotiating Nature with the people that are representing culture (engineers, local authorities in favour of liberal economies). See appendix 8.6, p. 317.

What Daniel's story adds to those of John and Jane is duration of living in Nature in a place that one attaches to (see also appendix 8.6, p. 318). Time allows learning it, appreciating its agency and becoming familiar through (non-vocal) adaptation, while making it 'one's own' (which is different from owning the place). Daniel was cross with Nature conservation advocates, he told me, who could only be academic, missing out on lived experience and attachment.

Daniel: You know, coming back to the alp after three quarters of a year, all traces of my presence are gone - that is sustainability for you.

When I last spoke to Daniel he had accepted a director role of a transnational NGO, promoting and enhancing the health of mountain ecosystems, while being supportive of this research project and encouraging me to do more.

4.1.4 mark: doing advocacy

Mark had been drawn into studying creatures in their natural habitat from a very early age. His drive to save and restore Nature brought him to the international forefront of that field as a director of a large conservation organisation. His latest project was entrepreneurial. He set up an organisation aiming to revolutionise the

restoration and management of biodiversity and the land. Through his new organisation he want to proof that ecosystem restoration is a viable activity and can even be of interest to investors.

Mark came across as a very busy, energetic, determined person. His office looked very organised, spacious with books about Nature, and pictures of Nature. We first met and introduced ourselves to each other there, while later continuing through skype. Mark was interested in what kind of research I am doing and wondered if he could be of any help. I asked him to say more about what his organisation does, before asking my opening question, inviting him to tell his story. I wanted to break the ice and establish trust between us that the situation was worthwhile. I tried not to be too formal, but I am not sure to what extent that was appreciated, as Mark came across as businesslike, trying to figure out if this 'interviewing' was going to waste his time. I sensed this might have something to do with telling him about my aim to research psycho-socially. But he also wanted to know if I was doing a PhD, as it felt he was not giving his time to just any study.

Mark: I looked in the eyes of animals that remained themselves, so I was thrown back to the question, 'what am I?' Therefore, I also remained myself. I became stronger, more and more stable, very well grounded by those kinds of animals, it could also be insects, it could even be plants.

Mark mentioned he would probably have been diagnosed with ADD or ADHD had he been younger. Perhaps that is linked to his feeling as a child that looking certain animals in the eye helped him to be himself. His parents allowed him to pursue this interest (collecting, keeping and studying animals in his room), and he also read about it, creating his own collection of expert books on ecology. He was interested in the environment animals live in from the beginning. When this wholeness got trampled on by other humans, it affected him very much. He was puzzled by why humans do that. When, for example, he witnessed a snake being beaten by men and it talked to him (in his head) when he was eight years old, or when he felt 'landscape pain', walking through a degenerated countryside that

had lost its vitality. I notice how 'the environment animals live in' is the key notion here as he tried to mimic the natural environment for his animals at home. Is there a link to Mark trying to understand his own environment, where he lives in? I don't know.

My sense of Mark being different, doing his own thing, was strong, as in a kind of non-conformism. While with others, Mark seemed to observe and comment at the same time but with some distance. He said as a student he didn't need:

Mark: sex, drugs and rock and roll.

But being drawn to the practice of squatting and being one himself for a while as a student, he was at the middle of it and the way he talks about it, alo studying it. He was part of a very engaged family, his father – a vicar - professionally involved with matters of life and death and wellbeing in the community. A community that rapidly changed during the second half of the last century, where many people found their own spiritual paths leaving the church. But he told me he didn't want to be in the same kind of attention, would rather distance himself somewhat and going out in the fields that still existed in the neighbourhood, loking for little animals. Mark lived the very *zeitgeist* by rejecting his father's church, as he felt the premise of 'being a sinner' didn't make any sense. The *zeitgeist* of his youth was soon followed by the everybody for themselves ethic of neoliberalism, and the rapid destruction of ecosystems and increasing pace of global warming. Having confidence and not being held back by negative experiences, he told me that his wife commented that he was like 'Teflon' when it came to dealing with disturbing ecological and political developments in the world.

Mark: My wife says, all that misery you let slip from you as Teflon. I think it is increasingly so. I see it. I do not go into wounded rainforest destruction discussions, do not watch documentaries because I already know it. If I focus on that I cannot go any further. There is too much trouble.

After graduation from University where he studied landscape ecology (what else), he took a job as a guide for a tourist organisation, going walking in Nature in remote places. He tells a story of being lost and meeting guerrilla fighters. But as he tells me he always guided the people he was responsible for safely back from the forest. I wondered about his confidence, his determination and to what extent he is telling me that is because of how he feels when in Nature. Another story tells of needing to send somebody away because that person would not stop complaining and spoiling the atmosphere. Again, I feel he refers to Nature, as the main figure in this atmosphere. Because the man he sends away maybe cannot cope, maybe feels distressed as he is away from Western comfort and maybe is the best of company in his own surroundings, but now he is in unfamiliar Nature. I am thinking this as spoling the atmosphere is not like any social situation, it is in the middle of the rain forest. Another story is of meeting his first shaman, who demonstrated incredible insight into Mark as a person through sensing him. That impressed him. Back in the Netherlands, Mark participated in a two-year spiritual training, which he described as a 'Kundalini' experience. Later, he lived close to indigenous people for a couple of years. He believes that indigenous people live in the real world, while ours in the West is 'made up', is virtual. I think Mark wanted to enjoy Nature, but also wanted to find out who he was and why Nature made him feel so comfortable, why Nature so much strengthened his 'self'. Living with native people, doing a spiritual training helped him to find out why this is.

Nevertheless, he was fed up with the little progress made in protecting Nature, people repeating the same stories and scenarios. 'Content' is missing from how Nature conservation is addressed in society, he said. As he knows from being in the centre of it, trying to persuade and convince politiceans and corporate leaders. But Mark argues there is more to making conservation relevant in existing Western culture. He decided to look for a different way. But then he only felt ready to unleash his new initiative once the emotional part of it fell into place as well. Part of what he wanted to establish goes back to his experiences of feeling whole, looking reptiles in the eye, being in the rainforest, meeting indigenous people and having been involved in spiritual training. His ideas seek to integrate

all of his practical and intuitive knowing and insights. He is not interested in the virtual Western world – the one reported in the financial newspapers every day, that only resonates with material gain and the emotions of greed and so-called progress - but the real one, the world the indigenous people know about and relate to. It is interesting how in his new organisation he managed to find investors, not being depended on small bits and pieces of a huge array of donors. It is alos interesting how in his new organisation he works with what could be seen as indigenous people, namely groups and communities of farmers not getting by in their areas because of the degraded lands and ecosystems.

Apart from being familiar with religious life from his father, Mark is also familiar with business through his grandfather. This resonates with Dutch culture, sometimes stereotyped by outsiders, as a unique blending of clergy motivated by morality, and traders pursuing profit. Mark is not interested in the dogma and rituals of organised religion and rejected his father's way at an early age. Nevertheless, his work for ecosystem restoration depends on persuasion through authentic engagement and proving that his ideas work to those engaged in projects locally, and to those who provided capital. It could be argued that he learned his methods from both his businessman grandfather and from his father's talk of trust and morality. He raises capital from people sympathetic to his objectives (morally), but with an expectation that there will be a return (profit) as well. His grandfather and father are familiar with working with the world at large. It seems Mark is doing the same.

During the third interview, as I ask about the 'now' and the way Mark and his organisation work he gives me more detail. He tells me he was becoming more focused on working through people. This seemed already present from when he was a guide in the tourist organisation. Working with and through people was also present in the story of when he was a conservation director needing to keep peace in the boardroom between many egos.

Mark: If a fight came up, and that happened, then I always tried to steer back to the essence, we are still doing ecosystem management. That worked very well but not always. Personal conflicts: what do I do? It was really some people who wanted to build their personal brand.

He went a step further than just developing a technique of good management. Now he is directly working with the dreams and hopes of people who had gone through crisis themselves and who show motivation and dedication to doing things really differently in working the land and regenerating the ecosystem.

Mark: I have started to work with people more and more. I thought about all those social impacts of our projects, but I am more and more thinking that biodiversity can save itself, if we work with good people. Preferably, when a fence has to be made, let it be done by the people themselves.

Mark's organisation is on a scale where role differentiation and working with many different experts is inevitable. Mark stated his role is now,

Mark: shifting to confirm long term commitment and building the organisation.

Could it be that this subjective element, acknowledged by Mark as crucial for people, is also necessary for the relation of people to Nature as well? At the same time, I sensed a tension between this subjective level of relating and the abstract world of investors and launching his organisation's projects on the stock market. As I asked him how experiencing Nature can be taught, he told me that almost everybody can find experiences in their memories, that almost everybody has a sensitivity to such experience. As his organisation grows, he is differentiating the roles within it, with different experts, a head office and people in the field. I wonder to what extent the subjective relating to Nature can stay a part of the structures in his operation. But it is too early to say.

Representing somebody being an advocate for his or her cause requires knowing about this other person. The extreme position of not knowing about another person is when that person is anonymous. To explore that a bit further, one can see anonymity as leaving aspects of communication on behalf of another person to the realm of fantasy or misinterpretation. Julie Ponesse sees two elements of anonymity, 'being unknown' and 'concealment' (Ponesse, 2013). Sara Heinamaa discusses Merleau-Ponty pointing at anonymity of relations with others on the level of perception, on the level of the body and how difficult it is to know (Heinamaa, 2015). Heinamaa also refers to trace as *earlier constitutive acts of alien subjects* (Heinamaa, 2015, p. 123). This idea of trace resonates with group analytic thinking. Peter Redman explores group analytic theory of the group unconscious as situated, or held, in matrices: personal, dynamic, and foundational. The foundational matrix should be understood as already there in time (from earlier generations, community history), and upon which the other two emerge (Redman, 2018). The foundational matrix and the anonymous level of trace (Merleau-Ponty) both suggest that perception by the individual person is built on community history and on practices within that community. This means that institutionalised advocacy risks sticking to what it already knows or thinks it knows (without questioning it). Thus, some cases of 'doing advocacy' risk leaving out contacting people and Nature, considering it unnecessary.

Mark is in the middle like Daniel, but at another level, the level of discourse itself and the level of wanting to influence institutional missions as currently most are only about distroying Nature to make a profit, while Mark is interested in making a profit while at the same time conserving Nature, restoring ecosystems.

Mark's story has several elements of him recognizing Nature having agency. Like Daniel, who believes herding is one of the best practices of living sustainably, Mark addresses Western culture as not recognizing reality in the way he learned from indigenous people, who live in and recognize the real world. Apart from Mark taking on Western economic thinking, working to influence its dominant idea of financial return, he addressed something else in his practice of relating to

Nature as well. This is time. Ecological time is different from Western cultural time. For instance, certain types of trees need 50 or more years to reach full productivity. Forests grow their abundance and diversity thanks to succession, a process that takes time, while modern investment algorithms are working to harvest 'wealth' in milliseconds. Mark's advocacy seems to me to negotiate time and its cultural role. We are running out of time globally and Mark was running out of time, not being interested anymore in the repetitive conservation debates that are not making a difference.

Mark was still running and supervising his organisation at the time the thesis was submitted, three years after the interiews.

4.1.5 ellen: shifting values, moving from corporate to ngo

Ellen was retraining to change her career. She was an organisational consultant and is now studying organic agriculture. As a child, her grandmother took her out to the orchard and garden. Although determined to study Nature, she was undecided what to do when she finishes her studies. It could be close to the business sector, but she no longer appreciated the motives and ethics that she identified this sector with. As she had no experience with other sectors – like NGOs - she thought about it a lot.

Her grandmother took care of an orchard and Ellen helped with the work in it from being a small child. Brought up looking after an orchard she knew she has a talent for gardening and is attracted to it. Her sensing of Nature was well developed; she spoke of feeling the energy of larger plants like bushes or trees, whereas she could not feel smaller plants, "a lettuce does not radiate the same presence as a bush", she said. In a joking way, she talked about her current garden as if it is a community, preferring the flowering plants not to be yellow. Ellen explained that 'going into Nature' helped her to reflect upon her feelings and thoughts, that she needs to draw back into Nature now and then, into the garden to (re)find herself. She did not choose to study ecotherapy – although

considered it - for her master's, although that was close to her intuitive knowing about plants and Nature. But she said she already knew that area. I think meaning she would be bored quickly. She therefore decided to follow a master's degree in organic agriculture. She wanted to learn from experts about growing plants in an environmentally friendly way. I was puzzled by this choice as she emphasized the expert part in it. There is nothing wrong with wanting to learn from others. My puzzle was about the aspects of power in a relation with experts. I was wondering how it would work out for her as her deliberations were deeply related to her finding her voice and identity. Not knowing yet where she wanted to continue her career made her self-conscious and self-reflective. She gave me a story of a girl in her class at primary school being pestered. When the girl's family became the first to have a video player, suddenly everybody in class wanted to be friends. Everybody got invited over to see a popular film. Ellen did not go, although she wanted to see the movie. She felt everybody to be dishonest. Ellen told this story to illustrate her dilemma in choosing her next career. She was remembering being aware of others: other people's choices, other people's judgements.

Ellen: And then other people say, what are you worried about, don't make it so difficult for yourself.

While studying she also ran a volunteer project with schoolchildren, supporting them how to have their own small gardens. I thought it was very relevant although she introduced it as fun, nothing special. To me it showed her wanting to contribute her time and effort to the wellbeing of others (being to schoolchildren like her grandmother was to her).

With all of this I tried to understand why she did not want to continu being a consultant to corporate clients. She gave some more clues. In finding her voice, understanding her authority in wider context, there was a gender component that she was ambivalent about as well as her vision for the world and wanting to do good. For instance, she commented on a company producing closed systems for growing plants and fish. She thought that business was not really about

sustainability and she felt the founders to be 'right in your face', a style of working that she didn't like and saw as 'male' and money driven.

Ellen: They market it like big business. They are fast Google people, think big business, high-tech, investors. Somehow that is not right for me. Although, if I am involved and we manage to make it known, I will be able to have more influence through that position.

She commented on noticing her professor, talking to a colleague, not saying hello when she passed by, clearly in his sight. She said she knew about that 'world', having been an organisation consultant and director. At one point when describing her career choice dilemma, she referred to herself as suffering Cinderella complex – the tension between striving for independence and having all the qualities to be independent and needing to be saved by another, often a man (Dowling, 1981).

Then she told me she wanted to talk to a US organic farming guru - a rare opportunity as he visited Europe - in order to present her thoughts on her development as a leader and ask for feedback on finding the leadership role she was looking for. This puzzled me again. For starters the guru was a man. Secondly what expertise (as she appreciated expertise) was an organic farming guru representing concerning leadership? Until I understood that she connected it to working on the land, being involved in a particular way of working with an ecosystem.

During the second interview, she was full of her Africa experience, where she had been for her studies and worked with local people's agriculture practices. She was helped by her intuition in communicating as she didn't speak the language, though she was also accompanied by a woman interpreter. There were two meaningful stories about her intuition when in Africa. One was how she saved herself and her interpreter when the locals pointed her at a place to camp at the border of the village. Ellen didn't feel good about that place and decided to camp

in the middle of the village instead. Later in the night, men came around the tents, clearly with bad intentions. Being on village territory made the men hesitant, just long enough for Ellen and her interpreter to escape into the brick house nearby. Another story concerned one of her Dutch supervisors, who was against her including personal stories in her thesis. Her supervisor in Africa, on the other hand, encouraged her to take her personal diary seriously and use it. Later that proved to have been the right decision for her.

Ellen told me she was amazed how people in the villages seemed to know her thoughts or referred to them without her speaking them. She was surprised how much she started to sense her way around and how she relied on her 'gut' feelings.

People's hospitality, and how she was invited into the families and communities were some of the experiences she tried to make sense of. At one point, she was even adopted as the daughter of a village elder, an exceptional honor, that confused her. It was an experience she could not compare to any other, emotional and impactful, as for some time she was the attention of so many people and in the centre of a lively community. She thought it was because she had shared all her findings about growing food with the villagers. This was quite meaningful (and maybe valuable in practical terms as well) for the farmers.

She told me how, while in one of the villages later in the trip, she started to value food and keep close track of her food stock, as there was a scarcity of food. She became very conscious of the amount she ate and how much was left from her stock after every meal. She noticed how food supplies influenced and interfered with emotional life in the village and how some people's (she mentioned several examples of men's behaviour) moods changed, especially at dusk and during the night, from having been friendly and giving an impression of wisdom, to using alcohol and being very violent.

When discussing her career with her father, he commented on her impatience not seeing her in a role as a politician – a comment that affected her deeply, as she wanted to have impact in the world. Her father looked her in the eye, she said, when she was just back from her field trip to Africa and confessed to him she wanted to go back. She said it was what her father did (looking her in the eye in a certain way) when he did not know all that well what to say but knowing it wouldn't make a difference anyway in her decision.

During this second interview, she also told me her experience in Africa became her guide for what she wanted to do after graduating. She had already subscribed to a course in Africa to attend just before graduation. She explained to me she felt she could be more herself in Africa. I had a sense of 'homecoming'. Again, there was an ambivalence as she commented on African people not using their brains the way Western people do. But that was her attraction to Africa at the same time, Africa being different. Maybe she wanted to develop her own leadership to be less 'brainy', more direct, more embodied? She was keen to comment on Western culture from her African experience.

Ellen: I sometimes laughed at it and occasionally thought: "You do not use your brain." I mean, if you fail five times in what you do, then you should at least think about an adjustment? But they do not do that at all. They hope a match or solution will come tomorrow when they will do the same thing again.

I asked her about being unconditional as that seemed a word fitting her experience and the way she spoke about being with the locals in Africa. Meeting a foreigner by the local people unconditionally, with no suspicion, no intention to receive something or to gain some kind of advantage.

Ellen: I can also say that I myself have experienced my Africa research unconditionally. But that being unconditional is maybe harder over here, is much less appreciated here in the West. Here my experience is put down

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as exciting or as adventurous or as…. It also has to do with the way our lives are organised. I understand that, because the interactions are organised so there is a dependency. A dependence has been organised between people.

A good friend of mine who came to visit last week to drink tea, said: "Yes, I would like to do what you did. But we have children."

She commented again on her father, who said he recognized the gaze in her eyes. He at first thought her longing for Africa would ebb away, but then recognized it would not. As I found out later (three years after the interviews), Ellen went to Africa for two more years after graduating. This was exciting news as her sensitivity, intuition, her ambition to develop her own kind of leadership, her wanting to help other people and her knowledge that she had acquired about local agricultural practices and cultures, all seemed to come together in that plan. Where Ellen expressed having found a purpose and a match to a new career path, like a home coming, this reminded me of Daniel. This feeling at home was also expressed by Daniel and to some extent by the others. While Daniel refers to Nature, to non-human others, Ellen refers to a whole different culture, where she at the same time works with Nature (organic agriculture). Her discoveries are personal as well as political (like Daniel and Mark). Both these aspects (personal and political) of her journey are also gender related. Her journey is beyond 'just' choosing a place to live, or how to live practically (commuting or not). It is even beyond her choice of life partner - she and her partner split up.

Knut J. Ims & Lars Jacob Tynes Pedersen (further referred to as Ims) investigated people's career choices in corporates from a position of ethics, particularly the debate on responsible leadership (Ims, 2015). They notice individuals' radical acts of personal responsibility despite inflicting considerable costs on themselves (and potentially on others) (Ims, 2015, p. 183). Ims distinguishes between the responsibility of a professional role, responsibility towards common shared values, and thirdly a personal responsibility. They describe an inner dialogue that is a dialectic between moral authorship and external accountability (Ims, 2015,

p.186). They highlight one person's case and his reasons for moving to an environmental NGO. He was approached by a headhunter and, feeling 'the odd one out', no longer wanting to contribute to destroying the Earth, not being able to change the organisation and not wanting to commute anymore, he decided to move (Ims, 2015). Ims then uses the idea of strong evaluations (Taylor, 1989), to pose a moral horizon by which the person judges his or her desires and preferences, asking, 'What kind of person do I want to be?' (Ims, 2015).

4.2 insights from analysis of shifts of meaning for each area of the research frame

In this section I will present an overview of shifts of meaning for each area of the research frame. To remind the reader, the areas are: **going into Nature**, **engaging with (particular) non-human animals**, **experience of Nature as it manifests itself in a place or a geographic area**, **Nature's advocate**, **shifting values and changing career**. I give a short description of what I took as characteristic shifts of meaning for each of the interviewees. The method of analysis was explained in the method section (pp. 76-79). Shifts of meanings have contexts, of course. I have looked for and captured shift of meaning from individual experience in relating to Nature. That is there is an origin of the shift of meaning coming from experiencing relating to Nature not humans, although humans can be involved in interviewees figuring out their experience.

4.2.1 going into nature

Fons

Fons had been a teacher all his life. When he started experimenting with taking adult MBA students into Nature, he said he discovered that Nature can do more in terms of empowering people and helping them to learn about themselves, than any professional can through his or her design of a teaching curriculum. This was

his experience of taking students into uninhabited South African countryside for several days of time. Fons talked about a strong shift of meaning of becoming aware of the impact of going into Nature. His experience would have a lasting effect on him as he became more and more interested in taking others into Nature as part of his professional teaching and coaching practice. Fons expressed being ethical about Nature, while not seeing a conflict in his work with students from multinational companies. He projected his ethics into the area of work as he told me, helping people in the world of work finding personal meaning and development with help of going into Nature. I am not sure to what extent one could interpret Fons his awareness and insight as a full recognition of Nature's agency or if Fons identifies with the idea of Nature having value itself.

John

John presented his early experience as an adolescent in Nature during his travels as most influential. After almost dying while surfing, he made a turn, looking for practices that he could engage with to make a living and be in Nature at the same time, with less risk of killing himself or being killed. Like Fons, John was not an outspoken environmentalist, but he cherished his relation to Nature and understood how being in Nature was for him a basic need, one he wanted to share with others. Where Fons worked in the world of work and enterprise, John found the application of Nature work with helping underprivileged men to find confidence in themselves. John expressed a strong shift of meaning in relating to Nature, very much in relation to his self-image.

Pete

Pete described his experience of merging with a rock while climbing, as a shift of becoming aware of his ecological self.[31] This story can be taken as an example of a dissociating experience of someone highly stressed (possibly with a history of psychological difficulties) functioning on the edge of breakdown keeping up with the requirements of an executive job. It can also be looked at phenomenologically

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[31] Naess, 1988; Diehm, 2002.

(Finlay, 2014). In that case it is consistent with analyses by Rossiter, Amatuzzi and Tudor (Tudor, 2014; Amatuzzi, 1984; Rossiter, 2014). As Pete was shocked by the experience and could not explain it, he started to look for an explanation that he found years later, in being trained by Arne Naess, who instructed him about his idea of the ecological self. This story represents a shift of meaning of someone becoming an environmentalist more or less overnight. He redesigned his life around experiencing Nature and taking others into Nature. He also studied people's experiences and promoted Nature to enhance people's health and wanted to heal some of society's psychological illnesses.

Shifts of meaning in this category can be summarised as a discovery from being in wild Nature:

- Nature does not have a story board or teaching curriculum like humans have in teaching contexts. There is no premeditated outcome.
- Nature having an impact on one's identity and sense of self.
- Anxiety and fear are part of going into Nature, as one can quickly become aware of the physical reality of having a body, with its vulnerability to hardship and pain.
- The cultural meanings of a body, e.g., men experiencing rituals of passage, striving for acceptance by showing mental control over fear of being hurt and what can happen to the body.
- The experience of going into Nature can be helpful in finding purpose over time. Interviewees had this experience for themselves as well as wanted to support other people (underprivileged people, adult MBA students, civil servants or NGO staff).
- Finding words to describe experiencing Nature or experiences in Nature is often difficult.
- There is a social threshold to sharing experiences of Nature, as they can be seen as weird.
- There is a need to share Nature experience in order to find the meaning of it for oneself and others.

- Many seek inspiration and guidance from people who are more experienced in relating to Nature.

- Nature work is considered 'world work' by some people. By that they mean it should be done for free, as a personal choice to offer time and resources to the world.

- Offering Nature experience requires skills that need to be built, therefore requiring financial compensation, a kind of compensation which can be difficult to explain. Those engaging in this kind of going into Nature work often struggle to make ends meet, living frugally and simply.

- Corporate styles of leadership, which can be narcissistic, prescriptive and hierarchical (exercising power), are different from leadership enabling others to experience being connected to Nature and finding one's own meaning of such experience (through being supportive, asking questions, promoting sharing and conversation).

4.2.2 engaging with non-human animals

Jane

In an important training, Jane was asked to rank her level of stress while putting a saddle on a horse. Something happened - as she ranked herself very high – and she immediately felt a sense of urgency to start healing herself. This realisation was so strong, and her disappointment at horses not responding all that well to her at that time, that it motivated her to make a career out of working with horses and people. Her shift of meaning at the time was powerful.

Iris

Iris told me that the pony she had as an adolescent taught her it had a language and was an individual. This experience became a thread through her life as a performing artist and philosopher with something of a mission to influence society about its position towards non-human animals. Iris did not give examples of shifts of meaning. From her story, it is clear that non-human others are

important to her and that society is not paying attention. Indirectly one can speculate Iris to hold back on any 'spectacular' story as she wanted to bring non-human animal's agency as 'normal', rather matter of fact for everybody to see and notice. She did not want to end up in the category of weird people one can study but does not have to take that serieus.

Michael

Over the years, herding has become Michael's permanent *education a*nd survival kit in one. His story was full of nuance about being in Nature, relating to Nature. Managing non-human animals made him work to shift from 'push to pull'. That was an adaptation to the non-human animals, from using power and causing stress to using the right timing and the social fabric of the flock, or individual non-human animal, communicating in a way that stimulated the animal's curiosity.[32]

Shifts of meaning in this category are:
- Horses helping people to develop non-verbal communication and influencing others through their bodies, their senses.
- Horses mirroring emotional wellbeing as they respond to an energetic level of being, not a conceptual linguistic one.
- Non-human animals are individuals, each of them communicating noticeably differently, having individual characters.
- Non-human animals as teachers, animals as experts in doing herding jobs and helping with solutions to challenges in the terrain and natural (fast shifting) conditions.
- People confuse dominance with leadership when it comes to horses, cows, dogs.

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[32] Because alpine cows and sheep are less fenced in than in European low land pastures, the herder has to keep an eye and communicate practically non-stop.

- People in cities do not in general see non-human animals properly; they don't notice what goes on with non-human animals or if something is the matter with an individual non-human other.

- Non-human animals as companion animals.

- Children bonding easily with non-human animals and pets.

- Involving non-human animals in decision making at the level of society is resisted; engaging non-human animals as agents merits further research.

- Working with animals can be more effective if one shifts from a 'push' to 'pull' style of communication, responding to them as the experts in their situation.

- A pull style of communication with others, guiding others, can be learned from non-human animals. Other transferable skills interviewees mention they take from non-human animals include seeing if somebody feels safe with somebody else, communicating non-verbally over distance, sensing information, using the right timing and the social fabric in the community (flock), communicating in a way that stimulated the individual's curiosity.

- In an office, one uses only vision and intellect, in Nature one uses all senses and one's intellect.

- Back in an office after having been in Nature for months, a previously familiar culture appears preoccupied with people handling and negotiating their individual reputations and how others see them.

- Non-human animals can help humans to understand and see their (human) culture.

4.2.3 engaging with place

Daniel

After secondary school Daniel looked for an unconventional life and became a herder. The herding work was serious and not for the faint-hearted. Realising human and non–human animals were depending on him, he persisted beyond

physical exhaustion. With great reluctance, he started to listen to and learn from the farmers as well as the non-human animals. Another shift of meaning came when engineers showed up to start building a dam for a hydroelectricity company. He felt they were trespassing on 'his alp' and were appallingly unaware of the beauty of living Nature around them. Grounded in his attachment, he started a campaign to stop the company, and on the way discovered his campaigner qualities and, after years, succeeded in his first campaign. Later, others would follow.

Gunther

As Gunther was born high in the Alps, Nature was part of his life. He went hiking and fishing regularly, always coming back with fresh ideas for issues or problems he was working on as a teacher, and as a responsible citizen bringing ideas to his local government. Making live music during his lectures on the glaciers melting created a different atmosphere that enhanced people's willingness to contemplate 'bad news' and to act. He described this experience with enthusiasm as a great discovery (shift of meaning), one that also fit with his experience of motivation being key for doing anything in life. He had learned this during adolescence, dreaming of glaciers.

Leslie

Leslie had been severely ill twice when young, and he still today could feel impacted by these events. He wished for everybody to have deep manifestations of self and he connected this wish to creating practices of reforming and reshaping the current economic system to become more sustainable, through providing safe spaces for conversation and enhancing peoples authentic thinking. I felt his childhood experiences were most powerful in terms of shift of meaning and that through his survival and reliance on 'self' he could connect with working towards a new future, based on his love for deep sensing and modern concepts of emerging patterns, not knowing and co-creation.

Shifts of meaning in this category:

- Working with Nature in a place, comes with a physical awareness; a physical demand that reconnects one's mind to one's body (see themes under the previous category as well) (appendix 8.6, p. 316).

- Place attachment develops through interaction, physical exchange with the land, working a place, experiencing and or being a part of its rhythm and the manifestations of seasonal transformations. It is as if the body becomes part of a web (appendix 8.6, p. 316)

- Working with livestock leaves little opportunity for human disputes, as livestock doesn't wait or pause for humans to have their conversations among themselves. Working with livestock can also enhance bonding among humans (appendix 8.6, p. 316).

- Working a (larger) place can only be done through cooperation, which gives rise to a need for governance (appendix 8.6, pp. 316, 317).

- Herding makes one aware of being relatively powerless over Nature. Dogs enhance human power; machines even more so but with the potential of destroying the bodily connection to Nature, hence risking destroying Nature's relations (appendix 8.6, p. 316).

- Being aware of the tensions between humans and Nature, one can use the metaphor of the economy needing to develop a 'new earning model', that includes connecting to place and the survival or regeneration of local ecosystems.

4.2.4 doing advocacy

Mark

Mark's experiences of looking non-human animals in the eye helped him to build his self, and his time living with indigenous people helped him to see more than one world, which he defined as real (Nature) and virtual (Western culture). Discovering and using the word 'return' was a crucial shift of meaning for Mark, as he realised the word could be applied to both ecology and economy. In doing so he could bridge the two. Another was Mark's notion of time, as ecosystems

develop successively, taking 20 to 50 years, whereas modern financial markets operate in milliseconds. Maybe most crucial was his shift of meaning to where he understood wellbeing as being intertwined with living, vital Nature.

Frank

In stating he did not see himself as a true 'beta' scientist, I felt a shift of meaning towards relating to Nature, from the natural sciences towards stories and the senses; he told the story of being enchanted by a sudden springtime abundance of flowering plants in a pool in the forest; he told the story of once having lost his way in in Australia, because of not being familiar with the indigenous plants and their appearance in the landscape. Frank was very aware of this shift of meaning and how not only himself but also others experience shifts of meaning when it comes to relating to Nature. He showed how this happened on cultural level as well at different times in history.

Drew

A strong experience was when it dawned on him that the pink dolphins in the South China sea suffered a lot because of human activity and pollution. After having finished secondary school, he worked there as a surveyor onboard a ship – with no direct task of observing living Nature. As part of his interest in world politics and hunger to discover the world he started to become aware of human ways of conduct and impact on the living world.

Shifts of meaning in this category:
- Nature conservation in traditional ways is important but not contributing enough to preserving Nature. Local people and economic returns need to be involved.
- Conservation needs to be at the core of how people live and engage with ecosystems, as they are part of them.
- Acknowledging teachers about Nature and being aware of traditions of thinking about Nature is important.

- Indigenous cultural meaning systems show a much clearer relation to being part of and being interdependent with Nature.

- Nature advocacy may be something that people that are less socially confident to engage in. Such stereotyping would however be counterproductive in achieving results through engaging everybody in society.

- Direct experience of seeing non-human animals suffer from human actions over a longer period of time is a strong motivator for action and advocacy.

- Engaging large groups of people who have not shown interest in advocacy before is possible, by, for example, offering participation in iconic activities, or through engaging with smaller groups facilitated by social media.

4.2.5 shifting values, moving from corporate to ngo

Katherine

Katherine introduced herself as connected to Nature but not wanting to miss out on cultural life in the city (theatre, dance, shops). As a communication professional, she promoted inclusive ways of ethical communication. Her interests included spiritual understanding and shamanism. From her position, she understood Nature to be more than technical solutions. She mentioned the movie Wall•E, where a small robot moves around on a dead planet (Pixar, 2008). She commented that people cannot conquer Nature, but must live with it. But then, she said that even her new organisation (an NGO) seemed to express technical solutions for problems that are largely social and political, rather than ecological.

Ellen

During a field trip to do research in a remote area of Africa, Ellen experienced using her senses, in ways she knew from being in Nature. She experienced the native people as knowing of her thoughts even before she expressed them. This

was an extreme situation of using her intuition (her embodied knowing), more than she expected. Now the thing she was very familiar with – sensing Nature – suddenly was all around her and she needed this skill to survive and understand where she was. To what extent such sensing could be part of science even became part of a debate with her study supervisors. Such direct unconditional living had a great impact on her.

Steven

On his organic farm, growing turmeric was a big learning for Steven. In the beginning, it did not work. When almost giving up, a biodynamic expert advised putting the plants in the soil at random, instead of in the straight rows used in Western monoculture. To his astonishment, the plants thrived and grew fast and healthy. Such experiences made Steven even more motivated to invite and cooperate with researchers to study the rain forest and help with Nature conservation.

Shifts of meaning and main themes in this category:
- Realising ethical communication within an oil company is limited, not only with respect to certain human stakeholders but with respect to Nature as well.
- Problem solving through technical solutions causes dilemmas when not enough attention is paid to the social implications.
- Contributing to 'doing good' within society is associated with working for an NGO.
- Gender stereotypes around dependency and independence are more of a problem to sort out or be clear about for a woman leader.
- Sub Saharan Africa can be an incubator for discovering one's leadership identity through communicating with Nature and embodied knowing.
- If taking responsible and ethical decisions within a corporate business model, even a CEO gets commented upon for not enhancing maximum profit.

- Learning from Nature about Western assumptions about efficiency in agriculture.

4.3 insights from analysis across interviewees' stories

The third part of the analysis, presents themes across the transcripts of all interviewees, developing insights through 'capturing' lived experience. The method of analysis is described in the methods section (p. 87). An overview of the outcome of this analysis can be seen in Table 5.

4.3.1 nature exists in itself

By 'Nature exists in itself', I indicate my sense of interviewees' lived experience of expressing Nature as separate from themselves, as acting, having agency. Furthermore, this is expressed with conviction of its reality, beyond an idea or fantasy.

Mark: I have had very valuable conversations with Embera (Chocho) in the Amazon area. These were always about Nature and people and the coinciding of both. The reality and the pseudo reality; it is indigenous people that understand that difference.

Fons: Suddenly there is a really big wave, or an incredible heat or the terrain is actually looking ugly. Or a scary snake or you know what. The wonderful thing about Nature for my work, is that it is unscripted. What Nature provides is completely open.

Katherine: I believe very much that it matters where I write. I was in India. I could not continue with the story in India with my father and the book that I published, that was not possible. It did not fit, I needed to do different things in India.

Mark: That these animals did not bond, like cats and dogs. I would look them in the eye and have an experience of wholeness. Feeling whole and strong in myself. As I felt those creatures stayed themselves.

The quality of the experience speaks to the realness. Also, the way interviewees describe their experiences goes beyond the visceral or any immediate sensory feedback. Interviewees talk about their experience as an encounter that influences and shifts their lives. It is as if meeting another person (or more than one) with its own identity. I do not believe they are anthropomorphising; on the contrary, it is more like emphasising a different entity, different from themselves. This is not about ethics either, in that there is no value (as in weight or importance of the lived experience), no judgement. The absence of a value judgement for me also relates to an absence of a sense of human status. By status, I mean what people among themselves refer to (most of the time implicitly) in order to regulate the social dynamic, they are part of. This absence of status is not simply an absence of power (later we will see how Daniel experiences power over Nature). It is also a kind of humility, knowing that exercising power is not possible or will not work. This absence of status marks the difference between the artificial and real (as Mark refers to in meeting indigenous people). Absence of status comes through in the quotes, which gives them something pure and shows how Nature invites us to make an interpretation or find a meaning in the moment, if listened to.

Pete: Don't worry nothing is under control.

Iris: It comforts me that long after I will be gone, Nature will still be there, trees will still be there.

Nature is being alive, is having a purpose, a purpose that interviewees declare themselves not to be in control of, but recognize. Their statements about 'Nature being alive' indicate a sense that it can be observed, and that one can be aware

of, relate to and interact with, without knowing exactly what that aliveness is. Furthermore, these are not expressions of human exceptionalism, but rather expressions of being part of, of a kind of relating even the other way around, of being vulnerable, being dependant.

4.3.2 nature's agency gets noticed

This theme is illustrated partly by people telling me how surprised they are in noticing Nature's agency (Frank, Daniel), as if seeing their baby walk for the first time and feeling amazed and proud, or surprised or intimidated. But it can also be experienced as if it is the most normal business in the world (Michael, Iris).

Frank: I had seen the pool a month earlier and it was nothing, just black and now this. This abundance of flowers that grew out of it. I thought that was one of the greatest wonders of my entire childhood. (Translated from Dutch)

Daniel: She didn't want to move. I tried to make her move, it didn't work. Then I realised probably I have to go to the cow that is standing lowest first. Then bring number one to number two, tack, tack, tack. It took me about an hour to bring 15 of them to the meeting place. (Sigh) We were late back to do the milking (appendix 8.6, p. 286).

Michael: They know before I know. Sometimes the dog has the idea that he or she knows what the plan is. So, you have arguments. All dogs have different temperaments and characters. You have to 'sich einstellen' [to adapt yourself to] with your dogs but also with the flock.

Each of the people quoted noticed agency but in different ways. While Frank described his experience as a miracle, Daniel's response shows frustration and human resourcefulness in figuring out a way to get the result he wanted. Michael

talked about Nature's agency in a very matter of fact tone, a given that he had learned to engage with, clearly telling me what it takes to interact with dogs.

Noticing can be about noticing difference, and also about curiosity and challenge, a challenge to oneself: what to make of it, how to respond? How to respond to that particular dog, how to handle it, how to act in relation to Nature when it has its own 'plan'? Noticing the cow doing what it is doing, curiosity is needed. Because the cow invites one to do something 'cow like' and not human like in order to make something happen that only humans want to happen. It is in the noticing that one can become or feel exposed, maybe embarrassed, by not knowing how to respond. Daniel got home with the cows an hour after he was supposed to. This reminds me of pet dog owners when meeting another pet dog and its owner. It sometimes happens that one sees both owners pulling, shouting, correcting, appologising for something the dogs never planned to do anyway (but might start doing as they sensitively pick up their owners' feelings, all in one confusing encounter). Do some people do their best not to notice to avoid being embarrassed? This could mean that noticing Nature's agency is easier when alone or with trusted others. But if one works with Nature, noticing its agency is crucial.

4.3.3 nature thinks about humans

Interviewees make statements about experiencing Nature that seem to be about 'being seen by Nature', or 'Nature thinking about humans'. It is the experience that Nature observes humans, takes in clues from human behaviour and adapts to humans, but also keeps doing its own thing, as if to say, "Right, yes, ok - there is one of those again, lets see what happens." It is interesting to note that, in each of the quotes below, the idea of Nature thinking about humans is yet again expressed differently, but each one illustrating the essence of it. For Iris there was nothing special about dogs doing what they want to do in being with humans. John had no fear in moving close to a moose despite its massive size. All the time the moose was engaged out of its own will.

Iris: Generally, you just live your life with each other [Iris is talking about her

         dogs] and you say hello to each other and when you see each other you

         decide to do something together or not. (Translated from Dutch.)

John: So that animal, I started to make contact with at a certain moment. But it

         was wild. It studied me and, step by step, a bit of that trust was built.

