Constructions of Nature and Tensions in the Outdoors

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This dissertation is dedicated to my family, Pedro and Clara, and to Aotearoa/New Zealand, the country/people that made us feel at home.
Abstract

This dissertation explores aspects of hunting and tramping experiences in the southernmost region of New Zealand, Stewart Island/Rakiura. The focus is on the complexities of hunting, and how tramping, particularly as performed by international tourists, impinges on these complexities. My primary goal is to provide a more nuanced understanding of hunting in modern society, using the particular case of hunting on Stewart Island/Rakiura to provoke new thoughts on the diverse possibilities that this practice provides for hunters who sensually engage with other elements of Nature. This more nuanced understanding involves the discussion of constructions of Nature in modern Western societies, and how the philosophical underpinnings of these constructions help shape experiences and performances in the outdoors, particularly those of hunting.

Secondly, through the understanding of hunting as performances situated in space and place, I discuss how other contemporary practices, equally taking place in natural environments, may influence the embodied narratives of hunters, creating tensions that may, occasionally, turn into conflict situations. I use tourism experiences of tramping in New Zealand, particularly on Stewart Island, to illustrate my arguments.

To achieve my aims I examine the historical processes that relate to hunting in New Zealand and the social norms and values associated with this activity over time. Tramping in this country is examined as a tourism product that is sold to, and performed by, international visitors. Also, I explore how the commodification of the tramping experience impacts on the local routine of hunting as recreation. In doing so, I relate New Zealand hunting and tramping, the latter as performed by tourists, to broader social issues and discuss the meanings attached to their practices in relation to philosophies of environment present in contemporary society. These philosophies are central to the combined understanding of both practices, their connections and disparities, and the relationships with the natural environment and with nonhuman animals that they provoke.

In order to be able to develop the literature on ‘uses’ of Nature and wildlife, integrating debates from philosophy and the animal studies field to conversations in the tourism and leisure studies field, the present study moves towards a more emergent approach to research, embracing a qualitative methodology where both humans and nonhuman animals are understood as being part of a intertwined web of complex relations performed in an ‘out of
doors’ context. A critical reflexive narrative approach was selected as better suited to facilitate metaphorical conversations between the different social actors. Hunters, trampers, and the researcher all bring to this project contributions promising a better understanding of human/nature relations, as well as a more emotionally engaged and embodied relationship with the research act. These exchanges challenge common assumptions associated with recreation conflict and the so-called consumptive uses of wildlife in recreation and tourism studies, thus opening a new window for sociocultural studies of human/nature relationships.
Preface

Earlier rehearsals of the argument presented throughout this dissertation have been presented and published elsewhere. For the sake of ease of reading/writing I will not be citing these papers in every instance this material appears in this manuscript. Rather, I draw to the reader’s attention a short list of the published material, in case the reader would like to see how my thinking has developed into the present thesis.

Journal Articles


Book Chapters


Published Reports


Refereed Conference Papers – Full Text Articles and Extended Abstracts


Refereed Conference Papers – Abstracts


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Introducing the Research

The beauty of hunting lies in the fact that it is always problematic.1

‘the bush’ is part of both the New Zealand landscape and national culture. ‘Going bush’, the deliberate act of escaping modern life or leaving unannounced, is also a quintessential New Zealand myth and reality.2

Indeed, hunting is always problematic. Although Ortega y Gasset, in this specific section of his famous book Meditations on Hunting, was referring to the fact that hunting is unpredictable, and therein lies its fascination to the huntsman (sic), the philosopher also argued throughout his book that hunting is in another sense problematic because it is often misunderstood by non-hunters. He, at the same time, raised several contentious arguments in his defence of the practice, such as the inherently human nature of the hunting practice.3 Here, I take his statement further to say that hunting is problematic not only because of the above mentioned circumstances, but also because of a lack of a more nuanced understanding of this very complex practice. Drawing from anecdotal and from academic literature, it seems that misunderstandings come not only from the non-hunter but from the hunter as well. One has only to analyse the intricate net of inconsistencies and contradictions found in hunters’ discourses to appreciate this difficulty.4

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1 Ortega y Gasset, Meditations on Hunting, 1995, 63.
Tramping, one of the New Zealand practices of ‘going bush’, is no less complex and equally is situated within contradictions and inconsistencies. In ‘the bush’ New Zealand trampers enact a cultural performance that arguably contributes to the continuation of a national identity that perpetuates the settler character. Following Ross, New Zealanders’ engaging in activities such as mountaineering, tramping and kayaking is a good starting point for an understanding of “nature’s meaning and significance in New Zealand culture” and I add that also it is a good way of comprehending how nature has been constructed and how it is dealt with in this society today. However, significantly for the aim of this dissertation, New Zealanders are not the only ones engaging in tramping experiences in New Zealand. International visitors to the country also are important participants who bring diverse cultural identifications to the New Zealand ‘bush’, and their inclusion in the tramping space is today central to the experiences lived by both trampers and hunters in the country.

This dissertation explores aspects of these two activities and experiences in the southernmost region of New Zealand, Stewart Island/Rakiura. The focus is on the complexities of hunting and how tramping, particularly as performed by international tourists, impinges on

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5 Tramping can be roughly defined as leisure walking undertaken in ‘natural’ areas, or ‘in the bush’, usually involving overnight camping or in backcountry huts of New Zealand. Rambling, in the United Kingdom, and Hiking, in the United States, stand as close, but not accurate, synonyms to Tramping in New Zealand.

New Zealand is officially also called Aotearoa, the country’s Māori name. I have opted to use the English name only in order to simplify reading. The choice of English is due solely to the fact that I am writing this dissertation in English and therefore it seems more appropriate to maintain the use of one language only.

6 As with any cultural performance, it is obvious that not all New Zealand trampers will fall into this description. Māori, in particular, have a distinct relationship to land and, in this case, to tramping (if ever engaged in this specific activity). However, I follow Ross and Green when they contend that tramping is a uniquely New Zealand cultural manifestation, fully embodied and embedded in a particular social space, and that it is deeply connected to national identity creation and re-creation. Ross, Going Bush, 2008; Green, “‘Walk This Way’,” 2009.


8 Henceforth I will be using the term ‘dissertation’ to refer to the body of written work that forms my research narrative. ‘Thesis’ will be used to refer to my main argument, or my final claim.

9 In a previous work with Higham, I discussed how international visitors, particularly to Stewart Island, bring different cultural backgrounds to the hunting and tramping experience in the New Zealand ‘bush’. Also Green makes reference to how New Zealand trampers expect quite different attitudes from international visitors to the backcountry than from those of local people. Reis and Higham, “Recreation Conflict and Sport Hunting,” 2009; Green, “‘Walk This Way’,” 2009.

10 Located south of the South Island of New Zealand, separated by Foveaux Strait, Stewart Island is considered New Zealand’s ‘Third Island’ and is the physical setting where the experiences that build this dissertation were mostly performed. It is not my intention to fully introduce the reader to this setting here in the introductory chapter, rather bringing it to full context in the chapters that follow.

Rakiura is the Māori name for the island and is officially used in this bicultural country. Again, for the same reasons mentioned above, I have opted to use, from this point, the English name only.
these.\textsuperscript{11} The nexus for such an exploration will be the contrasting constructions of Nature available to, and operated by, these groups. However, my journey has taken me closer to the experiences of hunters, although my own performance has constantly been of a tramer. What brought me closer to the hunting experience was my emergent awareness of the nonhuman presence in such experiences, and how this presence significantly impacted on the performances and narratives of hunting in New Zealand. My performative distance from hunters made me the more interested in comprehending their engagement with landscape and prey, and how trancers’ performances, including my own but particularly of tourists, interfered with what is an already inconsistent hunting discourse. It is thus through the analysis of the constructions of Nature of these two groups that I intend to identify and understand any tensions that may be inherent in these constructions, and that may cause them to be, at times, in conflict. To facilitate this understanding I will examine the historical processes that relate to hunting in New Zealand and the social norms and values associated with this activity over time. Trandering in this country will be examined only as a tourism product that is ‘sold’ to, and performed by, international visitors. Hence, my engagements with the New Zealand trandering culture will be minimal, providing only the context for the development of the trandering product. Also, I will explore how the commodification of the trandering experience impacts in the ‘local’ routine of hunting as recreation. In doing so, I seek to relate New Zealand hunting, and trandering, as performed by international tourists, to broader social issues and discuss the meanings attached to their practices in relation to philosophies of environment present in contemporary society. In fact, such philosophies will become central to the combined understanding of both practices, their connections and disparities, and their relationships with the natural environment and with nonhuman animals.

With this context in mind, my argument is, in part, that although there are significant moral, ethical and philosophical implications implicit in our relationships with the natural environment in which activities such as hunting and trandering take place, particularly with the nonhuman animals that are involved in such activities, studies in the tourism and recreation fields have not sufficiently engaged with these issues. More importantly, the philosophical debates that inform and impact on our understanding of such relationships have so far not been incorporated into the mainstream research agenda of these fields of study.\textsuperscript{12} Therefore,

\textsuperscript{11} I have opted to focus on international tourists for a number of reasons that will be later thoroughly explored, but particularly because it is their experiences that contrast the most with that of hunters on Stewart Island.

\textsuperscript{12} The philosophical debates to which I refer here encompass, but are not restricted to, discussions on the morality of the use and abuse of nonhuman animals, ethics and the environment, constructions of Nature and
it is my intention here to contribute to this discussion of human animal/natural environment relationships in tourism and recreation studies, exploring how different perspectives on human animal/natural environment, human/nonhuman animal, and human/human animal relationships are performed in pursuits usually categorised as being at either end of the scale of consumptive and non-consumptive uses of wildlife, that is, hunting and tramping.

At this point an important clarification needs to be made. New Zealand is a bicultural nation. Unlike most former colonies, the indigenous people of this country, Māori, are officially acknowledged and have their language and culture protected by Treaty. Māori represent 14.7% of the New Zealand population and their culture, undeniably, is central to the foundation of this country. However, for reasons that will become more apparent in the next chapters of this dissertation, I have decided not to engage with Māori relationships with the natural environment when discussing current philosophies of nature available to hunters and international trampers in New Zealand. My research has focused on ‘Western’ philosophical thought and although it is possible that some of the hunters I encountered during the course of this project had Māori ancestry, and therefore had been influenced by a different perspective of the natural environment, the process of acculturation into Western modes of social structure largely have silenced traditional Māori hunting manifestations to the extent that they were not prevalent, or even significant, in my experiences of hunting in New Zealand, and particularly on Stewart Island. I am aware, however, of the significance the place of human beings within Nature, among others. Tourism and recreation academics indeed have discussed some of these issues, most notably when dealing with zoos as tourism and recreation sites, and ecotourism practices. However, my argument here is that these debates are still marginal and, following from the discussions presented by several contributors to Phillimore and Goodson’s edited book, most tourism studies to date adopt a positivist approach to research that does not allow for a more philosophical discussion of human/nonhuman relationships. This context notwithstanding, one can notice some efforts from tourism and recreation scholars who in fact include in-depth philosophical debates into their discussions of tourism and recreation in natural areas. Good examples of this awareness that are pertinent to the discussions raised here are the works of Franklin, who is a sociologist but one who has great interest in tourism studies, and Marvin, an anthropologist who also possesses a marked interest in tourism. Their most relevant work for this thesis is found in the reference list at the end of this dissertation. Phillimore and Goodson, *Qualitative Research in Tourism*, 2004.

13 The degree to which this legal protection represents respect to, and acceptance of, Māori culture by the general population and by political action in contemporary society is questionable, but it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to address these issues.


15 I use the term ‘Western’ with inverted commas to highlight the contentious character of such a term and its multitude of meanings. Here I follow Bonnett and argue that ‘Western’ has been constructed as a ‘substitute’ term for white, with the same amount of racism contained within it but with a different focus. Therefore ‘the West’ does not refer simply to a geographical location but to the adoption of a particular neoliberal position that embraces certain cultural aspects of historically dominant nations. In this sense, Australia and New Zealand, for instance, are considered ‘Western’ societies. Having made this point clear, I will subsequently use
of Rakiura to Māori people, and that muttonbird hunting on the Titi islands, off the coast of Stewart Island, is an important Māori cultural expression. This practice is disconnected entirely from other forms of hunting on Stewart Island, and therefore is not of relevance to my discussions. Tramping forms a smaller part of this dissertation and is focused on international tourists, who are unlikely to have any connections to Māori culture.

My embedded engagement with hunting and tramping practices in New Zealand, and more specifically on Stewart Island, led me to choose narratives and performances as the main sources of material for my analysis of the experiences of hunters, as well as of international trampers, and their philosophical, including ethical, positions in relation to nature. Discourses formulated or used by hunting groups to define themselves, as well as the ‘others’, will be occasionally invoked during our discussions but are not a major focal point of this study.¹⁶ A thorough explanation of my methodological approach will be presented in the next chapter, clarifying my ‘preference’ for the use of personal narratives and performances over group discourses. Before that, however, there are preliminary considerations, particularly of theoretical issues, that I wish to consider.

**Preliminary Considerations**

Firstly a structural note: as the reader might have noticed, I make extensive use of footnotes throughout this dissertation. The footnotes here provide not only reference information regarding the sources used in my discussions, but provide also a parallel narrative which helps inform and clarify some of my arguments. Thus, these footnotes are an essential part of the text, and therefore, of the reading of my thesis.

Other, more theoretical, issues need to be considered before the discussions proposed in this dissertation are expanded, most emphatically, my use of terms.

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¹⁶ Here, and throughout this dissertation, I use the term ‘our’ to include the reader in the process of meaning creation, as Tompkins and others have proposed in *Reader-Response Criticism*, 1980. Other people who have participated in this research, such as the trampers and hunters I met during the course of my research, are similarly included. Although this dissertation has been written only by me, and reflects my authorial intention, it has been constructed together with all participants. Moreover, the discussions presented in it are ‘ours’ because the reader's interpretation and later recounting of interpretations negotiated with the work are further dynamic processes that add layers of meaning. McLaverty, “The Concept of Authorial Intention in Textual Criticism,” 1984.
Human and Nonhuman Animals

First, my choosing the term ‘nonhuman animals’ to indicate what are usually named simply ‘animals’ is a fundamental position for the presentation of my thesis; the reason being that this convention reflects in different ways my ontological position, and clarifies my understanding of one of the subjects involved in my research, the nonhuman animals who take part in the hunting, and also the tramping, experiences, as well as my own position in the natural world (and therefore in this research), as merely a human animal. Also, in choosing to use ‘nonhuman’ instead of ‘non-human’ I am making a claim also that the ‘non’ prefix is not a denial of a human condition (non-human), but simply an identifier of different categories of the ‘animal world’ (human animals and nonhuman animals).17

This selection of terms is essential for the reader’s analysis and understanding of my own narrative involvement throughout this dissertation. My rejection of the common assumption that ‘animals’ (all species except humans) and ‘humans’ are of completely different natures and that there is a hierarchy operating between the two, with ‘humans’ being superior to ‘animals’, is implicit in my use of these terms. It is clear, however, that in keeping the word ‘human’ in both designations (human animal and nonhuman animal) I am acknowledging the domination of human animals over other animal species, although by no means being sympathetic with such domination.18 This position will be noticeable and prominent in the course of this dissertation and is a critical basis for the development of my analysis of the hunting experiences. Herein lies the importance of a clear understanding of the author’s ontological position, which will be further explored in the next chapter.

Tourism and Recreation

Another issue that needs to be clarified is my constant use of the terms tourism and recreation to designate the nature of the activities analysed in my study. The permeable boundary between tourism and recreation, and tourists and recreationists, in outdoor activities can create problems when trying to define specific groups of people that engage in activities that are in essence engaged in while ‘away from home’. However, although I am

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17 Here I wish to call the reader’s attention to the fact that I am aware of the philosophical debate that deals with the question of what constitutes a human being and what constitutes an ‘animal’ or a ‘beast’. However, this debate is beyond the scope of this dissertation and it is not a theme I will pursue here. An important reference for this discussion is Tim Ingold’s edited book What is an Animal?, 1988.

18 I will, however, refrain from using the term ‘human animal’ in every occasion as this can add unnecessary weight to the text and make its reading less pleasurable. That does not mean, however, that I agree with the ‘oblivion’ of our animal self in the use of the term. Yet, I do not have a better term to present and for the sake of simplicity in writing and reading I have opted to use ‘human’ in most instances.
very aware of phenomenological definitions of tourism, and of the tourist, I am aware also of the complexities and limitations of such definitions, especially in the case of outdoor leisure pursuits, which are the main focus of this dissertation. In the case of the present research, it seems more appropriate to use a motivational definition for the participant; here, visitors to outdoor environments are engaging in activities for recreational purposes, even when they may also be called tourists. Particularly, hunters in this project are understood primarily as recreationists, as their performances are related to a sense of localism and being, rather than to a sense of discovery that is usually associated with the tourist performance. On the other hand, the trampers discussed in this dissertation are mostly international visitors to Stewart Island, performing clearly as tourists ‘buying’ a (loosely) formatted product, although they are certainly, to some extent, recreationists in that environment.

Following Urbain’s position, I understand tourism to be the result of the subject – the tourist – and not the contrary. Also, as Crouch stresses, tourism is made in the process of ‘doing’ and in this case I argue that the ‘doing’, for hunters, comes from a recreational activity that gives meaning to their travel. In this sense, hunters abrogate their status as ‘tourists’ and prefer being associated with the practice per se (being called hunters) than being associated with their traveller status, which today carries so many different and contested connotations. Conversely, most trampers on Stewart Island clearly reproduce tourism representations and tramping, in most cases, is only a (small) part of their travel. They do not usually identify themselves outside of that environment as trampers, but engage with tramping in that environment as this is the sort of engagement expected from them when ‘buying into that product’.

I am aware that activities that are engaged with in natural spaces, such as national parks and conservation lands, in most cases require travel, thus they would not be available in the first place as pure recreational activities, dispensing with the ‘tourism’ component. However, if tourism is the result of the subject, a tourist cannot simply be the one who travels to a

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specific location. It is the performance of tourism that ‘determines’ a tourist.\textsuperscript{23} In the specific case of Stewart Island, where the performances of tramping and hunting were most actively experienced by the author, trampers are commonly international visitors to New Zealand and perform accordingly. Hunters, on the other hand, are in most cases New Zealanders and their performances are deeply connected to the performance of place, a ‘localism’ that denies them tourist status.

\textit{Nature}

Obviously, a major concept used in this dissertation is that of Nature. Already, I have used the terms ‘natural environment’ and ‘outdoor environments’ to designate physical settings where Nature may be experienced. This concept needs elaboration and clarification, however. This necessity notwithstanding, I will refrain from doing so immediately in this introduction as it requires a major engagement with the literature to consider and conceptualise such a complex construct. Nonetheless, this engagement will take place as soon as I discuss environmental philosophies, in Chapter 3. For now, it is important that the reader is informed that my use of the term ‘Nature’ is metaphorical, a representation of a collective construction, and that I am aware of the difficulties both in using and avoiding the use of this construct, as well as the difficulties in using an alternative, substitute term.\textsuperscript{24} Moreover, I make a distinction between ‘nature’ and ‘Nature’, where the former represents either “the essential quality and character of something; […] the inherent force which directs either the world or human beings or both; [or] the material world itself, taken as including or not human beings,” and the latter the socially constructed and discussed notion of Nature.\textsuperscript{25} The latter will be my focus in Chapter 3.

\textit{Place and Space}

Connected to this discussion of Nature, natural environment and outdoor environment is the use of the terms place and space. These constructs also are central to the debates I will raise about the hunting, and the tourists’ tramping, experiences and need to be defined briefly before I move on with my discussions, in order to establish for the reader a clear understanding of what I mean when I use such terms. I will not, however, present a full


\textsuperscript{25} Williams as quoted in Franklin, \textit{Nature and Social Theory}, 2002, 22.
review of the historical developments of such concepts, as this has been done rigorously by other authors in the past.26

Space and place as metaphysical concepts have been used in different ways, both in the more specific geography literature and, more widely, in social science research. In general, there have been three main approaches to the place/space debate: the first favouring place over space; the second favouring space over place; and the third attempting to merge the two concepts as being mutually constituted.27 The first approach to the place/space distinction was predominant in the 1970s, mostly as a reaction to spatial scientist John Hudson’s comment that “places [...] were dots, and spaces were the white areas enclosed by geometrically drawn black lines.”28 According to Wainwright and Barnes, Tuan expresses this approach well when he writes that “what begins as undifferentiated space, becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.”29 From this perspective, space is inferior to place as “space provides the context for places [...] and derives its meaning from particular places.”30 Space, therefore, cannot have meaning if place-making does not occur.

In the 1980s, geographers began to conceptualise space and place in more dialectical terms. However, space was now implicitly favoured over place, possibly in an attempt to overcome the previous conceptualisation of the space/place distinction, as presented by Tuan.31 David Harvey clearly emphasised the predominance of space, positioning space as “where the action occurred, and places [as] only staging posts for spatial transformation.”32 Later, Harvey refined his position and discussed place as being in dialectical tension with space. However, although attempting to argue for a balance between conceptions of place and space, Harvey privileges space when he affirms that place-making is a process that “carve[s]

31 Tuan, Space and Place, 2001.
out ‘permanences’ [...] that are not eternal but always subject to time as ‘perpetual perishing’."\textsuperscript{33} Hence, while spatial change is constant, place can easily dissolve.

The third and most current approach to the discussion of the space/place distinction is discussed in terms of relationality. This approach aims to overcome dualisms and wishes to merge the two concepts, arguing that there is “no clear division between space and place because both are cut from the same cloth of multiplicious relations. Their difference is one of degree, not kind.”\textsuperscript{34} This approach, therefore, refutes any critical difference between place and space.

Contrary to all the above positions, Wainwright and Barnes have recently proposed a new, more nuanced, understanding of the distinction between space and place. Their position is that place and space should indeed be understood as inter-dependent, but not as the same. The distinction is necessary, but not the supremacy of one over the other. “They require each other because they are different in ways that shape how we think them. [...] Space is meaningful as not-place, and vice versa.”\textsuperscript{35} This approach has implications for the conversations around Nature, and therefore for this dissertation. As Wainwright and Barnes have argued, the concept of Nature has largely been influenced by conceptions of place and space. Thus, the amalgamation of the two into one ‘entity’, like Doel’s idea of ‘splace’, hinders a contextualised understanding of the historically-contingent constructions of Nature in modern Western societies.\textsuperscript{36} Also, by favouring space over place, or vice versa, one cannot fully analyse concepts of Nature when Nature has been conceptualised as both space and place. “While both space and place constitute nature, they do so in radically different respects. Nature is at once infinite and totalizing (as space) yet everywhere infinitely particular and differentiated (as place). As nature in this dual respect, space and place are articulated, joined in difference, and frame our experience of nature and existence.”\textsuperscript{37} It is this approach that better defines my understanding of the concepts of place, space and of Nature.

\textsuperscript{33} Harvey as quoted in Wainwright and Barnes, “Nature, Economy, and the Space-Place Distinction,” 2009, 969.

\textsuperscript{34} Wainwright and Barnes, “Nature, Economy, and the Space-Place Distinction,” 2009, 970.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 974.

\textsuperscript{36} Doel as quoted in Wainwright and Barnes, “Nature, Economy, and the Space-Place Distinction,” 2009.

Furthermore, the importance of space and place for the study of tourism and recreation has largely been supported by authors such as Crouch who argues, and I follow, that the embodied tourist experience can be understood only if situated and contextualised in space, which is not inert but “transformed by the presence and practice of bodies.”

The experiences of hunting and tramping are extremely sensorial and the involvement of the body is crucial to their practice. Through such bodily practices and active intersubjectivity one can add meaning to spaces and also constitute places. The meanings of specific hunting and tramping places and spaces are created and transformed during the experiences of hunters and trampers, in this case, located on Stewart Island. Therefore, place and space cannot fully be understood separate from the experience.

**Consumptive and Non-Consumptive Wildlife Recreation and Tourism**

The concept of consumptive and non-consumptive wildlife recreation and tourism proposes hunting as exemplary consumptive wildlife recreation/tourism, and tramping as a non-consumptive form. In general terms, consumptive activities in outdoor recreation or tourism are defined as activities that physically extract resources from the land. In the case of wildlife consumption, such activities include hunting, shooting game animals and fishing. Conversely, non-consumptive practices in wildlife tourism include all other activities in natural environments that involve wildlife but that do not involve the killing of specific nonhuman animals. Such a concept is a contested one that will, nonetheless, be occasionally used in this dissertation. In fact, this classification and division of activities might be useful for some purposes, but it also carries underlying meanings that distort, positively or negatively, the actual practices. As Urry argued more than a decade ago, common tourism activities, such as sightseeing and walking/tramping, are highly consumptive activities in symbolic and material ways. Tremblay adds that “[t]here is little evidence that non-

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41 The first use of the terms ‘consumptive’ and ‘non-consumptive’ referring to tourism and recreation practices in natural environments is usually attributed to Duffus and Dearden, “Non-Consumptive Wildlife-Oriented Recreation,” 1990.
consumptive wildlife tourism activities involve greater empathy, respect or learning benefits” than the so-called consumptive ones. The use of these terms here, therefore, does not imply their uncritical acceptance. On the contrary, I support Tremblay’s argument that the dichotomy created by these terms only hinders a more refined understanding of these practices. However, since the terms have been in constant use in the wildlife management and tourism literature to define and differentiate certain activities, including hunting and tramping, in outdoor environments, it seems inappropriate to ignore them and create a new label, the utility of which, most likely, will be limited.

Recreation Conflict
Conflict between consumptive and non-consumptive wildlife recreation participants is a common management concern that has been studied, albeit sparsely, by scholars from both the tourism and recreation fields. Research concerning differences between outdoor participants has predominantly been situated within the recreation conflict literature, a well developed, management-focused, research field. As it is the aim here to explore some aspects of the hunting experience that may be associated with conflict with trampers in the outdoors, it is imperative, in order to advance my own discussions, to clarify what questions this literature has formulated for attention and what the main conclusions are, allowing the present study to be situated within a broader field. Following a brief review of the recreation conflict literature I will present some issues that have been raised particularly in regards to consumptive and non-consumptive forms of wildlife recreation/tourism. A brief review of the literature here, in the introductory chapter, will aid in the understanding of my research aims and theoretical positions.

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Outdoor Recreation Conflict

Research concerning recreational conflicts in outdoor environments dates back to the late 1960s, when predominantly North American scholars began to discuss both the causes and consequences of conflicts between different groups of users.48 The introduction of ‘new technologies of play’, as well as an increase in participation in outdoor recreation, led to tensions between different groups, especially motorized and non-motorized groups of recreationists, becoming more evident, resulting in a call for the institution of new policies for recreation in natural areas.49 As a consequence, during the establishment of this area as a field of interest for academic studies, scholars have focused on contributing to the practical management of such conflicts, proposing strategies such as zoning, and management planning frameworks such as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, as possible managerial approaches to conflict resolution.50

Historically, conflict as a management concern emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but it was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that recreation and tourism studies started to emphasize the need to better manage this sort of conflict, especially because the usage of all-terrain vehicles for recreational purposes was steadily increasing.51 The main argument was that motorised and non-motorised recreationists have distinct profiles that reflect conflicting sets of attitudes and values. The common conclusion from these studies was that activities requiring motor vehicles, and those that did not, were simply incompatible.

In an effort to elucidate the conflict issues related to motorized versus non-motorized uses of the outdoors, conflict between other types of interest groups were identified and there

48 For a succinct but good review of the scholarly work conducted in the first decades of research on recreation conflict see Saremba and Gill, “Value Conflicts in Mountain Park Settings,” 1991; for a more recent account see Wang and Dawson, “Recreation Conflict along New York’s Great Lakes Coast,” 2005.

49 The term ‘technologies of play’ was first coined by Deval and Harry and is defined as the “physical equipments and sequences of activities engaged in by recreation persons.” Deval and Harry, “Who Hates Whom in the Great Outdoors,” 1981, 400.


Even though Dunn predicted that motorized recreation would diminish dramatically before the end of the century, and that Knopp and Tyger expected an increase in the support for less consumptive forms of recreation, the trend endured and still today motorized vs. non-motorized recreation is an important management matter.
emerged a significant outdoor recreation management research field. During this first ‘era’ of attempting to resolve conflict in the outdoors, Butler proposed a series of sources of conflict that were later repeatedly discussed in other studies. Besides stressing that merely the presence of the machine disturbs some outdoor recreationists, Butler argued that the physical impact of motorized vehicles on the environment also upset other users. He reasoned also that the introduction of technology to leisure activities enabled people to enter places that were otherwise inaccessible, and this could lead to misapprehension by the ‘new comers’ of what could be considered appropriate attitudes and behaviours.

From these initial approaches there was a subsequent search for better explanations for conflict, that is, researchers began to question the drivers for such ‘tense’ encounters. In this effort some factors began to be analysed to test their influence on conflict situations, including the perceptions of how natural settings should be used; crowding and carrying capacity; and values associated with the natural environment. The lack of theories to support these discussions led to the pioneering work of Jacob and Schreyer who defined conflict as “goal interference attributed to another’s behavior.” The theoretical perspective for recreation conflict in the outdoors presented by these authors is, to date, certainly the framework most employed for discussing conflicts in leisure pursuits, although their typology has been further developed, as I will be presenting below in this review.

52 An example of a different form of conflict, one involving not only park users but also managers, is presented by Clark, Hendee and Campbell, “Values, Behavior, and Conflict in Modern Camping Culture,” 1971.


54 Knopp and Tyger argue that some outdoor recreationists are in fact disturbed by the simple presence of the motor vehicles. Knopp and Tyger, “A Study of Conflict in Recreational Land-Use,” 1973.


57 A recent example of the application of the goal interference model can be found in Confer, Thapa and Mendelsohn, “Exploring a Typology of Recreation Conflict in Outdoor Environments,” 2005.

Hawke and Booth also applied the goal interference model when studying conflict between sea-kayakers and motorised watercraft users in a National Park in New Zealand, proposing additional four factors that contribute to conflict, but without challenging the well-established model. Hawke and Booth, Conflict between Sea-Kayakers and Motorised Watersport Users Along the Abel Tasman National Park Coastline, New Zealand, 2001.
Jacob and Schreyer proposed four causes of user conflicts: activity style, resource specificity, mode of experience, and lifestyle tolerance. For each of these causes the authors presented propositions that scrutinize their meanings. In short, the propositions involve evaluations of quality, behaviour settings and values, and these are presented as foresights to enable managers to recognize potential conflict in recreation. Due to its management focus, the framework does not provide a comprehensive basis for the understanding of recreational conflict as a sociological experience embedded in different social realities and wedded to different motivations; subjects that will come later in my discussions. Jacob and Schreyer’s influence in the period following the publication of their model led to most work being focused on attitudes and interactions among activities’ subgroups at a given site, with mixed support for the conflict factors presented by the typology.

A year before Jacob and Schreyer’s influential work, Bryan also presented a conceptual framework for outdoor recreation that has been widely employed in recreational conflict studies: the recreational specialization concept. This concept influenced the works of several subsequent studies in outdoor recreation, and specifically in recreation conflict, arguing that participants in recreational activities would ‘develop’ through a “continuum of behavior from the general to the particular, reflected by equipment and skills used in the sport.” This


In 1990, Schreyer expands the discussion he initiated, together with Jacob, on recreation conflict and the goal interference theory. However, the focus was kept the same and no significant advances were made to the original proposal. Schreyer, “Conflict in Outdoor Recreation,” 1990.

60 Bryan, Conflict in the Great Outdoors, 1979, 29.

continuum placed individuals as novices, at one extreme, and specialists at the other, according to their commitment to the activity and prior experiences with it.

A contribution derived from Bryan’s work is the understanding that different goals might be pursued by participants in the same activity, and that groups and individuals measure quality (of experience and resources, for instance) in different ways. Although current research continues to disregard differences within groups, Bryan initiated a discussion and analysis of the topic that has been important for the development of the field. In order to elaborate his proposed framework the author created a rather strict typology of the researched group. When doing so he presumed that a linear and predictable pattern of behaviour would evolve over time among participants within an activity group. Following the same argument, Hollenhorst reasoned that “while not identical, user characteristics, behaviors, and preferences do follow fairly predictable patterns.” Even though Bryan agrees that quality experience for one group might not be so for another, even within the same activity, his conclusions support the concept of predictable patterns of change in participation style and intensity over time, a supposition that is highly contestable, although also frequently used.

Daniels and Krannich, as well as Lichkoppler and Clonts, brought to the discussion on recreational conflict the management planning framework proposed by Clark and Stankey, the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS). The presentation and discussion of this framework is beyond the scope of my intentions here. However, due to the significance of ROS to outdoor recreation management, the inclusion of this framework into the recreation

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61 Confer, Thapa and Mendelsohn in their recent exploration of the goal interference model maintain an outdated approach to conflict that undermines the differences that can, and do, occur between members of the same activity group. Confer, Thapa and Mendelsohn, “Exploring a Typology of Recreation Conflict in Outdoor Environments,” 2005.


63 Kuentzel and Heberlein, “From Novice to Expert?,” 2006, have recently empirically challenged the assumption that recreation specialization occurs following a predictable pattern. Before them, Scott and Shafer, “Recreational Specialization,” 2001, argued that although the model had important merits, it did not seem that recreationists pursued a typical career path that would fit within the recreation specialization progression. More broadly, contemporary discussions of self and becoming, such as the ones raised by Crouch in his “Spacing, Performing, and Becoming,” 2003, are good examples of how unpredictable are the changes in one’s self, and therefore one’s behaviour, derived from repetitive recreation experiences. However, recent academic works still utilise the concept and present, nonetheless, positivist empirical support. See, for instance, Sorice, Oh and Ditton, “Exploring Level of Support for Management Restrictions Using a Self-Classification Measure of Recreation Specialization,” 2009.

conflict discussions is worthy of attention. For Daniels and Krannich, the use of ROS for dealing with recreational conflict would potentially diminish causes of conflict. Based on the ROS framework, another important issue raised by these authors that can consistently be found in the recreation conflict literature is the understanding that goal incompatibility, the main cause of conflict according to this approach, can be reduced by spatial separation, or zoning. However, the idea of creating special areas for determined activities ignores conflict amongst users of the same pursuit as well as the conflict derived from this management procedure itself. Other authors add that zoning is unlikely to be an effective management strategy if the underlying reason of conflict involves values and norms. In these cases, conflicts are not restricted to the direct presence or actions of others, but to what they represent.

Proposals, such as zoning (derived from ROS), and the use of social carrying capacity and limits of acceptable change, for example, to control and mitigate conflict, have arisen as an outcome of mostly quantitative studies that concentrated on the “public’s response to conflict and the processes involved in responding,” shifting from an initial focus on the understanding of behavioural aspects of recreation conflict to an effort to identify set responses to these conflicts. These management tools have served the latter purpose well. Nevertheless, however valuable, the focus on creating management strategies has again kept the discussions of socially and philosophically important matters at a superficial level.

Other important attempts also were made in the 1990s to develop new theories of recreation conflict, beyond the goal interference model. Gold discussed a behavioural approach to managing conflicts between different recreation users. Although Bryan, in 1979, had already proposed the use of behavioural concepts to discuss outdoor recreation, few studies had

66 See, for example, Horn, Devlin and Simmons, Conflict in Recreation, 1994; Williams, Dossa and Fulton, “Tension on the Slopes,” 1994.
69 Hammitt and Schneider, Recreation Conflict Management, 2000, 350.
used these as a theoretical framework to investigate recreation conflict. Gold added that recreation experience may be viewed in terms of “values that become institutionalised as objectives for individuals or society.”

According to this author, it is from the acknowledgement of these values and objectives that a behavioural basis can be built for a better understanding of the actual and perceived conflicts between recreation users.

Values were the focus also in Aldeman, Heberlein and Bonnicksen’s proposition that conflicts arise from differences in social values. Their work influenced some academic and management discussions in the field by changing the focus of recreation conflict theories from interpersonal conflict to a broader ethical discussion. However, to date, important philosophical issues related to values and ethics, such as the ‘natures of Nature’, human/nonhuman animals dualities, among others, have not been incorporated into the arguments, whilst studies in the area continue to attempt to measure social values and conflict situations. Some of these philosophical issues will serve as foundations for the present dissertation and will be raised later in this chapter.

The work of Schneider and Hammitt is also considered influential for the study of recreation conflict; it addresses the visitor-response dimension in conflict, presenting a conceptual framework based upon stressful situations. The model, adapted from Lazarus and Folkman's stress-response model, suggests that personal and situational factors influence a series of evaluation processes that lead to response to conflict. For these authors, “conflict is defined as a disruptive, stressful occurrence in the visitor’s recreation experience involving a person-environment relationship that taxes a person’s psychological resources.” What is interesting about this concept is that it can incorporate goal interference and crowding, as both can lead to stressful appraisal. The use of the stress concept to understand conflict in recreational

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settings was pioneering and influenced several subsequent studies, including important discussions about coping behaviours. Another important contribution of this work was the understanding of conflict as a process rather than as an event; and although crowding was utilized as a measure of conflict, the authors presented it only as a source for evaluating responses in potential conflict situations. This approach is rather different from previous ones, and demonstrates, as Owens noted, a soft shift in recreation conflict studies towards a better discernment between crowding and conflict. Nonetheless, studies in the field of recreation conflict until the end of the twentieth century were still primarily quantitative, adopting “a reductionist and linear model, ignoring complex interactions among entities involved.”

Coping strategies and stress-appraisal have gained increased attention since Schneider and Hammitt’s studies. Gradually, these concepts have become important and recurrent themes in the field as researchers have become more interested in how people handle and react to conflict situations. Another approach that has been receiving growing attention uses affect control theory, and deals with emotions and how these influence perceptions of conflict and subsequent levels of satisfaction. These more recent studies have proved very useful as this knowledge will likely enhance the ability of park managers and others to predict responses to potential conflict situations. More importantly, researchers have come to recognise that recreation “conflict is inevitable, but it should not be dreaded.” The works of Dustin and colleagues emphasise such an approach to conflict, suggesting “collaborative stewardship in the context of [...] contentious recreation resource management issues.” These studies are,

nonetheless, still ignoring philosophical issues that may influence conflict between different groups in outdoor environments.

**Consumptive and Non-Consumptive Wildlife Recreation Conflict**

Despite the prolific efforts of recreation conflict researchers, a segment of outdoor recreation has been left, to a great extent, unattended. The extensive literature on recreation conflict between motorized and non-motorized recreationists, for instance, contrasts with the dearth of studies published with the specific focus of understanding the conflict between consumptive and non-consumptive wildlife recreationists. Mention of this conflict is, nonetheless, present in park management reports and management plans. On the other hand, more generic discussions about consumptive and non-consumptive use of wildlife for recreation or tourism purposes have gained increased attention from social scientists working in the tourism and recreation fields. As I highlighted earlier, activities such as hunting and fishing usually are contrasted with those commonly referred to as contemplative and less impacting, such as bird watching and tramping, but few studies have attempted to understand the reasons for the alleged differences, and for any conflicts between the two differentiated groups. From the limited literature available, a consistent conclusion is that social values held by these groups are different, and that conflicts arise from such differences.

I have argued above that most of the recreation conflict research has used a practical approach to research design, and has concentrated on the measurement of general environmental values and of differences in behaviour. Similarly, the limited number of

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Harker and Bates have recently discussed conflict over a recreational bear hunt in New Jersey, USA, but not from a recreational conflict perspective. Rather, the authors present a discussion about the position of different groups of society in relation to the ‘problem’ of bears in that State and the measures taken to control them. Harker and Bates, “The Black Bear Hunt in New Jersey,” 2007.


A more recent study from Dawson and Lovelock investigated environmental values of fishers and sea kayakers and reached similar conclusions. Dawson and Lovelock, “Environmental Values of Consumptive and Non-Consumptive Marine Tourists,” 2008.
studies dealing with this topic, but concentrating specifically on non-consumptive versus consumptive users, have followed the same approach. Hence, it seems reasonable to argue that broader philosophical issues informing not only human/natural environment relations but also human/nonhuman animal relations, which, I will argue, are inescapable and central to the debate that involves consumptive wildlife tourism and recreation, so far have not been fully incorporated into the research agenda of academics involved in recreation conflict research.

From this brief review it is clear that researchers on recreation conflict have attended to an important practical need and have positively contributed to management strategies related to the conflict issue. The work that remains unattended, however, is the study of conflict in outdoor environments without management preoccupations driving the discussions. More specifically, possible tensions between consumptive and non-consumptive wildlife recreationists have not been sufficiently included in any of these considerations. Moreover, although some theoretical studies have been presented by scholars in the field, they have all been framed to serve the practicalities involved with the management of conflicts.

One can conclude that the strategies adopted to discuss the current issues are still based on a utilitarian ethical position, that is, “the aim of both private persons and public policy should be to achieve ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number’ (of human being) – ‘happiness’ then being understood to consist in a greater balance of pleasure over pain.” The knowledge produced by the studies reviewed above has enhanced, and will further improve, the ability of park managers to deal with conflict situations, but more profound discussions about the topic and a refined theoretical understanding of the phenomenon cannot be accommodated by these approaches. Therefore, my argument is that not only is there still an important gap regarding the theoretical underpinnings of such conflicts to be filled by studies in this field, but also that different approaches to research need to be incorporated into the discussions in order to broaden the understanding of this phenomenon and to move beyond a purely utilitarian management perspective. Hence, although the brief literature presented above provides an adequate coverage of what has been accomplished in the outdoor

88 The seminal work of Jacob and Schreyer is a good example here. Jacob and Schreyer, “Conflict in Outdoor Recreation,” 1980.
recreation conflict field in terms of a general understanding of the phenomenon and the management of conflict situations, the aim of this dissertation is to move beyond such literature, and situate the consideration of conflicts in outdoor environments within an alternative theoretical framework.

The framework I propose here is intended to generate a more nuanced understanding of conflict in outdoor recreation by including philosophical discussions that will not, necessarily, have a definite management outcome. In addition, contrary to most conflict research in outdoor recreation, my focus will be on one particular ‘consumptive’ activity, hunting, attempting a more complex, historically-contextualised and culturally-situated understanding of the practice to then be able to contrast it with a non-consumptive activity, tramping. This change of approach aims to provide a more in depth comprehension of a practice that may be, at times, in tension with other practices that are defined as its total opposite (consumptive versus non-consumptive activities). Also, such definitions (consumptive and non-consumptive activities) may imply tensions that in fact may not exist, and harmony may be found in environments where conflict is expected.

The use of an approach focused mainly on a single, so-called consumptive activity, has enabled the inclusion, in my discussions, of concepts and themes that do not feature frequently in the recreation conflict literature, such as the concepts of place and space, hosts and guests, ethics, constructions of Nature, and human/nonhuman relationships. It was not by chance, however, that I decided to engage with this topic by focusing more on philosophical and ethical considerations.

Choosing the Topic: A Personal Journey

My first attempt to understand the conflict that had been pointed out to me, between trampers and hunters on Stewart Island, proved frustrating, but, at the same time, forced me to adopt a position that strongly rejected my first approach to the theme and to my research. I will explain.

At the beginning of 2006 I arrived in New Zealand to undertake my doctoral studies. Conflicts in outdoor environments was my main research interest during the first stages of my research efforts. As a rock climber and trumper, I was interested in how different people engaged with the natural environment and why conflicts sometimes occurred in a
recreational space that I considered so pristine and therefore not suited for such negative, but typically ‘human’, behaviours. Gradually I became more familiar with the issues surrounding recreation conflict in New Zealand and was introduced to the idea of conflict between trampers and hunters in the backcountry. As a foreigner to New Zealand, coming from a large and chaotic industrial city in a developing country, hunting was not a familiar or totally acceptable pastime to me. However, possibly due to my acknowledged ignorance of the practice, and to the prominent status of recreational hunting in southern New Zealand, I became inquisitive and was open to learning more about the activity.

The alleged conflict between hunters and trampers became my research topic and, following the recreation conflict literature reviewed above, I designed my research to measure and identify the reasons for conflict on Stewart Island, and more specifically inside the limits of Rakiura National Park.90 The location was selected in light of the management review process taking place during that period; I was expecting to contribute to the management of a National Park, a recurrent aim of recreational conflict studies.91

In the southern summer season of 2007 I went to Stewart Island for the first time to conduct what I called then my first ‘field trip’ to survey hunters and trampers. Carrying hundreds of questionnaires during the island’s high tourist season, I went tramping along the several trails available inside and outside the National Park, took water taxis to different hunting blocks, and delivered surveys to every hunter or trumper whom I met on my visit. It was not until my first long visit to the trails of the island (a 24-day trip fully immersed in the tramping tracks of the National Park) that I realised that the quantitative data collection that I had chosen to employ was not appropriate to unveil some of the issues that I was increasingly becoming bewildered by. The conflict that had been described to me by park managers and

90 The Department of Conservation Southland Conservancy, the southernmost branch of the government organization responsible for conserving and protecting the natural and historical heritage assets of New Zealand, offered a research grant, in 2005 and again in 2006, to postgraduate students to conduct research in areas that were of concern to the agency. In both rounds the conflict between hunters and trampers on Stewart Island was listed as one of the three topics of research to be conducted by the successful applicants. The inclusion of this topic in the Department of Conservation (DOC) list of research priorities highlights the ‘common sense’ understanding that conflict between the two groups of recreationists was happening on the island. In 2006 I was the recipient of the award, with a project that I carried out during most of the second year of my doctoral research and that focused on this conflict.


An example of effort to contribute to National Park management can be seen in Manning and Valliere, “Coping in Outdoor Recreation,” 2001.
reports was not so clear anymore, and other more significant issues were arising.\textsuperscript{92} Why was I not being able to perceive the often mentioned conflicts if I was so immersed in both activities there? And why, at the same time, were trampers’ experiences and conversations so different from the hunters’? Most importantly, why did I feel a closer connection to, or a greater empathy with, the hunters’ experiences than the trampers’, if I was myself a tramper?

I returned from this experience with more questions than answers. Being fully aware of the recreation conflict literature, including New Zealand-based research, I was intrigued by why this literature was not helping me understand what was happening on Stewart Island, beyond the alleged conflict.\textsuperscript{93} I then began to look for other possible avenues, and environmental philosophy showed me that there were other ways, or lenses, through which to approach the issue. From these readings it became clear that central to possible conflict situations between hunters and trampers were not only issues related to the general social values and behaviour of the participants, but also to the social construction of the physical environment in which the activities take place, more specifically philosophies of nature, and issues of place-making and space production that closely relate to our ideas of Nature. These more philosophical lenses seemed more appropriate to use to engage with what I was investigating. From this moment I decided that it was necessary to take a different methodological approach and I chose a reflexive, embedded engagement using a critical interpretativist perspective.\textsuperscript{94}

As a consequence, the questions that emerged from this and subsequent experiences involved an understanding that environmental philosophies shape contemporary human/human, and human/nonhuman animal relations in environments typically labelled as natural. Also, these philosophies influence the constructions of Nature that individuals and groups develop while in such environments. Therefore, an understanding of these constructions of Nature may provide insights into human/human relations in environments where these views and practices are performed and lived, as well as contested and subverted.

\textsuperscript{92} The conflict is mentioned, for instance, in the first draft of the National Park’s management plan. Department of Conservation, \textit{Stewart Island/Rakiura Conservation Management Strategy Review and Rakiura National Park Management Plan Preparation}, 2006.


This journey has taken me from what Denzin and Lincoln called the ‘first moment’ of research to a ‘fifth moment’, where the boundaries between researchers and subjects are understood as blurred, and the engagement with the research is embodied.\(^5\) Moreover, a post-disciplinary perspective has helped me to comprehend better the complexities of the hunting and tramping experiences and has provided a different means to discuss and unveil some of these complexities.\(^6\) In sum, reflection about my research and my own experience as a subject of the research, initially unwittingly, led me to a reflexive engagement with the hunters’ and trampers’ lived experiences, while clarifying in my own mind the nature of the subtle and constantly shifting relationship between reflection and reflexivity.

I am nonetheless aware that reflexivity is a contentious concept and ideal, due mostly to the difficulties in negotiating the boundary between rigorous analysis of research material and unexamined personal narratives of one’s own subject position.\(^7\) However, these difficulties are part of the research act, since it is impossible to deny the author’s own views and participation in the study in which s/he is also performing. As Urbain has argued, “getting a tourist to speak about tourists always results in a discourse about others, never about oneself,” therefore my bodily engagement was essential for a better understanding of the different subjects involved in the study without relying only on narratives about the ‘others.’\(^8\) As a consequence, being so immersed in the performances that I was analysing and discussing, I could not but be conscious of my own role in these performances and narratives of experiences. Being aware of these issues made possible the construction of a new narrative that was built and re-built in close partnership with all subjects, that is, intersubjectively, and taking into account the rigours required of such endeavours.

**My Aims**

The main driver for the establishment of my research aims was my growing awareness of the potential of a more philosophical approach to the conversation around conflict between hunters and trampers on Stewart Island after my first visits to the island. The central goal of this dissertation is then to provide a more nuanced understanding of hunting in modern

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\(^6\) A discussion about the necessity of a post-disciplinary approach to research, particularly in tourism studies, is presented by Coles, Hall and Duval, “Tourism and Post-Disciplinary Enquiry,” 2006, and also by different contributors to Tribe, *Philosophical Issues in Tourism*, 2009.

\(^7\) For issues pertaining to reflexive research see Stronach et al., “Reflexivity, the Picturing of Selves, the Forging of Method,” 2007.

\(^8\) Urbain as quoted in Doquet and Evrard, “Tourism Beyond the Grave,” 2008, 184.
society, using the particular case of hunting on Stewart Island to provoke new thoughts on
the diverse possibilities that this practice provides for hunters who sensually engage with
other elements of Nature. This more nuanced understanding involves the discussion of
constructions of Nature in modern Western societies, and how the philosophical
underpinnings of these constructions help shape experiences and performances in the
outdoors, particularly of hunting. Performances are understood here as “everyday
improvisations which are the means by which the ‘now’ and ‘here’ of time and space are
produced,” and experiences as trans-subjective, that is, not owned by the performer, but a
relational construction.99

Secondly, through the understanding of hunting as performance in space and place, I aim to
discuss how other contemporary practices, equally taking place in natural environments, may
influence the embodied narratives of hunters, creating tensions that may, occasionally, turn
into conflict situations. I will use tourism experiences of tramping in New Zealand,
particularly on Stewart Island, to illustrate my arguments. By doing so, I intend to provide a
new approach to recreation conflict studies that incorporates discussions from philosophy,
sociology and other areas, in an attempt to move to a post-disciplinary discussion of this
social expression.

The Structure of the Dissertation
The structuring of the dissertation into defined and independent chapters is a presentational
demand of scholarly works of this nature rooted in a modernist comprehension of science
and knowledge.100 Although I feel that this is not the ideal format to present the complex
array of material engaged with in the construction of my thesis, it is nonetheless the one I
chose, probably due to my familiarity with it, in order to provide a comprehensible
understanding of the topic and of the issues discussed. Recent doctoral dissertations have
challenged this format and have incorporated more creative forms of representation, going
beyond the traditional prose adopted by academic writing.101 These creative approaches

99 Cloke and Perkins, “Cetacean Performances and Tourism in Kaikoura, New Zealand,” 2005, 905; Dewsbury


101 A poetic and musical example can be found in Brearley’s PhD dissertation: Brearley, “Exploring the Creative
Voice in an Academic Context, Representations of the Experience of Transition in Organisational Change,”
2001. Other examples may be retrieved from the electronic journal Creative Approaches to Research in the ‘Student
Exemplars’ section.
involve the use of different forms of text, such as autoethnographic accounts, poetic writing, music, storytelling and others.¹⁰² I will discuss the possibilities of creative approaches in the next chapter, but I wish, nonetheless, to briefly clarify here how these forms of ‘daredevil research’ have impacted upon my own writing style.

As I have been discussing, there is a series of very distinct positions and issues that need to be dealt with in order to make sense of what Marcus has called messy material;¹⁰³ but these positions are, nonetheless, intrinsically connected and are not clearly understood if analysed separately from each other and, most importantly, from the critical context for which they are being recruited. Therefore, even though I will engage in a ‘traditional’ prose for my narrative of this research experience, I will nonetheless challenge the ‘introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, conclusion’ format. I see this move as a necessary one because, as Blumfeld-Jones and Barone remind us, form and format “tell us what we can know and enable us to express what we have learned,” aiding in the depiction of experiences.¹⁰⁴ More importantly, in abiding by the ‘traditional’ research report format, where the researcher needs to assume the voice of a logician, we may easily lose awareness of the effect that the textual form has upon the textual content. “The [traditional] form, in its linearity, drives the reader toward the stated ‘conclusions’. The reader can glide through the report, validate each section and move on without retrospection.”¹⁰⁵ This linearity, therefore, does not provide an opportunity for a co-constructed and intersubjective narrative. As Polkinghorne argues, the formats in which we report our research are not neutral and thus reflect our epistemological stances.¹⁰⁶ In the case of this dissertation, a ‘traditional’ form of presentation would mask my own journey through this research, my contributions to the experiences, and my way of understanding them. The ‘messiness’ of the material I wish to present required, at least for me to be able to make sense of it, a rejection of linearity and an

¹⁰² Interesting examples of different forms of creative texts in academe can be found in the edited book by Jipson and Paley, Daredevil Research, 1997; and Tierney and Lincoln, Representation and the Text, 1997.

¹⁰³ The term ‘messy’ referring to qualitative research scenarios was first introduced in 1994 by George Marcus and refers to the resistance of the idea that it is possible to have a “too-easy assimilation of the phenomenon of interest by given analytic, ready-made concepts.” As Jamal and Hollinshead point out, I believe that my research context is ‘messy’ because it is hard to capture the performances and narratives of the various subjects involved as well as my role in their performances. More importantly, “it is difficult to complete the research interview/observation/critique because the target individual […] is conterminously engaged in a welter of other pursuits which hereby only yield ‘unfinished’/‘incomplete’/‘inaudible’ texts.” Marcus, Ethnography through Thick and Thin, 1998, 567; Jamal and Hollinshead, “Tourism and the Forbidden Zone,” 2001, 71.


¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 86-87.

embracing of the idea that our thoughts, feelings and perceptions are formed in a circular process of ongoing negotiation and interpretation. In sum, the ‘traditional’ form would contradict my ontological, epistemological and methodological positions. These positions will be explored in the following chapter together with a further discussion of my way of expressing this research experience to the reader. For now I will limit my presentation to a brief description of what the reader can expect to encounter in the next chapters of this dissertation.

