

**Aesthetic experience in nature: potential of environmental education in
protected natural areas**

**Experiência estética na natureza: potencial da educação ambiental em
áreas naturais protegidas¹**

**Experiencia estética en la naturaleza: potencial de la educación ambiental en
espacios naturales protegidos**

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Abstract

The aim of the current study is to identify the potential of a protected natural area in Southern Brazil to be used as space for aesthetic experiences in nature by a group of educators. The study was carried out in Serra da Baitaca State Park, Metropolitan Region of Curitiba City, Paraná State, Brazil, with three educators from different knowledge fields. It followed a qualitative approach and used techniques such as participant observation as well as mobile studies and interviews from the ecophenomenological perspective. Results were presented as (eco)narratives in response to the research object, with emphasis on two important findings, namely: education of attention practices and adventure body practices. In short, the current study has emphasized the importance of movement through practices such as education of attention and adventure in environmental education to value the more-than-human world and to promote sensitivity and political engagement by involving bodies in natural environments.

Keywords: Phenomenology. Education of attention. Outdoor education. More-than-human.

Resumo

O objetivo do presente estudo é identificar o potencial de uma área natural protegida, no sul do Brasil, para ser utilizada como espaço para experiências estéticas na natureza por um grupo de educadores. O estudo foi realizado no Parque Estadual da Serra da Baitaca, Região Metropolitana de Curitiba, Paraná, Brasil, com três educadores de diferentes áreas do conhecimento. Seguiu uma abordagem qualitativa e utilizou técnicas como observação participante, bem como estudos móveis e entrevistas na perspectiva ecofenomenológica. Os resultados foram apresentados como (eco)narrativas em resposta ao objeto de pesquisa, com ênfase em dois achados importantes, a saber: práticas de educação da atenção e práticas corporais de aventura. Em suma, o presente estudo enfatizou a importância do movimento por meio de práticas como educação da atenção e aventura na educação ambiental para valorizar o mundo mais-que-humano e promover a sensibilidade e o engajamento político por meio do envolvimento dos corpos em ambientes naturais.

Palavras-chave: Fenomenologia. Educação da atenção. Educação ao ar livre. Mais-que-humano.

Resumen

El objetivo del presente estudio es identificar el potencial de un área natural protegida, en el sur de Brasil, para ser utilizado como espacio de experiencias estéticas en la naturaleza por parte de un grupo de educadores. El estudio se llevó a cabo en el Parque Estatal Serra da Baitaca, Región Metropolitana de la ciudad de Curitiba, Estado de Paraná, Brasil, con tres educadores de diferentes áreas del conocimiento. Siguió un enfoque cualitativo y utilizó técnicas como la observación participante, así como estudios móviles y entrevistas desde la perspectiva ecofenomenológica. Los resultados se presentaron como (eco)narrativas en respuesta al objetivo de la investigación, con énfasis en dos hallazgos importantes, a saber: prácticas de educación de la atención y prácticas corporales de aventura. En resumen, el presente estudio ha enfatizado la importancia del movimiento a

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través de prácticas como la educación de la atención y la aventura en la educación ambiental para valorar el mundo más que humano y promover la sensibilidad y el compromiso político involucrando a los cuerpos en entornos naturales.

Palabras clave: Fenomenología. Educación de la atención. Educación al aire libre. Más-que-humano.

1. Introduction

The aesthetic dimension in environmental education is understood as the ability to experience the world with inspiration and enchantment through the sensory apparatus. The word *aesthetics* comes from Greek *aisthesis*, which means feeling or sensing, and *aisthanestai*, to feel with the senses. The aesthetic event goes beyond describing the lived world. Moreover, the theoretical-methodological framework of ecophenomenology is a way to understand the level of experience in the world. Thus, experience begins in the sensorial, perceptual and emotional world (Iared; Oliveira; Payne, 2016).

According to the work of authors who focus on understanding aesthetics in education, the biggest challenge is not to develop cognitive capacity or technology production, but rather the individual's openness to the exercise of feeling. Therefore, environmental education between and beyond walls can be guided by reflexivity and sensitivity, since it is essential to enhance individuals' ethical condition (Iared; Oliveira, 2017a, 2017b; Iared; Oliveira; Reid, 2017).