Daniel: It makes sense to stay on a big rock. The cows see you and they know 'our

         herdsman' is here. And this influences the cows, it is true. You are in this

         permanent interaction (appendix 8.6, p. 301).

Jane: They just see you as herd.

Is what Jane says proof that horses 'think' about human animals? No, but she
suggests that they are thinking about humans in a 'horse way'. Several
interviewees express an essence of their experience as if Nature 'thinks' about
one, the human being. It is not an empathic or caring kind of thinking; again,
interviewees are not anthropomorphising. Interviewees express their experience
quite matter of factly, as if it is an inherent quality of the 'being alive' or liveliness
of Nature / non-human animals that it / they can 'think' about humans.

4.3.4 nature impacts human identity

The essence of the lived experience illustrated in the following quotes is about the
reflecting, mirroring aspects of Nature on interviewees' sense of self and their
identity.

Pete: My sense of self changed because of my experience of wild Nature. And

         when that sense of self changed, everything had to change with it.

With everything else having to change with his changed identity, he points at his need to see the (human) world and engage in it differently. He found he needed to take a different stance on opinions, looks, profession, friends, engagement and express his thoughts and feelings in new ways.

Michael: If I am really there, my pores are open, and this is what I mean by erfulhlung [being satisfied]. Sometimes I am there but not really there, then this happiness, erfulhlung is not there. It depends. I think it is (pauses), it is more that I forget myself. I lose mich auf [I dissolve]. I am then part of the whole thing. I can breathe more freely and if you ask me, I grasp more about the situation.

Daniel: My wife told me, good organiser as she is, "Daniel, we will never be able to bring all the dirty stuff, because it is much smaller here. Several weeks later I realised I hadn't done anything else than make sure that I knew where my herding tools were and that I was sure they fitted in the new garage. And I felt safe (appendix 8.6, p. 288).

Words like feeling whole (Pete, Daniel, Mark, John) and homecoming are also used (Daniel).

Frank tells me that, as a child, a lot of the time he felt safer being in Nature than being among other people. Michael tells me he will be a herder (during the summer) for as long as he can. He is not describing a logic to his experience, yet it is full of meaning. In his wording, there is no judgement or reification, it just is, and he doesn't want to (or cannot) miss it.

There are active and passive sides to this, intertwined. Nature is active in bringing about an impact like shifting, moving, shaping. Nature also passively receives, like dissipating, dissolving, embracing. Each quote refers to the speaker's self, except for Frank, when he talks about escape and about being protected from specific other people. That escape, that longing relates to Nature dissipating, embracing. This reminds me of stories of people acting weird or uninhibited when in Nature.

Taking off one's clothes (e.g., at naturist campsites) is probably a metaphor for leaving behind one's culture; cultural norms, responsibilities, agendas can all temporarily fall to the ground, shaken off like skin. Also, once clothes are off, a person can only be identified by his or her body. Nature does not tell you if you are culturally well behaved. Nature does not identify; it has no customs or immigration officers; 'all humans welcome'. The changing identity points at an active side of Nature as well (shifting, shaping, imprinting). Being a herder is a serious play (Daniel, Michael) of life and death, with rules, but very dynamic. The joy of being on the mountain, reading it, being confronted with the same mountain always being different at the same time (appendix 8.6, p. 301). This is the challenge and you chose where to take the sheep or cows, which temporary fences to put where and finding out that what you did last year may not work now, because of the snow or a rock that fell on the path you always take, or wolves showing up where they have never been before. In Pete's case 'intercourse' took place, blending with a rock, becoming a rock. David Abram talks of shape shifting that he learns from indigenous people (Abram, 2010, p.229). In those stories, shifting identities goes a step further than letting clothes drop to the ground into changing the image of one's body, identifying with a different species, becoming a bird or a tree.

4.3.5 nature presents a mission

This theme is about people expressing how they started to act on their experience of relating to Nature. It is from lived experience that one can say a mission has presented itself to the interviewees. There was no plan or training or contract, there was a call.

Fons: And the big insight for me on the last retreat, was that Nature was no longer a nice backdrop, a desirable good to have. It was an essential component of the learning itself. With Nature, the depth comes.

Frank: We got the assignment when coming to school to bring one plant. I took very big bunches and when I left primary school, I got the most famous flora guide from the head teacher as a gift. I can still smell the paper; this was my Bible.

Daniel: The farmer said: 'I have to tell you they will build a hydro power lake'. I said, 'Are you crazy? Do you fight against that? Or do you accept that?' Then I tried to build up the cell of resistance. And I was boosted into political environmentalism. But I still believed I needed to keep the touch to this true life. For me this was true life (appendix 8.6, p. 283).

Drew remembers the pink dolphins in the South China sea suffering and finding them regularly dead on beaches. Having left rural England to go into the world and reading as much as he could about politics, he started to realise how extensive human impact on Nature is.

The interviewees talk about being moved to act. A focus appears, a narrowing down into agency that brings a purpose or an objective to the forefront. It becomes a clear undertaking to achieve something. Nature induces, mobilises humans. In Frank's case, one could say it was the headteacher, but the headteacher was, in his turn, already moved by Nature. This leads us to wonder about roles. Ecology discovered the idea of life moving in the opposite direction from entropy. Where entropy is the phenomenon of energy being dissipated to a state where it eventually must spread out to have an effect, life organises in the opposite direction. But that is not a task of one single organism. In ecology, one talks about a food chain; all creatures together are the food chain, and each has their role. If one falls out, the system can be in trouble and start losing its balance. Roles may also emerge from interdependence between creatures. For instance, antelope or giraffe eat particular branches or pieces of a tree, which can help the tree to grow in a different direction or help to spread its seeds. Other examples are predators keeping populations within certain limits, and storms making open spaces where new plants grow. Human roles in response to Nature presenting a

mission could be read as crucial in the functioning of an ecosystem. Quotes mention creating consciousness (Fons), noticing diversity (Frank), protecting the ecosystem, and preventing destruction (Daniel) or repairing what has been going wrong for Nature (Drew).

4.3.6 nature 'wishes' to be made social

This theme is about people wishing to share their experience and discuss its meaning. I received and understood these parts of people's stories as having a kind of urgency, expressing a need to share and discuss. Also, I feel these experiences are implicitly calling us to find meaning. In a way, I sense there is no escape, the experience looks to find a way out, a way to be made conscious. Making meaning is what the experiences look for, as if the interviewees have no choice.

Pete invites people who have been in Nature with him, to share stories.

Pete: Yeah, there are for me two really important pieces in the process. One is to provide people with an unmediated experience of wildness. And the other part is giving people the opportunity to share that experience in a safe and supported community.

Mark works with local communities in ecosystem restoration practices. That work evolves around social structures and enterprise that all need to be facilitated and supported.

Mark: At the start, there are a few basic questions that we ask. One is the question, um, let us look from a landscape approach to the whole area where you are. How big is such an area, well big? What would be your dream, what would the area look like in twenty years, putting everything you know aside?

Music or other art forms are mentioned as part of 'making Nature social'. Gunther brings his own violin into presentations (even scientific ones),

Gunther: Because the first step is motivation and music is a really good thing to motivate people. We found this out. I often take my violin with me to make music during talks.

Frank tells me how he invited some of the best artists in the Netherlands to make a work of art expressing their feelings about saving peat bogs. This resulted in a 'peat' ballet.

Daniel tells about the solidarity, sticking together in the work in Nature, getting the job done. Only when the animals are dealt with is it time to relax. Helping each other even when disputes or difficult emotions are in the way creates a kind of bonding that is pleasurable. In relating to Nature, Nature comes first, reflection later (appendix 8.6, p. 294).

These examples of lived experience express the essence of what I called Nature 'wishing to be made social'. I see how interviewees look to share experiences and seek meaning and the language to talk about them. Making music helps to focus, to be aware. This urge is not equally strong with all interviewees. Michael, for instance, seems to be quite comfortable with keeping things more to himself, or perhaps trusting that a non-verbal sharing takes place anyway. I am not surprised anymore about ancient rock paintings or stories as part of oral culture being told around campfires or in a pub about Nature and how Nature asks to be reflected upon in discovering and sharing meaning within a group. The tricky thing is that reflection and meaning making are not the same as reifying. Reifying something alive makes it dead. Making Nature dead (as in Cartesian thinking) is a big mistake, similar to misjudging people's agency. This brings us back to the topic of power, as exercising power can make the other look and act as if it is a thing. My dog can sometimes stop in the middle of a walk, becoming a dead weight, no longer moving forwards or backwards, like Daniel's first cow. With Daniel's experience, I

can now interpret my dog differently and start to see she wants something different from me (in that moment of walking) and expresses it in her way, telling me something – I have to figure out what it is.

4.3.7 culture resists nature, vice versa

People cannot always find ways to talk about or integrate their experience. Nature experience can be private or difficult to put into words. Interviewees did not always know how to talk about it.[33]

Mark: That experience of that snake, I only was able to talk about it in public much later.

John: Nor did I have the people around me who could help me at that point where I stood. But it became very clear: trust. It'll be fine. Go ahead.

Pete: When we think about dominant culture, it's not very attractive to people, for example in the corporate sector, to do this work of going into Nature, because you become invisible.

Fons explained that, in university business studies, the topic of the environment usually loses out in favour of the 'hard' topics like marketing and finance. Being cultural (as in being engaged with the world of Western people) can make it hard to keep connections to Nature. Daniel explained how going on the alp always required deciding with his children's schools to allow them to join him and his wife. The circumstances can be such that Nature disappears from people's awareness or thoughts. This seems to be a recurring theme in society, where it is OK, or even encouraged to be connected to Nature as a child, or in retirement,

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[33] This can happen with experiences that are not necessarily directly related to Nature itself as well (if we think of Nature as wild Nature), as experiences in urban surroundings can be as unexpected or unfamiliar.

while in between one is supposed to prioritise participation in 'the economy'. Steven and Drew told me they almost lost interest in Nature while working during their adult lives, absorbed in culture and city environments.

Being in Nature, living off the land, is seen as lower status, unsophisticated or against progress or modernity. Katherine as a girl had a famer boyfriend, but lost interest in him, wanting instead to go living in a culturally rich and exciting place, a big city. In other words, living off the land does not promise financial wealth, social success and an exciting and fulfilling life. Daniel needed all his creativity to develop a local voice of resistance among farmers and villagers against the building of a dam. The farmers agreed they were not at all interested in having the dam, but they did not want problems in the local community; neither did they want to upset the authorities or confront the powerful electricity board. Speaking out is always difficult but a sense of lower status doesn't help (appendix 8.6, p. 284). Gunther told me he carefully consulted the local authorities, making sure he included them in his ideas, hoping not to upset them.

Perhaps lack of interest (or uninterest) also arises from the fact that - as Frank and Drew stated - you have to be particularly clever to be allowed to study Nature in the shape of physics, biology, agriculture, especially at university level; feeling close to Nature is not enough. Even Frank, who became a professor, comments on that phenomenon among his own colleagues.

Knowing about Nature has entertainment value, in TV shows like Crocodile Hunter for example. Real experience of going into Nature is much more boring and requires hard work, patience and practice before one starts to understand. But this may be changing, as more people become interested in green food, green living and start making connections to climate change and biodiversity loss.

Nature resisting culture is harder to interpret, for, as in the examples of Daniel moving 'his cow' and myself talking about my dog, Nature doesn't express itself in human language. Yet several interviewees refer to lived experience that I

interpret as Nature resisting culture. In Michael's and Daniel's stories, the dogs and cows have their own 'plans' showing them to the humans, resisting the humans. Jane describes how horses did not accept her very well when she started to work with them again after a long time. In her story, it was her stress that made the horses nervous at first. It took her longer to start reading horse behaviour and horse intentions beyond human language (because at first the focus was on human needs, horses being such handy tools for humans to learn about themselves). But Jane became very able to understand how and where horses resist humans. In his story 'Nature is unscripted', Fons points at the opportunity to observe and contemplate while inviting his students to resist interpretation as long as possible, trying not to impose human needs. Practicing such skill (staying away from interpretation as long as possible), is like Husserl. While using one's senses is like Temple Grandin. In her case her senses are exceptional (Grandin, 2005) and she had difficulty fitting in human culture because of them.

4.3.8 representation, being multicultural, being in the middle

This theme is about interviewees expressing their engagement with Nature and with people as separate experiences, but also influencing each other (Nature and culture), being multicultural (like the experience of expats or people mastering more than one language).

Daniel: You drive there and you realize you look into everybody's face much too long and you read every advertisement on every bus or house. Why did I read everything? Well because I didn't read so much when on the alp and I like reading. I am now attracted to any new face or sentence I see (appendix 8.6, p. 287).

Michael: On the Alps, the animals tell me what to do. This I can take into life B [Michael calls his alp life, life A; his office life, life B.] Maybe also my rhythm, I can sprint if I have to, like interval training. But normally I work

slowly and precisely, and I know where to go, I don't lose the aim. There are different ways to arrive at the aim. Maybe A and B are different worlds.

Ellen: I cannot explain to him the fact that when you spread a number of activities in about twelve days, then there's a kind of a story. He said: "It is just a huge bias." And I said: "No, that is not biased. That is precisely the development of what happens." I have another supervisor who said: "Well, write all of that experience, especially as a description of the value systems of the people."

Several people express their experience as feeling in the middle. Daniel used the metaphor of Little Big Man, the movie with Dustin Hofmann, where a boy born into a settler family, is raised by native people, so that he finds himself between worlds, the world of the settlers and the world of the First Nation People. The expression of being in the middle is also used by Leslie, but in a different context, namely the one of transitioning between old world views and new world views (where the idea of relating to Nature is restored or regenerated). Iris thought about doing action research setting up dialogue between humans and non-human animals in situations of conflict (I had the same idea, which presented itself as soon as the notion of Nature and non-human animals having agency dawned upon me). The mixing of the worlds is where, for instance, Michael uses the one with the other; his learnings as a herder of value when working in Africa or when he is in the office. But being in between can be confusing, lonely or anxiety inducing. It can feel like a threat or a confrontation as it challenges one's identity. At times, one must put what one knows or takes for granted between brackets. This is what Daniel describes coming back from the mountain into the city. Is it possible to be in the middle? Or can one be a hybrid? Originally, a shaman was an in between person (not a healer, or only a healer as we have come to think of it). The role of a shaman is to take Nature into culture (taking Nature's aliveness as expressions of spirit) and to move the other way around (having conversations with 'the spirits'). We don't have people with that role in Western culture

anymore. We think we can observe Nature, making conclusions about 'it' and taking them into our rational decisions to support our anthropocentric economic growth strategies. For instance, I have not come across any environmental assessment report being read back to non-human animals or Nature with the curiosity to hear if some interpretation or intent comes back (in non-human language). As ridiculous as this may sound, it is precisely the point of being in the middle, of being multicultural.

Table 5. Main themes from Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of all interviewees

Nature exists in itself

Nature's agency gets noticed

Nature thinks about humans

Nature reflects human self

Nature presents a mission

Nature 'wishes' to be made social

Culture resists Nature, Nature resists culture

Representation, being multicultural, being in the middle

I will now answer the research questions and discuss the findings, before discussing the research overall.

5. DISCUSSION

Here I repeat the five research questions the project set out to answer.

1. What can be said from this study about the development of ecocentric ethics and leadership in the context of Nature practices?

2. What can be said about how leaders of 'Nature practice' navigate culture and Nature?

3. What constitutes a shift of meaning and how is that consistent with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception, ontology and epistemology of Nature?

4. What is the potential of studying lived experience of relating to Nature psycho-socially within the dominant culture of splitting Nature from culture?

5. What are some important implications from this study for the current sustainability discourse?

It is important to note again that the research is about 'Nature practices', and no other practices like political, farming, business / corporate, healthcare or the like have been examined.

The five cases illustrate the agency of Nature in people's lives in unique ways. Meaning making of person and Nature can be seen to unfold. The five individual cases can be seen as stories of defended subjects. In this case a person adheres to an idea, a discourse or can be seen to not fully grasp or even reject such idea or discourse. Through analysis we aquire more insight in the person as well as the 'discourse'. As soon as we connect an idea or discourse to the body or wider embodied reality, we see that discourse and Nature are connected ('lived experience', embodied knowing).

John who is officially described as a person with the characteristics of ADD, ADHD is defended against a society that values cognition. As such a society undervalues embodied intelligence, streetwise knowledge and skills are less valued or go unnoticed (are not seen as having value). But grasping the dominant discourse is not a matter of intellectually 'getting it' as in the case of John, his identity is not

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founded in such intellectual high-level functioning. Jane's story through the lens of defended subject highlights intergenerational trauma of a continuous kind (as Climate and environmental destruction are continuous, not one off). Another aspect of her story is how environmental NGO's are pretty similar to large organisations with cultures of 'doing business' with a lot of depending on heroism, one sided winning and less on emotional care taking. Daniel brings to the front the new discourse of place attachement. Like in the other stories, there are many nuances in his story. In his case clear references to power over Nature and family dynamics in a swiss context of political and economic developments of the last half of a century. Mark takes the dominant paradigm and institutional arrangements head on. While resisting his and others personal and collective pain, finding solutions for it 'in looking small creatures in the eye', he later in life shited to working more 'through people' as he calls it. He has to as the partners in his projects do not fully act or respond rationally all the time and he is aware of losing them if his company ignores these human trades. While trying to educate financial markets to be compassionate might be a bridge to far. At the same time this is what current times need and Mark is not the only one working on it. In Ellen's story truly surrendering to a non-Western culture, is an enlightening story of West meeting Global South. She finds a path for developing her intuition while integrating with her brain and intellect. Maybe hers is truly showing that the start is the deeper intuitive knowing followed by intellect and not the other way around.

In the stories, the decisions to follow through a path of action are not explained in terms of calculated planning, although some planning is needed in executing decisions. It is as if the decisions come from insights, moments of clarity about who one thinks one is and what one should do in a particular context, where Nature plays an important role (and its agency can be seen to happen). It seems to me to appear in knowing what to do as forms of going forward unfold, unquestioned and at the same time unknown. People express a great deal of confidence in each of these cases. Their meaning making has its origin in the experience of Nature and self, with no hierarchy or previously held career plan

involved. There is a vision of what should be, what is right and desirable, that not only has to do with self, but also with the collective, the commons and with Nature and how that connection can best be kept. At the same time individual psychological landscapes show themselves. It is very clear with John, Jane and Mark, who experienced therapeutic value from engaging with Nature and in coping with what Metzner has called a disturbed ontogenesis. But interviewees also illustrate their engagement with the wider world and its dominant culture, they want to address and influence. Also, there is evidence of mental stress with all these five people in their dealing with living within human culture. Stress that is hard to resolve as dominant culture is 'consuming' Nature and mentally hiding relating to Nature. All these five people are dealing with dominant culture of mainstream business and management practices that are not oriented towards relating to Nature, challenging larger paradigms (Daniel, Mark), sensitive cultural and gender issues (Ellen), or more of these issues combined.

5.1 the development of ecocentric ethics in leadership of nature practices

Fox and Curry describe ecocentric ethics in theory but both also state such ethics cannot be imposed onto a practice (Fox, 1995, Curry, 2011). At the same time, there is an understanding of ecocentric ethics as a process of incrementally valuing Nature, having 'value for its own sake' (Naess, 1988, 1989 Fox, 1995). Clearly there is a difference between cognitive understanding of ecocentric ethics ('I get it') versus acting on it ('I do it'). It is not possible to ask Nature itself (or the non-human actors in Nature) if humans do the right thing and if Nature or 'they' in Nature feel appreciated for being who they are. Knowing if one has it right is the challenge of interacting beyond human language. Fox states that Arne Naess' concept of Deep Ecology stands out among environmental ethics, pointing to his unique transpersonal understanding of ecocentric ethics (see also Davis, 1998). More people have taken a critical position towards Naess though. Diehm argues that Naess would 'do away' with the individual (Diehm, 2002). It is, however, not clear that Naess meant the transpersonal in that way (a person losing his or her individuality). Others have put more emphasis on the relational aspects of the

self, as does Ingold, who is more interested in 'connection' (Ingold 2007). In his later work, Fox also focuses more on the relational (Fox, 2006). Kohn describes the self as a semiotic self (see literature review) that is in relation with other semiotic selves in Nature (Kohn, 2013) and sees semiotics to some extent to be a potential for all living creatures. Kohn has taken another turn compared to Kidner, who takes human capacity for living in a culture of language as a key problem of having moved away from Nature (Kidner, 2012). From this I see ecocentric ethics to be building on both, namely, the maturity of the self as well as an awareness, active and practical 'use' of notions of relating, within a 'culture' of relating, that is 'a culture' where 'relating' is considered 'the norm', considered helpful and useful, and where 'relating' is making sense for the further development of 'a culture of being alive'.

5.1.1 being affected by nature

Interviewees are clearly affected while describing experiences of Nature in their own terms, like Nature being 'unscripted' or using phrases such as 'home coming' or 'feeling whole' at certain moments when in Nature. Michael described magical moments at a particular time of the day due to the light and colours outside. Such experiences are enjoyable and interviewees like Michael look out for them, while knowing they cannot be forced. Interviewees could be seen to be affected silently, while Nature allows for experiencing one's self, or gives access to feeling alive and in exchange with the surroundings (Steven, Gunther, Drew). Interviewees can be seen to look for the right words to express their experience of Nature. The words used are references to affect, for instance comparing an experience of Nature to 'falling in love' (Michael). At the same time, some people are so used to Nature (Mark, Iris) that they are not expressing emotions so much. They are matter of fact about them, as if they are used to these emotions and do not see them as anything special. Or they keep experience and emotions to themselves and are not so interested in sharing or making the effort of finding words.

5.1.2 nature impacting on identity

Interviewees also refer to their identity and to valuing Nature in their personal development. There is evidence that interviewees both value their identity as it is influenced by Nature as well as wanting to protect Nature, the source of their personal development. Pete presented becoming an environmentalist as following on from his experience of being one with a rock. Mark remembered his experience with a snake when he was a child. It led to him collecting small animals and keeping them at home and later studying biology. In their reference to identity, interviewees express relating to Nature as personal development, becoming more confident about oneself, enjoying oneself (John). Interviewees are conscious of the role of being in Nature and the development of their selves (John, Jane, Ellen), which they also want to protect. Daniel wants to keep his herding tools, his first and most pressing concern when moving to a new house. Michael wants to keep doing herding for as long as he can, despite his growing awareness of physical limitations, knowing he will eventually need to give up. Protecting also shows in wanting to protect Nature as the source of developing identity (Daniel, Gunther).

5.1.3 bonding

Bonding can be seen in how identity is impactedand influenced. Chianchi's research with activists shows a developmental understanding of bonding to Nature. The longer activists are successful in staying in Nature, defending Nature, the more likely bonding to Nature is to become explicit in their motivation, arguments and communication. This bonding (e.g., seeing trees as family members) helps activists to become willing to cross the line of legality, by, for instance, trespassing. However, Chianchi has not explicitly researched to what extent leadership plays a role in the development of bonding. Lin and Lockwood's study of attachment to place and Skogen's research on multi stakeholder interest in areas where wolves interact with people show relating to Nature as influencing leadership within communities.

We can also see place playing a role with interviewees similar to how attachment to place is discussed in literature (Lin, Lockwood, 2014). Frank did not recognize the Australian landscape as the plants were different. Therefore, he lost his way while walking there. Daniel's attachment to an alp made him become an environmentalist, when 'his' alp was under threat. Interviewees are also affected indirectly by Nature itself, because of other people's behaviors or indifference towards Nature. For instance, Iris sees other people's indifference to non-human animals in the city and is affected by it.

But bonding to Nature is different from bonding to people, even if the people are part of the place or context where Nature plays such an important role.

Daniel described the scene with the farmers after his success in making cheese. Having worked hard on the alp the whole summer season, farmers come to administer and distribute the cheeses. The chief speaks to the community. Before Daniel and his friend knew it, the farmers are gone, never to be seen again until the following year. Daniel was flabbergasted, expecting his sense of bonding to Nature, to continue into bonding with the farmers, but suddenly it was all over. There was a sudden emotional and physical gap.

Baldacchino talks about the sense of belonging to a certain group or practice (Baldacchino, 2011), while Bastian describes the politics of belonging to time (Bastian, 2013). One summer on an alp as cheesemaker was no guarantee of belonging with the farmers, let alone having a bond with them.

As Daniel expressed the bonding to his friend (and co herder / cheesemaker) and later to his family, who were part of the experience of being in Nature, he was expecting a bond with farmers he worked for that didn't happen. The bonding to Nature had happened and Daniel had to make up where his bonding could sit. That would explain Daniel calling himself and his friend 'hippies' who long for a free life in Nature. But the farmers were only partially involved in that.

5.1.4 the relational

My main point is focus on the relational, which comes through in stories like Ellen's. Ellen talks about her experiences in Africa and how she developed confidence in using her intuition, her senses. She felt comfortable with that experience. She makes a distinction between culture at home in the Netherlands, where she feels she is restricted, and the less conditional culture in rural western Africa. Interviewees seem to acknowledge that one needs to relate to Nature dynamically, in dialogue beyond human language. As Daniel said: 'Nature can be worked with, it cannot be controlled'. From this starting point of the dynamic relational way of being with Nature, it is clear that all interviewees also have had to develop a way of understanding Nature that makes sense to them and that they can propose and introduce to others (in language), and in ways that enable other humans to work with Nature as well.

5.1.5 what interviewees say they need to develop in their relation to nature

Ellen dedicated time and resources to the study of organic agriculture. She sought to learn from professionals. In one way, her choice of what and how to learn was conventional (she had considered eco-psychology and eco-therapy), and on the other hand not so conventional in that she chose organic agriculture. Nobody else within the group of interviewees expressed a need to learn from experts. Other interviewees mostly identified skills they wanted or needed to develop in engaging with other humans. This ranged from reorienting how their services were offered (Pete, Jane), to getting used to the idea that Nature is unscripted (John), and therefore a better teacher than anybody, even with the best curriculum design one can imagine. Iris hopes to develop an action research approach based on including the voice of animals, having non-human animals as active agents and participants in research. Gunther's wish is to contribute to practical solutions in protecting glaciers. In doing so, he is very interested in

finding ways of offering types of communication that motivate humans to act. As he is a natural scientist, he explores motivation in scientific ways. Mark's organisation is focusing on innovative ways of valuing returns on the stock market, so that they are not only financial. His organisation has now expanded into business education, introducing more than financial considerations. Drew is mostly interested in further understanding and exploring ways to engage millions of people to help protect Nature. All these needs point at the gap between experiencing Nature and putting that experience into language that can be communicated. The wish to influence and to transform others is strongly present. But there are limitations to expression through language. It reminds me of Merleau-Ponty's *ecart*, the gap or divergence that he identifies in perception. One can never see oneself the way the other can and does.

5.1.6 interviewees express what they find impossible or try to avoid in their relation to nature

Pete tries to avoid meeting institutional cultures with no interest in engaging with Nature the way he offers. He recalled a client who was mainly interested in learning how to make his organisation more profitable and efficient, and he decided to end that work relation. Pete had himself been a marketing executive before becoming an environmentalist. In talking about rejecting the client he showed hesitation, as if years after this experience he is still not quite sure he did the right thing. It shows how much splitting is going on in order to protect oneself from relating to Nature, or in staying away from a corporate identity once one has decided to do so. Being a father of a young child and having difficulty making the same amount of money as he did as a marketing executive, he might sometimes reflect on his situation of now having less income. Frank has found a way of not getting involved with internal organisational job appraisal processes that he experiences as detached from involving others in relating to Nature, which is key to his work. In his story, his discovery of himself as always being in the middle of social tension or differences of interest is at stake. He knows he can build bridges and help people to have more awareness about themselves and the natural

world. He feels that gets lost in the appraisal and internal political bureaucracy of the organisation, like an academic quotation index. He feels it threatens what he most values and is most capable of doing. Drew mentions that the negativity one encounters when working to conserve Nature can take its toll of one's emotional wellbeing and pleasure in life. His experience is that this not only comes from outside, but that environmental organisations often thrive on negativity, from taking moral positions and confronting others with them. Drew has the energy to do things. His stories of diving and hiking show his enjoyment and appreciation for the outside life. For him it is an energy source that he cannot miss for long. He comments that his children, living in the city, lack such experience. They play in concrete artificial gardens, instead of the real thing with plants and animals. Drew finds that engaging with others can mean meeting strong defensive behaviour. All interviewees are affected by this. Jane told me she makes sure she looks after herself and her emotional wellbeing. She is not working on saving the planet anymore, but focussing on simplicity and teaching her participants to improve their leadership skills instead. Jane puzzles about how to grow her business. She looks for structure to allow her to do things on a more routine basis. She also wants to connect her business into the marketplace, for which she thinks she needs marketing advice. These needs require integration of the way she now works with the non-verbal (bodily) experiences of people engaging with horses and the cognitive (detached) management approaches she believes she needs as well. Of course, she wants to avoid becoming the high-strung person she discovered she was. Mark makes sure not to get over-involved in conversations that are repetitive or stress negative outcomes of environmental work. In doing so, he protects himself from spending his energy in ways that he doesn't see as helpful in achieving the outcomes he is looking for. He avoids meeting circuits of conservationists, academics and businesses that are lobbying for the status quo. John has found a way to include what he enjoys in working for an agency. In a way, this makes the marketing and 'selling' of Nature to others somewhat easier, although he now has to convince his boss and colleagues of the benefit of the work he does when taking others into Nature. He tries to avoid falling back on being impulsive and irresponsible, as he experienced himself in his formative

years. None of the interviewees talk about avoiding anything in their relation to Nature. It is other humans and personal feelings and personal identity they want to protect. Interviewees are quite aware of other humans and their relating to Nature. Whereas Pete offers debriefing, conversation and coaching to people who have been on a retreat with him, John talked about his potential clients often preferring to spend their money on luxury holidays instead of sleeping in the open in a forest. Such putting oneself at a distance from Nature (needing to share and make sense of one's experience) was even expressed by Val Plumwood. Although very experienced with the outdoors, she admitted she had blocked out the idea of being prey. She felt it was a sense of irresponsibility she could only explain later after the incident with the crocodile had happened.

5.1.7 leadership

Proposing an understanding of Nature to others is not straightforward, as human language is not the first way of entry into experiencing Nature. This has an impact on leadership in the practices of the interviewees. One cannot simply teach others by giving them information, nor explain how Nature works at cognitive level. Jane could talk about the experience of working with a horse; she could not, however, tell the boy (or me) how to pull its 'levers' or explain where to find them. As a leader, one must facilitate experience and help others interpret the experience for themselves, taking time to understand the language used or develop or invent new language.

Interviewees see Nature impacting on their wider practice of being a leader. This starts with people saying that their own state of being with themselves, because of their experience in Nature, has a positive impact on others and their relations to others - including non-human animals and the land (Daniel, Michael, Jane, Ellen, Katherine).

Interviewees are aware that non-human others and Nature have affected their thinking about leadership and how they have developed their leadership. Michael

talks about shifting his leadership from 'push to pull' and uses his herding experience with 'human animals' as well, approaching them with care and allowing their own 'will' to show.

Expert experience of how to engage with Nature is also a part of leadership. Several Interviewees express their authority in such a way. Mark, Frank, Iris, Jane, Pete, and Daniel all see Nature as key in performing leadership tasks.

From a perspective of perception and a relational ontology, Nature leads as well, which can be seen in the findings shown by the IPA analysis across interviewees (see pp. 119 -134). Therefore, understanding Nature or non–human animals being actors and having agency informs this question of leadership. For instance, the non-human animals being herded influence the humans (Daniel, Michael) as much as the other way around. So, too, do the horses influence Jane, the glaciers influence Gunther, the alp Daniel and the ecosystems Mark. Interviewees understand these influences, these aspects of leadership coming from Nature. The interviewees who most clearly express this see themselves as instrumental in enhancing Nature's leadership. Humans can develop ways of becoming aware and then act more 'knowingly', as some interviewees confirm. Interestingly, there is very little reference to non-human animal's agency or Nature as an actor in the literature on ecocentric ethics.

Only in other fields are these aspects coming through and not only in philosophy, as in the work of Donna Haraway and Vinciane Despret, but in research of practices as well. Researching non-human agency is now a rapidly expanding field. The field of social geographyis also growing to include multi-disciplinary perspectives, including research into Nature as an actor. This growing body of research is instigated by interest in ecology and local place-bound practices. Research on wildlife management, for example, looks for alternatives to killing off intruders, instead developing methods of coexistence. Also, research and literature are developing to understand embodied knowing (e.g., the journal *Body and Society)* or texts from people like Lisa Blackman and Couze Venn (Blackman,

Venn, 2010; Venn, 2018), while Latimer also writes about embodied knowing and relating to non-human animals (Latimer, 2013). Academic groups are making efforts to bridge the natural and social sciences in understanding relating to Nature.[34]

On the business side, similar attempts are made to meet the split between culture and Nature head on, while researchers who come from business struggle to include relating to Nature from experience. Schein speaks of world views and supports education curricula within business schools paying attention to a different world view (Schein, 2015). But this is not the same as understanding Nature having agency and working with that awareness in practice. Western argues that ecological leadership should be a fourth discourse of leadership (Western, 2013), but although the discourse he proposes is more relational, again it doesn't include understanding of leadership from the perspective of non-human others being agents. I will discuss this further in relation to the next research question, about navigating culture and Nature. To conclude here, the insights taken from the transcripts confirm what in literature is described as ecocentric ethics being a process of awareness of Nature, with a lasting impact on one's self. However, interviewees show clearly and convincingly the relational part of being in Nature and/or with non-human animals. I discuss this relational aspect further in answering the third research question.

5.2 how leaders of 'Nature practice' navigate culture and Nature

This study incorporates leadership in working in Nature practices with other humans, as well as engaging with Nature. Therefore, it opened up the wider social implications of the interviewees' experiences of Nature within dominant economic, socio-political and science discourses.
Again, I start with reference to literature. Discourse about culture and Nature arises in several places in this thesis. For instance, the section on discourse in time

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[34] Like the group with Prof. Noelle Aarts at the Radboud University in the Netherlands.

(p. 21) showed the role of Descartes and other philosophers, eventually leading to Merleau-Ponty. The natural sciences have started to develop theory and measurements leading to moves away from Descartes, as quantum mechanics, cybernetics and ecology would not have been developed if science continued to insist upon explaining the world from an isolated brain. Roszak offers insight into a wide variety of developments and ideas within the current history of ecological thinking. His is a coherent account of a different psychology, cosmology and ecology, all related in pointing to a shift of relating to Nature. Nature is no longer seen as dead, but as mindful, thus implicating humans in the task of further developing and applying systems thinking, while being mindful of being one part of the principles of mind in life (Roszak, 2001). Kidner, on the other hand, states that industrial culture has moved far away from Nature in ways that are not possible to overcome, as he sees no evidence of modern man attempting to repair the relation with Nature. For him, symbolic and semantic capacities that allow man to create and live in an artificial – completely human dominated – world prevent progress (Kidner, 2012). De Schutter recently argued the urgency of moving away from capitalism as the social foundation of society. According to him, Weber analysed capitalist culture in terms of individuals being forced unable to escape the dynamics of capitalism and the market (De Schutter, 2017, p. 96). This is not necessarily inconsistent with Roszak's different insights, but at the same time shows how - because of social norms, expectations and historically built identities and paradigms - the capitalist discourse is uncontested and highly persistent.

5.2.1 interviewees reference to navigating nature and culture

The difficulty of escaping capitalism is illustrated by the interviewees. Pete and others commented on having difficulty in being properly paid for their work. Fons commented on how 'hard skills' like finance and marketing in the business schools can easily take over from the 'soft skills' of exploring and reflecting on relating to self and Nature. Ellen's supervisors were not all supportive of her interpretations based on her personal experience, as those were considered not to be part of

science. Looking at moving career from corporate to NGO,it may be that values in the work arena are somewhat shifting, but nevertheless not enough to convince certain people to stay in the corporate sector (Katherine, Ellen). Schein's research also indicates that individual sustainability leaders are not successful in shifting their companies' practices (Schein, 2015).

Whereas interviewees made limited reference to environmental crisis concern, if rephrased as 'Nature crisis concern', interviewees show an interesting continuum of concerns and motivations. Pete expresses his views on the ecological self (referring to Naess specifically, having been in a workshop with him) being in the business of helping people to discover their ecological selves. Once that happens, according to Pete, people can only be ecological, they have no other option. Gunther is more 'Cartesian', as he sees the threat to freshwater supply for people and the land once the glaciers are gone. His efforts are focused on making people and authorities aware of the threat and encouraging them to look for solutions, like the idea of the ice stube[35] developed in Tibet to keep a fresh water supply available. Katherine makes the connection to Western society being addicted to technical solutions, while Ellen refers to gender inequality, connecting it to relating to Nature. Responsibility for future generations is mentioned, specifically by those in the two categories of the frame called 'place' (Gunther) and 'shifting' (Katherine). Mark is very aware of crisis as he has been working in conservation all his life. At the same time, he tells me how he has made himself immune to bad news as he focusses on proving new practices are possible. Chianchi (radical activists) and Schein (corporate sustainability leaders) discuss being emotionally affected by experiencing the destruction of Nature, trying to address those that can stop it. However, the literature on the psychology of climate change has pointed at the phenomenon of denial (Weintrobe et.al., 2013).

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[35] German for tent or iglo like structure.

Love of (and bonding with) Nature seems to be the origin of interviewees' engagement with their Nature practice, which raises their environmental (Nature) crisis concern. Two aspects of that are apparent. On the one hand, love - in an emotional affective sense - comes through in response to meeting a white moose, or seeing a field of Waterviolieren[36] appear overnight in the shadows of a forest, or learning to communicate with a horse. On the other, love is expressed practically in taking action to protect Nature, such as protecting glaciers to keep them and their freshwater supply intact. Such love is 'paradigm free'. Leslie, Mark, Pete are all working their practices, not addressing environmental crisis (Nature crisis) but working to develop new practices aiming to change everything, convinced that change only comes from deep engagement in actually doing things differently, following and expressing their love. This is the origin of creating a practice, being entrepreneurial but not with the purpose of making money. The practices have to find their way into existing culture and become strong enough to establish support and 'followers'. In the cases of Leslie and Mark (possibly Drew and Frank as well), it involves whole communities. This echoes the society-level shift advocated by those who know about the cultures of Buen Viver in South America or Ubuntu in Africa, cultures where clashing paradigmsgoverning relating to Nature can be identified, as pointed out by people like Norberg-Hodge in the story of Ladakh or Eduardo Kohn in his book 'How Forests Think', telling the story of an indigenous culture in conflict with neoliberal economic culture.