The Chapters of the Story

So far I have presented, albeit briefly, some important theoretical positions that underpin my thesis. Following, I presented a succinct review of the management-oriented literature that is available in the tourism and recreation fields about outdoor recreation conflict, specifically about conflicts between participants of consumptive and non-consumptive recreation activities. At the end of my review I raised the argument that not only is there still an important gap to be filled by studies in this field in regards to the theoretical underpinnings of such conflicts, but also that different approaches to research need to be incorporated into the discussions in order to broaden the understanding of such a phenomenon, and to move beyond the purely utilitarian management perspective. I consider this context to be an appropriate one in which to situate a discussion of how human/human relations (e.g. conflicts) are influenced by, or are a result of, participants’ narratives and philosophical constructions related to the natural environment and, more specifically, to human/nonhuman animal relations. In encompassing not only the philosophical issues that permeate the relations humans have with the natural environment and with nonhuman animals, but also the narratives and performances of those involved in these practices, I aim to provide new grounds for the discussions that have hitherto mostly been pragmatic and utilitarian in nature.

In order to be able to develop the literature on uses of ‘Nature’ and wildlife, integrating debates from the animal studies field, the present study moves towards a more emergent approach to research, embracing a qualitative methodology where both humans and nonhuman animals are understood as part of a intertwined web of complex relations performed in an ‘out of doors’ context. Engaging with this challenge, a critical reflexive narrative approach is well-suited to facilitate metaphorical conversations between the

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different social actors.  

Hunters, trampers, and the researcher all bring to this project contributions promising a better understanding of human/nature relations, particularly in outdoor recreation settings. These exchanges challenge common assumptions associated with recreation conflict and consumptive uses of wildlife in recreation and tourism studies, thus opening a new window for sociocultural studies of human/nature relationships. Therefore, I believe it is necessary firstly to present an in-depth discussion of the ontological, epistemological and methodological issues regarding this research in order to clarify for the reader, right from the start, my position when dealing with these issues. Hence, in Chapter 2, *Positioning the Researcher and the Research*, I will discuss my role in this project and how I intended to conduct rigorous research without using the validity toolkit of positivism. This chapter will be devoted also to the presentation of the research methods employed and a justification for their usage. Furthermore, a comprehensive description of the location, Stewart Island, will be included to initiate a discussion about the places where the hunting and tramping activities take place as well as to how the hunting and the tramping spaces are constructed.

The chapter following, *Theorising Nature*, will discuss Nature and how it has been theorised in modern societies. This chapter will introduce the different lines of thoughts and positions on philosophies of nature and the natural environment. Firstly, I will provide a critical discussion of the realist and constructivist views of Nature and the natural environment. Also, a thorough discussion of the concept of Nature will be undertaken as this is central to the understanding of the constructions of Nature that hunters and international trampers engage with. The review of such literature determines the subsequent discussions as it permeates, in a more or less obvious way, the performances and narratives of hunters and trampers in the context of this research. Concepts such as ecofeminism, deep ecology, anthropocentrism and ecocentrism, amongst others, will be explored and discussed within the context of the thesis.

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109 Stronach et al., “Reflexivity, the Picturing of Selves, the Forging of Method,” 2007.


Chapter 4, *Hunting on Stewart Island as a Cultural Practice*, the central chapter of this dissertation, will encompass both a literature review and a presentation and discussion of what could be called the results of this research. I will analyse hunting as a cultural practice in New Zealand, presenting and discussing its history in the country, and also more specifically on Stewart Island.\(^\text{112}\) Furthermore, and more emphatically, I will discuss the philosophies of nature associated with hunting performance and narratives in New Zealand, and, more specifically, on Stewart Island. To be able to do that I will present the experiences I shared with hunters during this research.

During the course of this project, the focus has changed to provide a thorough understanding of one particular activity, hunting, while the second, potentially conflicting, activity, tramping, has served to provide a more complex understanding of the relationships that influence and permeate the hunting experience on Stewart Island. Hence, Chapter 5, *Tramping: Experiences of Commodified Nature*, will discuss the tramping experience exclusively as a manufactured tourism product sold to international visitors. Tramping will not be dealt with as a cultural tradition of New Zealand outdoor recreationists, but rather as it is experienced by international tourists, particularly visitors to Stewart Island. More specifically, the notions of Nature as commodity and as spectacle are dealt with in the context of the tramping performances and narratives of experiences.\(^\text{113}\) At the same time, philosophical issues related to Nature are brought into the discussions to foreshadow the arguments presented in the chapters following.

Chapter 6, *Tensions in the Outdoors*, focuses on the tensions, and possible contrasts between hunters and the tourist tramper. Here I will discuss in a more contextualized way how the different philosophies of nature are performed by hunters and tourists who share the same location in order to engage in their selected recreational activity. In this chapter I will argue that the production of space, and place-making are central to understanding how the different philosophical engagements with the natural environment may be enacted and create tensions between two diverse groups. I conclude that harmony seems to predominate in the


Chapter 7 will revisit the discussions, returning to the three main analytical chapters to weave ‘findings’ into one big patchwork quilt of ‘results’. By then I will have argued that the close encounters and sharing of locations that hunting and tramping activities entail on Stewart Island have triggered complaints, tensions and, at times, conflicts between these groups. These tensions are, however, a product of (sometimes unacknowledged) philosophical positions that influence, and are influenced by, the performances lived and experienced in shared locations. These philosophical positions generate contested discourses of human/nonhuman relations that may be associated with outdoor recreation and more specifically with hunting as a recreational practice in contemporary Western society. The concluding chapter will then follow from this claim and will present an overview of the major concepts discussed in the dissertation together with my ‘final’ statement, or my thesis, presenting the contribution to knowledge I hope to have made with this effort.114

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114 It will become obvious from my arguments that I do not believe that there is a ‘final’ claim to be made. What there will be is a provisory thesis that has been constructed intersubjectively, and that from the very act of writing it, it is changed. More importantly, it is changed every time it is critically read and deconstructed.
Positioning the Researcher and the Research

As researchers, we need to position ourselves as no longer transparent, but as classed, gendered, raced, and sexual subjects who construct our own locations, narrate these locations, and negotiate our stances with relations of domination.¹

The writer writes and the reader reads – or so it appears. And there the matter rests, for most. But in truth, this simple proposition is a mask for a vast system of ambiguities and entanglements.²

The statements above summarise important aspects of my research approach that will be explored in this chapter. Firstly, the acknowledgement that I am an integral and essential part of this research effort; not only as the writer of the ‘findings’ but also as a human being that influences, and is influenced by, the research act.³ Secondly, and unavoidably connected to the first, that it is not my intention to determine, with this research and its conclusions, a single reality or to make any definitive claims about someone else’s experiences in the ‘outdoors’. What I am attempting here is to provide fruitful insights about certain aspects of hunters’, as well as trampers’, experiences in New Zealand. These insights have been constructed ‘in the making’, that is, hunters, trampers and I have woven stories together in order to make sense of, and contribute to, the theoretical thinking of other researchers, who themselves also have contributed with their theories, ideas, stories and reviews. Furthermore, the reader, as s/he reads this text, brings to this project his/her own stories and experiences and will recount and interpret what s/he encounters here from his/her particular standpoint. It is from these notions that I wish to begin my journey.

This research is about human and nonhuman animals, and the locations, places and spaces we routinely call natural. It is about the relationships we construct with each of these notions and how these relationships are performed and talked about. It is also about identity and

³ The use of the term ‘findings’ here is not done without full consideration of its meanings, hence my use of inverted commas. As it will become clear in this chapter, my understanding of an embedded and embodied critical research is at odds with the idea of ‘research findings’, emphasising, on the contrary, co-constructed and intersubjective accounts of significant experiences.
culture and how these aspects of our lives underpin performances in, and narratives of, certain spaces and places. It is not about measuring these things, however; except to the extent that representation through the use of language may be seem as a form of measurement. It is not about building a context and presenting a case-study that will later be scrutinized and extrapolated. It is not about creating a model or a typology to cater for a certain type of tourist or recreationist. It is about discussing how these material elements (physical environment, human and nonhuman animals) interact in a multitude of ways and how different perspectives of this multiplicity can provide fertile grounds for better comprehending the world and its constituent parts, including what must be termed transcendental elements, and more specifically, tourism, recreation and their subjects. For these reasons, before the plot, the story and later, the narrative of this work can be constructed and presented, it is necessary that the reader understands fully how this research came into being, who is narrating it, and, most importantly, its raison d’être. These questions involve my epistemological, ontological and methodological positions and therefore constitute the first step in the telling of the ‘story’.

A Qualitative Inquiry

As I have briefly alluded to in the introductory chapter, my journey into this research has been one of change and discovery. On Stewart Island I became aware, in a most vivid way, of issues that accompany any research act, but that are not always acknowledged. Stewart Island then became a place where my understandings about myself and my project changed dramatically, and negotiating that understanding with others became a major process in my research. For this reason, I decided that a critical reflexive narrative approach based on interpretive qualitative inquiry was the most appropriate to inform my new engagement with the research, and social and philosophical theories of nature then became central to my discussions.

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4 Although identity and culture will be underlying themes explored in most of our discussions, they are not the main issues or elements of analysis. They, nonetheless, permeate the discussions in more or less subtle ways and will be acknowledged as such. My point here, however, is that this dissertation does not aim to make a profound analysis of identity and culture, which would easily constitute an entire new study, but uses such constructs as underlying themes that will contribute to the overall analysis of the hunting, and also of tramping, experiences on Stewart Island, New Zealand.

5 The issues I refer to here relate to ontological and epistemological questions, and are thus present in any research practice. These are the focus of the following sections of this chapter as well as a full exploration of the research approach I have chosen for this study.
Denzin and Lincoln have defined qualitative inquiry “as a set of interpretive activities” that differs from quantitative inquiry in the sense that it “locates the observer in the world,” that is, the researcher is seen as a contributor to the investigation. Following their argument, research that is conducted using qualitative methods, even those situated within positivist ontologies, are classified as interpretive. This categorization attests to the fact that in qualitative methods there are no sets of quantifiable data whose meaning is available through scrutiny, but only data needing to be interpreted. In this sense, the present research is an example of qualitative inquiry.

Still following Denzin and Lincoln, research approaches may be categorized into seven different interpretive paradigms, positivism/postpositivism being the first of them, followed by constructivist, feminist, ethnic, Marxist, cultural studies and queer theory. This categorization differs, however, from what Schwandt describes as interpretivist philosophies, or what is more generally called interpretivism. Although it is not my intention to expand on the definition of interpretivism, it is important to make this distinction here to clarify that although I am proposing an interpretive approach to my research, I am not engaging with interpretivist philosophies, such as phenomenology, for instance. Instead, my engagement is situated within a realist constructivist epistemology that is informed by critical constructivism in a narrative approach. I will expand on those theories, and how they inform my study, later in this chapter as they are indeed fundamental to this research. For now, I will briefly discuss my epistemological and ontological stances.

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7 Ibid.

Again, the use of the term ‘data’ here is not without critique. In order to be loyal to Denzin and Lincoln’s position I have kept the term in this explanation of their position on the ‘definition’ of a qualitative inquiry. When referring to my own research I refrain from its use as I believe it implies a positivist understanding of research material as ‘data’ to be collected and analysed, as opposed to material that will be intersubjectively constructed (by the researcher, as a subject of the research, and other participants) and the product narrated by the researcher to the reader, who may then critically engage with, and deconstruct, it.


The Ontological and Epistemological Questions

As Guba and Lincoln have argued, before one considers which methods to use in a research endeavour, one needs to ask the ‘ontological question’ and the ‘epistemological question’.10 Only having answered these questions can the researcher establish the appropriate methodology for his/her study. Methods consistent with the chosen methodology may then be selected, and these are the tools to be used in an attempt to deal in a rigorous way with the problems posed by the research, or the researcher.

The importance of a clear understanding of one’s ontological and epistemological positions has been highlighted also by Hay, who asserts that “[t]o be capable of articulating and defending a perspective […] is, then, as much as anything else, to be able to identify and state clearly its ontological and epistemological predicates.”11 Such predicates, as Hay contends, inform one’s methodology. In this sense, the following discussion is an attempt to uncover my ontological and epistemological positions, then to present my methodology and, subsequently, my methods. Being aware in this way of my positions, the reader will be better equipped to engage with this study in an intersubjective way, that is, by interrogating the text and rigorously developing coherent alternative readings.

Following Marsh and Stoker, I will deal first with my ontological stance since I believe that any epistemological claim is always ontologically grounded.12 To answer the ‘ontological question’ one has to demonstrate what type of reality s/he believes in and how that reality presents itself during the research act.13 As will become evident in my discussions, although I understand idealist arguments of the nature of reality as intrinsically connected to consciousness, mind and perception, I do not agree that there is no ‘reality’ apart from that which we make. Furthermore, for idealists “[m]atter does not exist except in the form of ideas in the mind, or as a manifestation of mental activity,” a position that therefore precludes physicality or materiality, for instance.14 In that regard, idealism is inconsistent with my understanding of the material world as being full of ‘realities’ that are comprehended and represented through social interaction and construction.

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14 Lacey, A Dictionary of Philosophy, 1996, 143.
On the other hand, materialism, or ontological realism, makes the claim that reality is ‘real’ and independent from mind, in many senses grasppable, or as Lockie defines it, “that nature and social relationships have an objective reality that exists independently of human knowledge or beliefs.” 15 Although I share with materialists the belief that there are ‘real’ things that exist ‘independently of human knowledge or beliefs’, materialists go too far, in my understanding, when they assert that “all that is real is the physical or material” world, a position that consequentially ignores that which goes beyond the physical, such as senses, intuition, and feelings. 16 I will argue later that the senses involved in the embodied performances of hunting play an important part in determining hunters’ (and trampers’, for that matter) experiences. More than that, in my own experience of the world I agree with Neville’s argument that

we have two kinds of perception. One is we see and hear and smell but there’s another perception in which the past flows into us physically. This we experience through intuition and premonitions and so on, and that’s to be taken just as seriously as the material things that we observe. And in writing comes the same thing. You keep writing until what you’ve written matches your personal experience and the experience of the universe which is flowing into you now.17

Therefore such materialism is not an appropriate response to my ontological question.

Materialism commonly is associated with the historical materialism proposed by Karl Marx, and today is manifested through different approaches, such as cultural materialism, or what Levinson has called pre- and post-dialectical materialisms. 18 Such approaches present new perspectives of crucial importance for critical research, both ontologically and epistemologically, but still they do not embrace embodiment as a significant part of social performances.

16 Willis, Foundations of Qualitative Research, 2007, 9.

In these forms (historical or cultural materialism), I would argue that materialism is more of an epistemological position than an ontological one. Again, inconsistencies of terms in social science literature present problems when trying to deal with such an array of ontological, epistemological and methodological positions.
Alternatively to materialism’s a-sensual perspective, subjectivism, or ontological constructivism, does take into consideration the senses, in that it understands that perception creates reality.\textsuperscript{19} In other words, “nothing exists before consciousness shapes it into something perceptible.”\textsuperscript{20} In that respect, subjectivism holds that the social world plays a substantial part in the existence, or the manner of existence, as Crossley puts it, of things.\textsuperscript{21} Furthermore, subjectivism assigns language a dominant position in reality creation, and provides the ontological grounds for several postmodern studies.\textsuperscript{22} In Jamieson’s words, “[s]ubjectivism can roughly be characterized as the view that moral language expresses the attitudes of speakers rather than stating facts about the world.”\textsuperscript{23}

Relativism, frequently associated with antifoundationalism, also is an ontological position that is commonly referred to in humanities and social science studies.\textsuperscript{24} According to Willis, “[r]elativism is the idea that the reality we perceive is always conditioned by our experiences and our culture. We can never be sure that what we think is real is a true reflection of the out-there reality.”\textsuperscript{25} In this sense, relativism does not deny the materialist claim that there is a ‘real’ reality, but it contends that we will never be able fully to grasp what reality really is. Furthermore, for relativists, moral claims, experiences, ethical positions, and so on, are all dependent on time and space and cannot be judged from different time and space positions. The difficulty with such a claim is that, in the end, anything is acceptable insofar as one claims that a given position is grounded in a specific cultural space or historical moment. Although I do acknowledge that cultural spaces and/or historical moments help shape behaviours and experiences, and that judgements privileging one’s specific cultural/historical position over a different one are very problematic, I understand also, following Jamieson,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Neither Willis nor Crossley classify subjectivism as ontological constructionism. However, the definition of subjectivism by Willis, and ontological constructionism by Crossley overlap, and for my purposes here it seems adequate to interchange these terms in order to not only display the variety of terms used in the literature, but also to make connections to other positions, such as epistemological and methodological ones.
\item Kincheloe, \textit{Critical Constructivism}, 2005, 8.
\item Crossley, \textit{Key Concepts in Critical Social Theory}, 2005.
\item Johnson and Duberley, “Reflexivity in Management Research,” 2003.
\item Antifoundationalism is the style of philosophy which “dispute[s] the validity of the foundations of discourse,” or a “rejection of the idea that there are foundations to our systems of thought.” Nietzsche is considered one of the most prominent anti-foundationalists. Sim, “Postmodernism and Philosophy,” 2006, 3, 8.
\item Willis, \textit{Foundations of Qualitative Research}, 2007, 48-49.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
that relativists fall into the trap of ‘anything goes’ and this does little to advance philosophical debates, such as the ones I am exploring.\textsuperscript{26}

Whilst I am aware that this brief presentation of commonly adopted ontological positions is by no means comprehensive, it provides nonetheless a useful background against which to build my own ontological argument. Here I have refrained from exploring possible ontological positions of indigenous groups, such as Māori in New Zealand, not in an act of dismissal or denial of their importance, but because they are usually not available to people of ‘white’, ‘Western’ ancestry. Also, in an effort to limit the scope of my enquiry, I have chosen to focus on Western positions in order to critically engage with ‘dominant’ world views to be able to deconstruct established assumptions, specifically as they relate to our engagements with the other-than-human world.

Another important point to be noted is that there are disagreements in different disciplines about the use of terms to refer to ontological and epistemological positions. It is not my objective to discuss here these disagreements, even less to try to solve them. Instead, I have presented what I understand to be significant points of various Western ontological stances that have influenced research in the social sciences, and more specifically in Western environmental philosophy, and that therefore will help clarify my own position in this literature.

My ontological stance has aspects both of materialism and subjectivism. For instance, I understand what is usually referred to as nature as being immanent in the material world and governed as much by its own existence as by external interferences, such as language and social action.\textsuperscript{27} That means that social groups ‘read’ this physical material referred to as ‘nature’ based on their own social constructions, and the way they interact with ‘nature’ depends on the meanings socially allocated to it.\textsuperscript{28} At the same time I believe ‘nature’ exists both related to, and independently of human beings, and its natural processes will remain

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{26} A classic example of a relativist position is to assign validity to cultural practices that are condemned by some cultures on the basis that the practice is an expression of a different and unique culture, and therefore needs to be respected and preserved and not dismissed due to its unacceptability in other (usually Western) countries. Whale hunt by the Inuit communities of the Arctic is one such controversial practice that can be defended on the basis of relativism.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{27} Ingold, \textit{The Perception of the Environment}, 2000.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{28} My position here implies a deconstructive analysis of Nature. However, as Morton warns, if nature is continuously deconstructed language is all that is left. This tension is central to the notion of Nature and is a permanent source of discussion for those who engage with philosophical debates of nature. Morton, \textit{Ecology without Nature}, 2007.}
despite human actions. Therefore, one could argue that I find myself ontologically ‘between’ these two rather different ontological positions. However, as Jamieson discusses, philosophical studies have attempted to find a mid-term between materialists and subjectivists in order to honour insights from both schools. Jamieson calls the ontological position created from the balance of these two positions ‘the sensible centre’ and that is where I find myself ontologically.

Now, moving on to the ‘epistemological question’, Guba and Lincoln contend that it involves the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the knowledge, or the researcher and the researched, and needs to be fused with the researcher’s ontological stance. My epistemological position, following from my ontological stance, seems to embrace aspects of different lines of thought regarding research and the social world where the researcher, the researched and the research live. However, I will clarify what seem to be contrasting positions in order to form my theoretically-informed stance.

First and foremost, I do not engage with a positivist or postpositivist paradigm that is based on empiricist epistemologies that regard the world as objective, where reality is ‘out there’ to be captured, either in full or in segments of probabilistic chance. In doing so, I reject the measurement of parts in order to represent the whole, and what Guba and Lincoln called ‘context stripping’, that is, research that operates under the assumption that it is possible to remove, or in most cases control, aspects (or variables, as positivists would term) of the context that might impact on, or interfere with, the research ‘findings’. If, as I clarified in the first paragraph of this chapter, there is no search for ‘the’ truth as the final product of this research, then the ‘findings’ are best described as knowledge negotiated between researcher and ‘Others’, and is the result of the interaction between them.

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32 I am here referring specifically to social science and humanities research. Also, as stated previously, I see merits in quantitative and positivist methodologies, but not to attain the aims of this dissertation.

Also common in positivist/postpositivist studies is a dualist epistemology, where researcher and ‘researched’ are ‘assumed to be independent entities, and the investigator is assumed to be capable of studying the object without influencing it or being influenced by it.”\textsuperscript{34} Apart from the object/subject divide, other dualisms found in such approaches, and that are of great significance to my thesis, are the culture/nature, and mind/body divides. Clearly, such an epistemological stance cannot be accommodated in my discussions.

Realism, as an epistemological position, also is commonly tied to positivist and postpositivist approaches.\textsuperscript{35} For Jones, this position can be linked to positivism because it presupposes that there is a ‘real world’ that can be empirically evaluated and understood insofar as researchers apply rational enquiry.\textsuperscript{36} However, there is much disagreement about whether a realist epistemology actually reflects a positivist approach to research. According to Steinmetz, for instance, this tradition of associating realist epistemology with positivism comes from what he calls ‘theoretical realism’, which differs from ‘critical realism’. For this author, “most historical researchers, whatever their self-description, are critical realists.”\textsuperscript{37}

As I stated before, it is not my intention to delve into the inconsistencies found in the social sciences literature regarding the definitions of epistemological realism. However, what I understand to be pertinent to our discussions here is that I acknowledge the fact that there are these various ‘types’ of realism, including ontological realism, a quite different construct. This wide spectrum of possible ‘realist positions’ makes the effort to situate realism as one sole epistemological position imprudent. As a consequence, what I provide here is my own understanding of epistemological realism based on Crotty and on Jones.\textsuperscript{38} In this sense, what I assume to be relevant to present is the problematic basic assumption that realists carry, that

\textsuperscript{34} Guba and Lincoln, “Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research,” 1994, 110.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
“reality is unambiguously available to human understanding regardless of culture, experience, or motivation.”

As it is the case with realism, constructivism has been conceptualized differently by different authors in social science research. Denzin and Lincoln classify constructivism as a research paradigm or theory. Holstein and Gubrium refer to constructivism as a ‘project’, or “a frame for understanding and a vocabulary for conducting empirical research.” In the same book, edited by Holstein and Gubrium, several other authors present their own understandings of constructivist research, using labels such as ‘foucauldian’, ‘discursive’, ‘narrative’ and ‘interactional’ constructionism. It seems, therefore, that some approaches present constructivism as an epistemological stance and others as a methodological position. This inconsistency notwithstanding, what all of these positions have in common is the idea that, to different degrees, we cannot understand the world beyond what social action formulates. In Crossley’s words, “the way in which we come to know the world is also shaped by social factors.” Following from this unity, epistemological constructivism contends that our ideas about reality are framed necessarily by social, historical, economic, cultural and political contingencies.

This idea that reality can be understood only as socially constructed has attracted a great deal of criticism. Benton, Dunlap and Catton, and Dickens, to name only a few of the ‘realists’ studying social issues that relate to ‘nature’, contend that constructivism disregards the objective existence of the physical world and its independence from human societies. The debate that has emerged from these two ‘distinct’ epistemological stances has generated a series of counter arguments that shaped what has been called critical constructivism, co-constructionism, and realist constructivism, and this is where I find myself

epistemologically. Crossley presents a valuable summary of what I am calling here, following Barkin, the realist constructivism that represents my epistemological stance:

Importantly, this use does not imply that everything is a social construct. Some things are and some things are not because some things depend upon society for their existence, where other things do not. Democracy, for example, is a social construction, both because it is a form of social organization and because it only emerges in some societies, but mountains, rivers and sheep are not, because, though affected ecologically by the life of human societies, their existence, as such, is not dependent upon the existence of human societies.

My own effort to summarise the realist constructionist position taken here implies an understanding of the environment and all its living forms as realities that are constantly reconstructed by a social system that imposes upon them meanings that are relevant in a given social context. As Laclau suggests “[a] stone exists independently of any system of social relations, but it is, for instance, either a projectile or an object of aesthetic contemplation only within a specific discursive configuration.” More importantly, this stance entails an understanding of social practices as dynamic and that “the interpretation of context or culture is both individual and collective and needs to be understood not as an acquisitional process but as an intersubjective process of ongoing negotiation.”

My Methodological Choice

Understanding methodology as the way the researcher “[goes] about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known” and that there is consequently a rationale and philosophical postulations underlying how we, as researchers, choose to gain knowledge about the world, my methodology may now be explored, since my ontological and epistemological positions have been addressed. In this respect an important clarification needs to be made. The engagements I discuss throughout this dissertation are engagements narrated to me in the

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first person, either in formal or informal conversations, by hunters and trampers whom I met during the period of my study, particularly from early 2007 when I first went to Stewart Island to early 2009, when I last visited the island. These engagements involve experiences of and in Nature, and human/human, human/nonhuman animal relationships. Also, and in addition, they are engagements as I perceived them from my own experiences with these and other people, including academics, during the course of my research in New Zealand, from February 2006 until today, as I am writing. Therefore, I do not understand this research to be confined to the experiences I shared and witnessed on Stewart Island, but to encompass all my engagements with New Zealand hunting and tramping since the beginning of this project until now. This position, therefore, rejects the concept of ‘field’ as a location, a place or a space that is ‘entered’, or travelled to, in order to ‘get access’ to ‘subjects’ or to ‘collect data’. As I have argued briefly above, and following from my ontological and epistemological positions, ‘data collection’ in ‘the field’ implies an understanding of the world and the research as quantifiable or involving determined ‘things’ that one (the researcher) can separate from his/her own everyday life. Cindi Katz challenged us to try to define the boundaries between the research and our own lives, between the researcher and the ‘subject’, between what is the ‘field’ and what is not. According to Katz, “[u]nder contemporary conditions of globalization and post-positivist thought in the social sciences, we are always already in the field – multiply positioned actors, aware of the partiality of all our stories and the artifice of the boundaries drawn in order to tell them.”

Following this reasoning, the narrative constructed here is as much a reflection of the experiences of the ‘Others’ as of my own. As Till rightly puts it, “[a] researcher cannot

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52 It is clear, however, that these engagements were greatly modulated by my experiences on Stewart Island and my focus is, therefore, highly influenced by my experiences in this location. Hunting, in particular, has been mostly focused on Stewart Island, together with other few experiences on the South Island of New Zealand. Tramping has been more broadly explored (in geographical terms) but it is mostly constrained by my experiences in the South Island of New Zealand, where I am based.


54 It is important to emphasise here what I understand by ‘the Other’, or the researched. As Fine points out, there will always be a distinction, despite the intention of reflexive engagement, between the researcher and the researched; the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’. My endeavour here is to engage in a dialogue and in a construction of meanings with the ‘Other’, therefore “revealing far more about [myself], and far more about the structures of Othering.” Such an intention means that I acknowledge a distinction between the two corporeal entities but understand that during my research act, and writing accounts of those acts, the boundaries between self and other becomes less and less clear, revealing multi-facets ‘Selves’ and ‘Others’. Such a position is consistent with a dialogic notion of self and open to the opportunities afforded by intersubjectivity. Fine, “Working the Hyphens,” 1994, 72; Holstein and Gubrium, The Self We Live By, 2000.
easily divide her [sic] research and personal selves into separate sites of home and the field.55

In this sense, my methodological effort will concentrate on presenting a reflexive account, or narrative, of a theoretically informed experience that involved hunters, (international) trampers, academics, ordinary people and me, through the course of my PhD study.56

A Reflexive Engagement

The reflexive narrative approach that I have chosen to use builds on this understanding that home and away, in or out of ‘the field’, are blurred spaces that cannot be comprehended as separable from each other. Thus, the research act is necessarily a constant reflection about one’s involvement in the project, and is about the impacts of the research experiences on one’s thinking and formulations, in order to develop a critically founded narrative. This act of reflection is inextricably linked with a reflexive engagement with the research and this is one of the main tenets of my methodology. In this sense I share Richardson’s position that writing is more than “a mode of ‘telling’ about the social world, […] [w]riting is also a way of ‘knowing’ – a method of discovery and analysis.”57 Therefore, as a methodological position and not only a statement, my reflexive engagement has been shaped by constant reflection, since the early stages of this project, until today, while I am writing it, upon my position and what it represents for my research and for my ‘final’ claim;58 and in every instance I have reminded myself that my understandings of the emergent questions are “only temporal because the self with whom we begin is never there upon return.”59 For this reason, I cannot limit my description of my reflexive engagement to a paragraph or two stating that I am aware of my cultural, social, political and sexual positions, and that all these bring to the research influences that need to be kept in mind by the reader. As much as this is true, there is much more to a reflexive methodology than this.

An important aspect of a reflexive methodology is that although it arises from an act of reflection on previous experience, it is the reflection in experience that allows a reflexive

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56 The term ‘ordinary people’ here is used to include in my ‘list of participants’ people that are neither hunters, nor trampers or academics, but New Zealand residents and visitors to the country that have contributed, in one way or another, to the refinement of my understanding of the experiences I am narrating and constructing in this dissertation.


58 As I have clarified in the previous chapter, I do not believe there is a final claim to be made, as my thesis has been co-constructed and will continue to be as long as there are people reading and, in any way, critically interacting with it.

methodology to be possible. According to Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith, a “[r]eflection is generally characterized as a cognitive activity; practical reflexivity as a dialogical and relational activity.”60 An act of reflection about my research, and my experience within my research, led to my choosing this reflexive engagement that involves constant inquiry into my own position in the research, beyond simple acknowledgements or post-event thinking.61 Therefore, as a relational activity, reflexive engagement requires the ‘Others’ who are involved in the research process, a requirement revealing a process of co-construction, attuned with a critical constructivist epistemology. It is hence not a solitary contemplation of previous research situations, or a monological reflection, but a dialogical activity that “we make […] happen in the instance.”62 Furthermore, as Hall highlights, the reflexive engagement involves also the reflection about the topic one chooses to investigate, and whose ‘voice’ the researcher is allowing to surface, a process that entails an awareness of power relations and political stances that necessarily impact on the research.63 Richardson also emphasises how the research practice represents cultural and political choices that are affected by the researcher’s background but, more importantly, that personally affect the researcher and his/her narrative.64 This acknowledgment of political and cultural forces acting on and within the research is a familiar process in critical inquiry and has influenced my subsequent choice of methods, my interpretations, my writing, and my claim of how my constant reflection has enabled a reflexive narrative to be constructed.

Also, such a reflexive engagement with the research inevitably leads to an embedded position. By embedded I mean the act of getting involved and immersing yourself in a culture in order to make sense of it.65 This embeddedness necessarily involves an understanding of the research as a constructed act of exchange between the researcher and ‘Others’. Hence,
understanding my role as just another participant in the research act, who performs in an intersubjective process of ongoing negotiation to interpret the contexts and cultures, an embedded, reflexive approach to research was deemed to be the most appropriate for this study.\footnote{Jamal and Hollinshead, “Tourism and the Forbidden Zone,” 2001; Connolly, “Exploring Narrative Inquiry Practices,” 2007.}

\textit{An Intersubjective Construction}

The idea of co-construction inherent in a reflexive methodology brings to the fore another important aspect of my methodological choice, that is, the intersubjective nature of my narrative. According to Tedlock, “[r]esearch in the human sciences has undergone a radical shift in perspective, from considering the world as a collection of objects (objectivity) or subjects (subjectivity) to understanding the world as a set of dialogical processes and psychodynamic relationships (intersubjectivity).”\footnote{Tedlock, “Bicultural Dreaming as an Intersubjective Communicative Process,” 2007, 57.} For my research, this means that there is a subtle process of negotiation between my subjective position, and the Others’ subjective positions, the outcome of which is the construction of an intersubjective narrative of events, performances, and experiences. One could argue that the lack of opportunity for some of the most important participants of this study, namely hunters and trampers with whom I shared experiences, to provide feedback through a chance to read and re-read my work in progress, reflects, in fact, a lack of intersubjectivity or co-construction.\footnote{In defining hunters and trampers as ‘some of the most important participants of this study’ I do not mean to underestimate the power and influence of other Others, such as academics whose works I read, nonhuman animals who in different ways actively participated in this research, my supervisors who have revised earlier drafts of this dissertation, colleagues who have read and discussed the material I am presenting here, my friends with whom I went tramping, climbing and travelling, my family with whom I shared my agonies of understanding my work and myself, and many others who have crossed my path during my 4 years in New Zealand. It is, however, an acknowledgement of the critical importance of these people, hunters and trampers, in the construction of an argument to build my final thesis.} Although I do sympathise with such an argument, and probably would be more fulfilled were these people able to read my dissertation and further co-construct my thesis, I follow Crossley’s argument that we are intersubjective beings, moulded by our interactions with the Other, and that intersubjectivity is “a fabric of ‘social becoming’ [which] entails constant and ongoing interaction.”\footnote{Crossley, \textit{Key Concepts in Critical Social Theory}, 2005, 175.} Therefore, even though this dissertation, or earlier drafts of it, were not read and analysed by most of the people who helped construct it, as participants in my ongoing development of an understanding of hunting and tourists’ tramping practices, it is still formed, shaped and built, through intersubjective experiences that closely involve these people.
Another complementary characteristic of the intersubjective nature of my methodology is grounded on the premise that my own subjectivity, or my own subject position, expressed through my narrative, develops in and through intersubjectivity. As Crossley rightly remarks, in this process of subjectivity development, intersubjectivity is also affected and reshaped. In this sense, the reading of this material by other Others contributes to this interminable process of co-creation. Hence, the choice of a reflexive methodology, which espouses that understanding and meaning emerge in the making, is complemented by the understanding of an intersubjective self and the presentation of an intersubjective narrative, however much it may appear to privilege my various voices.

The acknowledgement of the role of the reader in the construction of meaning of a text is not something new, but is decisively a post-modern turn. Works from Van Maanen and Geertz in the late 1980s and early 1990s, for instance, challenged the idea of an objective writer, or an absent author in ethnography. Moreover, Geertz contended that more than an integral part of the text, the writer is not a unitary Self, or unitary author, but is constituted by multiple selves, and the one narrating the ‘story’ is simply the one ‘chosen’ for that specific text. Although I accept the argument of multiple Selves, I cannot agree with the idea of one being ‘chosen’ to narrate an academic account. Instead, I follow Ronai and argue that “[m]y voice is cracking as I write this;” there is no single ‘voice’ of mine ‘speaking’ as I produce this narrative. The multiple Selves, all the ‘voices’, are there, in some way or another, bringing different ‘Me’s’ to this intersubjective, constantly co-constructed, narrative. In fact, it is co-constructed also because it involves the multiple ‘Me’s’ in the creation of meaning.

**My Multiple Selves**

So, who are my multiple Selves? And how are they relevant to this project? Although the latter question can be answered only as one reads through this text, the former can be dealt with, even if confined to the limited possibilities of a written prose, by my personal account. My description, nonetheless, reflects only what I understand about myself, and as I can feel,

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71 I use the term post-modern here to reflect a position that counters the modernist way of understanding text and writing, as criticized by Lincoln. Lincoln, “Self, Subject, Audience, Text,” 1997.


or perceive, these selves today; the other, undiscovered, or unrecognized, ‘Me’s’ will linger on the fringes.

Firstly, a Brazilian. Not having grown up in the country where I now live, and where my project was formulated and performed, and where it is now narrated, has provided me with a different set of lenses than that of a local New Zealander. As a foreign woman with no previous background in the activity of hunting, and with a perspective of ‘bush walking’ different from that of New Zealand tramping, even when performed by tourists, my impressions are my own and were formed outside of any previous familiarity with the discourses within which hunting, and also tramping, are usually situated. This does not represent, however, a weakness, but simply a constitutive element of the research that must be acknowledged throughout the process of interpretation and discussion of experiences, performances and narratives.\(^74\) Being a Brazilian represents also, in my case, a constant awareness of the ‘explorer’ and the ‘exploited’, of issues of class and dominance, and postcolonial discourses of the Other.\(^75\) As Dirlik asserts when presenting the differences between postcolonial authors from the ‘Third World’ and those from ‘developed’ countries, I believe that “there is a Third World sensibility and mode of perception” to issues of dominance and power that are quite distinct from the accounts found in developed nations, including New Zealand.\(^76\) Therefore, this distinct sensibility has an important effect on my

\(^{74}\) In fact, some authors argue that being an ‘outsider’ may indeed award privileges to the researcher (see Chock, “Irony and Ethnography,” 1986 for such an argument). According to McCracken, researchers conducting their study in their own culture tend to be influenced by a “treacherous sense of familiarity” which may grant the ‘outsider’ an advantage point as all they observe is, to some degree, mysterious. I do not share McCracken’s point of view that there is advantage of the ‘outsider’ over the ‘local’ researcher, but only that being a stranger to the research environment may in fact provide the researcher good lenses to see and live the research experience. McCracken, “The Long Interview,” 1988, 22.

\(^{75}\) My understanding of these issues draw largely from my early readings of Paulo Freire when I was still studying for a Bachelors of Teaching degree in the early 1990s, as well as my resultant subsequent engagements with socialist movements in schools and universities in the States of Rio de Janeiro and Ceará, Brazil. Freire, Ideologia e Educação, 1981; Freire, Ação Cultural para a Liberdade e Outros Escritos, 1987; Freire, Pedagogia do Oprimido, 1994; Freire, Pedagogia da Autonomia, 1996.


Although I understand that New Zealand is not technically considered a ‘developed’ nation due to its still less than significant industrial production, I include it in the same ‘basket’ as ‘developed’ countries not only due to its rather balanced wealth distribution, but also because of the significance of white Europeans in the construction of its culture. However, it is important to note here that the indigenous population of New Zealand, of Polynesian origin, may be more sensible to the issues of class and dominance that I have referred to here, a point that does not invalidate my own position.

My use of inverted commas in ‘Third World’ is a way of expressing my discontent with the term to designate countries that struggle with social justice and wealth distribution. I cannot sympathise with such terminology that places certain countries above others since I believe this is one world made of equals, and that power relations between and within the so-called developed countries greatly contribute to the situation of the ‘Third World’.
‘reading’ of the world and the social experiences I become involved with, including, most importantly, this research. Furthermore, the ‘exotic’ status of Brazil in Western, non-Latino societies adds to my identity as a researcher the distinct ‘Otherness’ that is usually associated with race. My status, without question, influenced the production of the Others’ narratives during the process of co-construction. The ‘How’s’, however, can be fully explored only through my accounts, later in this dissertation, and readers’ interpretations.

Maybe, just as important to this project is the fact that I am a female, entering a male-dominated scene; the hunting space. I recall going on my first trip to Stewart Island and one of my supervisors, a man, warning me that I should be prepared for ‘delicate situations’, as I would be interacting with a crowd of mostly male hunters. More than that, he asked me to be very careful, especially as I was potentially going to share backcountry huts with this ‘distinct type’ of men. The terms ‘delicate situations’ and ‘distinct type of men’ were probably not used verbatim by my supervisor, but certainly words that had that effect on me. As my supervisor, he was concerned with the appropriate compliance to Health and Safety regulations and current regulations at the time did not cover the specific aspects of my trip, such as going to the bush alone, for a considerably long period of time, and potentially sharing huts with an all-male crowd. The uniqueness of my research to all of us was therefore an important aspect of concern for both my supervisors and for me. I was nonetheless scared. My first night in a hut on the island was spent alone and I could hardly sleep thinking of these ‘crazy hunters’ roaming in the bush. This sentiment was created by my own interpretations of what I heard, from the most different sources, about hunters in general, not necessarily New Zealand hunters. The comments made by my supervisor, for instance, did not carry such meanings but these were created by my own previous experiences and current interpretations of them. Obviously, this sentiment of restlessness was significantly amplified by my Brazilian background, which makes me constantly wary of potentially dangerous situations in remote settings, involving men who can easily be robbers, murderers or rapists. Even though I have been quite a confident explorer in ‘the bush’ in Brazil, I had never been by myself for so long in a place so isolated. It is just not thinkable for a woman to do that where I come from. Therefore, my gender, and where this position places me in my

78 Huts usually are a very basic form of accommodation serving recreationists on New Zealand’s backcountry trails. Typically, huts offer shelter, bunk beds, cold running water and little else. There are, however, different standards of huts, from what is called ‘basic’, which essentially are a simple shelter, to ‘Great Walk’ huts, which can provide as much as flush toilets and gas for cooking.
society, made my first experiences in the New Zealand ‘bush’, and particularly on Stewart Island, have an almost heroic aura for me and my family. These first experiences, as a consequence, had a profound effect on who I am and what I was doing. Also, these experiences changed significantly the way I interacted with the New Zealand ‘bush’ and how I appreciated it. I suddenly felt extremely confident in that setting because, in the end, I did it all and I always felt very safe, regardless of being alone or in the company of others, such as hunters and trampers.

Returning to the issue of a male-dominated space, my status as a woman made my contacts and conversations with hunters quite distinct from what they would have certainly been were I a man. Possibly more importantly, the way I heard and interpreted their stories, as well as the way I saw and felt their performances, were also surely influenced by my feminine self. Indeed, issues of gender are central to many accounts of hunting in the academic literature. Not many studies, however, venture into the arena of a female researcher and her feminine perceptions of this male-dominated space as she enters it. This experience will form an important part of my narrative but is distinctive from the more common discussions of gender that permeate the current (eco)feminist literature on hunting.

Lastly, but no less important, I am married and I am a mother. This family-centred Self is constantly battling with the limits that I feel need to be imposed on my professional, researcher Self. Also, it moderates my experiences in ‘the bush’, the ‘risks’ I take, and how far I can commit to go with my research endeavour. It moderates also how I perceive and deal with other men, and Others in general, and how much energy I am willing to expend in the whole process.

There are, undoubtedly, many other Selves to be explored. I feel, however, that, for this moment, these are sufficient to situate me and my narrative for the reader. The next step is to return to other issues of my methodology and delve further into the forms and the ‘Why’s’ of my narrative approach.

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80 McLeod is one of the few researchers that have explored her role as a female researching (duck) hunting in New Zealand. However, the author explores little of this important facet of her work and concentrates most of her discussions about gender on the masculine performances of duck hunters. McLeod, “Pondering Nature,” 2004.
The Narrative Voice

With so many ‘voices’ inside of me, how can I possibly argue that there is a unitary one narrating this project? The process of writing a doctoral dissertation and constructing a thesis is a long one and involves your soul during an extended period of time. I write this piece in my office, at home, while travelling to conferences, feeling sick, with my daughter playing beside me, at night time while all the lights are off and everyone else in the house is in bed, on a nice Saturday morning, and on every other possible occasion. I cannot assert that as I sit in front of the computer, or as I use my ballpoint pen to write some crazy ideas I had in the middle of my sleep, that in these different occasions I simply ‘dress’ the ‘researcher Self’ and dispose of all the others. I applaud those who can do this, but this certainly has not been the case in my experience.

I have written here more than 1,500 words about who I am and where I come from. From this almost self-indulgent narrative, I hope to make clear that, as Ellis inspiringly argues, I wish to “add blood and tissue to the abstract bones of theoretical discourse.” Following her account of autoethnographic contributions to social science research, I believe that a co-constructed narrative inevitably will be as much about the writer’s experience as it will be about the Others’. Although I am not engaging in an autoethnographic exercise in this dissertation, I am nonetheless bringing myself to the centre and, in a sense, “telling a personal, evocative story to provoke others’ stories.” Personal, not because it is about me only, but because I engage with it in the first person and present it as, in the end of my process, I could finally perceive it. As Richardson phrases it, “in writing the Other, we can (re)write the Self,” and this is what has been happening as I am writing this text.

Also, mine is a story to provoke Others’ stories because I wish this piece to be a contribution to theoretical thinking, and to incite other writers to think and write about some of the issues I am discussing here. In citing Lincoln, Ellis warns that “this kind of experiment is not easy. There are so many choices to make,” one of which, I would argue, is whose, or which, voice will ‘dominate’ the narrative. It is obvious that in the case here it is me, the researcher, the one narrating the experiences to the reader. However, it is not so clear which of my ‘Selves’

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82 Ibid., 117.
will be the ‘chosen’ one, or if ever there will be just one in control. As Ellis explains in one of her texts, “I speak in several voices, which represent some of the multiple selves [that] feed[s] into the writing of our texts.”

On the other hand, it is evident also that whose voice is in ‘control’ influences the whole process of writing and the text thereof. Consequently, as Connolly argues, layering the different narratives – the ones from the researcher and the ones from the Others – is essential to this type of text, one which hopes to be rigorous, meaningful and significant at the same time. Therefore, the dialogue must be as explicit as one can make it, clear both to the researcher and to the reader. In this attempt, narrativity here refers to the plot, the characters, their stories, their political positions and the events, and not to a method of inquiry. My use of quotations from people with whom I had conversations, or from backcountry hut books, for instance, will be in an attempt to bring other voices to the conversation and not to ‘pretend’ that these are their responses to my theoretical questionings. Richardson has warned us that “no matter how we stage the text, we – the authors – are doing the staging. As we speak about the people we study, we also speak for them.” I am aware, therefore, that in choosing which parts of their narratives will be presented here, I am also choosing which parts of the story are going to be told. Certainly, they are the ones I considered the most relevant ones, but are not necessarily the ones that were ‘meant’ to be told. Such a process is an inherent risk in any qualitative research where the researcher is the one interpreting the material ‘narrated’ to her/him and presenting it to the reader. Somers refers to this story as an ontological narrative, reflecting as it does, the ontological position of the writer. Although I will not be using formal linguistic tools to analyse the Others’ accounts, I will be critically engaging with their narratives and situating these within relevant theory. The co-constructed meanings will be further developed as you, the reader, construct your own understandings of the text, in an equally intersubjective way.

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My narrative will be multivocal, influenced by all my ‘Selves’ and by all the Others who engaged in this project.

My multivocality has been influenced recently by Ellis and her powerful autoethnographic accounts, and also by Brearley and her creative ways of expressing how she perceives the Others’ voice, and by Richardson and her poetics and rigour. However, my accounts here will not engage with autoethnographic writings, such as the works of Ellis, or artistic interpretations of lived experiences, such as Brearley’s use of music and Richardson’s use of poems. My engagement will be no less meaningful or passionate, “writing from the heart as well as the head.” My way of attempting to explore my artistic, or creative, Self will be expressed through my use of photographs, in diverse ways, in selected passages of this dissertation. Following Brearley’s argument that “creative approaches to research have emerged from postmodern theories of reflexivity, multiplicity and complexity and the doubt that any single method or theory has a universal claim of authoritative knowledge,” it seems only appropriate to engage with such an approach here. Believing that “there are multiple ways of experiencing, knowing and communicating,” I find support for my use of photographs as a means of ‘experiencing, knowing and communicating’. These photographs do not represent an engagement with visual methods as a method of analysis, but they are nonetheless part of my methodology. It is so because it is an expression of my ontological and epistemological positions in this research, one of a fully, embodied engagement. Through the use of these photographs I intend to not only ‘put myself into the text’ in a more symbolic way, but also to evoke feelings and emotions through the provision of an affective context. Such an affective context is aimed at the reader, but it provides an affective context also to the writer who is constantly reminded of her experiences on the island. This exploration will respond to pleas for accounts that are emotional but that contribute also to the understanding of everyday lives and experiences. In this way I hope

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93 Ibid., 4.

to follow Ellis’ claim that “[t]his dialogic, multivocal narrative [will] decenter my authority by holding it up for readers to inspect.”

Despite the inherent contradiction in trying to explain a (postmodern) attempt to express ideas and provoke reflection through other means beyond the text, I will describe here my aims and means when using photographs friends and I took during my various trips to Stewart Island. I will do so because I am aware that in spite of constant attempts (and successes) to move beyond modern forms of thinking in contemporary society, we, as a society, are still trapped in modernity. Therefore, it would not be fair to the unadvised reader to simply expect to provoke sensations that may or may not be available to, welcome, accepted or expected by the reader.

I will use photographs in three distinct ways. The first one embeds photographs in the text, with words partially covering segments of the picture. These photographs are my visual recollections and representations of sentiments elicited during the time of writing. The photographs are not intended to be clear depictions of a location, or a time. Instead, their brightness has been slightly weakened, their borders faded, and no caption will facilitate the reader referring to a particular location. In fact, I will not use captions in any photographs as they are not aimed at ‘projecting reality’. As Chaplin and Gibson have argued, “images are not neutral and do not portray a truth but only the producers’ and viewers’ co-constructed understanding.” Also, it is not my aim to tell the reader explicitly what I mean when using a specific photograph, in a particular place of my writing. I wish only to provoke feelings that might allow the reader to engage him/herself with this research, the researcher and the participants in a more meaningful and embodied way. Also, I hope to make clearer my own position through the use of a different form of language, that is, visual and affective language.

Although the photographs were taken by friends or me while I was on Stewart Island, and were deliberately chosen with possible reactions in mind, my wish is that readers will engage freely with them and create their own meanings, significances and interpretations that will, nonetheless, influence their analysis of the material being presented. In Holm’s words, “not

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95 Ellis, “Evocative Autoethnography,” 1997, 120.
only are the producer’s intentions for a photograph important, but also the photograph invites many ways of seeing it because viewers see the photograph in relation to themselves.98 It is therefore my intention not only to bring myself to the text, but the reader as well, further contributing to a co-constructed, intersubjective, set of interpretations.

My second way of expressing my embodied engagement with this project is through the use of snapshots of my memory ‘guised’ as photographs. These photographs, unlike others, were invariably taken by me and represent special moments for me and for my understanding of this project. They will be framed, almost like they would be in a photo album where one goes back occasionally to remember travels, events, people and locations. They are moments that intend to illustrate to the reader my visual and emotional memory of my experience on Stewart Island.

The third and last mode of my employing photographs does not involve embedding pictures in the text, or framing them as in photo albums. Although these too represent moments of remembrance, they are intended to be metonymic, my visual translation of events I experienced on the island, that is, as symbolic images of my experience in the context of the text. Through all of those images, I wish to add layers of meanings and emotions to my self-reflected, narrative ‘voice’.

Social science research has been using reflexive and creative methodologies for some years now, but tourism studies has only recently included such an approach in the theoretical discussions of the field. Hence my intention is to “reframe the narrative voice” of academe “in ways that open up social science discourse,” in this case tourism and recreation research, “to a larger and more varied audience, that make social science more useful, that allow for the silenced voices of others and the silenced parts of ourselves to speak themselves.”99 My quest for a more useful social science is echoed in my choosing a non-traditional and non-linear way of approaching ‘data’ and ‘findings’, engaging with my research and my writing in an emotional way.100 As Lash points out, reflexivity presumes non-linearity as it involves destabilisation and dis-equilibrium.101 Therefore a linear argument could not appropriately

portray the ongoing process of de-stabilisation and re-construction. Also, this quest is reflected in my critical engagement with research. As I mentioned before, Brazilian educator Paulo Freire has been an important influence on my thinking about the objectives of knowledge, and more specifically, of research. From his works and writings I carry the understanding that the main aims of knowledge production are empowerment and social justice. Therefore, research needs to “deconstruct knowledge to reveal its underpinnings of power, privilege, and utility.” Moreover, research must be accessible as well as rigorous. Following Richardson, to be accessible contemporary research should engage the reader using different forms of narrative. Here, I have chosen what I consider a more emotional style of narrating to incite not only the theoretical/academic thinking of the reader but also his/her emotions.

Social inequalities and the related issues of power and dominance will not be the central focus of my narrative but my understanding of any research act is nonetheless grounded in the premise that all knowledge produced needs to be useful and empowering. As I will discuss in the following chapters, I sympathise with the social ecofeminists’ position that contend that our relationships with the natural environment and with other-than-human beings are in fact modulated by issues of power and dominance related to a patriarchal society. However, although I do share with social ecofeminists the understanding that power and subjugation are central pillars of a male-centred society, I have chosen to approach my research topic using a different set of lenses, without concentrating all my attention in gender issues but nonetheless acknowledging their importance. Therefore, these elements are constantly permeating my thinking and greatly influence my narrative here. As Kincheloe and McLaren argue, a critical researcher “attempts to use her or his work as a form of social or cultural criticism,” and that is my goal also. Using critical analysis in a reflexive narrative is my effort to “challenge [...] those conventional knowledge bases and methodologies - whether quantitative or qualitative - that make claims of scientific objectivity.” As Lyle accurately

puts it, “critical analysis challenges me to unpack what I have gathered through reflexive narrative and account for the incidents I have recalled and the language I have chosen in their retelling.”

Another important aspect of my critical analysis is the process of ‘Othering’ that any research effort entails. A distinction between the researcher and the ‘participants’ is unavoidable, and I have mentioned my awareness of this distinction and how I deal with it. However, the process of ‘Othering’ is not limited to this simple division between the one who wishes to problematize and narrate the stories, and the ones who are performing their everyday-life narratives that will later be re-told. ‘Othering’ involves also issues of power, and is present outside research contexts. As Fawcett and Hearn contend, a process of ‘Othering’ often occurs

in relation to the dominant social power relations and discursive constructions by and of the ‘one’, such as people with disabilities, women, people of colour and others societally defined as ‘other’ [...]; and, second, those who are defined in the context of specific researches as occupying less powerful social locations and as significantly ‘different’ from ‘us’ as researchers, such as particular groups of people, regardless of disability, gender or ethnicity, researched by researchers.

As a Brazilian woman researching male New Zealand hunters, and as a married mother, immigrant resident researching international visitors, I cannot deny the importance of the different aspects of the concept of ‘Othering’ to my research. In negotiating these positions, a critical but also reflexive approach grants me the possibility of engaging “with an open-mindedness on the specificities of particular research and socio-political situations.”

According to Fawcett and Hearn,

[t]his entails strong attention to historical context, a critical relation to the topic of research, a self-reflexivity of the researcher as author, an awareness of the social location of the author and the topic, consideration of the social bases of knowledge, commitment to political emancipation, and, where appropriate, empirical inquiry not just assertion and speculation.