Studies that address reciprocal, non-linear, or non-hierarchical processes, occurring in flow from a more-than-human perspective, are provocative and emerge in the quest to enable profound educational experiences. We bring as an example the engagement of participants experiencing perceptions of the world, of themselves, and of others within the Cerrado biome (Iared; Oliveira; Reid, 2017), as well as the studies by Borges (2014) and Muhler (2018), which evaluated experiences in the realms of ethics and aesthetics in different contexts but involving various ways of apprehending the more-than-human world.

According to Marin and Kasper (2009), the aesthetic experience is essential for the creation of meanings and the re-signification of the world of life. For the authors, environmental education faces the challenge of founding an environmentalist discourse in deep learning. The educator also needs to take the risk of experience to be transformed. The authors understand that the goal of environmental education is to pay attention to aesthetics to enable sensitizing experiences. This does not mean focusing only on the transmission of new technical and ecological knowledge, but on significant experiences that promote transformations.

In this sense, environmental education that promotes ethics, aesthetics, and politics and that contributes to a proposal of understanding that "experiences in the world and in the environment are connected by different constitutive dimensions related to affectivity, sensitivity, culture, politics, and social life" (Payne *et al.*, 2018, p. 93, our translation) reinforces the integrated vision of the nature-society relationship presented as a way of belonging to the world.

Several authors argue for the prominence of aesthetic experience as a path to autonomy, creativity, reflexivity, and breaking with processes of domination (Carvalho; Mhule, 2016; Iared *et al.*, 2021). Carvalho and Mhule (2016) investigated a group of future teachers who were exposed to an educational experience through walks in natural trails, fostering philosophical reflections and much more attentive than intentional experiences, countering the raw and standardized science of the traditional system. In short, the authors value an education for simplicity, for mindfulness, for deceleration that allows openness to experience.

The notion of the more-than-human world is anchored in the movement of the bodily turn, which values the perspective of horizontality in the relationship between humans and non-humans. The perception of the more-than-human world in environmental education includes the possibility of lived experience in an attentional, ecological, and bodily approach (Iared; Oliveira, 2017a, 2017b).

The permeability to experience that we are talking about aligns with the multiple ways of learning, teaching, and researching. In this context, Payne (2005) investigated a young woman's immersion at the beach and her attentive perceptions of environmental education incorporated into the perspective of sensitivity and *becoming*, explicating the *ways of doing and knowing* in research. The author studied the layers being sensory, perceptual, conceptual, and rational of the experience by noting the entirety as a process of *becoming*.

The pursuit of experiences in nature has increased in contemporary times and it boosted the demand for natural environments such as conservation units (Figueiredo; Schwartz, 2013). These areas allow physical and emotional well-being, as well as opportunities for outdoor activities – they were essential during the COVID-19 pandemic (Silva; Melo; Guedes, 2020). Consequently, this growing desire to connect to nature and to move away from urban centers led to a gradual increase in areas for adventure and leisure.

The term *adventure practices in nature* was herein adopted because these practices trigger the sense of taking risks. The word *adventure* refers to the subjective pursuit of emotions associated with the *unusual*, and it involves some risks and danger. Yet, nature is herein seen as an environment comprising all forms of elements found in nature: minerals, plants, landforms, the weather and humans.

Betiollo and Santos (2003) have extrapolated these concepts to the educational practice to investigate mountaineering contributions to environmental education. They assessed a group of mountaineers and observed features like change of attitude, behaviors and values capable of contributing to environmental education such as respect for other beings, weather conditions, and preparation for changes and unforeseen events along the way. These factors have indicated strong closeness between mountaineering and learning practices associated with environmental education. In her research, Boileau (2022) conceives the forest school as a pillar for the continuous and effective relationship of children with nature. For this, educational games that involve adventure have the potential for developing emotional, physical, and cognitive aspects, which awaken empathy, confidence, and cooperation.

The development of adventure tourism in Brazil began in the 1990s, influenced by a growing awareness of the concepts and practices of sustainable development, stimulated by Rio-92⁴. It is characterized by its occurrence in natural environments, its non-competitive nature, and the diversity of activities, including hiking, mountaineering, climbing, waterfall activities, cycling tourism, among others. These activities involve sensations of adrenaline, overcoming challenges, risk, and vertigo.

Therefore, exploring the closeness between environmental education and adventure practices in nature during aesthetic experiences lived in conservation units appears to be promising for both research and practices. Accordingly, the aim of the current study was to identify the potential of a protected natural area in Southern Brazil to be used as venue for aesthetic experiences in nature by a group of educators.