5.2.2 interviewees refer to their past in commenting on nature and culture

From the perspective of people's personal histories, interviewees mention many different experiences that have impacted them. Some also mention collective events, like being raised during times of protest against nuclear weapons (Jane), or the process of reallocating the land in the Netherlands ('landverkaveling') in the previous century (Frank) so that farmers could start to work efficient monocultures. Interviewees refer to family members, teachers, growing up in the

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[36] Waterviolieren Dutch for Water-violet, Hottonia palustris

countryside or farming areas, or to having had responsibility for a non-human animal as a child (Iris). None of the interviewees mentioned socialisation in the sense of parents or others being examples of how to relate to Nature. Jane mentioned both her parents being very engaged and active in political movements, but not directly teaching her about relating to Nature. Frank's father worked professionally with horses, but does not seem to have taught Frank, nor was he himself interested as a child in horses or how to be with them. He was, though, given a plot of land by his father, so he could start his own garden. Daniel's brother was active in the student protest movement, which influenced Daniel to claim his freedom and go to the mountains. Both Leslie's and Mark's fathers were vicars, which influenced them in being comfortable with taking on a mission or a role in public life serving others. Katherine's father was detained in a camp during World War II, and her history is tied to that. Some personal experiences with close family members, like Katherine's or Leslie's (who experienced severe illness as a teenager in care of his parents) formed their senses of self and their identities from awareness of how precious life is and how important it is to make meaningful decisions. Educators are mentioned as having been important, both negatively (Daniel) and positively (Frank). Places were mentioned. Katherine, Frank, Drew, Iris, Steven, Gunther, Ellen all mentioned formative experiences in the places where they were born and grew up. Experiences of Nature in the past are cited by Frank (forest flowers) and Drew (diving). One comment that stands out queries whether people who are so passionate about Nature are less secure socially. Not feeling safe within, or feeling restricted by, one's family was mentioned more than once (although not by all). ADHD was significant for one interviewee. Travel and going into Nature (like climbing or hiking) were important for several interviewees. Several (Frank, Leslie, Mark) referred to religion, including Buddhism, traditional Indian philosophy and Christian religious thinkers. None, however, mentioned the rituals of eco pagans researched by Harris. Longing for these practices is understandable, out of desire to feel something different or to affirm the idea that Nature is sacred. But none refer to being influenced by rituals or to practicing rituals to enhance feelings of wholeness, or to celebrating Nature as sacred. Frank mentioned being impressed

as a child with the Catholic Church for its splendour. For him, symbols and religious art had meaning. More recent references to ritual occur in the stories of two interviewees. John described his recent experience with Masai guides and the ritual of killing a goat before eating it. Katherine mentioned a passing interest in shamanism. Somewhat similarly, Mark stressed his experiences with indigenous people in the Amazon. From his experience, he believes Amazonians are 'natural', demonstrating an awareness of what Marks calls the 'real world', while in his opinion the West is preoccupied with a 'virtual world' of its own making. In other words, he was not citing indigenous rituals, but observing at the level of the senses and a knowing in the moment from connecting to Nature (and humans).

5.2.3 developing into the future

As my opening question in an interview was always an invitation to tell me the story of how the interviewee came to do what he or she is currently doing, there are not many direct references to the future, as I didn't explicitly ask about it. All interviewees were well established in their 'relation to Nature' or, to put it differently, in their identities relating to Nature. Yet at the same time there were differences in the evolution of such identities. A clear example is John, who came to see Nature as crucially important, but without being stuck to one practice, as he made the transition from entrepreneur to working for a government agency. It is a perfect niche for him to keep inviting people to go into Nature. Within the last category of the frame, shifting values, the people I interviewed showed more of a sense of becoming. Ellen was quite explicit about this, being drawn to rural west Africa, as if Nature provided a purpose, a compass. Katherine was interested in expressing her own values in work more and for a while engaged with shamanism as a way of connecting to Nature. At the same time, interviewees mention several factors when thinking about the future, and how things might change. For instance, decline in health when getting older could prevent working with Nature (Michael). Others are not sure if they can continue making a living out of going into Nature or working with Nature (Pete), as working in or with Nature to educate or enhance ecological living is not an easy business model, unless a lot of

entertainment is involved. Also, a changing family situation might leave fewer hours for Nature practice (Pete). Others envisioned making changes in the immediate future to their business model (Jane), or aim to cooperate more with others (Jane, Leslie, Gunther). Iris mentioned her interest in going into politics in the future to help change attitudes and perceptions of non-human animals. Interviewees do not comment so much on the future of Nature itself, although they are clearly very concerned, some more than others. The literature review did not specifically consider relating to Nature in the future, but it does address change over time. For instance, Nature shows itself to each generation differently, as in time Nature and places evolve. In general, that means being destroyed or becoming occupied by humans. Social discourse and practices shift in time (see Blom, Wulf, Morton). Mark is the most explicit about time or duration, as ecosystems need time to establish themselves[37].

In Merleau-Ponty's ontology and epistemology it is strange to think of the external as separate from the internal, as they are intertwined. However, interviewees themselves clearly feel such a distinction, implying conventions or the way one is culturally supposed to relate to Nature. For instance, several interviewees state that it is safer to express feelings about Nature within informal settings. Some people only spoke much later in life about their experiences, as they didn't dare earlier, or thought it was inappropriate. The formal setting of office environments immediately brings institutionalised ideas to the fore, showing how Nature has become detached from everyday life in society. Daniel comments on missing out on a job opportunity because, in his experience, people with decision-making power did not like his Nature advocacy and activism. Michael sees his regular job's office culture as people making efforts to build favourable reputations, even if they cannot show any work or results to support

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[37] Non-human animals have life spans, as do plants, widely ranging from a couple of seasons to grow to maturity, to trees living for thousands of years. Lifespans of individual humans and non-humans are different from the life spans of their cultures. Global warming adaptation shows a lot of difference between species. A recent study showed whales to adapt within a living generation to diminishing ice at the Arctic, while seals do not. As a consequence, they might grow extinct in that geographic habitat (Hamilton et al., 2018).

them. Katherine had a farmer boyfriend but was drawn to the excitement of the city. Pete thinks that corporate leadership is very different from leading people into Nature. Interviewees operate within a Western split between 'culture' and 'Nature' and must find ways of being translators or mediators between Nature and culture.

In the Nature practice categories of place and advocacy, interviewees take on these challenges at the level of society. I argue that within these categories, interviewees actively try to facilitate reconnecting to Nature through focusing on place, and by supporting direct relationships between humans. Abram points at oral culture being important in relating to Nature (1996). Gunther actively makes the connection to place (as do Daniel and Michael), and he does it through engaging people in meetings, even making music to help build an atmosphere where people can be as open and connected as possible. The literature on place attachment (Lin and Lockwood, 2014) resonates with Gunther's story about his upbringing in a higher region of the Alps where, for the first part of his life. he knew nothing other than living with lots of snow and the blending of the colours of the sky, the sun and the snow. He wanted to be a ski instructor, actually becoming a glacier scientist and later on a tourism industry teacher, emphasising sustainability and working within the centuries old hospitality practices of swiss society. It is this place attachment that Mark actively supports as part of the local practices of ecosystem restoration his organisation facilitates. Drew, like Mark, is aware of the need to frame conservation around engaging people, enabling them to make one-to-one contact among themselves. He found ways for millions of people to do so, with the use of social media. As an experienced Nature advocacy campaigner, it cannot be said he overcame the anonymity discussed in the literature review (Ponesse, 2013). But he was aware of it and tried to overcome it. He also commented on the limitations of the Green movement caused by not really knowing other people, its self-righteousness, reproducing positions and opinions that only serve members' own beliefs. What could be called a tribal character of self-righteousness is also mentioned in literature (Redman, 2018).

The Nature practices that interviewees operate in are made by them, not learned from families' lifestyles or ways of making a living. None of the interviewees can be seen to have taken over Nature practices directly from their parents (as might be seen in farming practices handed down through generations). What can be seen is the strong influence of teachers and role models from outside the family (except for Ellen, who mentions her grandmother). Frank, John, Jane, Ellen all mention their teachers, with a lot of respect as they chose these people themselves. On the other hand, some seem to expand their family to include Nature. Chianchi noticed activists talking about trees as if they were family members. Gunther and Michael still live in or close by the places where they were born. Leslie, Fons, Frank, Ellen, Katherine all mention their fathers. For Leslie and Mark, their fathers also represented religion (Leslie mentioning several religious scholars he was taught about). Frank comments that bonding to Nature may, in some cases, be stronger than attachment to family members, experience which resonated with the stories from Jane, Iris, Michael, Daniel and Drew as well).

5.2.4 interviewees' accounts of conflict

Conflict is expressed by John about his father, who was a psychologist always looking back instead of into the future, according to John. John is much more active, learning by doing, engaging. He doesn't talk about conflict as such. He talks about people choosing comfort over staying in Nature. He also talks about successful businesspeople being anxious in a sandstorm, while the economically less successful men showed leadership. Pete expresses conflict more openly, for example, about being invited to be a lecturer for hardly any money or being able to help a corporate client because the client was only thinking of financial return. Fons speaks of conflict in the business school environment, where students and staff see soft skills and Nature experience as window dressing. Jane spoke about her conflicts later on in the NGO she worked for, that she felt had to do with people having little self-knowledge and empathy for others. Iris spoke about conflict in terms of people and animals, like geese being a risk for airplanes during take-off, or seagulls tearing open garbage cans. Solutions are usually no more

creative than simply killing the animals. Michael addressed conflict between himself and his dogs, with dogs having minds of their own in some cases. Leslie spoke about conflict between interest groups, a lot of the time unnecessary and resulting from not listening. Gunther spoke of conflict between humans and Nature at large, the glaciers melting because of global warming. Daniel had personal experience of officials not wanting to hire him, after finding out about his public campaign successes. Mark is constantly working to bridge conflict in the ideology of Western thinking towards Nature, aiming to create a niche in the financial system. Frank is very aware of the shifting ideas of Nature in time, sometimes with an understanding of Nature as good (with reference to world religions, or the romantic period) sometimes as bad (with reference to a recent Dutch politician calling policies of Nature conservation as the hobby horse of some people). Drew spoke about conflict as inherent to the Nature conservation movement that at the same time struggles to make changes on a large scale. Ellen had experiences with conflict through her studies and field work. In Africa, she saw many examples of ineffective development work, but also learned about the ingrained complexity of African societies. Katharine pointed at conflicts in Western ideology and lifestyle, her extensive experience with corporate communication informing her about the workings of global markets and how financially driven they are. Steven spoke about conflict when he was a CEO, deciding not to use unethical resources. Paradoxically, years later the market shifted to more emphasis on ethical business. He and his partners then sold the company for considerably more money.

5.2.5 achieving results and being accountable

The interviewees herding on the Alps have learned that working with non-human animals' reciprocity (working with, not against them) is the best way of doing their job, and makes it more enjoyable. These interviewees were very aware of their responsibility to do the best they could for the wellbeing of the animals and the financial interests of the farmers. Here the interests of the farmers and the wellbeing of the non-human animals converge. It becomes more problematic

when people are involved who are not engaging with Nature practice work directly, but instead have a more distant relation to it. For instance, Ellen chose not to work for a company that developed 'turnkey' growing systems of combining artificial plant and fish habitats. She felt the key people of the company talked too much from a sales perspective, almost forcing others to buy in and start using the plant and fish growing systems, no matter what. After having had a lot of experience with dominating styles in her previous corporate engagements as an organisation consultant, Ellen didn't want to be involved with such attitudes. Mark deals with funders and people from the financial industry. He hints at talking to people that show an understanding and are therefore interested in cooperating. At the same time, he is aware his innovative work needs to prove itself in terms of returns. As he developed a cognitive understanding of benefits to jobs, biodiversity and wellbeing as well as financial return, he can advocate for his approach, but must still continually work the complexities and explain them to people who lack direct experience of Nature. He is trying to not be locked into being detached from Nature as is so dominant in society.

5.2.6 cultural norms and social expectations

During the interview period, almost half the interviewees worked as entrepreneurs, others as employees and one was studying. That means interviewees work to integrate their Nature work in the marketplace, in government institutions or in NGOs.

Interviewees handle their social contexts differently. Difficulties of making an income from working with Nature can lead to finding other work and still integrating going into Nature with others as part of a new institutional job (John). Or it can lead to making changes in one's practice (Pete, Jane). Pete had learned to ask for appropriate compensation for his work, although that was still not easy. John was one of the interviewees expressing the most challenging ideas of going into Nature, appealing for only small numbers of people. He did not find ways of earning a stable income. For fear of losing an opportunity to be herders, Daniel

and a friend found themselves working on an alp for the first time under a contract they did not fully understand. They took instructions from someone more than 10 years younger, who knew about non-human animals but not about city people. The farmer giving the contract wanted somebody accompanying them who knew about animals and herding. Mark needed to visit the local people to help them to be comfortable with the changes in governance of the project. He knew he needed to actively rebuild trust; in a way the local people could understand. Cultural norms and social expectations also demonstrate a systemic memory, illustrated by the story of Daniel being denied a job for being recognized as the leader of an environmental campaign. It seems that interviewees have developed different ways of engaging with cultural norms, while they are part of social norms themselves. How to engage was a journey of discovery for interviewees, each in their own way. Interviewees are aware of the limited impact of trying to share information by lecturing. Dreaming is mentioned (Mark); inviting people to dream of a vision (e.g., for the future of the landscape they live in). Playing music is helpful, as Gunther found out when offering people a different way of digesting difficult information about the disappearing glaciers. Having conversations in a safe space was what Pete offered to his participants - after having been alone in Nature for a night - to share their experience, discover some of its meaning and start to integrate it into their lives.

Are interviewees changing their minds due to cultural norms and social expectations? Cultural norms and social expectations certainly play a role and, to the extent they are consciously held, are part of self-reflection. But the experience of changing one's mind is also the experience of becoming aware of cultural norms and social expectations in the first place. Merleau-Ponty's ontology points at not knowing and then finding meaning from experience. Through such awareness, it is possible to see different meaning and to develop preference for a meaning distinct from one represented in cultural norms and social expectations. This is what Fons found out and actively uses in his Nature retreats with MBA students, helping them to reflect on their own experiences of how their beliefs and mindsets are affected by being in Nature. Morton describes the process by

which the Anthropocene confuses society, no longer understanding itself in the face of Nature's agency (Morton, 2016).

Interviewees are aware of a Nature - culture divide and work with it in many ways. It is seen as the core motivator (in establishing ecocentric ethics) or as a source and inspiration for learning (in taking, for instance, MBA students out into Nature) as a reality (doing one's best to do advertising and marketing using modern market communication tools), or as a problem that needs cultural transformation, even addressing core social values and assumptions (working to fit in ecosystem restoration beyond Nature conservation). Interviewees' motivation to do the work is not directly related to study and insights of (academic) analysis, nor does it come from generally accepted scientific knowledge (insights from the implications of quantum mechanics for instance). Neither does it seem to come that much from intergenerational motivation (taking over values, identities and practices from their parents). It seems that shifts of meaning from direct personal experience play a large role. I will discuss this further in answering the next research question.

5.3 what constitutes a shift of meaning in relation to Nature

Donna Haraway describes a transition for herself and her dog in how to run together in agility contests. She testifies to the possibility of building a reciprocal relationship if one is willing to focus on the non-human animal as an individual. Haraway asked herself: what does this individual dog show me, express to me, want, need from me? She found an entrance to solving some of the puzzle of interspecies communication, at least with her dog (Haraway, 2008).

This is exactly what I experienced in engaging with a horse during the interview sessions with Jane. It is what Jane talked about to me. Struggling occasionally to find the words, she rather demonstrated 'how to do it / engage and

communicate', through involving horses. The work of Tudor, Amatuzzi and Rossiter confirm such experiences (Tudor, 2014; Amatuzzi, 1984; Rossiter, 2014).

Some of the strongest shifts of meaning come from the experiences of Nature or being in Nature itself (Pete experiencing oneness with a rock). But also, a disruption by other people willing to destroy Nature can be seen to be very influential and instigate action (Daniel, preventing the dam from being built). These are examples of individuals being part of bigger events. Then there are experiences that directly relate to people's positions and income (John, Pete), mobilising them to change their practice, to do something or be more attuned to society's possibilities. So, in the typology of shifts of meaning there are two types. There are unlooked for shifts of meaning (which can even be violent and traumatic, surpassing the person's capacity to absorb). Other shifts of meaning are welcomed or exciting, answering puzzled over questions, maybe resolving something in order to achieve a goal or to move on.

Shifts of meaning are remembered, whether positive and negative. Ellen learned gardening from her beloved grandmother in a way she still remembers. Mark's parents allowed him to build half a zoo in his room. Steven was allowed to put everything he found or collected from the local butcher under his microscope at home. Negative ones can also be seen. Jane's mother engaged in Nature conservation, but in ways that could scare Jane. Frank's mother believed that God gave humans the right to kill non-human animals. He was not comfortable with that at all. Sometimes ambivalence or controversy shines through; Mark trying to persuade his board members, for example, and Katherine's boss, who supports her creative communication but likes to hold on to standards of natural sciences, to avoid risking the reputation of the organisation and possibly his own.

Physical endurance or even exhaustion can play a role with respect to a shift of meaning. This suggests the role of the body and its limitations. Daniel described his first weeks as a herder in very imaginative language. Listening to him, I was seeing images of people in the way of each other, frustrated, angry even (Daniel,

his friend, the young expert boy). Later Daniel was exhausted in the stable, working almost around the clock to get the job done, when a farmer came and talked to him. Daniel was desperate and almost gave up, hardly knowing where the next little bit of energy would come from. Later again in his stories, there is the image of him trying to move cows that won't listen. Embarrassment and not knowing what to do with himself comes through in the story. The supporting and hindering factors for changing his mind are as unexpected as the shifts of meaning.

Shifts of meaning spread out, can become collective. For instance, Jane told me that coaching practices with horses had doubled and tripled in the years since she had started her business. Mark's idea of regeneration has been picked up and put into practice by others. It is reasonable to surmise that similar practices are emerging far and wide. I have referred to relating to Nature and time (duration). Blom describes how Cartesian philosophy became the leading philosophy of relating to Nature through science in the seventeenth century. It was welcomed as Nature was becoming a problem during this time of low temperatures, influencing politics and Western culture in all its aspects. But by the time Descartes was writing, more than a century after Columbus, colonisation, killing and destruction were already well advanced. These cultural factors played out in the stories of the interviews, everybody having been born and educated in the West.

5.3.1 but how does 'it' (shift of meaning) happen?

I reviewed literature on this in previous sections (e.g. pp. 8,37). This is where epistemology focuses on therapeutic applications of philosophy and psychology, as in Gendlin, Ferro and Civitarese (Gendlin, 2003; Ferro and Civitarese, 2015). Not even phenomenological or psychoanalytic literature can provide completely clear answers to the question. It is clear, however, that the body in its relation to the environment and Nature holds a key. David Abram argues, with the help of Merleau-Ponty, use of the term shift of meaning might not be helpful, as meaning

is already there. Meaning doesn't shift; what shifts is cultural understanding and expression through language (Abram, 1996, 2010). A direction to (silent) conversation with Nature is further illustrated by phenomenologists like Seamon and Ingold (see section on place). Such authors explore and strengthen the idea that bringing people into contact with Nature creates learning, as in 'discovering meaning already there'. Conversation about such discoveries leads to figuring out how to put those into human language (human symbolism) that can be used in cultural channels and media, into the world of cultural norms and identities.

Interviewees address the need to create and facilitate opportunities for conversations based on experience. This is part of discovering the meaning of relating to Nature individually and collectively, being able to put it into language and how valuable that can be. Pete had a conversation with fellow climbers that helped him to understand his own experience. Fons found out about Nature being unscripted and going into Nature providing rich learning experience that, in his view, cannot be designed even by the cleverest educators. He found this through engaging with Nature retreat experts. Jane found allies and teachers that helped her to interpret her experiences with horses, when she was struggling to understand them herself, thus putting them into language. Ellen knows about silent conversation with Nature, but she also values talking and listening to experts about their knowledge of organic agriculture. Steven is desperate about growing the turmeric plants until he talks to a biodynamic agriculture expert, about whom he is at first skeptical, but who happens to bring the solution to growing these plants. Daniel is close to giving up until a farmer helps him to read Nature and how it will change during the season to be less hard, hence making his ordeal much lighter. Drew discusses and reflects on campaign strategies through creative associative ways of talking about people's needs to express concerns and feelings about Nature that otherwise find no audience or fertile ground, as people are 'disconnected'.

It could be argued that the experience, the meaning, was already there, but needing social coding to dissolve the disconnect between culture and Nature. The

coding is key, as in the movie 'Lost in translation'[38], a perfect example of humans communicating where a shared language code is lacking.

At the same time, and consistent with Kidner's argument (Kidner, 2012), the phenomenology of the experience of the meaning already there and its translation into language entering culture can be problematic. Who says the meaning is still there, who says the meaning still makes sense, is authentic or that it is correct to use such a word?

This flaw or accident of meaning losing its connection to Nature appears in the literature overview at several places. For instance, in the overview of relating to Nature in time, the Little Ice Age is depicted as a victorious time for merchants, when capitalism started to take root. An important cause of the emergence of new culture, namely the changing weather patterns, changing climate and failing agriculture, was not fully understood by contemporaries. Our perspective allows for a better understanding of causes and consequences.

In the overview of self and identity, psychological development is seen as acknowledging Nature, but the overall idea is that people should develop independent selves, with the origin of thinking not based in Nature but in culture (Searles, 1960).

However new ideas of self and identity formation in relation to Nature are now slowly gaining momentum. As Nature is expressing itself obviously not through human language, but in different ways, humans are challenged to look within themselves and their culture to do something different. In a society where written and abstract language (as used, for example, in coding and algorithms, or as written in legal contracts) dominates, it is difficult to be open to Nature communicating.

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[38] A movie with Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson, released in 2003, directed by Sofia Coppola.

5.3.2 how to understand reciprocity

As reciprocity is an aspect of human relations, what is it in human / non-human (natural environment) relations? The question is formulated as if reciprocity with non-human others / Nature is a problem. Indeed, it is philosophically contested. That is, if reciprocity is phrased as intersubjectivity, unless we acknowledge non-human others as subjects, it is hard to develop the concept. Benjamin's psychoanalytic concept of the third, or the capacity to hold the relation with a therapy client while at the same time participating in a conversation may be relevant. Such thirdness can be seen to govern reciprocity, keep an eye on it, so to speak, within human relations. But we also saw that Merleau-Ponty's position is much more radical, as he argues beyond the individual level of communication, highlighting the relational aspects of the origin of knowing. Maybe for those who are critical of Merleau-Ponty, the idea of reciprocity in communication between humans and non-human others can be accepted, though that would mean accepting some level of subjectivity to be the reality with non-human animals as well. This is what Haraway and Despret have shown in their contributions to the understanding of agency (*agencement*) of non-human others (Bennett includes the material world in such thinking as well). Haraway is explicit and the most revolutionary, talking about companion species, by which she doesn't only mean pets. She is most radical in blurring the cultural dichotomy between culture and Nature, while she talks about experiencing the subjectivity and deliberate – intentional – communication in the relation with her dog, from both sides.

In practice, reciprocity between humans and non-humans can easily be seen and it's clear that interviewees accept Nature's agency. Interviewees explain their experiences in ways that consciously take note of Nature's agency. John approached the white moose with respect and looked upon it as an individual choosing to have an encounter. Jane, Daniel, Iris and Michael talk in similar ways about engaging with cows, sheep, horses, ponies and dogs, all different, individual and actively expressing their presence. Pete refers to Nature as autonomous and the ecological self was his favorite concept of the possibility for humans to

experience Nature in that way. Daniel and Michael explicitly mention reciprocity in engaging with non-human animals, both in working with and alongside, to use Latimer's definition of reciprocity in relating to Nature (2013).

5.3.3 experiences of reciprocity with the natural world

Gibson who I have not referred to before needs to be mention here. He talks of the senses as sense organs of reciprocity. In stating it like that Gibson argues against the classic model of the brain perceiving something from the outside word in a passive way. Instead he describes the senses as an interconnected and interwoven system (all senses together) that actively seek out, connect and develop in relation to the environment. I other words senses and environment are a whole, rather similar to what Merleau-Ponty claims. Gibson then talks of the idea of affordance, where the environment provides a specific opportunity to an animal (or human) to relate to the environment, where as the animal influences the environment in turn when manifesting itself through these affordances (Lombardo, 1987).

Several interviewees share stories showing how reciprocity based on acknowledging Nature's agency impacts people's decisions on how to be with or in Nature. Examples have already been given in relation to previous questions and answers. If we look for interviewees explicitly talking about reciprocity, Michael, for instance, talks about a dog having its own plan, influencing Michael, influencing the dog. Daniel talks in similar ways about certain cows having their own plans, while aware of a human being close. In his turn, he clearly expresses his human plan to the cows in response to them. Daniel also talks about cows having personalities and bonding with certain cows by preference, and not to other cows. Those bonds are not necessarily between cow family members, as Daniel clearly observed cows becoming friends. This influences Daniel in how he sees the cows and engages with them. The same goes for Jane, who talks about horses being companion animals and how the horses see humans as part of the horse herd. This has a direct influence on Jane in how she is with horses and how she introduces horses to other humans, as horses present their culture to

humans. Iris talks about ponies, horses, birds, cats and dogs in the same way, recognizing non-human animal cultures and politics. Iris takes that into account in the way she is with the non-human animals and, again like Jane, how she introduces the non-human animals to other humans. A wider context of landscape and place is included by, for instance, Gunther, Frank, Daniel and Drew. Mark speaks of landscape pain, an expression I had not heard before, to describe the impression and feeling he receives from walking through a depleted, degenerated landscape. He is expressing a felt sense (Gendlin). It is not a natural science audit of the balance of minerals in the soil, or a survey of biodiversity. Such 'landscape pain' is important to Mark. He is not the only one with a sense of sadness and urgency towards regeneration work. The local people recognize this felt sense, have such experiences as well and are worried by them. Katherine talks about her capacity to write a novel. It is influenced (her thoughts, her mood) depending on whether she finds herself in India, Portugal or the Netherlands, even if she is in quiet places, without much exchange with other humans. It is when she is without human distraction that she most senses influences of where she is.

This is a key question as it addresses the culture - Nature split that denies reciprocity (if Nature is dead then it can have no agency, or at most of a kind that is very different from human agency). Abram talks about perception as participation, and Aparicio Parry points at consciousness of the dichotomous split between culture and Nature. Tudor suggests the organism as a more accurate concept for thinking about beings than the self. In doing so, he critically addresses the concept of the self as its interpretation (of the self) limits imagining the relational connection to Nature. Haraway, Despret, Deleuze, and Latour, all have addressed this issue, enriching our thinking about it through concepts like cyborg (Haraway), *agencement* (Despret), *assemblages* (Deleuze) or actor-network theory (ANT) (Latour).

5.3.4 being open and develop the experience of reciprocity

Developing the experience of reciprocity in relating to Nature is not mentioned explicitly by interviewees. These people worked with horses, ponies, cows, sheep, goats and dogs. Rather, they refer to developing relationships, individual non-human animal 'personalities' or teaming up (Daniel, Michael, Jane, Iris). Being influenced by the culture and landscape where one is, is mentioned as decisive for one's state of being, for example, using all of one's senses when in the mountains, and 'mental capacities' (Daniel, Michael, Pete, Jane, Mark). Experiences of feeling whole, or of being one with Nature, are shared by several interviewees. Interviewees state that they cannot order such experiences at will, but that the conditions for experiencing themselves open to Nature can be looked for or enhanced. Michael mentions the period at the end of the day when the light falls. Pete also states he cannot control moments when his ecological self reaches out to embrace the widest possible experience of Nature. But he recognizes it immediately when it happens. Temple Grandin has access to non-human individuals more than the average person, as she senses and has a keen eye, ear and smell for the experiences of the prey animals in how they are kept by humans. In general, her comment is that the institutes she worked for think they are efficient through applying production line logic, using conveyor belts, etc., while she shows how inefficient that logic can be, because of how it scares non-human animals. My own experience with group relations conferences made it possible to be more alert to the unconscious processes within groups and, based on that, I started to sense the influence of surroundings and place on the humans in such a conference. I think it is because of this sensitising I could be open to the encounter with the blackbird and look for an interpretation of that moment. Later during this study, my engagement with a horse made it even clearer how I could communicate with a non-human animal. As Haraway says, we can be more open to and develop the experience of reciprocity. It is the direction Abram describes in his books of becoming animal. He doesn't refer to non-human 'misbehaviour' as savage. He points to the lived experience of sensing Nature non-verbally; perception as participation as he calls it.

5.3.5 understanding reciprocity in leadership in the relation to nature

Experiences on the alp and learning to relate to herd animals has helped some interviewees to clarify effective ways of engagement with people in Africa. Jane has made it her practice to work with humans in engaging with horses and there is a growing interest in understanding the impact of such learning on the effectiveness of teams and organisations. Pete, Fons, John and others have introduced Nature retreats to organisations, teams and management education. It is to be expected that, in the growing awareness of environmental crisis, new ways of relating to Nature will be looked for and put into practice. Interviewees see the impact of their practice in different ways. 'Going into Nature' is seen as a helpful exercise in development of self, while engaging with non-human animals puts more emphasis on becoming aware of non-human others and the role of animalistic elements in humans relating to other humans. Interviewees in the category of place are not so explicit about Nature being an actor, having agency. In the category of advocacy, only Mark is explicit about this. In the category of shifting leadership, Steven gives Nature and relating to Nature as the main reasons why he wanted to be in the rain forest, building a resort and farm. Ellen and Katherine have stated more reasons for looking to develop their leadership shifts, including building more mutually respectful and inclusive relationships in society and organisations. Of the practices in this study in general, being a herder could be said to be very effective in learning about Nature and understanding reciprocity in Nature. For Daniel and Michael, some training and transfer of skills plays a role, for instance when Daniel and his friend have limited time to learn how to make cheese. But the idea of having the non–human animals tell their own story is part of how Daniel and Michael learned to become master herders. This corresponds with Despret who, in studying the Israeli ethologist Zahavi, slowly came to realize that he (Zahavi) had developed a research method in which the birds themselves became the researchers, as in his work he found a way of recording the questions and problems the birds themselves were working on (Despret, 1996). I would not have been able to ask the questions in this study and do it in the way I did, if not for years of participating in group relations

conferences. The sensitising to and understanding of the role of unconscious processes in organisations, groups and humans made it possible to look beyond the natural sciences' way of doing research and engaging with the natural world.

5.3.6 interviewees' 'fateful moments' (Giddens, 1991)

Several interviewees mention a vividly remembered one-off experience. Such experiences are described in great detail. They are described without reference to time, as if at that point there was no before or after, as if time stood still and continuity of time did not matter. Most interviewees have given me examples of such experiences in their lives, from relating to Nature or being with others in Nature. These include Pete's experience of becoming one with a rock, John engaging a Moose, Jane's moment of realizing the horse she is trying to mount is afraid of her. Mark remembers seeing a snake being beaten when he was a boy, while Ellen experienced danger and acted to bring herself and her translator to safety, while sleeping in a tent in an African village. Daniel's crisis arose from the exhaustion of being a herder for the first time, kindly helped by a young farmer explaining to him how nature 'works'. Michael enjoyed magical moments in front of his herding hut in the late afternoon.

Interviewees told me about these experiences to explain how they were changed by them or how they are exemplary in coming to appreciate their relation to Nature. Although some are pleasant or aesthetic experiences, people explained them to me to show what their practices are about. They are not about these experiences *per se*, but the experiences are moments of awareness that can lead to insight, connection and understanding of what practising relating to Nature could mean and the importance it had for them to start working on their mission. It is not that all interviewees express fateful moments as the starting insight for their Nature practice. Nature practice can come about in different ways. Sometimes it is an outcome of a longer processes of finding out, shaping or finding a form in society that people are satisfied with or can settle into. Of the five categories of my research frame, 'going into Nature' and 'working with non-human animals' seem like 'first order' Nature practices that are relatively common

(organising Nature retreats, coaching and engaging with horses or other non-human animals). Within the other categories of the framework, advocacy is well established but a more indirect way of engaging with Nature. Then the practice of place and shifting values (making a career switch across cultural sectors), are even less established and could be said to have been invented for this study. For example, Steven's path was coming closer again to Nature after his retirement as a CEO from a multinational company, while Daniel had several jobs after the period in which he was a herder. Daniel and Michael both alternated seasonal herding with going back to the city for a long time.   John, for instance, became an employee, after having been an entrepreneur organising retreats, but then introduced retreats into the government agency he worked for. It seems that fateful moments build a person's self, his or her identity, but still, given the demands of modern life and making a living, people can move away or back again to connection to Nature. I have not found literature that studies the role Nature plays in individual career choices or in choosing a certain place to live. This is different from research on the impact of Nature on communities or looking at people moving away from or returning to their land. There is a growing body of literature on mental health indicators that clearly show the impact of being in Nature after living in a city environment, as mentioned in the literature review. Recent contributions to this knowledge include those made by Matilda Annerstedt van den Bosch (Annerstedt van den Bosch et al., 2015) and Sophie Caillon (Caillon et al., 2017).

To follow Merleau-Ponty and look beyond shifts of meaning for the people interviewed, three 'higher level' shifts of meaning can be considered.

First is Merleau-Ponty's '*écart'* (a lack), which is to accept the unconscious relation with Nature as part of meaning making, which makes meaning making in relation to Nature an unfolding, that is, a continuous process. There is always a lack in knowing, as psycho-social research and especially psychoanalysis highlight. Only here it is not the human unconscious, but the unconscious in relating to Nature, with Nature being an actor and having agency that is the issue. Ferro and

Civitarese speak of the unrepresentational unconscious (see pp. 30-31). Phenomenology has moved on since Merleau-Ponty, to focusing more on understanding meaning making as a process of discovering meaning already there. Human consciousness and subsequent cognitive abilities can then be better understood as coding processes whereby humans take meaning from the direct relation. This is fundamentally different from human agency as defined in Cartesian ontologies, namely humans making meaning that is 'put into' Nature and creating human settlement in isolation and distanced from Nature. This 'coding process' of humans can be metaphorically understood as parents taking raw food material and processing it for feeding their young (who are not yet able to process themselves).

Second is to include the non-human world into meaning making. This is to accept non-human agency and 'actorship' based on one's experiences, of one's perception, experiencing the natural and accepting the non-human world as connected through senses and sensibility in its own right. This is the consequence of understanding the role of the senses, the role of perception, accepting meaning to be there already as it happens in Nature, in the life processes within Nature unfolding. All actors process meaning, creating their own type of code (language), their own communication and politics. This explains a never-ending task of meaning making as alive (building complexity against the laws of thermodynamics), as emerging, finding its way.

Thirdly, and this might be the biggest challenge, is to find a way into Nature 'itself' as humans are part of it, requiring a baron von Munchhausen kind of exercise. This is about pulling ourselves out of environmental thinking 'deadlock' and accepting the environment is not separate, let alone something dead or passive and 'just' the object of human intervention. Rather, environment is Nature not separate from humans, but intertwined with humans bodily and sensory being alive.

5.4 the potential of studying 'leadership and relating to Nature' psycho-socially

The divide between the natural and social sciences doesn't help in making sense of lived experiences of Nature and non-human animals. It is problematic in studying human's relation to Nature, as both types of sciences are well established, but not really talking to each other. In the current global crisis of culture and the environment, natural and social sciences are penned into separate silos. Research is political, and research in between the natural and social sciences may be even more so. What natural science and social science do have in common is seeing humans as separate from Nature. For instance, eco-psychologist Chris Robertson stated in '*Ecopsychologies wilding'*:

> Finally, the article notes the difficulties inherent in creating alternative discourses while also looking to be published (Robertson, 2013).

Right now, crossover areas of research between the natural sciences and the social sciences are difficult to conceptualise and yet do exist – so people are conceptualising the crossover. I have referred to recent work in the literature review (pp. 19-46). For instance, in her study of atherosclerosis, Mol called her research 'empirical philosophy', which allowed her to operate from a space that is not contested and with the authority of being both 'empirical', giving her access to the natural sciences, and 'philosophical', providing authority within the social sciences, while building actor network theory as developed by Latour et al. (Mol, 2002, p.1).

Careful framing can help to bridge both kinds of science, and may help acceptance of the importance of reworking our social institutions and practices beyond science as well. An example of innovative framing of space between the natural and social sciences comes from the American journalist Louv, who used the term 'Nature deficit disorder' to refer to medical authority in describing a social situation where children no longer play outside (Louv, 2005). As a consequence of his framing and public debate accompanying it, many US states have developed

policies to promote children going into Nature (to be cured). However, Dickinson, in response to Louv, argues persuasively that the primary problem of the disconnect with Nature is to be found in culture, which cannot be fixed that easily (Dickinson, 2013).

But just as natural science is split from social science, the same can be said of most social scientists, who stay away from Nature in their work (Roszak, 2001; Toadvine, 2009). Innovations in studying relating to Nature are exploring new avenues. This is work in between disciplines, requiring new ontologies and epistemologies. Having said that, crossover areas of research into relating to Nature are gaining traction. Area's where this happens, can be found the world over. In the Netherlands it is by people like Noelle Aarts (University of Nijmegen), Bernice Bovenkerk (University of Wageningen) and their collaborators.

Researching 'lived experience' is key to this acceleration of interest in the topic, as well as a means of finally breaking free from the limits of human culture as it manifests itself in urban industrialised contexts. Climate change and biodiversity collapse bring urgency to understanding global-local relations and lived experience.

Through investing in Merleau-Ponty, I discovered an ontology and epistemology that meant following a third position beyond positivism and constructivism. I took this from Toadvine's interpretation of Merleau-Ponty, showing how 'flesh' is both a metaphor for the subject (me, you) to understand its tendencies to close its perception of things, as well as an invitation to look at things and perception relationally, from an intertwined position (meaning the senses intertwined with other senses in Nature, as complexities of 'intertwinedness').

Using both a psycho-social approach and a phenomenological one combines these two sides of Merleau-Ponty's concept of flesh. The first is a reflective self (as in psycho-social thinking) that is challenged by the fact it should stay 'open' to perception, to not close into itself. This relates to the universal tendency of

humans to be defensive in matters of psychology, protecting one's psychological integrity, once identity. But it also relates to the unconscious relation to Nature. The second is a relational position beyond humans among themselves that can be researched through the phenomenology of perceiving Nature, where one can also assume Nature to perceive itself.[39] However, as far as humans are concerned, Nature will always be understood through human culture. But it might help to take measures of some kind to safeguard staying 'connected' and no longer excluding or being surprised about actors in Nature, Nature itself doing its own part of meaning making.

Philosophy is still looking to solve the gap between relational, embodied knowing and cognition. Philosophy is also still working on the mind of Nature, as its 'being alive' cannot be accounted for just by calculating chance. In other words, the tendency to promote and produce life in endless variety is just as powerful as the second law of thermodynamics, whereby at the end, everything is degraded (useless) energy[40]. This problem is not solved by Merleau-Ponty, but he did open up avenues away from Cartesian positivism (which went in the opposite direction of taking away all 'creative capacity' from Nature).

So, we can see Merleau-Ponty himself being 'in the middle', as some philosophers argue that he never made any attempt to include abstract human thinking. This is a problem because the link between perception and 'coding' into language is as hard to understand as the core idea of 'meaning' already existing in Nature, as it is now thought that meaning making and life are more connected then previously understood. Falling back on the idea of God as an authoritative father (or mother) figure responsible for it all is not a satisfactory solution. Others disagree, arguing that Merleau-Ponty actually did make valuable efforts in expanding his project of the philosophy of perception into the realm of abstract thinking (e.g., Matherne, 2018). DeRobertis puts it as follows:

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[39] Interviewees' agreement or disagreement with the ontology and epistemology of this research have not been discussed with them.
[40] The puzzle in a way is still to unravel 'life', explaining it how it is possible, happens and evolves, while theories of chance, stochastics or complexity do not do the job.

Thus, Merleau-Ponty proposed an embodied philosophy of interanimality and human–animal *ineinander*[41] or intertwining (Toadvine, 2009). Human and nonhuman animals exist by way of a reciprocal expressive insertion into each other's historically co-constituted lives, a transactional corporeal resonance occurring in time, as it were. This interpenetration makes it possible for human beings to readily ''feel-into'' (Einfuhlung) and relate to diverse species of animal. Merleau-Ponty's recognition of a primitive historically embedded logos at the level of an expressive, knowing body identifies the origination of a meaning-infused world-building process. (DeRobertis, 2015, p. 329).

At this point, Merleau-Ponty helps us to see how natural science stops at cognitive answers, whereas the social sciences (to the extent they have not in their approach become natural sciences themselves) stop at definitions of the individual and the social, leaving out studying relating to Nature, from an inclusive, intertwined position. In the context of work towards a sustainable society, the self as the place where identity is negotiated is a very important political instrument and influence. But to include Nature as a whole into the experience one has to look further than the self, as its (the self's) dominant theoretical underpinnings are currently keeping psychology and sociology hostage in human's own shaped world. Merleau-Ponty helps to reframe and regenerate human relating to Nature. These arguments have been put forward by others (Roszak, 2001; Kidner 2001), however with less emphasis on perception and the senses, and more on the spiritual. From the aim of including our relation to Nature, the self can be ontologically and epistemologically understood and studied differently and with much more promise as a 'body self' or 'body subject' instead of a 'mind self'. The phrase 'thought leader' should be rephrased as 'sense leader'. These 'labels' are not meant to create a new dichotomy, though. To

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[41] DeRobertis is using Toadvine to explain the German word 'ineinander', which provides a philosophical viewpoint upon which to approach the aforementioned notion of a human–animal boundary form.

conclude, the criticism that Merleau-Ponty has not provided enough insight into the role of cognition is only partially correct (namely that he has not been focusing on cognition). But in following him, it makes more sense to understand cognition as a coding process within an embodied 'pre-knowing', than the other way around.