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109 Ibid., 216.
110 Ibid., 216.
My use of narrative refers not only to my methodological stance, one which intends to report my study in a ‘storyteller’ manner that includes the Others as co-actors, as “contributors to the story’s denouement.”\textsuperscript{111} It accounts also for the narrative of the Others (as well as mine) being a type of discourse that frames social action. Consequently, these narratives are the material that constitute the “phenomenon of interest” to this research, material which will be deconstructed using critical analysis.\textsuperscript{112} In this sense, performances also are understood as forms of narratives, and need not be self-consciously ‘staged’ in order to be meaningful.\textsuperscript{113} As Alexander asserts, a wide range of human activities can be seen as expressions, and may be performative in their nature, “[i]n other words, performance pivots on the enacted nature of human activity, the socialized and shifting norms of human sociality, and the active processes of human sense-making.”\textsuperscript{114} It is in this way then that ‘ordinary’ performances, meaning day-to-day enactments of human sociality, constitute important forms of narrative about oneself and the discourses with which one engages. As Szersynski, Heim and Waterton explain, “performance has the capacity to create meaningful worlds around those who perform.”\textsuperscript{115} More importantly, performance also refers to an embodied practice, one which calls for a multi-sensorial relation with place and space. In understanding practice as performance and performance as a form of narrative, we move beyond what Crouch defines as “a one-dimensional reading of texts and representations across an inert space” and we are, therefore, able to perceive that places and spaces are “transformed by the presence and practice of bodies.”\textsuperscript{116} Thus, involving performances in my analysis of what I referred to as the ‘phenomenon of interest’ of this research allows for a more nuanced understanding of the hunting, and of the tramping, experiences, beyond vocality and written text, once they are fully embodied practices situated in time, place and space.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{111} Polkinghorne, “Reporting Qualitative Research as Practice,” 1997, 3.
\textsuperscript{113} Kincheloe and McLaren, “Rethinking Critical Theory and Qualitative Research,” 2005.
\textsuperscript{116} Crouch, “Surrounded by Place,” 2002, 212, 214.
The Tools of this Project
Although Guba and Lincoln argue that “both qualitative and quantitative methods may be used appropriately with any research paradigm,” the use of quantifiable, and in my understanding, static data, collected through quantitative tools did not seem suitable for answering the questions that emerged during this research.  Thus, and by no means rejecting quantitative approaches in the social sciences, this research project proposed to explore the realms of different groups’ environmental philosophies using qualitative methods under more emergent paradigms.

“Research methods are of little use until they are seen in the light of theoretical perspectives.” Therefore, based on a critical reflexive narrative approach grounded in a realist constructivist epistemology, I chose to engage with, and analyse, hunters’, and to some extent trampers’, practices and narratives about human/nature relationships through my own embeddedness within these practices and narratives, particularly on Stewart Island where I had several opportunities to spend extended periods of time. Stewart Island is the southern-most of New Zealand’s three main islands and is the home of the country’s newest National Park (Rakiura National Park), which comprises 85% of the island (Figure 1). Located south of the South Island, Stewart Island is the home of several native wild fauna and flora species and it is known by outdoor enthusiasts for its challenging terrain and magnificent landscapes. The island has only a small permanent settlement of approximately 390 inhabitants and its major sources of income are commercial fishing, aquaculture and tourism.
Stewart Island has long been a place of interest to hunters and trampers. For trampers, it offers the longest and one of the most demanding tracks in the country: a 10- to 12-day circuit around the island’s northern coast.\textsuperscript{123} For hunters, it offers the only readily available population of White-tailed deer in the Southern Hemisphere.\textsuperscript{124} For these and other outdoor enthusiasts, it offers excellent diving, fishing, kayaking and sailing opportunities. More

\textsuperscript{122} This and the other two maps presented in this chapter are not to scale.

\textsuperscript{123} Barnett, \textit{Tramping in New Zealand}, 2006.

importantly, the island’s rich natural environment is able to provide intense experiences of the sublime and of the picturesque. Small secluded beaches, calm inlets, little creeks and their little waterfalls, during Stewart Island’s less than frequent calm and sunny days, portray the essence of the picturesque, that which can be painted in a Romantic style. On the more frequent stormy and grey sky days, the island provokes feelings of the sublime, through its awe-inspiring landscapes, with thick bush, deep mud, marshlands, vast sand dunes and beaches, and open seas. In fact, as Gilpin asserted in his *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty, On Picturesque Travel, And On Sketching Landscape*, “nothing can be more sublime, than the ocean,” and the vast open seas that surround Stewart Island certainly can inspire such a feeling. This important aspect of the Stewart Island environment, and therefore experiences, will be the subject of my discussions in the later chapters. For now, it is important to highlight that it is a place of longstanding and growing popularity for outdoor recreationists and is therefore suitable for engaging ‘first-hand’ with tramping and hunting experiences.

Tramping opportunities around the island are several. In terms of multiple-day tramping trails, Stewart Island offers three formally constituted tracks, and other unmaintained tracks. The most heavily utilised, the Rakiura Track, is a 29 km circuit that starts and ends at Halfmoon Bay in Oban, the island’s permanent settlement. It is classified by the Department of Conservation as a ‘Great Walk’, which means it is a well formed, easy track, with two high-quality backcountry huts, and it is promoted to people of all levels of tramping experience. The North West and Southern Circuits, in contrast, are considered challenging tramps offering remoteness, physical challenge and solitude. These tracks, 125 km (10–12 days) and 105 km (7–9 days) respectively, can be partially combined to form a 13-14 day-track, a challenge that only a few are willing to undertake (Figure 2).

126 Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 1792, 43.
127 The Tin Range in the southern part of the island, for instance, offers excellent tramping opportunities that are not promoted by the Department of Conservation. This area is currently under evaluation to become a wilderness Area and therefore cannot have any marked, maintained track.
The modern history of hunting on the island goes back to the first decades of English settlement. White-tailed deer were introduced to the island in 1905, specifically for hunting, and today hundreds of hunting parties visit the island every year searching for this deer species.\textsuperscript{130} Most areas around the coast of the island are managed by a ballot system through which hunting blocks are defined and can be booked for pre-determined periods of time. This system is administered by the Department of Conservation and divides the coast into 35 blocks (Figure 3). At these sites, hunting parties can stay in huts or may camp, depending on the area chosen.

Together with this history of passion for the island shared by hunters and trampers, there is a more recent record of conflicts and tensions between the two groups. Although there are vast areas where hunters can freely stalk their targets, a significant proportion of these are near tracks where trampers are usually hiking. Moreover, some hunting parties use as their base huts that are equally available to trampers, with a significant number of those huts being located on famous tramping tracks. These close encounters and shared huts and tracks have triggered, or witnessed, complaints, tensions, and sometimes conflicts, between the groups.
Embodied Encounters

My first trip to Stewart Island was in March 2007 and since then I have been to the island on several different occasions. On every visit I explored the National Park as well as the community, taking day-walks, visiting the stores, pubs, visitor centres, beaches, talking to different people, locals and tourists alike. I took water taxis to remote areas where hunters are the only ones who usually go and I walked, more than once, all the marked, and some unmarked, tracks on the island. Also, I volunteered for the Department of Conservation and thus was able to spend some time with the people involved with the conservation of the island’s natural resources, even sharing accommodation.

In the first few trips my main concern was to unravel some of the basic practices related to hunting and tramping in New Zealand, and more specifically on Stewart Island. My aim then also was to overcome the status of a complete ‘outsider’ by listening, seeing and performing with the people involved in my project. In this way, during these early visits, and subsequently, I worked to embed myself within the physical and social environments within which my research took place.

My tramping trips on Stewart Island varied greatly in length, with the longest one lasting 24 consecutive days spent in huts, completely immersed in the activity. Spending nights in

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131 Based on the premise, thoroughly discussed earlier, that for an embedded research methodology there is no difference between field and home, that experiences are more relevant than numbers, and that there is no search for a definite truth claim that can be generalised to other ‘populations’, I will not add unnecessary weight material by detailing aspects of what would otherwise be called ‘field work’. A detailed account of my trips to Stewart Island and other tramping/hunting environments throughout the process of my PhD, as well as comprehensive information about number and location of interviews and related matters can be found in Appendix 1.

132 The Department of Conservation operates within the legislative, regulatory and managerial environment for the outdoor recreation on Stewart Island. Therefore, their presence in this study was of ultimate importance as they are closely involved with the activities that take place in that environment.

133 My work as a volunteer for this governmental agency followed from a research grant I was awarded in late 2006. While on the island conducting research supported by DOC I was asked, and happily accepted, to act as an itinerant hut warden, along the island’s several huts, checking user compliance with basic hut etiquette and payment of fees, where appropriate. I did not, however, wear a uniform and most people were aware of my added role as ‘partially’ a hut warden only when I checked for hut fees payment. I do not think, although I can never be sure, that this involvement with the Department of Conservation made my role as a researcher any different to trampers and hunters with whom I met and talked. Again, not everyone I encountered was made aware of this ‘dual role’, and the ones who were did not express any discomfort that I could notice.

134 The first research trip to Stewart Island revealed that hunters and trampers will rarely stay longer than a couple of weeks, and definitely will not be stationed in one particular place together. Hunters, for instance, may stay in the same hut or campsite for several days at a time, but the trampers with whom they will share the hut will, in most cases, be transients. Therefore, performing as just another participant, as I believe the researcher
these backcountry huts allowed me to share them with trampers and/or hunters on most of
the nights I spent in the National Park. Also, being ‘in the bush’ for consecutive days made it
possible for me to meet several trampers and hunters on tracks. Either in huts or on tracks, I
continuously tried to make contact, however brief, with the people I encountered. My
interactions with trampers, more specifically, ranged from short to long hut conversations,
sharing information about the tracks, the island, and the daily ‘adventures’. The topic of my
research and the interaction with hunters was also a prominent theme for dialogues that
could happen over the cooking of meals together, outside the hut, gathering wood for the
pot belly stove, playing cards during the night or simply by the fire. On a few occasions I
joined individual trampers or small tramping groups and tramped one or more parts of the
long tracks with them. All these experiences, including my walks alone, form what I am
calling my tramping experiences as well as informing my analysis of the tramping experiences
of the others.

Hunters, on the other hand, were slightly harder to find. Due to their longer pattern of stay
on the island, some hunters stay in camps and huts that are not so popular with, or readily
available to, trampers. Many hunting blocks are outside of the tramping track areas,
therefore requiring more effort to reach. My involvement with the Department of
Conservation while on the island allowed me to identify in advance the areas that were
booked by hunters, an opportunity that enabled me to locate hunting groups more easily.
From this information, when hunters were using campsites near tracks but not easily visible
to the regular tramper, I was able to make my way to these camps and spend time with
parties that were, in most instances, very welcoming. On these occasions, as well as when I
took water taxis to reach hunting camps that are located in remote areas with no marked
tracks, I spent considerable time informally talking to hunters about their experiences on the
island, about the hunting, the fishing, about my research, about hunting policies on the
island, about trampers and their ideas about tramping, and other topics that would naturally
should, I was able to participate in, and engage with, specific expressions of hunters’ and trampers’ cultures
during my repetitive, short-stay visits to the island.

Although all huts on the island are open to the public, huts that were built with the help of the hunting
fraternity, and that are located on hunting blocks where no marked tracks are present, are booked in advance
and have preferential allocation to hunting groups. These huts are usually referred to as ‘hunting huts’ and are
not advertised to the general public. As a consequence, the majority of visitors are not aware of their existence
and the possibility of using them. Hunters, therefore, can be almost assured that they will be the sole users of
these huts during the period they are on the island, and that they will not receive any ‘unexpected’ visitors. On
that note it is important to emphasize the surprise some hunters expressed when I arrived in their secluded
camps. I did not spend the night in any of these camps and stayed only to the extent I felt they were
comfortable with my presence.
emerge. Also, I would take this opportunity, at their invitation, to participate in some of their daily routines, such as having tea, going for short walks or even eating meals with them. Obviously, some hunting parties were more welcoming than others, and with some a mere ten-minute conversation was the best I could manage.

Apart from these more distantly located hunters, I spent also several nights in huts where hunting parties were stationed. Some groups of hunters do, in fact, enjoy sharing the hut space with trampers and choose to stay in popular tramping huts. Others opt for these huts because of their scenic location or because of their proximity to known herds of target animals. In any case, I was able to engage with the hunting experience on Stewart Island in different ways, even though I did not take part in the actual act of hunting. Indeed, as I will argue in more detail later in Chapter 4, I understand that, for the purposes of this study, to ‘live’ the hunting experience on Stewart Island I did not need to engage in the act of stalking or killing the animal. Experiencing nature and sharing a good part of the day with hunters in different settings and circumstances enabled me to participate sufficiently in the experience. While in the company of hunters, and most notably when sharing huts with them, I was able to participate actively in their daily routines, including some hunting ‘rituals’ that I will describe in detail in Chapter 4. On these occasions, I had several meals with hunting parties, sometimes with them serving freshly-hunted meat or recently-caught fish, I went for short walks in the ‘bush’ with individual or small groups of hunters, and on more than one occasion went fishing and collecting paua with groups or individuals.

Another important aspect of my first few visits to Stewart Island was that I was carrying questionnaire surveys to deliver to every hunter and trumper I met on the island. For this reason I spoke with more than two hundred visitors and was able to meet different people and hear different stories. This process enabled me to be very explicit about my position as a researcher while still being ‘just another participant’. More importantly, it provided me with great opportunities for listening to, and sharing experiences with, trampers and hunters on the island. Most people were intrigued about my research and would spend time telling me their thoughts about the place and the experiences they had on the island. In fact, some people were interested enough to meet me outside the hunting/tramping environment and I


It is important to note that even when I was not carrying and distributing surveys on the island, I made people I met aware of my project, following the ethical guidelines that commonly govern this type of research.
was able to digitally record our conversations, some of which lasted up to two hours.\textsuperscript{137} Unrecorded conversations that took place on the island were documented in my personal diary, as I explain below.

\textit{Inter-Views and a Diary}

Following Holstein and Gubrium’s understanding of ‘active interviews’, the conversations formally arranged with hunters and trampers I met on the island were carefully planned but not overly structured, allowing the Other to actively participate in the construction of meaning.\textsuperscript{138} My intention with these purposeful conversations was to further explore the themes that were continually emerging in my daily experiences of tramping and hunting in New Zealand, and more specifically themes that emerged from my experiences on Stewart Island. The recordings of these conversations were transcribed verbatim following the encounters and were repeatedly read throughout the course of my research as well as of my writing.\textsuperscript{139} Remarks were constantly added to my notes on the experiences of my readings and sections were frequently highlighted in the search for common themes.

All of these encounters, conversations and sharing of spaces and experiences offered me a chance to gain detailed insights into the “complicated character, organization, and logic of [the] culture” I was immersed in.\textsuperscript{140} In all my visits I carried a notebook where I would write down my daily experiences, emotions, encounters, notes on my conversations, and other events of the day. These notes constitute an important part of my methodology as they are an important effort to embed myself into the hunting and tramping spaces of Stewart Island.

\textsuperscript{137} As Rhodes points out “the person telling the story is speaking to an audience in a particular social situation where text is inseparable from context and story is inseparable from storytelling.” Therefore, I believe the use of the word conversation, instead of the standard ‘interview’, is important here to characterise my understanding of this process as a ‘two-way’ relationship, where meanings are being constructed together. Holstein and Gubrium, and Kvale also emphasise the active agency of participants in methodologies that include interview methods under a constructive perspective. These authors use the terms ‘active interview’ and ‘inter-view’ respectively to stress the collective meaning-making that emerge from these opportunities, and I will also occasionally borrow and use these terms. Rhodes, “Ghostwriting Research,” 2000, 519; Kvale, \textit{InterViews}, 1996; Holstein and Gubrium, \textit{The Active Interview}, 1995.

\textsuperscript{138} Holstein and Gubrium, \textit{The Active Interview}, 1995.

\textsuperscript{139} During conversations that used digital recorders as a means of documentation for future analysis, hunters and trampers were formally informed that participation was voluntary and the conversations were carried out in an appropriate location convenient to them. Because of the nature of the dialogues, the precise questions that were asked could not be determined in advance, depending on the way in which the conversation developed. Therefore, participants were reminded from the beginning that in the event that the line of questioning developed in such a way that they felt hesitant or uncomfortable, s/he had the right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that s/he could withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage of any kind. Fortunately, this was not the case in any instance.

\textsuperscript{140} McCracken, \textit{The Long Interview}, 1988, 17.
and also are part of my reflexive engagement with my research. Moreover, from these notes I extracted significant information about my experiences and of the Others’, also constituting important material for my analysis. For this effect, apart from repetitive readings of, and reflections on, the material written in my diary, I have selected passages and organised them into themes of interest. These themes often intermingle with themes which emerged from in-depth, recorded conversations, as well as from hut book entries, another important source of material for interpretation and discussion, that I will now present.

Hut books are a register that the Department of Conservation leaves in every backcountry hut for visitors to supply their expected itinerary and dates of the current trip in order to provide information in case of emergencies. Visitors are asked to provide the basic safety information but this is not a legal requirement and some choose not to. Apart from itinerary and dates of travel, these books also contain a space for general comments where visitors usually include impressions of their experiences. These accounts range in content, size and form, varying from single words (e.g. ‘Excellent!’) to pages-long stories, complaints, jokes or more generalised comments about their trip.

During my visits to the island I routinely went through the hut book entries and copied down verbatim in my diary comments that I found relevant to my discussions. Clearly, my understanding of what was relevant to be recorded changed over the course of my research but it was not feasible to copy every single entry, therefore some inconsistency was found later when analysing them. These entries are, nonetheless, very useful particularly in the context of tourists’ experiences on the island, and the Department of Conservation does take comments seriously when hut books are collected and analysed.¹⁴¹ For this reason, hut book entries provide an important source of analysis of trampers’ experiences on tracks and in huts on conservation land, albeit that there is a lack of research using them as a significant source of information. Reading these comments regularly was an important means for me to gather general information about the people’s impressions of places visited and also for me to acquire some understanding of the dynamics of recreation on the island. Moreover, from my observations, the majority of visitors engage in such reading, using hut books as pastimes.


When completed, hut books are collected and archived at the appropriate regional DOC office for analysis and future reference. Although there is limited time and funds to conduct a proper, rigorous analysis of the material provided by hut book entries, DOC staff do read and internally discuss the material, when relevant and appropriate. Ibid.
and as a common starter to conversations with ‘strangers’. Therefore, the material collected from these hut books is considered an important tool for the development of my thesis.

In addition to the hut books on the island, I was able also to access selected old hut books from the Southland Conservancy office of the Department of Conservation. Again, comments were copied verbatim following the same premise, and in all cases the activity in which the visitors were involved was remarked on in my notes. All entries extracted from hut books were subsequently organised into themes and combined with the larger material gathered through other methods, such as the diary notes and in-depth inter-views.

In sum, the material for this thesis was empirically collected through the use of diary notes, that also contained detailed accounts of my informal conversations with both hunters and trampers, in-depth, semi-structured, dialogues that were digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim, as well as hut book entries. Themes that emerged from all these sources form the basis of my discussions in later chapters of this dissertation. In addition, I made notes of conversations with water taxis and charter boats operators, commercial guides, Department of Conservation Field Centre staff, Stewart Island locals, and flight operators. All of these sources added to my own everyday experience of these activities that go beyond my time on Stewart Island. I frequently engage in recreational tramping trips, either alone or with others, such as family members and friends, and on these occasions, in different parts of the country, I meet other trampers and hunters with whom I talk and also share experiences. Since I am fully engaged with my doctoral research, these experiences never go unnoticed. My reactions to them, points that are made by the people I meet, or just general comments/impressions, are added to my understanding of the tramping and hunting phenomena in New Zealand.

142 There is a space for the visitor to identify which activity (i.e., hunting, tramping, kayaking) s/he was involved in for most part of their trip.

143 Research involving embodied participation of the researcher in the practices being focused on as well as formally recorded conversations requires consideration of a myriad of ethical issues that need to be dealt with in order to present sound participation and results. Issues were addressed by the use of the following measures: 1) as mentioned before in this chapter, all participants were aware of the researcher’s presence and intent; 2) no participants were identified in any way, even during note taking; 3) observations were focused on situations and not on specific participants; 4) no particular groups of people were focused upon, but rather interactions between recreationists; 5) and note taking was done in private and in a diary format so participants would not feel intruded upon.

This research and techniques had been discussed at length with senior research colleagues from the University of Otago as well as my supervisors, and was subsequently approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee before any visit to the island was made. Moreover, the research and its ethical implications were approved and supported by the Department of Conservation, the agency responsible for the areas where the study was conducted.
An Active Engagement with Theory and Every-day Practice

A significant aspect of my effort to gather and make sense of the material I was being exposed to was my constant engagement with the literature while I was on the island. In fact, carrying books and articles during my trips not only constantly reminded me of my position as a researcher, but also of what exactly was significant about my experiences. Obviously, following on from my ontological and epistemological positions, these questions were not answered by the literature at that moment, nor were the meanings of my experiences always clear to me. However, the simple act of carrying this material and engaging with it at the end of most of my days of intense tramping and exploration helped me better to understand some of the questions that were emerging as I walked the tracks. Indeed, it was on one of my early trips to the island, reading Franklin’s *Animals and Modern Culture* that I first realized the power of the nonhuman animals in the hunting and tramping experience I was immersing myself in.144 To be more precise, my experiences of nonhuman animals, together with the narratives of hunters and trampers on the island, triggered an awareness of the nonhuman animal presence in my research, and in my life for that matter. This awareness was facilitated by my reading, at that moment, Franklin’s work. It is in this sense that the books and articles I carried during my trips also constitute important tools for the development of my thesis.

My understanding of hunting and tramping in New Zealand is influenced also by the reading of newspaper articles and general media portrayals of the practices and everyday events associated with them. This material, although not systematically analysed, helped in the construction of my own, singular, understanding of the cultural practice of hunting, and the tourism construction of tramping, in wider New Zealand society. In a more systematic way, I have read extensively official management plans and reports of the consultation processes involved in the management of conservation areas that have a direct impact on hunting and tramping opportunities, more specifically on the South Island of New Zealand, where I am based, and also, obviously, on Stewart Island. This effort can be regarded as part of a review of the relevant literature for this research and their critical analysis will be included in the discussions where pertinent. More importantly, however, is that these documents provided me also the means to, as a foreigner, construct an informed image of the governmental agency that is directly responsible for the provision and management of hunting and tramping opportunities in this country, and that is, therefore, central to several of the discussions that will be raised later.

Publications from recreational organisations such as Fish & Game New Zealand, New Zealand Deerstalkers’ Association, the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand and others, also are part of a literature review that not only informs the discussions presented in this dissertation but provide an important background within which to situate my understandings of the social arrangements and political contingencies in which the hunting and tourist tramping practices are historically and currently situated. All these sources contributed to my understanding of the two recreational practices in New Zealand, and facilitated a refined understanding of them on Stewart Island. The analysis of the different narratives I experienced in their diverse forms was achieved through a critical engagement with theory, identifying themes which emerged from these narratives and positioning them in the available philosophical discussions of Nature and other relevant fields. Also, I constantly reflected on my own performances, recollections and narratives, and contribute these as jointly constructing my thesis.

It was therefore through an embedded engagement with this research that I endeavoured to participate in the ongoing process of negotiating interpretations of human/natural environment and human/nonhuman animals relationships in hunting and tramping performances. Although theoretically grounded, these impressions are distinctly mine and cannot, as I mentioned before, be assumed to present the unmediated ‘voices’ of hunters or trampers, although, inevitably, the impressions are informed by my direct experience of those voices. Such an unmediated presentation of hunters’ and trampers’ voices is not the intention of my contribution. Rather, my intention is to engage with both the theoretical underpinnings of environmental philosophies as they relate to recreational hunting and tramping in a tourism and recreation context, and with the actual performances of those who are physically immersed in the practices. Nonetheless, excerpts from conversations are used to illustrate my interpretation and hopefully will contribute to the understanding of the issues raised throughout this piece. Also, including the participant’s narratives within my own, as presented here, reflects, and is a representation of, my intention to build my thesis in an intersubjective way. In particular, I accept the proposal that one mechanism of such dialogism is personal narratives; stories of self that are not “out there waiting to be told” but rather are “stories yet to be constructed.” Therefore, the ‘findings’ of the project are

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145 These publications are usually in the form of magazines, newsletters, reports and website pages.
147 Denzin, Interpretive Ethnography, 1997, 220.
better described as ‘creations’ negotiated between researcher and researched, and any knowledge that is produced is the result of the interaction between these two social agents.\textsuperscript{148} My intention is to “make space […] for voices to come alive […] and be heard.”\textsuperscript{149}


\textsuperscript{149} Phillimore and Goodson, “Progress in Qualitative Research in Tourism,” 2004, 17.
3 Theorising Nature

The nonhuman world we encounter in wilderness is far from being merely our own invention. I celebrate with others who love wilderness the beauty and power of the things it contains. [...] Remember the feelings of such moments, and you will know as well as I do that you were in the presence of something irreducibly nonhuman, something profoundly Other than yourself.¹

Every river is more than just one river. Every rock is more than just one rock.²

In Chapter 1 I mentioned briefly that the natural environment plays a decisive role in identity formation in New Zealand, and is a significant aspect of this country’s identity. Hunting and tourist activities, particularly tramping, are highly modulated by how Nature has been constructed in New Zealand as these embodied practices are inextricably associated with modern engagements with the natural environment. Therefore, given that concepts of Nature are central to experiences that take place in the outdoors, but most emphatically are central to New Zealand national culture, and therefore to cultural manifestations that are performed in the natural environment, it is imperative to identify these concepts and to situate them within a wider literature theorising Nature in order to fully comprehend hunting and tramping in a New Zealand context. The theoretical contextualisation of concepts of Nature in modern society is the aim of this chapter.

The natural environment with all its constitutive parts has been discussed in academic literature and presented in public narratives in very different and conflicting ways. It is commonly agreed that attention to the subject has significantly increased in the late twentieth century with the strengthening of the environmental movement.³ However, issues referring to nature and the environment have been on the agenda of thinkers of modern and premodern societies who have considered the subject with great interest and through very

³ Not so acknowledged in the mainstream Westerner academic literature is the potential influence of the increased participation of indigenous peoples in environmental discussions and the resultant attention given to indigenous societies’ cultural views on matters relating to Nature and the natural environment.
diverse lenses. Obviously, the approaches to the natural environment and the focus of the discussions about the natural environment have changed, but the topic has never been of indifference to academics from the most varied fields. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that modern sociologists have tended to limit their contribution to the topic with the argument that sociology studies human societies and relations, and that nature is a subject (or ‘object’ as some would claim) that is beyond the scope of the discipline because it is essentially not-human. Fortunately, there has been increasing awareness that even if we do consider nature as something that humans are not a part of, there is a clear connectedness between human societies and the natural environment, and that relations between the two ‘worlds’ are therefore consequential. More importantly, there has been some progress in terms of acknowledging that, in fact, the natural environment is an essential part of human existence and thus the study of the relationships being performed in this space, and of humans with other fellow creatures, is crucial for the understanding of human societies and human/human relations.

More recently, with the increase in sociological analyses of nature and the environment – not necessarily by specialist sociologists – two approaches have dominated the academic discourses in the field, namely social constructivism and critical realism. Although there are propositions that float between the two and within each of them, most sociological works in the topic have adopted either of these epistemological stances, even if applying it to their discussions with varying degrees of consistency and fidelity. For the purpose of our discussions about experiences, performances and narratives of hunters, and of tourist


Oelschlaeger argues for a possible ‘Palaeolithic Idea of Nature’. Although he presents interesting arguments in that respect, still there is not enough evidence that Palaeolithic societies constructed such a concept, but more an inherently ‘natural’ relationship with nonhuman elements.


7 I will use the term ‘constructivism’ throughout this dissertation to refer to the epistemological stance that views “knowledge (and truth) as interpretation, an interpretation historically founded rather than timeless, contextually verifiable rather than universally valid, and linguistically generated and socially negotiated rather than cognitively and individually produced.” Some authors in the social sciences and humanities have used (and still use) the term ‘constructionism’ to refer to an identical position. Although these two terms originate from different academic traditions, namely psychology and sociology, their contemporary use has merged and their differences coming from the root of the terms have become blurred. I have chosen therefore to avoid dealing with this almost unsolvable problem and have opted to use ‘constructivism’ to refer to the current understanding of this epistemological position even when citing the work of authors who have opted for the term ‘constructionism’. Raskin, “Constructivism in Psychology,” 2002, n/p.
trampers, on Stewart Island, these two approaches seem to be sufficient to elucidate the most important arguments and provoke some fruitful reflections. Even though I have briefly described these epistemological positions in the previous chapter, here I propose a more detailed account of them, with a sharper focus on the issues of interest to environmental philosophy. Following, and in addition to, this discussion I will present some of the most common debates regarding Nature in modern academic (namely social and human sciences) literature and how these presentations fit within my own discussions of hunting, and of tourists’ tramping, experiences on Stewart Island, New Zealand. In addition, in the latter part of this chapter I will present briefly some important philosophical perspectives that deal with human/natural environment relations, and that vary considerably in their ontological positions, but that tend to be situated within mild forms of constructivism and realism. These environmental philosophies form the philosophical basis of the debates raised in this dissertation regarding the narratives and performances of hunters, in particular, and of trampers on Stewart Island. This succinct review of these literatures will contribute to the reader’s understanding of the complex picture that is socio-philosophical studies of the natural environment.

The ‘Constructivism versus Realism’ Debate

According to Bell, epistemological constructivism and realism essentially differ in their idealist and materialist explanations (or ontologies) of social life. That is to say that in the core of this sociological ‘dispute’ lies an old philosophical debate; one that contrasts two fundamentally different views of how humans deal with the social environment in which they are immersed. For idealists, there is no one truth that can ever be proven about the world; we can formulate only illusive truths. The world, for idealists, is dependent on the mind and material objects do not exist apart from our consciousness of them. For materialists, on the other hand, there is a reality ‘out there’, composed of material objects and available to be discovered or established, and what is needed only is the use of appropriate ‘tools’ to uncover the truth, or at least one truth.

With similar arguments, realists, when dealing with environmental issues or discussing social relations regarding humans and Nature (if we accept the dichotomy), infer that Nature is an

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8 Bell, An Invitation to Environmental Sociology, 2008.
independent entity that exits and functions regardless of human intervention.\textsuperscript{10} That is not to say that human action does not interfere with the environment, but only that Nature is not merely what humans decide it to be.\textsuperscript{11} Constructivists, on the other hand, “emphasize the subjective dimension of social problems,” and therefore have humans as the focus of analysis.\textsuperscript{12} More than that, most constructivists accept the material nature of Nature and that its functioning is not necessarily dependant on human action;\textsuperscript{13} nonetheless, Nature is socially constructed in different forms and thus appreciated, experienced, narrated and analysed in singular ways, depending on the cultural involvements and performances.

From this materialist ontology many realists find support for their arguments in Marx’s works, particularly Marx and Engels’ \textit{Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts}. In a brief revision of seminal realist works, such as Dicken’s, Martell’s and Benton’s, Franklin explains how dialectic materialism has been used by realists, since the 1980s, to ground their formulations about the relationship between human and Nature.\textsuperscript{14} A passage from Martell’s work nicely summarizes how realists make this connection:

\begin{quote}
In brief, Marx’s conceptualisation was that humans are so dependent on nature that nature can be seen as ‘their inorganic body’ (Dickens 1992: Ch. 3), as part of them. Humans live from nature and nature becomes part of human being. This guards against any dualist distinction of nature and society and necessitates a unified approach that includes both in an understanding of the dynamics and processes in either one.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

Franklin, however, adds that realists have failed to provide a methodology for sociological research on the relationships between human and Nature, concentrating solely on providing a theoretical and moral foundation for environmental activism. According to Franklin, Marx himself analysed social structures in isolation, as if Nature was a given, therefore not providing realists a methodological approach to include the ‘abstract causal properties of nature’ that realists emphasize.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{10} From here on I will be discussing realism as an epistemological position. Ontological realism will be referred to as materialism, as discussed in the previous chapter.
\textsuperscript{12} Munro, “Framing Cruelty,” 1997, 141.
\textsuperscript{13} Burningham and Cooper, “Being Constructive,” 1999.
\textsuperscript{14} Franklin, \textit{Nature and Social Theory}, 2002.
\textsuperscript{15} Martell as quoted in Franklin, \textit{Nature and Social Theory}, 2002, 42.
\textsuperscript{16} Franklin, \textit{Nature and Social Theory}, 2002.
\end{flushright}
The clear disparities between the two perspectives help us to understand why tensions between humans is almost inescapable when people are performing different or even similar roles in natural environments, even when conflict is not present at a particular moment. The ontological understanding of this environment, even if not acknowledged, shapes our performances and discourses. Therefore, discrepancies in the way people view or ‘construct’ Nature may indeed turn into conflict situations. Furthermore, as I will be arguing later, the performances of hunters and trampers are not always consistent with their alleged philosophical positions, and their narratives of experiences are more often than not inconsistent with their performances in the outdoors. More importantly, the stances taken by these individuals, which I am calling here their philosophical positions, are commonly contradictory not only to the group members’ performances, but also to their own discourses. Clearly, this inconsistency adds complexity to any attempt to gain a better understanding of the human/human relations taking place in natural environments, but is not alien to the academic study of environmentalism, human/natural environment relations and the like. In fact, Burningham and Cooper, in their discussion about criticisms directed at constructivism, demonstrate some of the difficulties involved in presenting a clear philosophical position when carrying out research in this field. \(^{17}\) The nuances within the perspectives themselves can add to the confusion and complexity of the subject. However, in order to be able to discuss the discourses, narratives and performances of hunters and trampers in the outdoors, it is necessary to have a clear and thorough understanding of the ontological and epistemological positions available to them and although this is not intended to be a comprehensive review of constructivism and realism, I will nonetheless endeavour to present their more subtle characteristics.

**Realism**

Realists’ main arguments critique the idealist view that society constantly shapes and reshapes all materiality and subjectivity according to its rules and practices. This idealist position implies that environmental problems, Nature, wilderness and so on, do not exist if detached from human society; that the environmental problems, for instance, are constructed as problems by human beings, and that if a new ‘code of reference’ is created then what are problems today in one certain society, might be something else tomorrow in other. Pollution, for instance, is considered to be a problem only if and when a society determines that a

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specific level of excrement is to be tolerated in a certain quantity of water, and that exceeding this limit is unacceptable for whatever reasons. Radical realists do not bind to this discourse, claiming that it hinders the political movement for an immediate solution to what are (perceived as) real environmental threats. Milton holds that “the constructivist model is incompatible with environmental activism, which depends on the recognition of an independent reality that can be modified by human actions.”

If all environmental problems are human constructs, then there is no urgency in taking care of them, as they are not, in actual fact, ‘real’. Furthermore, realists argue that a constructivist approach to human/environment relations accentuates the human/nature division, giving agency only to human beings. Interestingly though, constructivists make a similar claim referring to realists, but I will not explore this claim now, providing first the context in which this claim is based.

Environmentalists tend to engage with a realist discourse in order to emphasise the urgency of human actions to reverse what is perceived to be a current environmental crisis. Contraposing the constructivist discourse, some environmentalists have argued: “If nature is only a social and discursive construction, why fight (...) to preserve it?” Some extreme constructionists, such as Vogel, would argue that, indeed, the battle is not worth fighting, unless at the level of social discourses and practices. That is to say that such an idealist position can possibly advocate for moral environmental practices, but for only as long as humans accept that they are the ones with the power to change the course of things, “instead of believing that world [the one they inhabit] to be determined by external forces they are unable to control.” This position, however, does not present environmentalists their desired argument for human sympathy and engagement with environmental issues and therefore poses impediments to the advance of their movement. If nonhuman animals, rivers and mountains are not perceived to have intrinsic value, then it is hard to build an argument evoking compassion, sympathy, and moral obligations and claims. As Bennett and Chaloupka argue, “[w]hat happens to environmentalist concerns when the object of those concerns, the thing for the sake of which one speaks – nature, wild lands, animals – begins to lose its status as an object, a given, already set thing to which we can refer as if we were not

involved in its construction?”

The result, usually, is a clear opposition and enforcement of the abyss between realism and social constructivism. Proctor, following this line, goes as far as calling social constructivism the new environmental villain, although previously I have shown that the superficial analysis of the discourses of both realists and constructivists does not present this polarization as being obvious. Furthermore, in trying to establish an ecocentric engagement with the natural environment ‘green’ advocates need to acknowledge not only Nature’s agency but also its physical reality and, strategically, its fragility to human interference. The latter is extremely relevant to the stewardship and preservationist discourses and is central to ‘green’ advocacy. It is here that the dualism realists accuse constructivists of embracing becomes evident also in some realist discourses. When advocating for stewardship, environmentalists who are realists situate human beings in a position of control in relation to nature and therefore disconnect, or disregard, the self-acclaimed ecocentric position that contends that human beings are just one more piece in Nature’s complex system. Moreover, such a romantic position has human beings as the centre of the issues again by holding that Nature needs to be conserved for the enjoyment of future generations. Although realists may advocate for Nature’s intrinsic value, the stewardship discourse seems to divert them from a truly ecocentric position.

The emphasis on the physical reality and agency of the natural environment is a central tenet of the realist environmental position, and biophysical sciences have traditionally supported truth claims emanating from environmentalists. As Proctor rightly argues, “environmentalist discourse generally justifies its ‘oughts’ based on scientifically founded assertions of truth concerning the imperiled state of nature. The social construction of nature argument, then, strikes to the epistemological core of environmentalism’s moral and political campaign.” In response to constructivism, and the idea that our discourses and understanding of the natural environment are culturally produced and dependant, realists affirm that “at least some of our

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talk about the natural (roughly, non-artefactual) world captures how that world ‘anyway is’, independent of human perspectives, attitudes, practical concerns, and the like.\textsuperscript{28}

A major point of dispute then, between radical realists, or empiricist realists, and extreme constructivists, is the constructivist affirmation that Nature, wilderness, the natural environment, and the like, are more social constructions than a reality ‘out there’. In the following section I will present the key arguments used by constructivists to support their claim, but for now my attention will remain focused on realist interpretations of the argument.

In an interesting paper discussing the differences between the two positions, James Proctor presents a case where several realist academics, including active members of environmental movements, reacted in unison to Cronon’s famous edited book \textit{Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature}, and more specifically to his essay in this volume called \textit{The Trouble with Wilderness; Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature}. Now, constructivist arguments about how we perceive, deal with, and discuss nature produce clear impediments, in realists’ views, for human stewardship of nature and active mobilization regarding environmental problems. Against that, ex-\textit{Earth First!} leader Dave Foreman wrote in the preface of the \textit{Wild Earth} edition that was dedicated to counteract Cronon’s essay that such constructivist arguments are based on “a carelessness about the consequences of [their] critique[s] of wilderness.”\textsuperscript{29} Although specifically concerned with the wilderness debate, Foreman’s statement could be broadened to encompass the natural environment in its entirety and is directed at what is understood as an irresponsible act of advocacy against the environmentalist ideal of nature’s protection. The consequences, in this case, are for the environmental movement and for Nature itself - a real ‘object’. Cronon’s essay raised arguments in favour of the social production of wilderness in a very strong way and in turn raised from realists a series of responses that are worth exploring further.\textsuperscript{30}

One important argument against the ‘social-construction-of-nature’ position is that it questions the validity, or usefulness, of scientifically-based information about the ‘actual’ state of the natural environment, thus some of the arguments presented by Cronon’s

\textsuperscript{28} James, “Merleau-Ponty, Metaphysical Realism and the Natural World,” 2007, 501.


\textsuperscript{30} Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness,” 1996.
opponents claimed that his discourse was based on ‘ignorance of biology’ and ‘antipathy to science’. Bill Willers went further and asserted that Cronon was largely uninformed of “the biological truth that wilderness is a key requirement of organic evolution.” It is clear then, that for realists, rigorous empirical science provides enough, and determinant, information about the physical and biological aspects of the natural environment, and this knowledge subsequently provides for the development of basic assumptions, or truths, to guide action towards human/environment relations. Therefore, there is an object ‘out there’ that has been socially named ‘nature’ but that operates independently of human will; humans can only learn how to deal with its processes in the most efficient and least harmful way. As Willer concludes: “ideas of nature [might not] exist outside of cultural understanding, but Nature in all of its self-governing complexity most certainly does.”

A second, more emblematic realist critique of social constructivism that was evoked during the wilderness debate initiated by Cronon’s book refers to the idea of relativism. According to extreme realists, social constructivism is bound to relativism and this proffers highly problematic postulations. The general, lay idea behind relativism is one of ‘anything goes’, or the obvious ‘any truth claim needs to be necessarily contextualised’; the perfect opposite of absolutism, “the view that truth (value, reality) is objectively real, final, and eternal.” If assertions about nature, even if scientifically based, are culturally produced and thus socially and historically contingent, there will never be a ‘reality’ that we can grasp, or at least try to understand. All ‘real’ phenomena are then overly bound to human formulations of them and therefore can never be fully, ‘truthfully’ understood. Such epistemic relativism, as Crist phrases it, obstructs the action discourse of the environmental movement as it relegates the problems highlighted by environmentalists to a sphere of relative, and not absolute, problem. In other words, the issues presented by (realist) ‘green movement’ advocates can be reduced to contingencies of location, time, space, culture, and therefore are not urgent to the whole of society. Most social constructivists would deny such a level of relativism and some academics who take a constructivist epistemological stance have recently been trying to counter-argue such claims. Jones, for instance, based on the works of Milton and Hannigan,

notes that although social constructivism may accept epistemological relativism, it denies ontological relativism, therefore, it is “perfectly capable of dealing with environmental change and can lead to highly fruitful analyses.”

There is, however, a position within realism that accepts, at least in part, the ‘construction-of-nature’ argument. Critical realists make a move to shorten the gap between radical realism and extreme constructivism. Peter Dickens probably is one of the most important critical realists working with environmental issues in sociology. His works *Society and Nature* and *Reconstructing Nature* provide important contributions to the understanding of human/environment relations, utilising a critical realist perspective. According to Dickens, all living organisms can be understood only if situated within their environment, that is, the environment is part of the organism’s existence and therefore cannot be understood as a separate phenomenon. Dickens stresses that there is a mutuality between ‘beings’ and the environment that, if not acknowledged, prevents understanding being achieved. More importantly, this mutuality implies a coexistence that guides the relationships; the action or ‘being’ of one as it impacts the other.

Nevertheless, Dickens does not deny the social construction of knowledge and that this construction impacts on environmental issues. This position makes the dichotomy between constructionism and realism rather blurred, and it causes difficulties in the positioning of arguments in the discussion of environmental issues, especially of human/environment relations. In fact, all critical realists, in some way, support the claim that there is a constructivist dimension to environmental problems. The point of difference lies, then, in the amount of agency given to humans in the social construction of environmental issues versus the agency of the natural environment itself to present environmental problems that are ‘real’ and not dependant only on discursive production by humans beings. Other important supporters of critical realism are Benton and Martell who, like Dickens, have

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followed the critical realist philosophies of Bhaskar and early writings of Marx to develop this alternative approach to the study of human/environment relations.41

Critical realism has been an important and influential perspective in the study of human/environment relations. As James points out, most of the green movement is based on realist views of the world, therefore its importance to the discussions of the subject cannot be denied, if only to present important criticisms to the dominant constructivist approach found in the sociology literature.42

Constructivism
Following my strategy above, I will define and briefly present social constructivism arguments from the viewpoint of the critics of this position.43 As I have stated in the previous chapter, my own approach to research and knowledge is realist constructivist and therefore my discussion of both realists’ and constructivists’ positions are obviously modulated by my own stance. However, in choosing to approach the topic from the arguments raised by their critics, I anticipate making clear to the reader where I am positioned in such debates and hence set the grounds for my subsequent discussions. More importantly, in presenting the contentious issues related to the topic I hope to take my presentation to a different level, avoiding a purely descriptive account of the literature. Also, I will continue to use works that are related to the construction of Nature, natural environment and wilderness to illustrate the debate, therefore providing important context for the discussions that will follow.

Although social constructivism seems to prevail in most academic discussions in the social sciences about our relationships with the other-than-human world, the arguments in support of such a position vary considerably. Indeed, social constructivism in studies of Nature and the natural environment has gone through a process of significant change and development since its first appearance in the 1980s.44 From radical positions, such as the one taken by Vogel, through to the more moderate view of realist constructivists, such as Barkin’s, social

43 I will be using particularly the work of Crist who explicitly challenges the social constructivist position in her article “Against the Social Construction of Nature and Wilderness,” 2004.
constructivists offer an array of contributions to the human/natural environment debate. More generally, the different forms of social constructivist thought in social sciences research range from what is commonly referred to as ‘strict’ or ‘strong’ constructivism to ‘contextual’ or ‘weak’ constructivism. I will discuss these positions later in this section. Firstly, I need to contextualize the discussions more broadly.

Social constructivist perspectives have been used widely to analyse sociological themes. As Hacking points out, for some, all social (and sometimes other than social) aspects of life can be interpreted as socially constructed; that is to say that a state of affairs is always historically, economically, geographically, etc., contingent and not a ‘natural’, unavoidable condition. This understanding of the world can be considered to be liberating, as it works against inevitability by assuming that if “X was brought into existence or shaped by social events, forces, history, all of which could well have been different,” awareness of such pre-conditions can lead to subsequent social action that may successfully promote change. There are obvious problems with any universal statement that a social constructivist perspective is always liberating, however. Borrowing from Hacking’s example, knowing that anorexia is a “transient mental illness, flourishing only in some places at some times” does not effectively help the women who suffer from such illness. Moreover, critics of constructivism argue that explaining all social problems as ‘human-made’ might in fact weaken the case of those who work to actually change ‘reality’, as it may mask the urgency of action. An example of such an argument was explored previously when discussing environmentalists’ reactions to Cronon’s work.

On the other hand, as Cronon argues, in acknowledging the agency of social forces in the ‘creation’, or construction, of social conditions, we become aware of power relations that shape and repress these conditions and we become, therefore, better equipped to contest them. In the case of Nature, or more restrictedly wilderness, Cronon contends that in accepting wilderness as it has been shaped by (American) society, one may learn “to be dismissive or even contemptuous of [...] humble places and experiences. Without our quite realizing it, wilderness [as it has been constructed] tends to privilege some parts of nature at the expense of others,” therefore not actually helping in the task of preserving the planet and

47 Ibid., 2.
all its human and nonhuman constituents, arguably the aim of those who advocate for wilderness and its preservation in the first place. Following the same reasoning, Hannigan argues that social constructivism can help us understand why certain aspects of the environment, or certain environmental concerns, receive more or less attention in different societies. By deconstructing the available discourses and identifying the associated power structures, one can better comprehend the levels of relevance these issues are given in contemporary society and therefore individuals or groups may be better prepared to work for change, when necessary. Sutton endorses this position by arguing that environmental problems cannot “speak for themselves,” and if social studies refrain from deconstructing and subsequently reconstructing the underlying or founding issues that made people aware of the environmental problems (or any other social matter) in the first place, then all that is left is the position endorsed by “self-appointed experts and claims-makers,” and social science then will fail to make its contribution to the solution of the problems. Without social sciences’ contributions, particularly using a constructivist perspective, there is a chance that “the policy-making process becomes evermore specialised, leaving out the views of ordinary people.”

There are other issues confronting social constructivist thought, the most disturbing one being the claims of relativism. As I discussed above, some realists and other critics of social constructivism argue that if social constructivists contend that any given phenomenon – such as motherhood, hunting, anorexia, wilderness, homosexuality, to name only a few – is always a product of societal contingencies, then their claims are of a relativist nature. Although this might seem to be the case in the more ‘strict’ form of constructivist thinking, it is certainly not the case in most constructivist work. As much as social conditions are viewed as socially constructed, they are not necessarily acceptable on that same basis. In fact, as I showed previously, one of the main arguments of social constructivists is that knowledge of social

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51 Ibid., 64.

An important issue that needs to be considered here is that social scientists themselves might not be able or willing to present the “views of ordinary people,” presenting only their own interpretations of those views. In my understanding, and certainly a view shared by other social constructivist researchers, these interpretations are the best contribution we can make, and are certainly a step forward to a more thorough comprehension of the social ‘realities’. The endless struggle is to portray as clear a picture as one possibly can, highlighting that yours is only one interpretation of a multifaceted ‘reality’.

contingencies helps in the re-making of social ‘reality’. The social constructivist work is focused on the power of society to change its structures, and not on the acceptance of cultural relativism. As Hacking rightly puts it, “a primary use of ‘social construction’ has been for raising consciousness” and I would contend that, as a consequence, to incite social transformation.53

It is towards the more strict version of constructivism that most of the work critical of such a perspective is directed.54 Crist, for instance, expresses her unease with constructivism by affirming that such a position “considers it to be axiomatic that the intrinsic meaning of natural phenomena is unavailable and that human semiotic and material work bestows meaning to them.”55 Concluding from this comment, and paraphrasing Michael Soulé, Crist states that, as a consequence, constructivism is “as dangerous to the goals of conservation, preservation, and restoration of natural systems as bulldozers and chainsaws.”56 Although Crist is right in her first assertion, she has not considered the fact that although constructivists contend that the intrinsic meaning of natural phenomena is in fact unavailable to human beings, the ‘weaker’ forms of constructivism, including the realist constructivist position, do not deny the physical reality of such phenomena, even if still asserting that humans will never be able fully to comprehend natural phenomena independently from their relationship to human society. In fact, some authors argue that even the more strict constructivist does not assume that Nature, for instance, does not have a material reality independent from humans’ perceptions of it.57 In general, social constructivists share a belief “in the existence of an external reality that is independent of the observer [but] that it is not possible for observers to know that independent reality except through their constructions of it.”58 However, strict constructivists on the one hand, and contextual and realist constructivists on the other, disagree to the extent that social scientists should “engage with the question of whether the asserted condition actually exists or not, or attempt to assess the


56 Ibid., 7.


validity of the claims being made.” For strict constructivists, social scientists do not have, nor should they try to have, the knowledge to make such efforts, and therefore “should remain agnostic about the existence and extent of the conditions and simply consider the claims made about them.” Contextual and realist constructivists, in contrast, affirm “that what is known about the reality and extent of environmental problems can be used to gauge the truth of the claims made about them,” and, as a consequence, can assist change.

Critics of social constructivism however go farther still and assert that “[a]t the level of analysis, however, instead of attending to the degradation of natural systems, constructivism focuses exclusive attention on human discourses about it.” Again, the acknowledgement of the power of language in meaning-creation is considered by constructivists as a first and necessary step in the understanding of a phenomenon and any subsequent movement for change. More than focusing exclusively on human discourses, as Crist affirms, what constructivists propose is to go beyond language once we understand the power it possesses.

Another notable ‘sin’ committed by constructivists who discuss the social constructions of nature, natural environment and wilderness, according to Crist, is the dualism inherent in such an approach to nature and the discourses formulated as a consequence. In other words, if one contends that Nature is ‘only’ a social construct, something created by human discourse, then Nature is ‘other-than-human’, with humans being a disconnected form of life. It is true that idealist positions taken by some ‘strict’ social constructivists, such as Vogel or some readings of Tester, would surely imply this kind of dualism, and consequential anthropocentrism. However, ‘weaker’ forms of constructivism, such as contextual and realist constructivism, argue that other-than-human beings and phenomena have agency and thus are part of the process of meaning-creation, therefore differentiating the “epistemological and moral constructions of nature [from] its ontological reality.” Such agency modulates the human understanding of their existence, but we humans still shape our own attitudes and discourses regarding their reality. More importantly, these attitudes and discourses are contingent upon social structures. As Sutton summarizes, “all of our knowledge of nature,

60 Ibid., 308.
61 Ibid., 308.
63 Ibid.
including modern science, is still human knowledge, which has been produced in social situations and is open to the influence of similar social factors that influence other forms of knowledge production."

In light of what I have been discussing, critics of social constructivism are correct in most of their analysis, but their critiques are applicable only to very few scholars who embrace strict constructivist thinking. As mentioned before, Tester is one such constructivist who seems to deny the reality of other-than-human beings and phenomena. In his infamous description of nonhuman animals as “blank paper which can be inscribed with any message, and symbolic meaning that the social wishes,” Tester goes too far in order to make the claim that human sociality produces its own meaning of nature. As much as most social constructivists would agree with this premise, his statement goes beyond what the majority of constructivists would be prepared to accept. “A fish is only a fish if it is socially classified as one, and that classification is only concerned with fish to the extent that scaly things living in the sea help society define itself.” In other words, what Tester is saying here is that the reality of fish, for instance, changes as categorisations of fish change within, or between, societies. With this statement, not only does Tester fall into the relativist trap but he also assumes an idealist position when permanently binding the reality of the fish with our perceptions of it. Moreover, his argument works against nonhuman animals’ own value and towards the blind acceptance of an instrumental and anthropocentric view of the other-than-human world, whereby the understanding of any creature or phenomena matters only insofar as it “help[s] society define itself.”

In a sense, however, Tester is correct in asserting that there are different interpretations of what a fish, or any nonhuman creature, is: food, pet, or aesthetic presence, among other things. As Sutton points out, “all of these constructions can and do co-exist within one national society, let alone across cultures or at different times. In a very real sense, fish

67 Ibid., 46.
68 Burningham and Cooper argue that Tester has not committed such a ‘crime’, and the realist interpretations of his work are narrow and dismissive of the whole of his argument, focusing only on a specific citation that conveys the message they are trying to challenge. Here I am using the same strategy critics of Tester’s work employ but with a different purpose. I wish to highlight the extremist constructivist position that can be drawn from particular extracts of Tester’s narratives to show how ‘milder’ forms of constructivism are still available even if we take the point that Tester’s argument was in fact an idealist one. Like Burningham and Cooper, I do not agree that Tester’s final claim was idealist in nature. Burningham and Cooper, “Being Constructive,” 1999.
already are what humans say they are.” What strict constructivists do not seem to admit is that none of these interpretations, or constructions, of the fish alters the actual nature or reality of them as material objects. What changes through social living, and more precisely through language, is our use of the fish and our perceptions of them. But these are no less important to us and to the rest of Nature, because it is through our understandings of the world that we shape our interferences and general actions. In addition, as Raskin puts it, “none of the many ways of understanding that people have developed provide a God’s Eye (i.e., purely objective) view of the world. All constructed meanings reflect a point of view.” Therefore, following a realist constructivist position, fish, while real material subjects/objects, are in fact also socially constructed, and are so in different ways, with meanings ascribed that are of importance for humans only, but fish also have agency and their reality is the medium for our interpretations of them. Using a similar argument, Raskin affirms that knowledge is a compilation of human-made constructions. Such constructions are heuristic fictions useful for understanding the world. In this regard, epistemological constructivism sees knowledge schemes as being classifiable as more or less viable rather than more or less accurate. People cannot know for certain if their constructions correspond to an independent reality, but they can know if their constructions work well for them.