The next section introduces the theoretical fundamentals of ecophenomenology. Then, the methodological paths taken for data collection will be described. Finally, the bodily

⁴ Rio-92 took place in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and was the stage for two parallel events: the Second United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), bringing together several official representatives from dozens of countries, and the Global Forum, which had non-governmental organizations as its audience.

practices of attention and adventure resulting from an aesthetic experience lived in a correspondence process among subjects will be addressed.

2. Ecophenomenology

In a philosophical retrospective, the theoretical contribution of the book *Pensar o ambiente: bases filosóficas para a educação ambiental (Thinking the Environment – Philosophical Bases for Environmental Education)* organized by Isabel Cristina de Moura Carvalho, Mauro Grün, and Rachel Trajber (2006), offers readers possibilities for reflection based on the theoretical-conceptual contributions of various thinkers and the historical moments in which they lived. The relationships between nature~culture~environment are presented in a historical and contextualized way.

The chapter written by Nancy Mangabeira Unger (2006), brings thoughts from the early Greek philosophers, the pre-Socratics, and concepts such as *physis*, which pertains to the life that pulses in all beings, preceding and different from the modern Western view of nature. Similarly, the idea of *ethos* as a dwelling, from which ethics derives, predates the dichotomies that later came to constitute the modern way of thinking about the world. The pre-Socratics allow for imagining other ways of inhabiting the world as ambiance and rethinking the contemporary human's relationship with the universe and their place in this whole.

In the article *Rousseau: o retorno à natureza (Rousseau, the Return to Nature)*, Nadja Hermann (2006) proposes how nature is a philosophical concept. Rousseau understands that the human being is 'with' and 'in' nature and maintains a subjective feeling towards it, which allows them to preserve it while simultaneously distancing themselves to build their freedom. The philosopher contributed to the creation of a new mentality regarding relationships with nature; for him, nature is a pre-empirical unity.

From this philosophical perspective, the dual point of view is shifted to an integrated reality between nature and culture, humans and non-humans within the same environment, affecting and being affected. From the pre-Socratic philosophers to the contemporary authors guiding this research, the notion of nature lies in the non-dichotomy or non-exclusive polarization with which we have learned to think about the world: nature/culture, body/mind, subject/object, reason/emotion.

The theoretical-philosophical fundamentals of the present research followed phenomenological studies inspired by Merleau-Ponty (1992), who, in his work *The Visible and the Invisible*, addressed the concept of “flesh of the world” by radicalizing the premise of humans' indivisibility both in acts in the world and from the perception about the world. Based on Merleau-Ponty's concepts, Steil and Carvalho (2012, p. 36, our translation) understand that the “connection between human body and the body of the world comprises and transcends the individual's body and presents itself as link between the sentient human and the sensitive world”. Merleau-Ponty (1994) has made a valuable contribution to the study named *Phenomenology of Perception*, which regards the concept of perception~consciousness~world and outlines that perception is possible, because we are bodily beings. Therefore, the body is the conveyer of mediating experiences.

Humans' relationship with the world, besides taking place at the intellectual level, involves bodily senses and emotions, so individuals find themselves immersed in a flow surrounding them. According to Merleau-Ponty (1994), the body allows individuals to live in the world, to understand it and to give it meaning. Contemporary authors in the environmental education field have been using ecophenomenology in their investigations (Carvalho, 2014; Iared; Oliveira; Payne, 2016; Iared, 2019; Silva; Iared, 2023). Sato (2016, p.14, our translation) understands that ecophenomenology is the path to “overcome the utilitarian,

technical and anthropocentric perspective” to “transcend the human dimension, including other forms of life”. Sato (2016) also states that studies about this topic are scarce in Brazil and that this research field requires further studies to consolidate its perspective.

According to Ingold (2012), it is necessary to feel the world with bare feet, because corporeality allows thinking about the world not as something external, but from the inhabitation perspective (Ingold, 2015), i.e., relationships are set through living in the world. Thus, the body responds to the world’s movements, as the world responds to the movements of the body (Iared; Oliveira, 2017a; 2017b).

Some contemporary authors who have referenced Merleau-Ponty’s assumptions to elaborate new reflections on his thinking were herein adopted to help better understanding the present research object. Thus, ecophenomenology is understood as phenomenology field intertwined with environmental principles based on the role played by the more-than-human world in sensitive experiences in the world, as way to engage in this very world (Brown; Toadvine, 2003). The next section addresses the applied methodological procedures.