5.4.1 the research frame

The research frame reflects several discourses around relating to Nature, as that is how it was constructed. So, what has been the role of the research frame in this project?

I was interested in lived experience. Therefore, the interviews were not designed to draw out people's knowledge, though many of them were highly knowledgeable. To illustrate, one interviewee was very active in researching and writing about Nature retreats and is one of the leading figures in this practice. Equally, another wrote a book about the practical skills of herding. And yet another was skilled in promoting a particular view on working with people and horses. One had finished philosophical research in the area of non-human animals and was deepening insights into animal language and animal politics. Two interviewees were experts in ecosystems and their restoration.

The research frame categories are certainly not exclusive. For instance, most interviewees are advocates (fourth category), if not for Nature conservation directly, then for their own practices of relating to Nature. Also, working with non-human animals is place bound, so it mixes these two categories of the research frame. Lastly, the people interviewed for their interest in expressing different values in their work practice are not the only ones in the larger group to have made career changes. Nevertheless, the research shows different insights per category of interviewees (see p. 107). In other words, the frame worked well.

The frame is not extensive either; other practices could have been included, like farming, or management of resources such as forest or water management, or healthcare practices.

The frame had value for interviewing people working on different levels of engagement, from the small group, to the organisation, to global advocacy. This representation of people making efforts to engage at different scales helped to reveal more aspects of the topic. For instance, reviewing literature on the frame about advocacy, it was a surprise to discover a big difference between working with Nature in its immediacy (the categories of going into Nature and working with non-human animals) and a practice of using social media to reach out to people on the other side of the globe. For the advocate doing the latter, these are people he will never personally meet or know. This brought to light more of the aspect of anonymity in work relating to Nature (see p. 63).

The categories in the frame were not developed to research gender difference. However, the four women interviewees are not found across the categories but paired in just two, 'working with non-human animals' (Jane, Iris) and the category of shifting values (Katherine, Ellen). Further investigation could have led to other insights. How the women are distributed isn't surprising and could even be seen to fit typical gender identities. That is, men acting and women caring, in these cases for non-human animals, and values in the working environment, aiming to support diversity, inclusion and responsibility to others and the environment.

The categories also cross what one can call 'business models'. Taking others into Nature and working with non-human animals could be seen as services to private or performance-oriented individuals. The categories of working with Nature in a place or doing advocacy are categories of social innovation and economic reform. The last category (moving career) can be looked at from a social discourse perspective where one's wellbeing and economic success, is seen entirely as one's own responsibility, illustrating institutionalised individualism.

While this project is totally Western oriented, interviewees themselves built bridges to non-Western thinking and practices. Environmental NGOs have started to reach out to indigenous people, and this is also happening in research more and more. Indigenous practices are studied in order to be inspired, or to understand expert skills of being in Nature and living more in harmony with it, or to learn about rituals and spiritual meaning via ceremonies, or to enhance feeling connected to Nature, as religious practice may do. Interest in indigenous knowledge and practice is growing, whereas not long ago such cultures were seen as primitive and far away from what the modern world could or should learn from.[42]

Considering the category 'going into Nature', I concluded that a critical discourse on self is developing because of experiencing self in Nature. This is clearly reflected in the insights from analyzing the transcripts in this category. This category of the frame has helped a lot in the research through meeting people that expressed so clearly their Nature experience, how they work guiding other people and how they navigated culture - Nature differences and give strong examples of shifts of meaning.

Considering the category 'non-Human Animals', it is noted (p. 56) that thinking about self has to accommodate the idea that humans are not the only subjects. This means a shift from seeing non-human animals as objects to seeing them as subjects, more like human animals. This is clearly reflected in individual case studies. These stories are not told from a solipsistic position but from experience. Across all the interviewees, the themes 'Nature thinks about humans' and 'agency gets noticed' (table 6) illustrate how this discourse might further develop into generally acceptance of conversations with non-human others as relevant and ordinary. These findings are very much in line with key ideas coming from researchers like Haraway, Despret and Bradshaw (see literature review, p. 57).

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[42] A recent statement was made about SDG 16 (UN Development goals) needing to include indigenous knowledge and culture.

The third category of the research frame is place. The literature review showed that thinking has developed from place as an area of economic development, to a wider notion of place including a diversity of actors and non-human others. Such a wider notion includes Nature, self-governance by those living in a place and the emotional factors of attachment to a place. Interviewees clearly expressed place attachment and their interest in Nature cannot be seen to be isolated from place. Across the insights from interviewing, places are mentioned frequently in relation to particular lived experiences of Nature, especially in 'agency gets noticed' and 'Nature exists'. The literature on place incorporates non-tangible aspects (Devine-Wright, 2013) and shows research of how the notion of place shifts to the idea of 'socio-ecological systems', especially when looking at indigenous cultures (Adams, 2010, Kohn, 2013; C. Thomas, 2015; Country, et al. 2015).

The fourth category of the frame is advocacy. The discourse develops from influencing government policies through rational analysis, to influencing policies through supporting and even building new economic practices, from sounding alarm bells to creating global connectivity, to working on showcases of circular economy. The lived experience of 'Nature wishes to be made social' resonates here. Working in close contact with local people is part of this category (as it was of the third). Literature on effectiveness of campaigning supports these shifts of meaning, as such research aims to understand what distinguishes successful advocacy from less successful work. Focusing on personal experience of relating to Nature and encouraging more intimate communication to share and address meaning, perhaps by making use of safe spaces, is gaining attention in research on Nature advocacy (Timmer, 2005; Glasson et al. 2010).

The last category is about a shift of values in the workplace. The discourse in literature develops from leadership in doing good for marketing purposes, to leadership for being mission driven. This is seen in the rising popularity of social enterprise or the work of NGOs beyond financial gain. Doing good is a crucial factor in the deliberations of interviewees, as seen in wanting to work for or join a particular organisation as interviewees do. In the themes 'representations of

Nature and culture' and 'culture resists Nature, Nature resists culture' important elements of this discourse (doing good) can also be seen.

5.4.2 the method

A framework was developed from the literature review, creating a baseline for inviting particular people for interviews. The Free Associative Narrative Interview (FANI) is a narrative method that is widely known within psycho-social studies, and provided a guideline for the interview method, as well as how to analyse the transcripts. However, this method was combined with other approaches to interviewing. One was from Wengraf, working with the idea of Gestalt and engaging with an interviewee more than once. The other was to include awareness of the body as a source of information and knowing, drawing on Gendlin's work.

Asking about life stories, showing the greatest interest in interviewees' personal and individual experiences and views did not meet with resistance. Nobody openly challenged the way I interviewed, wanting to change the way the interviewing was explained and done, or even more extremely, refusing to participate once they understood how it was going. On three occasions, people were explicitly concerned about whether they would be able to help me. I did not problematise such comments other than confirming with them my belief that sharing their experiences would provide valuable input for the work. In doing so, I built confidence and trust, making the threshold lower for interviewees to participate. At the same time, I noted this hesitation and understood that any interview about one's experience can be challenging, especially when experiences with Nature are outside what is considered the norm. My guess is that some people, upon introduction of the research, projected the expectation of having to be a Nature 'expert' in order to participate and did not consider themselves to be so qualified. Knowing about Nature is the job of an expert, but only the individual knows the most about his or her work. Once the interviews had started, such reservations about being an expert or knowing enough disappeared. It illustrates

the culture - Nature split and shows how, on the one hand, Nature is considered the domain of the natural sciences (which means that knowledge about Nature can only be acquired within a laboratory), while on the other, the work done by interviewees in their Nature practices is pioneering, emerging or continuously developing like life itself. Thus, the interviews are necessarily subjective. Making sense of subjective stories is exactly the point of studying lived experience.

I interviewed two experts in the field of Nature, and both fully supported the idea of researching personal experience. Most people said they enjoyed being interviewed and, as remarked above in the analysis of the transcripts, several referred to having developed valuable insights themselves from the process.

The method was chosen to enable research beneath the surface, that is, in terms of Hollway and Jefferson, to work with a defended subject (while the researcher can also be seen as defended). To explore and use the principles of Gendlin's method of the felt sense was to add the unconscious aspects of relating to Nature through one's body. It is only very recently that psychoanalysis itself includes the non-human other and material world as part of meaning making (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015).

Thomas discusses the tensions between psychoanalysis and psycho-social research (Thomas, 2018), stressing the risk in any discussion of an interviewee's personal problems emerging, as the aim of research is not to do therapy, but knowledge production in a more general sense, contributing to knowing about what is presented as well as further adding insights into 'how to know'.

The idea of the analytic field puts this tension in an even subtler perspective. Psychoanalytic theory uses metaphors from science like the electromagnetic and gravitational fields of physics when considering the field between patient and analyst that is the communication between one unconscious and another (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015, p. 161). As Ferro and Civitarese argue, therapeutically working in the field means:

> In principle, interpretation is no longer directed to the
> patient, to modifying something in him, but instead to improving the
> narrative capacity of the field, understood as an un/conscious narration a
> deux (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015, p. 164).

Such theoretical comments illustrate that the interview method used here depends on using oneself as an instrument in the research. It requires some training to not unnecessarily disturb the story or stream of consciousness. It also requires some training to recognize oneself as subject (body subject in fact) and the interviewee *idem dito*, intertwined in the relation in the interview and through being members of society. The idea of the field might undermine that notion of subjectivity,as there is a double hermeneutic at work. That is, the felt sense is in expressive relation with the representational unconscious as well as the unrepresentational field. Although the research interview situation should not be compared with an actual therapy setting, the research is a site of co-producing 'knowledge'.[43]

Interviewees were not consciously aware of co-producing knowledge, as most were expecting a more cognitive question and answer engagement. When an interview was turning into an associative, and therefore joint, effort to look at somebody's personal story (with moments of resonating), interviewees were usually getting quite involved and excited to look into their experiences. This meant that it was not difficult to agree on meeting people again and often even a third time. By that time, as predicted by Wengraf, people were satisfied they had said enough about their personal stories (Wengraf, 2001). Of the 15 people interviewed, I knew five already before the project started. Now, after the project, I am still in contact with all of them as well as with two new people.

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[43] Notions of data, knowledge or findings were discussed with my supervisors. I started to use the term 'insight'.

Using psychoanalytic concepts to elaborate upon what happened in applying the method brings transference and countertransference to the fore. In theory, it is the job of a researcher to be aware of this, whereas a therapist actively welcomes and works with it.   Suggestions were made for possible cooperation in the future (a transference of wanting to be friends, a need to bond), and recommendations of other people to interview (a transference of a feeling of shared important work that could be made stronger through allies). Some made notes during the interviews, to preserve thinking that they developed during the interview. It was observed that, as a researcher, I was very much in my head. The general working title of the research was commented upon as being too wide, as Nature is such a vague notion. Somebody else stated that humans are part of Nature, puzzled by my topic 'relating to Nature', as if he had to explain to me reluctantly the basics of relating to Nature (querying if I knew what I was talking about).

While the notion of the defended subject has been the core notion for Hollway and Jefferson to introduce 'doing qualitative research differently' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013), I needed to understand how to include relating to Nature into the idea of the defended subject (or defended researcher). This concerns being defended about Nature, about one's own senses and perception, as well as being defended socially, beyond everyday matters of privacy or self. This brings to the front nothing less than critical notions of (primarily Western) culture as a whole and what it stands for and expresses. This concerns its (culture's) preoccupation with economy and financial wealth in contrast to what is real, meaningful and valuable in relating to nature.

We are not as familiar with the idea of defences against Nature as we are with defences in social relations. Within psychiatry, we notice that Nature is a realm to which certain behaviour and personality traits are attributed. For example, being a 'chicken', when feeling scared or being shrewd like a 'fox' (Akhtar, Volkan, 2005). This shows how defended we are against Nature within the humanities, as within psychiatry nothing real in relating to nature beyond such metaphors is imagined. This is despite evidence having built up in biology and ethology,

showing non-human animals being sentient. Hence cultural defences against the body persist despite decades of emancipation. Although the sexual revolution can be seen to have liberated us from strict norms against impulsivity, keeping pleasure hidden or to oneself in order to be accepted as a well-behaved member of society, defences around the body still exist. For instance, in medical science the immune system is seen as elementary to staying healthy and/or enhancing health, its job being to block and/or kill intruders. Yet many insights show much more complicated relations taking place on the molecular and organic level of bodies, like subtle exchange and synergies and constant renewal. In mainstream medicine, knowledge of one's body is handed over to doctors and the body becomes a stranger. These culturally embedded notions inhibit using one's body in contexts of being in Nature and using one's senses in understanding communication in Nature. Interviewees did not refer to their bodies as instruments or devices, as such reference would not be culturally understood or accepted. The exception was medical references, for example, my body is getting older so I don't know how much longer I can do herding, as that is a physical activity for which one needs to be reasonably fit. Nevertheless, interviewees made many direct or indirect comments to the fact that their senses and sensing were crucial. These were comments about esthetic experience and bodily sensations, as well as communicative realities when being with non-human animals and abilities to read signs in Nature in order to understand or anticipate coming events. Level of training, as in learning how to be in Nature and use one's senses was also referred to, with awareness that not paying attention to one's senses means missing out on meaning and therefore missing out on both good and bad (potentially dangerous) situations.

Though familiar with recognizing social defences, I am not familiar with (or trained) to systematically and professionally identify defences against Nature. It is known that professional dog handlers, people that work with horses, Nature observers or experts in bird language are skilled and open in using their senses to understand meaning when in Nature.

But here is where phenomenology comes in as an epistemology of delayed judgement, which is very close to what psychotherapists do in allowing deeper experiences or fragments of them come to the surface to become available for meaning making.

Psychoanalytic field theory suggests that the task of the therapist is to make the narrative capacity of the field as rich as possible. With respect to that suggestion, I did not ask interviewees if we could talk and do the interviewing in Nature itself. I chose to meet people as much as possible in the environment they themselves suggested, whether at work, in a neutral place like a café (although such places posed difficulties in finding enough quiet), or at home. Many were done by Skype. Although this is limiting in terms of perception, paradoxically enough it brought out very specific sensory experiences and details of the engagement that sometimes felt quite revealing and intimate. For instance, people Skype on their phones and talk while traveling, or in between meetings. I often felt part of the reality of their work, or I could witness them interacting with others who dropped by or tried to get a response from the interviewee, while I was interviewing. Interviewing people in their home brought a whole different sensory landscape and reality, like being asked to make tea in their kitchen and thereby gaining an idea of their cooking practice.

Interviewing is limited in that it does not allow for seeing interviewees in action. The one exception was interviewing Jane in the category of engaging with non-human animals. I contemplated how to organise opportunities for more participative observation. In the end, it was not feasible for practical reasons and time limitations. My own experience with Jane of working with a horse was extremely helpful, and if I could have done more ethnographic work, observing people in other practices as well, it would probably have given me more information and insight into people's accounts of Nature's agency and the ways in which they worked and addressed other people.

With respect to saturation of the data and the question of whether 15 people provided enough data for insights with respect to the five categories, the answer is yes, based on overlap of themes after doing so many interviews, which can be taken as a sign of saturation. Nevertheless, adding new categories to the frame and the research, like farmers, or leaders in health care could have brought different data and insights, maybe even more conclusive or contradictory. But I cannot further elaborate on that as these categories were not part of the project.

5.4.3 validation

During the project, the interview design was critically discussed among a peer group of PhD students. A different peer group of PhD students was asked to give feedback on a sample of a transcript, during a meeting of joint analysis. This helped me to reflect on my skills and capacity to do analysis and the risks of wild analysis, that is, drawing conclusions that cannot be supported by the actual interview content and experience. Furthermore, a first overall analysis was discussed with one of the interviewees and an independent organisational consultant who had been my colleague. Both were also asked to comment on wild analysis and offer hypotheses on where they suspected social defense of me the researcher was playing out. They expected more interpretation and more concluding comments and recommendations from me, the opposite of wild analysis. Two interviewees offered to validate their interview transcripts (one did). This resulted in agreement, appreciation and encouragement for doing the research. It also created some comments in addition to the transcript.

5.4.4 the insights

Some strong motivation and guidance for what kind of practice people wanted to establish arose from experiencing Nature. Insights also emerged about how Nature practice meets dominant Western culture and how the people involved in and leading the practice must navigate that culture and themselves.

No interviewee wants to miss 'Nature experience' having once discovered 'it'. But none of the interviewees live directly or solely from the land. Michael gets some income from engaging with non-human animals and Steven has an income through his eco-resort annex ecological farm. All the others provide services to other humans, with relating to Nature involved.

Interviewees show an entrepreneurial way of engaging with Nature, while servicing other humans. This leads to interviewees commenting on dominant Western culture. References are made to the power dynamics in Western business organisations and the cultural idea of progress rather than Nature's progress.

In dominant Western culture, Nature is thought to be universal, as defined by the natural sciences. The weather, seas, soil are omnipresent and expected to always act the same. As Joanna Macy states:

> Until the end of the twentieth century, each generation lived through history with the tacit assurance that generations would follow. Each assumed, without question, that his or her children and the children of his or her children would walk on the same earth, under the same heaven (Macy, 1995).

Maybe by replacing God for the eternal laws of natural science, we humans felt comfortable that Nature would be there for ever. From this perspective, the unique differentiation and diversity of Nature intertwined with humans and place is lost. In several practices, conscious and deliberate attempts were made by interviewees through their leadership to establish stronger local connections to Nature, to help people to understand Nature as place bound and to work with that notion. They work within the perspective of Nature and its agency. Mark calls that work restoring ecosystems, including the human relations to the place, the land and the people already living there.

The invitational question 'Can you tell me the story of how you got to do what you are doing?', implies a story of working with Nature, relating to Nature, but told from the individual's position. Nature and non-human animals are present in the stories and the experiences of Nature are relived while telling a personal story. This comes with affect. In those examples, humans tell about sensing Nature and about the impact such experiences have had on their thinking and even identity. But the opposite, humans influencing non-human animals / Nature, can also be seen. Daniel knows he must be visible to the herd and he noticed how standing on a high rock influenced their behaviour. Jane influences a horse through her body, while the horse influences Jane. (I had a similar experience during a meeting with Jane, when she offered to help me to 'work' with one of her horses.) This is in accordance with Merleau-Ponty's ontology, where the influencer and the influenced are intertwined.

Does every experience of or in Nature lead to acting upon it? No, interviewees give many stories of an experience that is real and has impact without immediately translate into action. Knowing one had an amazing experience at dusk – seeing incredible colours, patterns, or views of the landscape in changing light, when silently standing in front of a hut, doesn't mean that standing there the next day at the same time will lead to a similar experience. Nevertheless, such experiences are remembered, and have impact, contributing to a sense of familiarity, feeling at home, enjoyment, longing or attachment.

The overall themes across all interviewees (table 6, p. 142) come from phenomenological analysis. They cannot easily be compared or made to refer to the categories of the frame or the literature review. The overall themes express the experiences of the relation to Nature directly, much 'closer' than the themes of the five categories of the frame or the literature. As such, these themes are expressed as dynamic from the onset. For instance, neither 'birth of a mission' nor 'Nature wishes to be made social' are found anywhere in literature as a distinct discourse, yet these themes very clearly capture lived experience, intentions and subsequent agency and actions by interviewees.

The findings show a better understanding of ecocentric ethics. Interviewees did not develop their ethics as rational decisions, following rational analysis, setting up norms through a deductive process of deciding what is right or wrong. Rather, they grew from lived experience of relating to other humans, non-human others and Nature. This puts emphasis on non-human animals and Nature as 'the other'. The relational experience produces an ecocentric ethic in action, as it emerges in the process of relating. The ethic comes from actions, instead of the other way around, through deduction and then application. It is a different ecocentric ethic compared to a normative idea of ecocentric ethics in literature (e.g., Curry).

Following from this, it is possible to see relating to Nature and shifts of meaning in a rich perspective, a spectrum of ways of relating to Nature and the blending of human culture. Relating to Nature according to Merleau-Ponty's ontology, is hard to grasp, as it is culturally unfamiliar; though perhaps not for those who know about quantum physics (Capra, 1997). In this way, the findings (insights) help to make relating to Nature more accessible.

Looking at the findings (insights), a gradient or classification of 'Nature - culture' conversation shines through, that is different depending on who is telling his or her story. I have identified the following types of relating to Nature:

- The body subject level: Merleau-Ponty's recognition at the level of an expressive, knowing body and meaning making that influences the world and vice versa. This describes the bodily knowing of Nature. At this level there is an organic, visceral dynamic. It is communication using one's animalistic capacity. Several people expressed awareness or direct experience like this.
- The level of a 'call' of Nature, an entrepreneurial level: Here, people are explorers when it comes to Nature, while at the same time they need to connect to culture (their own and others') in order to connect to 'the human side of things'.

- The cooperative level: Animals / Nature execute and establish meaning and culture as much as people do. Some interviewees described working with Nature in these terms. A dog is an individual and works with the herder to get the sheep herding job done. Acknowledging the dog as an individual helps the work. Acknowledging that somebody else could possibly work more easily with that particular dog, or vice versa, helps as well.

- The differentiating level: This describes observing differences in Nature, noting different animals, plants in (cultural) landscapes. It is the knowing of individual dogs being different from individual cows. This is knowing of Nature in human terms, the knowing usually used in educational situations where one learns about the natural environment in all its diversity.

- The management level: At this level human culture is dominant, Nature is understood to be forceful, but activities are more directed by technology and science, seeing Nature as complex but as needing to be controlled, instead of knowing Nature through lived experience.

- The ownership level: This is an extension of the management level. Power over and distance from Nature make conceptions of it more abstract. Contracts and financial transactions become dominant. This is the domain of environmental economic theories, incorporating costs of ecosystem services in profit and loss projections. It is also the domain of theories of critical natural capital (Ekins, 2003; Farley, 2008; Lü et al., 2017).

Nature being a relational partner can be experienced not in argumentative or analytic fashion, but through exposure, from being open to non-human animals at a different level of meaning making other than human language. Silent at first, it is the lived experience – sometimes an epiphany – that is the starting point of meaning making through language. Gendlin's protocol puts 'listening to one's body' (felt sense) at the core. That needs to be broadened by the observation that there is no 'felt sense' if there is no 'Nature'. Nature instigates 'felt sense', through one's body in exchange with the wider Nature of non-human others and material agency (Amatuzzi, 1984; Bennett, 2010; Rossiter, 2014; Tudor, 2014).

Merleau-Ponty introduces new concepts while the patterns he recognizes can be considered a structure for interpretation, on top of which words and language can develop. He illustrated attempts to put into words what to a large extent cannot be put into words, cannot be reified. It can, though, be expressed in art, especially painting. Adams used aesthetic, poetic references to describe experiencing Nature. Furthermore, he suggests that oral culture is better suited to communicating about Nature, being more open to experiencing Nature, than written language. Bateson, Gendlin, Morton, Bradshaw, Zahavi, Scharmer, Aerts all consider the semantics or syntax of human language in relating to or interacting with Nature. Other researchers work in the area of animal languages and cultures. Donaldson and Kymlicka, von Essen and Allen and Meijer all bring animal voices into the political arena (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011; von Essen & Allan, 2017; Meijer, 2017).

Incorporating Nature into understanding of language and language development is a separate field of study, called ecolinguistics. Several definitions of ecology of language and language ecology studies have appeared over the last 30 to 40 years (Haugen, 1972; Makkai, 1992; Fill, 1993; Verhagen, 2000; Muhlhausler, 2003; do Couto, 2014; Kravchenko, 2016). Ironically, I argue that this field speaks about incorporating the non-human other (Steffensen, 2014) but as yet, ecolinguists do not research in that way, in general not looking into the non-human other, with some exceptions. Rautio used a small sample to examine the ways people in a small northern Finnish village refer to the non-human other, expressing it in language (Rautio, 2013). She notices anthropomorphic meaning making and makes a plea for including non-human others in order to establish a richer meaning making. In her article, she distinguishes her position (appreciating humans to already be part of Nature, not needing to reconnect) from those of people like Naess or Abram, who are criticizing humans for being detached or split off from Nature, though this is a misreading of their work in my view. Some ecocentric ethics literature also warns against the 'ought to' aspect of ecocentric ethics (Fox, 1995). Other ecolinguists stress the need to look at language in terms of systems, complexity theory and place (Kramsch & Witheside, 2008). All in all, it

is most helpful to acknowledge the challenge of studying the language of relating to Nature as part of a continuous and contextual process of relating 'itself', instead of trying to come to a verdict on defining ecolinguistics at this time.

In doing a language analysis exercise, table 7 illustrates people with similar positions to Merleau-Ponty's on relating to Nature and the kind of language used to express or make meaning about relating to Nature. I have added expressions from interviewees like 'being in the middle' and 'push pull'. The table does not supply an overview of a (new) language of relating to Nature, but shows the ways authors (including interviewees) give words to relating to Nature. We saw from Merleau-Ponty and the implications of his thinking how language in a positivist Cartesian ontology pushes meaning to become universal (mathematical), and how that tends to reify Nature, putting economic value to it, instead of focusing on the expression of (direct) lived experience.

Table 6. Examples of wording about relating to Nature used by several authors and interviewees.

	Merleau- Ponty*	Abram**	Gendlin***	Morton****	This study*****
Semantic ideas and expressions used	Intentional arc (internal purpose and external availabilities)	The flesh of language (the attempt to say what language is, meets a limitation)	Focusing (the process and protocol of working with felt sense)	Agrilogistics (the invention of controlled agriculture in Mesopotamia)	Being in the middle (between Nature and culture, between senses and cognition)
	Expression (a transformation that is rooted in our embodied existence)	Forgetting and remembering of the air (air being a mystery)	Felt sense (the bodily knowing that one allows it to express, give meaning to something visceral)	Ecognosis (ecological awareness of everything related to everything else)	Push Pull (opposite styles of leading, one becomes aware of while in Nature and not in the office)
	Grasping (how I can see something better, looking for what is the best position to see)	The speech of things (how sounds of things mingle)		Subscendence (the whole is not more, but less than the sum of its parts)	Unscripted (Nature comes without a training curriculum)
	Alterity (refers to being embedded in a world that is not oneself and as one interacts one is shaped in return)	The discourse of the birds (the constant presence of signalling by birds)		Uncanny (something totally intimate, weirdly jutting into your world)	Compost heap (the metaphor for the complexity of life, that is circular)
	Flesh (the embracing medium)	Sleight of hand (each creature has only restricted access		Kicking in the biosphere (as an individual I am affected by for	Landscape pain (the pain one feels when walking through a

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		to the mystery of the real)		instance global warming, as is everybody else and Nature at the same time)	degenerated landscape, lacking clear signs of life)
	Chiasm (the intertwining, the concept of the 'in-between' where the visible and the invisible and the sensible and the sentient come together	Shapeshifting (the body a realm wherein the diverse textures and colors of the world meet up)		Ecosexual (ecology is delicious, gives more pleasure than consumerism)	Livingness (being alive, having purpose and meaning, which humans, non-humans and Nature have in common and have a right to express)

*Gamage, 2016
**Abram, 1996, 2010
*** Gendlin, 2003
**** Morton, 2016
***** This study (Insights from Interviewees)

For social innovation towards a different ethic, being connected to Nature is not a protocol or instruction, it is the possibility of a lived experience of meaning already there to be 'coded'. From there, the cultural context determines if meaning making includes Nature being acknowledged for its agency or not. That inclusiveness can develop into an action that is either adaptive or innovative within the human / non-human relation. Humans in general do not like to be dependent on Nature, creating the illusion of being disconnected and seeing Nature as eternally unchanging. This limits the impact of Nature experience on human ethics. While making more of sustainability through management of the environment can be seen to be adaptive, it is cultural brokerage (Bradshaw, 2010) that is truly innovative.[44] All Interviewees have been cultural brokers in this respect, which asks them to stay close to lived experience in relating to Nature, taking risks. Michael, after a season of herding, returns to the office. But every time he comes back from Nature to the office, he is a different person. Mark, in having made a difference (with his teams) to the health and ecological functioning of an ecosystem, still has to overcome the challenges of needing to fit in his regular economic and financial institutional arrangements. But in doing so, he too is a different person through his restoration work.

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[44] See Appendix p. 231 for description of Bradshaw's concept of cultural brokerage.

5.4.5 alternative explanations

My findings highlight Merleau-Ponty's ontology of Nature as a relational ontology, but other studies can be found in the area of human animals relating to Nature. While this research focusses on phenomenology, several authors follow different ontologies in studying relating to Nature.

Bauman (2015) argues that a shift is occurring in human's overall meaning system because of globalisation and climate change. This is a shift from "universalizing meanings, objective truth, and a single reality", to "proliferation of different, evolving planetary contexts" (Bauman 2011, p. 777). Contrary to my argument, he does not work with the concept of Nature's agency, but sees Nature as a "multi perspectival emergent process" (ibid, p. 780). Bauman provides minimal explanation of what Nature is. He links his overall argument to the West having split religion from science (ibid, p. 789). What is important is that he sees multiple realities in which Nature plays a role in local cultural diversity, which is, according to him, a way forward out of global crisis. This resonates with several of the people I interviewed that choose to work on inclusive local or regional unique practices (Gunther, Leslie, Mark).

Searles, mentioned in the chapter on the research frame, writes about the role of the non-human environment in human development. He starts to include the relation to Nature in psychoanalytic thinking and theory, considering that relation of vital importance. In *The Nonhuman Environment in Normal Development and in Schizophrenia* (1960), he elaborates on human development as an individuation process where one learns to see oneself as separate and distinct from other humans. Searles shows how this differentiation holds true for the non-human environment as well. He illustrates with many examples of people suffering schizophrenia who experience being one with the non-human environment / Nature, or showing episodes of de-differentiation as if the non-human environment is part of them.

Following Searles, the experiences of interviewees where they express feeling connected to Nature could be interpreted either way, as the expressions of sensitive but mentally healthy people or as evidence of suffering mental issues. However, the people interviewed for this study can safely be seen as not suffering from schizophrenia or having schizophrenic episodes.[45] Yet they were very aware of and cautious about the extent to which they could or should share their experiences of Nature. Searles' contribution is now more than 50 years old and psychoanalytic thinking and theory have evolved, as shown by psychoanalytic field theory (Ferro and Civitarese) and intersubjective theory (Ogden; Benjamin; Avila, Crociani-Windland).

Searles emphasised the desirability of healthy mental relations towards Nature (1960). At the same time, he pointed to the natural sciences as the main source of knowledge about the natural world, arguing that the challenge for modern man is to integrate that knowledge in order to become better. Although Searles is known to have made psychoanalysis more relational, this doesn't stand out from his analysis of mental illnesses like schizophrenia and psychosis. He did not add thoughts on non-human animals and Nature as having agency. In this sense, he did not see Nature as the other, which would have put a whole new dimension to relating, the dimension that has been explored in this study. While psychology builds on its history, the argument here is that sensing a bird or communicating with a horse, allow us to critically reflect on what it means to be psychologically healthy.

The topic of relating to Nature is multidisciplinary by default, partly because Nature was split off into separate disciplines when the natural sciences developed. It is now picked up and reintegrated. This results in disciplines that define themselves with the prefix 'eco', allowing new endeavours and innovation in ways of looking at the world. As eco-psychology and more recently ecosociology have developed, the relation to Nature and the ecological self as the

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[45] Though some did refer to poor mental health or conditions.

self that is connected to Nature are becoming key concepts.[46] At the same time, such stretching can only go so far before something truly new has to appear. This is how quantum mechanics and later cybernetics and ecology came to life as disciplines. Nature allows for both the highest level of integration of spiritual awareness as well as the tiniest and most minute level of detail and specialisation.

5.4.6 unexpected finding

It is surprising that interviewees do not address environmental crisis concern very much. Is this the core of the 'defended subject'? if looking through that lense what does it say? One possibility is that they have formed secure viewpoints for themselves. They don't need to discuss concern about the environment as, to them, it is obvious; for most interviewees, the environmental crisis is real. Being concerned about environmental problems and wanting to do something about them was a given. Another possibility is that interviewees don't want to be alarmist, as that doesn't help in moving forwards. For instance, Mark did not want to get distracted by alarmist conversations stating the problems, as they are repetitive, especially if one acts within groups of experts already familiar with these problems. A third possibility is the need to see the challenge as positive, for oneself and for other people. Living with environmental crisis concern and a constant sense of danger is not pleasant and requires resilience and the ability to understand one's own anxieties, fears and emotions. A fourth possibility is being defended towards the researcher (me) and this research. Maybe this is in order not to become to disturbed in ways one is already working with Nature. Interviewes have developed ideas and ways forward that help them to continu their work and making a living out of it (although not everybody is equally successful at this). ,

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[46] One criticism of the concept of ecological self as described by Naess comes from Toadvine, who states that the ontology of Nature, as Merleau-Ponty argues, is about connecting self and other. It is relational. That means that the concept of an ecological self is a contradiction. It is not the self that is ecological, it is the self in relation.

5.4.7 limitations of the study

Limitations arise from the method chosen, as interviews are not as direct a way of acquiring insights about lived experience as ethnography or participative observation. A follow-up study focusing on social innovation could take a single case and interview more people involved in a practice or initiative as well as combining interviews with people involved in a participatory and observational way. As Nature cannot be asked directly how this topic could best be researched, another consideration is to involve people with expertise in observing animals and Nature. Rather obviously, these could be indigenous people as Kohn has done (Kohn, 2013).

A study like this inevitably meets political views. Although it is mentioned at several points that the findings and consequences of this study are political, in the end this project did not focus on its political implications. It is clear, though, and it is my observation, that concerns and debate around Nature - climate change, biodiversity loss - are gaining momentum and that ecocentric ethics and political adaptation to a different relating to Nature are needed.

5.5 implications for the current sustainability discourse

5.5.1 social norm

In many ways, sustainability has become a social norm. Starting as a concept that pointed at limiting the use of resources for future generations to prosper, it also focused on global equity. In the last couple of years, it has become more about green growth and innovation, claiming social equity and conservation of ecosystems and species will be realised as well through green growth (Pfister, 2016).

5.5.2 inherent polarity

Recently more criticism has developed about growth itself, pointing at the inherent polarity between ecological thriving and economic growth (Latouche, 2010; Kallis, 2011; Sanford, 2017; Venn, 2018; Wahl, 2016). In this criticism, a mix of political, ecological and psychological insights and arguments are used. Some of these criticisms come from outside the economic thinkers on the development of the sustainability discourse, with thinkers like Ilya Prigogyne, Isabelle Stengers, Francisco Varela, Margaret Wheatley and others, who consistently research theories of life and what it means to relate to and enhance life, referring to dissipative structures (Prigogyne, 1984), autopoiesis (Varela, 1988) and quantum mechanics (Wheatley, 2006).

5.5.3 sustainability is different

Nature teaches us that true sustainability is different from what the dominant culture makes of it. Within that difference, Nature's agency is a decisive factor, ecosystems by default work through succession and enhance diversity. The complexity of these dynamics is of course studied by natural science, but the social meaning of it comes from and through experience. This shows the difference between a normative ecocentric ethics and an ecocentric ethics learned from experience. In this study the focus has been on experience. Ecocentric ethics then shows itself meaningfully on many levels, while the meaning has to be discovered. One of those meanings is time; ecological time (crucial in ecosystem restoration depending on natural succession over considerable timespans) is different from human time scales of planning, decision making and acting within economic conditions.

Schein helps corporate leaders of sustainability understand ecocentric world views, but within social economic systems that does not include agency of non-human animals, or Nature as an actor. Hence lived experience of Nature is neglected. To further illustrate the point, Borland and Lindgreen rightly state that corporate eco efficiency or eco competitive advantage falls under an anthropocentric epistemology (2013, p 176), while an ecocentric ethics appears in

their work through defining strategies that 'satisfy the need of markets'. There is no mentioning of Nature's agency, developing ecocentric ethics through lived experience of non-human others and or Nature. This proves how difficult it is to include inter-subjectivity (based on non-human animals / Nature having agency) into existing corporate cultures / social norms. Researching lived experience shows that the current sustainability discourse is failing to move from an anthropocentric paradigm to an ecocentric one. That latter can easily become an anthropomorphic concept again as Nature resists its reification, meaning making while relating to Nature must be discovered over and over again, with Nature and non-human animals as much at the centre as human animals, and it must go beyond markets. Without reference to non-human animals and Nature, any leadership will fail to be ecocentric from the start, and will unconsciously reproduce anthropocentric practices.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, I will discuss the contribution of the research, where it fills gaps in literature, offer suggestions for further research and finally end with some concluding remarks.

6.1 the contribution of the research

My position is based on Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of perception. The implications of his phenomenology and ontology are to begin analysis from within – opening oneself to experience of being intertwined with Nature. If an anthropocentric position in relating to Nature is primarily shown through the Cartesian power of 'thinking up the world' through the individual mind, then the suggestion from Merleau-Ponty is that Nature can never be approached and made sense of from outside, from avoiding being intertwined. Merleau-Ponty emphasises that meaning making is a relational process.

My study has shown an understanding of Nature practice gained from being intertwined with Nature. Through phenomenological interpretation, Nature's agency comes through. This is how I suggest that Nature-oriented practice and its leadership can be facilitated collectively, as a position of inter-subjectivity with humans and non-human animals, plants and wider Nature included, but also as a way of valuing experience of Nature and collective enchantment. What that means and how it works then needs to be discovered over and over again, as Nature resists its reification.

The interviewees demonstrated that exploring and communicating experience of Nature individually and collectively is a core part of ecocentric leadership. This is overlooked in the sustainability discourse, where in general the word sustainability has become a universal label for thinking about how to manage resources. If sustainability focuses on efficiencies, and how to achieve them, to save the planet's running out of 'stuff' it stays within the dominant anthropocentric Cartesian ethic and ways in which society has organised its

capitalistic relation to Nature; a social stasis that it (the sustainability discourse) does not seem capable of addressing. Rather than following the sustainability discourse, interviewees all seem at an edge, as for them their counterpart, Nature, is alive and not just a matter of resources.

Through the analysis, I have shown that Nature 'wants to become social', but at the same time 'culture resists Nature'. An important insight from this study is that moving to a position of working with Nature immediately shows the way Western society emphasises the self as the muscle that negotiates personal identity, expecting to be detached from others, including non-human others. A self in a human working / office environment, in its most perverse version, is living detached from others and Nature. Dominant values emphasise cognitive, individual meaning making, individual material progress, individual career development and carelessness with respect to non-human others and Nature. A self operating in Nature, or working in Nature practice (of a kind that chooses to engage with Nature, restricting oneself to avoiding excess power, or technological dominance), encounters a challenge to be (or become) an interconnected self, an intertwined self, with the opportunity and potential of knowing through the senses. This is a self that I imagine to be closer to how indigenous people experience the world. It is also a self that is reflected in some countries' constitutional principles of law, like Ubuntu and Buen Viver.

The findings of this research suggest interpretations outside of prevailing cultural understanding of Nature. Apart from the analysis itself and the insights it gave rise to, table 5 shows some of the most important outcomes of interviewing 15 people who were all engaged in Nature practices as I have defined them for this study. The analysis of interviewees' stories has, I hope, brought the participants' experiences and insights close enough for the reader to think and reflect on them, and to become curious about relating to Nature.

6.2 bringing arguments to the identified gaps

On page 18, I identified three gaps in research that led to the objectives of this project:

1. To expand the psycho-social approach of researching beneath the surface to include the philosophy of Nature as Merleau-Ponty started, in order to add unconscious relating to Nature to psycho-social research.