It is interesting to note that in some ways what constructivists from the ‘weaker’ tradition try to do is to create a conceptual bridge between idealist and realist perspectives of knowledge. That is to say that realist constructivists, for instance, work on an integrated view of what can be known about the world, acknowledging ‘the real’ as well as the power of ‘the constructed’. Furthermore, this more recent constructivist tradition tries to overcome extreme idealism and relativism while attempting to avoid the dualism posed by strict constructivists (and realists for that matter) between human and Nature. As Evanoff rightly points out,

[r]ather than see the human-nature relationship in dualistic terms (which places the two sides in opposition to each other) or in monistic terms (which simply collapses the natural into the human or vice versa), a dialectical position is present which sees

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71 Ibid., n/p.

72 Ibid.
humanity and nature as simultaneously shaping and being shaped by the other, while each maintaining a measure of autonomy.\textsuperscript{73}

Paraphrasing Crossley, environmental problems, Nature, gender, anorexia, are ‘real constructs’, being particularly real in their effects: “People will kill in pursuit of ‘mere constructs’ and/or make themselves ill with worry [but] just because these social things depend upon our agreement or complicity for their existence, that does not mean that we fully understand their dynamics.”\textsuperscript{74}

What about Nature?

Based on the premise that Nature is a ‘real construct’, in this section I will discuss how the construct ‘Nature’ has been formulated by different social scientists and philosophers, and how it is commonly comprehended by the general public. It follows that it is from my own position in this debate that in the subsequent chapters I will present and discuss my experiences with hunters and trampers on Stewart Island, and how I interpret their narratives, and performances of their experiences. Due to the centrality of Nature in these experiences, it is absolutely necessary to identify these formulations prior to an exploration of hunters’ and trampers’ narratives, although I have no intention of exhausting this very complex discussion here. Indeed, it is not my intention to provide a full review of the extensive literature on Nature and socio-philosophical theory. Many authors have done so brilliantly before me.\textsuperscript{75} My attempt here will be to introduce some key tensions in contemporary thinking in regards to human/nature relationships, and I will not attempt to do so in a linear or chronological way. As I have discussed in my previous chapter, a linear argument cannot portray the mosaic of issues that I am dealing with. Such an approach would hinder, instead of help, the clarity of my argument. Furthermore, as Franklin has argued, most of the available ‘reviews’ of such issues focus, for good reasons, on dominant (meaning oppressors’) conceptions, and therefore may not accurately portray the different constructions produced by society.\textsuperscript{76} Following Macnaghten and Urry, there are 

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\textsuperscript{73} Evanoff, “Reconciling Realism and Constructivism in Environmental Ethics,” 2005, 62.

\textsuperscript{74} Crossley, \textit{Key Concepts in Critical Social Theory}, 2005, 254.


\textsuperscript{76} Franklin, \textit{Nature and Social Theory}, 2002.
Natures, and not one Nature.\textsuperscript{77} In these different Natures there are oppressed and unvoiced ones, as well as the one available for review from literary and historical accounts. Unfortunately, to maintain my focus on selected issues for discussion, I cannot do justice here to all of these \textit{Contested Natures}. Hence, I will focus only on the ones that I believe help us understand the prevalent dualism present in human/nature relationships discourses.

Without attempting to write a full history of the changing attitudes towards nature in modern society, a task not suitable to my purposes here, I will now try to provide a basic historical context to discuss the notions of Nature I wish to explore. Keith Thomas is particularly useful for a better understanding of how Nature has been conceptualised in modern Western society.\textsuperscript{78} In his historical account of changing attitudes towards nature in modern England, Thomas shows how, in the early modern period, nature was there to be dominated and tamed, not appreciated or enjoyed.\textsuperscript{79} Nature was the antithesis of civilization and therefore viewed with disdain. More than that, humans wanted to distinguish themselves clearly from nature, and particularly from nonhuman animals who were always referred to as brute creatures. Humans, in order to be civilized, needed to differentiate themselves from such ‘brutes’, creating as a consequence a divide between human beings and other animals.\textsuperscript{80} Moreover, in the ‘new’, civilized society, agricultural land, tamed and modified to suit human needs, was the only ‘natural’ landscape to incite human interest. Wild areas were aesthetically unpleasant as they broke with ‘civilized’ ideals and the imaginary horizontal lines that meant comfort in such an aesthetic, bringing, therefore, discomfort.\textsuperscript{81} In addition, ‘the wild’ was feared. Avalanches could be triggered by as little as a sneeze; monsters could come out of their (wild) habitat if it were invaded; people could fall into one mountain gorge and be expelled on the other side of the range.\textsuperscript{82} Nature was, therefore, significantly ‘Other’ to humans.

\textsuperscript{78} Here I would like to borrow Ingold’s discussion of the difficulties in providing ‘the’ view of Western, modern society. As Ingold rightly argues, “the Western tradition of thought, closely examined, is as richly various, multivocal, historically changeable and contest-riven as any other.” It is in this sense, that again I wish to emphasise that the accounts presented here are only the predominant ones, and not, by any means, a full account of the whole story. Ingold, \textit{The Perception of the Environment}, 2000, 6.
\textsuperscript{79} Thomas, \textit{Man and the Natural World}, 1983.
\textsuperscript{81} Andrews, \textit{The Search for the Picturesque}, 1990.
By the end of the eighteenth century, the Romantic aesthetic provided an opportunity for a new relationship with the natural environment. At that stage, instead of fear and despise, Nature evoked peace and joy, and civilized society became the villain. Men and women started to travel to ‘wild’ landscapes to enjoy this ‘new’ Nature, now aesthetically pleasing in this new phase. This move from fear to enjoyment was significantly facilitated by the aesthetic movement of the Sublime and of the Picturesque, concepts that still today shape human interaction with the natural environment. According to Cronon, the sublime is “one of the most important expressions of that broad transatlantic movement we today label as romanticism” and he summarizes this move by saying that Nature “ceased to be a place of satanic temptation [to] become instead a sacred temple, much as it continues to be for those who live it today.”

Three theorists were of particular influence in the conceptualization of the sublime and the picturesque, and therefore were precursors of this shift in attitude towards nature: Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant and William Gilpin. Burke, with his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* in 1757, was the first one to suggest that fear in the presence of wild nature could be felt as awe and exultation, affirming that the terror felt by some in the presence of the sublime landscape did not necessarily stem from dread. Burke polarised the sublime and the beautiful, where the former provokes awe and the latter calmness. Kant’s *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* built on the same ideal but in more complex ways, providing justification for the admiration of dramatic natural formations and phenomena, such as great mountains, open vast seas, and storms. Kant provided also a distinction between the sublime and the beautiful, certainly reducing the beautiful to a limited and lesser experience, and exulting the sublime. As Morton explains Kant’s position on the sublime, “[i]n [Kant’s] sublime, the notion of infinity exceeds

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85 Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness,” 1996, 72, 76.
86 Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1764[1757].
87 Kant, *Notes and Fragments*, 2005[1764].
any number or magnitude, no matter how vast, and thus terrifies-inspires us with the power of our mind, not of an overwhelming physicality.”

In 1792, Gilpin introduced the idea of the picturesque as the enjoyable characteristic of wild, irregular and somewhat chaotic nature, shifting from the previous aesthetic presumption that linearity and ease were more pleasing and beautiful. According to Glickman, Gilpin’s description of the picturesque as what is paintable, led inevitably to the construction of the picturesque as a third concept, ‘in between’ the sublime and the beautiful; the sublime could not possibly be represented in a painting, and the beautiful would not always be worthy of a painting representation. Glickman explains:

Conventionally, the beautiful […] was all harmony, balance, and mellow light. Such paintings are frankly idealized: they evoke “a sense of a Golden Age, of grazing flocks, unruffled waters and a calm, luminous sky, images of perfect harmony between man and nature” […] Landscapes of this sort were typically Mediterranean or classical. In contrast, sublime landscapes, representing tumult, vastness, and obscurity, were usually northern or alpine, or occasionally coastal or tropical. However, since sublimity was held to consist of that which is indefinable and immeasurable, subjects incarnating these principles were often unsuitable – if not impossible – to paint. […]

[…] “I meet, I find the Beautiful – but I give, contribute, or rather attribute the Sublime. No object of Sense is sublime in itself; but only as far as I make it a symbol of some Idea. The circle is a beautiful figure in itself; it becomes sublime, when I contemplate eternity under that figure – The Beautiful is the perfection, the Sublime the suspension, of the comparing Power.”

For this reason, the picturesque came to be known as the ‘middle way’ between the sublime and the beautiful, almost like transforming the irregular and chaotic forms of the sublime into something aesthetically pleasing and acceptable. As Nash correctly asserts, “[t]he wilderness remained the same, but a change in taste was altering attitudes toward it.”

The sublime, however, until today is understood as that which inspires, provokes awe and feelings that are almost inexplicable. An environment need not be a high, snow clad, mountain to provoke such feelings, as Glickman explains; it needs only to install feelings that are “indefinable for the understanding,” and are “more easily [found] in ‘raw nature’.” The

90 Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 1792.
sublime, as a characteristic of wild nature, still predominates today in descriptions of
wilderness experiences.

The sublime, however, strengthens the gap between humans and Nature. Instead of avoiding
Nature, modern men and women attempt to enter Nature. As Nye rightly affirms, “[t]he
sublime object is by definition something one is not accustomed to, something extraordinary.
It virtually requires that one be an outsider.”94 The tourist who, by the late eighteenth
century, becomes fascinated with wild landscapes, distinguishes Nature from culture by
attributing the ideals of ‘malign civilization’ and ‘benign nature,’ emphasising the
dichotomy.95 Moreover, following the theories of Burke, Kant and Gilpin, the sublime
landscape was a remote ideal, as these landscapes were only “those rare places on earth
where one had more chance than elsewhere to glimpse the face of God.”96 Nature was as far
from humans as ever.

This change of conceptions of Nature, therefore, fails to abandon the dualist proposition of
the Nature/human divide, a position rooted in the early thinking of philosophy of mind.
From Plato and Aristotle to René Descartes, pre-modern and modern philosophers always
have been interested in the non-physical attributes of the mind. The intangible nature of
thought intrigued philosophers and there was consensus on its disconnectedness from the
physical materiality of the body. This distinction between mind and body argued by
philosophy of mind has greatly influenced Western thought, particularly following from
Descartes’ works in the sixteenth century. Other forms of dualisms emerged from the initial
separation of humans from their own mind, such as the nature/culture and natural/human
divide. Following a Cartesian, or dualist, view of the world social scientists were ready to
separate the social, or what is dependent on human agency, from the natural, or what
humans have (or, better, had) little control of.97 By the end of the nineteenth century,
following Durkheim’s view that there was a domain of life irreducibly social, social scientists
in general, and sociologists in particular, assumed an even stronger dualist position when
discussing human relationship with the natural world. In support of such thinking, modern
societies were becoming more and more urbanized and nature was, in fact, becoming more

96 Ibid., 73.
97 Franklin, Nature and Social Theory, 2002.
and more distant from the everyday lives of people. Nature was visually quite distinct from
the rapidly changing urbanised world. As Franklin argues, “[t]his separation of civic society
form the countryside, its agricultural hinterland and from wild nature its opposed other,
enabled sociologists to imagine a province comprised purely of the social and cultural.”
This dualism is ingrained in modern (social) science and prevails in wider Western society as
well.

There are authors, however, who present a different account of the historical development
of human/nature thinking. Schama in his *Landscape and Memory*, for instance, tried to avoid
the ruptured discourse of the ‘traditional to modern’, as I have just presented it above, and
argued that the sacralised view of nature of the early periods and the utilitarian view of
modern times are not mutually exclusive and that, in fact, the “sacredness of nature [...] was
never shaken off by modernisation.” His argument is that perceptions (of nature) change
slowly through time and are not easily overcome. Hence, these seemingly incompatible views
overlap in modern society, and prevail in different areas and spheres of social life. This
position seems to better support the mosaic of narratives and behaviours found in modern
and late modern society in regards to the varied, contested relationships that humans engage
in with other living and nonliving creatures of the natural world.

Nonetheless, despite Schama’s account, it seems reasonable to state that in the twentieth
century post-modern thinking started to question Cartesian, empiricist views of the world
and, consequently, in sociological studies, social constructivism soon became the rule, rather
than the exception. In acknowledging the dialectic character of the human/Nature
relationships, for instance, post-modern social scientists made an attempt to overcome the
dualism currently predominant in scientific discourse. Post-structuralists took an even more
radical position when permanently binding nature to language about nature, breaking all the
assumed dichotomies between human and other-than-human creatures and phenomena.
However, social constructivists, in general, still seem to be trapped in, at least, one form of
dualism: the natural/cultural divide. In concentrating only on human agency, social

100 Although I accept the success of post-structuralists in overcoming the dualism inherited from Cartesian
thinking, and appreciate their insights to the philosophical discussion of Nature, I see their permanent
deconstruction of Nature as an endless and unfruitful process that leads to the absolutism of language.
constructivists seem to be guided by an anthropocentric view of the world, a view that also is rooted in Cartesian philosophy.

Anthropocentrism is regarded as the biggest sin of human kind by most environmental activists. Borrowing from Barry’s glossary of terms, anthropocentrism is the “thinking or acting that is predominantly concerned with humans. [In its] strong[er] version [it] holds that human interests or purposes are the only issue in making moral judgements, while the weaker version holds that while human interests are important, they are not the only ones to be considered.” For green advocacy groups, this human-centeredness prevents humanity from engaging with environmental problems in an urgent manner, for the sake of the actual nature we are destroying. Instead, we delay the process by ‘wasting precious time’ in evaluating how humans are being impacted by the environmental issues we are creating.

According to some authors, anthropocentrism emerges from the technocentric ideology. With industrialisation and the consequent urbanisation of societies, humankind became ever more dependent on cumulative science and technology. This dependency can be attained only at the expense of nature, which is used to provide the means to reach the technocentric ideal, that is, the most ‘efficient’, ‘technological’ society. Utilitarianism, and more generally instrumentalism, are the only possible, effective ways of formulating philosophical issues in such a technocentric mode, as O’Riordan phrases it. Therefore, instrumentalism drives the relationship with nature, where nature is seen as a resource to be manipulated at the will of humans. Anthropocentrism is therefore both human-centred and human-instrumental. In short “[a]n anthropocentric society is one with a dominant worldview in which the non-human natural world is both conceptualized and treated in terms of means to human ends.”

According to this definition, therefore, most social scientists have, in one way or another, ‘committed the sin.’ By focusing on the human or social component of the relationship between humans and Nature, it could be argued that all social science is, in some way, anthropocentric. However, if the focus is re-directed and moved towards Nature’s agency and participation in such a ‘socially created’, ‘human’ world, then social scientists could

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101 Barry, Environment and Social Theory, 2007, 316.
103 O’Riordan, Environmentalism, 1976.
contribute not only to a modal shift in the ways we understand our relationships with the rest of Nature, but also to understand better the realities of Nature. From a brief review of the literature, it is clear that several social scientists, including both realists and social constructivists, have made an effort in this direction, and their approach, without a closer examination, is commonly labelled ‘ecocentric’.

Before moving on to a discussion of ecocentrism, however, there is one other term that is often associated with anthropocentrism that needs to be clarified. The concept of speciesism is an important development from the anthropocentric idea and, although a more comprehensive discussion of the term will take place in the following chapter when I discuss the hunting practice and the involvement of nonhuman animals in such practices, for now it is important to highlight its significance and connectedness to the anthropocentric idea. The term ‘speciesism’ was first coined by R.D. Ryder in the 1970s and was adopted by Peter Singer in his famous Animal Liberation to promote rights for nonhuman animals. As with anthropocentrism, speciesism means that human welfare takes precedence over the welfare of other (animal) species. Such a concept involves morality and ethics and, in its origin, is fundamentally associated with the idea of racism. The argument is that if “[r]acism is condemned by most intelligent and compassionate people [then] it seems only logical that such people should extend their concern for other races to other species also.” As Singer defines it, “[s]peciesism [...] is a prejudice or attitude of bias toward the interests of members of one’s own species and against those of members of other species.” Using racism as a point of departure, Ryder and Singer (among other animal rights advocates, such as Tom Regan) wish to move the rights movement discourse beyond the human boundary to encompass nonhuman animals, and therefore make their appeal more dramatic.

Against such positions as anthropocentrism and speciesism are some philosophers and social scientists who are self-labelled ecocentrists. The term ecocentrism has been in use for more than four decades now. According to O’Riordan, McConnell in 1965 had already discussed the ecocentric mode as “resting upon the supposition of a natural order in which all things moved according to natural law, in which the most delicate and perfect balance was

106 Ryder, Victims of Science, 1983[1975], 5.
maintained up to the point at which man entered with all his ignorance and presumption."109 For green advocacy, the technocentric society that is based on anthropocentrism is fraught with unsolvable problems since it presupposes constant, never-ending, economic growth that is dependent on natural ‘resources’. Although admittedly all human societies, primitive, modern or postmodern, need natural materials to survive, it is the overexploitation of such materials that green advocacy groups oppose. Technocentric ideology is at the core of environmental groups’ advocacy.

Ecocentrism’s aim is to subvert modern (technocentric) modes of practice towards Nature, placing Gaia at the centre of concern. Lovelock, whose Gaia Hypothesis has influenced most green advocacy groups, contends that the (anthropocentric) stewardship model cannot work because Gaia, or the whole of the ecosystem, is in control. Humankind will suffer the consequence of their actions. Hence, ecocentric thinking is in clear opposition to the technocentric hope that nature provides unlimited resources for human manipulation.110 However, although ecocentrists focus on Gaia, their major arguments still focus on human existence in Gaia, or on the limits Gaia imposes for human habitation of the Earth.

As we can see, the essence of ecocentric thinking presumes that humans are a negative presence in nature; a presence that, again, enters Nature, but now to destroy it. The proper dynamic is maintained only when humans do not interfere. It is ironic therefore to notice how the term ecocentrism has been widely used without a full acknowledgement of its meaning. In common usage of the word, ecocentrism tends to signify a ‘better’, more ‘spiritual’, more ‘pristine’ relationship with nature, but in fact Nature still is personified as the ‘good’ and humankind as the ‘evil’. In other words, humans are still detached from nature, Other to nature, and are not one of the many constitutive parts of nature. As Sutton rightly asserts, ecocentric theorists are “still working with the same society/nature dualism which ecocentrists claim to be transcending and which they identify as a major source of our ecological problems.”111 O’Riordan, one of the precursors of ecocentric thinking, acknowledged the dualism in one of his most influential writings about the topic in the 1970s:

109 McConnell as quoted in O’Riordan, Environmentalism, 1976, 1.
But we should avoid the temptation to divide the world neatly into an ecocentric camp of environmentalists and a technocentric camp of manipulative professionals and administrators. In real life the boundaries are much more blurred. There is every reason to believe that each one of us favours certain elements of both modes, depending upon the institutional setting, the issue at hand, and our changing socioeconomic status. The engineer, the planner, the administrator, and the technician are not insensitive to the beauties of nature, nor are they unaware of the consequences of ‘tampering’ with ecosystems. [...] The ecocentrist is not immune from this duality. [...] The duality of the technocentric and ecocentric modes is probably evident to most of us and need not be further elaborated. Suffice it to conclude that coexistence does not necessarily produce compromise, though in thoughtful people it should lead to better understanding.112

However, from the ongoing debate between anthropo- and ecocentric positions, and the constant accusation of dualism and inconsistency between the two, it does not seem that it is as clear as O’Riordan expected it to be, in that both positions fall into the dualist category. In fact, as O’Riordan points out, it does not seem that humanity is prepared to escape dualism.

To conclude this section, it is important to problematize one other term that is less often used, but is still present in the literature involving the discussions of anthropocentrism versus ecocentrism, a debate that has been labelled as being fundamentally about the metaphysical status of nature.113 In the same vein, biocentrism “is often described as a religious or metaphysical commitment” and has frequently been confused with ecocentrism.114 Biocentrism, contrary to ecocentrism, does not focus on Gaia but on the biotic, or living, community. This distinction is important but also very problematic and probably the reason for the misuse of the term. Biocentrism places moral values on life forms, that is, to be a subject of moral consideration life is the first condition to be fulfilled. Peter Singer’s (and others’) argument, that the necessary condition for moral consideration lies in sentience or being the subject of life, is challenged by biocentric philosophers, who argue that the value of life itself is the first and most important condition for moral consideration.115 Biocentrism focuses on individual welfare, and aims at refocusing moral and ethical discussions to include all living beings, and not only human beings.116 Some biocentrism advocates promote

114 Ibid., 8.
biocentric egalitarianism, a principle that proposes equal moral consideration for all living creatures, including nonhuman animals and plants.\footnote{117 Thompson, “Environmental Ethics and the Development of Landscape Architectural Theory,” 1998.}

As we can see, there are many similarities between bio- and ecocentric perspectives. What differentiates biocentrism from ecocentrism is that the former focuses on the value of individual life, whereas the latter makes moral judgements with the whole of the ecosystem in mind. As Thompson rightly asserts, “[b]iocentrist also value ecosystems, but do so on the grounds that preserving ecosystems will ensure the protection of the plants and animals contained within them.”\footnote{118 Ibid., 79.} Consequently, ecocentrism argues that biocentrism has not gone far enough in the battle for ‘saving nature’ through limiting their action to individuals and forgetting about the complex interactions of Gaia’s constitutive beings.\footnote{119 Jamieson, Ethics and the Environment, 2008.}

The philosophical debates that emerge from the discussion of morality and ethics guided by each of these terms (i.e. anthropocentrism, ecocentrism and biocentrism) are beyond the scope of this dissertation. My intention here is simply to present these contested concepts that are frequently used in academic debates about Nature and show how they are, in their origins, still very much tied to Cartesian philosophy, one which even when looking at Gaia and how better to relate to ‘her’ we tend to separate ourselves from the natural world, as if contaminated by ‘humaness’, a ‘disorder’ alien to Gaia’s fair equilibrium.

**Contested Natures**

One of the practices that derive from formulating Nature as an entity completely separate from us, human animals, is the constant reframing and reification of Nature as a set of distinct ‘things’. Indeed, one could argue that the constructivist position supports the view that there are in fact these different, distinct ‘things’ that sometimes are labelled as Nature. However my point here is that regardless of how we feel and experience Nature, there are labels that are constantly created to present to us a new ‘dimension’ of this ‘unknown’ entity that is so distinct from us. In doing this labelling, we formulate that Nature is wilderness, or the countryside, or some urban, nearby, green park, or a single flower, or the whole of Gaia. The issue here is not so much the construction of these concepts, clearly socially created, but
how their existence in language affects our experiences or our expectations of relationships with Nature.

**Nature as Wilderness**

According to Callicott, “to call certain areas of the natural world ‘wilderness’ [...] is to put a spin on them; it is to socially construct them, not as objective, autonomous nature, but nature in relationship to us human beings.” More precisely, Guha has argued that wilderness is a “distinctively American notion, borne out of a unique social and environmental history.” The concept has been exported, however, due to the undeniable influence of American concepts in modern and late modern societies. The problem with such an export is not only that it trespasses on local cultural values and forms of relationships with Nature, but also that it is a clear form of colonialism. An interesting example of such an imperialist attempt can be found in the writings of Roderick Nash, for instance, who is an advocate of international parks administered by the economically developed nations (in his case it seems that he has the United States clearly in mind as the most developed, and best able to do the job). Nash has argued that the concept of national parks, historically a product of the wilderness construct, is the greatest American ‘invention’ and a sign of the country’s economical, philosophical and ecological maturity and superiority. However, the exportation of the American national park concept not only disregards and represses other (mainly non-Western) forms of human attempts to conserve the natural environment, but also it does little for environmental protection, as wilderness as it has been formulated can be restrictive of wider forms of ecological thinking.

To help contextualize this argument, and channel it to the broader discussion of constructed, contested Natures, I will go back to the uniqueness of the wilderness concept that Guha referred to. According to Cronon, this uniqueness comes from the influence of the sublime aesthetic in American culture, which I briefly presented earlier, and the idea of the frontier, the movement to the ‘wild west’ that reignited the sense of ‘Americaness’ in that country. For Cronon, the frontier was responsible for an important change in Americans’ relationship with wildness, and the “wild country became a place not just of religious redemption but also

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120 Callicott, “Contemporary Criticism of the Received Wilderness Idea,” 2008, 358-359.
of national renewal, the quintessential location for experiencing what it meant to be an American.” These two elements, combined, allowed American society to establish a relationship with untamed nature that was new to modern societies; the appreciation of the natural landscape was directly related to a sense of national identity, creating in the American social imagery the sense of the explorer and the renewed ability to conquer. Quoting Cronon again, “wilderness came to embody the national frontier myth, standing for the wild freedom of America’s past and seeming to represent a highly attractive natural alternative to the ugly artificiality of modern civilization.”

This context facilitated the start of the conservationist movement, and the establishment of the first national park in 1872, Yellowstone National Park. What is interesting to note here is that such a movement did not imply any disturbance to the dualist notion of Nature as ‘Other’ that I have been discussing. On the contrary. In order to establish conservation areas, Native American peoples were displaced from their original land because the concept of wilderness implied creating the fantasy of ‘the-first-man-to-step-on-this-land,’ and earlier occupants of the constructed wilderness space could not ‘spoil’ such new settlers’ ideals. More importantly, influenced by the philosophy of Kant and Burke, the sublime, wild, almost divine, landscape was one that humans could only expect to enter and not to be accepted as a living part of. Hence, boundaries needed to be created to preserve such a space to remind humans of the existence of this ‘sacred’ Nature, and of the role and power of humans to conquer and overcome Nature’s forces. Most importantly, it reminded humans of our otherness to the natural world as well. As a consequence, any land that showed evidence of human presence was not regarded as ‘pure’ or ‘pristine’ and therefore was not considered wilderness. Native Americans’ relationship with the land was so different from the relationships allowed by the modern concepts of Nature that the vestiges of their presence were easily erased and national parks were created purposely ignoring previous human occupation (or dwellings, as Ingold would term it). This understanding of wilderness was not abandoned after the turn of the century. In fact, it is still very much present in late modern societies. Franklin supports this point when asserting that “natures closer to the metropolitan centres and small towns are almost ignored [by environmentalists], as if they have become denatured, unclean or ‘lost’. In this aspect the environmental movement is

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125 Ibid., 78.
related in interesting ways to the Romantic Movement which privileged and concentrated on exactly the same types of nature.”

Plumwood complements saying that

[the] presence and impact of the modern adventure tourist is somehow ‘written out’ of focus in much of the land called wilderness... The modern subject somehow manages to be both in and out of this virginal fantasy, appearing by wilderness convention as a disembodied observer (perhaps as the camera eye [or Emersonian “transparent eyeball”]) in a landscape whose virginity is forever magically renewed.

In addition, in the Romantic wilderness concept, the natural environment should not only be pristine and unpopulated, but also of sublime beauty. Nature as countryside, nearby nature, and Gaia were, and still are, not concepts compatible with the concept of Nature as wilderness. That does not mean that they do not coexist in societies, but only that they are indeed treated as different Natures. The sublime aesthetics of the wilderness concept does not allow for other interpretations of Nature as in these forms Nature might not evoke the awe and the almost religious inspiration that the sublime requires. Such a comprehension of Nature has significant impacts on environmental preservation and on the environmental movement at large, a point Guha was trying to make when criticising Nash and his wish to export this ‘great American invention’. A pertinent example for our discussions here is given by John Muir, one of the founders of the national parks movement in the United States and greatly inspired by the wilderness concept. When advocating for his dear Hetch Hetchy valley protection, Muir argued for alternative sites for the dam construction proposed for the Hetch Hetchy, sites in other foothill valleys, “a preference that had nothing to do with nature and everything with the cultural traditions of the sublime.”

From this point of view, less attractive environments, such as marshlands or deserted plains, even if ‘pristine’, deserve less attention and are more ‘disposable’, allowed to serve other human needs far from the aesthetic. Again, the preoccupation shown by Muir, in this particular instance, represents less an understanding of the necessity of respecting Nature as a complex ecosystem made of very different landscapes and living creatures, a claim made by environmentalists, and more an

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129 It is important to add here that the sublime ideal and how it affects people’s experiences of Nature obviously has changed over time. Initially, from Thoreau’s writing we can sense the religious awe with the constant presence of God in his descriptions of the experience: “For all nature is doing her best each moment to make us well. She exists for no other end. Do not resist her.” Later, Muir shows a more romantic admiration, and the sublime seems to be more ‘domesticated’. Thoreau, “Huckleberries,” 1998[1861], 47; Muir, “Our National Parks,” 1998[1901]; Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness,” 1996.

anthropocentric view of the world, conserving only what is dear to us, for aesthetic, instrumental or other reasons.

Another argument put forward by Cronon in regards to the unhelpfulness of the concept of wilderness to environmental protection is that wilderness, being sublime, needs to be a large expanse of land, untamed. This idea stems, on the one hand, from the romantic frontier ideal that contends that in order to ‘escape’ civilization one needs to go on for days without meeting another human being. On the other hand, this idea develops from the quasi-religious sacredness associated with the sublime aesthetic which implies that one can get closer to God only if completely immersed in his creation, and thus far away from ‘humanity’. Cronon concludes:

By teaching us to fetishise sublime places and wide open country, these peculiarly American ways of thinking about wilderness encourage us to adopt too high a standard for what counts as ‘natural’. If it isn’t hundreds of square miles big, if it doesn’t give us God’s-eye views or grand vistas, if it doesn’t permit us the illusion that we are alone on the planet, then it really isn’t natural. It’s too small, too plain, or too crowded to be authentically wild.131

Although it seems clear that the production of wilderness is not a helpful construct for environmentalist aims, it is a construct well and truly established in late modern society and several environmentalists maintain its usage and the arguments derived from it. As I have shown before, any mention of a socially constructed Nature or wilderness is rapidly disregarded by a large group of green advocates who claim a commitment to the reality of Nature and of the environmental crisis. But more than that, the uncritical exportation of the concept of wilderness presents even further problems as in the process of exportation it tends to undermine other forms of human/nature relationships that, in fact, may be less dualistic and more ‘ecological’. Callicott expresses well some of these concerns:

The received wilderness idea has been and remains a tool of androcentrism, racism, colonialism, and genocide. It privileges virile and primitive recreation, because the main reason wild lands were originally preserved is for such utilitarian purposes. The wilderness idea is associated with outmoded equilibrium ecology and ignores the ecological impact of at least eleven thousand years of human inhabitation of the

Americas and Australia. Finally, the wilderness idea perpetuates a pre-Darwinian separation of “man” from nature.\textsuperscript{132}

Hunters, as well as trampers and many other members of Western societies, fluctuate between understandings of Nature as wilderness and other contested Natures, but seem truly to embrace the former when recreating in the outdoors. How this is reflected in their experiences is the topic of the next chapter. Before exploring such experiences, however, there are a few more of the contested Natures that I wish to present.

\textit{Nature as the Countryside}

A different, but just as strong, form of conceptualizing nature is Nature as the countryside, or the rural environment. Such a construct also has its origins in the Romantic Movement but situated within a European-based (particularly English) context. Western European countries already were densely populated during the Romantic years, and ‘wilderness creation’ was not a possibility as it was in North America. The search for Nature that the Romantic Movement initiated meant, in the former countries, the construction of the ‘myth’ of the countryside. The countryside became “a symbolic ‘middle way’ between the ‘wilderness’ of unmodified nature,” not available in these countries due to centuries of human interference, but nonetheless still part of their cultural and natural history, “and the artificial built environs of the town and city,” which were in continuous increase in that part of the world.\textsuperscript{133} Again, the construct, countryside, is critical of the focus on materialism common in the urbanised, civilised society, a reflection of Romanticism’s renouncement of the “anaesthetising comforts of urban life.”\textsuperscript{134} In this sense, Nature as countryside represents the idea that rural life is more wholesome, more ‘natural,’ more spiritually connected to nature.\textsuperscript{135} More than that, it serves as a constant (nostalgic) ‘reminder’ of how life used to be/can be simpler and more fulfilling, purposely ignoring the hardships and complexities of rural living, including the advanced technologies employed in modern farming, for instance. Even early agricultural practices were still based on the exploitation of the land, which was viewed purely as a source of food to be fully used and re-used to attend to human needs.\textsuperscript{136}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{132} Callicott, “Contemporary Criticism of the Received Wilderness Idea,” 2000, 24.
\footnote{133} Cudworth, \textit{Environment and Society}, 2003, 118.
\footnote{134} Aitchison, MacLeod and Shaw, \textit{Leisure and Tourism Landscapes}, 2000, 37.
\footnote{136} It is undeniable that such practices were less harmful/pollutant to land, air and water, and that wild animals were less impacted as a consequence. However, my point here is to question the ideologies behind the practices,
The idea of a more spiritual relationship with nature in rural areas is, therefore, nothing but an urban creation.

For Rennie-Short, “the countryside is seen as the last remnant of a golden age ... the nostalgic past, providing a glimpse of a simpler, purer age ... [a] refuge from modernity.”\footnote{137}{Rennie-Short as quoted in Barry, *Environment and Social Theory*, 2007, 23.} Such a reactionary view is contestable also on other grounds. As Williams has argued, rural social networks are founded on the ‘mutuality of the oppressed’.\footnote{138}{Williams as quoted in Cudworth, *Environment and Society*, 2003.} Cudworth explains: “[p]overty and economic dependence tie people to a particular locality. In the developed regions of the globe, however, it may also encourage them to leave such ties, and increasing migration of young workers to urban areas has caused concern in recent decades over a loss of ‘community’ in the countryside.”\footnote{139}{Cudworth, *Environment and Society*, 2003, 120.} Moreover, following a Marxist perspective, the dramatic increase in farm size by the attachment of lands from adjacent aristocratic estates, neglecting any peasant right over land, led to the sole ownership of (rural) lands by the aristocracy, and the rural proletariat was left to sell their labour to live. In fact, as Cudworth reminds us, the agricultural “economic system was erected on the basis of social exclusion and elite privilege.”\footnote{140}{Ibid., 120.}

Also, the mention of the ‘golden age’ is an important aspect of the countryside ‘myth’. As much as wilderness was (and still is) an important part of American identity (or the search for it), the countryside was/is an important aspect of Western European countries’ identities. In fact, New Zealand has inherited important aspects of this construct. The ‘golden age’ refers to a time when crime was not a recognised social issue, where obedience, hard work and loyalty were common social human behaviours, and patriotism and community were important notions in social life. Evidently, these characteristics are not, in fact, the main characteristics of earlier Western societies, but are the nostalgic creation of these urbanised cultures. The countryside comes to symbolise a cultural era that is abstractly desired, but is not necessarily achievable (few urbanites are in reality prepared to give up the comforts of urban life).

\footnote{and not the fact that early modern societies did not have the technological knowledge yet to produce in large scale and using noxious chemicals to accelerate and optimize production.}{137}{Rennie-Short as quoted in Barry, *Environment and Social Theory*, 2007, 23.}

\footnote{138}{Williams as quoted in Cudworth, *Environment and Society*, 2003.}

\footnote{139}{Cudworth, *Environment and Society*, 2003, 120.}

\footnote{140}{Ibid., 120.}
An early expression of such nostalgic construction was provided by late eighteenth century tourism practices, when the idyllic rural spaces became the landscape of choice for urban tourists, who saw in the countryside a place for leisure, but not for productive labour or living. Rural communities had been recently abandoned in favour of urban areas where employment was more available. Therefore, elite urban tourists would travel to these less populated areas, where nature was tamed and controlled, but also where human presence was not so readily visible. The vast pastures with (domesticated) animals and cropped lands were still ‘natural’ enough for the urban eyes who ‘suddenly escaped’ modern civilization and ‘went back to Nature’. Once again, the highly manipulated land is purposely ignored by the urban tourist’s gaze, a tourist who is concerned only in seeing/perceiving a green, ‘natural’ (meaning not built) environment. The dualism is ever more present here when natural elements are constantly physically, as well as abstractly, modified to serve human needs. Cudworth summarises such a view as follows:

as Howard Newby (1979:35-9) suggests, rural society is characterized by industrial farming and the more archaic practice of care and preservation. The former is the material ‘reality’ of rural life and the latter a ‘veneer’ which disguises it. Newby sees it as part of this romantic idealization of the countryside. I think the ecological critique is more hard-edged than this, and that critiques of agricultural practices, landscape preservation and organic farming are cognizant of socialist analysis of industrial capitalism.141

In this sense, it is clear how Nature as countryside is a contested construct but nonetheless very influential since the late eighteenth century, particularly in tourism discourse.142 In fact, the countryside is subject to a particular ideological construction that has always formed a dialogical relationship with tourism. Cloke, for instance, has discussed how the commodification of Nature has been felt particularly by rural tourism and suggested five main representations of the countryside, all of which are directly related to the issues raised so far: rural and/or agricultural landscape (and the sights of the idyllic), nature (meaning any sort of animal and plant), history (and the nostalgia it brings), family orientation (highlighting a sense of community) and craft and country fayre (again a nostalgia ideal).143 Urry also has


142 There is a vast literature on tourism and the ‘myth’ of the countryside. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to further explore such literature. Good sources for discussion of some significant issues that arise from this construct are: Cloke, “The Countryside as Commodity,” 1993; Urry, Consuming Places, 1995; Macnaghten and Urry, Contested Natures, Chapter 6 “Nature as Countryside,” 1998; Brown and Hall, Tourism in Peripheral Areas, 2000; Cater and Smith, “New Country Visions,” 2003; Crouch, “Tourism, Consumption and Rurality,” 2006.

argued that the natural environment, particularly in the countryside, is today managed, celebrated and publicised for consumption.\textsuperscript{144}

Lastly, Barry uses the term ‘environment as garden’ also to refer to this same idea of Nature as countryside. For him, this construct signifies the tameness or ‘humanised’ aspect of such an environment, highlighting the importance of the idea of human agency in modifying the environment “in the service of human needs, aims and intentions.”\textsuperscript{145} Agricultural land, here, is a more vast form of garden, where humans manipulate the land and the aesthetic that results is of serene and idyllic sensation. The interesting parallel leads me to a third conceptualisation of nature: the urban, Nearby Nature.

\textit{Nearby Nature}

In urban environments the presence of Nature is less visible but no less powerful. Rachel Kaplan, since the late 1970s, has provided us with some interesting works on the significance of nearby nature and continues to this day to refer to the ‘healing’ and ‘restorative’ powers of such presence in urban environments.\textsuperscript{146} Her work is greatly influenced by the Romantic ideal and gives Nature the ultimate power to bring peace to the mind and soul, in contrast with the urban, built and mechanised environment of modern cities. In her own words, the “\textit{[n]atural settings, by contrast [to the urban/built], are often proclaimed for their capacity to instill a sense of peace and serenity. They are not usually described as hectic or rushed. Somehow, tranquility is more readily achieved in the natural context.”}\textsuperscript{147} However, for authors such as Kaplan, Nature need not be wild to produce such positive feelings and can be available to all, including the most ‘urban-centred’, materialist individual. The presence of plants, in particular, provides the connectedness to Nature that is necessary for a less hectic or rushed life, common characteristics of urban societies. Urban parks and home gardens are fine exemplars of restorative places within the urban environment and their quality lies in the presence of this nearby Nature.

\textsuperscript{144} Urry, \textit{Consuming Places}, 1995.
\textsuperscript{145} Barry, \textit{Environment and Social Theory}, 2007, 23.
Kaplan’s works concentrate on the psychological benefits of nearby nature and, as expected, do not attempt to contextualise this concept in a sociological way. However, it is interesting to notice from these studies how Romantic ideals of Nature are still guiding in important ways some of our most common relationships with elements of the natural environment. Kaplan and her contributors go further and relate the ‘power’ of Nature to the ‘function’ it plays in someone’s life and to the experience derived from such functions.¹⁴⁸ I place an emphasis here in the term ‘function’ as it, again, reverberates with the instrumental notion of Nature, as clearly Other to human beings. Gardening here plays an important role in framing these experiences of urban Nature and the practices associated with such a natural space are well discussed in the psychology, leisure and recreation literature as ones of significant restorative power.¹⁴⁹

Franklin, on the other hand, produces a fine sociological account of the place of Nature in urban environments. He proposes the concept of hybridity to explore how Nature and the urban interact in a multitude of ways, and focuses particularly on city gardens and gardening as significant ways of making the natural world part of the ‘human’, urban world. For Franklin, these ‘natural’ spaces lead to a closeness-to, and not a separation-from, Nature. In fact, his approach, one with which I have great sympathy, is that humanity is indeed part of the natural world and “cannot be taken out of natural equations.”¹⁵⁰ He goes on to say that

[the city is a particularly interesting site in which to consider a new sociology of nature. A phenomenon that evokes more than any other a sense of humanity’s spatial and ontological separation form nature is at once absolutely alive with nature and natural relations and natural habitats but more than this, the city is a unique natural configuration or marvel in its own right. It is the complex home of a single species that ant-like, weaves nature into a super-abundance of natural resources and materials, involves thousands upon thousands of natural things as tools, toys, decorations, fantasies and symbols and is comprised of thousands of other species as symbiotes, slaves, friends, decorations and aesthetic pleasures.¹⁵¹

Franklin follows on from this argument to present an interesting and complex account of the historical contingencies that led to the significance of gardening in modern England and the


¹⁵⁰ Franklin, Nature and Social Theory, 2002, 133.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 133.
subsequent ‘exportation’ of such practice to (former) colonies, including New Zealand. I will limit this brief presentation of the construct ‘nearby nature’ to emphasise the role urban Nature plays in social imagery in bringing Nature ‘closer’ to ‘home.’ The concept of nearby nature is not central to the discussions of this dissertation but the acknowledgement that this is a powerful social construct shaping some of our relationships with Nature is of utmost importance. More significantly, I wish to emphasise the contrast between Franklin’s position of understanding the natural elements obviously present in the urban environment as part of a hybrid community of natural beings, one that includes human beings, with Kaplan’s view that natural elements are ‘brought into’ the ‘human domain’ to bring serenity and peace. The former stance argues that, in a sense, the urban environment is ‘as natural’ as any other, as it is the ‘home’ of one dominant species as well as of several others. Urban parks and gardens are therefore part of this environment because the elements present in such spaces are as fundamental to human existence as any other ‘built’ element. The latter position views humans as permanently detached from Nature, and bringing the natural elements closer is a distant reminder of what humans were once like: more attuned to natural instincts and elements, less stressed or rushed. The words of Thoreau in 1861 exemplify some of these paradoxical feelings: “I think that each town should have a park, or rather a primitive forest, of five hundred or a thousand acres, either in one body or several - where a stick should never be cut for fuel - nor for the navy, nor to make wagons, but stand and decay for higher uses - a common possession forever, for instruction and recreation.”\textsuperscript{152} Here, is clear not only the Romantic ideal but also the instrumentalism of Thoreau’s position, designating Nature as forever a possession of human beings.

\textit{Nature as Gaia}

An attempt to view Nature as a less stratified concept comes from an understanding of Nature as Gaia, or the whole of the ecosystem. There are different approaches to such a view, however, the first one, and most commonly referred to, being based on James Lovelock’s \textit{Gaia Hypothesis}.\textsuperscript{153} The Gaia hypothesis argues that the planet is a living organism that functions healthily from the mutual interdependence of the elements that inhabit it. According to Lovelock, humans need not worry about the ‘ecological crisis’ as the planet will soon bring ‘herself’ to a state of balance again. Although human kind and other species might not prosper in such new environment, Gaia will continue to thrive. In Barry’s words,

\textsuperscript{152} Thoreau, “Huckleberries,” 1998, 45 [Emphasis added].

“[t]he reality of the Gaia hypothesis is that if humans continue to inflict ecological damage on global and local scales then the Earth will no longer function as our species’ life support system.”¹⁵⁴ Such an approach has been highly criticised due to its anti- or post-humanist perspective, as if human agency, or the agency of any other nonhuman being for that matter, had no real influence or importance in Gaia’s ecological system.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, Lovelock, as well as some of his followers, such as John Gray, have been accused of extreme pessimism and therefore of not being very helpful for the environmentalist agenda.¹⁵⁶ In fact, some would argue that the ambiguous position taken by Lovelock in regards to his sometimes ecocentric and at other times technocentric approach does not well support environmentalists’ aims. For Lovelock, if well considered, human beings could develop better husbandry technology to further provide resources for human beings on Earth, without compromising Gaia’s ability to support us. Such a claim is in direct opposition to some green advocacy groups, who reject every form of human technological intervention in Gaia’s natural system. In this way, Lovelock and Gray have been labelled right-wing environmentalists who continue to support technological advance and human manipulation of ‘resources’ for the species’ own good.¹⁵⁷

These issues notwithstanding, some green advocacy groups, particularly deep ecologists and eco-feminists, frequently have used selected aspects of the Gaia hypothesis to defend an ecocentric position. However, in their discourses, the Gaia hypothesis serves more to emphasise Gaia’s agency than to support continued human intervention in natural ecosystems. Such an approach seems to better accommodate the idea of an ecological self, proposed by these two philosophical positions in different ways. Also, it overcomes the pessimism encountered in Lovelock’s proposition and brings Gaia more towards the centre of the attention.

These different ways of perceiving and sensing Nature co-exist in modern societies and influence experiences of Nature in very different ways. But most importantly, it is because these constructions of Nature are available at any one time in society that discourses and performances can be so inconsistent, as they can easily fluctuate between the diverse ways of

¹⁵⁴ Barry, Environment and Social Theory, 2007, 147.
¹⁵⁶ Barry, Environment and Social Theory, 2007.
understanding Nature. In this sense, it seems very unlikely that most of the visitors to the conservation estate in New Zealand, for instance, and particularly trampers and hunters, will have developed consistent and coherent positions in regards to the natural environment and to the nonhuman animals that take part in their experiences in the outdoors. Moreover, ways of articulating one’s position through narrative and performance also will likely be inconsistent. It is for these reasons that it is important to have laid out some of the main possibilities here to ground the discussions that will arise later.

**Philosophies of Nature**

According to Foltz and Frodeman, philosophers need to move beyond theory and include the idea of practice into philosophical discussions of Nature. For these authors “it is time that we bring philosophers out into the field, understanding environmental philosophy as not only a pursuit of correct propositions, but also as a way of being in the world.” Foltz and Frodeman’s main concern is that environmental philosophy has concentrated too much on ethical issues and has ‘muted’ other perspectives, to a point where environmental ethics and environmental philosophy have almost become synonymous. There are, however, significant attempts to engage more actively, and from other perspectives, with philosophical issues that involve Nature and our relationships with the other-than-human world. I will cover only a selected few that I see as embracing the most common positions taken by academics and activists in the environmental movement. My aim here is to present only a brief introduction to such philosophical positions as required to provide the foundations for discussions that will be pursued later.

**Deep Ecology**

Deep ecology is probably the philosophical position most widely advocated by environmentalists, although there are some inconsistencies in the way deep ecology’s basic premises have been used and understood by different followers. Initiated by Arne Næss,

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159 Some environmental activists do not accept the label ‘environmentalist,’ arguing that environmentalism is “a concern with conservation through technocratic means (Benton 1994: 31), and ‘environmentalists’ are [...] reformers who do not consider radical change in political, social and economic institutions and processes necessary.” Næss and other deep ecologists prefer ‘ecologism’ as it supposedly implies a less anthropocentric view of the world. This controversy notwithstanding, I have been using and will continue to use the terms environmentalism/environmentalist to refer to all groups of people who, in a way or another, advocate for the conservation and protection of the other-than-human-world. There are two main reasons for my taking this position: first, for ease of writing and understanding, as environmentalism/environmentalist have been the
deep ecology was a clear effort to diverge from the anthropocentric view of nature and the common utilitarian and often consequentialist ethical perspective. Although Næss, in his 1973 work *The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement*, never used the term deep ecology, he did refer to the thinking in environmentalism current at that time as shallow and human-centred. In opposing such views, deep ecologists proposed a different approach to not only environmentalism, but also to all human/nature relationships, and advocated for what has become known as ecosophy, or a philosophy of ecological harmony. For Næss, to change general destructive and instrumental attitudes towards nature, it is necessary to change individual attitudes towards oneself, that is, individuals need to acknowledge their ecological selves, or their ‘inorganic body’, as Marx suggested in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844. The focus should therefore shift from a perspective where human beings emphasise their differences from the rest of nature to a perspective where we perceive and sense ourselves within nature.160

By promoting ‘ecosophy,’ deep ecologists try to move the philosophical (environmentalist) debate from an emphasis on ethics to a focus on ontological principles, “or the insistence that ethical argumentation and persuasion, though necessary, will not be sufficient to transform the ingrained anti-ecological character of modern societies.”161 It is in this sense that deep ecology claims to be a more active strand of environmental philosophy, since the process of self-realisation, which highlights one’s ecological self, is bound to activity. For deep ecologists, self-realisation involves an expansive experience of self that may include other people, animals, bioregions or Gaia as a whole, and therefore leads to actions of care and respect for all other beings, with whom we begin to identify more and in closer forms.162

However, at the same time, deep ecologists have been accused, even within the environmental movement, of promoting a less effective kind of activism as it may be too focused on individual character change, which may take a long time, while environmental degradation is proceeding apace. Moreover, for deep ecologists, the awareness of an ecological self will lead to a change in daily-life attitudes, such as acknowledging where your food and drinks comes from, and an expanded awareness of your bioregion. However, for

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their critics, it seems very hard to see what arguments one can provide the modern urbanites, who purchase all kinds of fresh fruit and vegetables all year round, to actually want to identify with their bioregion, which is now so remote from their daily experiences.

The essential basis for deep ecology’s position is the constant questioning of fundamental values, or deep questioning of anthropocentric views of the (natural) world. Eight basic principles guide followers of deep ecology and consequently most environmentalists. These principles state that nonhuman life forms have value in themselves and that humans have the obligation to allow them to flourish. For that, it is required that the human population decreases, and that higher standards of living should be avoided. Individuals should therefore try to consume only from local sources and avoid high levels of conspicuous consumption. Authors such as Guha questions such a discourse, arguing that ‘simple living’ in this way is affordable to very few, and that deep ecology in fact “runs parallel to the consumer society without seriously questioning its ecological and socio-political basis.” For such critics of deep ecology, the movement is deeply rooted in American ideals and does not take into account issues of power and dominance over less economically developed nations. For that reason, deep ecologists tend to adopt the view that nature is wilderness, as I discussed above, and “equate environmental protection with the protection of wilderness.” In advocating for wilderness experiences through walking and hunting, for instance, deep ecologists have promoted also colonial ways of experiencing nature, without taking into account the experiences of women, the elderly, the disabled, or

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163 The eight principles of Deep Ecology are: “1) The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves. These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes; 2) Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves; 3) Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs; 4) The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease; 5) Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening; 6) Policies must therefore be changed. The changes in policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present; 7) The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating quality (dwelling in situations of inherent worth) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great; 8) Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes.” Devall and Sessions, *Deep Ecology*, 1985, 70.


165 Although the founder of deep ecology was Norwegian, the deep ecology movement gained strength from its American followers and, since its inception, has been greatly influenced by American environmental advocates.

other disempowered individuals or groups.\textsuperscript{168} Also, in placing human domination of the environment as the \textit{a priori} form of social domination, preceding other forms such as those based on race, gender and class, deep ecologists assume an extremely reductionist position that blames the whole of the human species as the source of environmental destruction, without considering the diversity of forms of social organisation, values, human/nature relationships as well as the different degrees and forms of environmental impact caused by the different societies.\textsuperscript{169} In summary, deep ecology tends to centre its attention in the transformation of behaviour through an experience of an ecological self that seems highly attached to a very particular way of experiencing Nature, arguably, a colonial, male, dominating one.

\textit{Social Ecology}

Social ecology intends to question the dominant discourse commonly associated with deep ecology’s philosophical premises. Social ecology is founded on the idea that social domination and environmental exploitation are two interconnected concepts, that is, social domination leads to environmental exploitation and environmental exploitation reinforces social domination. Social ecology uses left-wing anarchism as the central pillar for environmental advocacy, and Murray Bookchin, one of the most significant anarchist theorists of contemporary societies, often is described as the founder of social ecology.\textsuperscript{170} Bookchin sees human exploitation of other human beings as the key to understanding human exploitation of the natural environment. In Bookchin’s words, “the very concept of dominating nature stems from the domination of human by human, indeed, of women by men, of the young by their elders, of one ethnic group by another, of society by the state, of the individual by bureaucracy, as well as of one economic class by another or a colonized people by a colonial power.”\textsuperscript{171}

In this way, social ecology is in opposition to deep ecology’s view that anthropocentrism is the ‘great villain’ of environmental destruction. For social ecologists, not all humans, or not all societies, are equally responsible for environmental exploitation and the consequent crisis. It is the exploitation of humans by other humans that creates environmental problems, and

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{171} Bookchin as quoted in Cudworth, \textit{Environment and Society}, 2003, 43.
the oppressed cannot be blamed or punished for the problems created from issues of dominance and power. Moreover, Bookchin argues that environmental exploitation is secondary to the domination of humans by other humans – which has adopted different forms and different degrees of brutality throughout history and across cultures – but is a direct consequence. Social inequalities are, therefore, at the core of social ecology, and the social causes and consequences of environmental destruction are the basic points of discussion for this strand.172

Social ecologists do not take into account, however, the different forms of domination of Nature, or the different degrees to which different aspects of Nature are subject of domination. For social ecologists, humans are indeed superior to other nonhuman animals or life forms, and the environment is seen as one whole object, with no attention given to its different constitutive parts. As Cudworth phrases it, social ecologists ‘homogenize’ the environment and therefore the “ethical divide between humans and the ‘environment’ [is] vast and unbridgeable” for them.173 Furthermore, their position in the conservationist discussion is one of stewardship, ignoring the potential ‘dominionist’ discourse that arises from such a position. In this way, as much as deep ecologists often are accused of ecological reductionism, social ecologists may be accused of sociological reductionism.