3. Methodological paths

When it comes to most contemporary forms of ethnography development, Pink (2009, p. 3) suggests that it is to “acknowledge sensoriality as essential to how we learn about, understand and represent the lives of other people, it is increasingly more central to academic and applied practices in social and human sciences”. According to her, there is no gold standard way of doing ethnography, so far, but she recommends taking into consideration multisensoriality as central element to research. From this perspective, body movements such as walking, dancing, and cycling, among others, were understood as ways to resist, belong, and relate in the world, rather than naïve actions. Among the most contemporary forms of developing ethnography, Pink (2009, p. 3) suggests that it is necessary to “acknowledge that sensoriality is essential to how we learn about, understand and represent other people’s lives, it is increasingly central to academic and applied practices in social and human sciences.”

The *methodological route* of a given investigation is linked to witnessing everyday events in order to experience the same experiences as others. This process encompasses the entire flow of living and non-living beings in constant learning (Pink, 2009). The author believes that performing sensory ethnography involves collaborative and participatory practices when it comes to perception, meanings, values, knowledge, and practices.

A point of convergence between Ingold (2014) and Pink (2009) lies in understanding that ethnography is a deep experience, a dive into the study context. Pink (2009) shifts the idea of ethnography to the relevance of the movement, whereas Ingold (2014) emphasizes living ethnography as ontological commitment. Therefore, it is important to both capture and understand different senses and sensations within the research. Pink (2009) has suggested that traditional interview is not enough to meet the depth of ethnographic research. According to her, there are other techniques capable of capturing multisensoriality during data production processes, such as video ethnography or walking and talking.

Ingold (2014) opposes the hierarchy among the senses and does not give primacy or centrality to a single sense, but he rather connects the whole group of sensations to the flow. The fine tuning between being and knowing implies giving sense and meaning to experiences. This association guarantees the correspondence among concerns, movement and responses as invisible thread connecting relationships with both practice and fabric of research.

Movement understood as methodological resource enables bodily perception and the production of aesthetic~ethical~political meanings. From this theoretical-methodological perspective, movement does not mean going from one point to another in one single straight line of a given path. It is conceived as flow of interactions that mutually respond to more-

than-human multisensoriality. Therefore, movement is understood as ontologically prior to epistemological representations (Ingold, 2011). Payne (2009) has emphasized the relevance of conducting research about environmental education, and commensurability between ontology and epistemology in order to support methodological issues.

3.1. Data Productions

The herein selected research participants comprised college students who work as educators in different knowledge fields. They were invited to participate during an affectivity and aesthetic experience course provided by a postgraduate program.

The study was carried out in Serra da Baitaca State Park (also known as PESB), Paraná State, Brazil. Talking about this place means more than just mentioning its natural, historical and tourist importance. Besides being a gateway to mountaineering and climbing in Paraná State, this park's landscape is stunning, as well as provides open and closed trails, a waterfall, not to mention the view of Serra do Mar (Figure 1).

Figure 1: View from the summit at Serra da Baitaca State Park



Source: the authors, 2022

Walking studies available in the literature were associated with theoretical and methodological approaches, such as sensorial ethnography, non-representational theories, walking studies, moving bodies and walking ethnography. In addition, they have been referenced by several scholars who highlight their ability to capture the sensorial and affective dimensions of everyday life (Pink, 2009; Vergunst, 2011; Iared; Oliveira, 2017b, Paiva, 2018).

These walking studies have gained prominence in human and social sciences, besides being applied in environmental education research, since they enable exploring different ways

of perceiving experiences in the world. This approach emphasizes researchers' bodily and sensory involvement in research processes, in compliance with Ingold's (2014) perspective about existence as a tangle of life flow, evolution and movement. Walking ethnography and sensory ethnography are examples of methodological approaches focused on exploring bodily sensitivity and multisensoriality in the world (Iared; Oliveira, 2017a; Vergunst; Ingold, 2008).

The study adopted the *participant observation* approach, which is based on individuals' immersion in different realities, not only to collect information, but also to participate in the experience as enchantment and correspondence process, and to live it (Ingold, 2014). This approach acknowledges that the observer and the observed one continuously affect each other and establish a permanent affection relationship.

This methodological stance was adopted throughout the current study, based on the understanding that there is no strict research protocol, since experience was more important than planning. Participant observation took place in different meetings, since both the researcher and participants were immersed in the multisensoriality of the more-than-human world and responded to it.