2. To include the notion of agency in Nature, agency of non-human others, in the ecopsychology body of knowledge.

3. To look for a dynamic ecocentric ethics, instead of a static one.

6.2.1 expanding the psycho-social approach

This study comments on Searles and recent work by Ferro and Civitarese, where I make the case for expanding thinking about reciprocity in psychoanalysis to encompass non-human others having agency.

Searles was influential in developing relational thinking about Nature within psychoanalysis and the relation with the external environment.

> I am saying that he [man] is an indissoluble part of the fabric of all created matter. (Searles, 1960, p. 23)

Searles mentions the notion of a 'field', referring to quantum physics (Searles, 1960, pp. 25, 408), in discussing relations with Nature, as well as dialogue in referring to Buber (ibid, p.117). He hopes that modern natural sciences can produce more insights into relating to Nature, as well as the other way around, i.e., that psychoanalysis can help individual natural scientists (ibid, p. 402-203). His work on relating to the environment is based on clinical observations and describes how the development of the ego and a mentally healthy individual is based on differentiation from the external environment as much as differentiation from other humans (ibid, p. 420). He did eventually work in a limited way with his hypothesis of including the environment. However, he did not (possibly limited by his times) go further into the relational level itself to ask what role 'relating' actually plays, nor into making observations about the non-human 'Other' (as in

non-human animals or Nature) as having agency and therefore actively taking part in the relation. Practitioners of psycho-social studies with an interest in studying relating to Nature while at the same time building their position on the work of Searles need to be aware of that.

Ferro and Civitarese recently introduced Merleau-Ponty into psychoanalytic field theory. Borrowing the concept from natural science (e.g., electromagnetic field), they introduce the idea of a psychic field between patient and analyst (Ferro and Civitarese, 2015). In doing so they include the external environment:

> It also includes everything that furnishes the place where the physical persons are situated, as a possible source of stimuli, as well as the more or less subtle actions performed by each in order to force the others to accept projective identifications (ibid, p. 161).

They make a distinction between the representational and the non-representational unconscious. With the latter, they point at Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of perception or ontology of the senses. For the patient - therapist relation, now operating from the perspective of a field:

> …. interpretation is no longer directed to the patient, to modifying something in him, but instead to improving the narrative capacity of the field, understood as an un/conscious narration a deux (ibid, p. 164).

There is full appreciation of,

> [i]ntercorporeal communication preceding linguistic / symbolic communication […] The individual is immediately part of a 'system' or 'field of relations'. The body is impregnated with what it touches, sees, feels, and tastes. Consciousness of one's own body is never, even when an ego is established, that of an 'isolated mass', but a postural schema that is

not fixed once and for all, but results from the position occupied at every instant relative to the environment (ibid, 2015, p. 155).

Earlier I also mentioned Crociani-Windland who summarizes three models of seeing transference and counter transference, model 1 that refers directly to Freud seeing countertransference as a hindrance to a therapist being objective, model 2 that includes the therapist's feelings a needed and valuable in looking for access in the unconscious en finally a model 3 where the relationship is key as in working with a joint space (the third). The relationship is now considered a higher state than the client or therapist either one of them alone (Crociani-Windland, 2018, p.37). In further exploring the thirdness she uses Bion's and Bergson's characterisations beyond what is known and beyond what is static, to explain the concept of affective genealogy, as she calls it (p. 31-33,38). In other words, affect is key to work with thirdness to work with what is beyond. I notice parallels with Merleau-Ponty's flesh (thirdness) and perception (the senses) as the key to primordial knowing which resonates with affect. However even here there is no explicit participation yet of the non-human other as agent or Nature as being an actor.

The position of ecopsychology in these arguments can be seen to be either in favour of expanding the field (Roszak) similar to Ferro and Civitarese or in favour of looking upon the ecological crisis as a collective pathology (Shepard, Metzner, Kanner). However in the debate around how to understand psychological development, that is, what defines healthy interaction with the object, this study expands the psycho-social approach to include the unrepresentational unconscious to non-human others as agents and Nature as an actor and is, to my knowledge, the first empirical study to do so.

Phenomenology (its ontology and epistemology) first had to be further explored and in a paradoxical way kept clear of existing psycho-social ontologies, before 'a space' could be held in which the argument could take shape. Both (Phenomenology and the Psycho-Social) can work together in further exploring what relating to Nature means.

6.2.2 including the notion of agency in Nature

Although 'everything that furnishes the place' is mentioned as a source of stimuli (again following Searles) – but as I mentioned above - there is a hesitation in psychoanalysis (impacting psycho-social studies) to look at the non-human other as having agency. Ferro and Civitarese, operating within their profession, are probably not (yet) motivated by the ecological crisis, describe the body as the "thin film that forms at the interface between subject and object" (ibid, 2015, 158).

This means that Ferro and Civitarese still emphasise the difference between human (as the subject) and non-human (as the object). Following such interpretation, then, the body is either an obstructing barrier, or instrumental to affect leaving the subject a cultural invention of being / operating in social context, for which a self is very necessary and useful, but nevertheless culturally in the way of fully exploring 'relating to Nature' as Merleau-Ponty points at the body as by default being connected through the senses.

Lived experience of relating to Nature as explored in this research is illuminating to the extent that it supports further exploring relational approaches in psychoanalysis and psycho-social studies, taking in 'liveness' – which could be described as the character of relating to Nature, the character of ecological relations and the agency of Nature. Further, including agency of non-human animals and Nature into psychoanalytic field theory expands the un/conscious narration *a deux* between therapist and patient, as Ferro and Civitarese point out, into a narration *'a trois'*, or even a multiple selves narration.
This is an invitation to see thirdness as a potential in therapy (and research) to be thirdness with non-human others as well. With such invitation reflecting on the defended researcher being defense about notions of agency in Nature, becomes a topic of real importance.

6.2.3 to look for a dynamic ecocentric ethics

In his analysis of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, Toadvine remarks that:

It makes no claim on us to return to simpler ways of life, give up cars and computers, cultivate a closer perceptual attunement with the non-human world, or develop more evocative philosophical concepts (which is not to deny that we might have other compelling reasons, ethical as well as practical, for wishing to do these things), since such behaviors neither embrace nor reject the fleshiness of things, but in fact have no bearing on it (Toadvine, 2009, p.134).

Toadvine's 'have no bearing on it' shows the consistency of his analysis. Yet he introduces Merleau-Ponty's philosophy as a 'philosophy of Nature' (where Merleau-Ponty himself did not get to the point of calling it that, although he investigates 'Nature'). Toadvine's achievement is in positioning a third (relational) ontology, besides the natural, positivist sciences and the social, constructionist sciences. However, his argument is not directly built on insights from empirical findings through analysis of lived experience. Insights from people doing practice show expressions of their 'missions' of looking for shifts of meaning in culture. Haraway, Despret and others also argue not only for agency in Nature (from their own lived experience and observation), but also for reflecting on and changing practice. Merleau-Ponty's relational position and his concept of flesh do not prescribe ethics (as Toadvine rightly argues) but do provide understanding of people's lived experience of relating to Nature and their efforts to integrate such experiences into meaning for themselves and others.
I argue that the lived experience of relating to Nature does create a call (see chapter on insights) and does in that way provide a direction, an impulse even to develop a dynamic eco-centric ethic and practise it further.

6.3 suggestions for further research

Current psycho-social research and practice focuses on human-centred social issues, working with a well-developed vocabulary and set of reflective tools. It is recommended that psycho-social studies invest more in research relating to

Nature and subsequently put emphasis on expanding its ontologies and epistemologies towards different notions of the self and bodies beyond the individual including non-human others and Nature by, for example, looking at collective bodies in the context of a place and ecosystems.

The aim would be to expand psycho-social studies towards towards what could be called primary dependencies and reciprocities of non-human others and Nature beyond human centred systems and institutions.

It is also recommended that such an emphasis allows for studying other, non-Western cultural practices and for psycho-social research into their meaning making practices.

These recommendations seem to me crucial for the critical development of psycho-social studies of relating to Nature and for innovation in the current sustainability discourse.

Splitting culture from Nature is not just a mistake that can be repaired in the context of everyday conversation. It is a cultural and therefore political phenomenon that externalises existential problems onto others and not only human others (that can be shown to be less well represented or even exploited), but non-human others and Nature as well.

Understanding more of the role of different contexts can lead to further research beyond the areas addressed in this study. These could be contexts where Nature connections still (partly) exist, like rural or farming practices. Comparing such contexts with corporations will deepen the understanding of collective bodies and histories and memories of place, non-human other 'societies' or lack of them.

Direct Nature experience is critically important for people to develop an ecocentric ethic. Further research is needed into the leadership impact of people leading Nature practice and the shift into an ecocentric ethic. This should be expanding into the role of Nature experience and innovation of governance and

development of Nature inclusive socioeconomic practices as much as it should expand to ordinairy working and living practices in society.

Last but not least expanding research methods to include participative observation or action research to 'democratize' research could be a way forward in the topic as it potentially will enhance the energy and enthousiasm for such research.

6.4 concluding remarks

Starting from the premise that Nature is omnipresent while at the same time relating to Nature seems mentally hidden, it has been the purpose of this study to research leaders of Nature practices in more than one way of thinking about the unconscious, namely both 'human relations unconscious' and 'human Nature relations unconscious'. At the same time, it has been critical to choose people who, in one way or another, work in / with Nature. Expression and meaning making beyond direct use of human language stretches the existing body of knowledge within psycho-social studies, as its interpretive practice uses psychoanalytic concepts and ideas that have been developed to study human relations. As the body is the key reference point, starting with perception, the method used in this study borrowed the notion of shifts of meaning through 'felt sense' from Gendlin, who illustrates the option of interpretation of information coming from one's body. Many interviewees worked with their bodies and the senses of non-human animals and being sensitive to Nature (Gendlin, 1978, 2003). Without reference to and understanding of phenomenology, it would have been difficult to add this dimension to the psycho-social approach. In this way phenomenology has facilitated working beyond the usual psycho-social 'toolbox', outside existing interpretations and theory, starting to cover ground in 'relating to Nature' and adding to ontologies and epistemologies used in psycho-social studies, becoming a psycho-social-ecological approach. For instance, discourse on self and identity (Diehm, 2002; Tudor, 2014) and discourse on human animals having agency (Haraway, 2008; Despret, 2013) and discourse on sustainability (Curry, 2011, Schein, 2015) can be researched within the combined use of

phenomenology and existing psycho-social methods of investigation, to avoid limitations in appreciating 'relating to Nature'. Like psychoanalysts providing the tools for exploring human unconscious, phenomenological approaches and Merleau-Ponty in particular, provide tools to look into the unconscious beyond human to human, adding human - Nature relations and Nature - Nature relations. Both psychoanalysis and phenomenology help to dive into the unconscious in this wider sense.

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8. APPENDICES

background to the Nature practices and their discourse
ethical approval
information and consent sheet
researcher journey
direction of travel
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8.1 background to the Nature practices and their discourse

8.1.1 going into Nature

'Going into Nature' that is considered to enhance people's wellbeing and or health. Richard Louv explored going into Nature and had great impact. Louv introduced the term 'Nature deficit disorder' (NDD), a 'condition' (or 'illness') that children in the US are suffering from (Louv, 2005). As a consequence, many state governments in the US launched initiatives for taking children into Nature. Matthew McDonald and colleagues, describes the experiences of people going into Nature, identifying seven types of experience. They find that a wilderness setting provides both aesthetic pleasure and feelings of renewal that can lead to a triggering of peak experiences (McDonald, Wearing and Ponting, 2009).

Following the idea of Nature enhancing people's wellbeing or health, going into Nature can be developed like a business. Lundberg, Fredman and Wall-Reinius for instance stated that Nature-based tourism entrepreneurs in Sweden missed out on return of investment, partly because the land has a status of commons and it therefore cannot be commercially exploited (Lundberg, Fredman & Wall-Reinius, 2012). An industry of going into Nature can be seen to now exist that 'produces for markets' in education (Louv, 2005, Elliot, 2018), health care (Hartig and Cooper Marcus, 2006), management and leadership training (van Droffelaar and Jacobs, 2017), leisure activities (Duffy, 2014) as well as conservation. In the latter area, the discourse is about redefining the value of Nature (ecosystems services) or seeing how urban environments (Farr, 2012) and agriculture and Nature can integrate (Short and Dwyer, 2012).

The above literature does not specifically address relational aspects, ideas of agency in Nature and reciprocity in relation to Nature. But there is literature addressing this dichotomy – in attempts to overcome it. Elizabeth Dickinson has responded to Louv's book and the programmes inspired by the idea of NDD by

arguing that the primary problem is to be found in culture as a whole (Dickinson, 2013).

Other writers explore the interrelated dynamic between the human and non-human that 'going into Nature' opens up. Mauro Martins Amatuzzi talks about the jungle:

> The jungle is indomitable, unlimited, indefinite. It is impossible to contain it. But if you choose to live in it, it will also live in you…. Now there is one thing. This is the conversation we are having here on the outside. But if we go inside, after walking for days on end, for moons and moons, then our conversation will change. This willingness to 'go inside' (ourselves, the jungle, the wild places), to allow the outside inside, and to be open to changing conversations is the kind of experiential knowledge that Rogers advocated with regard to culture, cultural setting and influence as important preparation for the training therapist: 'A way that is the true way takes you into the jungle and makes you part of it. This is the explorer's strange reality. He may get lost in the jungle. But he feels the urge to go deep inside'. It follows that if we are to develop ecological awareness and literacy, and to explore 'strange reality', we would advocate having some experiential knowledge of our environment. (quoted in Tudor, 2014, p. 326).

Tudor addresses the reciprocity Haraway and Despret point at in analysis relating to non-human animals, but in a wider perspective. They build the argument that non-verbal conversations between a human and Nature are happening (both being influenced). Penelope Rossiter does the same, giving specific examples of such conversations, of the meeting of bodies while rock climbing.

> Through the defacing of the face, the climber is memorialised in the cliff. In the meeting of bodies, the removals, scratchings, rubbings, mutual roughing-up, the climbing body becomes part of the memory of the earth. At the same time, the rock is body-memoried too. At a certain,

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undefinable point, when enough rock has been memoried in the growth of muscles, the reformation of tendons, the trans- formation of feet, the brain alterations, the sanding back of skin from the fingertips, a climbing body emerges. If a climber stops climbing for a length of time, the climbing body disappears (Rossiter, 2014, 299).

Like Tudor, Rossiter shows how one's identity and body can be changed going into Nature. In discussing the interaction, influence or reciprocity with a rock in rock climbing, she does away with the argument that intentionality is exclusively a human trait. She does not state that the rock or cliff has a mind as humans have, but she explains intentionality coming from an interaction where the non-human affords[47] (Rossiter, 2007) the human. According to her, the engagement with Nature and the experience of rock climbing is like Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's assemblage; many elements are intertwined. The climbing gear used is part of the way the person and the cliff meet. Is it 'new gear', 'old gear', 'high quality gear', has the cliff ever been climbed before? All these differences make for different spaces where the person and the cliff meet (Rossiter, 2007).

There is another aspect of 'going into Nature'. Organisation development literature speaks of 'safe spaces' for people to feel confident to explore their feelings or speak up, without immediate repercussion or risk of breaching some aspect of organisational culture or policy, or challenging shared social identities. It is possible that people experience going into Nature as the very same thing, being alone with their experience, in absence of the social. Quite often it is in 'alone time' or in silence that people later refer to as most impactful moments of going into Nature.

The sense of connection can also become part of a ritual or ritual practice. In his PhD thesis, *The Wisdom of the Body: Embodied knowing in Eco-Paganism*, Adrian

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[47] Affordances are possibilities for action provided to an animal by the environment— by the substances, surfaces, objects, and other living creatures that surround it (Gibson, 1979/1986).

Harris describes 'protest sites' where people identifying themselves with Eco-Paganism going into Nature to protect those sites against modern development. He identifies six 'processes' for enhancing Nature experience and spiritual wellbeing. He also reports that people from outside the protest site are addressed as belonging to 'other worlds' (Harris, 2008, p. 113).

8.1.2 engaging with non-human animals

Non-human animals have always been with people and vice versa. They have performed many functions, ranging from source of wonder, to being companions, doing work (pulling, guarding, finding, showing, sporting) or being a food source, whether hunted, or bred for food (DeMello, 2012).

Human - animal relations have been studied and described by, amongst others, Margo DeMello (2012), Marc Bekoff (2013) and Brian Fagan (2015). From these authors, the idea can be taken that humans not only influence animals and Nature, but that this happens the other way around as well. Fagan, for instance, describes the histories of the human/wolf relation as well as of humans and donkeys. Moving from hunter gatherer to agriculture and domestication of animals, he gives anthropological evidence for the mutual dependence of humans and several other species. However, for a long time, splitting off from Nature meant most people lost knowledge about Nature and non-human animals. In that situation animals were used to find out more about humans. The story goes that the famous physiologist Bernard[48] who was famous for promoting vivisection, experimented with dissecting live animals, cut off their vocal cords before his investigations, in order not to hear the animals screaming, as it was believed that animals did not feel pain (Preece, 2002). It should be noted that the discipline of ethology has largely caught up with the vivisection situation, through recognizing non-human animal's cognition, emotions and even moral behaviour (Bekoff, 2013; De Waal, 2016). In the scientific community, these insights have gained credibility

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[48] Bernhard lived from 1813 until 1878.

over behaviourism (where animals are considered automata, just following their instincts). But instinct itself is now the word pointing at the capacity to think, being purposeful within a particular context to solve problems and learn. Where the notion of only being 'programmed' by your genes is not considered completely true anymore. However, in natural science the boundaries between human animals and non-human animals have become less strict. Since Darwin, there is more recognition of humans being animals and animals being non-human animals. Making non-human animals into humans is another matter.[49] Systems theorists started to question the isolated thinking position of humans (as if mindful activities could only occur with humans and not be attributed to other species and Nature) decades ago. In *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (2000), Gregory Bateson explores 'minds' as processes, rather than as things, pointing at the need to attribute mind to non-human animals and even ecosystems.

Within the realm of psychotherapy (not psychoanalysis), working with animals is increasingly popular (Muller-Paisner, Bradshaw, 2010; Julius et al., 2013). A lot of that interest largely falls under the discourse of enhancing human welfare and health. It is with regards to both personal development and the development of teams and leadership, that equine facilitated approaches are described in literature. Keren Bachi, among others (eg. Carlsson, 2017; Burgon, et.al, 2018, Flora, 2018) has researched equine facilitated psychotherapy, or EFP (2013). Bachi makes the connection to attachment issues and trauma, and to the holding environment. Other important elements of EFP, according to Bachi, concern the non-verbal and the body, the immediate affective mirror in the response of horses and the element of touch. She points to EFP as a safe way of working for therapists as well, for instance because the horse may be a *source of comfort* for the therapist (Bachi, 2013, p.194). Cheryl Meola, Rebecca West and Riina Koris among others describe research on EFP executive, or staff training (Meola, 2016,

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[49] It is not considered strange that pets go to a hairdresser (Japan, US), have personal trainers, are buried like humans with ceremony and gravestone (Kenney, 2004). In the West, pets are often obese (Wooten, 2018).

West, 2015, Koris et al, 2017). West researched setting up practices for equine supported leadership programmes. Although her research is not psycho-socially informed, her analysis is informative and relevant to Jane's story, emphasising a lack of attention to emotional leadership skills in many organisations (West, 2015). Mary Flora subscribes to that point, as she researched building emotional resilience grounded in the human - horse interspecies relationship, especially feminine equine relationship and individuation. In this way, she emphasises gender issues and cultural dominance of 'male values' in the workplace (Flora, 2018).

The turn to animal welfare and appreciating non-human animals for what they are is happening now in industry as well. Somebody who has been instrumental to that in the American cattle industry is Temple Grandin, professor of animal physiology and husbandry. She is clear in how she relates to non-human animals. Growing up in the 1950s in America, clinical understanding of autism was limited. Being a keen observer, sensitive to external stimuli, with information processing qualities different from other people, she discovered her ability to 'understand' prey animals (horses, cows) better than experts in the field:

> The problem with normal people is they're too cerebral. I call it being *abstractified*. I have to fight against *abstractification* constantly when I'm working with the government and meatpacking industry. A big part of my job now is trying to make sure all food animals are given a humane slaughter, but even though there's a lot of support for animal welfare it's getting harder to make good reforms instead of easier. It's harder because today's government regulatory agencies are all run by people who've been to college, but who in some cases have never even been *inside* a meatpacking plant, let alone worked in one. It's terrible. I keep telling them, 'You have got to go out there and visit a plant.' (Grandin, 2005, p. 27)

As Grandin addresses people being *abstractified,* she explains that what is lacking is an attempt to think and feel like animals. Grandin offers an overview of "tiny details that scare farm animals" and she discusses them one by one.[50] Grandin talks about non-human animals, explaining a difference in perception:

> My experience with animals, and with my own perceptions, is that animals and autistic people are different from normal people. Animals and autistic people don't have to be paying attention to something in order to see it. Things like jiggly chains pop up out at us; they *grab* our attention whether we want them or not (Grandin, 2005, p. 51).

The idea of mediation between human and non-human animals is expanding in order to get to a beneficial outcome for both in situations of direct conflicts of interest. Anna Breytenbach is promoting this through publishing stories of such situations and how she intervened (Breytenbach, 2013, 2015).

The philosopher David Abram argues that humans could become more whole through developing their animal side. By that he means developing and using our senses. He writes about it in his book *Becoming Animal*:

> …..taken-for-granted aspects of the perceived world – shadows, houses, gravity, stones, visual depth – drawing near to each phenomenon in order to notice the way it engages not our intellect but our sensing and sentient body (Abram, 2010, p. 8).

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[50] Headings of her checklist are: 1. Sparkling reflections on puddles; 2. Reflections on smooth metal; 3. Chains that jiggle; 4. Metal clanging or banging; 5. High pitched noise; 6. Air hissing; 7. Air drafts blowing on approaching animals; 8. Clothing hung on fence; 9. Piece of plastic that is moving; 10. Slow fan blade movement; 11. Seeing people moving up ahead; 12. Small object on the floor; 13. Changes in flooring and texture; 14. Drain grate on the floor; 15. Sudden changes in the color of equipment; 16. Chute entrance too dark; 17. Bright light such as blinding sun; 18. One-way or anti-backup gates. (Grandin, 2005, p. 33-39)

As well as discussing many examples of becoming animal, he develops an overview of common principles as he deduces them from his own experience and knowledge of cultures that live consciously in a "more than human world" (Abram, 1996). He concludes that oral culture keeps the connection to Nature and the land.

> If digital culture is inherently globalizing, and if the culture of the book is inherently cosmopolitan, *oral culture is inherently local in its orientation* (Abram, 2010, p. 286).

Non-human animal agency and communicating to non-human animals is now a growing area of research. Elisa Aaltola, for one, argues that non-human animals suffering should be studied through empathic and intersubjective epistemologies (Aaltola, 2013). Relational approaches are gaining importance. Susan Boonman-Borsen is one of the people that show how practices of management of wild animals are changing, for instance in the US, where experience of humans and bears learning from each other is gaining interest (Boonman-Borsen, 2018). In Jungian literature, a growing body of knowledge on the animal psyche can be seen to develop.

Turning to the animal psyche, it is noticeable that Freudian oriented psychology has difficulty escaping its medical ontology and epistemology. In essays edited by Salman Akhtar and Vamik Volkan, both professors of psychiatry, animals are mainly seen to play symbolic roles in the psychic development of humans (Akthar & Volkan, 2005). Jungian psychology takes a different position. One of the leading figures here is Gay Bradshaw (Bradshaw, 2010). She runs the Kerulos Centre based in Oregon, US, working with human animals and non-human animals from a trans-species perspective.

> We are explicitly trans-species, in the understanding that humans and other animals have common capacities to think, feel, dream, aspire, and

experience consciousness. This open recognition sparks re-discovery of essential identity, a way of living aligned with Nature, and seeing through external form to a relational space of common communication and meaning making (www.Kerulos.org).

Bradshaw explores relational transformation of trans-species community through the lens of culture brokering, shifting from exploitation, to giving service to, for instance, traumatized elephants (Bradshaw, 2010).

It seems plausible to see non-human animals as individuals (persons) and non-human animals as collectives having their own cultures, though the line between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism is a thin one.

8.1.3 engaging with place

Human and non-human animals influence and are influenced by place. Availability of resources is one clear indicator of such influence, which will determine the use of the land, e.g., for herding animals, industrial agriculture, leisure, mining or conservation. Nature and place can also be looked at for emotional and social meaning. Looking at both, availability of resources and emotional meaning, is of more recent origin. How difficult it is to think about the environment as a place in relation to the social and ecological (re multi- and even transdisciplinary approaches in understanding place) can be illustrated from an article by Koons Trentelman. A community sociologist herself, she was missing reference to physical place in the sociology literature. She started to research the issue via other disciplines, although she kept her position, arguing a distinction should still be made between community sociology and multidisciplinary approaches. She did not want to unnecessarily mingle ontologies and epistemologies (Trentelman, 2009). Within community sociology, the primary field of research explores differences between urban and rural areas with respect to economic development. For example, Heather Randell's analysis of forced human migration from the Brazilian Amazon forests speaks in favor of such

policies. She concludes that most of the people invest their compensation money in small businesses and therefore safeguard a future income. Thus, she argues, it proves that the policies taking people from their land reduce poverty. Therefore, she subscribes to these policies (Randell, 2016). In contrast to Randell's research, multidisciplinary research about place can be seen to look at a wider scope of factors influencing resilience, sustainability and biodiversity. Contrary to Randell's position, most such findings now favour enhancing diversity in the landscape with high levels of self-governance. Such diversity, as opposed to forcing people off their land, supports resilience of populations, ecosystem and local economies (Schippers et al. 2014).

Social geography is a rich source of research and literature on Nature, place and their social aspects. Other than ecopsychologists and climate psychologists, geographers have also started to look at emotional aspects of climate change and geographic factors. For instance, Kathryn Ryan, who was part of a local team facilitating a workshop for a community affected by a tropical storm, noticed that allowing for emotions to be expressed and be part of the meeting made what she describes as 'transformative social learning' more successful. She emphasises the role and experience of positive emotions such assurprise, delight, possibility (Ryan, 2016, p.5).

The social concept of attachment to place is becoming important in the social sciences. Attachment with respect to human and non-human relations was already a well-established research phenomenon based on the work of John Bowlby (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1988). Bowlby was influenced by ethologists like Konrad Lorenz, who introduced the concept of imprinting (Immelmann, 1972). Connection between the two concepts of attachment, one in the social sciences and the other in geography, is made by Frank van der Horst (2011). Patrick Devine-Wright made an overview of the geographic literature on the topic. His recommendations for future research include capturing place attachments and identities at global as well as local scales and investigating the links between place attachments, identities and collective actions (Devine-Wright, 2013). Adams and

colleagues state that ecological research into conservation and resource management should include social dimensions. They also argue that local, place-bound knowledge and indigenous cultures' traditional practice can function as models for developing socio-ecological systems (Adams et.al., 2014).

Chia-Chin Lin and Michael Lockwood show aspects of attachment to place through their research in two areas of Tasmania (Lin & Lockwood, 2014). They propose two different types of place attachment, localised and generalised. In the localised sense of place, personal and family identities are important. In generalised sense of place, historical and aesthetic values of these places underlay the formation of a cognitive place attachment (Lin, Lockwood, 2014, pp. 80, 81).

Place is clearly connected to non-tangible elements and I illustrate this further through three examples.

Lindsey McEwen, who is part of the Hydro Citizen research group at the University of the West of England, looks into the phenomenon of flood memory as part of local knowledge of communities. She finds that enhanced memory of flooding has a positive impact on community resilience in areas at high risk of flooding (McEwan, 2017).

The importance of time in relation to place is illustrated by Michelle Bastian's writing on the Australian stolen children. Australian prime ministers John Howard (1996-2007) and Kevin Rudd (2007-2010) took different positions on the issue of apologising. Howard did not apologise to the Aboriginal people; Rudd did. Bastian analysed their use of time and shows the distinction between their different use of time and its effects on Aboriginal Australians' sense of belonging to the Australian community (Bastian, 2013).

Thirdly, Jean Paul Baldacchino connects a sense of belonging to practice and use of the body, which resonates with place and identity.

The body is trained to conform to a we-image. Whether in fashion, subcultural styles or even fetishized national costume, the body is often dressed as a site for agency in an eidetic of belonging. As locus for body praxis, the body of belonging could be a theatre of cruelty and barbarous mutilation but it could also be the site for the practices of everyday life (Baldacchino, 2011, p. 97).

The meaning of place has shifted from 'environment' to 'ecology' in its widest sense. Place attachment and identity are crucial within understanding relating to Nature.

8.1.4 doing advocacy

Advocacy is well explained by Save the Children Fund, UK:

Advocacy is a social change process affecting attitudes, social relationships and power relations, which strengthens civil society and opens up democratic spaces (Save the Children Fund, 2010).

John Cianchi researched radical environmentalists and what motivates them to operate in the grey zone of advocacy, acting legally or illegally (Chianchi, 2015). Acts of protest can involve trespassing, blocking roads, chaining oneself to machinery, hindering business activities and putting up banners or painting words of protest on other peoples' property. In performing such acts, environmentalists risk fines, criminal records and/or being put in jail. Also, much of the public do not sympathise with breaking the law even if they support conservation or protection of the environment This made Cianchi want to understand the motivations of radical activists.

What emerges from these interviews is a perspective that recognises the personhood of non-humans. It is an animist perspective that gives rise to a deeply held moral obligation to defend Nature, in which the chief concern

is how to behave respectfully towards more-than-human Nature (Cianchi, 2015, p. 3).

Cianchi builds an argument that his interviewees live through stages of becoming sensitive to Nature, from a more cognitive understanding, to experiencing Nature (trees, whales, landscapes) as actors, with agency. Many of his interviewees testify to non-verbal communication with Nature. Interviewees show mourning over loss of trees as if they were family members. It is this direct bonding to Nature and experiencing Nature as an actor that Cianchi believes makes it understandable that activists act in the grey zone between legal and illegal forms of protest. After all, they are protecting their 'family' (Cianchi, 2015).

Representing somebody being an advocate for his or her cause requires knowing about this other person. The extreme position of not knowing about another person is when that person is anonymous. To explore that a bit further, one can see anonymity as leaving aspects of communication on behalf of another person to the realm of fantasy or misinterpretation. Julie Ponesse sees two elements of anonymity, 'being unknown' and 'concealment' (Ponesse, 2013). Sara Heinamaa discusses Merleau-Ponty pointing at anonymity of relations with others on the level of perception, on the level of the body and how difficult it is to know (Heinamaa, 2015). Heinamaa also refers to trace as *earlier constitutive acts of alien subjects* (Heinamaa, 2015, p. 123). This idea of trace resonates with group analytic thinking. Peter Redman explores group analytic theory of the group unconscious as situated, or held, in matrices: personal, dynamic, and foundational. The foundational matrix should be understood as already there in time (from earlier generations, community history), and upon which the other two emerge (Redman, 2018). The foundational matrix and the anonymous level of trace (Merleau-Ponty) both suggest that perception by the individual person is built on community history and on practices within that community. This means that institutionalised advocacy risks sticking to what it already knows or thinks it knows (without questioning it). Thus, some cases of 'doing advocacy' risk leaving out making contact with people and Nature, considering it unnecessary.

We can also mimic having real information from somebody else, as if we know. I think this is illustrated where 'experience' from others is borrowed. These 'as if' experiences could be part of the tendency to anthropomorphise Nature. For instance, Peter Wohlleben explains the relations and inner lives of trees, using metaphors from simplified notions of human relations and emotions (Wohlleben, 2016). Another striking example of mimicking a subject to subject relation is the story of the Dutch cow Hermien. She was about to be transported to a slaughterhouse when she escaped and could not be caught by vets and police for days on end. When the general public got hold of the story, a crowd funding campaign started. She is now a famous cow with her own old cow's home. In the meantime, every single day, thousands of her colleagues are processed to meat.

Because of the difficulty of 'knowing Nature', I would argue that some Nature advocacy risks being built on positions of advocates getting personal and subjective motivation from foundational experience, that is, community history and community practice 'in the way' (Redman, 2018). The question, then, is: What part of advocacy for Nature is based on knowing about and from Nature 'itself'? If natural science is used for knowing, the relational aspect of knowing is lost. Are the activists Cianchi interviewed, who bond to trees and see trees as family members, filling in that gap?

Through bonding with Nature, strong advocacy for Nature can be seen to develop. Activists protect and defend Nature as if it is family. However, the question of who the activists think they represent remains open. In thinking about representation as if one 'knows' the other person, or as if one 'knows' Nature, anonymity is a problem. Anonymity can make one fall back on already existing ideas and opinions, or experiences of formative years. Understanding how to communicate with Nature, or how one could understand and develop meaning from experience is important, especially as such communication with non-human others / Nature can not directly be done through employing human language in conversation.

8.1.5 shifting job, shifting values, from corporate to NGO

Not long ago, my sister-in-law shared with me that she had talked about me at a corporate party and how I was now working for an environmental NGO and not for one of the big accountancy firms anymore. With a sense of admiration, several people stated how lucky I was, but that it was out of reach for them.

Peter Case and colleagues take a critical stance on how leadership with respect to the environment is reported and represented. In analysing a large number of articles using Grint's perspective of the many factors contributing to leadership ('person', 'position', 'process', 'result' and 'purpose'), they show the limited way that environmental science literature talks about leadership (Case et al., 2015). They take a constructionist position and show how framing of environmental discourses, particularly in terms of crisis, seems to bring forward traditional ideas of strong individual leadership and its decisive influence in solving crises.

> We suggest that defining problems related to the environment as crises tends to invite specific forms of leadership that: (a) simplify the complex, contested ecological and social causes/ consequences of environmental change; and (b) propose solutions that tend to marginalize diverse viewpoints (Case et.al., 2015, p. 414).

I note the emphasis they put on crisis. In heroic advocacy organisations like Greenpeace and Sea Shepherd that are involved in direct action, strict protocol and hierarchy during an action is considered crucial, especially when operating a ship is involved. As an example of a broader way of understanding leadership in environmental science they mention the work of Wesley, who suggests that leadership could be replaced with the concept of entrepreneurship,

> …because it can encompass more diverse, more numerous, and more institutionally or contextually embedded 'change agents'. Within this interpretation of leadership, the research emphasis shifts to the practices

of a number of actors at different stages of the process [of influencing] and at different scales in the system (Case et.al., 2015, p. 414).

If interpreted as entrepreneurial, I can imagine the response of the corporate people my sister-in-law spoke about. For in that case, doing environmental NGO work could be considered an open arena, with little chance of success, which may only be possible for the ones that really endure or do not care if they fail.

Another example that Case et al. give is from Sander Huitema and Dave Meijerink, who give more insight into the actual process of leadership in the context of various stakeholders (Huitema and Meijerink, 2010).

> This analysis does not see leadership as an unequivocal good. Instead, it invokes analytical distance to describe those who oppose and promote policy change, it focuses in detail on leadership as process and it views results as partial, contextual, and overlapping (Case et al. 2015, p. 414).

Seen like this, the corporate staff my sister in law talked about are right to think a career move is not that desirable after all. Not only is it entrepreneurial, it is oppositional, acting against what is already there. Corporate staff are hired to outsmart the competition, but inventing a new market, including influencing existing governance, is another matter.

Simon Western identified 'Eco-leadership' as one of four discourses in leadership, the others being Controller-, Therapist-, and Messiah-leadership (Western, 2008, 2013). His analysis shows that Eco-leadership addresses relational and ethical elements of leadership. Western's arguments show a relational position, and with that comes a distinct set of ethics.

> Relationships are vital to success; our ability to connect and influence depends on our ability to relate and respond to others with confidence.

> Improving teamwork and customer relations means improving the quality
> of relationships (Western, 2008, 2013, p.278).

As Western wrote his text to contribute to leadership development, it shows emphasis on development of authentic human agency. I would say such 'authenticity' can be understood as making workplaces more human, but that is not necessarily the argument that management would use to reform. Reform is more likely to come from the hope that authenticity is needed to perform better in an ever more complex outside world and work environment.

One theme that seems to stand out as an explanation for how NGOs are perceived and what people working in corporates are missing is: 'doing good'. (Some) environmental NGOs are seen to be effective in addressing environmental issues. For instance, Erlend Hermansen, et al. found that NGOs do influence policy making, although at a risk of co-optation (Hermansen, et al., 2017). Lenka Slavikova et al. found that NGOs can play an effective complementary role in protecting biodiversity in a German-Czech border area (Slavikova, 2017). NGOs do fail a lot of the time as well. Jae-Eun Noh states that NGOs have failed to keep transnational corporations accountable for their impact over the lives of the poor (Noh, 2017). Successful NGOs could be attractive to people from the corporate sector, who want to be instrumental in social change and protecting the environment. At the same time, a corporate mentality focused on outsmarting the competition and suffering addiction to (financial) success could limit the choice of and/or attraction of some NGOs, when considering making such a career move, let alone the difficulty of getting used to different rewards and compensation levels in NGOs.

Looking at corporates 'doing good', there is a large amount of literature discussing what is now called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Such literature argues that practicing CSR will enhance profit, as consumers will express their approval

(Kaul & Luo, 2017; Mantovani, et al., 2017).[51] Michele Hunt goes as far as stating that doing good is the new standard of success for corporate leaders (Hunt, 2017). Marc J. Lane writes that mission driven ventures can "contribute to the world's most vexing problems" (Lane, 2014). Tom Levitt describes how partnerships have developed between NGOs and corporates (Levitt, 2012).

Steven Schein researched ecological worldviews in the global sustainability practice of corporates (Schein, 2015). His story is interesting as he himself changed his career from corporate accountant to consulting and teaching, but he also researches what influences others to help corporates become more sustainable operations. In the introduction to his book, *A New Psychology for Sustainable Leadership: The Hidden Power of Ecological Worldviews*, Schein addresses questions like, "Why not all executives have a strong sense of urgency?", and "Why not everyone sees the clear and deep connections between our traditional ways of doing business and harming the ecosystems we depend on for life?" (Schein, 2015, p. xviii).

He formulates a lack, in so far as the sustainable business movement, as it is framed, "would never go far enough" (Schein, 2015, p. 25). He proposes a "new, more holistic curriculum for sustainable leadership in the coming decades" based on analysis and ideas from the humanities. He concludes that a non-conventional worldview should be expressed in sustainable leadership behavior and business training, where his discovery of the ecological self gets connected to insights and theories about human development (Schein, 2015, p.26). He limits himself to individual positions, despite his introduction of systems thinking and the wider

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[51] Literature about Nature in the workplace itself merits a brief mention. That includes health and fitness (Parks & Steelman, 2008; Thiele Schwarz & Lindfors, 2014). Bringing Nature or natural artefacts into the office can also provide some level of Nature experience. This ranges from bringing plants in, to designing a new lay out or paying attention to office premises and local Nature experience through gardens or outside seating areas with Nature elements (Mangone, et al., 2017; Bringslimark, et al., 2009). Last but not least, mindfulness in the work place has gained popularity with employees in corporates (?, 2018; Islam et al., 2017); even Westernised Shamanism or work with animals has become more popular as part of management training and developing organisational cultures (Knighton, 2004; Waddock et al., 2018).

social arrangements in which businesses operate. Another way of looking at Schein's findings is to ask, to what extent has sustainability become 'business as usual'?

Despite initiatives in corporates, some people still seem to miss something and wish to change career to work for an environmental NGO. So, why would people still move out if they want to protect the environment, while the concept of doing good has spread to the corporate sector (although society as a whole is not very successful in dealing with the ecological and humanitarian crises) and CSR programs aim to reach beyond charitable giving?