Eco-Socialism

Eco-socialism is a more useful approach to the inclusion of social issues within philosophical discussion of human/nature relationships. In fact, the idea of the commodification of nature is probably one of the main issues I encountered in my experiences with international trampers on Stewart Island, and is also an important contribution from eco-socialism thinking to environmental discussions. Eco-socialists, like social eco-feminists and social ecologists, are concerned with the connectedness between environmental destruction and exploitation, and social inequalities and differences. Although socialism in its origins has had little to add to human/nature relationships, recent readings of Marx and other socialists have presented important contributions to discussions about Nature. Lockie presents a good summary of the distinction between the classical approach to socialism and the eco-socialist position:

173 Ibid., 47.
Ecological Marxists, or political ecologists, use dialectical method to incorporate questions of agency (the capacity to make a difference) in human-environment relationships. Where classical Marxist theory adopts the modernist ideology of humanity liberating itself from ‘brute nature’ through the application of labour, Ecological Marxism [or eco-socialism] argues that the lives of humans are conducted in relation to a nature that is both subject, and resistant, to transformation through human labour (Dickens 1996). Thus the dialectic is shifted from a concern with the relationship between the materiality of nature and its symbolic representation in human culture to a concern with the relationship between pre-existing ‘laws’ and potentialities of nature and the material production of nature through human labour. This leads Ecological Marxists to explain the alienation of humanity from nature through the capitalist labour process.\footnote{Lockie, \textit{Social Nature}, 2004, 32.}

Such a dialectical approach, employed also by social eco-feminists, as I will show later, problematises the dualism that positions nature as the true opposite of society, and that is used to legitimate the subjugation of those who are ‘closer to nature’, such as women or indigenous peoples, to a ‘less human’ status. In formulating our relationships with Nature as dialectical, eco-socialists argue that the way we interact with the environment is both material and ideological, influencing how we think \textit{about} Nature as we interact \textit{with} Nature.

For eco-socialists, capitalism, and its forms of production, constitutes the main issue for environmentalist thinking. The means and ends of capitalist production are directed to profit creation without due attention to allocation and resource extraction, and as a consequence, poverty, the central by-product of capitalist systems, is the key cause of environmental problems. More importantly, the notion of alienation defended by Marx when dealing with disaffection with one’s paid employment is used to explain our distancing from nature. Such alienation from nature leads to the transformation of nature simply into an object of consumption.\footnote{Cudworth, \textit{Environment and Society}, 2003.} This relationship is aggravated in global industrialised societies where movement between countries is facilitated and the exploitation of poorer communities is stronger. The capitalist system is regarded as intrinsically connected to environmental misuse and degradation, whereas socialism, which is not premised on profit accumulation but on reciprocity and redistribution, is not likely to promote environmental exploitation; “[c]apitalism encourages us to see the natural world as a series of commodities for use rather than things we work with in reciprocal relationships.”\footnote{Ibid., 51.}
An important difference between social eco-feminism, the philosophical position I will explore next, and eco-socialism, apart from the emphasis in gender inequalities, is the fact that eco-socialists attribute humans with the sole power of deciding what treatment different species of animals, or other forms of life, deserve based on our own attribution of moral and ethical values. Social eco-feminists emphasise an ethic of care and the intrinsic value of all living organisms. Such a position advocates for equal treatment of living beings and no ethical superiority of humans. Eco-socialists, on the other hand, although giving agency to Nature, prioritize human needs and sustainable use of natural resources. It is in this way, therefore, that it does not seem that eco-socialists are indeed able to overcome the dualist notion of nature versus humans in their arguments. As I have been arguing, the understanding of Nature as a ‘resource’ for humans is deeply Cartesian, anthropocentric and dualist in nature.

Eco-Feminism

In an attempt to integrate all individual and singular life forms within Nature, radical ecofeminist philosophy brings what I understand as a new essentialist perspective to the environmental movement when it presents the idea of a closer relationship being available specifically between women and the natural world. 177 Like deep ecologists, ecofeminists also employ notions of the ecological self to promote an ethics of care to all nonhuman beings. However, this exploration of the ecological self is available to women only, who can indeed relate to Nature. Nature is seen as mother-Earth and therefore feminine. To be able to connect to her, women need to dispose of pre-conceived, hierarchical, male-dominated, Christian notions of relationships and engage in an embodied connectedness with Nature.

In less radical forms of ecofeminism, the essentialist notion that a profound relationship with Nature is possible only between women and the natural environment is dismissed, and men are invited to embrace feminine attributes, such as care and emotionality, to connect with Nature. Val Plumwood was one such ecofeminist who advocated for a social form of ecofeminism, one which is more interested in the cultural creation of dualistic notions that connect emotions and Nature to women, and reason and culture to men. In this way,

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177 See Collard and Contrucci, Rape of the Wild, 1988 for an example of what I am calling here the radical ecofeminist position.
Plumwood was able to provide an interesting critique of the dualism present in current environmental thinking through the inclusion of other structures of power and domination in the discussion of human-nature relationships. According to Plumwood, to privilege feminine perspectives over masculine ones is not the solution to the dualistic notions today shared by Western societies. Such a position would merely invert the logic of patriarchy. Instead, we should try to develop a ‘rationality of the mutual self’, where one is aware of your own feminine and masculine beings, as well as being aware, and feeling part of, ‘the community of life’. 178

Social eco-feminism has used some basic premises of social ecology and eco-socialism to expand its approach from purely feminist to a more widely embracing one. As Cudworth summarises: “[Plumwood] sees gender, nature, race, colonialism and class as interfacing in a ‘network’ of oppressive ‘dualisms’ (1993: 2). They exist as separate (autonomous) entities but are also mutually reinforcing in a ‘web’ of complex relations.” 179 From a social eco-feminist approach, women are ‘closer to nature’ than men because of the cultural images and social practices enforced by the patriarchal society, and not by ‘simple’ inherent differences between sexes. 180

One of the main ecofeminist arguments is that both woman and nature are subjugated by men, being constructed as the ‘other’, through a process of objectification and oppression. 181 In this way, ecofeminists claim to embrace the different ‘others’ in their cosmological relationship with Gaia, acknowledging that “gender, race, class and sexual orientation also influence our perception of others.” 182 Moreover, according to this philosophy, women are naturally immersed in an ethic of care as they are able to develop through their upbringing and social conditioning a relational perspective to the Other. 183 As nature and all its nonhuman life forms is understood as another Other in a male dominated world, it follows logically that ecofeminists perceive women as better positioned to sympathize with, and understand, the subordination and suffering of nonhuman animals and other beings. Accepting uncritically, for the moment, a potential essentialism based on sex, then the

180 Ibid.
Others, including women themselves, are all victims of the same social condition of subservience to a profoundly male society.

An important concept contested in eco-feminism thinking is ‘reason.’ For eco-feminists reason, as opposed to sensibility, is the overarching master narrative of Western societies. The focus on reason, intimately tied to Cartesian dualisms, places all sensual or caring engagements in society in a position of inferiority, and therefore helps create an environment of oppression. Instead of focusing on differences as dualistic opposites, social eco-feminists propose understanding differences as part of a complex web of relationships between living and nonliving beings. As Coupe asserts, “to see two entities or categories dualistically is not the same as merely asserting that they differ,” the later being social eco-feminists’ position.\textsuperscript{184} In this way, this philosophical position advocates for social changes (particularly in regards to power and domination) to achieve a more caring relationship with the natural environment.\textsuperscript{185}

What all of these positions have in common is that they adopt a realist epistemology, although in different forms and degrees. Furthermore, all of these stances try in different ways to contest the dominant Cartesian view of the world, but none of them seems to provide clear answers as to how to overcome it. Also, the philosophical discussions raised by each one of these positions engages with theoretical issues that are also brought into environmental activism, therefore in some ways overcoming the problems raised earlier by Foltz and Frodeman, of philosophical inertia.\textsuperscript{186} Indeed, it is because these positions tend to inform activism that they are key to some of the discussions that will be raised later about how hunters and trampers, through their embodied performances, perceive their relationships with the natural environment. These issues notwithstanding, the dualism present in most of the philosophical discussions explored so far is still of major concern and needs to be further discussed before we can move on to the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{184} Coupe, \textit{The Green Studies Reader}, 2000, 119.
**Escaping Dualisms?**

My engagement with all these literatures has allowed me to reflect deeply on the fractured discourse that underlines what Ingold calls the “entire edifice of Western thought and science [...] that which separates the ‘two worlds’ of humanity and nature,” or the Cartesian dualist view of the world. Constructivists and realists accuse each other of epistemic dualism and my account above shows how both of them may easily be accused of falling into the dualist trap. Deep and social ecologists, eco-socialists and eco-feminists all have tried to overcome the ‘modern’, ‘Western’ dualism but all have failed to present truly integrative approaches. My position is that any engagement with philosophies of nature may take the form only of a process of constant critique of dualism, despite the fact that key authors, such as the ones I have been discussing, write as if dualism may be overcome. In my own view, social forms of eco-feminism have reached, so far, the most productive stance in this debate involving reductionism and dualism. The question I ask then is: are we able ever to escape dualism if society is so deeply rooted in dualistic and anthropocentric conceptions of the world?

Nature is not, by any means, an easy notion to explore. First, the word ‘nature’ is used widely to refer to very different things, each with its own very different meaning. In colloquial language, nature may refer to a landscape, to particular places, to social spaces, to wilderness, to parks, to nonhuman animals, to other-than-human phenomena, to the whole of the planet, or only to allegedly pristine environments. When analysed through a realist constructivist lens, one through which I myself look and analyse the world, nature can take on other, multiple, often contradictory, meanings. “Nature is not for us a concrete reality that may be like this or like that, but an idea or series of ideas which specific people (in specific times and places) use to frame and understand their world.” Greider and Garkovich’s introduction to their views on the social construction of nature and environment provides us with a good account of such messiness:

> Why does a real estate developer look across an open field and see comfortable suburban ranch homes nestled in quiet cul-de-sacs, while a farmer envisions endless rows of waving wheat and a hunter sees a five-point buck cautiously grazing in preparation for the coming winter? The open field is the same physical thing, but it carries multiple symbolic meanings that emanate from the values by which people define themselves. The real estate developer, the farmer, the hunter are definitions of

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who people are, and the natural environment – the physical entity of the open field – is transformed symbolically to reflect these self-definitions. These symbolic meanings and definitions are sociocultural phenomena, not physical phenomena, and they transform the open field into a symbolic landscape.189

Nature, therefore, when experienced and reflected upon, is used to create meanings that are symbolic of one’s own previous experiences and identities. The way we perceive and understand the Nature construct is hence a reflection of our individual experiences of it, as well as of the social environment in which we, and our conceptions of Nature, operate. These experiences and constructions are thus not limited to Nature’s physical existence. A realist, however, would disagree and focus only on what we can in fact know, and therefore affirm with some degree of confidence, about the physical, material nature. Such a task seems almost impossible for constructivists who, like me, understand that nature cannot be separated from our social perceptions of it.

It seems therefore that realists’ discussions about Nature, or any aspect of it, focus on the physical reality of nature, and our formulations about nature matter less than what the ‘hard’ sciences have been able to ‘prove’ about how nature operates. Constructivists, on the other hand, although mostly aware of the physical reality of the components of nature, concentrate their efforts on understanding how humans have come to the conclusions they have about nature and its phenomena, how the historical contingencies for such conclusions have affected what we ‘know’ about nature, and why we place different sets of values onto different aspects of the ‘same’ nature. The constructivists, therefore, focus on humans.

Another attempt to integrate between humans and their (natural) environment is presented by Ingold with his ‘dwelling perspective.’ According to Ingold, the Western ontology contends that the environment, or Nature, is an external world that needs to be understood conceptually and appropriated symbolically, all mediated by cultural impositions. For him, such an ontology should be subverted and we should instead see the

human condition to be that of a being immersed from the start, like other creatures, in an active, practical and perceptual engagement with constituents of the dwelt-in world. This ontology of dwelling, I contend, provides us with a better way of coming to grips with the nature of human existence than does the alternative, Western ontology whose point of departure is that of a mind detached from the world, and that has literally to

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formulate it - to build an intentional world in consciousness - prior to any attempt at engagement.\footnote{Ingold, The Perception of the Environment, 2000, 38.}

Ingold uses the term ‘organism-persons’ to reinforce the idea that human animals are, in fact, biological and social, that is, humans are organisms dependant on the interaction with organisms from other species and with the abiotic components of the environment, and humans are also bearers of cultural traditions who enjoy a distinctively social life. Moreover, organisms should not be understood as being bounded by their individual or species physicality. Nor should it be understood that their interactions with other species occur externally only, leaving “its basic, internally specified nature unaffected.”\footnote{Ingold, The Perception of the Environment, 2000, 3.} On the contrary, organisms are “a node in a field of relationships,” affecting and being affected by others in a relational way.\footnote{Ibid., 4.} In this way, Ingold contends that “[h]umans [...] are brought into existence as organism-persons within a world that is inhabited by beings of manifold kinds, both human and non-human. Therefore relations among humans, which we are accustomed to calling ‘social’, are but a sub-set of ecological relations.”\footnote{Ibid., 5.} Through both of these concepts, Ingold tries to rupture the dualism that guides Western relationships with the natural environment, assuming that humans should realise their place within nature, as one singular component of nature, and not detached from it. Ingold uses his anthropological works with hunter-gatherers to substantiate his position. According to him, hunter-gatherer societies perceive the world through their embodied experiences of that world, and not as ‘disembodied minds’. It is then through ‘interagentivity,’ and not ‘intersubjectivity,’ that these societies operate. All the elements, living or abiotic, that dwell in Gaia are agent beings, and humans are but one of these elements. Perception, therefore,

is not the achievement of a mind in a body, but of the organism as a whole in its environment, and is tantamount to the organism’s own exploratory movement through the world. If mind is anywhere, then, it is not ‘inside the head' rather than 'out there’ in

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\footnote{Ingold, The Perception of the Environment, 2000, 38.}

It is important to note here that, again, although Ingold is aware that the simple act of rationally writing and discussing philosophies of nature is bounded, in modern and late modern societies, to Cartesian dualism, he shows a problematic understanding of pre-contact societies’ relationships with the environment when he talks about their ‘ontology’. It is clear that ‘ontology’ is a Western concept, coming from the Greek philosophical tradition of ‘thinking about being’ that is not clearly present in pre-contact societies. To the least, we, Westerners, can never be sure if that is the case. Therefore, inferring that ‘their ontology’ is one of dwelling, although fruitful for our own philosophical thinking about our (Westerner) relationships with the environment, is not particularly appropriate to the pre-contact context.

\footnote{Ingold, The Perception of the Environment, 2000, 3.}

\footnote{Ibid., 4.}

\footnote{Ibid., 5.}
the world. To the contrary, it is immanent in the network of sensory pathways that are set up by virtue of the perceiver’s immersion in his or her environment.\footnote{Ingold, \textit{The Perception of the Environment}, 2000, 3.}

Another dualism that Ingold refers to as a vice of modern Western societies concerns our a-temporal views and understandings of the environment, or of landscapes. For Ingold, we should be attentive to aspects of the past and the projections of the future that are present in any landscape, as a consequence of dwellings in that space. This he calls the ‘taskscape.’ This notion is important because it reminds us of the temporality of natural and built environments, and the agency of all beings who dwell in these spaces. Franklin uses this concept to give life to urban Nature and to support his claim that Westerners “maintain most of their relations with the natural world in and around their dwelling places, which is mainly in urban setting, in their homes and gardens, in their parks and greens, in the intermediary,” and therefore these spaces need to be incorporated into any broad discussion of human-nature relationships.\footnote{Franklin, \textit{Nature and Social Theory}, 2002, 57-58.} Also, through Ingold’s concept of taskscape, Franklin challenges the view that Nature is primarily apprehended through visual engagement, proposing that other sensual engagements with Nature are not only available but highly significant.

For my discussions here, it is the concept of embodiment that derives from the ‘dwelling perspective,’ together with its consequential ‘interagentivity,’ that provides the most fruitful notion towards a more integrative understanding of humans as just one agent being dwelling in Gaia. Following on from Ingold, and in some ways from Franklin, the multi-sensory engagements with other elements of Gaia provides the possibility of comprehending our relationships with other beings as one of mutual exchange, where one affects the ‘being’ of the other, with Gaia providing the home for all. Constantly trying to avoid the prevalent drive to rationalise our relationships with other elements of the natural world (including the ‘built world’ of human beings in this formulation of ‘the natural world’) and instead incorporate our sensual, therefore embodied, experiences into our discussions is the best we can do to avoid the ‘plague’ of dualist thinking in Western societies. As Ingold rightly affirms, the very act of writing about, and therefore conceptualising Nature is a rational act, which in one way or another may reinforce dualism. Thus, in an intellectual argumentation about our relationships with Nature, one can only persistently struggle to evade dualistic understandings of it.
In summary, by placing human beings outside the Nature domain, either by emphasising Nature’s reality or by emphasising human constructions of Nature, modern and late modern Western societies have facilitated the formulation of very different understandings of Nature that have consistently changed throughout time, but that nonetheless have been unable to overcome dualistic notions of human/nature relationships.¹⁹⁶ Unlike Benediktsson, and in light of the arguments presented above, I do not see an effective ‘destabilization’ of the human/nature dualism in recent theorizing, although attempts have been made in this direction.¹⁹⁷ In fact, as Morton points out, most attempts to break down the human/nature barrier have resulted in the creation of another barrier based on the same dichotomy.¹⁹⁸ These understandings, therefore, have always placed Nature as Other to human beings and, by doing so, cannot overcome the anthropocentric position that contends that humans are the centre of the world. It is against such position that many scholars advocate but few social scientists have been able actually to overcome the difficulties associated with the rejection of such a position. Ingold, searching for an alternative approach, brings a different perspective drawn from his anthropological experiences with indigenous societies and provides interesting accounts of other possible ways of interacting with Nature. There are several problems, however, with Ingold’s desire to transpose or import such perspective into late modern Western societies, not the least of which being that his narratives of his experiences of these pre-modern societies are far from accurate accounts of these peoples’ relationships with Nature, particularly before their contact with modern Western societies. This is firstly due to the impossibility of the re-creation, through oral history, of past experiences, that is, the impossibility of his ‘informants’ being able to tell him literally what the lives of people from their society were like before contact with Western men and women. In New Zealand this issue is of particular importance since the Treaty of Waitangi recognizes the legitimacy of an indigenous Māori world view which is based on the possibility that genealogy (Whakapapa) may be recited for accurate social history spanning several hundred years pre-contact.

Secondly, the problem is due to the inherited difficulties of works of such nature to ‘report’, from an (Westerner) outsider’s point of view, the perspectives of the people one is

¹⁹⁶ Even realist accounts of Nature have changed through time, and will continue to change as humans learn new properties of other-than-human creatures and phenomena.


‘observing’.\textsuperscript{199} These limitations notwithstanding, one can fully appreciate Ingold’s discussions in the sense that his narratives can, as I mentioned earlier, remind us that there are other possibilities available for our relationships with the natural environment that do not need to be based purely on Cartesianism. This is not to say that humans should long for this ‘ancient’, ‘primitive’, unachievable ‘way’ of living, a desire deeply rooted, again, in Romantic aspirations. Instead, I argue that humans should be aware that a replica of such relationships is not attainable in contemporary societies, but also that humans should acknowledge that there are other ways of experiencing and sensually perceiving our role in the whole of the environment. By building such an awareness, social scientists may be able to facilitate a search for alternatives to the current dualism that governs our relationships with Nature, towards a more ‘natural’ way of living.

To conclude, and in order to further elucidate to the reader my stance in this complex picture, I need to clarify one last point. In a self-narrated report of my ontological position, and in different moments of the present chapter, I have highlighted a great concern with issues of (in)justice, power and domination. Such a concern has led me to indicate my personal preference for social forms of eco-feminism in the discussions of human/nature relationships, although fully acknowledging the limitations of such a position in ever overcoming dualism. It is therefore my view that one can only aspire to surmount dualism but there needs to be a constant process of struggle that, in my understanding, is more fruitfully done by following the basic premises of social eco-feminists. However, in addition, one should be very conscious of alternative views and experiences of the world, particularly sensual and fully embodied understandings and perceptions of the other-than-human world. My effort here, therefore, will be directed to a constant reflection about my own struggle in my narrative to avoid dualisms, while at the same time being aware that a complete escape is impossible. A reflexive engagement with the research, keeping these issues in mind, however, hopefully will help in the understanding of our place in, and our relationships with, the wider living community of the planet Earth, at least insofar as my experiences and accounts of hunting and tramping on Stewart Island are concerned.

\textsuperscript{199} A full critique of ethnographic works of such nature is not within the aims of my discussions and therefore will not be pursued here. It should suffice for my purposes here my earlier explanations of my ontological and epistemological stances and the methodological views I support as a result.
4  Hunting in New Zealand as a Cultural Practice

We’re not killing. We’re hunting. A slaughterhouse kills, a hunter hunts.  

I know it’s something terrible, it’s something cruel, but I would not be able to understand the human condition without hunting, because hunting brings you closer to the big truths of life.  

As discussed in the previous chapters, the relationships Western modern men and women establish with the different elements of the natural environment are mediated by a cultural heritage that emphasises a disconnectedness from Nature and by a rationalisation of our emotions and understandings of it that hinders a more integrative comprehension of our place in (as part of) the natural world. More importantly to my aims here is that it seems that human engagements with other natural beings in tourism and/or recreation settings are still trapped in Romantic ideals, where one must enter Nature to appreciate its sacredness, a position that only accentuates our detachment and otherness from the natural environment. In this chapter I will explore one recreational practice that is, in different ways, deeply connected to some of these elements of the natural environment, and that I argue is itself profoundly trapped in a Romantic aesthetic ideal, that is, hunting in a New Zealand, non-indigenous, context. Obviously, this is a vast topic that cannot be fully explored in one single chapter of a larger project such as this. I will therefore limit my contribution to a few themes that I consider to be of central importance, these being the ethical issues related to hunting in modern societies, a philosophical debate about the hierarchy of species presented in hunters’ narratives, and the influence of the sublime aesthetic in the experience of place and on the production of a hunting space. These themes have been chosen for a few reasons: first, because of their significance to my experience with hunters on Stewart Island. These themes emerged during my process of understanding the hunting performances in that location, and without thoroughly dealing with them I would not have been able to fully comprehend, as far as one can, the hunting experience. Second, the sociological and the philosophical

1 An earlier development of my thinking in regards to hunting as a cultural practice in New Zealand was recently published as a peer-reviewed journal article: Reis, “More Than the Kill,” 2009.
literature on contemporary forms of hunting invariably raise questions of ethical concern. Therefore, any attempt to fully engage with these literatures and hunting needs to consider ethical issues, or else one will fail to make a contribution to current discussions on the theme. Moreover, ethical issues are inherently transitory and complex, allowing for new, nuanced views of what could be seen as an ‘exhausted’ theme to be occasionally fruitfully raised. Third, the philosophical debate about the hierarchy of species, although not a new theme in animal studies, does not seem to have been comprehensively explored in the academic literature, and how this is expressed through hunting even less so. In my experience with hunting in New Zealand, and in my analysis of how hunters’ performances portray philosophical positions, this issue emerged as a key theme to provide some subtle understanding of the hunting practice. Lastly, I will argue that hunting in New Zealand, particularly on Stewart Island, is deeply connected with Romantic notions of Nature, and the sublime is central to such a discussion. Therefore, not until the following chapters will I engage with issues that relate hunting with other recreational practices. Firstly my focus will be on tramping as performed by international tourists and how their experiences are constructed in relation to the natural environment and then narrated. Only then will there be a strong foundation to discuss hunters’ relationships with other recreationists and how these ‘encounters’ impinge on hunters’ experiences on Stewart Island.

My first step in providing a complex understanding of hunting on Stewart Island is the presentation of a brief cultural history of hunting in the wider context of New Zealand society.

**Hunting in New Zealand**

Kate Hunter, a New Zealand historian, has recently published a thorough cultural history of hunting in New Zealand. It is not my aim to replicate such an effort here. Obviously, my account will be largely influenced by my recent reading of Hunter’s manuscript, but it is influenced also by other important sources, both academic and non-academic, that have all helped shape my own understanding of the historical bases of hunting in New Zealand. Clearly, my lived experience with the hunting culture of New Zealand is one of such sources. My academic resources for this specific segment came most notably from David Young’s *Our Islands, Ourselves*, David Yerex’s *Deer: The New Zealand Story*, Robert McDowall’s *Gamekeepers for the Nation*, and Carmen McLeod’s doctoral dissertation *Pondering Nature*, all of which provided important narratives of the history of hunting in this country.
Hunting has played an influential role in shaping New Zealand’s national identity. As Kate Hunter argues, “[i]f there is a ‘national culture’ in New Zealand, then hunting and hunters are at its core.” From the earliest Māori hunting and gathering societies to Pākehā colonisation, hunting has historically been an important part of the country’s cultural life. Before human occupation, New Zealand was devoid of land-dwelling mammals, apart from two small species of bats. The land was mostly forested with lush cover due to moderate to high rain fall throughout the country, but more extensively in the west coast of the South Island. High snowy peaks, fertile valleys and coastal flats provided (and still do) a range of landforms that had much in common with other southern lands in the Southern Hemisphere, but with a rather peculiar fauna. Without grazing animals, some species of birds evolved into large flightless browsers, and species usually susceptible on other land masses thrived in a ‘predator-free’ environment. With Polynesian occupation, probably between 750 and 800 AD, Polynesian rats (kiore) and dogs (kuri) were introduced, but no ‘game animals’ were introduced during pre-modern New Zealand history. Also, although the introduction of rats and dogs, the use of fire, and human hunting practices have all contributed significantly to the extinction of at least 40 species of vertebrates, without grazing species and extensive agricultural systems the lush landscape was considerably maintained during the years prior to Pākehā colonisation. In this context, it is obvious that indigenous hunting was targeted at native species, such as birds and marine mammals, and not only comprised a primary source of food for Polynesian peoples, but also was part of their way of living in and off the land.


5 Pākehā is commonly understood as being the original term used by Māori people to designate “alien ‘European’ settlers.” Today the term is used widely, by Māori and non-Māori, to refer to ‘in-dwellers’, or, as Goldsmith phrases it, “as the preferred substitute for ‘European’ or as the most accepted term for ‘white’ New Zealanders.” I will use both terms in this dissertation to acknowledge the common use of the Māori term in modern New Zealand English language. Goldsmith, “Translated Identities,” 2005, 67.


King explains that rats and dogs were used also as food sources, but dogs were domesticated and rats were trapped or snared, not hunted as ‘game animal’. In fact, dogs were used to hunt ducks and kiwis, and were kept also as household pets.


King reports that 32 species of large birds, mainly rails and waterfowl, became extinct during Polynesian sole occupation of New Zealand.

9 McLeod confirms that native birds were used by Māori societies in diverse practices, and were not considered only as food sources. According to her, “[p]ersons of high status had their cloaks embellished with feathers, and feathers were also used to decorate other personal items (…). Some evidence also suggests the importance of birds in traditional Maori medicine: *Pukeko* feathers and *kakapo* feathers were used to swab wounds, bird oil smeared on to assist healing, and the skin of birds such as the *pukeko*, blue duck, or paradise ducks were used
This was particularly true for South Island dwellers. Due to its more severe weather pattern, and the cold temperate climate, South Island Māori were not as successful in horticulture as those living in the warmer North Island, and therefore the former were more reliant on wild food sources, largely bird hunting, than their counterparts in the far North.\textsuperscript{10}

With European colonisation, beginning about 200 years ago, a further 52 mammal species were introduced and although some groups of nonhuman animals were introduced by accident, most other animals were purposely introduced, either for farming or to provide hunting opportunities. The introduction of such a quantity of animals, particularly land animals, led to even more severe patterns of extinction of native fauna and flora that persist to this date.\textsuperscript{11} More significant to our discussions here, New Zealand presents today eleven of what are referred to as ‘big-game animals’, introduced by a series of more than 250 liberations between 1769 and 1923.\textsuperscript{12} In the late 1920s the government became concerned about the impacts such species were having on the native ecosystem and prohibited further liberations and/or the introduction of non-native animals.\textsuperscript{13} But this ‘conservation awareness’ did not grow without tensions and the contingencies associated with this move help explain some contemporary attitudes towards native and exotic nonhuman animal species and their hunting.

As an English settlement since the late eighteenth century, and therefore truly influenced by the Romantic ideals, New Zealand inherited a unique perspective into hunting for sports that has grown to be proudly distinct from the one of its colonizer. Similarly to the United States, New Zealand initiated its hunting culture by negating, in some ways, the allegedly elitist counterpart in England.\textsuperscript{14} That meant that, for some, hunting was an expression of difference and therefore played an important role as an identifier for both colonies. But because New Zealand was colonised so late in the English expansionist movement, settlers to the new land like ‘sticking plasters to cover wounds.” McLeod also presents a brief but somewhat detailed historical review of duck hunting in pre-colonial New Zealand. In concluding, she suggests that “it seems that ducks were a regular source of food for Maori and were most likely gathered on a seasonal basis. In more marginal areas, such as southern New Zealand, it is likely that duck became a more important source of protein after the Moa became extinct.” McLeod, “Pondering Nature,” 2004, 70, 77.


\textsuperscript{11} King, \textit{Immigrant Killers}, 1984.

\textsuperscript{12} The New Zealand ‘big-game species’ are: Red deer, Fallow deer, Sika deer, Sambar deer, Rusa deer, White-tailed deer, Wapiti, Chamois, Himalayan thar, feral pig and feral goat. Fraser, \textit{Status and Conservation Role of Recreational Hunting on Conservation Land}, 2000.

\textsuperscript{13} Fraser, \textit{Status and Conservation Role of Recreational Hunting on Conservation Land}, 2000.

already had certain expectations of the environment they would come to colonise, with previous colonies in Africa and India providing important sources for such anticipation. Clearly, hunting in these colonies comprised big game, trophy animals, and the elite of English settlers hoped for a similar environment in New Zealand. But, as mentioned above, that was far from the case, and trophy hunters found the New Zealand landscape anything but attractive as a hunting playground, with the country being accused of having nothing to shoot, “where some half-wild pigs … [and] a few ducks gave the only chance of a fair day’s sport.”

And although settlers of lower social standing were delighted with the possibility to freely hunt native waterfowl, and wild pigs that were initially introduced for food by Captain Cook’s crew in their early expeditions, elite Englishmen were determined to make New Zealand a hunting paradise through the introduction of prime game species.

There are important points here that need to be raised. First, during the period of New Zealand colonisation, England had in place already strict policies for all sorts of hunting that effectively restricted the practice to the noble and the wealthy. ‘Ordinary’ people were still very enthusiastic about hunting but were, in most cases, denied access to it. Colonies were, in this sense, a good possibility for working-class Englishmen to have access to any kind of hunting, and New Zealand provided the untamed landscape and enough animals to satisfy this need. Therefore, contrary to the elite who were preoccupied with the idea of introducing worthy game animals for recreation, lower-class immigrants were delighted with the liberty to hunt without any political interference. However, upper class settlers

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17 The hunting restrictions in place in Europe and particularly in England in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century were the result of a process of expanding human settlement, beginning in the Middle Ages, that provoked deforestation, and landownership increasingly limited to the aristocracy. Peasants were denied access to royal forests where game was abundant, and therefore hunting became highly associated with wealth and nobility. As a result, poaching became a grave crime, punishable with severe sentences, even death. Cartmill, *A View to a Death in the Morning*, 1993.
18 Obviously, land was the main motive for British settlers to come to colonies such as New Zealand. During this period, land was the measure of wealth in Europe and the only way lower-class individuals could ascend socially was through the acquisition of land. Related to that is the restriction of hunting to land-owners in England, and therefore the possession of land in the new colonies also meant the possibility to hunt for those who were not formally allowed to in their mother-country. In New Zealand, since early colonisation, hunting has never been restricted to social class standing, but for early settlers in England it is undeniable the connection made between land ownership in the new colony and the possibility to hunt, therefore providing a good combination of motives to immigrate to the new land. Yerex, *Deer*, 2001; Hunter, *Hunting*, 2009.
19 Native species were also hunted as ‘collector’s pieces’, either for display in private collections or for trade with overseas museums that were keenly interested in the ‘curious birds’ of New Zealand. Collectors were not numerous, however, but their impact on native birds’ numbers is considered significant due to their particular attention to the rarest species. King, *Immigrant Killers*, 1984.
understood hunting also as a way to improve the character of the population, and making it an ‘egalitarian’ practice would help build a strong character for the country. Therefore, even though they did bring in big game to fulfil their own hunting desires, all game animals were allowed to be hunted regardless of the hunter’s social standing.\textsuperscript{20} The ‘egalitarian’ rhetoric, however, was flawed from the beginning, as I will explain later.

There was also a genuine effort to make the inhospitable and ‘dull’ new land more familiar and, together with the ‘hunting empire’ mood that reigned in nineteenth century England, acclimatisation societies were established between the 1860s and the 1880s in different provinces, to encourage the introduction of new species of nonhuman animals, as well as of plants. These societies were responsible for the ‘acclimatisation’ process of exotic species that were being brought to the country for trade, industry and hunting, by operating nurseries and hatcheries. According to the first annual report of the Otago Acclimatisation Society, their hope was that the “sportsmen [sic] and lovers of nature might then enjoy the same sports and studies that make the remembrance of their former homes so dear, the country more enjoyable, our tables better supplied, and new industries fostered.”\textsuperscript{21} Formed and administered by the elite, these societies also aimed at improving the nation’s character through the introduction of big game hunting, particularly deer hunting. Interestingly, the acclimatisation societies also envisioned the potential to attract international visitors, and intended to transform New Zealand into a great hunting resort for tourists. According to Hunter,

\begin{quote}
[a]cclimatisation societies introduced deer mainly for ‘sport’ hunting and tourism and of the character-building effects of hunting on the colonial population. Hundreds of years of British tradition had instilled in colonists the notion that deer-stalking was ennobling, and that the colony would prosper through the introduction of deer-stalking.\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

From this passage it is interesting to note how significant a role deer played in this early hunting environment. In fact, Hunter asserts that deer were the most important of all species deliberately introduced for game. Forrester and Illingworth in 1973 affirmed that deer were the main quarry of hunters in New Zealand, and Holden three years later confirmed it by

\textsuperscript{20} Hunter, \textit{Hunting}, 2009.

\textsuperscript{21} Otago Acclimatisation Society as quoted in McDowall, \textit{Gamekeepers for the Nation}, 1994, 24.

\textsuperscript{22} Hunter, \textit{Hunting}, 2009, 44-46.
stating that deer was the number one game animal in the country. As I have observed in my experience with (mainly deer) hunters, in 2009 this is still the case. Deer hunting, for some, is regarded as the apex of the New Zealand hunter’s ‘career’, and hunters justify this position by the cunningness of this target animal and the great skills required to achieve a kill. Other nonhuman animals, particularly small game animals, are ‘used’ to practise the shooting skills necessary to ‘move up the ladder’ and to become competent enough to start hunting deer. This status is clearly influenced by the first standing of deer in the New Zealand hunting history, a species “associated with nobility, royalty and aristocracy, both literally and figuratively.” The species introduced were regarded as prime individuals and liberations were carried out by elite Englishmen who wished to ‘Anglicise’ the landscape to match their own values. The first liberations of deer occurred in the early 1850s and continued until 1913, with a total of eight species having successfully adapted, including the Whitetail who is predominantly found on Stewart Island and regarded as a prime game target by most New Zealand hunters. Even today, the significance of deer is such that Willis, Elworth, Acland and Wilson, in their foreword to Yerex’s book *Deer: The New Zealand History*, state that “the story of deer in New Zealand is a significant part of this country’s history.”

Right from the early periods of nonhuman animal liberations for hunting, tensions began to arise. Not only did elite settlers have a different approach from the working-class groups to what was considered good hunting, but also Māori had a completely different view of the practice. For Māori, hunting was not only a cultural practice but an activity tied to food provision. Obviously, Māori diets included meat sourced from native species, therefore

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It is also evident from the number of publications dedicated to deer hunting in New Zealand the status of this game animal to hunters. McLeod, for instance, referred to only fourteen books being published about duck hunting in the last forty years. On a quick library search, I have found more than one hundred books/reports that deal with deer hunting in this country from 1960 until today. McLeod, “Pondering Nature,” 2004.


McDowall suggests that deer were first introduced in New Zealand in 1847 by wealthy men who desired, as their followers, the availability of game for recreation, and maybe even the establishment of a deer park, a venture much appreciated at that time by the English aristocracy. These releases were not successful for the attainment of neither of these aims, however. In most other sources, it is considered that the first (successful) effort to introduce deer in New Zealand was in 1851, a Red stag and hind, by H.W. Petre in the Maitai Valley, near Nelson. Holden, *The Golden Years of Hunting in New Zealand*, 1983; McDowall, *Gamekeepers for the Nation*, 1994. Yerex, *Deer*, 2001.

mainly of native birds, fish and marine mammals. Bringing to New Zealand their English cultural baggage, settlers created legal frameworks to deal with game species that did not present direct privileges for landowners, but that followed, in most other instances, the English system. Although hunting was not a class-ridden sport as it was in the ‘mother-country’, there were still restrictions imposed on hunters, such as licences, hunting seasons and bag limits. Such a legal setting was not only alien to local Māori culture but was also disregarding of their hunting tradition.29

The hunting of exotic nonhuman animals did not generate much disagreement between Māori and Pākehā, but the regulations over native fowl, both as game (for the settlers) and a food source (for Māori), initiated tensions. According to Hunter, kereru was probably the first animal to trigger disagreement. As an important food source for several iwi, their pursuit by Māori was dictated by the “birds’ plumpness and suitability for the pot,” while for Pākehā hunters the best time to hunt them was when they were “lean and swift.”30 The best season for the aims of the two groups clearly differed and Pākehā interests tended to prevail. Conflict began to arise and a constant change in policies, from the second half of the nineteenth century on, was disturbing for both Māori and Pākehā.31 The question as to whether Māori had the right to hunt without a licence, and according to their own seasonal interests, frustrated both groups, with inconsistencies emanating from the legal environment, and the inevitable consequence was poaching, by Māori and by Pākehā. Another problem regarding Māori hunting customs were the fowling techniques used, such as snaring and spearing, considered by the settlers to be “unsophisticated, unethical, and primitive.”32 Here, the rhetoric of an ‘egalitarian’ practice is easily challenged when English hunters refer to Māori modes of hunting as “unsophisticated, unethical, and primitive,” marginalising their...

29 As Young points out, these restrictions were an effort to protect game animals for the maintenance of numbers to ensure the provision of good hunting, and it happened before any native nonhuman animal received legal or social protection. Also, the Protection of Animals Act 1867 prohibited the introduction of predators, such as foxes and hawks, to protect and preserve game animals, both exotic and native, an attitude that demonstrates the importance given to recreational hunting. Young, Our Islands, Our Selves, 2004.

30 Hunter, Hunting, 2009, 57; Young, Our Islands, Our Selves, 2004.


McLeod traces this non-acceptance of Māori techniques to eighteenth century England, when fire arms became popular amongst aristocratic hunters and the more elementary, or traditional methods used by poorer classes were increasingly marginalised. Cartmill’s account support such statement. Cartmill, A View to a Death in the Morning, 1993.
practices until totally banning them within the first 100 years of settlement. In a summary of such a context, McLeod explains:

While it does appear that the general philosophy of the Acclimatization Societies was to make hunting accessible to ‘everyone’ and not just the elite […], it is clear that this philosophy intended to incorporate British settler society rather than Maori. British settlers established a set of rules and social understandings as to what constituted ‘ethical’ hunting practices which differed markedly from traditional Maori hunting practice. Because the British hunting ethos was incorporated into the legal system of the developing colony, Maori hunting, while initially allowed in a marginalised fashion, was to ultimately become outlawed.

The effort made by Māori to protect land that was of spiritual significance also incurred losses of hunting rights. In ‘gifting’ areas such as the mountains of Tongariro to the Crown to be permanently protected from human settlement into what later became the first New Zealand National Park, the Tongariro National Park, the land and the animal dwellers became governed by Pākehā laws and, as a consequence, subject to Pākehā hunting laws. Thus, as more and more restrictions were put in place for the hunting of native birds, the more Māori were denied their traditional practices, even on land considered as of traditional (spiritual) significance to Māori.

Another interesting point to note is that Pākehā interference with Māori customary hunting practices was so extensive that modern New Zealand hunting traditions contain very little influence from Māori customs. McLeod explores this issue at length in her doctoral dissertation about duck hunting in New Zealand. In tracing the historical background of duck hunting in this country she concludes that modern practices have little or no resemblance to pre-contact Māori waterfowl hunting tradition. One of the issues she raises

33 Bauer and Giles briefly present some of the difficult questions that arise when discussing indigenous, or traditional, forms of hunting that are performed within modern societies. This discussion is not central to my arguments and will therefore not be pursued here. I wish, however, to draw the reader’s attention to the comment that “[t]here are numerous examples from Africa, Eurasia and America where the decline of indigenous people was initiated by removing their right to hunt,” and although this affirmation might not well represent the New Zealand case, it is worthy of attention that indigenous hunting practices were well regarded by pre-colonisation societies and formed an important part of their culture. Bauer and Giles, *Recreational Hunting*, 2002.


35 Ibid., 110.

Tongariro National Park was created in 1887 following Māori gifting of the land, being the first national park established in New Zealand and fourth in the world.

36 Contemporary hunting of tītī, or muttonbird, is not included here since it is a practice completely restricted to Māori people of certain iwi and therefore should not be considered a ‘modern’ practice that has been embraced and widely practiced by Western society, such as other forms of hunting.
that is of particular relevance is the masculine tradition associated with modern practices; a
tradition certainly not borrowed from Māori hunting. Historical evidence shows that women
also were involved in the provision of food during pre-contact years through waterfowl
snaring and spearing. 37 Also, the techniques used by Māori were completely replaced by
‘modern’ techniques, considered more appropriate and ‘ethical’. 38 Deer and other big game
hunting, therefore, are even less influenced by Māori hunting traditions since they were never
fully embraced by early Māori, who preferred pigs and their other customary sources of
meat. 39 Such a lack of indigenous influence in present day hunting in part justifies my
decision to restrict myself to Western engagements with the New Zealand environment.

Later, in 1922, and influenced by the Romantic conservationist movement of the United
States and England, and the clear declines in native game numbers, i.e. waterfowl, the New
Zealand government prohibited the hunting of most native species. 40 Here it is interesting to
note that, as Hunter explains, “[t]he cultural and legal environment in nineteenth-century
New Zealand encouraged particular types of hunting and protected game animals and birds.
Hunting for sport was prioritised over hunting for food, especially as the colony became
more prosperous and the idea of subsistence hunting became less desirable.” 41 Within this
context, and although big game such as deer, tahr and chamois were prized, nineteenth
century New Zealand hunting was still very much connected to the provision of food, and
Māori and working-class Pākehā hunted mainly waterfowl and wild pigs. The lack of a well
established agricultural system during those early years of settlement meant that settlers of all
kinds, but particularly explorers, surveyors and bush workers, as well as Māori, had to rely
heavily on the abundant provision of wild pigs and birds in the still untamed New Zealand
bush. 42 South Islanders were particularly reliant on wild food sources. 43 Also, although the
opportunity to freely hunt big game was prized by some, most working-class settlers
associated this activity, especially deer hunting, with negative aspects of the land they had left
behind and therefore were not particularly fond of it. Conversely, the chance to hunt for

38 Ibid.
40 Māori argued at that time, and today’s scientists agree, that hunting pressure was not the major reason for
declining numbers, but loss of habitat through deforestation and farming. Young, Our Islands, Our Selves, 2004;
41 Hunter, Hunting, 2009, 66.
43 King, Immigrant Killers, 1984.
one’s own plate was highly valued, since this option was denied to most people in nineteenth century England. More importantly, and again in a reference to the ‘egalitarian’ rhetoric, early hunting laws clearly favoured the elite, despite denials, through the institution of a five-pound licence fee, an exorbitant amount of money for working-class settlers. Such impediments were eventually removed in 1867, in what seemed, finally, to be a true effort to make the activity more accessible to lower-class individuals, but a ‘hunting tradition’ had already been installed and ‘big game hunting’, in practice, prevailed as a less than egalitarian activity. In fact, acclimatisation societies were overtly opposed to subsistence hunting, disapproving of the activity on the grounds that it was against what was considered the appropriate sporting codes. As Hunter points out, the selling of wild meat to restaurants and butcheries was condemned by acclimatisation societies but was a common practice among ‘pot-hunters’, and therefore created tensions even within the Pākehā hunting community.

In another change of the hunting legal framework, following the total ban of native species hunting in the early 1920s, restrictions to exotic game hunting were abandoned in 1932. At that stage, the New Zealand government was becoming more aware of the damage to the native forests caused by introduced species and the move was not only to liberalise hunting of all introduced game throughout the year, without bag limits, but also to start eradication

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45 McDowall uses the egalitarian rhetoric and affirms that “one of the fundamental avowed goals of the societies in bringing such animals as deer and salmon to New Zealand, was to provide easy opportunities for all people to pursue these prized quarries with little or no constraint either as regards opportunity for access to hunting and fishing of the cost of doing so.” He follows on to admit that license fees were initially high for working-class settlers but contends that later these became affordable, reaching the desired outcome of hunting access provision to all. Contradictorily, in a later chapter, he states that “deer hunting in these early days [...] was an expensive business. [...] it was also a pursuit of the nobility.” His argument could have been directed mainly to gamebird hunting and game fishing, the main interests of acclimatisation societies. His conclusion nonetheless still confirms my analysis here. McDowall, Gamekeepers for the Nation, 1994, 26, 347.

46 Contemporary hunting practices in New Zealand inherited a significant amount of ‘codes of practice’ and rituals from early engagements with the hunt and the prey. Cartmill elaborates on the hunting rituals of the English aristocracy, much of which was brought to New Zealand by early elite settlers. These engagements have certainly evolved into distinct New Zealand practices and I will deal with them in detail later in this chapter. I will not, however, explore in depth the origins of such rituals in the English hunting history, as this would be beyond the scope of this dissertation and have been done exhaustively by other authors. Suffice to say that English hunting rituals were built on particular ideals of nationhood, class and gender that have influenced but have been modified by New Zealand society throughout the years. Cartmill, A View to a Death in the Morning, 1993; McLeod, “Pondering Nature,” 2004.


programmes, including the culling of big game. This ‘conservationist awareness’ can be associated with a wider change in New Zealand society. The urge to make New Zealand a ‘home’ in the first years of colonisation gave impulse to acclimatisation societies and the importation of plants and animals that reminded the settlers of their native country; later, the following generations “reversed this logic as they took pride in their sense of being ‘a new people’, forged from a ‘new land’. They began to celebrate the differences found in the New Zealand landscape that differentiated them from ‘home’.” It was in this context that New Zealanders began to appreciate native fauna and flora and to recognise the damage introduced animals and plants were causing to these. The ‘exotic’ became pests.

Returning to the consequences to hunting created by this modal shift, it is interesting to note here that culling, at that time, was regarded as “the practice of selective shooting carried out by the acclimatisation societies to enhance trophy quality by eliminating weak animals and limiting the total numbers.” In fact, acclimatisation societies had done this job for the government in earlier years when hunters themselves noticed that trophy quality was being diminished probably due to the enormous number of deer in different herds around the country, leading to poor condition. Therefore, the term was very inappropriate to designate a programme that aimed at ‘eradication’, and not management of a hunting asset, and thus generated immediate opposition from (trophy) hunters and the acclimatisation societies. In this process, deer became vilified and deer hunting, although still extremely attractive, now was justified by a different rhetoric, moving from purely hedonistic to conservationist, as hunting came to be regarded as a tool for animal management.

Deer was probably the first and therefore the most vilified animal to be on the ‘eradication’ list in the early years of the conservationist movement of New Zealand. According to Bruce Banwell, “after many years of acclimatisation society control, deer numbers had increased to pest proportions and so began the era of panic.” In 1930 the Department of Internal Affairs called all interested parties to discuss the impact deer were having on the native bush

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49 Young, Our Islands, Our Selves, 2004; Hunter, Hunting, 2009.
51 Yerex, Deer, 2001, 36.
52 McDowall, Gamekeepers for the Nation, 1994.
54 Banwell as quoted in Yerex, Deer, 2001, 42.
at the ‘Deer Menace Conference’ in Christchurch.\textsuperscript{55} The title of the event does not deny the emphasis the government was placing on the negative impacts this species was having on the environment, clearly expecting a wide acceptance of an ‘already confirmed’ problem.\textsuperscript{56} According to Yerex, “[i]t was at the time of this conference that all remaining protection of deer was removed, and the decision made that the government should assume responsibility nationwide for controlling deer.”\textsuperscript{57} It was at that stage, also, that the control over deer was completely taken from the acclimatisation societies and given to the Department of Internal Affairs.\textsuperscript{58} It is clear, therefore, the shift in how the government perceived deer in this country: from an active importation policy to provide not only game for settlers but also to promote deer as a tourism asset, to a universal deer eradication programme.\textsuperscript{59}

This shift in rhetoric was not, however, adopted by all types of hunters. New Zealand historians, such as Young and Hunter, have established that working-class settlers were more interested in waterfowl and pig hunting for the pot, while deer hunting was more prized by the elite who hunted for sport.\textsuperscript{60} When the ‘evidence’ of deer impact on native land became widespread, government cullers were employed to eradicate the ‘menace’. Cullers came from the working class and took on the role for the money but also for pride.\textsuperscript{61} It is important to remember here that the 1930s, when the culling programme was introduced, were also years of economic depression and many New Zealanders, both from European and from Māori ancestry, were unemployed and going through severe hardships to provide for their families.

\textsuperscript{55} Acclimatisation societies, from their creation, had been concerned with ‘vermin’ control, but mainly to secure the successful adaptation of species introduced by them. Weasels and stoats, for instance, were under their focus since the late eighteenth century. The move to an eradication programme focused on game animals, however, was not in their initial plans and received a great deal of opposition in the early years, as I will be discussing in this section. McDowall, \textit{Gamekeepers for the Nation}, 1994.

\textsuperscript{56} Some groups at the time were, and some contemporary authors are, sceptical about the evidence used to affirm that deer were negatively and dramatically impacting the natural environment in New Zealand to the extent that needed to be exterminated. Hunter, for instance, talks about a “misplaced fear of accelerated erosion caused by browsing mammals, especially by deer.” It seems to be widely accepted that farmers had a crucial contribution in the vilification of deer and the harm it was doing to native forest. Logically, their concern was built upon crop loss to deer browsing and was extended to imply deer impact on catchments through soil destabilization. For diversified discussions on this matter see: Forrester and Illingworth, \textit{Hunting in New Zealand}, 1973, 241; Holden, \textit{The Deer Hunters}, 1976; Holden, \textit{The Golden Years of Hunting in New Zealand}, 1983; McDowall, \textit{Gamekeepers for the Nation}, 1994; Yerex, \textit{Deer}, 2001; Young, \textit{Our Islands, Our Selves}, 2004; Hunter, \textit{Hunting}, 2009.

\textsuperscript{57} Yerex, \textit{Deer}, 2001, 34.

\textsuperscript{58} In later years the acclimatisation societies were disbanded, and in 1990 the Fish and Game Council was created as a national ‘substitute’ agency. McDowall, \textit{Gamekeepers for the Nation}, 1994.

\textsuperscript{59} Young, \textit{Our Islands, Our Selves}, 2004.

\textsuperscript{60} Young, \textit{Our Islands, Our Selves}, 2004; Hunter, \textit{Hunting}, 2009.

\textsuperscript{61} Gale provides an interesting account of his life as a professional culler who was very passionate about his job, saving the New Zealand bush, but also a very passionate hunter. Gale, \textit{Hunting for Love and for Money}, 1997.
But for them culling was not only a paid job and a means to acquire free meat, but also it meant saving what was now their home from this introduced ‘pest’. Yerex describes well this context:

Right through the 1930s the exploits of the government cullers were widely reported. The conservationists had done their job well, to the extent that the public were fully convinced that deer were indeed ‘a menace’. The cullers, therefore, were modern-day knights going off to slay a monster that threatened the country. Was it that the public had become accustomed to reading of the deeds of heroes in the Great War? Or did they see the cullers as representatives of the true character of the New Zealander: strong, independent, facing the worst that Nature throw at him? Whatever the answer, the government cullers did achieve a good deal of public recognition, and they themselves felt a strong sense of loyalty to what, in later years, they referred to as the ‘Old Firm’. A number of them wrote books about their experiences, in which there is more talk of the glorious surrounding, a strong sense of comradeship and the challenge of survival than there is about killing deer.62

In this context, recreational hunters were initially considered a hindrance and not helpers.63 Cullers were the professional people to handle the ‘deer pest’, and recreational hunters tended to oppose what they viewed as ‘indiscriminate killing’.64 For recreational hunters the tally of more than one thousand deer shot by one single culler during one season was too much to accept. As a consequence, according to MacLean, “[d]uring the late 1930s [the New Zealand Department of] Internal Affairs had found that [recreational] hunters had interfered with tactical plans and as a result there was a prohibition on private shooting during the summer culling season.”65 This was only one of the early occurrences that triggered animosity between recreational hunters and government agencies responsible for the management of wildlife and conservation land. Predictably, such government enforcements made recreational hunters even less supportive of culling programmes in general, and their argument was constantly based on the loss of game to ‘incompetent shooters’.66 Such a position was not enough to gain the support from other interest groups and ‘battles’ were persistently in place.

As part of the culling programme, a network of huts was created in high level sites throughout the country to provide safe shelter for cullers during the culling season. After the

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63 Fraser, Status and Conservation Role of Recreational Hunting on Conservation Land, 2000.
65 MacLean, Tararua, 1994, 221.
first few years of implementation, and in the midst of intense animosity between recreational hunters and conservationists, the Forest Service realised that, beyond the provision of huts and tracks and the employment of professional cullers, to successfully control deer they needed the help of private, recreational hunters. When in 1956 the New Zealand Forest Service took over the role of controlling wild non-native animals from the Department of Internal Affairs, the priorities changed from “reducing densities per se to the protection of water and soil values,” and although deer were still viewed as pests, the focus changed from eradication to management. From this moment, recreational hunters slowly became ‘partners’ in the control of deer, and the general attitude towards hunting of this ‘pest’ became very favourable. The Forest Service began to liaise with the hunting fraternity and as a result encouraged them to hunt in the backcountry, with huts being open to both hunters and trampers.

Within the acclimatisation societies also there was some disagreement in regards to the government culling and eradication programmes. For some, big game such as deer, tahr and chamois were paramount to the hunting asset of the country; for others, gamebirds and trout were of more interest. As a consequence, a few members decided to establish an association to protect the interests of big game hunters, and more specifically of deer hunters, since this species was the focal point of attention of farmers and authorities in their eradication effort. In 1938 the New Zealand Deerstalkers’ Association (NZDA) was formed under “the principle of conserving rather than exterminating wild game.” In the years following World War II, the NZDA gained increased recognition and was working closely to the New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs in the effort to manage deer numbers. A public statement in 1951 by NZDA president Geoffrey Orbell shows how cooperation was the goal of the association:

67 MacLean, Taranaki, 1994.
69 McDowall in his history of acclimatisation societies in New Zealand affirms that the societies were not particularly active in the introduction and management of deer at the very beginning of their establishment in the country, nor for the more recent times, partially explaining the need felt by some deer hunters to create their own association. McDowall, Gamekeepers for the Nation, 1994.
70 Yerex, Deer, 2001, 49.