Interview is a research technique widely used in social sciences to collect information about a specific subject through conversations. A bibliographic review conducted by Iared and Oliveira (2017) has evidenced flexibility in research methodologies involving interviews and walking studies. Different articles adopted several approaches such as group walks or interviews with one participant at the time, the presence or absence of a script to be filled, the use of video recorders or cameras, among others.

Participants were invited to take walks in a protected natural area to carry out walking studies. Details of the routes and practiced modalities were defined during the process to plan the meetings, based on the researcher and participants' preferences, and on agreement between them. The option was made, in the present study, for adopting individual body practices with each participant. Some questions such as *how do you perceive your body sensations during the experience?* or *how do you describe your relationship with nature?* or *what bodily activities do you have, or have had, contact with?* were made along the way in order to guide the conversation and to encourage participants to reflect on it.

The questions selected to the interviews were asked since the beginning of the bodily practice in the State Park. The researcher took pictures during the activities, recorded videos or audios on her mobile phone as the conversation progressed, and participants could do the same on their own devices. Table 1 is based on the performed bodily practice aimed at recording educators' participation in it.

Table 1: Synthesis of participants' contributions to the study

Participant	Date	Adventure practice modality	Duration	Distance	Location
Anderson	03/17 th /2022	Walking	5 h	13 km – 1450 m	PESB
	12/16 th /2022	Climbing			
Julian	06/25 th /2022	Cycling	2h 35min	36.5 km	Curitiba
	12/16 th /2022	Walking	3h	9.7km	PESB
		Climbing			
Bruno	12/16 th /2022	Walking	3h	9.7 km	PESB
		Climbing			

Source: the authors, 2022

All records have contributed to a prompt description of the experience lived in the State Park. It was done to faithfully document the event.

Subsequently, two data triangulation times were established, not only to help the analysis applied to the object of study from different perspectives, but to enrich the

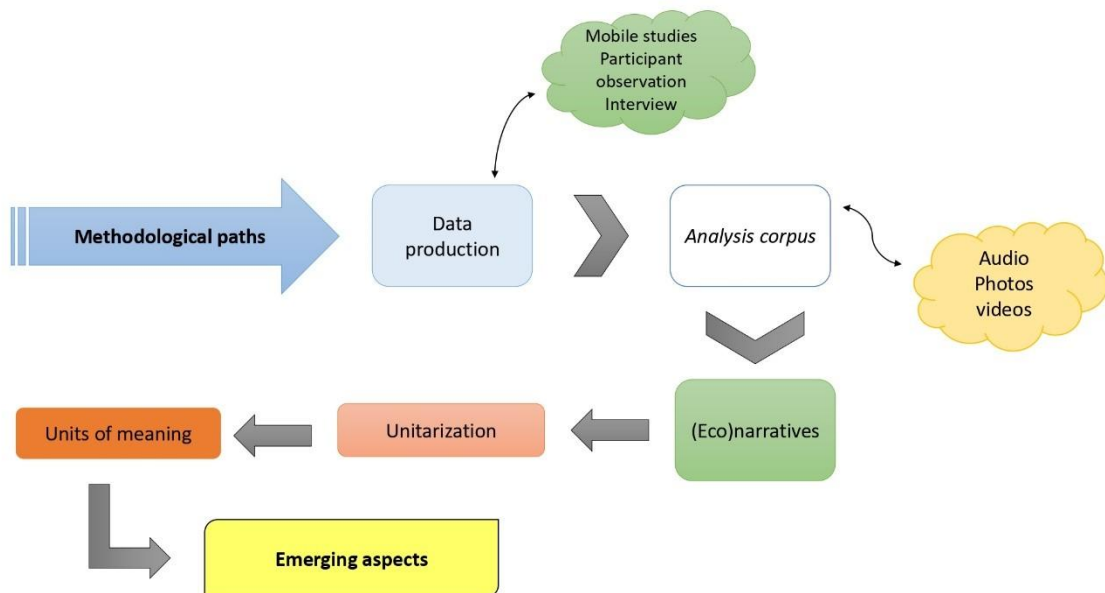
perspectives and dimensions composing it. Analyzing the same research phenomenon from more than one perspective enables us to collect more complete and detailed data, as well as to avoid likely emptying processes that can take place when a single methodology is adopted.