Knut J. Ims & Lars Jacob Tynes Pedersen (further referred to as Ims) investigated people's career choices in corporates from a position of ethics, particularly the debate on responsible leadership (Ims, 2015). They notice individuals' radical acts of personal responsibility despite inflicting considerable costs on themselves (and potentially on others) (Ims, 2015, p. 183). Ims distinguishes between the responsibility of a professional role, responsibility towards common shared values, and thirdly a personal responsibility. They describe an inner dialogue that is a dialectic between moral authorship and external accountability (Ims, 2015, p.186). They highlight one person's case and his reasons for moving to an environmental NGO. He was approached by a headhunter and, feeling 'the odd one out', no longer wanting to contribute to destroying the Earth, not being able to change the organisation and not wanting to commute anymore, he decided to move (Ims, 2015). Ims then uses the idea of strong evaluations (Taylor, 1989), to pose a moral horizon by which the person judges his or her desires and preferences, asking, 'What kind of person do I want to be?' (Ims, 2015).

Some research shows that people who are interested in generative work are more inclined to work for the environment, joining environmental NGOs (Matsuba et al., 2012).

Phenomenological research into the lived experience of career moves adds to Ims' arguments. Norman Amundsen shows that the career moves of adults impact on relational life, personal meaning and personal or family economies and status. From this research, counsellors are advised to use more open-ended models to help their clients, as well as offering themselves as whole persons in the relation to the client (Amundson, et al., 2010). Other phenomenological research into experiencing a profession introduces themes like bonding and leadership. Stephanie C. Field and colleagues show a preference to bond to people that know about the outdoors, as without such experience it is very difficult to explain and share information and knowledge about the job of outdoor coach and trainer (Field et al., 2016). Experiencing and enjoying bonding as part of the shared excitement of taking a stance in society can also be seen as a motivator to join an (environmental) NGO (Ivy, et al., 2015).

Corporate cultures are not very good at providing confidence to employees beyond their measurable contributions to profits. Some corporates try to improve that (Dutton, 2018). However, organisation cultures of big NGOs also struggle to provide differentiation in work culture and to help staff find and express personal meaning. That is why many large NGOs have adopted diversity and inclusion programmes just like some large corporates, in order to be more appreciative of people's individual differences (Fredette et al., 2015).

The flip side of doing good is doing 'bad'. Many examples show that large (environmental) NGOs with influence and money can do as much damage to local social fabric and circumstances as they do good (Coyne, 2013). Some people see environmental NGOs as too radical (Wald, 2014). Others fear how some staff at environmental NGOs are prepared to give up a personal life or even risk their lives. In the global South, environmental NGOs are in the top of the rank of unsafe organisations, where activists are at high risk of being attacked or killed (website Global Witness).

It is clear that deciding to continue one's career in an environmental NGO[52], shows a wider spectrum of motives than only working for the environment. However, the environment (and desire to pass on a healthy planet) plays an important role in people's decision.

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[52] I am not going into literature that is about making a career switch from NGO world to corporate.

8.2 **researcher journey**

The trigger for this project came from an experience of 'meeting' a blackbird. I call it meeting, for it was like that. It started with noticing, followed by a weird awareness of being noticed by the bird as well. A quick moment of both of us acknowledging the other. That moment hit me with a great longing to know what 'this' was. The experience came with a call to make sense of it. With hindsight, I see this as similar to interviewees' experiences of what I interpreted as Nature 'presenting a mission'.

In looking at my journey, I first discuss some experiences from my personal past. I go on to explore some creative blocks that arose while doing the research, ending with reflections on how the project has changed me.

8.2.1 experiences leading up to the project

When I studied for my master's in biology, I was supposed to build further on the research outcomes of a PhD student who had worked in the same department. Yet, whatever I did or however often I repeated the measurements, they showed different outcomes, which was unacceptable to my professor. I lost his trust in me as a researcher. Much later, it appeared that I was directed to use plant material from a different source, with different growth conditions, other than my predecessor had used. My interest in natural science remained, but from then on it included a profound carefulness. I can see now that my professor was attached to an idea of linear progress, as was I, though without knowing what it would look like, as I was a beginner in the field. Maybe even more, my professor was focused on studying a tiny part of the plant, chlorophyll, thinking that part could explain the functioning of the whole plant (or the wider system of which it was once part). The professor was an expert in reading spectrophotometer outcomes, connecting them to electron movement in complex membrane environments. But he was as clueless as anybody else about whole living plants. My findings might have been

important if we had been able to see that chlorophyll doesn't function in isolation, but changes its characteristics depending on its environment.

I remember an exercise from when I was trained with the London Institute of Psychosynthesis.[53] We were 60 people distributed in little subgroups. Each group had a different key. We went through a series of questions, starting with the material of the key (iron, copper, plastic). The answers seemed pretty straightforward, with some disputes. The second and third questions were about the shape and the function of the key. Here many more disputes came up, long discussions and a range of emotions. The last question was about the 'essence' of the key. At that point, the energy in the room shifted. The subgroups didn't matter anymore - as people expressed the world in ways that were apparently fully shared. The feeling of being connected to others, a sense of wholeness, seemed real and not unpleasant. Maybe this experience helped to sense some of the connection on a systemic level (the ecological self that Arne Naess talks about). At the same time, it felt like losing my individuality, my identity, as if it didn't matter, and becoming part of a bigger human experience, that was pleasant and at the same time avoided (the risk of) being hurt in the expression of individual difference that was manifest in answering the first questions in the exercise.

More experience came from membership of group relations conferences. The first one I attended totally confused me, as it was not about knowing things the way I understood 'knowing'. The variety and complexity of emotions, feelings, and styles of communicating were overwhelming. Opening up to learning about intra- and intersubjective interpretations while they unfold was mind blowing, as was exploring relating to other people on quite a different level compared to what is shared in everyday encounters. For the latter half of my years of consulting, I've been strongly influenced by the group relations tradition. This includes innovative ideas from that tradition, like using sculpting, drawing, music, visual images,

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[53] Psychosynthesis is an integrated psychology, addressing both what it calls the lower unconscious (with orientation towards Freud) and the higher unconscious (with orientation towards Jung).

dreaming, or reference to shamanism that can create real change in (work) projects. For me, the first group relations event marked a shift from knowing in diagnostic terms towards embodied, expressive and associative ways of knowing while being conscious of relating to others.

I was hoping to expand my relations to Nature, similarly to how my relations with other people had expanded through group relations work, exploring the strong experience of working with the unconscious assumptions held individually and collectively. But when it came to relating to Nature 'beyond the natural sciences', I did not know where to go to, or how to find guidance to such learning. Integrative approaches (Wilbur) and spiritual approaches (Jung, Assagioli) came close. But I could not totally identify with them, as my experience with the blackbird seemed very down to earth to me, like a direct exchange, a relational experience with another / otherness, different from a spiritual experience (where there is wholeness with no differentiation). My experience of Nature was primarily about contact with an 'other'. How could I research such contact and make good use of it in a context of social change, addressing the importance of communication with Nature?

Looking to understand practices of relating to Nature, this project became a research project with other humans, talking, interviewing, partly observing,[54] other humans who could tell me more about their experiences and their meaning making. At the same time, I knew I was looking for something hidden, something under the surface, as Nature doesn't speak human language. That hidden part for me was not about a spiritual experience, but much more about meaning making. On that path, I 'met' phenomenology, which became a big help, in terms of ontology and epistemology. I felt others before me had encountered some of the same conundrums when applying natural science to relating to Nature and had

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[54] I did have the idea of doing experiments, like a kind of group relations conference, or conversation including non-human animals at some point, but did not see practical ways of developing methods for that; maybe that will be my next project.

already developed ways into those conundrums. When it came to Nature these people were 'phenomenologists'.

8.2.2 creative blocks

I have experienced several creative blocks that coincided with the tasks at hand, during phases of the research. A way forward usually meant days or weeks of sitting with the problem, looking up 'stuff', reading, reflecting, talking to others, supervision, until a next step presented itself. This happened when:

- I needed to know what research and what findings and theory were already available. But how to find that if the starting point is a personal experience? How to find direction if the context of one's experience is within political, social, economic, scientific, aesthetic parameters? In focusing on experience, I managed beyond being intimidated by the many disciplinary dimensions of the questions I was interested in researching.

- I was asked by my supervisors what my 'position' was, what I would like to see happening in the world of Nature and social innovation. Again, the challenge was to relate to existing knowledge and thinkers, but how to find them? The comment from my supervisors that 'there is always somebody to find, who has done similar research', was frustrating at first. I can only say in hindsight that the comment was true.

- I was introduced to phenomenology in discussions with my supervisors on lived experience and how to research that. That was a helpful direction, especially because some connection to Nature could be found within the vast literature on phenomenology. It helped to know that researching experience is possible and that there is a whole field dedicated to doing exactly that.

- I knew of Searles' study on schizophrenia and Nature, but couldn't find a copy of it anywhere, until by accident somebody helped me by sending an electronic link, as a copy of the book was online and had been all along. (I learned that the university library system is not infallible.)

- I struggled to connect psychosocial research and phenomenology. It seemed such an easy task, but it wasn't, because the ontologies and epistemologies of

the two approaches are different. Then I found Ferro & Civitarese's book from 2015 and Gendlin's publications on focusing, which both helped me to understand the difference between representational unconscious and non-representational unconscious. I tried to synthesise phenomenological and psychosocial research methods, until in supervision it was suggested that this would not work or would not be possible. Keeping them separate was the advice and it was very helpful and that is what I did.

- I had to understand what type of data collection would fit and who to ask to participate in the project. My research framework informed the choice of the 15 people and their stories which comprise the thesis. They are listed in the thesis and, through reading about the framework, it can be understood how their stories became the data in this research.

- I was translating my experience of Nature and my aim into a series of research questions. I needed to find language to do so. Through defining the ontology and epistemology, I was able to allow myself to research more freely in relation to the research questions. This was important because otherwise the project would have stayed within the boundaries of linear answers (yes, no, a bit), preventing any emergence of new directions of meaning and thinking. The key challenge was designing a method that would help to find answers to questions that probably were not the right ones anyway, as well as to understand descriptive versus interpretive approaches. Only when I found out that research is indeed an ongoing process, probably with quite arbitrary starting and ending points – as it can also fail – did I feel more at ease with changing the course of things in my project, starting to connect experience to meaning making, with a focus on 'shifts of meaning' as a point of focus in answering the research questions, analysis and interpretation. This was helpful as, with that focus, both content and process of the research (how 'things' happened in it) came together.

- I had to think through the idea of findings (which later became insights). It took me a long time to understand what could be meant by findings. This was because, at first, I thought I would 'just' describe the journey of finding answers to the initial research questions. That was what I was after. As if I

would do nothing but listen and make an account of what I heard. But soon it was clear that 'just' listening is not possible: the whole point of the psychosocial and phenomenological underpinning of this project is about deep listening, or listening underneath (and not only underneath what the interviewees say, but underneath my own thinking as well) as the basis of interpretation. This journey of thinking through my research and the method slowly made me understand what interpretation means and how I cannot escape interpretation and, indeed, I need it. But I had to find guidelines and a method that would explain how to do my interpretation to the extent it would be possible, could be followed by others and hence could be accepted (as the qualitative research variety of validation). I was too cautious with interpretation at first. I think only when I had understood the role of interpretation, was I able to make statements with respect to the value of my 'findings' (my deep listening) and how they related and contributed to existing research. Discussing the original research questions was problematic at first as I felt I had moved away from them. But at some point, I was able to connect to them in helpful ways, elaborating on how some of the questions had changed or lost their point, because of the research and the findings. I find this (how research questions shift) most fascinating and one of the most exciting elements of doing research and following its methods.

- I connected two complex areas of research, 'Nature' and 'leaders'. I had many reflections on this, as it was the aim of the project to contribute to understanding and 'doing' social innovation. This meant keeping focused on what the interviewees as leaders would tell me about being influenced by their Nature experiences. I was questioned many times about the extent to which the interviewees could be considered leaders as well as the extent to which I was grounding the research enough in leadership theory. Nevertheless, I kept the working title 'Leaders and their relation to Nature' almost to the end. Only then did I use the word 'leadership' instead of 'leaders' as a focus on individuals holding a role in taking initiative or championing a practice. Then I used 'leading' (not leadership) to emphasise the process of being with others (instead of following). Then I thought of 'with

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Nature in mind' instead of 'the relation to Nature'. This was to emphasise meaning making (from unconscious to conscious). But did I mean mind to be only human or as a general capacity in Nature (Bateson)? Calling the research 'with Nature in mind' had a risk of becoming (remaining may be a better word) Cartesian, positivist and therefore anthropocentric. 'Relation' still seemed to be pivotal (following Merleau-Ponty). In the end, I chose the title 'Led by Nature' with the subtitle 'psycho-social investigations into practices of relating to Nature', thus expressing Nature's role (within the practice) and the approach. I like this title because it points at both a kind of ecocentric ethics as well as the unconscious. I think such an approach is needed. Because of administrative reasons the title was never changed and my considerations about it were kept to myself and my supervisors.

8.2.4 learnings and change

While method is crucial, supporting the process of meaning making, research is not only following protocol. But in following protocol, the challenge has been to keep my experience fresh, to remember what I was researching and why. With my experience of the little blackbird, it has been the idea of 'Nature having agency' that kept me focused on accomplishing this project. Every time that remembering made me aware of not knowing, I was reminded that the essence of this project is to be the relational.

I have come to be fond of phenomenology as it is 'democratic'. It aims to grasp the experience and let it form into shape. Phenomenology supplies the ultimate reset button, the ultimate stick between the spokes. I am surprised it and psychoanalysis are allowed. I am surprised politicians, law enforcement and other authorities are not more active in prohibiting it. For instance, phenomenology states that Artificial Intelligence (AI) can never and will never replace the human brain (Dreyfuss, 1992) – while I would add AND the non-human brain, and that a unifying theory of science will never be found. It might be constructed and believed by a lot of people, but that is something else. Thus, phenomenology of

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perception is on an equal footing with Freud's discovery of the unconscious. That premise is helpful to legitimize what I have been doing, it provided enough confidence to keep going.

I had to learn how to do research and how to work with academics and academic requirements. I had not foreseen the difficulty of not knowing how to do research and learning it step by step. This evoked a kind of a regression back into my formative years and experiences of being at school, listening, complying and depending on teachers as sources of information and telling me what to do, expecting me to stay within the boundaries of curriculum and follow their authority.

Some of this regression was intensified by doing research 'by template' as I would call it, like submitting a research proposal that matches the university's criteria. Regression to early life school experiences and authority relations with teachers was painful at points. But more peculiar was my experience of being spoken to, or instructed, as if I had already successfully done the project. I felt I had to describe in detail my research questions, my way of acquiring knowledge, my method, analysis and interpretation and what I was hoping to contribute to the existing research and discourses in similar fields, all in one go, without even having started the research. This was scary as it felt like entering a foreign culture where one knows one has to learn extremely fast in order to survive, as the system will not adapt to you as an individual and all the others seem to know what the rules of the game are except you.

This sometimes made me feel as if I was cheating. For instance, to write the research proposal that would pass, I looked up all the qualitative research methods that I could find through the library and constructed answers to the template requirements that I thought would at least allow me to the next level.

Looking into ecocentric ethics, that made intellectual sense to me as soon as I understood the thinking behind it. That was the result of a cognitive exercise.

Socially, the normative is no doubt hugely important, from traffic rules to the banking system. But then, the people who design and implement the norms are different from the people who need to comply. This is what we do with Nature as well. I have learned it is possible to develop an ontology and epistemology that are different and that start from relating, that is, not thinking ecocentric ethics but showing the possibilities of such ethics emerging.

Towards the end, writing slowly but steadily and overseeing the whole of the research felt in many ways like riding my bicycle for the first time without side wheels. I was without a structure of some existing guidelines, because I was expected to take authority for what I had done in the research. I felt myself as if not in linear time, but in a circle, with all the daunting insight of maybe having to do it again from the start but differently, not because I did something wrong, but because the research process actually worked and I had changed insights. But having changed doesn't mean I am finished; I am different and therefore while I am reflecting behind my thesis writing desk, I am aware of a great deal of anxiety. I also know my body is available to do the perceptive knowing.

I have felt many times that, the more time I spent on this project, the less I had control over it. I sympathize with artists who say this happens to them when they try to catch the creative moment. For instance, John Mayer in working with Herbie Hancock (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPbARyEEjr4, min 3.41 – min 3.54). It reminds me of a teacher telling the stories of Tantalus and Sisyphus. Tantalus is so close to drinking but never achieves it, for the water draws back when he bends over to touch it. Orpheus, despite being warned, could not wait to see Eurydice. Only when he dies and transforms and descends to the underworld, is his spirit united again with hers.

Looking for 'the essence' or the insight that Van Manen talks about (2017) and that he describes as the outcome of phenomenological inquiry has also given me the pleasure of discovery. Nature is always more of a mystery. This is unbearable in times when we are receiving messages that we know everything and that

everything is known (in terms of universal knowledge), or will be known and unravelled by science in the near future.[55]

I have more faith in the possibilities I see now - through others - that Nature can be included in conversational types of processes. This knowledge cannot be captured in fundamental truths and then imposed upon people, as traditionally has been the role of the natural sciences.

I see Nature, or parts of Nature, as including or consisting of many other sentient beings other than human animals. I do and I don't make the distinction between the living and non-living surrounding world. That distinction can be made when dissecting what is there, but as soon as we consider dynamic interaction, such a distinction is not very helpful or meaningful. It is, in addition, helpful to differentiate place, as every place is unique in its tapestry and constructs. I think the same of animals. In order to relate through the body, the body needs access.

Undertaking this project has changed me, not only bringing me research skills, but also in being comfortable with knowing and not knowing and how this position at the same time has value and gives me confidence. The essence of this research has strengthened the idea of Nature as 'the other' with agency, a truth for more than just myself. Also, it has helped me to be critical again, and to develop better arguments about management and technology, recognizing that both are realities of human culture, though it is a mistake when they take priority over this wider essence. I can feel now how I am able through phenomenology to understand Cartesian thinking better and work with it more critically.

8.3 direction of travel

This project is an example of research work done by a growing group of thinkers and practitioners that are interested in relating to Nature, placing such work in

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[55] While making revisions to the thesis, the Corona Crisis presented itself. Quod erat demonstrandum.

the context of larger cultural change and innovation in the discourse on sustainability. My interest and practice are directed at social change. This research has helped me to appreciate once again the complexity of social change. It strengthened me in valuing the unconscious (both representational and non-representational). In my life I have never experienced a collective crisis of global or national proportions as previous generations have experienced the second World War, or in case of the Netherlands, the great flood of 1953. While writing these thoughts on the direction of travel for myself coming out of this project, the disease called covid -19 has stopped the world in its tracks. Many social and organisational arrangements that are thought of as set in stone, are now exposed as not helping everybody in the same way or can be seen to even be dangerous for society as a whole. How we think of our relation to Nature and the non-human other is part of that. It is possible that the sustainability discourse could experience a boost because of the Corona Crisis. For instance, the council of Amsterdam has declared it is going to implement economist Kate Raworth 's concept of the 'doughnut economy'.[56] However I consider emphasising 'lived experience' in rigorous scientific ways to be crucial in order to develop a more ecological society. That could be part of a renewed interest and trust in science as many commentators now hasten to state is needed. But a (Western) world that promotes an ideology of individual rights without boundaries to linear thinking and practices of economic growth, still has more work to do when it comes to overcoming the disbalance in ethics. That means my direction of travel coming out of this project is nothing more or less than favouring options of further researching experiencing Nature and incorporating Nature and non-human others' agency in social change.

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[56] Raworth K. (2018) Doughnut Economics : Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist. Cornerstone.

8.4 sample of thematic analysis

Interview transcript from first half of 2017 on location in Switzerland.

This transcript was validated by the interviewee and the interviewee gave permission to use it. All references to people's names and locations have been anonymized by the author.

Following thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) 'elements' are identified from the transcript that I distilled themes from with respect to 'a shift of meaning' (see introduction to method on page 82 of this thesis), with the following questions in mind:
- What striking experiences of Nature are presented as a shift of meaning?
- Does the individual see this occurring to him, herself (intra psychic) or at a group level (inter psychic) or at a collective (cultural) level?
- What is impacted, what does the person do with the experience / shift of meaning coming from the experience?

In the following analysis the phases of thematic analysis are illustrated through application of the method on a transcript of one of the interviewees.

1. Familiarising with transcript.

Transcript.

R: This is on actually, because I am…

K: Hmmm

R: Soft voice: I am saying quite sensible things at the moment so, I should record it as well, laughs.
But so, uh and the way I do it, is then the research, social research is a bit like anything goes, because the ideas about social research are pretty postmodern that there is no truth and truth gets constructed, so there is nothing uhm there is nothing that sort of references or or puts social science in a box. Because you can research and you can look into anything that gets constructed. The only way it is the only way by which it can be declared to be science is when you follow certain uh

K: Rules, logics

R: rules and if you include enough uh review or or literature and connect it to things that have already been done, so that people find it credible, so that people say so that the experts can say

K: You selected well

R: you produced something that you followed the rules and you used what is already there so congratulations this is valuable work

K: yeah

R: So, this is what I am doing and I am doing it with a couple of people that I have partly uh chosen to fit a kind of framework and partly because uh you you get referred to people or you find people on your path. Like P came through you otherwise I would have never found P. So, this is also uh like a snowball, there are many ways of after you have done the research to legitimate your choices again it is valid if you can properly explain why so there are also people I do not interview or have not looked for, because I could not explain why I would go there.
So now I have like 4 categories of people that I have uh included in my interviews. And it is also a little bit of a mix but, but you could say there are four categories. One is a category of people that take others into Nature, a second is people that work with animals, a third category is people that are affected because something in their environment has changed, uh so an immediate impact of Nature on their livelihood and a fourth category is people that are more working with Nature in social context to create something new or pick up the interest of Nature in a particular way, like uh setting up a campaign or uh doing educational programmes. There was a guy who is a professor in vegetation uhm areas, a particular kind of biology, who is also working for the state forest managers. But he has a particular role in the state forest company. Uhm because he is doing educational programme's. So I also interviewed him. In practice, these areas overlap. So sometimes I think that person could also be in that category. So that is a bit of a background to the research I am doing. And uh ja, I think you fit in for several reasons and I think you would probably fit in more than one of these categories. That is ok.

K: I am a mix between 2 and 4 (brushing sound from outside can be heard)

R: Yes, I think so. That is fine.

R: The way I would analyze the data is to look at sort of the individual case but then also to see where there are themes coming that are shared through these people or through these groups. I have actually started to do that now and I need to focus on it otherwise I will never finish.

K: haha

R: So, I think you probably are the last person I will interview.

K: Hmm Ok, let's start

R: Ja, does that give a bit of a picture.

K: Yes, that helps

R: Now thank you for doing it. I think we go till we think we are tired or it is enough. Mostly that is around an hour, sometimes a bit longer.

K: Ok no problem

R: It is basically uh me asking you to tell stories.

K: Ok

R: And then the way I will work with you is maybe just have some associations. So, I am allowing myself a little bit to go with associations. It is like drawing or it is like doing something, making music so of course there is a structure and there is ideas behind it. But it is most of the time more interesting to not go so linear. But to just allow some associations.

K: Yeah, super

R: But the overall question, this is my interview question euhm is to ask you first so please start, with the question (little pause) 'Can you tell me the story, how you came to do what you are now doing?'

Some silence

R: And I have to ask you to start where you want to, think you want to start. It is basically a question of what stories are behind some of the things that happened to you or the choices you made. And there is an idea of a time line, but it is not like through your cv, it is more like going with your experience. So How, (repeating the question). Is that ok?

K: That is ok

Sound of microphone moving, pause in the conversation.

K: I was 10 in 68 and in 68 also in Switzerland we had the student riots quite tough. But I was not part of this generation who was fighting against the police on the street in Zurich and so on and declaring free love and anarchy and whatever to be ready (Laughs) to be replace all other swiss systems. (laughs) And very old fashioned after WW II systems of thinking and behaving and so on. But I was very impressed by that and while my brother who is 4 years older than I am, while my brother was really outside on the street already I was sitting at home to say so and reflecting. And I was very much impressed by the philosophy that we should learn from Nature and that we should collaborate with Nature. And to say it simple and I red books about hippies and hippy communities in California and so on. And to say it simple I had the possibility, saw a chance to do it really by going on the Alps. Zurich is only 2 hours train ride from here. But then and for me this

was like the distance between Netherlands and Indonesia. I think you know a lot about Indonesia in the Netherlands because it was one of your former colonies, but you are not really close hmmm and you have not been there. So it was this kind of why not doing it. In fact I was preparing the ? stories I was preparing with another guy also called K, we were preparing working with kids to do a theater, boy scouts theater and when we were (laughs) writing the whole story doing the script book at the home of his girlfriend, the girl friend came in to our room like here and said he K's, look what I have seen here. And he was a young student in agricultural uh at the most important university of Zurich of Switzerland so high class agricultural studies he is just started. And she said look what I have seen here, and she came in with a womens magazine, hmm feminist women magazine who told there is a women she was then 30, 35, 40 years old doing, making cheese on the Swiss Alps it is high class best rated cheese, she is a women, she is from Zurich, she is a hippy, it was 79, she is a former hippy and that is the story of Bea Schilling. And KR said oh great and I looked also into the magazine and said oh great. And then we looked at each other and he asked do you like that. Oh yes for sure I all the times bla bla thought about going on an alp. So, he said let's do it. So, it was out of nothing Febr 1979 and I began to call the farmer association of a particular canton. 'From Zurich I am a young guy, I would like to go on an alp, what shall I do. Oh, come on, not another one. Must be something of a trend isn't it. I said ah hmm I thought it is my proper idea but ja. Look we have a lot of them you youngster's beat nicks, however. My hair was longer than this. Unless you don't have a job, a contract unless we shouldn't talk about anything. I mean we have again and again these calls. Just think about and if you really want to be serious then look for a contract with such a farmer cooperation we have been talking about yesterday. That is it. And then

R: Cause why would he need a contract?

K: Unless we as the farmer association who is running uhm the whole, who is supporting the farmers by finding people by getting organized and so on unless we are not sure here is a serious person who is really doing the job in a few months time unless we do not really want to discuss with you anything. Otherwise it is I read an article and I want to do something. And I said ok hmmm because I was already then on the way to become a journalist. I said ok I need the newspapers, the journals of the farmers and then I realized how the whole thing works. Then I phoned to the agricultural school here. And said I like to go on the alp. And they said my dear guy we have these courses where you learn to make cheese alpine cheese making crash course. But it is overcrowded now we have much too much applicants so forget it, unless you have a contract. And I went back to my friend K and while we were uh training with the kids the theater following our idea, we said let's find a contract. And then in these farmer magazines we saw the little advertisements. And then we realized ok here quite close, around the corner there is an alp where they still do not have staff. In fact, if you are a clever alpine cheese maker or herdsman you do the contract before Christmas. Because clever farmers which pay well and so on they want to be safe and sure and before the end of the year they do the contract with a first-class

herdsman. But it was already February so, we were in this kind of where is a complicated farmer, a complicated president of a cooperation, a complicated situation I don't know why and that is why they still do not yet their alp staffed. We found one. We realized they had an old man he was an alcoholic. He had been on the alp the whole year. But the whole cheese production of the year before was declared as failed not good in fact with listeria bacteria and they had to throw it in to the next gorge. Just don't bring it into the cycle of consummation. And then they began to think in February, probably we should not hire the same old guy again. We moved up there with our girlfriends in winter. The farmer was out of in front of his house. And he was so impressive he was staying there with special tools he made out of a tree he made a new Dach Kengelde the tube that takes the water hmmm, he made it out of a tree hmm, carving it. Laughing. Zurich hippie guys he mr T. here we are. He looked at us we were just on the phone with him and I realized at least I did realize oe this will be difficult this will be very difficult. My colleague was actually very much such type, he was like 'I want to go to the alp lets go to the alp'. But I was aware of all the obstacles. We made it. He said my dear two city guys it is a tough job, you have to do it and you have this is an obligation you have to take the third one the 15-year-old. We were 21. You have to take that boy with you. Because he is experienced it will be his 4th season or 5th up there and he knows everything except of the cheese making. And we cannot give the cows 42 milking cows to a 15-year-old. We said ok, actually we were looking for having fun for 3 months not wanting to take care of a 15-year-old little bit strange mountain boy. (Laughs) But ok we will do that. Second question who is the boss of you. We said with one mouth no boss, no boss, we are a team. He said no I want the boss. Then the other K looked at me and he said ok you K you are the boss. In fact, he was the boss. Probably he was the boss again like TH. Because he was pushing lets do it. K* you are the boss. Then we signed the contract with a higher salary for me and

R: really

K: yeah yeah, a lower salary for KR and another lower class of salary for the boy. We said we want the contract we will sign everything that is demanded. Then we jumped in the car again we drove down to the valley and we met the young man. Totally shocked 15 years old boy 1979 boy grown up with very simple working-class parents, really simple parents. And he had no plan what to do after his 9 years of school. And so, it was just uh simple shy looking at us, who are these guys. They signed the contract. And know I am obliged.

R: He must have been 16 then or something

K: He was 15 something yeah. O shit, powerfull strong, muscles all over, not to compare (laughing) with my weak thin body. And we went up there and it was hell, it was hell. For me because I was totally, no first I went to the school this farming cheese making school. I could n't milk by hand. And I knew up there for sure I will have a milking machine, but I have to be able to prepare a cow and to milk it finally to the end because this was the time when you don't put on a

machine and pfff. and it take away the cups (?) and move on. The farmers were not yet really best friends with milking machines. So, they said just do it up till 75 % and take the last 25% of milk out by hand. Take care of all the sensitivities as every cow is different etc. and we liked that, very much. I had to train how to milk and cheese making and and and. And we went up there and…

R: but you did it.

K: And we did it. I was after 6 weeks, no after 3 weeks I was at the edge of the stable

R: on the alp

K: on the alp and I was crying it was Sunday evening and I was crying and I had the most beautiful sunset, because up there you see all down the way down to the Lake of Zurich to the East, to the West. It was beautiful. But I was just crying because I realized I will not survive. I will have to go home. I will die up here. Every morning my arms were totally lame. They were paralyzed of doing that strong work. And every and each morning to be able to put the wood stick? to bring the cows home. I had first to go to the well to put my arms into the cold water to bring the feeling back to my fingers (laughing) (?) at 4 'o clock in the morning. It was Sunday evening and I realized it is too much, it is too much, I cannot bear that. And then a voice in my back said 'oh you will see'. After one month, it will be much better. And I watch back and what didn't realize before a young farmer came up he wanted to show. Even farmers on Sunday evening they have a little time off or try to do a little bit.

R: He was somebody you didn't know?

K: It was a farmer of the village. His cows were up the alp. And he just had the intention let's go to these young guys and let's have a look how they are doing up there. And then he realized oh this one is exhausted. And he, I assume tried to approach me without being unpolite. So, he stood 5 meters behind me and then he realized this poor guy is totally exhausted, really frustrated, oh he is even crying. And then he tried to say hmm hello here I am. And I said why, no no I am not crying at all. He said ja you will see after one month the milk production slows down the best grass is eaten, the grass gets older and as more pregnant the cows are the less milk they give. You will see it will slow down. In these first weeks and because of the old installations we had to make cheese twice a day. We had such a high milk amount and such a low content of the milk basin big pot we had to make fire to heat up the milk, wood pieces, fire and to move it on an installation on an arm like a crane you can move it in and out of the fire and regulate the temperature with the right amount of sticks. It was really traditional (emphasis) cheese making. And to carry out the milk was stored in big wooden basins like this you have to move them in and out of the cellar. It was heavy heavy work day and night (deep breadth sound).

And so, this was my (exhale sound) initiation. It was a pshhh it was a boost a physical boost. But it was also mind blowing, for sure because of all these physical circumstances. I cannot be the same as I was, I have to learn so much I have to reframe my behavior I have to reframe my thinking. This is something difficult. You have to be aware I have been a boy scout and a boy scout leader for years and I was hiking and doing kind of games during the night I was close to Nature. But this was something so challenging that I realized (pause) I have to reframe my behavior and not only in a physical but mainly in how to approach this something called Nature. I have to get much more familiar with it. I have really, I think I did not realize then up there on alp, I did not realize then that I had have to get part of it. I think I would not have been able to tell it. To somebody I am still something external and I have to learn to be something internal. But when I look back, it was something that I had to realize you cannot be the guy you have been so far if you want to do that kind of job really. But it was this kind of oh shit my common behavior, my common logics of how to approach animals or even mountain farmers, it is not working at all. Uh I had to learn to listen to farmers, not in this way of what a strange guy Rembrandt is (laughs)

R: Hmm

K: nice face but uh ha, I really had to begin to listen what are they telling me what is important what they tell me.

R: Hmm

K: Ah it is important that I now get to know all these damned macro detailed descriptions of landscapes with 'you know the sowieso lichtung' where a wooden patch is free of trees, we call it lichtung[57] in German, an open space in the forest. The sowieso lichtung is not the sowieso lichtung 100 m close by. Because on the the sowieso lichtung the cows have water and on the sowieso lightung the cows have no water. I was not interested first in all these lightungs. I said this part of the ridge and that part, first we move the cows to this part and two weeks later to that patch on the other part. Do you have a plan, a plan, no. Do you have a schedule, Excell sheet you would say today. You will see when the grass is good enough? up there you move up there. Oh fuck when is the grass good (?) up there. So, J our 15-year-old boy he was our teacher. The first day he said we are late. But KR who was a heavy (?) marijuana smoker said no no no I have to smoke another pipe. Wait. But then J said we really have to go because otherwise we will be too late for milking and bl bla bla. But KR had to smoke another pipe. And then we were late on the patch over there the pasture, it was in a forest and it was beginning to rain and we were there.

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[57] See Watts, M. *The Philosophy of Heidegger*. Routledge, London (p145, 145). 'For Heidegger the truth occurs each time the meaning of an event occurs to us and Dasein is a being that always remains receptive to experiencing the truth of other beings. Heidegger regards Dasein's receptiveness as an 'open space' of intelligibility, a 'region' in which entities can manifest themselves. He often refers to this open region as a 'clearing'(Lichtung) and says that Dasein itself is this Clearing. The German word Lightung can be used with reference to a forest clearing. It was probably inspired by Heidegger's regular treks through the Black forest.'

And he said ja K you go in this Sluf, Sluf is kind of a (laughs) this is a Walzer word from the Walzer people from the it is kind of old-fashioned German they speak. You go in this Sluf, Sluf is a kind of a soft valley in a ridge, it is not a really (klick sound) sharp gorge, kind of uh a channel. You go in this Sluf and I go in that Sluf. And you go down there and then I say ok and what shall I do well you bring back the cows. Ok I went there and there were no cows, in the Sluf there were no cows and then I realize ah because it is raining they are under these kind of pine trees, really hiding they don't get away. Ok I went to the first cow and said hello I am your knew boss and would you please move out. She didn't want to move out. And I said you dirty asshole, bastard move out of here (in a shouting voice). No, I took out my stick gave her a bang on the ass and she moved 10 feet out of the tree. And there she stood. I said move up there we have to meet all your sisters, friends and girlfriends. She didn't want to move. I tried to make her move it didn't work. Then I realized probably have to go to the lowest first. And to go to number one bring to number two tak tak tak tak. It took me about an hour to bring 15 of them to the meeting place. Hmm. And so on he (sigh). We were late.

When we are up there KR and I said we are damned late. Let's make the move. So we opened the door, the fence and KR and I started to cry like we saw it in a Western movie. And then the whole bunch of 42 cows started to walk but we said no you have to run. We have to speed up you have to be milked. So, we made them run, so they run for about two kilometers. J was totally upset. He was right because they are high pregnant ladies and they had udders full of milk. But we said lets safe time, lets go home. So, you know, it was … You could have made a movie with us.

Unfortunately, we had to cross by another alp where there were also kind of hippie guys. They were much more trained and more clever then us. They realized ok they are late so we have to be first with our cows in bringing to the stable. But we were running. It didn't match so we were right in the same moment in front of their stable where they tried to bring their cows to their stable. So, we had a mix we had 80 cows in the front of their alp. And it was the first time so we all didn't already really know our cows. They were not marked as then we did it later. So, we had to separate their 42 from our 42. Another hour? Then we (?) were three hours late. We began to milk. Uhm uh J well experienced 15 years old mountain boy he just began to milk. And you have the machine on one cow, you prepare the next one in the right time, not to early not too late, that she is really letting the milk go, and you can put away the machine here. (tractor noise outside in the village). Then you put it to the next and you finish the first one. Then you realize ok the machine of this one is nearly to the end so I have to go to next afterwards to prepare it. Then the machine is working, working, working. KR and I we were sitting in front of our first cow we are so tired and we watch the machine working and we realize o shit we should prepare the next. O shit we should prepare the next one. We had 2 hours 2,5 hours for a job we had to do in 1 hour. That after two weeks you have realized, you are not even a rookie, but less we had no plan, no clue no chance. So, the farmer who stood in my back telling me you are behind the worse. He was really helpful. He was also going back to the village. These guys up there I am not so sure about. Next Sunday we had the alp president. He was for years up there. He came to control us. Unexpectedly he stood at 6 in the

morning he stood in our cheese making room. I just want to have a look. We said oh no. We realized that they realize we were really having a hard time. After 3 months we were so damn proud, we were so damned proud, we made it, we had 2500 kg of cheese, freshly made cheese. Loafs like this (low pitch voice) 8 kilo loafs in the cellar. They were all hmm (sound of kiss) beautiful beautifully washed, beautifully washed. Because we really washed them every second day. It was perfect. I had never had probably before never again I had a feeling of I have done something, it was a product hmm, it was something real. The cashier of the cooperation came up in the evening before and he said are you prepared my dear cheese makers. We said uhh yes we knew you will come. Yeah now we work for a whole night so, are you ready to have a lot of coffee for me. Yes for sure. Then we began to weigh all the cheese loafs. KR and I we weighed all the cheese loafs. Once again you weigh them already when you put them into the cellar. But they loose weight because of drying. We had to weigh them. And he while we were weighing the cheese loafs, he calculated all the milk amounts. We had to weigh the milk of each farmer. Every milking time twice a day you milk them and you noted precisely so much kg from cow number and so much kilo and so many grams from cow number so and then you calculate and then you have a relation, general amount of milk compared to general amount of cheese makes x kilo of cheese for x kilos of milk, farmer 1 has in total so many milk and gets so much cheese ta da da li ta da ta la and then you make piles, in the cheese cellar you make piles farmer one farmer two. In the morning, Sunday morning, then they are coming, then the alp president this nasty little guy said yeah. He had a speech about sticking together. We only can run the alp because we have once again, another summer really stood together we came up with this young man and we helped them to build up the first fences. We were there and we realize this is true this is reality. And then he said let's pray and then he made pray together with the farmers then he said ok and now let's share the cheese. Then it began to be uh very normal again every farmer took his cheese loafs he putted it on any kind of agricultural vehicle where he put in some hay or straw before and tied it together. Then we had lunch together and said bye bye some gave us a tip and some disappeared so they did not have to give any cash to these youngsters. And that was it. That was it. Then they were gone. Unfortunately, it was also snowing – mid of September – it was snowing and we were up there. It was such an overwhelming experience. It is done.

R: Everybody left

K: everybody left

R: you are by yourself, contract finished.

K: the cows are gone. Contract finished. Ladies with kids took the cows home, ladies with kids walked the cow's home. Men drove down with the cheese back. Machines are for men, animals are for women. (Laughs) And we were up there no more cheese, no more butter, no more nothing. A mess in the cellar hundreds of wooden shelves to be washed in the coming days with hot water, because they

had this kind of gluey cheese skin. And it is done, nobody tooks care of you, nobody asks anymore how you are doing, nobody says hello or even thank you, job done, farmer gone. They have to do take care of the cows now down in the village, uh you are no more needed. Oh, that is it, hmmm. Ok we sat together drank uh a glass of wine. KR needed lot of joints (laughs) and J had the intention to go, to go, to leave these strange long-haired hippies immediately. Next morning, he was gone. KR and I set up there and we realized ok he took the right moment to go home. Now we have to clean up to close the stables to put out the last pieces of manure. And and, and to make the whole buildings winter safe hmm that is our job now. Ok Then we were up there another five days in the snow. There I killed my first, I killed my first chicken, second day or third day in the snow up there totally lonely. He had a crazy idea well at least let's make some good food. We still have some chicken. Let's kill a chicken. Have you ever chilled (he struggles the word) a chicken, chicken no? KR said no. But don't you learn that in the agricultural university. No, you don't learn how to kill a chicken. Ok let's kill the chicken. It was a mess. It loses the head for sure. But I kept it and he tried to kill it with the axe cut off the head. I was so shocked when the blood came out that the chicken without head flew on top of the roof the snowy roof of our alpine hut and there the chicken died. We had a blood line on top of the roof through the white snow.