The NZDA website states that the association was formed in 1937. Hunter also uses 1938 as the year of its establishment. I have chosen to use here the academic accounts. New Zealand Deerstalkers’ Association, “About the NZ Deerstalkers’ Association,” 2009; Hunter, Hunting, 2009.
The policy of this Association [NZDA] is to give the Wildlife branch of Internal Affairs wholehearted support in reducing the numbers of deer throughout New Zealand to a level consistent with the regeneration of the forest. Both the NZDA and Internal Affairs are agreed that only when this state has been brought about in any area can the deer be said to be ‘under control’.  

The social environment changed, however, and the NZDA lost support from other interested parties, such as Forest and Bird and The Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand. Conservationists from these groups were not willing to compromise and did not appreciate the wishes of hunters to maintain a manageable level of deer in backcountry forests. Also, probably due to the independent character of New Zealand hunters, the association did not seem to attract the majority of the hunting community, therefore losing its bargaining power. The active members, however, increasingly had their tempers frayed over the years as the culling programme continued, and although the government in later years, especially during the years of Forest Service control, moved closer to recreational hunters, the animosity had been created and until today one can notice in the rhetoric of some fervent deerstalkers the hostility towards any government agency who has power over land and animals.

In spite of any animosity, in 1981 the Forest Service created Recreational Hunting Areas (RHAs) and gazetted several areas where the management of big game was done exclusively by recreational hunters. This move was a definite attempt to bring the hunting community closer to the management of conservation areas, and when the Department of Conservation replaced the Forest Service in 1987 the aim to provide recreation opportunities to New Zealanders in natural areas under DOC control reiterated the need to attend to hunters’ interests as well as to those of conservationists. At the later stage however, the culling programme had been replaced by both commercial meat export exploitation of herds and subsequent deer farming. Currently, DOC relies on few strategies to manage deer numbers, while still acknowledging the recreational asset. Deer control companies that operate with the use of helihunting in venison recovery operations have been contracted by the Department on a trial basis, replacing the ‘search and destroy’ strategy used previously during culling.

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71 Orbell as quoted in Yerex, *Deer*, 2001, 50.

programmes. In addition, DOC encourages deer hunting throughout the conservation estate as a way of controlling deer numbers.\textsuperscript{73}

Today, hunting is widely promoted as a conservationist pursuit by both hunters and conservation managers. The title (and content) of a Department of Conservation ‘Science for Conservation’ report indicates such a position: \textit{Status and Conservation Role of Recreational Hunting on Conservation Land}. Surely, there are tensions in such a conservationist discourse and these tensions are explored by different interest groups, including some conservationist groups that oppose recreational hunting. An interesting statement by David Yerex in the preface of his book on the history of deer (hunting) in New Zealand illustrates the state of these tensions:

The humans who introduced them [deer] to NZ, and their successors, changed their views about deer every decade or so, disagreed vehemently as to whether deer were a benefit or a problem; argued bitterly among themselves as to what should be done, produced numerous conflicting theories and policies, and subsequently criticised loudly almost everything which anyone before them had done. By the year 2000 the conflict between the several interest groups had still not been solved. Our dealing with deer have been characterised by contradiction, confusion and confrontation. Since the 1920s there have been those who want deer retained as a source of trophies; others who seek hunting opportunities (which are not necessarily the same thing) or commercial advantage; and those who consider them a threat to the environment which should be eradicated, or at least reduced to the lowest population levels possible. By the end of the twentieth century deer had become both a valuable commercial commodity and part of a growing environmental problem which involved greater public concern about the environment.\textsuperscript{74}

Some of these tensions will be explored later but for now it is important only that we are aware of this shift in discourse.

The fact that all big game species were introduced by settlers provides indeed an interesting differentiator from hunting practices of the United States and other countries. In fact, this may be considered as \textit{the} main distinction of New Zealand hunting from countries in other parts of the world, particularly former English colonies.\textsuperscript{75} On the other hand, “[a]s opposed to the French, Spanish and Portuguese, who seem to have been more interested in extracting and appropriating resources and leaving behind their genes, the English colonial enterprise

\textsuperscript{73} Department of Conservation, “DOC’s Work with Deer,” 2009.
\textsuperscript{74} Yerex, \textit{Deer}, 2001, 9.
\textsuperscript{75} Hunter, \textit{Hunting}, 2009.
was focused on land to live on and to make over into a landscape like the one they left behind,” and therefore the release of game species features as a clear and significant ‘identity-building’ effort to make New Zealand the settlers’ new ‘home’.

As Forrester and Illingworth rightly argue, the “early efforts to make New Zealand over into the image of the Old Country were a very human and understandable reaction to the strangeness and challenge of an alien land.” Introducing animals that would not only remind immigrants of the mother-country but also provide for their leisure was an important means to connect to the land. More importantly, this new ‘home’, although made familiar by the introduction of recognizable animals, is singular in the new relationship with them. A central aspect of this novel relationship is the environment where these animals were released and where hunting and settling took place.

The New Zealand environment proved very different from the United Kingdom’s long-tamed landscapes, and the grand and inhospitable natural formations greatly influenced the construction of the new country’s identity. This environment provided – and still does – an experience of the sublime which I argue is central to hunting experiences and performances in New Zealand. Previously I have demonstrated that most animals who were released for game adapted surprisingly well to this landscape and quickly became part of it in the eyes of most settlers, until several decades later when they were officially designated as pests. Deer, in particular, adapted well in some of the most rugged and untrodden land of the country and thus the encounter with these animals involved (and still does) an immersion into the sublime in a way that significantly enforced the settler identity and provided an intense exchange with the hunted animal. It is my argument that for both cullers and recreational hunters, the experience of place in a sublime landscape has been one of the most significant aspects of deer hunting in New Zealand.

Moreover, tourism in New Zealand is also deeply rooted in the Kantian sublime aesthetic, being a product of diverse historical and contemporary processes, such as the ones previously explored in this chapter, that also greatly influence other aspects of New Zealand

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76 Callicott, “Contemporary Criticism of the Received Wilderness Idea,” 2008, 357; Young, Our Islands, Our Selves, 2004.


78 Young, Our Islands, Our Selves, 2004.

79 Today, the realisation that these species are exotic and, to some extent, unwelcome, provides an important narrative of wildlife management and pest control to New Zealand hunters and will be further explored later in this chapter.
culture and relationships with the environment. It is my argument here that ‘escaping’ from the tamed environment of New Zealand’s major cities and towns and travelling into these ‘untamed’ landscapes is critical for the hunting experience in New Zealand, and more specifically on Stewart Island, a remote destination by its very nature. Lovelock and Robinson make a similar claim when they affirm that the hunting experience on Stewart Island is greatly influenced and enhanced by what they call the ‘island’ experience, one which involves considerable effort put into the travel, by boat, helicopter or plane, to the island’s hunting blocks. In addition, the authors affirm that “the characteristics of environment, with rugged coastlines, dense bush, plus interesting birdlife […] combine with the opportunities to fish and dive […] to produce a unique hunting experience.” However, the authors do not fully engage with these issues; rather, they limit their comments only to acknowledge the importance of these factors to the hunting experience. Engagement with these previously neglected issues is part of my endeavour in this chapter.

I have argued before that another important aspect of the introduction of game species for building a new but familiar ‘home’ involved the intention of constructing a fair and ‘egalitarian’ new land. Hunting was mostly a form of leisure for all, and this understanding still grounds the New Zealand hunting culture. As a result, present hunting practice eschews any form of pretension. Although, for city dwellers, the opportunity to spend a few days hunting may now involve significant expenditure related to travel, food and accommodation, the hunting performance retains egalitarian characteristics. The less economically privileged still have access to nearby protected areas of some sort where game is still abundant. Hunting blocks are available to anyone who applies to hunt there and excess demand is dealt with through a system of balloting. Hunters get immersed in the bush, camping in tents and rustic huts without any distinction between different economic or social classes. It is in this context that hunting takes place on Stewart Island.

80 Bell and Matthewman’s book on identity, space and place in New Zealand provides interesting examples of the different areas in which the constructed Romantic idea of Nature impacts on New Zealand’s culture. More broadly, Young and Ross discuss how Nature, and New Zealanders’ relationship with Nature has helped frame New Zealand culture. Bell and Lyall, The Accelerated Sublime, 2002; Bell and Matthewman, Cultural Studies in Aotearoa New Zealand, 2004; Young, Our Islands, Our Selves, 2004; Ross, Going Bush, 2008.


The importance of travelling time to the travel/tourism experience has been remarked by several authors. For a recent account see: Watts and Urry, “Moving Methods, Travelling Times,” 2008.

The brief cultural history presented here supports the argument that modern hunting practices in New Zealand, particularly deerstalking, have evolved from the elitist approach of early English settlers to become proudly different and a sign of ‘New Zealandness’. The discourse around deer hunting has also significantly changed, and the deer hunter had to change his approach to hunting big game to incorporate the newly established conservationist ethic that in many ways populates collective discourse in the country today. In order to legitimize the practice, deer hunters had to nearly abolish, or better had to suppress, the trophy search associated with elite forms of hunting and incorporate the ‘working class’ discourse that links hunting to meat provision and to the protection of the native land from the noxious animals. In this way, deer hunters became ‘true New Zealand icons’ and became more accepted by New Zealand society, including farmers who were some of their early opponents. The main driver for such a change was the involvement of working-class men in the government culling programme, which provided to other groups of hunters the ‘pleasures’ of deer hunting and associated such activity with the stewardship role of protecting the new home.

_Hunting on Stewart Island_  
Hunting has been an important recreation and tourism activity on Stewart Island since the beginning of the 20th century. White-tailed deer were introduced in 1905 and today form the only readily available herd of Whitetail in the Southern Hemisphere. The liberation was not conducted by any acclimatisation society, but rather was an attempt by the Government to establish the species after failing to do so in 1901 in the Takaka Valley in Nelson. Nine deer (seven does and two bucks) were released at Port Pegasus, in the southern tip of Stewart

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83 I have opted to use the masculine pronoun when referring to hunters because it is a practice engaged predominantly by men, its cultural history is extremely connected with masculinity, but more importantly because during my four years of research in New Zealand and on Stewart Island I did not meet any female active hunter. I have, nonetheless, met several women that had been hunting before (usually not more than in a few instances), but none of them considered themselves hunters.

84 ‘Gamebird’ and pig hunters can be considered the more ‘original’ representatives of such a collective imagery that connects hunting to ‘true New Zealandness’. My argument here is that deer hunters, through their socio-cultural history, have become part of this.


86 Red deer were introduced in 1901 but did not proliferate as the Whitetail, and therefore the existing herd does not attract so much interest of the hunting fraternity. _Yerex, Deer_, 2001.

Island, and the herd, since then, has become well established on the island. Although not coming from any specific effort of the acclimatisation societies, it is speculated that the Southland branch was responsible for selecting the locations of liberations. According to Banwell, Port Pegasus was chosen due to its remoteness, probably to increase the chance of a good adaptation and establishment of the herd. The only other Whitetail herd present in New Zealand, at the head of Lake Wakatipu, has never produced a large herd, making the Stewart Island herd the only one of enough interest for recreational hunting.

The first ‘official’ hunting season on the island, with two licences being issued, was in 1921. The number of participants increased steadily, particularly in the late 1970s, and in 1982 a hunter usage survey conducted by the New Zealand Deerstalkers’ Association reported that some 1200 hunters had hunted on the island during a one-year period. In 1997 this number had doubled reaching 2370 hunters. In 2003, a year after the establishment of the Rakiura National Park, 2800 hunters were reported to have been hunting on Stewart Island.

In 1930, as part of the governmental eradication programme, deer were, for the first time, culled on the island, a practice that lasted until 1953, when a bounty system was introduced. This lasted only 5 years and in 1958 was terminated. During the 1960s and 1970s commercial hunting prevailed on the island as a means of controlling deer numbers, and in the 1980s helicopter operations accounted for animals of both Red and White-tailed deer species. Today, the Department of Conservation relies largely on recreational hunting on the island to control the population. They state:

[r]ecreational and commercial hunting are New Zealand traditions and have been the key method of controlling the deer population on public conservation land within the Stewart Island / Rakiura CMS area in the recent past. [...] Department of Conservation resources directed toward the control of deer species within the park have been low due to significantly greater cost of programmes targeting deer species and the inability to control reinvasion from neighbouring lands. The recreational hunting community and commercial wild animal recovery operators

89 Banwell, *The Rusa, the Sambar and the Whitetail*, 2006.
90 Ibid.
92 Banwell, *The Rusa, the Sambar and the Whitetail*, 2006.
[which focus only on Red deer] are the key methods for controlling deer populations within the park.\textsuperscript{93}

Such a position probably derives from the inconsistency found in scientific reports addressing the damage caused by deer to the native fauna and flora of the island. According to Banwell, since the early 1980s, reports have been tabled, from different sources, presenting contradictory findings, some emphasising the damage and others understating the problem.\textsuperscript{94} Probably due to the extremely high numbers of deer on the island and the lack of feasibility of completely eradicating the present herds, as well as the strong outcry of the hunting fraternity against the total eradication of deer, the Department of Conservation has adopted the strategy of controlling numbers, using the deerstalkers as partners to bring numbers down to a sustainable level. Periodically, however, as part of their pest eradication programme targeting possums and feral cats and rats, 1080 poison is used on the island and is likely to affect deer herds as well as the targeted animals. The hunting fraternity is generally strongly opposed to such a practice, arguing that it affects native birds as well as other species of animals. The Department of Conservation, however, denies such claims and maintains the poisoning of selected areas at various times of the year.

Stewart Island has a remarkably strong reputation within hunting groups, one which relies mostly on the ‘extraordinary’ status of the Whitetail in this country. Harris describes members of the species as “cunning, quiet, fleet, and [they] possess remarkable sense of sight, smell, and hearing.”\textsuperscript{95} Banwell confirms the refined senses of this species stating that White-tailed deer can smell and hear predators from an impressive range, differentiating some threatening sounds from others.\textsuperscript{96} The elusive characteristic of the Whitetail is also mentioned by Lovelock and Robinson while explaining the attraction of Stewart Island deerstalking to New Zealand hunters. These authors support their argument by quoting the high average number of hunting-days to achieve a successful kill, which is around 10 per kill.\textsuperscript{97} In addition, the Whitetail are smaller than Red deer, the predominant deer species in New Zealand, and this is a quality that makes them an even more agile and more difficult

\textsuperscript{94} Banwell, The Rusa, the Sambar and the Whitetail, 2006.
\textsuperscript{95} Harris, Hunting Whitetail Deer, 1970, 15-17.
\textsuperscript{96} Banwell, The Rusa, the Sambar and the Whitetail, 2006.
target in the thick bush of Stewart Island. According to several hunters, White-tailed deer can be considerably more silent in moving than Red deer, as well as more alert than their counterparts, and therefore are much harder to spot and shoot at. They are also very fast when running away from danger, reaching maximum speeds of 65 km/hour. Such characteristics make them a rather prized game, as they demand superior skills from the hunter. Harris explains: “[s]portsmen stalking whitetail deer for the first time are invariably amazed at the elusiveness of what are known locally as the ‘little grey ghosts’. Hunters who have pitted their wits successfully against even the wary sika will find that stalking whitetail taxes their skill.” Holden agrees: “[e]ven experienced hunters come to grief chasing the wily whitetail in stalking conditions which, as a rule, are more than enough to test anyone’s patience.”

Red deer can also be found on mid-altitude habitats, but in lower numbers, therefore attracting less attention from hunters who venture onto the island. Banwell suggests that the culling programme and commercial activities targeting Red deer during early stages of this species’ establishment on the island provided the space for the Whitetail to spread and become overly dominant in that environment. White-tailed deer are usually found in larger numbers in areas around the coast of the island, and hunting blocks therefore also are concentrated in these areas, particularly the northern and eastern coastal regions. According to Harris and to Banwell, the Whitetail are excellent swimmers and are particularly fond of kelp, which is washed ashore in great quantities on the Stewart Island coast. In addition, the coast provides hunters with a more attractive landscape, one which is able to replicate the sublime and picturesque ideals. Camping sites and huts are, with one or two exceptions, right by the beach, providing for other recreational opportunities, such as diving and fishing, in this sublime environment. As Banwell affirms, “[d]iving and fishing are often part of [one’s] hunting experience.”

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98 Banwell, *The Rusa, the Sambar and the Whitetail*, 2006.
103 Banwell, *The Rusa, the Sambar and the Whitetail*, 2006, 251.
Many hunters from other parts of New Zealand envisage Stewart Island as a small, bush clad lump rising from the sea off the southern end of the South Island. Visitors quickly realise that the land mass is far more extensive than first imagined. The island has an area of some 425,000 acres (650 square miles), most of which is covered in dense bush. Its many waterways are just as dangerous to negotiate as backcountry rivers elsewhere. The high points, up to 3,200 ft, are snow clad in winter, and even during the remainder of the year sudden storms raging in from the Antarctic can make the island wilderness extremely inhospitable and dangerous for the unwary or poorly equipped.104

This portrayal of the sublime is typical of hunters’ descriptions of the island and certainly adds great impact to the hunting experience on Stewart Island. Hunting areas inland are also available but are not as prized or sought after, probably because they do not provide such an attractive landscape, where one can immerse oneself in the bush and that, at the same time, one can easily reach by boat or plane. These inland hunting areas are not divided into blocks and do not require pre-booking, due to the lack of demand for them.

The establishment of Rakiura National Park in 2002 was initially opposed by recreational hunters who worried that this change of status would lead to the loss of their long-established recreational opportunity on the island. The hunting fraternity feared that eradication programmes, such as aerial culling, were going to be again implemented and, as a consequence, a highly prized asset was going to be lost. Hunters made several submissions during the period of the initial proposal for the park, showing their discontent with this possibility. They argued that Stewart Island was significantly dependent on tourism and hunting was one of the main attractions; if hunting was to be impacted, Stewart Island would lose an important source of revenue.105 The ‘battle’ was won, at least so far, and hunting remains as an important recreational activity on the island, as shown above by the Department of Conservation’s public statement in their latest draft of the Rakiura National Park Management Plan, that deer control is mostly conducted by the deerstalkers through recreational hunting.106

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104 Harris, Hunting Whitetail Deer, 1970, 14.


It is interesting to note here, however, that in the economic impact study conducted by Lovelock and Robinson, the authors concluded that “the economic benefits to the island from hunting tourism are minimal. [...] By far the biggest proportion of hunter expenditure is off the island.” Ibid., 196.

In terms of access, there are different ways of getting to the hunting blocks, varying according to the distance from the mainland or to the amount of investment (in time and money) that hunting parties are prepared to make. Some of the most remote areas require several hours of travel by boat, whereas some more accessible blocks can be reached in less than one hour by a small plane or helicopter from the mainland. The movement to and from the hunting blocks is often seen by hunters as an important part of their hunting experience, and contributes to the immersion into the sublime landscape. Lovelock and Robinson concur explaining that “[t]he difficult nature of the crossing of Foveaux Strait, the seasickness, or the challenges of landing in a light aircraft on a remote and rugged beach are integral parts of the Stewart Island hunting experience.”

My position is that these singularities about New Zealand hunting and the particularities of Whitetail deerstalking on Stewart Island certainly promote narratives and performances unique to the New Zealand context and surely are responsible for building a relationship with the prey animal that cannot fully be understood if engaged with only through the available environmental philosophies. This intricate web of narratives and performances is extremely complex and challenges current ethical positions for and against contemporary forms of hunting. Following, I will discuss some philosophical issues related to hunting and the narratives and performances of hunters on Stewart Island as I experienced them during this study.

**Environmental Ethics, the Nonhuman Animal and Hunting**

Hunting is a fruitful source to discuss issues of environmental ethics; the activity has been the focus of environmentalists, both for and against the practice, for several decades now. The central ethical issue that stimulates the attention of scholars is that hunters engage with the natural environment, and particularly with nonhuman animals, in a way that is very close and may be full of significance. As Marvin asserts, hunting “incorporates particular forms of engagements with animals” that are singular to this activity. These engagements involve an embodied encounter with nonhuman animals that is rich in meanings and sensualities in

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ways that few other recreational activities are able to be. And yet, this is probably the least understood facet of hunting: its immediacy and the senses exchanged with the prey and with other elements of the natural environment in which the practice takes place. Marvin’s sophisticated attempt to explore this sensual engagement elicited the discussions I wish to make in this section. In his accounts, Marvin discussed how the senses are explored and stimulated during the hunting performance but he did not endeavour to discuss the philosophical issues involved in this embodied experience. This will form part of my effort here.

The embodied experience of hunters has been largely disregarded also in tourism studies. Tourism scholars have focused their studies primarily on game management in tourism ventures, manifestations and impacts of hunting tourism in different local communities, hunting as a sustainable tourism option, the importance of wildlife in tourism experiences such as ecotourism operations and consumptive tourism, as well as profiling the hunting tourist, to name some of the most recurrent themes. However, there has been little or no research in the tourism field that explores not only the importance of the embodied experience of the hunting act to the hunter, but also the ethical issues involved in the hunting experience and the crucial role the environment has in the fulfilment of this experience. Also, the experience of hunters with other recreationists, such as trampers, and the conflict that may arise from such interactions, particularly in regards to the environmental philosophies that underlie hunters’ performances in the outdoors, has received little, if any, attention from tourism scholars. I wish to contribute to the discussions in the field by exploring some of these issues, in this and in the following chapters, using my experiences with New Zealand hunters as the source of my contribution.

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110 Sensualities and sensual engagements here, and throughout this dissertation, refer to experiences that involve senses other than the visual. As Urry has argued, tourists tend to engage with tourism landscapes predominantly through visual exchanges. Conversely, Marvin argues that hunters’ experiences are multi-sensory, and therefore need to be explored taking this sensuality into consideration. It is my aim to do so here. Urry, The Tourist Gaze, 2001; Marvin, “Sensing Nature,” 2005.


As I have demonstrated, hunting plays an important role as a cultural manifestation intimately, but controversially, associated with nature. The main reason for the controversy surrounding it is the fact that there is killing involved in a leisure activity, which brings into play arguments about violence, brutality, manliness and anthropocentrism, amongst others.113 Hunting has been formulated by several anthropologists as the “major catalyst in human evolutionary development.”114 Some go so far as ascribing to this practice the development of humans’ basic social skills.115 However, it is the development of this practice as part of Western modern and late modern societies’ cultures that presents us with some valuable opportunities for discussion regarding ethics and nature. Nonetheless, the formulations around hunter-gatherer societies and the meanings attached to hunting in these cultures are pivotal to the current narratives of hunting in contemporary society. In spite of this, what will be argued here is that such narratives cannot be aligned with current practices as their motivational foundations are too dissimilar.

The Cosmological Approach of Tim Ingold

Ingold offers some interesting discussions about hunter-gatherer societies. His main argument is that the hunting act cannot be considered as violent because for the hunter, as well as for their communities, the relationship between the hunter and the prey is one of profound connectedness. The prey will present her/himself to the hunter in an act of giving, building and enforcing a relationship of mutuality and co-existence that involves not only animals but also the earth as a wide-encompassing element.116 “[A] hunt that is successfully consummated with a kill is taken as proof of amicable relations between the hunter and the animal that has willingly allowed itself [sic] to be taken.”117 This larger, cosmological perspective on the act of hunting is assumed to guide the relationships between humans and nonhuman animals in these communities. On a larger scale, and without emphasising the

115 Lee and DeVore, Man the Hunter, 1986.
116 Contrary to most works on hunting, I do not use indiscriminately the feminine pronoun to refer to the prey. In fact, I wish to emphasise my discontent with the recurrent reference of hunting prey as feminine beings. As several eco-feminists have argued, hunting discourse tends to sexualise the hunting act, and the prey is commonly referred, or compared, to a woman being (sexually) ‘possessed’ by the (male) hunter. Also, I do not agree with the use of the third-person neuter pronoun to refer to nonhuman animals in general, or to hunting preys, as this term implies a lack of agency, or the subjugation of the nonhuman animal to the status of a mere ‘thing’. Collard and Contrucci, Rape of the Wild, 1988; Luke, “Violent Love,” 1998; Kalof, Fitzgerald and Baralt, “Animals, Women, and Weapons,” 2004.
117 Ingold, “From Trust to Domination,” 1994, 12.
agency of nonhuman animals as Ingold does, also Bird-David discusses the giving nature of
hunter-gatherers’ understanding of the systemic role of the natural environment in their lives.
According to her, Nature is perceived as an ever-providing parent, a ‘giving environment’
that will present the food (hunted nonhuman animal) for the community, whose members
will equally share the meat in an act of generous co-existence.\footnote{Bird-David, “The Giving Environment,” 1990.}

Kerasote transposes this view to late modern societies when presenting arguments for his
hunting engagements in the United States: “Wild elk, along with all the other creatures and
plants of nature, are what the earth still provides from her initial grace. They can’t be planted
or harvested or ranched; \textit{they can only be received}. Whether the means of receiving them is a
spear, a gun, or one’s plucking fingers matters less than the state of mind moving hands to
action.”\footnote{Kerasote, \textit{Bloodties}, 1993, 229, [Emphasis added].} It is this attempt to bring a unique cosmological interpretation of the ecosystem to
contemporary society that reveals an interesting approach to modern hunting. Posewitz, a
hunter, biologist, and self-acclaimed conservationist, in his book about the ethics of hunting,
also borrows from indigenous discourse and refers to game as a gift given by the Earth to
the hunter. In a passage of his book \textit{Beyond Fair Chase} he tells a story about a young hunter
who chose not to shoot an elk, despite the clear opportunity, because of the emotions they
exchanged through their eyes, but that years later, on the same slope, took a good bull. The
moral message, Posewitz states, is that:

\begin{quote}
[a]s with all game, [the bull] was a gift the land gave the hunter, and it is possible there
was a connection between the elk passed by years earlier and the elk taken later. The
gift of the harvested bull was deeply appreciated. However, the hunters had already
been given the highest satisfaction from the snowy thicket on that other November
afternoon. It was a magic moment when a young hunter and a mountain looked long
into each other’s eyes – and they became one.\footnote{Posewitz, \textit{Beyond Fair Chase}, 1994, 5.}
\end{quote}

The difficulties with Ingold’s arguments of the ‘willingness to be hunted’, and their
transposition to modern and late modern society are several. The most discussed one, and
the focus of most of his critics, is that the actual act of killing cannot be interpreted as non-
violent if one understands the animal who has been killed as an individual.\footnote{Fausto, “Feasting on People,” 2007.} Ingold argues
that the hunter respects and ‘knows’ his prey as much as one gets to know a friend. This
analysis, however, does not aid in the understanding of hunter-gatherers’ cosmological
relationships with the prey because, as noted above, the involvement with the animal goes beyond the hunt, involving the whole ecological system as well as religious thinking and involvement. On the contrary, Ingold’s argument seems rather to serve contemporary hunters, giving them a point of departure from where they may start reasoning in favour of hunting, as one can see from Posewitz’s accounts above. Again, the problem with the ‘friend’ metaphor is that it does not take into account that the kill is inflicted on one individual animal whereas the ‘knowing the prey’ is directed at a species. The experienced hunter learns the main patterns of behaviour of the species he is pursuing; how the herd generally moves, where they usually feed, the times of the day they are more or less active, but he tends not to engage with the individual animal. Therefore, arguing that the hunter knows his prey as much as he knows an individual human being is far from an accurate representation of the human/nonhuman animal relationship during contemporary hunting practices.

Thus, critiques of Ingold’s account of hunter-gatherer communities, and the subsequent use of his argument in support of hunting, stem from the fact that this perspective subordinates the individual animal to a larger category, that of the species, and therefore rejects the idea that individual animals have rights. It is the creation of this category, ‘animal’, that groups nonhuman species generally and disregards them individually, that has allowed for the use of such arguments by modern hunters, or as Fudge comments, “for the simultaneous existence of bear baiting and the emergent ethics of fellow-feeling with [nonhuman] animals.” As Knight proposes, focusing on the population instead of on the individual animal presents hunters, and some wildlife managers, with arguments that try to neutralize “the moral objections levelled by animal welfarists at both recreational hunting and the use of culling in wildlife management and conservation.” Most importantly, the metaphor produces a dualism that is contradictory to the cosmological understanding of the hunt by hunter-gatherer communities proposed by Ingold. If hunters know or engage with the prey as species and with humans as individuals, then there is a clear divide and crucial difference between the two relationships.

Thus, it seems that Ingold’s perspective on the hunt in hunter-gatherer societies does not present clear benefits to the discussion around contemporary hunting, only adding confusion

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124 Knight, Animals in Person, 2005, 4.
to the understanding of the ethical and philosophical issues that are involved in today’s practices. The cosmological involvement of these earlier societies with the hunt cannot be aligned with contemporary engagements in hunting. Nonetheless, understanding where the limitations of this rhetoric lie does in fact contribute to the conversation about the ethical and philosophical underpinnings of today’s hunting practices as I will discuss below.

**Deep Ecology and Hunting**

The question of hunting, in relation to the deep ecology movement, may be raised by the third principle when it is declared that “humans have no right to reduce this richness [of life forms] and diversity except to satisfy *vital* needs.” Several animal rights activists have used this principle to promote campaigns against recreational hunting, arguing that this form of ‘sport’ benefits only futile ego and anthropocentric needs. Moreover, the idea of nonhuman animals having value *per se*, that is, intrinsic, non-instrumental value, does also contribute to the argumentation against recreational hunting. In fact, animal rights advocates consider hunting the least acceptable form of wildlife use. However, although the deep ecology movement has aided in the promotion of animal rights ideals, it is not clear from their principles and main philosophical positions what are the moral flaws regarding hunting as a cultural practice (even if recreational). Indeed, Devall and Sessions, in their *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered*, one of the most influential books on deep ecology and where the eight principles were first promoted, state that hunting, along with other nature-based activities, can help encourage self-realization – one of the main aims of deep ecology philosophy – through self-maturity. Furthermore, if hunters advocate that they are in fact doing pest control through their hunting, they would equally be preserving nature’s otherwise threatened richness and diversity. As a consequence, conservationists with clear anthropocentric ideals and preservationists who proclaim ecocentric positions can easily use deep ecology as a philosophical basis from which to align their arguments pro-hunting. Again, the individuality of nonhuman animals is ignored in the basic principles of deep ecology, and the moral and ethical questions involving the act of killing remain untouched by this eco-philosophical movement.

Peter Singer, although clearly in agreement with deep ecology’s ecocentric perspective, finds yet another problem with the basic principles of deep ecology. Singer is concerned that deep

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ecology has failed to acknowledge animal suffering as one of the key components of nonhuman animal use and abuse. As Cobb points out, “to overcome anthropocentrism is precisely to recognize that other creatures also have their points of view, which are just as valid as ours, that their suffering is just as real as ours.” Therefore, as Katz has argued, it does seem that Naess’ ecosophy or deep ecology is still rooted in a human-centred worldview, as nonhuman animals are not dealt with on an individual basis.

The use of principles of deep ecology to discuss ethical issues involved in the hunting performance thus seems limited as the embodied encounter cannot be thoroughly analysed if one does not consider or understand the nonhuman animal as an individual with whom the hunter may exchange intense and extremely sensual moments. A relationship is built between hunter and prey, even if the quarry is conceived of initially only as a member of a community without an individual ‘face’. Although ephemeral, the encounter carries with it meanings of profound connectedness. Deep ecology’s disregard for this individuality hinders the examination of this embodied performance.

Ecofeminists’ Approach to Hunting

An important discussion that is brought about by ecofeminists in relation to contemporary hunting is one of sexual representations and the symbolic affinity between hunting with sex, and women with nonhuman animals. According to some ecofeminist authors, hunting perpetuates the idea of masculine dominance over all Others, and therefore often the analogy with sex in hunting discourse demonstrates the symbolic meanings attached to the practice. Masculinity, dominance and power are repeatedly invoked in these discourses which, once again, would justify a special relationship existing between women and nonhuman animals – especially the ones, that is, the nonhuman animals, involved in the hunting act.

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Included in the sexual analogy between hunting and sex is an even more powerful argument of domination; the idea of rape immersed in hunting narratives. The significance of this idea had previously been extrapolated to other environmental issues, as in Andrée Collard and Joyce Contrucci’s 1989 *Rape of the Wild*, and Carol Adams’ *The Sexual Politics of Meat*. Again, the questions of power, violence and control are raised as being related to current masculine social dominance. Hence, the major issue in all of these presentations of ecofeminist ethics relates to power relations and male domination over all other living forms.

Although extremely powerful and significant to discussions around both the moral adequacy of hunting and the ethical issues related to the practice, what the ecofeminist position fails to account for is the significance of the hunting practice as a cultural ritual that, at some point, is intended to reunite the human animal with the environment in which it belongs. As I will argue below, some hunters do engage in a relationship with the ‘natural world’ that ecofeminists claim is not available to them. Thus the essentialist position taken by most ecofeminists in regards to this matter is not adequate to account for some of the human/nonhuman animal sensual exchanges that may occur during the hunting performance. Even the less essentialist social eco-feminists do not accept hunting practices in general, as they are said to involve a culturally-developed form of dominance that is not sensitive to the nonhuman animal’s individuality. Although this is, again, a powerful argument, social eco-feminists also disregard the embodied and sensual significance of the practice for hunters who, somehow, engage with their prey and hope to establish, through their performances as hunters, a deeper connection with the natural environment and its constitutive beings. These performances can be interpreted as performances of masculinity and dominance; but such a position does not weaken the importance of a better understanding of the significance of embodiment and sensuality of the hunting experience to hunters.

Clearly then, in analysing the ethical issues surrounding nonhuman animals’ ‘use’ in recreation, and more specifically in the hunting performance, it becomes apparent that it is not easy to formulate such positions within classical ethical approaches. Taking Ingold’s discussion about the non-violent act of killing in the hunt as the first example, it is clear how

a dichotomous consequentialist versus non-consequentialist approach is inappropriate for these ethical problems. Following Ingold’s argumentation, it is obvious that he does not express a utilitarian perspective towards the practice of hunting. According to Ingold, the hunter-gatherer is taking the life of a nonhuman animal who has almost sacredly given her/himself to the hunter, in an act of reciprocity and for the better (natural) functioning of the community. The community, in this case, involves not only the human society but the entire ecosystem in which humans live. Therefore, even though he does not fully acknowledge it, Ingold’s comprehension of, and engagement with, Gaia implies a philosophical position that cannot be understood or analysed outside of such an engagement. Hence, it would be simplistic to assume that the fact that Ingold obviously does not embrace a utilitarian perspective to hunting would necessarily make his position a non-consequentialist one. Indeed, although clearly not utilitarian, one could identify some form of consequentialist discourse, as the killing involved in hunting would, in fact, have a worthy consequence – which in this case would be perpetuating the natural, animal cycle of hunter and prey. However, as discussed above, Ingold does not deal with the killing in hunting as harming the individual animal. There is no consideration for the individual, so, for him, there is no real harm involved. As a result, his position would not be consistent with the logic of a consequentialist ethics.

Following the same line of reasoning, one could try to classify Ingold’s position as a non-consequentialist or intuitionist one, as it is relatively easy to identify ordinary moral intuitions behind his statements. However, again, there are problems with this classification. Kamm’s work on non-consequentialist ethics involves an argument for ‘permissible harm’; that it is in fact acceptable to harm if for a greater good.135 However, the individuality of the nonhuman animal and the fact that there is no consideration of harm in Ingold’s perspective would once again make it impossible to fit his argument under this umbrella of non-consequentialism. Moreover, for non-consequentialists like Kamm, it would not be ethically or morally acceptable to pull the trigger to kill, but only to redirect the bullet to avoid killing others; people, for instance. More importantly, the major difficulty involved in trying to make such linkages with this dualistic approach to ethics lies in the fact that nonhuman animals, in all of these analyses, are never taken into consideration, as they are usually detached from the human and dealt with as a different category from human animals. Because these approaches

always deal with harm towards human animals, the inclusion of nonhuman animals proves to be problematic.

A consideration of the ethical issues around hunting, then, must necessarily be situated outside of both Ingold’s ideas and traditional (anthropocentric) ethical systems. Furthermore, the self-labelled ecocentric positions of ecofeminism and deep ecology prevent a deeper engagement with some of the central aspects of the hunting performance; the sensual relationships between human and nonhuman animals and the feelings of love and sorrow for the animal’s death that these may entail.

**The Hunting Performance**

Clearly, there are several aspects of hunting that could be analysed from an ethical and philosophical perspective. However, it seems that out of all these possibilities the sensual engagement with the prey and with the natural environment in which the activity takes place are the least discussed or understood by academics studying the contemporary practice of hunting. My effort will now concentrate on presenting some of these issues as they arose during, but not restricted to, my experiences with the hunting community on Stewart Island, in the rewarding and well-known White-tailed deer hunting areas in Rakiura National Park.

**Sublime, Identity and the Senses: Stories of a Complex Hunting Experience**

It is evident from the discussion above that hunting in New Zealand has quite a distinct ‘personality’, for it is still strongly connected with the country’s settler identity. This identity influences, and is influenced by, the performance of hunters in the outdoors and it is fundamental to the narratives of their experiences. Several hunters will refer constantly to the idea of nature’s challenge and that this challenge is one of the main motivations for their engagement with hunting. It is important to note here that the challenge is not related only to the shooting skills or the actual hunting. For these men the challenge refers to something more important, with a deeper meaning. This meaning emerges from the opportunity to feel

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136 My analysis of the hunting performance differs in significant ways from Marvin’s analysis of fox hunting performance. Marvin explores performative elements of the hunt, its ‘staging’, the traditions and rituals, and the significance of those elements to the experience of all of those involved, including non-hunters. Deer hunting on Stewart Island, on the other hand, involves, amongst other things, moments of solitude, where there is no ‘stage’ or spectators. There is not a sense of a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ performance, as Marvin points out as being the case in the fox hunting context. Performance here is the experience of the practice. Marvin, “A Passionate Pursuit,” 2003.
and act as their predecessors did, those who lived through, and participated in, the era when the harshness of the New Zealand physical (natural) environment was firstly tamed.

I think the bottom line is: it’s an adventure, it’s going back to basics, to where the settlers were. You’re out there in the outdoors and it can be dangerous, so there’s an element of danger and risk involved with hunting [...] It’s also the challenge of trying to get an animal ‘cos it’s their home, so they know it a lot better than we do and they’ve got much better senses than we have, instincts and sense of smell, and their eyesight might be better too in some cases. So, it’s the whole challenge of you against the animal, you against the elements! because you don’t know what the weather’s gonna do when you’re out there and that’s the big thing that gets you hunting. (Patrick)\textsuperscript{137}

My argument is that a central aspect of this challenge relates to being immersed within a sublime environment. Marvin has made a similar claim when discussing fox hunting in England. For him, the English countryside is not a mere backdrop for the hunting experience, but is essential for it to happen and for it to be meaningful:

The landscapes of the countryside are not merely a stage or a setting for the event but rather they are essentially constitutive of foxhunting. They demand a knowledge and awareness of them and an immersion into them for hunting to take place and to be successful. (...) For all participants, both human and animal, there is an intense, immediate and visceral engagement with the natural world during hunting.\textsuperscript{138}

Similarly, but in important ways different, the sublime landscape of Stewart Island is intrinsic to the creation of the hunting space, and is an essential part of the hunting performance.\textsuperscript{139} In fact, the creation of the hunting space and the hunting performances are inextricably linked

\textsuperscript{137} Note that the names used throughout this paper are not the names of the actual hunters whom I met and talked to, for obvious ethical reasons. Nonetheless, in an attempt to ensure that these people are seen and understood by readers as ordinary individuals, who have names and a history, I have opted to use pseudonyms, and not numbers or single letters (i.e. ‘Participant 1’ or ‘C.F.’) to identify the protagonists of this project.


\textsuperscript{139} It is not relevant for my argument here to discuss in which aspects the sublime landscape of Stewart Island is different to the English countryside of the fox hunting performance. Suffice to say that the experiences of Nature that these environments provide are obviously different, the sublime inciting the experience of the extra-ordinary, whereas the countryside reverberating the ordinary. Both practices, however, share a connection with place and a production of space that allow sensual experiences to happen between hunters, nonhuman animals and other elements of the natural world.
to each other, as “space is [...] a doing, that [...] does not pre-exist its doing, and its doing is the articulation of relational performances.” More than that, “space is practised, a matrix of play, dynamic and iterative, its forms and shapes produced through the citational performance of self-other relations.”

As discussed previously, the modern and late modern sublime landscape has been defined as “beautiful but potentially dangerous: sanctified, visited, enjoyed, photographed, then left; a vision to inspire.” Thus, being absorbed in an awe-inspiring and dramatic environment certainly enhances the idea of challenge, be it physical or emotional. Several authors have classified both the New Zealand native and contemporary landscape as sublime, including Park, who argues that this environment, together with any embodied engagement with it, has helped build the country’s sense of nationhood.

Also ingrained in the sublime concept, within a New Zealand hunting context, is the idea of movement from an ordinary place to a remote setting. It is therefore not only significant but central to the hunting experience that hunters are engaged in an activity that takes place in a location that allows the production of a space where they are distanced from mundane, every-day routines and landscapes. As one of the hunters mentioned:

> you know, certainly, the fish, or, or the venison or whatever happens to be, is the, the end result, but certainly the whole package is actually getting to that end result… you know, organizing the trip, going on the trip, the boat ride out there, the company, the company on the trip.

(Marty)

141 Ibid., 248.
Moreover, Henry and Berg’s argument that “the ostensibly sublime character of the New Zealand landscape was framed through a heteromasculine gaze” helps us to understand the significance of the masculine practice of hunting as a way of trying to retain this particular physical engagement with the sublime; one that assists the maintenance of the country’s identity.144 It is obviously problematic that a country’s identity be structured around a monogendered perspective, particularly when related to practices that involve the natural environment, which is socially constructed as the feminine, oppressed Other. However, the role of the sublime characteristic of this environment in the shaping of such an identity is nonetheless significant. Nature has been overly constructed as a feminine entity in different societies throughout history. ‘Mother-Nature’, in Western societies, epitomizes the gendered construction of Nature as the provider, the care-taker. In Ingold’s account, Gaia provides and the hunter(-gatherer) accepts the ‘gift’. Ecofeminists discuss how the feminine Other, Nature, has been dominated by masculine authoritarian performances that disregard the needs of the feminine-self. Deep Ecologists call for a closer connection to Mother-nature, the sacred being who provides for all. However, the sublime landscape into which New Zealand hunters immerse themselves has very clear masculine characteristics. It is not only the performances of hunters that are full of masculine attributes, but the landscape itself is represented through masculine traits. The power, the chaos, and the awe-inspiring features that are constantly mentioned by hunters are usually attributed to men, whereas the more common features associated with Nature, such as care and provision, are typically linked to women. Therefore, sublime Nature, as constructed by New Zealand hunters on Stewart Island, is ‘one entity’ that can be seen as a reflection of contradictory performances and narratives from the very moment of its construction.

For authors who engage with the aesthetic implications of the sublime in the philosophy of Burke and Kant, contradiction is at the core of sublimity. Armstrong, for instance, argues that “sublimity, though inspiring awe or wonder, is not always thought particularly pleasing, and is a site of extreme ambivalence. The discomfort instigated by the sublime […] might be read as a tension between two somewhat conflicting and competing possibilities.”145 Hunters perform this tension in two distinct ways. First, physically, through the discomfort of being in an overwhelming environment that, at the same time, provides enjoyment:

144 Henry and Berg, “Geographers Performing Nationalism and Hetero-Masculinity,” 2006, 635.

You sit there and hope that you will see an animal, you will see a deer, but it’s also quite enjoyable as well. Obviously it won’t be raining because we wouldn’t sit there if it was raining, but in saying that you are often stood there for half an hour in a dark spot, under a tree, so you can’t be seen and the rain is pouring down. But just sitting there quite often is so nice, just sitting there, and its peaceful, the only noises you hear around you is the birds fluttering above and it’s actually quite interesting, you actually end up just sitting there just watching the birds fluttering about and doing their thing. It is really good. (Patrick)

Second, through their emotional engagement with hunting and with the sublime, the former in an exertion of power and dominance over the animal who will become prey to the hunter, and the latter in a relationship of respect and resistance to the powers the sublime possesses. It appears that both are performances of masculinity, but performances that are embodied in response to distinct ‘entities’; one that represents the feminine Other (Mother-Nature who provides the animal for the hunt) and the other that represents the masculine Other (the powerful sublime). Armstrong and also Brand have previously highlighted the gender dualism in the construction of the sublime, discussing how Burke’s theory emphasised the beautiful as feminine and the sublime as masculine.\(^\text{146}\) However, because their focus is on aesthetic and artistic representations of the sublime, these authors do not challenge the fact that Nature has been constructed as feminine, while at the same time, the sublime, which is often a space within Nature, may be constructed as masculine. What I propose here is a different way of understanding the engagements within a sublime space of a nature-based pursuit, one that comprehends the constructions of Nature as multi-gendered, adaptable to the multiple experiences one can shape and produce in that environment. It is this latter perspective that provides better explanations for the hunting performances and narratives that I was able to engage in during this study.

Few studies in the leisure and tourism realms have discussed the gendering aspects of the sublime. In fact, the sublime does not feature in many discussions in these fields, despite its ‘re-emergence’ in philosophical debates over the last 20 years. In this sense, Bell and Lyall provide an important contribution, discussing how the New Zealand sublime landscape (tourism/leisure) experience has moved from one of pure aesthetic contemplation to one of active engagement, but which remains an experience that is nonetheless ephemeral. They call the latter the ‘accelerated sublime’. These authors have not, however, dealt with the gendering aspects of Nature or the sublime in such experiences.

In engaging with issues of gender as they are performed through Nature, my interpretation of the hunting experience in the sublime landscape differs in important ways from the tourists’ fleeting engagement in an ‘accelerated sublime’ proposed by Bell and Lyall. Such an interpretation had been evolving throughout the course of this project, but had a particular impulse after my engagement in the Annual Conference of the Sociological Association of Aotearoa New Zealand where I presented two papers discussing the sublime in New Zealand tourism practices and, more particularly, in the masculine performances of hunters on Stewart Island. In this forum I had the opportunity to be chaired by Bell, who made important comments about the way I was presenting my thinking, which triggered further developments and refinements. Bell and Lyall in their book argued that the sublime is excessively explored by tourists to destinations such as New Zealand, in a ‘post-modern’, accelerated way. This historically and culturally situated Eurocentric approach to the construction and appreciation of landscape and nature, namely the sublime approach, has undeniably persisted in contemporary representations of New Zealand, particularly those images associated with tourism and recreation. The argument of this presentation was that a restricted version of the sublime aesthetic persists in tourism and recreation marketing imagery, specifically that of primitivism, which best serves the purposes of product marketing. But more importantly, in the second paper I went a step further to argue that experiencing a recreational space as a sublime landscape may not necessarily be the result

149 The tourists’ engagement, or more specifically the trampers’ engagement with Nature in a commodified, ‘accelerated sublime’ way is one topic of discussion in my next chapter.
150 A list of the works I presented and published during the 42 months of this project can be found in the Preface.
only of product marketing but may be so strongly acculturated that it has become associated with performing masculinity, in this case the activity of recreational hunting.

Hunters seeking White-tailed deer on Stewart Island described the environment within which they were hunting in terms that were consistent with the primitivist component of the sublime aesthetic. Engagement with this aspect of the sublime was reported to be as important, and sometimes more important, than achieving a kill. What I argue here, the product of the refinements derived from my experience in this academic forum, is that although it is very clear that hunters are in fact performing masculinity, as McLeod has argued in her thesis about New Zealand duck hunters and other (ecofeminist) authors also have previously contended, the rhetoric of domination and mastery over sublime Nature is not present in hunters’ narratives and performances. When dealing with elements of the natural environment other than nonhuman animals, hunters’ performances shift from one of mastery to one of resistance; a sort of resistance that is not intended to separate the hunter from the environment but, on the contrary, endures the ‘elements’ while the hunter is still immersed in, and sensually feeling, them. Resistance here does not involve avoidance but rather is about the challenging of oneself; it involves outsmarting the power and strength of Nature, feeling content for being able to live and survive in the ‘natural’ as one should ‘naturally’ be able to, portraying a Romanticised experience of ‘going back to Nature’. Ben explains how he feels about the challenge of, and his respect for, the sublime landscape of Stewart Island when we discussed the experience of being in the Stewart Island bush:

well for me, I think, it was always a bit of a challenge, it always has been, a challenge in just getting things right, I mean, [...], so you respect the bush, and you wanna get that aspect of it right. (Ben)

The gendering of the sublime space creates an overlap, or a multi-gendered status for the natural environment. In this sense, the sublime provides a masculine space within the commonly nurturing (feminine) one provided by Nature that makes possible the

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151 Although the sublime is usually described as masculine in discussions of aesthetics, Zylinska proposes a 'feminine sublime' that “conceptualise[s] aesthetics beyond grandeur and might [and that] search[es] for wonder in the most minuscule spaces of the quotidian.” Her ‘feminine sublime’ wishes to move beyond pure aesthetical considerations and include ethical discussions in the analysis of the sublime: “[i]t is this possibility of an encounter with the alterity of the other, which for a moment suspends Burke’s fear of nothingness and death, that gives the feminine sublime an ethical character.” Such an exploration is not the intention of my contribution here; therefore, although I acknowledge the works of feminists who explore the feminine possibilities of the sublime, I argue that the experiences of hunters in the New Zealand sublime landscape is performed through a masculine perspective of the sublime. Zylinska, On Spiders, Cyborgs, and Being Scared, 2001, 5.
performance of masculinity. Here, performing masculinity is not so much related to mastering the feminine Other, or Nature, but now involves cautiously abiding by the codes of the dominant Other, the masculine sublime. Although the location, the Stewart Island bush, is the same, the sublime space, which has helped in the construction of a contemporary (overtly masculine) New Zealand identity, is distinct from the ‘Nature as provider’ present in hunter’s discourse, the nurturer who offers the nonhuman animal to be hunted.152 The nonhuman animal is presented to the hunter in the sublime landscape, nonetheless, but in the narrative is somehow detached from it. Therefore, a constant contradiction will be almost certainly present in the narratives and performances of the hunting experience.

Another important difference between the hunters’ experience and Bell and Lyall’s ephemeral tourist engagement is that for the hunters it does not seem that the sublime is experienced, enjoyed and then discarded, as is the case with the tourist. Bell, in her single-authored book, Inventing New Zealand, published before The Accelerated Sublime, defines the sublime New Zealand landscape as short-lived: “visited, enjoyed, photographed, then left.”153 In The Accelerated Sublime, with Lyall, such a transitory experience is further explored and analysed through the engagement of tourists who visit the country and bring with them a commodified idea of Nature and natural landscapes: Nature as a product for consumption, an argument used also by Urry in his Tourist Gaze.154 In contrast, I argue that full immersion, for longer periods of time, is an essential part of the hunting experience. Hunters stay in the same location usually for at least a week, truly in an effort to escape from civilization and embed themselves in the wild, sublime environment of Stewart Island. From the results of the quantitative study undertaken during the early stages of my PhD journey, it became clear that the vast majority of hunters stay at least six days camped on the island.155 Research conducted by the New Zealand Deerstalkers’ Association from the years 2002 to 2006 showed that hunters’ average length of stay on the island is 7.5 days.156 My personal experience with hunters has shown the same pattern. It is, therefore, an experience that goes beyond the ‘accelerated sublime’ that Bell and Lyall refer to; the sublime is not only central to

153 Bell, Inventing New Zealand, 1996, 29.
the hunting experience but also the engagement needs to be enduring to provide the feelings of identity that hunters are looking for.

Um, so what do I like the most? Well, I haven’t shot a deer.... it would have to be the experience of nature I suppose. The experience of nature. [...] I don’t know but just getting away from it all. There is no work, there is no cell phone, there is no nothing and you are in the middle of nowhere and you are just spending 7 or 8 days, or however long it is, on the island and it’s just us and nature basically, and it’s pretty good. (Tim)

Posewitz presents a similar account:

You need to be familiar with the field, the woods, the marsh, the forest, or the mountains where you hunt. If you work hard and long at this aspect of hunting, you can become a part of the place you hunt. You will sense when you start to belong to the country. Go afield often enough and stay out long enough and it will happen. Little by little you will become less of an intruder. More animals will seem to show themselves to you. You are no longer a stranger in their world; you have become part of it. Many people hunt for a lifetime without learning this, and they miss the most rewarding part of being a hunter.157

It is interesting to note here that Posewitz clearly uses a similar perspective to that of Ingold’s cosmological approach to hunting with apparent Romantic influences, when he emphasises ‘become a part’ of the place where one hunts. Such a narrative is often found in hunters’ discourse. But more importantly here is the fact that a ‘true’, ‘ethical hunter’, as Posewitz phrases it, needs to spend time in the wild landscape to become part of it, and only then may achieve the supreme status of an ethical predator, operating as a proper part of the bigger cosmos.

157 Posewitz, Beyond Fair Chase, 1994, 23 [Emphasis in original].
I wish to emphasise that I do not dispute the (eco-feminist) claim that the ‘possession’ of the nonhuman animal, the hunting and the kill, are performances of extreme masculinity and of power relations.\textsuperscript{158} The relationship with the prey and the challenge involved in this experience is of a different sphere than the one faced and engaged in with the sublime natural environment. They are not mutually exclusive in the case of hunters on Stewart Island. One of the reasons for this may be the fact that the sublime landscape does not need to involve a nonhuman animal presence. In fact, it rarely does. Portrayals of the sublime tend not to depict animals; they are usually devoid of animal presence, be it human or other animals. The emphasis is on the intangible, the metaphysical powers that Nature exerts upon us. It is possible, then, for hunters to show this greater respect and reverence for the powerful sublime, not wishing to tame or dominate it, but to bravely – and there needs to be an emphasis on the bravery of ‘men’ – survive it. Tim briefly explains some of these sensations:

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An important difference from other recreationists, such as trampers, either locals or foreigners, is that hunters, when ‘out and about’, are roaming, paying close attention to nonhuman animal signs, be they of prey or not, with the aim of either finding an animal or simply exploring the landscape in order to know it better.

\begin{center}
\textbf{When you’re hunting you spend a lot of time walking around in the bush covering a lot of country and you’re looking for animals, so you}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{158} This is true also for women hunters. See, for an example, Fitzgerald, “The Emergence of the Figure of Woman-the-Hunter,” 2005.
look for all sorts of things, really! and part of the thrill of Stewart Island is seeing the bird life more than anything, really, like the kiwis. (Peter)

There is not a search for a triumph over sublime Nature, like the mountaineer who wishes to ‘conquer’ the top of a mountain. There is enjoyment and a sense of satisfaction and plenitude even when the weather closes, the hunter needs to camp in the open, or retreat to the hut. The adventure, the immersion, and more importantly, hunting, in the full meaning of the term, has taken place and this matters as much, or even more, than the final kill.