The first triangulation covered the analysis corpus (records of walking studies, participant observation and interview) to write participants' (eco)narratives. The material deriving from this triangulation comprised audios, photos, and videos recorded on a mobile phone, and they were later used to help develop the (eco)narratives. The first author of the current study accounted for writing the (eco)narratives, in first person, shortly after the experience lived with each participant. Therefore, one (eco)narrative per participant was written.

The second triangulation was based on individual analysis applied to each experience shared by research participants. In other words, each (echo)narrative was analyzed separately. The "clippings considered relevant and representative of the phenomenon according to the interrogation", which are called units of meaning, were highlighted in order to help observing the phenomenon (Alves; Buffon; Neves, 2021, p. 211, our translation). In other words, units comprise excerpts of ideas written in (eco)narratives that best contextualize the phenomenon.

After the units were defined, the researcher made a convergence move towards units of meaning that have crossed the poetic language of (eco)narratives to reach a language close to the theoretical framework of the investigated phenomenon. Thus, emerging aspects were surveyed for further discussion. Each route of the methodological path is highlighted in a different color, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Methodological design



Source: the authors, 2022

Finally, in the third triangulation moment, the emerging aspects of the work resulting from the refinement of units of meaning were discussed in compliance with the study's phenomenological coherence, by taking into consideration the need of answering the central question of the study: what are the aesthetic experiences of/in/with nature that can be available for educators in a protected natural area?

4. Results and Discussion

Results are herein presented based on the experiences reported in the (eco)narratives developed through data triangulation. Two emerging aspects will be herein pointed out to address the research object, namely: *education of attention practices and adventure body practices*.

4.1 Education of attention practices

Education of attention (Ingold, 2010) refers to individuals' aesthetic attitude towards the world based on establishing a harmonic relationship with the movements of the world to boost intuitive sensitivity. It is done to encourage participatory engagement, which is related to the way individuals deal with the more-than-human world. Encounters experienced by participants have evidenced a correspondence relationship between the moving body and the environment, and it has the potential to be used in the conservation unit.

We were silent on the way up the hill, which required a lot of body strength and breath control. My heartbeat was accelerated, and my gaze was attentive to the environment. The focus was on getting up there! ((eco)narrative 2- Julian, 2022).

When we started the walk, the forest was thick and we had to walk in a line. I felt that Bruno was more introspective, taking slow steps, with attentive gaze, listening to the noises around, observing the birdsong and footsteps. Little by little, the landscape was changing. The climb became steeper and breathing speed increased. It took strength to climb, we took breaks to drink water and to recover and in these moments we established our affections. Between the ups and downs of the path, I was very immersed in the sounds and smells. I asked Bruno if he had smelled the fresh forest. It was then that he realized and also felt it, it brought back childhood memories in me. At another point he pointed to a colony of fungi and said "Look! How beautiful". Before this note, I had not noticed the beauty. Witnessing what we see, feel, and hear opens up a field of possibilities that is continually born before our perception: finding the attention that awakens to this emergency, to then produce new memories: this is what can be called the education of attention. ((eco)narrative 3- Bruno, 2022).

In other words, education of attention lies in creating conditions for individuals to perceive and learn in real time, in person. The idea of showing, advocated by Ingold (2010), was expressed during the walk by participants' verbal and bodily exchange interactions. It happened when the researcher, between the ups and downs of the way, asked participant Anderson if he was feeling the smell of the fresh forest and he also felt it. Another example of it is when he pointed to a fungal colony and said, "Look! That is beautiful". The researcher had not perceived those more-than-human beings before he pointed to them.

The role of *tutor* shifts and reverses, because, depending on the situation, the tutor can be the most experienced one or the beginner. This finding reinforces Ingold's (2010) idea of *showing*. Therefore, knowledge is not built from the transmission of accumulated representations, but from education of attention, according to which, individuals develop their knowledge based on their own actions and incorporated perceptions within specific environmental contexts.

We go through different times and routes, such as open trails, closed forests, trunks working as obstacles, climbs, descents, climbing or jumping rocks, until reaching the first resting point in the waterfall. When I stopped, my body felt like it was still moving. He talked about how much he learns from nature and the park. At that moment, we were passing by a waterspout, surrounded by stones, he said that we

could drink that water and thus refresh our body and soul at that moment. In this movement with the world, there was the awakening of a sacred perception of the environment and the notion of unity between us and the environment we inhabited ((eco)narrative 1- Anderson, 2022).