R: laughing

K: It was a really Hitchcock, Hitchcock scene. And we said oh shiiiit (with high pitch voice) who which one of us goes on top of the roof the bring down the chicken?

R: laughing

K: And the hot water wasn't prepared. You put it first in hot water and take of the feathers. It took another four hours before we had roasted chicken. You see (serious voice again) this was my first alp summer. And (pause) fortunately, my then girlfriend uh which I met at the boy scouts (laughs) a very good colleague, she was totally fond of going to the alp she said if you do it once again I will join you. Me myself I was not really ready then to do it once again. I said ok that is it. I will be journalist. I will get, I will write a roman a big book about my experiences. When I said I won't do it again and she said that is great next time I will join you.

R: So, you had given up your studies for doing it.

K: I (hesitant) I never studied. Hmm I was in gymnasium they kicked me out because I organized to many riots. I was a very anarchic person, didn't, couldn't uh accept any kind of hierarchies then. As soon as a teacher, the pro rector, who ever tried to force me or my colleagues or something I was fighting against them. So, because I was kicked out of the Gymnasium forced by my father I had to do something. So, I got clerk. Made a three years apprentice ship and then went to the alp. So, what is next. Ok let's go the alp with my girlfriend next year. In between we made travels, traveled to California, we met people. We were kind of

uh low level hippies. (drinking sound) But we found something. And I did it for 13 years between '79 and '99 between these 20 years I was 13 years on the alp. Probably in my poeh 6th or 7th P came into my life and P asked me he would you take me with you? And I thought ok I also take P, I had already had a lot of experiences with other colleagues known or unknown once before I took, they joined me and B my former wife and we took P. And I thought ja ja this guy he will probably stop doing it after one year, like many others, but he didn't. And the main experience in talking about Nature, the main experience in what it changed in me the main experience in what it still means for me still now, I still have a son now who is doing the herdsmen job, he has taken over the alp that P made for several years and P stopped now and one of my big sons is there K. I help every summer fencing or whatever needs to be done. The main experience is when I go up there I am home (slow low-pitched voice). And it doesn't matter if it is my alp, means which I know because I have been working myself there or if it is another alp another mountain part in Switzerland which has these (tummy sound, giggling) specific ingredients which are so called swiss style, untouched Nature. It is cultivated Nature because they do alpine economy up there since several centuries. But it is hmm for Western-European feeling it is wild Nature.
You have. In spring. In spring even now, the last time I did it by myself it was 99 for the whole three months, but even now in these times when you see up there the grass turning from brown green to real green and you have the last patches of snow it is huhne haut uh I get huhne haut (RZ: goose bumps). It is kind of feeling (breadths) you have to get prepared. Put your banana cartons together. Do I have all the stuff, my knifes, do I have my fencing tools, is my rain coat still capable to protect me from heavy rain or should I buy a new one? This is, this is, it is part of your body. And so probably when you come home from when you Rembrandt when you come home from several trips to Moscow or other NRO's when you come home you have this kind of feeling pfff, hmmm just because it is your apartment hmm you know that?

R: Hmm

K: and this is the feeling and I have this too traveling around for the NGO you know as well. I like my room in a hotel or were ever I am and this is this strange feeling when I am up there in such landscape it is huhhhh

R: Hmm

K: And this is amazing I have not been I have not experienced it before in Zurich. I was nowhere in Zurich and this is my home town, it is a cozy tiny swiss nice city at the lake. It is kind of deeper connection with yourself, I would describe it. It is kind of, it is kind of a second skin feeling. But in fact, it is first skin. After several days you are sure this is my skin, this is it. And when A comes with me she says nice these alps, hmmm but (lot of emphasis) I don't like it so much because this time it was raining so much. I don't care about the rain. You don't care about your bad sanitary installations in your home, it is your home. Who cares about an old

lavabo? It is your home. It is this kind of feeling it is hufff. It is physically. (cat purring sound) I physically felt more myself,

R: Hmmm

K: I feel stronger. (cat purring) I have been fit as before. I feel weaker in my office. I feel stronger more present more powerful, physically powerful. So, you have the feeling of that is it (with emphasis). And why did I not stay? Why you ask me why I am there were I am?

R: Yeah, or what is the story of how come you do what you do?

K: Ja, how, ja. In 1984 around pff November I phoned on the flatlands where I lived with B and we already had our two kids. Which we all the times took on the alp. We could then make then an arrangement with the primary school that we could stay even in another canton

R: She did it with her, right

K: Yes, ten years we were together on the alp with the family. And we could make an arrangement that we could prolong the summer holidays. Because we were doing this traditional thing. (Laughs) Here you have even no longer summer holidays, because of haying, making hay sending as farmers sending the kids to the Alps etc. But this was an industrialized canton where we have all the nuclear power plants and so on. They said ok ok one week longer in advance you can take your kids out of the school. One week before so we had 6 or 7 weeks together. Then she would go back with the kids to school and they come up on the weekends and so on. And in 1984 we were the first (pausing thinking) or the second time on an alp in a really really really remote alp here in this part of Swiss closer to the boarder to Italy with an alp with 285 young cattle and 1000 sheep which were guarded by somebody else living in our house, another family. 1000 ha 2 and a half valleys lot of different ridges, all our kingdom, it was heaven, it was heaven it was huhhh (laughs) it was feeling like an american indian in the prairie or so it was wow it was no longer this is our alp and there is a village close by, it was our life up there and in the second year when I told the farmer uhha and I told the farmer for us it is clear we will do it another year. Yes, for sure oh K it is great to know that already now in November. But I have to tell you something by the way. They will build a hydro power lake up there in the next years. Are you crazy. Are you kidding, he said yes yes you know these power companies, bla da da dee they expand. But pff hmm forget it, I mean. I mean do you fight against that? Or do you accept that. The power companies they are most influential companies, they build in the fifties, they build all the roads in the remote valleys and infrastructure. They have construction sites up there, they gave us everything. Without these power companies the remote valleys would not be inhabited anymore. I said yeah but it is times before it is now 84. I mean fight there are environmental organizations in Switzerland. It was a tiny little group of people. Uh

go get in touch with them, they will support you. These green people forget it. I know some of them and then I tried to be the go between. After

R: Because you knew P.

K: No no it was before P, P wasn't in my life. Uhm because I was after my clerkship I worked for 8 months for an environmental NGO. And P wasn't there yet. I paid worked as a practicant uh as a more or less volunteer with a little salary. So, had my I knew some people. 6 years later it was I still knew some people from the NGO. I phoned to them, the CEO there. And I explained him the problem. He said but K uhm great idea for sure we will support but we need people up there. Who say we do not want this new lake. Because if people from Zurich come and say we don't want that the local people euh build a, you cannot do it it is colonialism. Then I tried to build up the cell of resistance of local people. It didn't work really, because the farmers said, yeah for sure we don't like it, but these are the power companies… So, it was my training of what is a campaign, how to build trust how to get in touch with people, what can you do with the local people what not how do you get in touch with politicians. What kind of politicians, how can they help you. O what is the political process until you get the concession to build a hydro power station in Switzerland. Difficult, difficult, it takes about 10 years maybe longer. And I was boosted into environ….political environmentalism. But I still believed I need to keep the touch to this true life. For me this was true life. And I still think I have never experienced something which is so close to our ecological idealism as doing the job on the alp. Because with your limitations you have up there you have your physical body you have your will. You can do some decision in the morning what you will do today, you will realize after two hours it is too much. Because you will never go up there, because part of your herd is already over there. You will have to bring them to here and o shit some additional are up there. And oe I will never be able to do the fence I intended to do in the afternoon up there. So, I have to rearrange. You are brought to a new frame of possibilities. Hmm. And it is totally (pause) modeled in relation to your physical mainly your physical capabilities. You realize if people live like this you are not able to destroy Nature really. Hmm I think even already a farmer has much more possibilities because he is an industrialized farmer nowadays. Even the mountain parts he has vehicles and so on, machines to cut the grass adopted to mountain farming and so on so he brings much more power, additional power into his behaviors. But there as a herdsman you are depending on your two legs. You realize a dog, a dog who is really following uhm your intentions and you are really if you have a dog you can really cooperate with, this is kind of, it is like a computer, it is like kind of tripling,

R: Hmm

K: doubling (almost shouting) your power, he. Because so than you say ok can I make it how can I arrange it as a guy who is freelancing journalist in winter and herdsman in summer. Can I have such kind of a shepherd dog at home and so on and with the first dog you fail because you have no plan how to train a dog and

with the second dog it works quite well and the third dog he was heaven. Because then you are here and you say Bimbo, Bimbo you know you see up there, uhh go up there but don't be too furious because it is damn steep and before you walking 20 min the cattle in this 20 min probably already moved somewhere and with the dog you are down here and you don't use physical power any more and then you send him up stop, stop, bark woef woef. O, shit dog hugh. Then you look and you say ok, ok, no not enough, they keep up eating up there where they shouldn't be. Bark again, woef woef. Do a little bit more more and then you. I think this was for mankind to be able to cooperate with a dog brings you in the position of being the king hmm you are almighty you and the dog you govern. And before you and the cattle hoogh it was a kind of relation who has the longer breadth.

R: Hmm

K: Who survives easier. With the dog you feel ok now wragh. And then first you again hmm I said ok now I am the king I bring you all in a few minutes from this valley to this valley. O shit I am actually too late as it begins snowing. But Bimbo now lets give it and wham. And they move to fast and then a week later they have all infections in their feet because they hurt on stones. Then you realize it is because of me I was much too tough. Don't tell the farmer. Next time you have to be much quicker. When you are in difficult landscape you start to realize to be familiar with the landscape. It is really you have a totally different knowledge of the environment. You know where you can pass with one or 20 or 100 animals within a certain time from here to there under certain temperatures, weather situation, which as a hiker you do not have to know, you will never think about, and so you have a pattern, a feeling a map of possibilities all the times carrying around with you. Of possibilities, last year or five years ago I could have been on this pasture up there already at the 5th of August but uh now, I think I go up there next week and have look and then you reframe you pasture planning. I have to show you afterwards, I made. Because I still was for sure then I was all the times a little but intellectually under challenged so I made plans, beautiful plans I have to show you one, I think I still have them, where I made for everyday I made a little drawing. My brother became a comic author he wrote stories for comic designers, graphic novel designers. He made the stories. They made the... So that is probably a possibility for me bringing all my life, my experiences, my stories, love stories, other stories, died cattle, farmer coming. Which cattle did you have to cure when. This is what the farmer usually asks. Did you treat them and when did you treat them and what did you give them? I drew all in the plan. With such a plan you actually live. Hmm You have a and it was just a tiny patch of Switzerland but it covers all your thinking, your feeling, your behaving, your kid's experiences, uhm it is amazing you are in a new mode of using all your human capabilities, possibilities you have. And after three wee months you leave again and you go back somewhere in November just because you are homesick for the alp. And you realize you cannot see nearly anything what happened, there is some manure left, the grass is gone, but anyhow it is now brown and winter comes soon, the hut is still there, but that is it. But you invested everything, all your energies you were up there. Me as an ecological thinking person. I realized that is it. More or less

that is it. That is the level where we are in a balance. Hmm So, but as soon as we for example say let's build a hydro power station up here, (laughs) you shift the balance to the worse?

R: Hmm

K: This year, the next year after the alp chief warned me, they came up there, young geological students came up there and they began to measure the valley and after they came two weeks later there was coming a drilling company and the drilled holes in 'my' at least in the feeling in 'my' pastures where we took so much care off and thought all the time can we move the 284 Cattle from here to there or do we destroy to much of the grass 'narbe'. They come to drill holes they put in TNT and they pfff pfff pfff made small explosions all of over our pastures to detect what kind of geological formations do we have underneath. And I said are you crazy, me as a young leftish (laughing) person. I went to these drillers coming to these drillers coming from Tirol or Northern Italy. Are you crazy you cannot do that. What the fuck are you doing here. I am the herdsmen here. You shouldn't do that, I began all kind of discussions with drillworkers, students, engineers and even once the director of the hydro company was coming up there. I had a big show down with him on the open pasture, I said I will follow you now. I am just coming to have a look. I am sure he was told by the engineers the herdsman up here drives our staff crazy. I tried to bring him to all the beautiful spots, to the waterfall here and the water basin there, are you ready to destroy he felt more and more uncomfortable. It was great. He was together with the mayor of the village. It was hundreds of thousands of experiences but all the times by the Autumn it was gone. This kind of feeling (pause) You are so limited, you are so limited. It is not your alp no possession. By feeling it was our, the alp of our family the shepherd family for sure. The village decides to build the plant or not. A lot of people decide but you do not decide. Who is doing the job, who knows all the landscape. Who is familiar with the circumstances specific circumstances the animals. The fox and where he is going in the morning and back in the evening. It is a huge bio cosmos you are in it and some other guys come 'let's destroy it'. We will build a new alpine cottage. Or what do you think mister K shall we build it here or more over there, we know you now. I don't need a new one. You want a chapel. Forget your chapel I don't want your dam up here. It was so full of experiences and learnings. And very often in winter I went up there too with skies. Totally cold winter. You have the key to the cottage you make a fire you have a tiny kitchen you need a very good arctic sleeping bag to make sure that you don't freeze in the night, but it is a kind of feeling home. A kind of feeling here I am as a totally lucky well-balanced human being. It is crazy. Sometimes A tells me ja when she is at an ocean she has a similar feeling of pfhuhhhh,

R: Hmm

K: Being centred, calming down. And life is ok, yes, I have my problems. But live is ok. This is my herdsman feeling of pfhuhh

R: Hmmm. It is the breathing. You do the breathing.

K: You do the breathing

R: Yeah what you do now, so like pfuuhh

K: It is centred.

R: It is the body

K: Probably if you do years of meditation. This kind of. Everything is as it is, everything will develop as it will develop, you are part of it. It is ok it will turn out like this or it will turn out like this. Once you will die, that is ok. That is a life.

R: Hmmm

K: And you are twenty something. And you realize probably that is all that is all that you have to know or be aware of.
After three months, you go to Zurich. After my first alp seasons, it was crazy. I went to Zurich you sit in your VW bus with all your cartons, in it you drive to your I don't know where house which you organized for winter because you didn't earn so much money, so you had not a permanent, try not to pay the rent during summer so you arrange something new. You drive there and you realize you look into every bodies face much too long and you read every advertisement on every window of a bus or on a wall of a house you read it and you think what does Allianz insurance mean to me. Until you realize stop reading every letter. F… why did I read every letter? Well because I didn't read so much when on the alp and I like reading. And I am probably now attracted too much to any new sentence. Before any face that showed up was important because it was a farmer. Sometimes you also met a hiker and then it was quite interesting to have half an hour talk with a hiker so that was an important face in that day. There are a hundred thousand people because it is rush hour. K stop watching every face. Makes no sense. It is another world, I need other filters, I need other behaviors. You know you can do it. But it has to happen fast or you will become crazy.

P also still now has these in between times. Where he tells me K I will not be in the office to fast. It is time of moving making his soul move to the new situation. Then you can move like a normal swiss citizen. You do your proper work, your other proper work. It is really different you have to reshape yourself. And after a certain time you feel, now I have the other skin and it fits well let's do org development or do campaigning or whatever.

R: hmm

K: But you know actually you have two skins.

R: Hmm

K: In my young days I realized that when you made your introduction. In my young days I saw the film little big man with Dustin Hofman. It is a 70s or late 60s movie where a young young Dustin Hofman plays a white man who was adopted by Lakota Indians. If you have the chance to see it do it. He moves in with settlers into the West as a baby. Indians come and kill them all. Hmm. But there was this little baby they don't kill a little baby. So, they gave it to a Indian woman. He grew up. He was called little big man. During his whole life time, he is shifting between the two cultures. I loved this movie, because I love the Indian culture there. Later I realized actually this is my film, it is the move between the two cultures. I cannot really tell. I am born in Zurich, I have ja I am totally assimilated to the city behavior. My father was a uh chief of all the apprentices at Swiss Air. So, we traveled all over the world in the 60 and 70s. When I went to the alp I was already in South Africa in Canada, in Finland in half of Western-Europe, that is me. But the herdsman that is also me and I think that is much more a true human being K then the other one but I am both. I am both. I am aware that I am shifting.

R. Hmmm

K: (Pause) There are, (Pause) when we had to move there are most important things, which I would never never never throw away. They are connected to my herdsman ship.

R: Hmm

K: Special kind of knives and workman tools. Hmm When we moved from there to here. A told me good organizer as she is. K we will never be able to bring all the dirty stuff we had down there up here, because it is much smaller here. So, K you are obliged to throw away hundreds of things.

What I did first I realized it later what I did first was thinking about do I have my herdsmen's tools where are they. In my brain I first stored them up here. And I felt safe. It was totally strange. I felt safe. Several weeks later I realized I haven't done so far anything else then make sure that I know where these tools are and that I am sure they fit here in the garage. And I felt safe and I felt I have my job done. Few weeks later I realized I hadn't done anything. K you haven't done anything, you just feel safe because you know your most important life time tools ..? You immediately start now to collect and filter all your books and other stuff and so on but this is the core. One of these moments in life you realize what is really important for you, ok your herdsman ship is damned important.

You just say I have them yeah, they will have space up here, that is it that is cool, life goes on. Uh I had for years, for years I had some additional poles fencing poles. Which eh plastic poles, simple, cheap, but for my thinking the best of the 200 different plastic poles you can buy in the internet or in any agricultural shop. The ones who fits best to my behavior how to fence. I had about a hundred of them. I had them down there in the garage for years and then when one of my sons began, went to go permanently to go up the alp too. I had a hard time to give

them to him. I was already Executive director of an NGO. I had a hard time, so actually they shouldn't stay in a corner of the garage. They should go to someone else, but am I really ready to give my hmm my emergency poles hmm? Farmers never give you enough poles. Poles cost. And actually, farmers would like to pay your salary and that is it. And as soon as the herdsman comes and says he I need two hundred poles several, I need uh several kilometers of rope and I need a new battery uhm to put electricity on the fence, because the old one I think is about 10 years old, and anyhow what about a whole new uh electric fencing system?, 'no, no, we cannot pay that', sooner or later you say ok I will never tell it to the farmers but I have my own 100 poles and I will bring them up. Even when they say I will bring on Sunday and they are not there even not 14 days later. You have done the job already with your own poles and you bring them home. Things which are that get so important you stick to them, even if your brain realizes it is not important anymore.

R: But my feeling is that the campaign person that you then became might even be a third K, no?

K: (Sigh) Pause When I was 21 same time same time when I decided to go to the alp. My protestant parents going to a protestant group every 14 days. Strict, honest, really laughing idealistic, my mother was fighting for the right for women to vote. We got it in 71. I remember how happy she was when that right was established in 71. These protestant parents met an astrologist who was running an art gallery in Zurich. And my father liked art very much and so he got and probably he like the lady very much and they got into a big discussion. And she said to him do you know your astrological sign and he said go away. This is devils' stuff. You think so I am an astrologist besides running this gallery. And then with her charming help they were ready that she explained to my father and my mother who were already in their 60ties. Because my father was exactly 50 years older than I am. So, I have. My father was born in 1908 uhm he had experienced WW I as a kid and so he, he was a grandfather. So, this grandfather in his 60ies realized he probably has to learn something new about astrology and characterial description of characters by psychological astrology she was teaching. And then they were so impressed they were not aware of. That is exactly how it is. How can you know that? And she said well this is an interpretation of this graphic chart. And they went trrrruh. They came and said kids if you are interested in such an explanation go and do that, we will pay. We have learned so much about our relation go and do that. I went to this woman Mrs Kalderara and she explained me as a 21 years old man how I could probably be. She made it in a gentle way. You just think about it could be that you are a little bit like this a little bit like that. And then, I realized there were a lot of Ks. I have nearly I have nearly no euh stable, balanced, calm parts. She said Mr Schuler how could you work in a life insurance company between 15 and 18 and you had to sit all the times at your desk. And I said yes it was like hell. And she said yes, it is obvious all what you have in your astrological charts is tension lines, hmm (laughs) so my suggestion is after 1 hour feel free whatever the kind of job you just have done feel free stay up walk around say to your boss that you have to buy something or just whatever and

come back after a quarter of an hour and you will feel much better. You always have an overflow of energy you cannot permanently stay a long time at the same work. And I said oh yes that is very helpful. That is what I feel but I think I am a little bit immature. She said no this is not immature this is who you are. And I think this is also something where I could introduce my energy on the alp. I can walk and walk and walk and walk (clapping his hands) and actually in the evening I am tired but I am already ehm fond of staying up the next morning again and to have another 8 hours walk. I am not really keen on an 8 hours work to go from here to the peak there, uhm I like to do it, these herdsmen like to go from here to there and watch around and think why not do a little bit of climbing here, but it must just because of ? let's go back to work to with the cattle here dididididi, then let's take a nap for two hours, then eat, do sandwiches, and then hmmm I have never been on the ridge there to have a look into the next valley, hmmm nice valley. One day I will take time to explore that valley too. Ok it is time to go home now. Energy here, energy there. Doing a little bit here and a little bit there. There are probably several Ks. I wrote a few books, one is about how to work on the alp with a colleague. We were very proud of it. It was the first book, the first book about herdsmen who wrote a book about herdsmenship. Before you had in German speaking literature, you have a lot of books uhm about from scientific people about alpine, alpestry culture hmm you have a lot of sociological books, uhm history of buildings and so on. But these were we were about 19 people who wrote articles philosophical uhm or practical articles about what is uh herdsmanship. And people asked me how could you do that beside beside doing the work, I said it is best walk around on the alp and in the evening I had a little mechanical typewriter on the alp and in the evening, I did the type writing. So, it is this kind of energy overflow, that I tried to canalize in any kind of uh (laughs) 'sinnvolle tatigkeiten', of meaningful work.

R: Different meaningful.

K: Yeah different and then people approached me. But actually, one day I realized that it is perfect for me to be a shepherd who is allowed to do political work against (laughs) he is allowed by himself to do political work against power companies. Because then my intellectual brain uhm on the alp found a new field. End in the morning, I had breakfast with the family, sometimes then I wrote an article or a letter to the editor, put it in an envelope said to my wife I put it here on the shelf at the window, the next hiker you please hand over the things because it is a letter to the editor to the newspaper which was already 5 years old which has to be brought fast to the letterbox. (laughs) Then doing the job on the mountains thinking about the next I don't know what. So, this was this kind of oe there are so many possibilities in life. And (pause) my only problem is sometimes I try to do too much and like to be part of a story here and there and support a lot of people in this, this and that. As soon as I began here in this canton in the mid-eighties to be an environmentalist the people from all the valleys came to me. And luckily P who decided to move from Zurich up to here then I think in 87 or something around that, he became the job (?) he was the first uh manager of his NGO in this area. There in these times in the mid 80-ies his NGO decided to have

in each and every canton a local manager. Because they realized you cannot do environmental protection in this high federalist country from Zurich. And P as a boy a man who grew up here was the perfect match. So, they send him back to here. And to say because, before he already worked for his NGO we met in over here. He he said you are this guy who is fighting against the power plant. Yes, and it is a bit too much. I will come and support you, because I will be the manager of the NGO in this area. Oh, super and do have you already organize a bureau. Yes, I already organized a bureau, I am a local guy. Can I join you in your bureau, yes you are very welcome. We stick together again and again. How many Ks, several. But ja for sure they are all connected. Hmm it was a totally organic development. Uh if I list up my cv with years and professions it makes no sense, it really makes no sense from a distant view. If I explain it as a guy who was looking for a close relation in his profession and total life with Nature who came by luck to the alp and from the alp to another alp and in between what shall I do. Oh, journalism is something. No journalism Is not. It had to be freelancing journalism, no newspaper was is ready to let you go for three months a year. So, it was freelancing journalism. Then it was also leading with 22 years I was leading with B a youth hostel and we had to produce 15000 meals (laughs) a year. Then we realized it will be too much because she got pregnant and we did not got the allowance to have an additional uh staff member. Then we left the youth hostel. Then we were back in alpine cheese making and freelancing journalist. And then the kids came. Then we realized you cannot have kids with our thinking what is good behavior in education of kids while you are making cheese. So, we shifted from cheese making to being a herdsman. It is less stress and you have more free space to define what you do when. Alpine cheese making even cheese making in a small cheese factory is like a bakery hmm get up at 4 o clock be ready with the cheese at 9 o clock, uh do the cleaning up, then take a nap for two hours, then go out and take the cattle back, then milk and then prepare the milk for the next day then you go to bed at 10 and get up at 4 and do it again. Kids in that forget it. So that is how we shifted to being herdsman. From there the power company came and then I got into political uh environmentalism with the luck that I already did the short interimship at an NGO, so I knew what it is in general about environmentalism. And so, on and so on. Finally, in the late nineties, in the mid-nineties I had the problem that I was the best hated environmentalist in that canton, because we really made it to the stop uhh the dam, the plans for this hydro power dam. And I didn't get any kind of jobs as a free-lancing journalist anymore. Here it is a small canton he and the nomenclatura is tough. It is Liberals and Catholics and they run the show the social democrats have 10% of the parliament 10% of the parliament in a swiss canton, (laughs) still now a day. So, I had to rearrange my plans, my working plans. And I found with luck an offer to go to Karpatia, Roemania, Hungarian speaking Roemania to start cheese factories there. In the mid-nineties because they were in a mess Swiss foreign aid hired a milk technologist before and he failed because of all the improvisation he had to do. Then one of these guys said high K you are cheese maker specialist under special circumstances alpine circumstances, would you also be able to do that in the Karpetian mountains. And I said oh great, great, I want to do that, I want to do that and I was in the Karpatean mountains trying to train oh damn 50 years old

men with alcoholic problems to shift from socialism to free market capitalism by doing cheese factories. And after 5 years I have done my job there. Because they were trained and we had educated some people from there some young man there to train them on. Then I was in a mess again. Then as a journalist I could do social cultural concept here in a certain valley because the guy who should do it failed. The former director of the art museum of the canton here got the job to do a cultural development concept for a valley and he began super super super artificial level and two months before the thing should be delivered to the national government to get some subsidies, without the concept you did not get subsidies, they realized he will never finish it. Because I was living there in the valleys a guy told him K can write at least and probably he can finish so I looked at the pieces of that super artificial concept and said you will never get subsidies with that I think. What I can do I do it as a journalist and go to all the cultural actors, stakeholders in the valley and ask what they need. What do you need, do you need a meeting room, do you need a gallery, what the f… do you need? Do you need new instruments for your brass band tell me? And I made a concept out of uh the smallest common denominator of all the needs of the valley, it was great they got the subsidies. I said ah probably that is a new niche for me here. Then another guy came from another valley a politician and said K could you do that for us as well. Sure, immediately, I like to talk to people and do the interviews. Super, I do that. But the president of that society there he knew that I am the K who fought the power companies. We will never give him the job. It was only about 5000 swiss francs. We will never give the job to that leftist asshole. Who killed that, and I was in a mess.

Then someone came and said he do you know that the NGO in Switzerland is looking for a CEO. Then I said yes nice, I will never go back to Zurich. Then two weeks later I realized probably I should not say in my economic mess that I never at any level go back to Zurich. Probably I should be a baddy to work in Zurich and then I applied for the job. I applied and I got the job. End uh,

R: How did you get the job?

K: Ja it was (laughs) We have a swiss and now already european famous (laughs) uh uh theater company very actionistic, open air theater company called theater Karl's kuhne Gassenschau they are doing great comedies, open air with a lot of firework and so on. And they had, right when I applied for the job they had no organizational director. They had a big mess. Then because in my student time I lived together with one of these hmm directors (says in a diminishing tone) uh in Zurich he approached me and he said K can you not come for half a year to be the org director otherwise the new play will never happen. We have so many organization problems. The new piece is still not done and we have only 4 months left. And then I went to the French speaking part of Switzerland and organized all the background stuff for them. From there I applied. At so at least I could say I am interim organisational director of a theater company.

R: Hmm

K: Which was obviously a little bit impressive. Because somebody said GP Switzerland is not much else but a group of crazy artists nothing else.

R: Hmm

K: Are you really sure Mr K that you can organise them? Yes, I have organized cheese factories in the Karpetean mountains. And for sure look I did this and that I ran a youth hostel for 1, 5 year. I am very well in organizing. And what else can you do.

R: Hmm

K: I can fight power companies, as that is what they like doing. I know how to organize for instance people in remote alpine cantons. I know what political work is on a canton level. Can you do it on national level. For sure must be possible, give me a chance. (Laughing) And I was quite stressed in the first years.

R: Hmm

K: In the Karpetean cheese factories they have up to 20 people. What you do in Switzerland with one boss, his wife unpaid and one clerk uh you do in the Karpetean mountains with 15 - 20 for each little job so many people for the salaries in the nineties so low. So yes, I could organize 20 people and then I had to organize 45 people and we ended with 90. And uh it is, so you see actually there is a red tread rote faden that covers my cv. But looking at it, Free lance journalist, CEO of an environmental company and herdsman and what the hell.

R: Chuckles

K: (Pause and sighs) Uhhh, what (banging background noise) I also learned one of the most important learnings (pause) for me, is (pause) sticking together. Whatever happens on an alp you cannot do the job without solidarity. On my second summer was the same alp near here, the second summer also on the alp, we had a mess. I was together with my girlfriend but she quit me just before but she fell in love with a friend of mine and then we had a triangle relationship until I broke my arm because of that – I still have this left over here – because of that crazy 70ies triangle relationship. Then her friend left to South America, he traveled around South America one year so because I was such a poor guy with a broken arm she said ok I come back to you and this was to base to go on an alp with another couple that was n't couple, they were just two colleagues, a young woman and a young man. Both B and I knew them a bit. I was the only one who was already on an alp but only for one summer and I had a broken arm. I was kind of.

R: You are talking about B, your wife.

K: B my first wife.

R: She fell in love with somebody else.

K: Yes, she was then fell in love with somebody else. But the guy had left anyhow for South America. We had already made the contract before she fell in love. So, we said do we quite the contract no we don't. We go. Our relation was a mess, I was incapable to do the physical work. I was 22 years old I stood in the cheese making facilities up there I had to tell three people my same age what to do. They were unexperienced the had visited the alp before, for example my alp. Just because of ethical thinking we do not accept that we fail. And we want to deliver

R: Hmm

K: to the farmers what they have to get. And we sticked together. And you support each other. And even when you hate each other you stay up the next morning and you try to solve it in more or less clever way and let's do the job again. And the positive side of it is when it is working you are in a perfect flow. With P and I and dogs you realize you can manage everything, you can manage everything. Because you can cleverly interact, and you with your dogs up here and around noon we are up there and then we can give us a sign it was in the pre-mobile phone era. You can give us a sign and if you wear the red jacket up there and I wear my brown jacket up there than it is everything fine, after lunch around one a clock we begin to work and we bring the cattle from here to here. More or less to this little patch there and so on and in the evening, you drink a beer and said done and it is just great. This is the behavior you took I realized a few days ago, you took profit off. I could approach P by email and say this Rembrandt is coming, now Rembrandt is shifting. Yes, no problem. Yes, yes tell me. P tell me I think you are in Africa have you a second, it is changing with Rembrandt, for sure man. If you have this kind of experience with somebody. A guest who is changing his tiny plans, no problem. We solved other things already before. So, this kind, this for me a guy coming from the city this was another wonderful experience. It is

R: We are almost done (A comes in)

K: yeah fast

A: for me it is ok. I need coffee more,

K: me too

A: do you need something to eat

K: We have to nourish him, Salad?

A: I will make a salad

R: That would be fantastic.

K: This tension between two people who went through hell,

R: Hmm

K: is is unbelievable unbelievable great.

R: Huhm

K: I was with A and my son and our kids and his girlfriend we were on an alp. I was already CEO of the NGO Switzerland. He made the alp the whole time. In this alp where the highest village is, he made an alp.

R: Your son?

K: My son. I had my sabbatical. So, we went for 7 or 10 weeks we joined them also in favor for our other kids and their experience. And I realized with my son this is now 12 years ago he was in his 20ies. And ja we didn't have all the times a perfect relation my son and I. We were out there, it was in the evening. I looked at the sky it was a heavy fuhn sturm. Fuhn is this kind of fall wind created in the south of the Alps, raising in the northern Italy above the Alps and then he felt in northern Europe you have heavy winds blowing all clouds out of the valley. So, it was very dry and for mountain relations a very warm wind. K this wind will last with my experience (sigh) for sure another day, probably two and all the bad weather announcing coming from the Atlantic will stay away. Let's go to bed. He said yes pa, I am not so sure about, but yes pa. We went to bed. At 1 o clock in the evening. I woke up in the night because it was so calm that I couldn't hear the river in the valley (whispering). Shit and I stood up and we had snow. So much snow. And this is horrible. It was August and our cattle were on 2700, 600, 500 feet. And you are aware, actually already when you wake up because it is so calm in the mountains where you all the time hear a river rushing. You realize you were totally, totally, totally wrong. You went over there to the next room and say K I am totally wrong, totally wrong. We have half a meter snow. And then you know the cattle up there stay up in the valley in half a meter of snow, they sink, shit what will we do. What the fuck. Will they walk or stumble in the next gorge and you know you have not brought them together the night before.

R: Hmmm

K: But K didn't say you are such an asshole. Or nothing like fuck you father. Ok, I mean shit, isn't it. Deep shit. Then we sat together and we ate a chocolate and we said it makes no sense at 1 o clock in the morning we go to bet again. We stand up at 6 then we make tea and put our sandwiches together because we knew it will be 8 hours walk in the snow. And you just do it just do it and you have no more questions about any kind of details. You do it. And in the evening, you did it. And pfff you are quite sure from the 121 uh pieces of cattle you had 121 down in the valley. And you know it is great. Yes, for sure the farmers came by help by noon.

When you have snow. They don't come to soon, they know by experience if they come to early to help the herdsmen they have to do the real job. If they come at noon they will be invited by the girlfriends for coffee. In the afternoon they can behave a bit like ah we have supported the herdsman. For sure they were around noon up in the alp and we had not finished the job and it was clear to them we had totally missed the change of weather. But everybody is happy in the evening. This kind of tight relations it is super, super. I don't know how to get to this kind of experience. Probably in the army, but then it is connected to killing other people.

R: Exactly

K: Laughing

R: There is this Tom Hanks producer series 'Band of brothers', do you know that

K: No, probably like that

R: That is like that

R: Two questions which are not associative

K: yeah

R: but are really …. the first one: Are you a son of your father, yes of course genetically you are, he was working with an airline company

K: Laughs, right, right

R: Probably 10 times more money than you?

K: Ja (with a bit of a 'nostalgic' sigh)

R: Being a very nice father. But expecting different things from life, or? How come you are this Nature guy, how come, where is this coming from? Is that..

K: My father in his, my father married with 42, (breathing sound inhaling) 42 only he. Until then he was as he once told me, off the record K, I have to tell you until 38 I didn't sleep with a woman. He was such a proper protestant uhm he never went to bed with a woman without being married. And he was twice engaged, (laughs) but still didn't sleep with these women. So, with 41 or 42 he married and had sex. Luckely he said before he had sex with a woman who did not took care of protestants. This very strict father, for sure I am his son. Means, what I have learned from him is, if you do something, do it totally and don't stop (banging sound in the back ground) before you have finished it. Hmm and once I felt during the alp, uhh one of my alp summers I felt in love just before because of a job as a free lance journalist I made in one of the valleys here, I met a beautiful

Graubunden women and we already had kids uhm B and I, and I fell in love and I was totally (kgighh – makes a sound)

R: Hmm

K: uh in trouble, deep in trouble. And I was on the alp I was doing the job and I wrote to my father who then was already in his seventies and said I need you, I need your wise fatherly advise. And he took his old... He came to me up the alp

R: He came to you?

K: He came to you, he met me up there, and uh had to sleep there in the stable in the straw. And he did it. And because he was in his young years, this was in the, born in the thirties hmm he was doing a lot of hiking and skiing here in the swiss mountains. So, he was familiar, he was a sports man,

R: Sportsman, yeah,

K: A sportsman. He had this kind of contact with the Nature. Then I said Tada, I called him Tada, what the fuck shall I do? And he couldn't give me any advice, with the exception that he told. Look K this is like a captain on a ship in a storm. You are the captain you have to stay on the ship and you have to bring it through the storm. And the ship is your family. And it is no question about what is your duty. You bring the ship through the storm. Then I asked him, I wrote so well. It was so difficult to speak with him. Because he was this kind of ja.. (struggles). From the beginning of the last century person, he was not even my mother, later when he already was died. She told me I nearly could never talk about our relation. Probably why he was so happy about the astrologer women explaining the relation. Then he said that is it. Father you want to tell me I have no possibility to re-decide my marriage and to follow E. For sure you have, he said we live in the 80-ies, we live in the 80-ies, but if you ask me you shouldn't. And that was it. This was the core of my call to my father, please come and give me your support. He came, for sure also he, he showed me something like, I am here. We had a very difficult, my youth was so difficult, when I was kicked out of the gymnasium, because of doing this political stuff and so on. He didn't like me at all and he told me you are killing your career and so on. Because he was an (?) air of private market business, and being a manager and so. But uh, (pause) he came up there. He gave me advice. He left me. I didn't like him at all in that moment. Shit you are not really useful in this most important moment in my life, my dad is not really useful. But to tell you truth I sticked together with B. Until, we were 23 years together from 17 to 40. We divorced because she wanted. I would not have been able to say let's leave. It was she fell then in love with another man and my two boys our two big sons, were already hmm quite grown up. So, it was this kind of where you had to decide uh, with 40 we were, do we want to stick together to 60 or not. After being already together between 17 and 40. But she did it, she did it. I learned so much strict and moral issues from my father for sure I am the son of my father, but I did it totally different. Uhm in my perspective in the youth for

sure and because I got into environmentalism and and and and and. And I was anti liberal and I was fighting against the most important companies in remote Switzerland. Bla bla, bla (children sound in the background). And he tried to adapt. And even when I was thirty and already the fight here was happening I had tough discussion with him because he couldn't intellectually agree, once my mother when I left in anger my home, parents home my mother said to me, I have to tell you something, take it, please take it a little bit easier. He is now an old man. And to be true, whenever we have guests he is so proud of his son and that is you. But he cannot tell it. Then I realized he really tried to adopt (laughs) my thinking and so on. And in his late years he was for sure kind of an old who became quite a good part of being an environmentalist.

R: Hmm

K: Uh, but, and for sure he helped me for example by being a CEO 's who was familiar with the whole world. Uhm it was fun to me to meet CEO's, ED's from Canada where I had my memories of having holidays in Canada, or Finland or whatever. So, it was a perfect mix to be so rooted here in these mountains, but to have my former youth background of my open-minded father. He was strong anti nazi. He left a lot of friends. Because there were a lot of young men in the 30ies who were pro nazi. Uhm he lost a lot of friends there. He was a convinced European. He liked to tell us the story of Churchill being in Zurich and in the 1945, or 46 just after the war Churchill came to Zurich and he held a speech at the university a speech where he said Europe must arise as one (klick sound) united something. So, this was one of the first idealistic visions of a united EU and he was there and he was totally convinced that Switzerland should be part of the EU union and for sure not such a splendid isolated country. Which impressed me also very much, and I all the times, and still now telling people, why the fuck are we just picking the cherries out of the European cake and why do we not participate. So yes, for sure I am the uh the son of my father. (Pause)

R: So, did you have other teachers when it comes to the environmental stuff, or how, how, you said you were impressed by the student movement, and the, but were there particular people that influenced you? And go on this environmental path? Or was that the dream of the enlightened student ideas. Which are, which. I have, I have no judgement about it

K: Na ja, (laughs)

R: because I trying to be part of it myself? But were there other people that influenced you? Like teachers, or?