It is relevant to highlight also Patrick’s earlier reference to the senses as part of the experience. As Marvin has argued, statements like this stress the embodiment of the hunting act, and how this practice is a fully multi-sensory and multi-sensual one “that depends on an immersion into a multi-sensory and multi-sensual world.”159 Through the act of ‘doing’, the hunter can ‘dialogue’ with nature in a way that a distant gaze would not allow. As Crouch

points out, “‘doing’ can be given the power to figure, and to refigure nature.”\textsuperscript{160} Therefore, the embodied nature of the engagement with the sublime landscape, this total immersion in it, provides hunters with a sensual experience that not only perpetuates their collective identity but also inscribes, in a profoundly corporeal sense, the meanings attached to Nature and what these meanings represent for this collective identity.

That’s what I actually do enjoy about hunting on Stewart Island because I was actually having to be patient and taking my time, especially walking. You can’t just flog along, you have got to be looking around you and all your senses are working, your eyes and your ears and you have also got to watch where you are walking because you want to be careful not to stand on a twig, that’s going to go crack or a particular branch because there is lots of fallen trees and logs that are rotten and they will have moss covering them and it looks like you can go and stand on them but as soon as you stand on that it will just crush them. So you have got to be very careful about how you walk and even though you are walking slowly it’s sort of quite physical because you are actually balancing on one foot and slowly moving and slowly putting one foot down. So it is actually, it’s not like a gentle little walk. And you are going up hills and down hills and all these odd places, so it can be pretty tough. But it’s peaceful and you actually learn your patience again especially when you take your time and every now and then you take five steps and stop and just wait and look around and listen and then you take another five steps and wait. If you think you are in a good spot, you just stop and if you see a deer sign you might decide, okay they have come through here, so you might stop there and wait several hours to see if any come through. (Tim)

\textsuperscript{160} Crouch, “Spacing, Performing and Becoming,” 2003, 28.
Another important narrative found in hunters’ discourses, one that emphasizes the importance of this bodily immersion within sublime Nature, is the narrative of ‘being out there’, ‘away from it all’. Again, this enactment of the escape into the wild landscape where you can have solitude but, at the same time, excitement and adventure, accentuates the sublime ideal and the settler character that is so much connected to the land, in its most physical form. As Phillips argues, “[l]earning to rough it became central to the male experience in the colonies. The ability to endure these physical hardships and to cope successfully without domestic comforts became the mark of the adapted colonial male.”

Enduring the ‘physical hardships’ not only connects hunters to the land but it does so in a manner that reminds them of the ‘frontier’, a Romantic ideal of escape and nostalgia. The passages below, extracts from conversations with hunters I met, highlight some of these issues:

I can go hunting for a weekend not shooting anything and explore the surroundings and have a great time and still enjoy myself, but basically all I’ve done is tramp. But I’ve been looking for animals and all I’ve done is carried a rifle and never used it so it’s sort of tramping isn’t it? There is a similarity whereas I’m sort of not going just from one point to another to say I’ve done it. I’m just wandering around aimlessly looking for an animal, really. (Patrick)

I enjoy getting out in the bush, you get a couple of hours solitude, down there it’s beautiful as you know, just having a wee look around, take the rifle, if I get to shoot a deer it’s a bonus. (Ben)

Again, these quotes also emphasise the idea of escape as an important facet of hunters’ engagement in the activity and of the fulfilment of their experience.

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So I suppose the beauty of Stewart Island is that you’re just totally away from everything, it’s the remoteness, there’s nothing to do and see, just enjoy the landscape and the activities there. [...] I think my time in the bush is better [than the trampers'] because I am actually sitting there just sucking it in and enjoying the sun on me and so I am not saying, one is right and one is wrong but... (Callum)

Another component of the performance of masculinity through landscape and prey are the rituals around the hunting experience. Hunting in New Zealand, and in particular on Stewart Island, is surrounded by an almost sacred ritual of male connectedness, not only to the land as a settler, but to fellow men who also share this settler identity. Being there, escaping from everyday life, is a sensual way of engaging with this identity in a manner that creates meanings that certainly go beyond the hunting act and the enactment of power and dominance often referred to in academic literature. My argument is that it is not only necessary to go hunting as a sport practice; it is crucial that the performance takes place in an environment that provides the physical sense of being connected to a sublime and supposedly untamed landscape.

Well in some ways, yeah, because you are going back and you are fending it for yourself. You know, you have got a stove and all that and you are out in the bush and you are tenting. Well, you have got to go out and provide your own food and so you do everything there yourself, you have got to make sure you are warm, you have got all your tents, you know, your stuff like that, you have got to sort of look after yourself. So in some ways you are back to that and then you are up early in the morning. You are normally in bed by 7 or 8 at night because it’s too bloody dark and there is nothing else to do. Yeah well it is, I suppose going back a bit. Yeah, you are able to prove to yourself that you can look after yourself, a certain amount of self-confidence comes out of all that. (David)
This ritualistic enactment is similar to most hunting parties on the island. Whitetail traces can be seen, and movement often occurs, in the first light of day or the later hours of the afternoon.\footnote{Banwell, \textit{The Rusa, the Sambar and the Whitetail}, 2006.} No matter how late the previous night has been, hunters will wake up with sunrise and get ready for the day. The rifles will be carefully maintained, the maps will be analysed and projects for the day will be discussed with fellow hunters. Typically, one or two from the group will go stalking while the others will enjoy their time involved in other activities. In the particular case of Stewart Island, some will go fishing, some will go diving and some will just explore the surroundings. The camp will be empty from early in the morning. In the first hours of the afternoon the group will gather again and after exchanging their experiences of the day the groups will again part and this time different hunters will go pursuing the White-tailed deer. When the day turns into night, the group congregates again at camp anxiously waiting for the last hunter. Successful or not, the hunt will be described in detail over drinks until late in the night. If successful, the group celebrates the achievement with a big feast. Each individual will have a task assigned; some will skin the deer, some will cook it, some will take care of storing the meat and all will join in the celebration.
The rituals of the hunting trip highlight the importance given to the senses and the physical contact with the wild landscape. Although not always a successful hunt with an animal being shot, the entire experience in the remote, ‘untamed’ landscape is what matters for these hunters:

it’s really hard to describe how important it is, or how highly you rate it, but I was just thinking this morning, for example, if somebody offered me ten days on the Mediterranean in a cruise, with airfares over there it might cost easily 20, 25 thousand dollars; another guy came for the same time and said here’s your ten days down on Stewart Island and it will cost 750 dollars, I’ll go to Stewart Island. Well, I just say that because that’s how highly I would rate a 10 day spell down there on, say, Port Adventure. (Ben)

As Patrick’s quote above indicates, the hunters may go for days without shooting anything but they will still be highly satisfied with their experience. In fact, more often than not that will be the case. Hunting White-tailed deer requires highly developed hunting skills and for many hunters on Stewart Island and elsewhere in the country, being able effectively to shoot one is a feat. Nonetheless, the hunting experience occurs, because it is more than the hunt; it is the involvement and engagement with the environment that takes place interdependently, as the quote below shows us.

Well, certainly with deer hunting it is the experience of being there, as much as seeing an animal or getting one or anything. It’s just being there really.

Yeah, just being out amongst the bush and that. We quite often, 90% of the time, we come back without anything but it still doesn’t stop us. You know, climbing up a mountain and stuff like that. Just being out and away from everything. (Garth and Ben in a conversation)
Within this relationship with the wild, sublime environment there is a more immediate relationship with the nonhuman animal. Even though the encounters with the prey are less frequent, the power they exert upon the hunter is immense. In fact, one could say that this is what they are mostly anxious about and it is certainly the climax of the experience. I have argued that the immersion in the sublime environment is as important as the actual hunt in the hunting experience. The animal and the chase is an essential part of that magnificence. The physical, multi-sensorial encounter with the prey is, therefore, undoubtedly the culmination of that engagement.

This relationship with the animal in contemporary New Zealand hunting cannot be mistaken for, or compared with, the cosmological connections that typify hunter-gatherers’ performances. Although contemporary hunters still refer to an idea of ‘going back to basics’, to being self-sufficient in nature, and even make reference to hunter-gatherer societies, the concept of an unitary cosmos where humans are just another living form does not guide today’s hunting practices. A good example of such failure in the use of the cosmological approach to contemporary forms of hunting can be drawn from Posewitz’s work. In order for the cosmological discourse to ‘work’ and ‘make sense’ in modern modes of living and hunting, Posewitz ‘needs’ to combine this approach to modern management of game and conservation land, clearly influenced by Deep Ecology’s philosophy. Not only does he justify the hunting right as the gift from the land, but also says that the hunted animal “has come to you […] through the efforts of people who protected your opportunity to hunt, through conservation programs that restored wildlife to a depleted land, […]and] through wildlife management programs that ensure wildlife harvest is balanced with wildlife production.”

The natural equilibrium envisioned by Deep Ecologists and the cosmological gift from Mother-Nature are used, jointly, to produce an ‘ethical’ narrative for hunting:

There is a lot to think about and be thankful for. It is well to think of these things when you anticipate hunting, now and then when you are hunting, and always when you claim an animals that is, in so many ways, a precious gift. It is a gift that comes to you from ancestral hunters in the caves of our origins, from native hunters of all lands, from those who won our independence from kings, from our nation’s first conservationists, and from all those who work to protect wild places and the wildlife that lives there. Most of all, it is a gift that comes from the land. Appreciate it.

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These inconsistencies notwithstanding, the relationship with the prey must not be interpreted as being of any less significance. Contemporary hunters do engage with the animal in a powerful manner and I argue here, following Marvin’s work, that the sensuality of the experience within nature and the sublime landscape helps to shape this engagement.\footnote{Marvin, “Sensing Nature,” 2005.} Hunters often refer to deer as beautiful or majestic, and there is a true admiration for the animal’s beauty, intelligence and physical abilities, as the quote below, from Marty, exemplifies.

As I say the deer are beautiful deer, the Whitetail down on Stewart Island they’re just magnificent, they’re beautiful to watch, they’re such a cool animal… Red deer, you get big stags, I mean, they’re just huge animals, Wapiti, in Fiordland, they’re, once again, they’re huge, big huge animals, nice to watch, maybe the odd moose there, who knows? But then you get the sika up on the North Island, which, once again, are beautiful animals. (Marty)

This admiration seems contradictory to the act of killing. However, as Marty points out later in the conversation, such admiration is one part of the performance and, if the animal is properly sighted, it needs to happen.

no, yeah, I mean, that’s certainly a bit of a downward, but that’s part of it though, you know… I mean, everything has sort of a bad side, I suppose… yeah, there is a little bit of sadness… you soon get over that, I suppose… [...] I mean, it’s certainly not the nicest thing to do but… it’s, it’s the thrill of the hunt. Ask any hunter and I’m pretty sure they’ll say that the actual… once they go out to the animal they’re probably with… a bit of sadness, but… at the end of the day it’s… yeah, I mean, that’s part of it… but not a big part of it, you know. (Marty)
Marty’s statement encapsulates well the conclusions reached by More, in 1973, when studying the attitudes of hunters in Massachusetts, United States:

For most hunters, the pleasure of sport hunting stems not from anything inherently rewarding about the death of an animal, but rather from the companionship of peers, the aesthetics of nature, and the application of their own skills in reaching the goal. The actual kill is an integral part of hunting because it provides the hunter with information that he has succeeded in solving the problem.\(^{166}\)

Ortega y Gasset once asserted: “one does not hunt in order to kill; on the contrary, one kills in order to have hunted.”\(^{167}\) My argument here, however, is that this analysis is not enough to explain hunting as examined in this study. Contemporary New Zealand hunters need not kill in order to have hunted. The kill is just an episode within the hunting experience. Ben, for instance, has never shot a deer. He has been going to Stewart Island to hunt for five years but has never succeeded in shooting a Whitetail. Nevertheless, he does not consider that his experiences have been diminished by this fact. Usually, he spends between eight to ten days


\(^{167}\) Ortega y Gasset, Meditations on Hunting, 1995, 105.
on the island and goes hunting on every single day of his stay. According to Ben, just sitting alone in the middle of the bush, in a place where one can be fooled into thinking that no one else has ever been before, is what he looks forward to most. Peter, who is a ‘keen hunter’, as New Zealanders would say, has such an admiration for White-tailed deer that he has refrained from going to Stewart Island on a regular basis. He explains:

> after I’ve shot I think what an awful thing to do, it’s such a beautiful deer and that’s probably why I won’t go back to Stewart Island for a while, just to, you know… I’ve shot quite a few of them in there now. Yeah, they’re probably one of my favourite animals. (Peter)

The killing is an aspect of the hunt that is almost dismissed from these hunters’ accounts. It is such an ephemeral event that it vanishes with the pleasure of the achievement. The feeling of accomplishment also dispels the sentiment of sorrow for the death of such a magnificent creature. Serpell suggests that it is the “tendency for the hunter to project himself into the head of his prey [that] leads him to empathize with the prey and [...] feel guilty for killing the prey.”\(^{168}\) The sorrow reflects the admiration for the animals and, most importantly, the performance shared with them as the passages below reflect:

> If I stop to watch and admire the deer, I just can’t shoot it. So [when I go hunting] I have to see it and immediately shoot it, otherwise I can’t. (Mick)

> I’ve shot quite a few Whitetail and I always feel like a bit of a mean bastard really ‘cos they’re such a beautiful animal, even though I enjoy hunting them. (Patrick)

In this sense, the kill in the hunting performance is ephemeral: the emotions associated with sorrow and regret, typically associated with the feminine, are quickly dismissed and replaced by the dominant male position. There is a place for these feminine sentiments, though, and they are accepted, not denied. The hunter ‘confesses’ his ‘love’ for the animal who will be dominated, and sorrow for their fall. But the embodied engagement with the sublime environment and the affirmation of the (settler) identity takes over and the hunter returns to a (dual) position of resistance/dominance. The feminine then, is present only in passing, in the acceptance of the ‘gift’ from Mother-Nature, and in the mourning, albeit swift, after the death of the animal.

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Conservationism and Speciesism in Hunting

The acceptance of the death of the animal is also deeply ingrained in the conservationist discourse discussed earlier. Historically there has been a change in discourse and in the performances of hunting in New Zealand, particularly of big game. As European, self-indulgent forms of hunting became less and less compatible with the new conservationist ideals, hunting practice was legitimized through the incorporation of the nationalist discourse that linked hunting with the protection of the native New Zealand natural environment. Hunting came to be regarded as a tool for animal management. The conservationist ideal promoted by hunters and by conservation managers in New Zealand, however, presents several contradictions, some of which I have already explored. Here I wish to pursue one aspect of these contradictions in particular, which relates, again, to the embodied engagement of hunters with ‘their’ nonhuman animal prey: the discourses that hunters carry forward in relation to their role as conservationists and focusing on their treatment of different animals species. I will, therefore, not engage with the actual discussion of the validity of conservation ideals and ‘pest’ eradication programs. My aim is simply to present some of the tensions inherent in hunting practices through the different levels of attachment, and treatment, that different species of animals receive from the hunting fraternity, in a New Zealand context.

Although I am aware that such a phenomenon, one which I argue is an empirical reflection of speciesism, is not confined to the hunting practices of New Zealanders, my discussions here will focus on the cultural status of certain groups of nonhuman animals in this country, and how such status is reflected in hunting practices and discourses.

The concept of speciesism, briefly mentioned in Chapter 3, seems to predominate in the discourses of New Zealand hunters and conservation managers. However, contrary to common uses of the term in the animal studies field, speciesism here does not relate only to an attitude of bias, or a sort of racism towards animals of other species, that is, nonhumans. It is more complicated than that. Hunters not only, in some ways, see themselves as a superior species to other nonhuman animals, but they see, within the nonhuman animal kingdom, a difference in value, that is, hunting-related or non hunting-related value, between different species of nonhuman animals. Following Bekoff’s argument, this attitude involves the understanding of different species as ‘higher’ or ‘lower’ in a moral scale, where human beings are the ‘superior’ species. 169

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My argument is that in New Zealand hunting culture there are at least three-levels in a hierarchy of species within the nonhuman animal realm.\textsuperscript{170} In addition, this hierarchy is supported by conservation agencies in light of the different approaches taken by these when dealing with selected exotic species. In the first tier of this hierarchy are nonhuman animals such as rodents and mustelids. These animals are constantly referred to as invasive pests that ideally would be eradicated. There are consistent policies in place for their eradication from specific areas, although their efficacy is contested. These animals, however, do not generate any hunting interest and are treated by the majority of the population as vermin. Hunters will go only as far as setting traps to catch and kill these ‘threatening pests’.

On a second level of engagement hunters place ‘small-game’ animals, such as rabbits and possums. These animals are also widely regarded as pests by New Zealand society and their eradication is extensively supported.\textsuperscript{171} In April, during Easter, a famous competition, \textit{The Great Easter Bunny Hunt}, takes place in Central Otago, a region in the South Island where farming is extensive and rural living is most common. One of the most important newspapers of the South Island reported on the event: “Central Otago farmers are rid of 14,799 rabbits following the 18th annual Great Easter Bunny Hunt held throughout the district over 24 hours during the long weekend. [...] Hares, stoats, ferrets, goats, possums, turkeys and the odd feral cat were among the tally of 15,495 pests.”\textsuperscript{172}

Four hundred and sixty ‘shooters’ took part in the occasion, a popular event for hunters and hunters-to-be as well as for the wider rural community of the region. The popularity of the event and of rabbit shooting in general notwithstanding, what is more relevant for our discussions here is that these animals differ from the previous category in the fact that the latter attract hunting interest and are actively pursued by hunters. In fact, it is common that young hunters are introduced to the activity by ‘shooting’ rabbits and possums. Several hunters I met on Stewart Island and other places in the South Island of New Zealand initiated their hunting involvement shooting rabbits and possums. Here, I place special emphasis to the fact that hunters do not call the common practice of killing these animals as

\textsuperscript{170} This tendency to classify the natural world into hierarchies is not something new or a practice restricted to New Zealand hunters. As Keith Thomas states “all observation of the natural world involves the use of mental categories with which we, the observers, classify and order the otherwise incomprehensible mass of phenomena around us; and it is notorious that, once these categories have been learned, it is very difficult for us to see the world in any other way.” Thomas, \textit{Man and the Natural World}, 1983, 52.

\textsuperscript{171} An excellent discussion on the vilification of possums in New Zealand society is presented by Potts in “Kiwis Against Possums,” 2009.

\textsuperscript{172} Otago Daily Times, 13/04/2009.
hunting; the term used is simply ‘shooting’. I understand this subtle difference in terms to be an important one as it places the animal in a position of inferiority and vulnerability that is even more striking. The animals never reach the status of subjects, remaining forever as object. Rabbits, for instance, are used to master shooting skills to enable the hunter to ‘move up’ the ladder and pursue more difficult targets. A passage from a conversation with one New Zealand hunter illustrates this idea:

Rabbits are plentiful, they’re everywhere, they’re almost like a menace, you know, do you beat yourself up when you spray flies with fly spray? No, we think flies are just annoying, we just spray them, that’s the same thing for me with rabbits, it’s just like a fly, I’m just getting rid of that bug, that annoying little creature that’s frustrating me. The only difference is with the rabbit is there’s a wee element of I got you, you know, good shot, I mean, your aim is, you know I like shooting rabbits with a 22. [laughs] I like to actually place a shot, so you have got them in your wee scope, and you line him up, he doesn’t know you’re there, you squeeze off a nice shot, and bang, he’s dead. [...] well, it’s a different sets of skills, for the timing and what have you, but it’s enjoyable to get a clean, you know, bowl a rabbit over, you know when it’s trying to get away and is running flat tack and boom, you know, that’s quite fun, it’s probably the amusement actually, you know, it’s going flat out and they will roll and tumble, and that’s quite funny to see (laughs), you probably think that’s terrible [laughs]. (Callum)

Rabbits are considered a menace to crops on New Zealand farms and farmers usually are the first ones to encourage rabbit shooting on their property. Although the conservation agencies of the country do acknowledge rabbits’ impact on the native ecosystem, eradication programmes particularly focused on this species are less common. Rabbit activity tends to focus on farm land and conservation land seems to be less impacted by this animal, although there are areas where eradication programmes have been put in place due to high numbers and impact on native flora. Despite the limited attention given to rabbits by conservation agencies, the ‘conservationist’ pursuit is still well justified by hunters. However, what is interesting to note is that such a discourse, although present, masks the relationship established with such an animal: after Patrick told me that he was very mindful of the damage caused by rabbits and how farmers enjoyed it when hunters went to their property to shoot the ‘pests’, I went on to ask if he had started to shoot rabbits to help conservation and he said “no, just for the fun of it.”

Possums, on the other hand, pose important threats to native flora and their impact is regarded as more damaging to the ‘natural’ ecosystem. For this reason possums receive a greater amount of attention from conservation managers and several programmes are in place to locally eradicate the species. Due to their status as highly threatening pests, common both in urban and rural environments, possums also are viewed and used as objects by hunters, and the general population is very supportive of their extermination. Possum shooting, therefore, is very popular, attracting the old and the young. Callum, when telling me about how he started to hunt, shows evidence of the popularity of possum shooting among beginning hunters:

it would’ve started when I was a young kid I used to go down and stay with cousins who had a nursery down in Clinton, which is south of Balclutha, and we’d go hunting possums and stuff like that, for the skins, trap them for the skins and sell them and make some money over the holidays. So that’s probably where hunting started. (Callum)

But again, like Patrick, when asked about the conservationist motivation to hunt possums, especially in his childhood, he replied: “I shoot possums for the hell of it!”

On the highest tier of the hierarchy, are the ‘big game’ animals. Deer, chamois, and tahr, for instance, are all regarded as valuable hunting ‘assets’ by the hunting fraternity. Despite the fact that they also are introduced species that have significant impacts on the native ecosystem, hunters consider these as assets rather than pests. The major tension here is that in order to justify their practices to less endorsing groups and individuals, hunters argue that these animals are introduced therefore their killing is a necessary thing. However, hunters do not support arguments that advocate for the complete eradication of such species. Rather, hunters consider that these animals can be ‘managed’ to ‘ideal’ numbers that will not only provide for a ‘recreational asset’ but that will also help the conservation of native fauna and flora.

Government discourse is also inconsistent. The Department of Conservation Policy Statement on Deer Control states in its first sentence that “Deer are a serious pest on public conservation land.”\textsuperscript{174} In the Rakiura National Park Draft Management Plan the same government agency states that recreational and commercial hunting are used as the key

method of control of the deer population. Even though research commissioned by DOC, as well as research conducted by other institutions, has shown that deer can have a significant impact on native plant species’ growth, the government has opted for ‘managing’ numbers with the help of hunters. Probably influenced also by the financial constraints of the department to carry forward its eradication policies, only few and very isolated attempts are made to actually dramatically reduce numbers and therefore be consistent with the argument that certain species of animals need to be eradicated if they are alien to the region.

This context can be referred to as one of ‘political negotiations’. As I have been arguing, hunting is a practice largely accepted by New Zealand society, and particularly in a rural context. As most of us are aware, New Zealand is particularly dependent on agricultural exports, and support from rural communities, including farming communities, is extremely important for any political party. Hunting lobbies are, as a consequence, quite influential and government policies, to some degrees, reflect this influence. To fit both agendas, the discourses of hunters as well as of conservation agencies need to have some degree of congruence, and the reference to the ‘exoticism’ of the hunted animal is always brought to the fore.

Interestingly, however, although the ‘exotic’ status of the hunted animal is always referred to when justifying their hunting, their status as prey differs according to other motives. Similarly, environmental management actions differ substantially between the exotic species, and the value of the animal as a hunting prey, and therefore as a recreational asset, is also often taken into consideration. These tensions in practices and discourses, therefore, support the idea that speciesism is the philosophical position that most adequately describes the moral claims presented by these two groups in this particular social environment.

I don’t mind if it’s killing possums, cos I think possums and rats to me are the biggest threat to the conservation land and to the birds and stuff, native birds. I don’t like the idea of 10/80 being used to kill deer cos once they, I mean when they do a 1080 aerial drop you can’t go hunting in there for three months. It kills all the animals and they die painfully, it’s not humane. (David)

well, a rabbit is not as challenging so, I was talking about adrenaline, you don’t get that by shooting a rabbit, you might think good shot,
nailed it nice and sweet, clean kill, you know, that’s cool, but rabbit shooting is probably more just fun... I’m actually more mindful about the damage rabbits do, ‘cause you go up to central Otago and you see the damage, you can see, and maybe that’s it, maybe it’s the fact that it’s more in your face, you know, that bonus I was talking about before it’s more obvious with rabbits, I mean, I know deer obviously eat a lot of bush because you gut one and you see the amount out of foliage in its guts, you know, but I suppose it’s not as apparent when you look at sections of bush, I mean, I still see areas with lots of the young growth so it’s not like they are wiping it out, whereas you see rabbits when they’ve taken over a hillside and it’s just decimated isn’t it, rabbit holes everywhere, and no vegetation so that’s probably more obvious that you’re actually doing something that’s a little bit useful to people, like farmers really appreciate you shooting rabbits on their property.

(Callum)

From these extracts it is obvious that there is a hierarchy created by hunters in their treatment of the nonhuman animal prey, and the discourses and narratives that are employed to support the pro-hunting arguments. In summary, for hunters all these animals ‘deserve to die’ but how they do it differs according to their species and their quality as target animals. Here, again, the feeling of admiration for the ‘higher’ animal overlaps with their relationship with other nonhuman animal targets:

Again, about the sorrow that you say you feel when you shoot a deer, you don’t feel that sorrow when you shoot a rabbit or a duck, do you?

No I don’t.

Why?

[thinks] Why is that? [thinks] it’s strange... maybe I like deer, I think they’re gracious animal, I think they’re lovely, you know, they’re... yeah, I just like deer... it’s funny, eh... (Callum and I, in a conversation)

The position of the ‘exotic animal’ within the hunting and conservation management context varies widely, presenting therefore extremely inconsistent narratives and practices. Hunting and eradication involve exotic animals but both are situated within complex social and political contexts which certainly cannot be understood by focusing solely on the amount of damage done to the physical environment. It is clear that hunters and the Department of Conservation disagree on the nature and extent of damage done by one exotic species in particular, deer. Patrick shows his discontent with DOC’s policies towards exotic animals but most particularly towards ‘valuable hunting assets’ such as deer:

It’s hypocritical that they (DOC) turn round and they complain about animals like deer, pigs, goat or whatever, eating conservation land yet
they allow grazing of farmers on conservation land, they look after and now they allow coal mining on conservation land so what does most environmental damage? Burning coal or a few deer eating some trees? So they can have this anti exotic animal phobia and they’ve had it ever since DOC was formed, back before DOC, before I was born, they had this phobia about deer and everything that eats the trees yet the animals are still here and they’ll probably be here long after the human race unless they come up with some miracle poison that they can spray everywhere. (Patrick)

This tension is irresolvable while DOC views exotic simply as undesirable, and try to apply consistent policies and management actions following this understanding of the ‘exotic’, which is also in contrast to deer hunters, for whom some exotic animals have an implicit element of desire. Most importantly, this constant tension in narratives and performances influences the hunting experience in ways that serve to further emphasise a collective identity, one which frames the hunting experience on Stewart Island. In order to ‘protect’ a hunting asset, hunters need to engage with a conservationist discourse that needs to be shared by the fraternity to strengthen lobbying power and promote a positive social identity. Their performances also, to some extent, need to follow their discourse to facilitate legitimizing their social position and their practice as culturally relevant. The shared discourse and consequent shared narratives and performances produce a hunting space on Stewart Island that stages the social relationships derived from the hunting experience. Before we are
able to discuss the interaction of this hunting with other contested spaces, specifically tramping, I will need to provide a context for the tramping experiences.

**Final Considerations**

I have argued that the relationship between human and nonhuman animals is a complex field and one which legitimately may include considerations of recreational hunting. Traditional attempts to situate this practice within an ethics of animal rights, deep ecology, ecofeminism and Ingold’s analogy with hunter-gatherer societies have proved inadequate. Hunting experiences are more complex than academics so far have acknowledged. Consequently, this chapter has challenged these traditional analyses by demonstrating that a more sophisticated approach to ethics needs to be taken, outside of essentialism and the consequentialist/non-consequentialist dichotomy. As an alternative I have described hunting practice and performance as a sensual experience occurring within a sublime landscape; where the hunter and prey are closely connected. The embodied nature of the hunting experience and the desire to engage with other elements of the natural environment in a multi-sensorial way provoke a singular way of performing that is philosophically, particularly in terms of ethics, very complex. Hunters’ performances fluctuate between deep ecology’s notions of human/nature relationships, instrumental approaches to nature, efforts at cosmological engagements with the natural environment, dominance and masculinity discourse, but all within a highly Romantic understanding of Nature. Such instability in the discourse, narratives and performances is productively analysed if the embodied, sensual engagements of hunters are given a predominant position in the discussions. Also, these engagements are determinants of the types of experiences and relationships established during the hunting performances. My argument is that this approach provides a more fruitful way of discovering and articulating the nuances and subtleties that characterise contemporary recreational hunting particularly as performed with White-tailed deer on Stewart Island, New Zealand.

A second argument raised in this chapter is that the exoticism of the nonhuman animal prey in New Zealand provides an ‘easy’ but highly contradictory justification for hunting, but one that, nonetheless, involves still an extremely powerful and sensual engagement with the hunting act. Always a process of ‘Othering’, the exotic in some cases are prized and highly regarded due to their origin or characteristics, and in other cases vilified for the simple fact of not being native. Such a process impinges on the relationship established with the nonhuman animal prey, but also leads to an inconsistent discourse that implies a speciesist position, one
which is nonetheless consistent with a dominionist, masculine performance. As Clutton-Brock has argued, “the attitudes of people to [nonhuman] animals throughout the Western world is still a mass of contradiction.”

The inconsistency found in the discursive level has distracted academic studies of hunting from the significant meanings of the sensual engagements with selected prey animals. Although hunters clearly adopt a speciesist position, the hunting experience, particularly deerstalking, is no less significant for that, and is full of (sensual) meanings that provide a unique relationship between hunters and the other elements of the natural environment. In fact, the masculine performance is reiterated by the construction of the sublime as a masculine ‘entity’, not only reifying Nature but also gendering it. Performances of gender, or of masculinity, in an environment constructed as masculine in some ways can be said to facilitate and legitimize hunters’ speciesist position.

More importantly, the discussion presented here has emphasised how the sublime landscape, situated away from the daily and ordinary, plays a pivotal role in the hunting experiences and performances, as it would not be possible for these to happen anywhere else. Furthermore, this engagement with the sublime reinforces a social identity that is extremely powerful in the production of a hunting space, and that provides meaning for the construction of place. The experience of the sublime, as Zwart explains, “is not a pure, immediate event, but rather a conditional one. Certain conditions have to be met in order for this experience to occur,” and hunters’ engagement with a collective settler identity performed within an unpredictable, ‘intense’, and ‘untouched’ environment surely creates these conditions. When discussing the power of the sea in a sublime experience, Zwart clarifies that the sublime can be experienced in different settings within a natural environment because it is created by us, by our perceptions, which are “shaped by certain concepts and ideas.”

If we were exposed to the ocean unshielded, we would simply be struck with terror. It is only gradually that man [sic] loses his sense of ‘the full awfulness of the sea which aboriginally belongs to it’. [...] For one thing, it is prerequisite that, up there in the mast head for instance, we feel reasonably safe, that we somehow stand above it. Under such conditions, a sailing philosopher may not ‘feel one whit more of terror than though seated before your evening fire’. The basic element (water, fire) has been subdued by

178 Ibid., 91.
human technology: still fascinating, but no longer terrifying. Yet, the *real* sea, experienced immediately so to speak, is simply terrible – a masterless commotion. Man [sic] is alien to it.\footnote{Zwart, *Understanding Nature*, 2008, 91-92 [Emphasis in original].}

It is the fully embodied engagement with the *real* nature of Stewart Island that provides hunters with the experience of the sublime that shapes their performances and affords significant meanings for their experiences. Therefore, there is an important, if not crucial, component of the hunting experience that is entrenched in a key New Zealand tourism context, the sublime, but which is yet to be fully contemplated by tourism scholars. This embodied encounter with the sublime landscape and with the hunted nonhuman animal deserves more in-depth discussions within tourism and other studies. The material presented here provides an initial contribution to this emerging line of enquiry.
5 Tramping: Experiences of Commodified Nature

Where once commodification was of the vista, or of the view translated into a painting or photograph to sell, people now expect to interact with nature.¹

Hunting has never been the only, or even the predominant, outdoor recreation activity pursued by New Zealanders. In fact, historically, outdoor recreation activities in general have been an important part of New Zealanders’ lifestyles.² The tenacious settler identity in New Zealanders’ collective cultural imagery has contributed, for a significant proportion of the population, to the persistence of a way of living bound to the natural environment.³ This lifestyle is epitomized by the popularity of outdoor recreation pursuits and the extensive system of National Parks and conservation areas managed to provide a diverse range of nature-based leisure opportunities.⁴ National Parks and other forms of protected areas make up 31.3% of New Zealand’s land area and are intended to be an integral part of these outdoor experiences.⁵

Within this context, tramping plays an important role as one cultural manifestation intimately associated with Nature that is sold to the tourist as part of this ‘outdoorsy’ New Zealand lifestyle. As Hall and Higham pointed out, since the initial stages of European settlement in New Zealand, and the first conservationist impulses, recreation activities in forested areas, and in particular tramping, have been a core element of New Zealand society.⁶ Moreover, throughout the development and consolidation of the ‘clean and green’ image, the tourism industry of the country has hosted an increasing number of tourists searching for outdoor experiences in its protected areas.⁷ Tramping, among a few others, is one of the main

¹ Bell, Inventing New Zealand, 1996, 41.
³ Bell, Inventing New Zealand, 1996.
activities pursued by these tourists. More importantly to my aims here, tramping is one of the few tourism activities that commonly takes place in the same locations as hunting, therefore directly impacting on hunters’ experiences. For these reasons, this chapter proposes to briefly explore the tourism product ‘tramping’ in New Zealand, in order to provide the context in which this activity takes place and the rationale of the tourist experience on the tracks of Stewart Island. This approach is aimed at better equipping us to analyse the interactions between these tourists and local New Zealand hunters. The focus will shortly turn to my own experiences of tramping on this island, a location where this activity is largely pursued by international tourists, and where huts and tracks are shared with New Zealand deer hunters. My thesis’ focus on hunting and hunter’s performance limits my discussions about tramping to tourists’ expressions, and the latter will serve to provide the grounding for my final analysis of hunting performances, in Chapter 6. There I will contrast the two activities so as to establish how tramping, as performed by international tourists, affects the hunting performance. Here, tramping will be discussed detached from the interactions with hunting, in an effort to concentrate on wider issues that involve tourism, Nature and tramping in New Zealand.

**Tourism and Outdoor Recreation in New Zealand**

New Zealand is presently internationally recognized for its outdoor recreation opportunities as well as for the associated adventure ramifications of these, and tourism in this country has developed based largely on ‘landscape’ consumers. In 1998 Higham stated that the extensive National Park system (directly related to outdoor activities) is one of the major attractions for international inbound tourists in New Zealand, being central to the promotion of the country to international visitor markets. Since then, the number of international tourists to the country has doubled and nature-based recreation and countryside sightseeing have continued to be the major activities pursued by these tourists. In fact, the ‘clean and green’ image seems to be so central to the country’s tourism promotion that since 1999 Tourism

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8 The 2008 International Visitor Survey reported that 1,483,617 tourists to New Zealand engaged in ‘Walking and Trekking’ activities while visiting the country. This number represents almost 67% of the total visitors to New Zealand in that year. Ministry of Tourism, “International Visitor Survey,” 2009.


New Zealand has adopted the brand ‘100% Pure New Zealand’ to promote the country as an internationally competitive tourism destination. Although the campaign was not created with the sole purpose of promoting the country’s natural landscapes and activities pursued in these spaces, Nature is nonetheless a central pillar of the New Zealand tourism brand. According to Maurice Saatchi, one of the developers of the original global campaign, New Zealand landscapes are authentic and therefore are meaningful for the tourist, providing for a non-conventional product. Although Saatchi refers to the country as “real” and “authentic,” the idea behind the campaign he helped develop, and what I will argue in the discussions that follow, is that the product Nature is ‘manufactured’ and ‘packaged’ to serve the international tourist. Even though his statements are founded on incontestable facts, such as the extensive preserved natural areas and the sublime landscapes suitable for a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities, the natural environment is consumed and sold as a product guided by demand, and not so much engaged in as part of ‘ordinary’ human-natural environment relationships.

According to Barr, recreation and conservation were, and still are, the main driving forces for the protection of such a large area of natural land in New Zealand. However, as Hall and Higham highlight, the pressures derived from leisure practices, particularly those associated with physical structures constructed to provide access to, and permanence of, visitors (locals or tourists) in outdoor areas, have been responsible for significant impacts on the natural environment. Before the establishment of the first National Park in New Zealand, other conservation areas, such as Forest Reserves, had been created for tourism and recreation purposes. According to Shultis, because conservation areas in general were seen primarily as tourist resorts, often landscapes were ‘upgraded’ with physical infrastructure to better host wealthy visitors and therefore extract economic gains from areas that were previously unproductive. It seems clear that these conservation areas were primarily serving tourism and recreation interests, rather than non-instrumental ideals.

As I have discussed in the previous chapters, conservationism is still a highly anthropocentric and instrumental notion, but one that has undoubtedly influenced, or even determined, the

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establishment of such a large system of protected natural environments in this country. Park affirms that tourism has always been the main stimulus for the conversion of land not suitable for agriculture into conservation areas.\textsuperscript{16} Tongariro National Park, for instance, the first National Park established in the country, was gazetted only after the area was officially attested as unproductive for agriculture.\textsuperscript{17} The introduction of game species followed, to some extent, the same tourism rationale, although one that is seen as a contradiction today. Perkins and Thorns affirm that the dramatic natural scenery of the South Island, with its fiords, the Southern Alps and scenic lakes, were its main tourist attractions since the late nineteenth century. According to these authors, in the 1870s the government began using Nature as one of the main tourism products of the country, highlighting the scenery and ‘natural landscapes’ in the first tourist brochures used in London and Australia to promote New Zealand as a destination.\textsuperscript{18} Undeniably, tourism, recreation and natural landscapes have been, for a long time, inseparable in this country.\textsuperscript{19}

It is important to note here that New Zealand collective identity is certainly bound to a close relationship with Nature, although the expressions of this identity are surely varied.\textsuperscript{20} Outdoor recreation is, nonetheless, one of its most prominent expressions. Barr, for instance, reiterates such a link: “[s]ince European arrival there has been an ethic of exploration, adventure, and going into the unknown, both for pragmatic reasons of finding grazing land or gold and as recreation for exploring untrodden areas and climbing virgin peaks.”\textsuperscript{21} National identity is constantly reinforced when engaging in outdoor recreation activities: mountaineering, tramping, skiing, kayaking, hunting and fishing all serve to strengthen an identity bound to Nature. In fact, when the National Parks Act was promulgated in 1952, the definition of a National Park stated that recreation and public use was its major objective. This statement helped to establish in the New Zealand social imagery, in a more ‘official’ way, that the interaction between recreationists and Nature was a significant constitutive part of New Zealanders’ identity, and that National Parks and other protected areas were ideal settings for one’s involvement with the natural environment during leisure times. In this context, Saatchi’s comments well translate the image that New


\textsuperscript{17} Hall and Higham, “Wilderness Management in the Forests of New Zealand,” 2000.

\textsuperscript{18} Perkins and Thorns, “Gazing or Performing?,” 2001.

\textsuperscript{19} Shelton and Tucker, “Managed to be Wild” 2008.

\textsuperscript{20} Bell, \textit{Inventing New Zealand}, 1996.

Zealanders have of their own land: surrounded by water, geographically isolated, of difficult access, remote and wild, with a severe and unpredictable climate: all features characteristic of sublime landscapes, providing for the ‘perfect’ adventure location, in a ‘real’, ‘authentic’ environment.  

Star argues that feelings of aesthetic admiration and emotional connection to the land also were important drivers for the protection of natural areas. During this process, initiated in the late nineteenth century, the New Zealand national identity begins to be grounded on human relationships with the natural environment, particularly influenced by the Romantic notions of Nature. As this identity is based on ‘real’ natural features, the adventurous, explorer spirit is constantly present in the image New Zealanders construct of themselves, and sell to the overseas tourism market, as they perceive their land as rugged, wild, extreme and inhospitable. It is therefore only ‘natural’ that the country has become the ‘world capital’ for outdoor adventure tourism.

Another important factor contributing to the construction and consolidation of this tourism image is the structured effort made by Tourism New Zealand to promote the country to the ‘interactive traveller’. In fact, the focus on the natural environment, clearly present in the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign, is a strategy to attract this market segment. According to the Ministry of Tourism, this market is composed of “regular international travellers who seek out new, authentic experiences that involve engagement with natural and cultural environments,” highlighting the importance of Nature to tourism development in this country. But more than that, Nature is sold to be physically engaged with, and not simply gazed upon, as the campaign and visitor participation patterns attest. As Perkins and Thorns have argued “tourists are encouraged both to gaze at spectacular scenery and grapple

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22 In fact, Stewart Island has all of these characteristics, being surely an exemplar of the sublime in New Zealand landscape.


26 Ibid., 20 [Emphasis added].

27 Ibid.
with the challenge of nature” and therefore perform as “gazers and active beings.” Such an understanding of tourism as embodied practice aligns well with Franklin’s argument that whereas, for example, many early tourisms emphasised the disembodied subjectivity of the gazing tourist and the (ethnic, folk, bathing, native, local, animal etc.) bodies of the Other as objects of their gaze, increasingly in recent years it is their own bodies that many tourists attend to, as tourists. In other words, although the visual gaze is still an important part of tourism, tourists are increasingly doing things with their own bodies, with embodied objectives such as fitness, thrill, spirituality, risk, sensual connection, sexuality, taste (olfaction and degustation) and what I will presently refer to as ‘inscription; and ‘flow’.

In Perkins and Thorns’ study there is an underlying support for the importance of the sublime as fundamental to the performance, as Nature is a ‘challenge’ that needs to be ‘overcome’. Hence, unlike other tourist destinations, “the gaze does not fully encapsulate tourists’ experiences” in New Zealand, and performance in and with Nature is the product to be purchased and experienced.

This increasing demand for adventurous, nature-based tourism may be analysed from different perspectives. Some authors, seemingly influenced by Romantic ideals, attribute this demand to the complex process of change towards a new style of living that societies have been experiencing since the end of the 20th century. They argue that the Industrial Revolution’s core value of excessive commitment to labour has given way to a society with a greater understanding of the necessity of leisure and the pursuit of it. Dumazedier is one such contributor to this interpretation, stating that groups search for these activities as a pursuit of freedom. Longing for personal equilibrium, desiring distance from routine, monotony and stress, people respond by getting away from the everyday scenario, which now means entering the ‘Nature domain’. For Gyimóthy and Mykletun nature-based adventure recreation offers escape from day-to-day life and can stimulate deep euphoric experiences. These authors argue that regular tourism and weekend sport practices are no longer supplying today’s men and women with the emotions they seek. However, the authors seem to disregard the postmodern conditions that trigger such practices.

28 Perkins and Thorns, “Gazing or Performing?,” 2001, 196, [Emphasis in original].
29 Franklin, Tourism, 2003, 213.
31 Dumazedier, Toward a Society of Leisure, 1967.
Kontogeorgopoulos also have argued that tourists are looking for ‘alternative’ modes of travel opposed to “the mass production, inflexibility, standardization, and insensitivity toward host population associated with more conventional forms of tourism.” In fact, such ‘alternative’ modes of travel seem to well represent the ‘interactive traveller’ targeted by Tourism New Zealand.

Conversely, other authors move towards an understanding of these activities, especially those engaged in as tourism experiences, in light of the postmodern condition, particularly the commodification of Nature as part of the commodification of society. It is through my engagement with tourism experiences in Nature, and drawing upon the New Zealand cultural background previously explored, that this chapter aims to contextualise tramping experiences in a particular New Zealand landscape within the concept of commodification of society and, more specifically, of Nature. More generally, this chapter discusses the production of a recreational space, for international visitors in particular, through the commodification of Nature, leading to its acting primarily as a setting. Building on Cloke and Perkins’, and Perkins and Thorns’ contributions to the conversation on commodification of Nature in tourism experiences, with a focus on the performative nature of nature-based tourism in New Zealand, I will discuss such performances as staged in a particular setting, the Stewart Island landscape. In my argument, New Zealand natural landscapes are sold to provide the setting for the experience of the sublime; Nature being an integral part of the experience, but engaged in superficially as a mere stage for the tourism performance. Here, I follow Edensor’s position:

Different tourist ventures are carried out upon particular stages – on beaches and mountains, in cities, heritage sites, museums and theme parks. These settings are distinguished by boundedness, whether physical or symbolic, and are often organized – or stage-managed – to provide and sustain common-sense understanding about what activities should take place. Indeed, the coherence of most tourist performances depends on their being performed in specific ‘theatres’.


My use of the term postmodern here is informed by Hall’s observation that postmodernism “expresses the crisis in modernism – a crisis of our truths, our values, and our beliefs.” Hall, “Reflexivity and Tourism Research,” 2004, 138.
Small wonder then, that Park called his book on the history of New Zealand’s conservation estate, and the tensions between preservation and tourism, *Theatre Country*. Nature is the ‘specific theatre’ and is advertised as producing certain types of experiences and performances.

**The Commodification of Tourism, Leisure and of Nature**

Leisure and recreation, as complex social experiences, cannot be understood if they are not related to other elements constitutive of postmodern society. The social relations involved in any type of leisure experience are reflections of power structures, societal organization, social imagery and representations, set within the material world in which they occur. Postmodernity involves the commodification of various areas of life and the leisure experience is no exception.\(^{36}\) Likewise, naturally occurring landforms become part of this commodified society once they are transformed, through social processes, into landscapes. In fact, these constructed landscapes magnify characteristics of, and responses to, the interaction between commodity and consumer as often they carry symbolic meanings associated with Romantic notions of the pristine. Although evidence of tourism and recreational activities in natural environments, particularly mountain regions, can be found in literature dating back to the 13th century, it was not until the late 1700s that men and women started to transform such areas, by now transformed already into landscapes, into a tourist destination.\(^{37}\) The European Alps were the first to be ascended and then subsequently ‘captured’ by frivolous tourists in search of the sublime, the strong emotion caused by the uncertain nature of the mountainous landscape: what one would today call adventure. With the growth in popularity of mountain regions and the increased awareness of great climbs and new heroes by the general public, together with the strengthening of capitalism and its subsequent commercialization of goods and services, adventure consequently is sold along with its prime stage, the naturally occurring sublime landforms. As Beedie and Hudson point out, mountains, as perfect symbols of a sublime nature, represent escape locations and adventure itself, thus creating the perfect scenario for sold adventure.\(^{38}\) As postmodern societies promote consumerism and individualism, and privilege the image over the object,


\(^{38}\) Beedie and Hudson, “Emergence of Mountain-Based Adventure Tourism,” 2003.
the pursuit of ‘adventure’ in a more or less controlled environment gains popularity and the search for ‘adventure packages’, as well as more regular recreational activities in outdoor environments, increases.\textsuperscript{39}

The concepts of ‘commodification of locations as places’ and ‘authentic tourist experiences and behaviour’ are not subjects new to tourism and recreation studies. In fact, these concepts have been the themes of analyses by social scientists since the beginning of the 1970s, largely as a response to Boorstin’s seminal work on the illusory nature of the tourist experience in contemporary North American mass tourism.\textsuperscript{40} Thus, the commodification of Nature as location or place, and as ideological space, augmented by the recreational demand in these conceptual settings, begs questions regarding the different values associated with the practice of outdoor recreation. As the term commodification suggests, the object – in this case the constructed natural environment and the experiences associated with it – “come[s] to be evaluated primarily in terms of [its] exchange value, in a context of trade.”\textsuperscript{41} Therefore, other meanings associated with natural environments may be lost, displaced by the new understanding predicated on commodification. Consequently, ethical positions formerly linked to outdoor activities in the natural world may be displaced also by the new codes that are introduced, or permitted, by the establishment of tourism ventures there.

The commodification process is situated within, and engages with, a broader social context, which involves changes in societal structures and relationships of exchange. From Marx’s perspective, commodification represents the conversion of use value into exchange value.\textsuperscript{42} Objects (and later for Debord and Baudrillard, services and activities) have an exchange value which is greater than their production value\textsuperscript{43}: “In this way commodification denotes an abstraction of the object from its use value and therefore from social references about the need for the object and the quality of it.”\textsuperscript{44} For Marx, this abstraction, originating in the economic realm, is transferred to the social and personal domains. This process then results


\textsuperscript{42} Marx, \textit{Capital}, 1990.


\textsuperscript{44} Cloke, “The Countryside as Commodity,” 1993, 55.
in significant distortions of the social and cultural constructions of commodities’ values, representing the ‘commodification’ of objects, and more widely, society. Such a process is exemplified in the tourism industry’s commitment to ‘adding value to’ and ‘extracting revenue from’ the natural world. As a tourism service provider in Milford Sound, one of New Zealand’s most visited ‘post-card’ locations, presents in a video with images of New Zealand’s natural environments: “Breathtaking New Zealand scenery; Available for purchase here.”

More recently, Debord, expanding on Marx’s treatment of commodification, analysed the same phenomenon from a different perspective. He argued that this process is facilitated by a social consensus made possible through mass communication. For Debord, the idea of commodification of society involves more than the exchange of tangible goods, but incorporates also social relations. From Debord’s arguments, I contend that also human-nature relations may come under the influence of commodification. This analysis is useful in the tourism and recreation contexts as it allows the inference that people are drawn to consume abstractly constructed products and services, and that these are mere productions or spectacles. I argue below that the experiences of trampers involved in this research seemed guided largely by this principle, and that these tourists appear to be ready to ‘consume’ Nature as ‘produced’ by postmodern society. This development produces an interesting tension, between the reification of nature, that is required if it is to be considered as a collection of objects, and a new ‘post-thingness’, reminiscent of the simulacrum.

Although tourism and recreation pursuits in natural settings are not new activities; what can be seen today, in addition to the former practice, is the production of models for leisure practices and the homogenization of the search for a meaningful leisure experience. Debord demonstrates that one can analyse the production of such models within the context of post-industrial society consumerism, and the homogenization of this search as social consensus, constructed by the spectacle presented by mass communication media. According to Debord, the commodification in the society of the spectacle is clearly related to the production of ‘fake’ objects, services, relations and putative real activities. Tourism and recreation, as well as Nature and the experiences associated with it, are formatted and sold. An interesting example of how this phenomenon is expressed in New Zealand tourism is clear from a statement from Perkins and Thorns: “International tourists typically enter New

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46 Ibid.
Zealand at either Auckland or Christchurch international airports and then follow a sightseeing circuit of the country’s major natural scenic attractions, reinforcing the importance of scenery, wild nature, thermal springs and the Māori in overseas tourists’ experiences of New Zealand.47 The circuit is pre-packaged for the tourist, and the attractions are defined and follow the ‘clean and green’ image so well established by New Zealand tourism marketing campaigns.

Within this context it can be understood how the appeal for Nature is constructed in the attractive discourse of the tourism industry. Historically, as Franklin reminds us, the consumption of Nature by tourists has never been purely visual. From the writings of Thoreau and Leopold tourists are incited to engage in “a closer sensual knowledge of nature through having direct contact with its sonic, textual, olfactory and visual presences;” they are encouraged “to appreciate nature fully [...] get[ting] in to the thick of things, not view it from a safe distance.”48 However, it was not until the end of the twentieth century that such a way of consuming Nature became the norm in tourism endeavours, rather than the exception. Active engagement with Nature adds intangible value to the tourism product, and its ‘consumption’, in a society that sells everything it creates, becomes almost compulsory. One starts to believe – or desire – that s/he needs to engage in adventurous activities during his/her leisure pursuits. “Pleasure seeking,” suggest Macnaghten and Urry,

is a duty since the consumption of goods and services becomes the structural basis of Western societies. Social integration [...] takes place through the ‘seduction’ of the market-place, through the mix of feeling and emotions generated by seeing, holding, hearing, testing, smelling, and moving through the extraordinary array of goods and services, places and environments, that characterise contemporary consumerism organised around a particular ‘culture of nature’.49

Furthermore, to be truly adventurous one needs to engage with the sublimity of the landscape produced to stage such experiences. With a stage defined, performances tend to become standardized, although “despite the prevalence of codes and norms, tourist conventions can be destabilized by rebellious performances, or by multiple, simultaneous enactions on the same stage.”50 There are common performances that can be noted in the experience of tramping in New Zealand tourism. I am aware, however, that such

50 Edensor, “Performing Tourism, Staging Tourism,” 2001, 60.
performances are not uniform, but reflect a collective construction. As Edensor notes, “[w]hile such stagings cannot determine the kinds of performance which occur, the processes of commodification, regulation and representation that reproduce performative conventions ensure that distinctive performance can be identified at most sites.” Moreover, as Bell and Lyall point out, physically engaging with the landscape connects the tourist with the performance of the spectacle. Today, this forms part of the basis of New Zealand’s tourism product.

The Stewart Island Context

Stewart Island offers three formally constituted tramping tracks, all following a circuit format. The most visited, the Rakiura Track, is a 29 km tramping track which runs relatively close to the only permanent settlement on the island. This track is classified by the Department of Conservation as a Great Walk, which means it is amongst the most internationally publicized tracks in New Zealand. According to Cessford, Great Walks serve as the bridge “between the wilderness user and the front-country user,” providing a less demanding overnight tramping experience that is suitable for most tourists. Great Walks’ status as tourism products is attested by some of their basic features: Great Walks are the only tramping tracks in the public conservation estate that may require booking over the summer period for overnight stay in huts and campsites “to manage visitor pressure”; hut and campsite fees are usually considerably more expensive than in any other track on public conservation land due to the high tourist demand; during peak tourist season, hut wardens are employed to supervise and maintain hut facilities, collect hut fees, provide safety information, and some general information for visitors about the area, including characteristics of the native flora and fauna of the location; and “the huts and tracks on the Great Walks are of a higher standard than other tramping tracks” in New Zealand.