This understanding arises from the aesthetic experience linked to comprehension of sacred, which refers to enchantment and contemplation of nature (Iared, 2019). The sacredness of nature has already been addressed by some scholars in the environmental education field. It is not something external or an outside entity, but rather the immanent sense of perceiving the sacred environment as a bodily experience in nature (Iared, 2019; Chiesa; Brito, 2022). According to Chiesa and Brito (2022), understanding what sacred is depends on how much a given person invests its attention and emotion in a specific thing. Thus, by putting affection into something, individuals make that ‘thing’ sacred, i.e., they attribute value to it based on their emotions and feelings. According to these authors, perceiving the universe, things, beings and oneself in a sacred way means being aware of continuities, connections and flows that travel, unify and cross the whole environment (Chiesa; Brito, 2022) in a more-than-human world.

We kept on walking, with times of iterations, exchanges, help and experience sharing and, thus, we created affective bonds. Another quite striking point was when we stopped to contemplate nature. Looking at the immensity of that place and realizing that we are small before the world. It was like looking at the immensity, but also looking at ourselves and renewing our energy. It all involved risks, such as tiredness, emotions and different body sensations, as well as positive affections, such as dazzlement and flow experiences ((eco)narrative 3 – Bruno, 2022).

Therefore, the current study aims at defending this potential of protected natural areas. It is worth highlighting events that mostly triggered our perception of *sacred* among events flowing along the way, namely: the arrival at Anhangava hill at sunset; admiring the landscape was like feeling the presence of the *sacred*. We felt the emotion to be able to overcome the climbing (we were on an altitude of approximately 1,430m after almost two-hour walking). We overcame bodily difficulties and limitations.

Nature is a sacred place for indigenous peoples, according to whom, the mountains, the rain, the sun, the earth, the stones, among other elements, are alive and respected by them as the tribes’ ancestors. Nature is where they find inspiration to live, dream, sing, dance and heal. Therefore, indigenous peoples do not see themselves as separate from nature, they rather see themselves as integral part of it (Krenak, 2019).

According to Borges (2014), we live and learn in a world that is more-than-human. Based on this understanding, it is necessary to acknowledge the role played by materiality within learning processes and in pedagogical experiences that take place in different environments. The aforementioned author does not deny that learning is a social process. However, he reinforces that “learning in a more-than-human world makes individuals shift their attention to the presence of these elements in environmental education practices between places” (Borges, 2014, p.56).

4.2 Adventure body practices

Commitment to environmental education through aesthetic experiences is the way to open room for learning processes, according to which, sensitive, sensorial and affective dimensions prevail in harmony with the environment (Payne *et al.*, 2018). It is worth highlighting the excerpt below ((eco)narrative 2), which meets the specific aim of describing bodily responses to multisensoriality:

When participant Julian asked the researcher: “So, how are you feeling your body right now?” This question brought me back to the present and I was surprised because I realized that the researcher was actually being an observer-participant and corresponding to the aesthetic experience” ((eco)narrative 2 – Julian, 2022).

The focus of the present study lies in feeling, which is a basis to understand the world around us and that we are part of (Iared; Oliveira, 2017b). Upon transposing this process to the research field, the phenomenon of experience requires an understanding type based on the researcher's bodily engagement to the same situation experienced by those involved in the process. According to Ingold (2011), this engagement takes place in the movement of the flow of life or in its fabric.

Pink (2009) has suggested that researchers should use their sensory body at the time to collect and interpret research data. According to the aforementioned author, sensory perception is not just based on dialogue and our social interactions are not just based on verbal or visual language. In other words, the experiences of others can be better understood when researchers also experience them, rather than just listening to individuals telling their experiences, or than just reading reports about them.

My intention was to explore the potential of cycling during a conversation and close observation of the sensations that this activity could provoke. Julian accepted the challenge and let the conversation flow while we pedaled. Our route was previously defined, our intention was to reach the conservation unit and to do so we chose to follow the bike path. We were willing to ride as long as our bodies could take it. Cycling is also an act of resistance. A freedom achieved. Close observation of the landscape and traffic formed part of our conversations and pauses. At certain moments, the conversation was left for later, just after catching the breath lost on the climb. Sometimes the momentum of the descent encouraged the pedaling, and sometimes our dialogue was interrupted by setbacks – the deflection of the root of the tree that crossed the cycle path; the dog that crossed the street; the vehicles that passed close to the bicycles; or even during our breaks to drink water or eat something. ((eco)narrative 2 – Julian, 2022).