K: (sigh) It was difficult, for me it was difficult (crying child on the background) to accept mentors, because I was – no not ours – because I was so much reluctant to accept any kind of (pause) bosses, (crying keeps going on, hear a woman voice comforting) hierarchies and so on. I was really I was provoking whomever I could and I think in fact looking back it was the unsolved relation to my father

R: (very quiet hmm)

K: which I projected into all kinds of mentor or persons or teachers, whatever. I knew very well where I could itch provoke my father and immediately felt intuitively where I could provoke any teacher or school director whatever

R: Hmm

K: and because of the influence of my elder brother I was, who was really part of the student riots in Zurich, ehm I was doing that intensively. So, I did not have, I cannot say yes, this person or that person showed me a lot. I have parts of some persons where I think yes for sure. The first director of the first NGO I worked for. He was the first manager in Switzerland and because his NGO was founded in Switzerland he was very close to these founders which were a mixture of swiss lawyers and the English uh, the English uh queen family and the Dutch, for sure Dutch English aristocrats founded together with a swiss lawyer they founded this NGO in 1961 in Zurich. And uh I think because they had I assume they had their money already located in Switzerland and this lawyer already gave them advise about how-to safe taxes etc. or hide even hide money. Because he was a finance lawyer. And he (klick sound) set up the constructs of the swiss foundation which was then spreading all over the world. The director who hired me as a little clerk for a few months was a very impressive person, this kind of pioneering kind. I had a teacher in the gymnasium, my German teacher an history teacher who helped me a lot. At least to survive for three years in the gymnasium, before I was kicked out. So, I had pieces here and pieces there.

R: You were, really kicked you out, because you, because people were not able to manage…

K: They had to find a reason and I was bad in mathematics. Because we had a professor there who was such a racist. He fighted against any kind of the court, we had very little college pupils there he, in the seventees, he fighted against court and he fighted anybody who he thought was a dumb person. So, he was totally unfair and I was in heavy fight with him he and the Latin teacher, they too. They… from these two teacher's I would have needed some empathy to… one should, both of them should give me half of a point in addition to keep me in the Gymnasium. And my uh teacher, the German teacher who was our mentor for the class he came to me and said K be aware, you are now below, you have your half year last change. But I can tell you because of all the discussions we have at the end of each semester, these two teachers will never never ever support you. Hmm you make them crazy with all your actions and activities, and they realy they will never help you so you have to safe yourself by making better tests. And I didn't make better tests so I was finally kicked out.

R: Hmm

K: So, these learning years I had "spat puperteit lehrne jahre"… I really had. One guy I admired was the cashier of the alp cooperation up here on the alp, the guy who made with us the whole cheese distribution calculation at the end of the season. He was this intellectual farmer in one of the most remote village in the Grissons in those times. He said to K and me in this specific night in between another calculation for the farmers, he said: What are you reading. I don't know what. Then he said: Do you know Erich Fromm? And we said yes for sure 'Haben oder sein' that was then our book. Then he said I read that too. That is what it is really about. Wow.

R: Hmm

K: This cashier I found a great man. Sitting in a remote village. He was also the secretary of the village, doing all the stuff for the farmers. Usually the secretary of a village were quite some crooks because they know who has debts and how can you manipulate to get some more land for yourself or whatever. But he was this kind of enlightened farmer. For me I said shit, (laughs) that is how people should be. Farmer for sure because I like being this rural society so much being so close to Nature, but telling about Erich From. Sighs.

R: Last question for now.

K: uh Ja (hear breathing)

R: So how would you say your leadership developed or has been influenced because of your relation to Nature. You spoke about two worlds that you both are, and then you also say but it is one K. So is there, is there from your very intense deep

K: yes for sure

R: experience of Nature, does that influence you as a leader, how you lead people,

K: Yes, a lot permanently. I made the big mistake that in one of my first speeches to the swiss all staff crew of the NGO Switzerland in 2001 I was telling about just about that how does being a herdsman influences your leadership. I tried to explain honestly frankly. Finally, H my then organizational director said, ok we got the message we are your cattle and you are the herdsmen.

R: (Laughing)

K: I said ok H you are right I will have to frame that (laughing) differently, shit (laughing). Look but I think still know it is true, it really has something to do with it. When I became a herdsman, at first, I was running around as I described to you bringing the cattle the first time in the fog up in the forest. I had no plan. If you have no plan, don't try to lead. I tried to do micromanagement permanently, had no different ways of doing things. Do this, come here, move out from under that

tree and di da da. I learned a hard lesson as most of the time it did'nt work, the cows behavior, no change.

A: You can eat (K's wife comes in the door)

K: Ja ok give me 5 min.

K: And uh (laughs, waits till A has left again) what I told you also before good management is you know where we have to stay on which big rock somewhere above the valley where you have your two hundred eighty-five cows. And it makes sense to stay on a big rock not only because you feel like the old Indian but the cows see you and they know oe herdsman is here. And this influences the cows, it is true. If you sleep behind the rock they begin to make all the forbidden things to go into the steep parts of the valley where the best grass is for sure. But if you are up there and you are in this permanent interaction, not micro management, but you once or twice a day move them a bit, he, they know ok he is here.
He Lili no shit today please, ja I have seen it, ok we have food over here. But later we go up to the fine one. Ja, ja later but now. Be present, have the overview. Don't do anything as long as they know what they do. Make your plans for the next few weeks, years, months to come, whatever is needed. Be close to them, if they have a problem think about if you really can help, if you have to help and can help go and do the job and then let them do their job again. Until I had, until I have got that really as a herdsman. It took me years. It took me years. Especially because I was not trained in cattle or cattle behavior because of going up in Zurich. I was over managing for 6 or 7 years. Until I was placed in this huge alp, as smaller the pastures are the less you learn as a herdsmanager. As bigger the size of your alp is, as bigger your company is, the more you have to be aware of oe don't interfere, but you have to know what is going on in that herd. Why is immediately a group of young cattle moving from here like crazy uh kids (tsap) moving over there do I send the dog? O no, one cattle is horny and the colleagues try to behave like taurs, Taurus, like bulls and try to fuck her. It is a game. But oeps if they move on there it will be steep. So probably ja if they don't stop I have to go over there and block them with the dog here. But I shouldn't tell them don't fuck your girlfriend. Do what you want. So, you learn a lot about (pause) being part of huge system, including weather, local circumstances, rivers where you can drink and so on.

You begin to map hmm begin to map your job and you begin to plan, think in advance, to take into your considerations what could come, what is rather possible. You do scenario planning, you do scenario planning, with a big uhm herd you do on a big alp, you do permanently scenario planning. Because you are so damn aware of your physical and other limitations you really begin to think, what is important, what is necessary, what is fun for sure, do we do I, why do I not give them this additional patch too. It is quite a problematic one. But the weather says the forecast says it will be beautiful weather, so I can leave nine tens of the herd I can leave down here, but with these 15 over there they are quite fit, I go to the difficult patch. It is like oh shall we do an action, ja these are my 15 tough

campaigners and action coordinators, with these fifteen do we have enough money. Do we have legal problems or no problems at the moment? Ok now let's do the action, but my presence intellectual uhm attention has to be there hmm and then we do it.

R: Hmm

K: Ok, now debriefing, let's bring them down to the valley after three, to the bottom of the valley after three weeks and three days now the beautiful grass is eaten up, no accidents, super, job done.

R: Do you think that without

K: Job done (shouting and laughing) management, herdsman ship (laughing)

R: Short answer, do you think that without your experience of Nature

K: I would have learned that somewhere else. Come one but that would be different, totally different.

R: No, no the question is different. Without the experience of Nature do you think you could have a proper understanding what sustainability is about?

K: No, no (shouting) no not at all. I give a shit on this kind of intellectual sustainability preachers, teachers who tell you out of scientific thinking uhm what sustainability is. I feel sustainability. And I could not explain it so beautiful as they can, that is true I mean scientifically. But I feel it and I am sure I could transfer it to you, let's go together three days with my son on the alp, it is a true offer, if you once you have time we do that. And then we walk there around in the herdsman behavior, after that you have at least a bit of feeling. Ah that is what sustainability. How the balance of the alpine ecology is working but really, physically. It is another level of experience.

R: Good:

K: Thanks for listening.

R: You gave the right answer (laughing).

2. Generating initial codes through identifying particular words.

A... (industrialized canton)
Accidents (on the alp with cows)
Advertisement (in farmer magazines)
Agricultural (university, school, vehicle, activity in the Alps for centuries)
Airline (Swiss Air, apprentices, father being director)

Allianz insurance (advertisement in the city)

All over the world (having been traveling)

Almighty (in the alp where you and the dog you govern, as the dog extents your range)

Alp (for instance the one the interviewee worked on)

Alpine (economy, hut, cottage, chapel)

Anarchic (not accepting hierarchies, not accepting bosses, mentors)

Animals (Cow, dog, bull, fox)

Another K (K R)

Anti Nazi (strong position by the father, losing friends that choose to be pro nazi)

Apartment (living space in the city, for 10 years no fixed place as it was cheaper to not own during the summer)

Applicant (role when young, with an NGO)

Apprentice (apprenticeship, reference to the role of the father, and to a time in the past)

Arctic (sleeping bag, needed when going back to the alp in November)

Army (killing people, band of brothers, just as an example of an organization where very strong bonds between people exist))

Arrangement (contract to go on the alp)

Art gallery (owned by the astrologer women Mrs K)

Article (several references to writing on the alp and sending it to an editor, through asking a hiker to bring it to the nearest post box)

Asshole (referring to others looking up on preventing hydro power lake and station to be built)

Astrology (character description, characters, psychological, interpretation, graphic chart, tension lines, explaining marital relation of parents, a lot of Ks)

Attracted (to looking at and reading everything in the city when just back from the alp)

Axe (killing the chicken)

Balance (shift the balance of many things when up the alp)

Banana cartons (moving boxes from city to alp and back after three months)

Bastard (see Asshole)

Beer (after a long day herding and enjoying the cattle safe)

Bio Cosmos (reference to the complexities and richness of living and working on the alp)

Blood (blood line, line of blood in the snow from the chicken that was killed by both Ks letting it escape)

Body (the feeling in the body of being home on the alp, breathing, also reference to broken arm)

Book (sociological, herdsmen ship, as K wrote two books)

Boss (President, Alp president, Manager, director, CEO, Mayor, Captain, Mentor, any kind of; many references throughout the interview, it seems to be male bosses)

Boyfriend, girlfriend (reference to couple joiing on the alp and personal relations or relations of people close)

Boy scouts (active as a teenager and maybe before, where he met his wife)

Bunch

Bureau (of K and P)

Business (private market)

C (a small town in Switzerland)

Calculate (distribution of cheese among farmers, milk into cheese)

Call(s) (telephone)

Calming down (reference to experiences up on the alp)

Canton of G, (a canton with several names that are used through out the interview).

Cashier (calculating the harvest, secretary for the farmer community on an alp)

Cattle (animals on the alp, milking, cheese making)

Centred (being, reference to experiences up on the alp, feeling at home)

Cellar (cheese making)

Cheese (cheese making, cheese maker)

Chicken (kill a chicken, beheaded chicken, roasted chicken)

Christmas (reference to time of the year)

Chocolate (eating at night for comfort, when father and son realized a mistake was made missing the change of weather)

Churchill (coming to Zurich in 1946)

Clerk (role after having been kicked out of the gymnasium)

Clever (cheesemaker, farmer, is clever when arrangements are made in time)

Clue (no plan, no idea how to do this)

Coffee (to be served to farmers when they have come around or helped with a job of the herdsman, usually done by wife's or girlfriends)

Colleague (being good colleague, supporting going up the alp, B supports and is enthusiastic to go another year)

Colonies

Comic author, comic designer, graphic novel designers (with reference to K's brother who became a comic novel author)

Common denominator (cultural concept for the valley to gain subsidies)

Common logic

Community

Companion, friend

Company (drilling company, insurance company)

Complicated (farmer, president, as in a situation where particular help could be offered from outside to get a herdsmen ship contract)

Connection

Consummation

Construction site (hydro electricity company)

Contract (herdsmen)

Cooperation (the verb and the organization)

Cottage (on the alp)

Countries (US, California, Netherlands, Indonesia, South Africa Finland, Canada, Western-Europe, Karpatia, Roemania, Hungary)

Cow (sinks in snow, stumbles on rock, hurts feet, horny, Taurus, bull, influences the cows)

Crane (cheese making)

Crash course (cheese making)

Crazy (idea, artists)

Crying (at the end of the first month up the Alp)

Dach Kengelde (tube for water transport from a farm, or shed roof)

Dam (hydro electric)

Day and night (working on the alp when cheese making and herding at the same time)

Descriptions (landscapes, like some of the farmers do and have knowledge of)

Distance (Netherlands, Indonesia, metaphorically 'Zurich from a valley in the mountains')

Dog(s) (Shephard dog, cooperation with a dog)

Drawing (in an alp plan)

Drilling

Duty (virtue, strict and moral issues)

Dying (metaphorically first month up the Alp)

East and West

Ecological thinking (ecological thinking person, description of himself)

Education (of kids, Spat Puberzeit Lehrne Jahre)

Electricity dam

End of the year (before the end of the year, as the best time to have a contract for the next)

Energy (overflow of physical, psychological energy, life energy)

Environmental (organizations, the NGO; protection of the environment)

Environmentalist (best hated because of having stopped the building of the dam)

Erich Fromm (Haben oder Sein)

Ethical thinking

European (convinced European, Europe must arise, EU union, picking the cherries, joining, splendid isolated country)

Everybody (as in everybody gone)

Experience (kids experiences)

Explore (when on an alp)

Farmer(s) (farmer association, industrialized farmer, mountain farming, enlightened farmer, land for yourself, secretary of the village, crooks, debts)

Family (Father, mother, son, brother)

Father (seeking wise fatherly advise)

Feathers (chicken that got killed)

Federalist country (not possible to do environmental protection from Zurich, canton of G, perfect match for P)

Fences (keeping in cattle, poles, emergency poles, one's own poles, electric system, battery for electric system, km of rope)

Fighting (police, power company, companies)

Fire (heating, forest fire)

Fit (feeling fit)

Flatlands (some area's in northern cantons in Swiss)

Fond (of the Alps)

Food (good food after having the job done)

Force (in school, psychological force)

Forest (trees, pine trees)

Fox (the route of the animal that you come to know when up on the alp)
Frame, reframe (thinking, behavior, external, internal, the guy you have been, common logic, it is not working, of possibilities, reshaping yourself, shifting, flow, perfect flow)
Free space (to define)
Freeze (when in the hut in November or late in the season)
Frustrated, crying, unpolite
Fuck (swearing)
Geology (students, formations, detect, underneath, engineers)
Generation
Genetically (as in the son of his father)
German (in relation to the language, the Walzer people)
Grass (patch, pasture)
NGO (ED, Swiss, NRO, campaign, campaigners, actions, action coordinators, legal, legal problems)
Hair (hippie, beat nick, long, short)
Hate (as in some point in the relationship between K and B)
Having fun (up the alp)
Hay (fodder, straw in stable)
Heavy (lifting, job, circumstances)
Hell (first month of the first season on the Alp)
Herd
Herdsman (how does being a herdsman influences your leadership)
High class (university)
Hiker (hiking)
Hippie, feminist, old fashioned believe systems, protestant strict, strange, long haired
Hire (being hired)
Hitchcock (scene, killing the chicken)
Holiday (as a child with his family)
Home (feeling home, home town, home sick)
Huhne haut (goose bumps, feeling excited when the alp season is underway)
Human (capabilities)
Hut (on the alp)
Hydro power
Immature (thinking to be, when talking to the astrology woman)
Impressive, impressed (being impressed)
Indian (American Indian, Lakota Indians, old Indian)
Infections (the cow's feet)
Infrastructure (in alps thanks to hydro power companies)
Inhabited (remote alp valleys, remote villages)
Installations (traditional cheese making)
Intention
Job (job interview)
Joints (Marijuana)
Journalist (freelancing, journalism)
Kicked out (from school)

Kids

Kingdom (the feeling up the alp)

Knives (as in work tools, herdsmen's tools)

Landscapes (descriptions of)

Lavabo (as in one's home)

Learning

Letter (to the editor, letterbox)

Level (another level of experience)

Life (a Life, life with Nature)

Lightung (open space in the forest)

Limitations (physical)

Listeria Bacteria (makes the cheese unfit for consumption)

Loaf (cheese loaf)

Love, falling in love

Magazine (feminist, farmer)

Manure (cattle, in stable)

Marijuana (K's friend is a fan)

Married (together from 17 – 40, father married at 42)

Micro management (when on the alp with cattle finding a different style of management)

Milk (fresh, more, less, milking machine, basin big pot, technologist)

Money (salary, taxes, hide of money, finance lawyer)

Mountain (gorge, ridge, valley, different sizes and shapes)

Movie (60s, little big man, white man, producer)

Myself (feeling myself, physically feeling myself)

Narbe (grass underground)

Nature (learning from Nature, cooperating with Nature, Swiss style Nature, untouched Nature, cultivated Nature, contact with Nature)

Nap (short sleep up on the alp)

Newspaper (as an employer for a journalist, freelancing)

Nomenclatura (strong representation of conservative groups)

Normal (normal life, doing one's business, minding one's business)

Nourish (salad, guest)

NRO's (Greenpeace abbreviation)

Obstacles (when doing the herdsmen's job)

Ocean (feeling at home, similar like in feeling at home on the alp)

Old man, alcoholic (as the people many times being the herdsmen, as it is low on the hierarchy ladder)

Overcrowded (course for cheese making)

Overwhelming (experience)

Paralyzed (Lame arms and hands)

Parents (working class, simple)

Parliament (10 % social democrats)

Persons (A, Bea Schilling, Mr T, K R, B, T H, S T, J, P, K, Ben the Burger, Dustin Hofman, Mrs Kalderara, Tom Hanks, Roland Wiederkehr)

Physical (strong, muscle, weak, thin, exhausted)

Piles (cheese loafs)

Pipe (water, smoking)

Places (Zurich, Lake of Zurich, Chur, Tirol, Northern Italy, South of the Alps, Northern Europe, Atlantic, Gland)

Plan (schedule of how to manage the cattle, pasture planning, tiny plan of guest, thinking in advance, considerations, scenario planning)

Poor (first month up the alp)

Possession (the commons)

Power company

Powerful (feeling powerful, having double, triple power with dog)

Practicant (support job)

Prairie (metaphor for feeling of space, vastness on the alp)

Pray (farmers up the alp)

Pregnant (cow, wife)

Pre-mobile phone era

Present (when doing the herdsmens job)

Production (milk, cheese)

Proper work (in the city versus being on the alp)

Pro rector (of gymnasium)

Protestant (protestant parents, group), catholic, liberals, social democrats, socialism, free market capitalism, anti liberal)

Rain

Rain coat

Red thread (rote faden)

Regulate (temperature in cheese making)

Relationship (triangle, 70ies relationship, tight relations, sticking together, solidarity)

Resistance (against the plans of the hydro dam)

Ridge (mountain)

Riot(s) (student riots, period of the 60-ies)

Roman (novel, writing about experiences up the alp)

Rookie

Royals, aristocrats (as in founding partners)

Sabbatical

Safe and sure (feeling safe, I felt safe having my herdsmen's tools)

Salary (higher, lower)

Sanitary (bad sanitary)

Schedule (plan)

School (gymnasium, bad in mathematics, dumb person, racist professor, safe yourself, german / history teacher mentor, last chance)

Script book (theater)

Sensitivities

Sex (sleeping with a woman)

Shepherd, herdsman

Shy (as in J the 15 year old farmer)

Skin (second skin, first skin, my skin)

Skiing

Sluf (old Walzer people name for a narrow valley in the mountains)

Smoking (Marijuana)
Snow (snowing, snowy white, snowy roof)
Social cultural concept (for subsidies, art museum,
Solidarity
Speech (alp president to the farmers and herdsmen)
Sportsman (as in father outdoor activities when he was young)
Spots (beautiful locations)
Spring, summer, winter
Stable
Stories (mu stories, love stories, other stories, died cattle, farmers coming)
Storm (fuhn, common strong wind in the southern alps)
Street
Studies
Sunday evening
Sunset
Sustainability (scientific thinking, feeling of, transfer the feeling, balance alpine ecology, another level of experience)
System (system of thinking, system of behaving, system of being in the world)
Teacher (gymnasium, german teacher, mathematics and latin teacher)
Team
Temperature (regulate with cheese making)
Theater (boyscouts, actionistic, open air, comedy, European famous, Karl's kuhne Gassenschau, organizational director, organizing problems, interim organization director)
Third one (15 year old boy)
Three months
Time (running out of time, being late, February, 5th August, mid of September, November)
Tip (money)
TNT
Together (sticking together, stood together)
Tools (workman, herdsmen)
Traditional (going up the alp)
Train
Traveling (trip, hotel)
True human being
Typewriter (mechanical)
Udder (cow)
University
Unpaid
Up there (on the mountain, on the alp)
Valley (remote, valley with name of A)
Village (up in the village, down in the village)
Volunteer
VW bus
Walzer (Walzer people)
Washing (cheese loafs)

Water (basin, fall, ocean, ship)
Weeks, months, years (time periods)
Weighing (cheese loafs)
Well (the well at the cheese making place)
Western (movie)
Wife, second wife
Wine (glass of wine in the evening when the jobs are done)
Winter safe (cleared up for winter)
Woman (beautiful, voting rights, astrologist, sleep with woman, woman who doesn't take care of protestants)
Wood (forest, firewood, sticks)
Work (meaningful work, sinnvolle tatigkeiten)
Working class (parents of boy)
Writing (finishing writing)
NGO (founders, founding, financial lawyer, royals)
Years mentioned (1908, 1968, 1984, 1945, 46, 2001)
Yourself (as in by yourself, taken care of, not more being needed, safe yourself)
Youth Hostel (staff member, 15000 meals)

3. Searching for themes.

Vignettes from the transcript, reference to shifts of meaning

I was crying it was Sunday evening and I was crying and I had the most beautiful sunset, because up there you see all down the way down to the Lake of Zurich to the East, to the West. It was beautiful. But I was just crying because I realized I will not survive. I will have to go home. I will die up here. Every morning my arms were totally lame. They were paralyzed of doing that strong work. And every and each morning to be able to put the wood stick? to bring the cows home. I had first to go to the well to put my arms into the cold water to bring the feeling back to my fingers (laughing) (?) at 4 'o clock in the morning. It was Sunday evening and I realized it is too much, it is too much, I cannot bear that.

And so, this was my (exhale sound) initiation. It was a pshhh it was a boost a physical boost. But it was also mind blowing, for sure because of all these physical circumstances. I cannot be the same as I was, have to learn so much I have to reframe my behavior I have to reframe my thinking. This is something difficult. You have to be aware I have been a boy scout and a boy scout leader for years and I was hiking and doing kind of games during the night I was close to Nature. But this was something so challenging that I realized (pause) I have to reframe my behavior and not only in a physical but mainly in how to approach this something called Nature. I have to get much more familiar with it. I have really, I think I did not realize then up there on alp as it was called, I did not realize then that I had have to get part of it. I think I would not have been able to tell it. To somebody I am still something external and I have to learn to be something internal. But when I look back, it was something that I had to

realize you cannot be the guy you have been so far if you want to do that kind of job really. But it was this kind of oh shit my common behavior, my common logics of how to approach animals or even mountain farmers, it is not working at all. Uh I had to learn to listen to farmers,

that I know get to know all these damned macro detailed descriptions of landscapes with 'you know the sowieso lichtung' where a wooden patch is free of trees, we call it lichtung[58] in german, an open space in the forest. The sowieso lichtung is not the sowieso lichtung 100 m close by. Because on the the sowieso lichtung the cows have water and on the sowieso lightung the cows have no water. I was not interested first in all these lightungs. I said this part of the ridge and that part, first we move the cows to this part and two weeks later to that patch on the other part. Do you have a plan, a plan, no. Do you have a schedule, Excell sheet you would say today? You will see when the grass is good enough? up there you move up there. Oh, fuck when is the grass good (?) up there.

Ok I went to the first cow and said hello I am your new boss and would you please move out. She didn't want to move out. And I said you dirty asshole, bastard move out of here (in a shouting voice). No, I took out my stick gave her a bang on the ass and she moved 10 feet out of the tree. And there she stood. I said move up there we have to meet all your sisters, friends and girlfriends. She didn't want to move. I tried to make her move it didn't work. Then I realized probably have to go to the lowest first. And to go to number one bring to number two tak tak tak tak. It took me about an hour to bring 15 of them to the meeting place. Hmm. And so on he (sigh). We were late.

And the main experience in talking about Nature, the main experience in what it changed in me the main experience in what it still means for me still now, I still have a son now who is doing the herdsmen job, he has taken over the Alp that P made for several years and P stopped now and one of my big sons is there K. I help every summer fencing or whatever needs to be done. The main experience is when I go up there I am home (slow low-pitched voice). And it doesn't matter if it is my alp, means which I know because I have been working myself there or if it is another alp another mountain part in Switzerland which has these (tummy sound, giggling) specific ingredients which are so called swiss style, untouched Nature. It is cultivated Nature because they do alpine

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[58] See Watts, M. *The Philosophy of Heidegger*. Routledge, London (p145, 145). 'For Heidegger the truth occurs each time the meaning of an event occurs to us and Dasein is a being that always remains receptive to experiencing the truth of other beings. Heidegger regards Dasein's receptiveness as an 'open space' of intelligibility, a 'region' in which entities can manifest themselves. He often refers to this open region as a 'clearing'(Lichtung) and says that Dasein itself is this Clearing. The German word Lightung can be used with reference to a forest clearing. It was probably inspired by Heidegger's regular treks through the Black forest.'

economy up there since several centuries. But it is hmm for Western-European feeling it is wild Nature.

It is kind of deeper connection with yourself, I would describe it. It is kind of, it is kind of a second skin feeling. But in fact, it is first skin. After several days you are sure this is my skin, this is it. And when A comes with me she says nice these Alps, hmmm but (lot of emphasis) I don't like it so much because this time it was raining so much. I don't care about the rain. You don't care about your bad sanitary installations in your home, it is your home. Who cares about an old lavabo? It is your home. It is this kind of feeling it is hufff. It is physically. (cat purring sound) I physically felt more myself,

R: Hmmm

K: I feel stronger. (cat purring) I have been fit as before. I feel weaker in my office in C. I feel stronger more present more powerful, physically powerful. So, you have the feeling of that is it (with emphasis).

You are brought to a new frame of possibilities. Hmm. And it is totally (pause) modeled in relation to your physical mainly your physical capabilities. You realize if people live like this you are not able to destroy Nature really. Hmm I think even already a farmer has much more possibilities because he is an industrialized farmer nowadays. Even the mountain parts he has vehicles and so on, machines to cut the grass adopted to mountain farming and so on so he brings much more power, additional power into his behaviors. But there as a herdsman you are depending on your two legs. You realize a dog, a dog who is really following uhm your intentions and you are really if you have a dog you can really cooperate with, this is kind of, it is like a computer, it is like kind of tripling,

R: Hmm

K: doubling (almost shouting) your power, he.

And after three wee months you leave again and you go back somewhere in November just because you are homesick to the alp. And you realize you cannot see nearly anything what happened, there is some manure left, the grass is gone, but anyhow it is now brown and winter comes soon, the hut is still there, but that is it. But you invested everything, all your energies you were up there. Me as an ecological thinking person. I realized that is it. More or less that is it. That is the level where we are in a balance. Hmm So, but as soon as we for example say let's build a hydro power station up here, (laughs) you shift the balance to the worse?

I tried to bring him to all the beautiful spots, to the waterfall here and the water basin there, are you ready to destroy he felt more and more uncomfortable. It was great. He was together with the mayor of the village. It was hundreds of thousands of experiences but all the times by the autumn it was gone. This kind of feeling (pause) You are so limited, you are so limited. It is not your alp no possession. By feeling it was our, the alp of our family the shepherd family for sure. The village decides to build the plant or not. A lot of people decide but you do not decide. Who is doing the job, who knows all the landscape. Who is familiar with the circumstances, the specific circumstances and the animals? The fox and where he is going in the morning and back in the evening. It is a huge bio cosmos you are in it and some other guys come 'let's destroy it'.

And very often in winter I went up there too with skies. Totally cold winter. You have the key to the cottage you make a fire you have a tiny kitchen you need a very good arctic sleeping bag to make sure that you don't freeze in the night, but it is a kind of feeling home. A kind of feeling here I am as a totally lucky well-balanced human being. It is crazy. Sometimes A tells me ja when she is at an ocean she has a similar feeling of pfhuhhhh,

R: Hmm

K: Being centred, calming down. And life is ok, yes I have my problems. But live is ok. This is my herdsman feeling of pfhuhh

R: Hmmm. It is the breathing. You do the breathing.

K: You do the breathing

R: Yeah what you do now, so like pfuuhh

K: It is centred.

R: It is the body

K: Probably if you do years of meditation. This kind of. Everything is as it is, everything will develop as it will develop, you are part of it. It is ok it will turn out like this or it will turn out like this. Once you will die, that is ok. That is a life.

R: Hmmm

K: And you are twenty something. And you realize probably that is all that is all that you have to know or be aware of.

You drive there and you realize you look into every bodies face much too long and you read every advertisement on every window of a bus or on a wall of a house you read it and you think what does Allianz insurance mean to me. Until you realize stop reading every letter. Fuck why did I read every letter. Well because I didn't read so much when on the Alp and I like reading. And I am probably now attracted too much to any new sentence. Before any face that showed up was important because it was a farmer. Sometimes you also met a hiker and then it was quite interesting to have half an hour talk with a hiker so that was an important face in that day. There are a hundred thousand people because it is rush hour in A. K stop watching every face. Makes no sense. It is another world, I need other filters, I need other behaviors. You know you can do it. But it has to happen fast or you will become crazy.

I am born in Zurich, I have ja I am totally assimilated to the city behavior. My father was a uh chief of all the apprentices at Swiss Air. So, we traveled all over the world in the 60 and 70s. When I went to the Alp I was already in South Africa in Canada, in Finland in half of Western-Europe, that is me. But the herdsman that is also me and I think that is much more a true human being then the other one but I am both. I am both. I am aware that I am shifting.

What I did first I realized it later what I did first was thinking about do I have my herdsmen's tools where are they. In my brain I first stored them up here. And I felt safe. It was totally strange. I felt safe. Several weeks later I realized I haven't done so far anything else then make sure that I know where these tools are and that I am sure they fit here in the garage. And I felt safe and I felt I have my job done. Few weeks later I realized I hadn't done anything. K you haven't done anything, you just feel safe because you know your most important life time tools … (?) You immediately start now to collect and filter all your books and other stuff and so on but this is the core. One of these moments in life you realize what is really important for you, ok your herdsman ship is damned important.

But the president of that society there he knew that I am the K who fought the power companies. We will never give him the job. It was only about 5000 swiss francs. We will never give the job to that leftist asshole. Who killed that, and I was in a mess.

When I become a herdsman, I was running around as I described to you bringing the cattle the first time in the fog up here in the forest. I had no plan. If you have no plan, don't try to lead. I tried to do micromanagement permanently. He do this, come here, move out under the try and di da da.

And it makes sense to stay on a big rock not only because you feel like the old Indian but the cows see you and they know oe herdsman is here. And this influences the cows, it is true. If you sleep behind the rock they begin to make all the forbidden things to go into the steep parts of the valley where the best grass is for sure. But if you are up there and you are in this permanent interaction, not micro management, but you once or twice a day move them a bit, he, they know ok he is here.

learn a lot about (pause) being part of huge system, including weather, local circumstances, rivers where you can drink and so on.

I give a shit on this kind of intellectual sustainability preachers, teachers who tell you out of scientific thinking uhm what sustainability is. I feel sustainability. And I could not explain it so beautiful as they can, that is true I mean scientifically. But I feel it and I am sure I could transfer it to you, let's go together three days with my son on the alp, it is a true offer, if you once you have time we do that. And then we walk there around in the herdsman behavior, after that you have at least a bit of feeling. Ah that is what sustainability. How the balance of the alpine ecology is working but really, physically. It is another level of experience.

4. Reviewing themes

Father son relation, relation to bosses, transforming (fighting or escaping convention). His father is anti Nazi, pro Europe, his mother an advocate for women's voting rights. 'We are a team' he and his friend state to the farmer who wants to have the name of the one boss in the alp contract. They give in as they don't want to miss the contract.

K references to his older brother (4 years older) who actually was on the streets during 1968. He states he took ideas from his brother at a later stage when his brother developed comic writing and writing stories for graphic novels. There is a parallel to journalism. K uses these inspirations to add drawings for his own maps for herding cattle on the alp.

He also references to his mother, who states that his father (her husband) is not capable of talking about their relation. A theme that can be seen in connection to his older brother joining the escape of convention, looking for a free expressive life.

K is in favour of breaking the splendid isolation of the country (Swiss) and at the same time paradoxically enjoys the isolation of the herdsmen at the same time. 'I am more K's' than just one K he says, the K that already travelled as a kid with his Swiss Air manager travel father and who is at home in a large city like Zurich and

on an alp. K characterizes his life on an alp as maybe an even more 'true human being.'

The 'I am in an economic mess' K as in his case he finds that journalism can only be combined with herding as freelancing journalism with no secure income. And one who is blocked in his further journalism and consulting career by confessional forces who recognize him for having done political work against 'the nomenclature'. It is almost as if this automatically directs him to earn a living as professional (political) environmentalist. Although very much his experience this is also an interpretation of his aspirations and an expression of an identity that follows on the student revolution and his call for environmental justice and protection. His becoming of age in conjunction with political awareness.

There is a 'sticking together K', who is based in virtue ethics (duty, moral code, ethical considerations, 'you deliver to the farmers what they are entitled to', even when you cannot cope and think you are going to die. Partly because of enjoying social companionship (within a challenging (playful) context (boy scouts), sometimes even hardship (herdsmen, celebrating harvest with the farmers), this K is also called to action when experiencing the destruction of an alp by a hydro power company. He followed the advice of his father to steer the ship even when he fell in love with another woman but stayed with his family and young kids. This K is partly based on practical experience of needing to stick together to deal with tough jobs, or crisis even when on the alp and circumstances are tough and stronger than one person.

There is a lot of reference to the body. To the skin (huhne haut (chicken skin), first skin, second skin) to breathing (sighing, relaxation, being at home), to physical activity, challenge and even performance (keeping it up physically at the point of breaking, giving up). These references to the body are be default relational and K is aware of that. There is even reference to work on the alp being physically restricted and therefor bringing limitations to what can be done. The farmers have more power as they have machines, but machines immediately destroy the ecological balance. A dog gives more power, but it is not as radically more power as a machine. An alp in its ecological integrity exists because machines are of limited use, unless you come and blow it up and make it accessible to machines. In that case the ecology as it existed is destroyed. Using machines also break up social relations to the extent they are needed to do a job together at the same time.

There is a lot of reference to relating to non-human animals. The animals being individuals, the animals bonding, showing to respond to the weather, the landscape, to where the best food is, to animal coalitions and politics. Than there is the reference to leading animals, communicating with them, not being in control. There is great skill involved that adds to knowing and developing one's self, ones senses.

There is reference to attachment to place (as his call to protect 'his' alp brings him to start campaigning).

The K as a leader of people refers to having moved away from micromanagement (as this did not work with non-human others either).

K has started his consulting practice – I know. At some point in the interview he refers to his problem of having energy for (to) many initiatives and to many situations where he likes to get involved or help people. Taking such a social position clashes with charging money for services in a disengaged transactional mode of operating.

There is also a theme of joy, having fun, love, trust, belonging, the good life as well as hate, frustration, racism, crooks and cheating (owning land at the expense of others when in power). There are themes of social, economic and technical power to construct (infrastructure) and destruct (ecosystem).

There is the theme of shifting. Shifting from having been on the alp back to 'a proper job' back to 'city life'. K gives the example of driving the VW bus back from the alp, back into the city when reading every text and looking at every face. He has to stop himself not to overload his brain. He also refers to his colleague and friend P needing these transition periods as well, as P usually calls K that although back from the alp, he (P) is not able to come to the office straight away.

5.   Defining and naming themes.

There is a 'gestalt' relatively clear being about family / social relations, within the context of larger economic and social developments in Swiss and the environment – even with reference to EU and the world. It points at (traditional) management of the commons (*ecological thinking and acting as a collective task*) in relation to private enterprise (*ecological thinking and acting as a private task*).

(NB. K is running for the government of canton G next year. It would be interesting to know to what extent his alp experiences and 'ecological thinking' as he sees it will become part of his positon and work as a politician (if he is elected).

K's consultancy is called '…….. It shows three services, organisation development, strategic mapping and special projects. I think there is evidence from the interview transcript where he describes how his alp experiences as a herdsman have influenced his ideas about leadership, running an organisation and how this influenced his service offerings. *Only intervening when needed* and otherwise letting the 'cows do their job' seems to be a motto – coming from his experience - that can be found to resonate in his service offerings to organizations.

There is evidence to make the connect between helping and taking *a middle position*. Possibly K took a middle position (or more neutral) in his family when his older brother was on the streets. He did confront his dad on the issues of

environmentalism while at the same time being sensitive to his mother stating that his father (her husband) did not communicate about (or in) the relation with her, his wife. K was involved at some point in a romantic triangle relationship (crazy 70-ies relationship as he calls it), one cannot be 'more' in the middle than that. His consultancy offerings can be interpreted in a similar way 'helping' on a relational level as the offerings do not refer to direct economic interest as such. This is relevant as the relation to Nature can be described as a *being in the middle* relation or helping relation (helping Nature to survive). There are authors referring to this middle position (of transition) when it comes to being sensitive to Nature and Natures agency, finding different political and ethical solutions. It seems important to not only see Nature from a relational perspective, but to have experiences of Nature as a subject (agency), before the experience of being in the middle can be understood and worked with. Otherwise what does one find oneself in the middle off?

Situated in canton G, city areas, agricultural areas and commons (alps) are all very close together, because of the landscape where the mountains dominate. Eg. In the Netherlands as far as I know there are no commons, although some new developments and experiments try to readdress governance in certain areas. Where the oldest democratic structures in the Netherlands come from water management and collective management of the polders keeping the Dutch feet dry, such democratic structures are hardly visible anymore (although still crucial). In Swiss it is the mountains that create a similar need for 'sticking together'. Swiss governance and democracy are built on that and although extremely slow, still with a *particular level of inclusion of those bound to 'the land'* and although maybe reluctantly, a sense of needing the collective in order to survive.

Shifting. Related to the previous reflection there is the theme of shifting. Shifting between being on the alp (in Nature) and the city. K refers to both himself and P (herdsman colleague, office partner) going through such phase of adjusting themselves again to a 'proper job' and to putting on different filters again that help to not read every text or focus on every face coming back from the alp, a sort of consciously closing down the senses. This relates to the breathing as expanding and shrinking as a *continuous movement*, the rhythm when living on an alp herding animals and the opening up of the senses while on the alp and the shrinking (because of information overload) in the city. This associates with being driven to cognition when in office, city environments as a world separate or split off from the senses. It also makes me associate with power and machines. Were machines create power (because they have) but also limit because they focus, they differentiate, they make boundaries of jobs of specialisation, instead of opening up and allowing more systemic awareness (including awareness of agency in Nature and all the relational phenomena going on all at the same time. With respect to living on the alp a process of homecoming and attachment can be identified from the verbatim. This is attachment to Nature, to the lifestyle and to the challenges that living on an alp entail. It is attachment to the agency in Nature one experiences, the experience of Nature's non-human others. The attachment can also be seen to include a sense of connection, a pleasure of feeling whole, of

living with one's senses and it can be seen to include a sense caring or being called to defend the integrity of the whole.