Multisensoriality (Pink, 2009) plays a key role in the body's involvement in everyday events. There is a fine agreement between feeling and body perception, and it implies attributing sense and meaning to experiences. This association guarantees correspondence among concerns, movement and response as invisible thread connecting body~movement~action relationships.

According to Pink (2009) and Ingold (2014), ethnography should reinvent itself by explicitly exploring sensory perception and by incorporating more collaborative and participatory data analysis and representation techniques. This reinvention process is configured as ontological commitment to research (Ingold, 2014). Pink (2009) explained the intersection between body and movement by exemplifying that a given body in movement responds in different ways to stimuli coming from the world. According to the aforementioned author, the sensorial system can be the source of cognition. Pink understands multisensoriality as a process lacking hierarchy among different senses, i.e., the human body is synesthetic.

From this perspective, adventure practices are necessarily linked to the body and to generating affection. When we climbed the wall of a rock:

Bruno kept his whole body near the rocks, he moved his hands, trunk, legs and feet right by the rock, like a spider. I (the researcher), on the other hand, climbed it in bipedal position because I couldn't do it like Bruno did ((eco)narrative 3 – Bruno, 2022).

Issues (topics) and values (feelings) to be worked have emerged upon exploring different body possibilities in this adventure practice (climbing/walking). Fear, overcoming, adrenaline and happiness were among them. Topics such as climate change, environmental preservation and the history of the park have also emerged. Thus, the learning process should involve the body in order to generate knowledge within educational processes.

The walking activity enabled participants to be/exist in the world in times of correspondence between movement and pause in this relationship with the other:

To our surprise, a soft rain fell to refresh our bodies. It was enough to change the climate, the forest got a fresh smell, we took careful steps in the descent, we held on the roots to maintain stability, we held each others' hands and supported each other ((eco)narrative 3 – Bruno, 2022).

Springgay and Truman (2018) have organized a book called *Walking Methodologies in a More-Than-Human World: WalkingLab*, which is based on studies that encourage the incorporation of walking studies as methodological approach for research in multiple fields. This approach takes into consideration the perspective from different bodies that encompass a range of different walks. Walking has a diverse and extensive history as research methodology in social and human sciences, with emphasis on its contribution to research in the relational and material fields.

The previously mentioned studies point towards the importance of taking walks as research methodology, as school practice focused on providing education outside the classroom and in higher education spheres. However, most activities involving adventure focus ecotourism and leisure, and they do not effectively have an educational profile. Thus, there is the potential to explore the multisensoriality of movements other than walking, such as cycling and climbing or mountaineering.

What is the power of adventure practices to conservation units? Closeness to nature and contact with different bodily and affective possibilities have shown a way of belonging to the world in pursuit of a more horizontal relationship with beings, and it implies living well. At this point, it is possible to see an intrinsic relationship in the learning process, since it triggers a sensitive perspective that goes beyond established standards.

5. Final Considerations

State Park potential becomes even more explicit through the emerging aspects - education of attention practices and adventure body practices – rising from the decision to be an observer-participant. This process requires much attention, flexibility, and enchantment skills and corresponds to the process where the observer and the observed ones continuously responded to each other since they were together in the herein described experience.

Education opens room for new discoveries and knowledge. The aim of the current study was not to find all the answers to educational and environmental issues, or to change other elements, but to witness and experience a new (more-than-human) education profile and to walk through trails in protected natural areas to value this place, its history and the living and non-living beings living there.

Approaching this aesthetic experience perspective towards natural areas led to an in-depth analysis of the central object of the current research. Pointing out aesthetic experiences available in the State Park also means recommending certain directions for future aesthetic~ethical~political studies.

At this point, educators' training encompasses the most-than-human perspective. Giving primacy to movement through adventure practices in environmental education is a

choice to immerse in research as resistance form to value the more-than-human world and the possibility of finding correspondence to materiality. It regards the practice of becoming sensitive and political ways to engage bodies in the world. Therefore, the current authors had to put their souls in this experience since, according to Joseph Campbell (1988, p. 68), “the place of the soul is where the inner and outer worlds meet each other.”

Back to the introduction, there are few studies focused on adopting adventure practices as means of aesthetic experience in nature. From the environmental education research field and practice perspective, these experiences are valid ways of aesthetically experiencing nature.

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