As the Department of Conservation states in their website: “the Great Walks are the department’s premier walking tracks, through areas of some of the best scenery in the

53 This excludes all day-walk tracks.
56 Ibid., n/p.
country.”

Their appeal as tourism products is, therefore, easily noticed, and astutely marketed by the tourism industry, which provides several services to ‘improve’ the tourism experience, such as guided walks, shuttles to and from start and end points of the tracks, gear hire and purchase, and private huts and/or shelters.

The Rakiura Track, however, is in some respects singular. Firstly, out of the nine Great Walks, the Rakiura Track is one of three that do not require booking at any time of the year. Also, the Rakiura Track is the only Great Walk that has not instituted a high-season fee for huts and campsites, keeping the fees comparable to other non-Great Walk huts throughout the year. But these measures are justified. The Rakiura Track presents the lowest total visitor numbers of the nine Great Walks, with just over 1,500 visitors in the period between July 2008 and June 2009. The Abel Tasman Coast Track, by comparison, attracted over 30,000 visitors during the same period. On the other hand, according to Great Walks’ visitor statistics, during the period of my study the Rakiura Track was consistently amongst the three tracks with the highest rate of international visitors, varying from 64% to 72% of all trampers on the track. Such a high number of international visitors on this track, and the consequent singular relationship established with New Zealand hunters on tracks and huts, led me to choose to focus on international tourists for this research project.

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Despite these singularities, the track conforms to Great Walks standards. It is well formed and signed, and suitable for people with limited backcountry experience. However, due to the natural, geomorphologic characteristics of the island, such as wet soils with poor natural drainage, visitors consider the Rakiura Track, compared to other Great Walks, less suitable for the inexperienced, as Wray, Harbrow and Kazmierow noted in their user survey of the Rakiura National Park. Usually, the track is completed in two or three days but can be finished in one long day, as I saw happen a few times while on the island. It is provided with two Great-Walk-standard huts and long sections of board walks and gravel surface, which makes it a relatively easy and comfortable track.

The Northwest and Southern Circuits, conversely, are considered challenging tramps and are classified as Tramping Tracks in the Department of Conservation Track Categories. With

61 However, the Rakiura Track huts are the only Great Walks huts that do not provide flush toilets and gas for cooking during the summer, a condition that contributes to unmatched visitor expectations of the Stewart Island Great Walk. Wray, Harbrow and Kazmierow, “Planning for visitor management at Mason Bay (Rakiura National Park, Stewart Island),” 2005.

62 The categories listed by this documents are: “Easy Access Short Walks: Easy walking for up to an hour; even surface, well formed with no steps or steep sections; suitable for people of all abilities, wheelchairs, buggies and strollers; streams and rivers are bridged; walking shoes required.
long sections of deep and thick mud, constantly undulating country and very remote bush areas, only more experienced trampers are advised to adventure on these tracks. However, with relatively well managed trails, several markers and a few signs, even ‘first timers’ are able to complete the journey safely, although good level of fitness and appropriate gear are essential. The Northwest Circuit is 125 km long and generally is completed in nine to eleven days, whereas the Southern Circuit is 105 km long and usually is completed in six to nine days. However, the latter track is less frequently visited as its country can be more physically demanding for the tramer. All of these tracks can be combined, forming a longer loop around the northern part of the island. This combination forms the longest tramping track in the country, and even the Northwest Circuit alone is longer than any other track in New Zealand. Such a status definitely enhances the ‘product’ and attracts visitors from different countries to engage in a singular New Zealand experience.

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Short Walks: Easy walking for up to an hour; track is well formed, with an even, well drained surface. There may be steps; suitable for people of most ages and fitness levels; streams and rivers are bridged; walking shoes required.

Walking Tracks: Gentle walking from a few minutes to a day; mostly well formed, some sections may be steep, rough or muddy; suitable for people with low to moderate fitness and abilities; some tracks suitable for mountain biking; clearly sign posted; water crossings bridged; walking shoes or light tramping boots required.

Great Walk Tracks/Easy Tramping Tracks: Comfortable multi-day tramping; generally well formed, some sections may be rough, muddy or steep; suitable for people with limited backcountry (remote area) experience; some tracks suitable for mountain biking; track has signs, poles or markers; major water crossings bridged; light tramping boots required.

Tramping Tracks: Challenging day or multi-day tramping; mostly unformed, may be rough and steep; suitable for people with moderate to high level backcountry skills and experience, including navigation and survival; some tracks suitable for mountain biking; track has markers, poles or rock cairns; expect river crossings; tramping boots required.

Routes: Challenging overnight tramping; track unformed and natural, may be rough and very steep; suitable for people with high level backcountry skills and experience, including navigation and survival skills; be completely self sufficient; track has markers, poles or rock cairns. Expect river crossings; sturdy tramping boots required.” Department of Conservation, “Track Categories,” 2008, n/p.
It is important to note here that Stewart Island is not, by any means, the most commercialised destination in New Zealand, particularly in regards to nature-based, ‘active’ forms of tourism. As mentioned above, the Rakiura Track is the least frequented of all Great Walks, which therefore leads to less service providers acting to support tourist experiences. This fact does not, however, weaken my argument. I am not proposing here to discuss levels of commodification, to present a scale, or to compare this destination with other more commercialised ones. My point here is that Nature, regardless of the number of tourists, service providers, or publicity efforts, is experienced as a product, is consumed as a commodity. The tourists themselves bring to Stewart Island an idea of Nature commodified, as Nature is the strongest tourism product of New Zealand, as I discussed in a previous section. The expectations are therefore created outside Stewart Island, and brought in by tourist/consumers. Advertisement strategies on and for the destination reinforce the commodity status of Nature and such a status is constantly strengthen by the campaigns that use, or are targeted specifically at, other destinations, such as Milford Sound, Queenstown, Abel Tasman National Park and others. With this in mind, what I propose here is to discuss how my engagements with Stewart Island tramping led me to this understanding, that is, how through my experience on Stewart Island I was able to clearly notice that Nature is in fact a commodity in the tourist search for ‘the spectacle’.

The Experience and the Tales

Staying on Stewart Island for 24 days, as I did on one of my trips, sharing tracks, landscapes, huts and sometimes food, with so many different people, has the potential to be a life-changing experience, a ‘transformation of self’ that has been reported as occurring through this kind of recreational travel. There were many people on the tracks during the time I spent on the island since some of the days coincided with Easter break, which is a busy period for tourism on the island. Most of the trampers were international visitors, probably due to the ‘Great Walk’ status of the Rakiura Track and the fact that the Northwest Circuit, or the combination of the three tracks, is the longest managed tramping track in the country. As Cessford points out, “the Great Walks are especially important components of the nature-adventure opportunities commonly associated with New Zealand’s tourism industry

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and image. The numbers of international visitors hiking the Great Walks commonly exceed those of New Zealanders.\textsuperscript{64}

What follows is an account of some reflections I had of the tramping experience on the island, as recorded \textit{in situ}, later interpreted to identify key themes and then re-written to reach the present format. During my editorial effort I included material coming from recorded and non-recorded conversations, hut book entries, photographs friends and I took while I was on the island, different notes I took throughout the course of this project, as well as memories of my experiences. In fact, although rigorously analysed and theoretically informed, my discussions here derive from my own interpretation of the experiences I engaged with while on Stewart Island. Such a methodological position has been thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2.

I was there to interact with the people I met, and to live the tramping experience. But it was work, and the preoccupation with meeting, talking, seeing and trying to understand behaviours, values and feelings was always present in my mind. That immersion was what made it possible to feel and understand what I now formulate as the process of commodification and spectacle that happens with each one of us, in some way or another, while engaging with tourism experiences in the natural environment.\textsuperscript{65}

During the first few days of the tramp I was constantly meeting people who would frequently ask how long it took to go from one hut to the other. That question was more often than not one of the first topics of conversation. Reading hut books, one could easily find this issue being raised again, with some people questioning the Department of Conservation about the expected duration of each ‘leg’ of the tramp. Some comments would reinforce the forecasts made by the agency and some would complain, arguing that it was not a good prediction: “\textit{Track times are not accurate}”; “\textit{I walked for 7 hours from Bungaree hut to here [Christmas Village Hut]. DOC information isn’t correct}!”.

Some of the hut books’ comments showed where my feelings of the primacy of time-taken were coming from: “\textit{The trail is challenging. Only five hours}”; “\textit{hey… I’m back & Southern Circuit in 4 days. Nice but very tough}!!!”; “\textit{2.5 hours from Mason, wet feet for first time}”; “\textit{4h from Freshwater}


\textsuperscript{65} Debord, \textit{The Society of the Spectacle}, 1994.
“5 h to come here girls, paddling and splashing in the mud, under our lovely rain”; “Freshwater [Hut] → North Arm [Hut]: 6hrs +, no DOC overestimates here!”; “bad dodgy knee but even so path was abysmal. Leave at least 7 hours. We took 9’ and then a response: “Hack this chick up into pieces and feed her to the codfish that way we won’t have to hear her stupid complaints about track times.” It is clear from these hut book entries that the ‘time-taken’ comments I heard were not coming from concerns over safety, as estimates made by the Department of Conservation are supposed to attend to, but from a different motivation or aspect of their experiences. It is interesting to note that previous research on travel experiences has indicated that the actual movement between places forms an essential part of the experience of place. However, if travel time had to be minimized to fit into a race to reach the day’s destination, then this crucial part of emplacement, the journey, was being in some way diminished.

In my particular experience, this emphasis on time-taken started to make me too focus during the day on completing the tracks below the expected time, or at least within it, in some way as a response to the ‘pressure’ of time that trampers in general were constantly presenting to each other. For me, from what I was witnessing and experiencing, in the process of critically analysing my experience and those of Others, there could be no doubt that this was a race.

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This idea of the tramp being a race made a lot of difference to how I was experiencing the environment. The tracks, which can be strenuous, were becoming harder and harder, and the hours seemed to stretch longer and longer. There was little joy involved, and I hardly ever noticed the scenery. When it started to become less and less pleasurable, I realised the effect of having engaged in those dialogues; they were becoming my truth. As a ‘bush-walker’ for more than ten years, the feeling of being in the outdoors had never been so negative. I did not want to be part of the race but the race was ‘out there’ and that was what was making these trampers such an adventurous group holding values in common. As Edensor argues, “particular tourist contexts generate a shared set of conventions about what should be seen, what should be done and which actions are inappropriate. Such shared norms instantiate a way of being a backpacker, a participant on a tour-bus or a member of a Club 18–30 holiday.” In this context, being physically able to endure the track competently, that is, within or under the expected time, was ‘what should be done’.

My years of involvement made me an experienced ‘tramper’; and I wanted to be recognised as such. To earn that status in this instance I had not only to be there, but also I had to tramp it that way, perform according to that norm. In the light of Debord’s thesis, this is the product that is being sold and the adventure, which is part of the product Nature, is mass

produced. The experience of the product must be the same, for all, in search for a consensus, the aim of late capitalist societies: “people are led to consume a world which is constructed by others and not themselves.” The tourist space is produced by Others but the adherence to the consensus that forms such a space is almost unconsciously performed.

Although on Stewart Island most trampers and I were not involved in a commercial guided walk, for example the ones that take place in locations such as the Routeburn or the Hollyford Track, where paying tourists have little option but to follow the same procedures, the performances and narratives were nonetheless strikingly similar between the tourists I met. These ‘collective’ performances support Debord’s argument of a consensus reached through the commodification and spectacularisation of society.

Again, some hut book entries show that I was not the only one finding less and less enjoyment in my contact with that untamed environment: “mud on your face, rain in your hair, sandflies biting, kiwis fighting, tourists snoring, mud on your face”; “Surviving”; “harder than you think this walk is” were some of the comments under the title ‘activity’ in the hut books.

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These comments indicate that Nature plays a secondary role, predominantly as setting, although physically felt and experienced. Cloke and Perkins have challenged the idea that nature can be viewed as a ‘mere context’ for tourism activities as they recognize “how embodied beings, or other elements of nature, actively coconstitute the changing nature of places and coconstitute the performances which help to define those places,” an idea with which I fully agree. My argument here does not imply that the environment does not ‘coconstitute the performances which help to define those places’. On the contrary, were not the environment in Stewart Island as harsh, and sublime, as it is, the ‘adventure’ for those tourists would not be worth the effort and the story later to be retold. However, what I argue is that those trampers on Stewart Island do not recognise nature as an agent, subject, and the interaction with its elements serves only to give an extra flavour, or to make the adventure possible. Trampers wanted to complete the track: that was their major goal. Linda, a tramer from the United States, commented on her experience on Stewart Island with her boyfriend, a German university student:

Sometimes it’s frustrating, I think sometimes it’s annoying, sometimes you just feel like ‘couldn’t the trail be a little bit better? A little bit drier? Or go a different path, or...?’ I don’t know, but, I was definitely more positive than my boyfriend, he would get really down, really frustrated, especially if he started to get hungry, he would just, like, completely lose it. I was more kind of the one saying ‘it’s ok, honey, you can do it, we chose to do this’. (Linda)


72 Cloke and Perkins leave the possibility of a less visceral experience of nature, using their own terms, when they say that “sometimes travel permits performative encounters with the ‘natural’ or ‘wild’ world, in which nature becomes a visceral experience rather than an object of contemplation.” Ibid., 906 [Emphasis added].
It also seemed that trampers were there to prove something to themselves and probably to others; to prove that s/he could tramp Stewart Island in a very competent way. The timing of the tramps - how long s/he would take to go from one hut to another - clearly had become the measure of this competence. The questions asked in conversation were never about the forest, the beaches, the birds – except for the kiwi – the wind or the sounds; but only about time.\(^{73}\) Nature and the natural environment seemed to play only a small part in the experience; it seemed as if they were only the backdrop to where the trampers’ major objectives and achievements were situated. Susan’s comments well illustrate the secondary role Nature frequently plays in these experiences:

I now look for tracks that rise above bush line because I went on a couple that were kind of long valleys and just got so frustrated, like, you never see anything. I suppose I mainly go for places that people have suggested; and coastal stuff. I love coastal stuff; I probably would’ve enjoyed the Northwest Circuit a lot because it’s on the coast, like, we only had a few bits on the coast so, yeah, I do love the coast.\(^{74}\)  

(Susan)

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\(^{73}\) Kiwi is a New Zealand endemic flightless bird, and most of its species are on the endangered list. Stewart Island Tokoeka is a sub-species endemic to Stewart Island. The kiwi is also a national icon for New Zealand, and New Zealanders are often called ‘kiwis’ when referring to their nationality. On Stewart Island one can find one of the best and well preserved environments for the species, and ‘kiwi spotting’ is a famous tourist product of the island, as it is one of the few places in the country where you can see the bird in the wild and during daylight hours.

\(^{74}\) Susan went on the Southern Circuit, which has less coastal parts than the Northwest Circuit.
As our conversations continued the topics expanded to include what sort of gear we had, how tiring the day had been and if either of us had seen a kiwi – the second most important objective. A comment made by one trampler in a hut book was followed immediately by a response that emphasised how common this narrative of ‘I saw (or did not see) a kiwi’ was amongst Stewart Island trampers, and how this stresses the idea of Nature commodified. In response to the inquiry ‘Where are the kiwis?’, was the suggestion: “Perhaps there is more to Stewart Island than kiwis?” It seems that the latter trampler became disturbed, as I did, with the constant ‘search’ for the ‘prized’ kiwi. Kurt too was uneasy with this standardized procedure, ‘ticking the box’ and saying ‘I saw a kiwi’:

I mean, you go there kind of hoping to see one, but we never, like, go looking. You know when people go out at night to go looking, at Mason Bay a lot of people went out at night and like, searching! Weird! and we didn’t and then the next morning we saw a kiwi, so we felt really lucky. But that’s how it’s supposed to be! [...] when we were out at Mason Bay people went out just to try and see them. (Kurt)

As Mroczkowski observed, Nature has become as much an object of consumption as any other in postmodern society. In this case though, the ‘adventure package’ is purchased bringing Nature with it, but only as an ancillary product. Although the people I met did not come

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with commercial tour operators, the idea of adventure is sold abstractly through advertisement and marketing campaigns. Tramping on Stewart Island is definitely one of the biggest products of this destination and unquestionably sold as an adventurous activity. While most trampers said that they were there, in the natural environment, to feel closely connected to Nature, to feel Nature or to admire Nature, fertile ground for the production of ontological narratives, what I experienced, and understood them to experience, on Stewart Island seemed far removed from that. Susan's comment indicates the Romantic ideals entrenched in narratives about Nature, but that are contradictory with other descriptions of the experience of Nature:

The morning walking from East Ruggedy down to that beach was like, what I think was one of my favourite mornings, seeing kiwis was really exciting and just, it was still pretty dark when we left, and then getting down to the beach as it was getting late, was cloudy so it wasn't like spectacular or anything, but it was powerful, just like being down there, we were waiting the tide to get around that little crop in the end, yeah, I don't know, just like I really started to feel like, like, I don't know, it's just like a cool feeling, you just really start, it just kind of hit me, like, we're out in this island, close to the South Pole, away from everything, everything is so natural and you're just like... [...] I guess the challenge is the main part of why you go there, to see if you can, what will happen to you. [...] I mean, there's a point when you get completely frustrated and lose your patience but we, the whole time, and afterwards, I mean, it was so rewarding and such a great, challenging experience. (Susan)

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The tramping performance had little relationship with an engagement with Nature that went beyond romanticised narratives. As one tramper wrote on one survey: “the views could be better”, showing how little appreciation s/he was demonstrating for that natural environment and how s/he was expecting an almost standardised ‘sublime landscape’ constantly to be presented to her. In fact, such expectation is the norm, as it has become “implicit that the more embodied activities take place against spectacular backcloths.”

Also, the ubiquitous discourse, including the repertoire of performances, revolved about the production of a competitive recreational space and did not comprise primarily articulations and performances of admiration and connectedness; the race prevailed. One episode well illustrated this. A tramper had decided to complete the Northwest Circuit in two days. He went almost without sleep for the two days of his tramp and completed 125 km of very undulating track in forty-eight hours. This achievement was the topic of most conversations during at least four days of my stay on the track. Everyone I spoke to who had met this tramper described his personal characteristics and compared his performance with their own. One tramper who had met the ‘leader of the race’ told me: “he is not doing it any faster than some of us are. He is basically just not stopping or sleeping.” It did not matter the reasons for him choosing to do it (as I do not think it matters now); the emphasis was all about finishing the

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famous long track in a way that you too could be recognized for. Nature seemed very disconnected from this process. Callum, a hunter, commented on this episode, feeling quite puzzled as to why run for almost 48 hours without stop on a track that you are supposed to be enjoying and appreciating:

There was a guy when we were there who came through. He hit our hut at about 5.45 at night and he carried on walked out to Christmas Village that night. So he would have been walking half of it in the dark. And you know, you go back to this thing about what are you doing it? I mean, tell me, what is the point of walking in the dark, you are not going to see anything. [...] I later found out that this guy, he was an Australian, he did the whole thing in two days, the whole Northwest Circuit that you are supposed to do in ten days and he slept for a couple of hours each day only, and that’s it, and that’s how, and it was funny... [...] And it was just because his girlfriend was on the island for a couple of days to do something, to work or, and so he decided to do something for fun and he is a mountaineer and so it was kind of like a challenge. (Callum)

Another persistent topic of conversation amongst trampers was linked to the mud encountered everywhere on the tracks. Stewart Island is famous for its damp, muddy tracks, a feature the islanders are proud of. Having a sublime landscape available, added to by such a singular natural condition, certainly enhances the promotional ‘value’ of the ‘product’. A tramper has to endure not only more than 120 km of undulating, remote terrain, but also must cope with the mud. Thus, the ‘adventure package’ is transformed into an even more demanding product. If you buy it and if you perform it successfully, then you can certainly call yourself a real tramper.
Interestingly though, the mud was remarked upon most commonly as the worst aspect of the visit. In the hut book entries mud is mentioned in almost every comment. One tramper went so far as to say that the Department of Conservation should advise people better, and that the mud encountered is simply not acceptable, although in every brochure about the island’s tramping tracks there is mention of the harshness of the conditions, especially the mud. In the official visitors’ guide brochure the description of the Northwest Circuit is as follows: “The North West Circuit is a 10-12 day hike for experienced and well-equipped trampers. It covers 125 km but is particularly demanding due to the often wet and muddy surfaces for which Stewart Island is famous and the undulating terrain.”

Susan, when I asked her what were the worst aspects of her trip she responded:

And the mud, at times, yes, because there is just so, so much of it, and I, sometimes you kind of sink up to hair in the mud and, oh, I think the main thing that annoys you is that it just took hours longer to get where you wanted to get to, like, an added couple of hours onto each day because there was just so much mud. (Susan)

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Jo showed similar feelings:

I had never gone on a trail that bad before, like I’ve never had such a hard time walking in all that mud, I mean, I’ve done hard hikes but usually they are hard because you’re going uphill forever, like, that’s really steep or something, but I’ve just never gone on a trail where it’s so hard just to walk. It’s very frustrating. (Jo)

One question that emerges from trampers’ responses to mud is; how much do they really care about the nature of the environment in which they are ‘adventuring’? If a naturally occurring condition such as mud is so despised, what environmental characteristics are they seeking? Is the search only for features intrinsic to the race? Is it to be able to say that they completed such a long and harsh track? As one tramper commented in a hut book entry: “finally finished all the Great Walks”.

One other possible answer is the social aspect of the tramping experience. Being ‘away from it all’, with ‘good company’ was a reason frequently mentioned by trampers I interviewed. This narrative of ‘being away from it all’ is a constant feature in tourism discourse. Edensor states that,

rather than transcending the mundane, most forms of tourism are fashioned by culturally coded escape attempts. Moreover, although suffused with notions of escape from normativity, tourists carry quotidian habits and responses with them; they are part of their baggage. Tourism thus involves unreflexive, habitual and practical enactions which reflect common-sense understandings of how to be a tourist. 79

Edensor discusses how every-day practices are important features of the tourism experience. Here I draw a parallel to the trampers’ experiences I engaged with on Stewart Island. The establishment and strengthening of social relationships are important elements of every-day life, but in tourism spaces may be ‘combined’ with narratives of escape. When asked about her motivations to go tramping, Jo, an international student in New Zealand, answered:

It’s interesting cos a girl from the tramping club was doing a Marketing PhD and so she got a group of us together and wrote up all the different reasons why you might go tramping on a white board, and we try to kind of prioritize them, and find out why we went tramping, and we discovered that there is no, like, what we all kind of came to the conclusion that we didn’t go for one particular reason that was about five or six maybe even ten reasons, but I suppose I have thought about

it a bit and the thing that I most, that most makes the trip, a good trip, is the people that are on it. So if you go with a neat bunch of people it doesn’t matter where you go, you have a great time. So that’s really important for me. Another thing is just getting out of Dunedin, it’s, otherwise, we just kind of pass so, so fast, and you don’t really know what you’ve done with your life, so it’s nice to get out and spend a weekend away, because it seems that when you come back on Monday morning you’re all refreshed… and I guess a challenge, to be able to walk up a mountain, it feels good too… (Jo)

Here, again, we can see an emphasis on Nature as setting when Jo states that “if you go with a neat bunch of people it doesn’t matter where you go, you have a great time.” Personally, there was one point when I found myself tired of sinking in every mud patch and finding it so dreadful that the whole experience felt like almost a torture. It was not until I returned from the island that I realised that the mud was an innate part of that environment and that to like that place, and all that can be experienced there, I had to enjoy, or at least appreciate, the mud as well. It is possible that such an essentially nostalgic reminiscence occurred to others.
Searching and Concluding

Tramping certain tracks, in certain parts of the world, has become a mass product for the ‘adventurous some’. Consequently, ‘ticking off’ all, or at least some, of these tracks has become the goal of a certain niche of tourists. The selling of adventure in postmodern tourism inevitably is intermingled with a search for spectacle.\(^{80}\) The trampers of Stewart Island demonstrated through their comments that an opportunity to narrate this engagement with spectacle is available twice; once, certainly in the immediate rhetoric of the tramp and secondly, when narrating recollections of the experience. Spectacle here is closely bound to the production of sublime Nature, where ‘sublime’ has been emptied of significance, with no more power than ‘heavenly’, or any number of other descriptors. The commodification and standardization of the tourist experience, through marketing campaigns and the development of specific tourism products, such as tramping tracks in the sublime Stewart Island environment, as well as the stage itself, in this case Nature, with all its potential sensual and aesthetic powers, greatly influences the types of performances tourists engage in.\(^{81}\)

It seems clear that tramping on Stewart Island illustrates a trend in contemporary society simultaneously to get closer to, and further away from, Nature. As Cloke argues, the interest in Nature in such a detached way presents the tourist with an opportunity to feel engaged in a movement for environmental concern without really taking an active part in it.\(^{82}\) In a ‘society of the spectacle’, adventure, one of such a society’s main products, is purchased and consumed. And the transformation of adventure in Nature into a commodity to be ‘purchased and consumed’ does not need to involve the payment for guided services or tangible other goods, but the homogenisation of the experience and the narratives derived from it. More importantly in the case of Stewart Island tramping, it involves the detachment of Nature from the meaning of the experience, being now simply a product. In this view of society Nature comes to provide only the appropriate setting for the adventure to be experienced.

Another facet of the ‘society of the spectacle’ observed on this tramping experience was that of performing in accord with established behavioural standards and norms. For Edensor, these codes and conventions form a ‘tourist habitus’ that is partially “determined by


\(^{81}\) Edensor, “Performing Tourism, Staging Tourism,” 2001, 63.

unreflexive, embodied, shared assumptions about appropriate behaviour in particular contexts,” and do not represent ‘types of people’, such as a broad category called ‘the international tourist tramper’, but more “as roles adopted rather than social categories made manifest.”83 In this sense when I refer to (international) trampers on Stewart Island throughout this dissertation, it is to the roles I witnessed they play while on the island, and not to a social category they automatically and permanently fit in.

Furthermore, on Stewart Island, the ‘kiwi’ product is one of the most advertised ones, and it is part of the tourism experience to search for it. Thus, even when hoping to encounter a wild animal, the kiwi, as part of the tramping experience, trampers searched for the spectacular; the sighting and not the engaging with. Only the spotting of a kiwi mattered. As one tramper reported, “I am really disappointed that I haven’t seen any kiwis. That was one of the main reasons I came to Stewart Island… I think the kiwi is just a myth to attract tourists!” This comment, as do those about the mud, encapsulates the replacement of use value by exchange value, the essence of commodification.

The experience of the sublime on Stewart Island, therefore, is modulated by two different forces: in the case of hunters, a cultural background that constantly reinforces the engagement with the natural environment as part of an expression of *being*, and in the case of trampers, a media-constructed and -sold tourism concept that fits well in a cultural and physical landscape that is able to provide an experience associated with a produced sublime Nature. In both cases, Nature is constructed to allow for an experience that is designed prior to the actual performance. The narratives and performances of the two groups are influenced by different philosophical positions, and this difference may provoke tensions and conflicts between the different ‘users’ of that ‘natural’ environment. It is the distinction, but also the similarity, between the hunting and tramping performances on Stewart Island that will be the focus of my last analytical chapter.

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83 Edensor, “Performing Tourism, Staging Tourism,” 2001, 60.
Tensions in the Outdoors

Our relations with wildlife are largely structured by emerging competing patterns of leisure. Although non-consumptive forms of wildlife leisure would seem most likely to succeed under these general conditions I would argue that it is by no means cut. While non-violent and protective of animal environments, non-consumptive forms derive from relations that create distance rather than proximity, separation rather than interaction and spectacle rather than sensual, embodied relations. It is moot as to whether non-consumptive forms will always produce a sustainable politics of care that is more robust than one based on consumption. While tourism is still a dominant mode of interacting with our world, within it one can discern a frustration with purely visual forms of engagement and growing interest in closer, more embodied interaction.¹

Social conflicts are, inevitably, an integral part of society, an “expected and functional outcome in a social system.”² Social conflicts are potentially also creative as they can act as a catalyst for social and political change. However, conflicts often are perceived only as destructive, and therefore societal structures frequently are formulated in ways that attempt to eliminate conflict. This approach, focused on elimination is, according to Woehrle and Coy, not ideal since it limits individual creativity and communication, leading to homogeneity and apathy.³ Contemporary conflict theory, on the contrary, advocates conflicts as being potentially positive, and proposes that this alternative approach should guide conflict resolution processes. Therefore, recreation conflict management should not try to avoid conflict but “embrace[e] conflict [...] using it as a creative force to work in a democratic fashion toward outcomes that can be lived with by all.”⁴

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³ Ibid.
Kriesberg claimed that conflict is not simple competition, as several studies in recreation conflict have proposed. Rather, there is a set of factors necessary to trigger conflict and, therefore, one cannot limit the understanding of conflict to one main factor. Cook-Huffman, for instance, argued that social identities and access to goods and resources are antecedents of conflict, but, by the same token, social identities “are modified and sometimes transformed throughout the conflict process.”

In Chapter 4 I argued that hunting in New Zealand is constructed as an expression of national identity. The hunting ethos is constantly reinforced by practices that highlight culturally significant and historically mediated performances deeply connected to a distinctive way of being a New Zealander. On Stewart Island, these performances are intensely experienced, due particularly to the significance of the sublime environment in which hunters immerse themselves, but due also to the length of their stay, which allows them fully to engage with such a sublime landscape. International trampers on Stewart Island, on the other hand, tend to reproduce a standardized tourist performance that disconnects the individual from the environment, and where sensual involvement tends to be limited to visual engagements. For these trampers, the natural environment, a commodity in a tourism modus operandi that sells the experience, is no more than the setting for their performance, and is constitutive of identity only to the extent of confirming their personally unacknowledged status of demanding consumer. This demanding consumerism is what militates against a sensual engagement with the mud, for instance. Although the mud is repeatedly mentioned in conversations and hut books, and involves the senses of touch and smell, it is reported as an unwanted by-product of the main product, the tourism experience. This wholly negative engagement is not how the term sensual is generally understood. However, trampers do engage with a distinct New Zealand way of framing Nature, as Nature is an essential part of New Zealand national identity and it is sold to the tourist accordingly.

These two contexts for the constitution of identity, although distinct, take place in the same location. Contemporaneously, hunters produce the hunting space, closely connected with the construction of place, particularly ‘camp as home’, while trampers operate within a tourism

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space that is produced and provided by others, specifically tourism agencies and tourist service providers, as part of the country’s tourism product. This provision of space does little to facilitate place making; tramping huts, as used by these trampers, and in contrast to the hunters, are not constructed as home. In the case of hunters, the historically and culturally situated concept of the sublime may be argued to be an external factor in producing the hunting space, but since it is so deeply acculturated within these individuals it may better be considered internal. Therefore, hunters may collectively produce a space that is meaningful and that allows place making and the perpetuation of a collective identity.

The production of space is a means to reaffirm a collective identity, creating an imaginary boundary where a repertoire of narratives and performances are expected to take place. Hunters, then, are involved in a performance that emphasises a collective identity that, in turn, legitimizes the hunting practice and its significance to a New Zealand sense of self. A positive social identity plays a significant role in the development of a positive self identity and therefore is of extreme importance to individuals. Practices that challenge one’s social identity have the potential to disturb. It is this disturbance, created by the production of these distinct and potentially conflicting spaces, that the hunters’ produced from within and the trampers’ were supplied with from without, that this chapter aims to discuss. Central to any understanding of this conflict over the production and utilisation of these distinct spaces are the philosophical positions to which the protagonists subscribe, however unselfconsciously.

**Framing Contrasts**

My embodied engagement with hunting/hunters and tramping/trampers in New Zealand, and more specifically on Stewart Island, together with my constant search for a nuanced understanding of these practices, gave me opportunities to reflect on the experiences and performances of Others and of myself that I believe contribute to the recurrent discussion of recreation conflict in outdoor environments. These experiences, and such a reflection, (in)form the argument of this chapter. Here I argue that recreation conflict, at least insofar as it concerns hunters and trampers on Stewart Island, is deeply bonded to the notion of space.

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8 Maier, “‘Being There’,” 2007.
The production of space, in the case of hunters, is modulated by shared philosophical positions that connect individuals and the environment, and produce a collective identity that is in turn significant to oneself. For international trampers, in contrast, philosophical positions might not be shared and there is no group identity that unites and guides the production of the tourism space in which they operate. Such an approach has not been incorporated into current academic discussions of recreation conflict, despite (superficial) mentioning of social identity and place attachment in the conflict literature. Therefore, this space-centred approach serves to advance the discussions in this field.

In order to present my argument, I have opted to analyse the production of these spaces by contrasting some ways of performing ‘hunting’ and ‘tramping’ on Stewart Island. To facilitate the discussions I will present these performances separated into two themes that will, between them, provide the context within which to understand the hunting and the tramping spaces associated with this island.

Performing the Norm
The first of these themes is how the characteristic behaviours of these groups affect their experiencing of the hunting/tramping spaces. I understand that individuals may not fully subscribe to some of these norms, and neither is this an attempt to generalise from idiosyncratic behaviours. I understand also, nonetheless, that the creation of norms and adherence to them is part of the process of collective identity building, and therefore opposition to, or subversion of, these norms may be considered as acts of resistance.\(^ {11}\) According to Brewer and Gardner, “the collective self […] reflects internalizations of the norms and characteristics of important reference groups and consists of cognitions about the self that are consistent with that group identification.”\(^ {12}\) It is in this sense that I discuss certain performances as normative, as they are vehicles for the reinforcement of self and of collective identity.

In chapter 4 I established that hunters travel in larger groups (usually 4-12 people) and commonly remain based at one hut for longer periods of time (around 7 to 10 days, on average). In addition, the hunting trip typically is considered the most important holiday trip

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11 Heywood, in an empirical survey study of three different outdoor recreation activities, argued that socially accepted behavioural norms are perceived as obligations to behave in particular ways and were highly crystallized amongst his research participants, a finding that supports my argument here. Heywood, “The Cognitive and Emotional Components of Behavior Norms in Outdoor Recreation,” 2002.

12 Brewer and Gardner, “Who is This ‘We’?,” 2004, 68.
of the year, and is planned in detail and anticipated throughout the year. As one hunter wrote in a survey form: “guys waiting 12 months to hunt one of Stewart Island’s better hunting blocks.” Another hunter, Marty, said in a conversation:

I hunt in other areas as well, yeah. Stewart Island is our biggest trip of the year, it’s our big holiday. So, it’s the biggest trip, and most of the other ones are sort of weekends, you know, long weekends and stuff like that. (Marty)

Beyond these descriptive accounts, some characteristics of the hunting and tramping experiences are starkly contrasting. Since hunters tend to be based in only one location they are relieved of the constraint of carrying all food and equipment each day from hut to hut. Thus, hunting is associated with considerable volumes of food supplies (including alcohol) that are considered luxurious, bordering on excessive, by other recreationists. As one hunter mentioned in a survey: “Hunters eat steak, stew, bread, etc. while trampers eat freeze dried food and tend to get a bit jealous.” Indeed, backcountry luxury items, it emerges, are an important element of hunters place-making on Stewart Island; part of the construction of home.

Stewart Island is a bit different, for some reason, it is like… every year we try and out-do each other and try to get something a bit different… Always someone brings something along that’s something better than the year before … but, as I say, we do take a lot of crap, though, God! [...] I mean… yeah, like last year we had a, a shower out, you know, hot, you know, we had hot water and… and it was great. You know, we had a shower there and we took a fridge to keep our beers cold, I mean, that’s all part of it, just trying to make the… yeah, we enjoy the roughness but we don’t wanna do it too hard… (Marty)
One could argue that such a behaviour in fact detracts from the idea of ‘going back to basics’ discussed in Chapter 4 and, as a consequence, from Nature itself. It seems indeed contradictory, but it does not invalidate the close, sensual experience of the environment however. In fact, the artefacts that are taken to camps and huts are there to provide a sense of home for hunters who are mostly urban dwellers but who make an effort to ‘re-connect’ in an essentially Romantic way. As Ortega y Gasset’s quote in the first page of this dissertation affirm, hunting is indeed a problematic pursuit.

Hunters’ place-making effort certainly contrasts with the ephemeral nature of the tramping experience of place in these huts. Trampers tend to wake up early in the morning to get ready for the tramp, eat a quick breakfast, and depart for the track. The location for lunch is usually chosen beforehand, by looking at the map and finding a ‘half-way-through-spot’ in a seemingly pleasant setting to stop at, such as flat open country or by the beach, and typically not more than 45 minutes will be spent in the location. The walk continues until trampers reach the final destination, the hut, where they settle in, prepare a simple dinner, play some cards, talk a little, and retire to bed not long after sunset. The next day the process is repeated, and the hut and its surroundings are left behind, leaving little chance for place-making to occur. Tony, a hunter, expresses well this contrast between the effort to create a meaningful place and the fleeting experience of most trampers:

When we go hunting we usually stay in one hut for a period of time and it is usually somewhere where we will transport all of our supplies in by boat, which means we will have a lot of supplies, gas cookers, a lot of meat, vegetables, stuff like that. So when the trampers come through and they have got their freeze dried foods and things like that, as you would be aware of, and you see somebody, they have got a big pot on the fire, the coal burner ranges that are there, and we bring our coal as well, bags and bags of coal, we bring in axes and saws to chop up any wood that is lying around and so we sort of actually have all these nice comforts and I think we probably have our stuff spread out a little bit and we have got to make room and if we know there is trampers coming in or if we leave for the day, we always make room for someone if somebody does come in but I think, maybe some trampers feel a little bit hacked off because they see you with the food bubbling away on the stove and there is maybe a couple dozen beer sitting in the corner or something like that and all these sort of luxuries that you can’t have and or cart round with you when you are tramping. I mean we have gas toasters to make up toast, all on the gas cookers and you will have probably two or three bottles of gas there. So we have ample lighting and all the rest of it, so we can do our cooking at night when it is dark because we have still got lights as well as cookers, whereas I think with most trampers they have only got the one little bottle, so they will get
their cooking done, all in one pot and when that’s finished, they have to do it before it gets dark, because when that’s finished, they will have to put the gas lights. I do think they sort of get a little bit hacked off, with that, in that respect. (Tim)

The consumption of alcohol in backcountry huts emerged as an important aspect of the hunting groups’ activities. From my own experiences with hunters on Stewart Island, as well as from academic and non-academic hunting literature, socialising and sharing experiences is clearly an important part of the hunting experience. Adding to this characteristic, hunting groups are almost exclusively comprised of men, who consume more alcohol, and more frequently, than do women. Marty, talking about the consumption of beer in his hunting party, explained:

down on Stewart Island, I mean... I’ve been down there when …it’s been absolutely teeming, gusty winds, horrible, horrible weather, so...


those little comforts come in handy then ... it's just a way to keep up
the good fun, I suppose. (Marty)

Along the same lines, Callum noted:

so things we take are pretty basic comforts, what I think, you know,
and again we take beer and we take fridges, (laughs) to keep our beer
cold! Well, this is not luxury, they are necessities! You can't drink warm
beer, that’s just not enjoyable. (laughs) ... It’s about having a good time
and so you need some of those props to help you make the most of it,
you know what I mean? That’s how I view it. (Callum)

The consumption of alcohol is an important point of distinction between hunters and
trampers. Trampers are unable to carry such items, although some carry a bottle of wine, for
instance, which in such cases is treated as an extravagance. Hunters, by contrast, tend to
consume alcohol every day. Furthermore, the daily routine of hunters as it relates to the
consumption of alcohol stands in contrast to trampers’. As Marty explained with reference to
conflicts associated with alcohol consumption:

well, at the end of the day the hunters come back... later in the
evening, trampers basically want to go to bed then. ...We'll come back,
we'll have our tea and most of the trampers are already in bed, and
they'd wanna probably sit around, have a couple of quiet drinks, which
they can't do, 'cause they got to get up and tramp, and they can't carry
that sort of stuff with them. I'd say 90% it's probably alcohol related,
or 80% of it alcohol related, and you know, the other 20% is probably
attitude related. (Marty)

Similar comments were expressed by trampers:

Obviously hunters’ hours are quite different to trampers’, so they sort
of hang around in the hut during the day, and they were heading... they
arrived back quite late... so we only had to ask them to be quiet once
so we could get to sleep, but they were very considerate. (Carla)

These experiences indicated some interesting elements of host/guest and home/visitor
relationships inherent in the use of huts by hunters and trampers. It has been noted that
hunters are able to carry large amounts of supplies by virtue of accessing sites by motorised
transport, and being more settled in terms of hut use. As a consequence, hunters are able to
‘make themselves at home’ in shared public-use huts. Huts that are used by hunters as bases
can become cluttered with hunting equipment and supplies. With reference to this, some
trampers expressed the view that huts can serve as a second home to hunters, which can make trampers feel a bit uneasy when arriving at a hut at the end of a long day.

The life with hunters groups was strange because you seem to arrive in their house, so it doesn’t give you a good impression. (Linda)

We came across a whole lot of hunters actually, at East Ruggedy Hut, ... they made themselves very much at home, ... it was quite a large group of them... they were very friendly, they, yeah, offered us food and everything, I think, well, that’s what I’ve come across with all hunting parties who are in huts but, yeah, they definitely spread themselves in the huts a little bit. (Dan)

This supports my suggestion that the place-making effort, and the performance of place, ‘hut as home’, is simultaneously part of the production of the hunting space and interferes and contrasts with the experiences of trampers, which in turn interferes with the experience of hunters and their place-making effort. At ‘home’ you do not expect to host complete strangers, and accommodating trampers when they arrive at ‘base camp’ can be frustrating. Nonetheless, several hunting parties, being aware of the shared location, perform as hosts, providing clear evidence of their construction of place.
An important point regarding the host/guest performance refers to the performance of localism enacted by hunters and the general acceptance of trampers to perform as fleeting tourists. Franklin indicates that hunters, in general, tend to choose locations that are known to them, and in New Zealand this is no different. In fact, as I have been arguing, the hunting experience is inextricably connected to place-making.

In comparison with other tourists, the consumptive practices of hunters and anglers tend to form around known places, even if they are not locals themselves. While there are certainly those hunter and anglers who do travel widely, it also true that both traditions place great emphasis on knowing their country, nature and landscape. In their writings, hunters and anglers tend to emphasize their knowledgeability and love of place in terms of its particularities. These tend to be embodied experiences and are expressed in visual terms, colours, landscapes, light and shade, but also in terms of smells and tactile experiences. It is also about knowing where things are (local bush foods, birds’ nests, water, wallows, snake infested areas etc) and how they change over the season. Hunters cultivate an association with particular areas because in hunting the knowledge of these particularities becomes greater than a sum of the parts and are a tangible factor in the successful hunt.15

As Franklin rightly argues, the sensual engagement with the natural environment, and being knowledgeable enough to have the ability to engage with place-making, are essential parts of the hunting experience. Without those elements, hunting would not provide a fully satisfying experience for most Stewart Island hunters. Conversely, for trampers the search for novelty, being on different tracks, seeing different (and spectacular) scenery, spotting different nonhuman animals – all essentially visual engagements – is more important than the sensual engagements that these elements could provide. Place-making, therefore, is not indispensable for the tramping experience.

An interesting comment by one tramper indicates that this place-making behaviour is characteristic of a style of travel that hunters, more than trampers, tend to have. In the case reported by Carla, a non-hunter had been staying in a Southern Circuit hut for a week by the time Carla arrived with her friends: “I felt like we were intruding a little bit because he sort of made himself quite at home.” For her, it was unexpected to see such a behaviour coming from a tramper “so much like ourselves,” but who was, nonetheless, not performing the norm. He had, like hunters, created a strong connection to that place, which seemed to be alien to the tourist tramping experience. Here, it may be appropriate to infer that the lonely tramper was creating a site of resistance by ignoring the tramping norms that have been created and

‘imposed’ on tourists by the New Zealand tourism industry.16 Maybe more importantly, for this tramber as well as for hunters the natural environment is indeed “coconstituent of place-making” as Cloke and Perkins suggest, and not a mere setting as I have argued it is the case for most trammers on the island.17

Another factor which relates to the large amount of gear taken by hunters to the huts concerns their mode of access, that is, the use of motor boats, helicopters and fixed-wing planes to reach hunting grounds, more precisely, the camps and huts where they will usually spend a week. For trammers, seeing motorised vehicles during their stay in a remote island like Stewart Island, devalues their experience.18

I was lucky to have 2 days/ nights at Doughboy Bay with nobody there because a group of hunters flew in as I was leaving. I think it’s good to get rid of the deer but it ‘cheapens’ the experience with them flying/boating in all over. (Kurt)

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On the other hand, trampers’ style of travelling and general characteristics might also affect hunters’ experiences. Despite the Stewart Island tramping reputation, the island does attract a large number of trampers who are inexperienced and this is frequently criticised by hunters. Again, the hunting performance is a reinforcement of a national identity, extremely bonded to place. Such a performance therefore needs to contain elements of ‘localism’, or proving local knowledge. It is through the conscious noting of the Other’s inability to perform in an environment that is familiar to hunters that they are able to emphasise their own ‘ownership’ of the place, legitimizing them as hosts.

It’s when, once again, the inexperienced people come in and they put a burden on other people that are experienced and are prepared for it, I mean, I’ve seen some hilarious things on the island, and particularly from people getting dropped off and they are walking around in sneakers and black jeans and they’ve got this pack and they’ve got a pot hanging outside, it’s just ridiculous and … they’ve got no cooker and, you know, that sort of behaviour puts a strain on the whole thing. (Patrick)

We have had trampers staying on extra days, they actually stayed on two or three days to come out and fish with us and, one guy, a Canadian guy came, on the day of that deer I told you that we couldn’t find, when we found it he carried it the way back to the hut, so that sort of thing, he loved it, we trying to talk him into having a break, but he wanted to say, I carried a deer back, so that’s one thing he wanted to do it, so obviously you can carry it out, so that’s more our experience. We took a German guy out fishing one day and he caught a big blue cod and he was just buzzing, he was just over the moon and he said “oh that’s the first fish I ever caught”, he said, I live miles from the sea, so when you think he had that experience it’s quite nice to be part of that. It’s quite nice to think, well he’ll remember that, that will be a memory for life, you know, the fact that we could take him out in our boat let him experience that, is quite cool you know, yeah. (Garth)
Episodes like this illustrate dramatically the potential for host and guest performances, as well as the distinctiveness between the hunters’ space and that of the trampers. Another cause of criticism, but not necessarily a reason for conflict, comes from the fact that trampers remain on tracks and go only from one hut to another and therefore, hunters say, do not experience the environment as much as hunters do. This characteristic, according to some hunters, leads trampers to have a poor understanding of the problems and necessities of the ‘bush’ and therefore contributes to a lack of tolerance and understanding between the two groups.

It’s all very nice having the thick bush, but, I mean, I love it but my argument too is that’s cool but who’s actually gonna enjoy it? I mean, you, quite honestly, like the Milford Track, you could cut, say, from the track back 10 meters and then from 10 meters beyond cut the whole forest down, no one will know... no one will know, except for the hunters that get to go there hunting, ‘cause all the trampers do is walk on the track. That’s it. They’re not enjoying the nature, ‘cause they’ve never being into it. So they’re walking on the main railway track, or whatever that is, a state highway. (Marty)
It can be argued that hunters perceive trampers, in comparison to hunters, as less embedded in the natural environment when engaging in their outdoor activity. I argue that trampers on Stewart Island, due to a lack of sensual connections with the environment, the provision of a pre-defined tourist space, and the relative inability to create an attachment to place, consume Nature as detached from oneself. The experience does require the natural environment, but its participation is limited to a visual, ideal (and idealised), setting.

Despite all the differences, hunters and trampers on the island found a commonality through the need to share huts, tracks and their experiences, and few general negative comments were ever present in their narratives. In fact, both groups reported more positive experiences than negative ones. Several trampers I met on the island found it quite amusing to meet hunters in huts, as they were usually not only more knowledgeable about the area but also had interesting ‘tales’ to tell. Moreover, a number of trampers were very happy to be offered fresh fish or venison caught by hunters, as well as some fresh vegetables and a can or two of beer.

[I] stayed in a hut with 7 hunters. They were friendly and offered me food. I don’t believe there is conflict between trampers and hunters. (Survey participant)

I think there is a natural unspoken animosity between trampers and hunters, but this is all but unapparent here. […] The two groups can easily coexist […] If any problems with hunters are reported, I assume is hyper sensibility and a foregone distaste for hunting seeking any outlet of indignation. In truest truth, there exists no conflict on Stewart Island. (Dan)

There was these two guys, one from Switzerland and one from Germany, I think they were, they thought it was quite amusing, I think, to be honest, […] to turn up to a hut and have these guys seemingly in the middle of nowhere, and made themselves so at home, and I think they sort of watched with a bit of wonder, but no, they definitely didn’t have any negative comments to make or anything, they quite enjoyed it… I mean, they were really good company so it was quite nice to… I think they were very open to meeting new people on the track, so quite aware that there would be other people using the huts. (Caroline)

Once again, with place-making being such a central part of the hunting performance, and with its being constructed through their rituals and through the necessity of legitimizing their practice as an expression of national identity, when sharing huts with trampers hunters perform as hosts, creating a hunting space that trampers can be part of only as fleeting guests.
who respect their hosts’ rules. On the other hand, due to trampers’ lack of a collective identity binding them together, and the provision, from the outside, of a tourist space that they feel compelled to accept and situate themselves within, trampers tend not to make an effort for the creation of a meaningful place. Hence, trampers accept the distinction between the two spaces and perform, towards hunters, as guests.

Clearly, precedence is being given here to the hunters’ space, with trampers deferring to the hunters’ more established position. Accordingly, hunters seemed very pleased to meet different trampers every day, especially overseas visitors, as they could reinstate their status as hosts.

We all enjoyed the relaxation, hunting and fishing, as well as trampers. Trampers are interesting to get to know and learn of their home countries and experiences. (Callum)

We fed two lots of trampers with fish and they loved it! (Peter)

We do our best not to cause frustration to others and like to provide them with cooked fish, cold beer and other "extravagances" (showers, etc.). On this trip we offered to take a French tramper fishing...he declined because the weather was not too good and he wanted to get on the track. Previously we have taken a German tramper out fishing and he loved it... caught his first fish. I believe it is good to mix hunters and trampers as long as people are mindful of others and want them to have a good experience. (Marty)

In addition, hunters on Stewart Island are usually more attached to the setting than are trampers, contributing to this host behaviour. This sentiment of place construction and attachment is consistent with the political organisation of hunters and their active involvement in discussions on issues related to the management of the island. Stewart Island is highly valued by this group and most users are recurrent visitors who pass the ‘legacy’ of Stewart Island hunting from generation to generation. Trampers were less attached to the location, had few opportunities for place construction and predominantly were first time and one-off visitors.


Another important element of the hunting and tramping context is hut etiquette, which forms a significant part of New Zealand’s outdoor recreation norms. There are over 950 public backcountry huts spread around conservation areas in New Zealand providing an excellent and frequently visited facility for outdoor recreationists in the country.21 Because of such an immense network, and what it represents to New Zealanders and outdoor enthusiasts from around the world, a code has developed with some simple points that hut users usually follow: a hut-use etiquette that is well established in the recreational context. This etiquette includes practices such as signing the hut book on arrival and departure, keeping huts clean and tidy, removing all non-biodegradable material on departure, replacing all firewood used, sweeping floors, cleaning benches, propping up mattresses and paying hut fees.22

Non-compliance with hut etiquette is frequently reported as a cause of conflict between park users.23 It is my argument here that hut etiquette, particularly on Stewart Island where the production of space is differentiated between the two most common user groups, is inextricably linked to place-making and the production of a particular recreation or tourist space. Common complaints raised by hunters related to trampers not restocking firewood supplies and not cleaning tramping boots before going into huts, a clear performance of hosts operating in their familiar place.

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21 Department of Conservation, Homepage, 2007.
Trampers are quick to whinge and moan about things but I’ve never seen a trampler restock the wood pile, go out there with a bloody saw and cut up some wood or anything, they’re quite happy to use our wood. You know, that pisses me off. I’ve never seen them... the people that I do see cleaning huts up are generally kiwis, experienced trampers that as they leave their bunk room they give their bunk room a sweep out and, you know, is all nice and clean. (Marty)

Here, New Zealand trampers are referred to as knowledgeable as they too have a historical and cultural connection to the ‘outdoorsy’ performance expected from New Zealanders and one which is an inherent part of the hunting performance.²⁴

Generally the first thing we do when we get there is, obviously after unpacking the bucket load of luggage... a couple of guys go out and got a whole lot of drift wood... and we cut heaps of wood ... and also a couple of guys will clean the hut, so the hut is all nice and clean... things all packed away... And then the trampers come in with their bloody dirty boots, they don’t give a shit! (David)

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It is evident that international visitors are not as familiar with such norms and might not follow them as New Zealanders generally do, in that they are the expected performance in the New Zealand backcountry. As tourists who are provided with only minimum information about local behavioural expectations, specifically backcountry ones, due to the commodity status of the tramping activity in New Zealand tourism strategies, trampers are even more alienated from the subtleties of this culturally-nuanced, etiquette-based possibility of place-making. The product that is being sold to them is not to be engaged with in a lasting manner, but through ‘accelerated’ and transient performances, allowing for more products to be consumed in a short period of time. Such an engagement, although fully embodied as Bell and Lyall remind us, seems to be less reliant on senses other than the visual, maintaining both Nature and local manifestations of culture distanced from the performance, and participating in the experience only as setting.

Clearly, hut etiquette can be a cause of conflict for trampers also. In fact, most complaints about hunters concerned hut etiquette and were particularly focused on the fact that hunters tended to use too much room and were not particularly accommodating of trampers. However, such an attitude (occupying too much room) is a reflection of the place-making effort of the hunting experience, but in this case, with careless disregard for the ‘appropriate’ hosting performance. Most importantly, it does not represent a lack of ‘local’ knowledge of hut etiquette but an explicit attempt to disturb ‘unwelcomed guests’. Nonetheless, trampers criticised hut users in general terms more often than singling out hunters specifically; common themes revolved around untidiness, noise and disrespect for nature. As Jo said in a conversation: “Hunters are not necessarily the ‘bad guys’. It’s people in general! People who have no respect for others and who end up messing up for everyone!” Here again the production of space seems to be central to the conflict situation. When the hunting space intrudes upon the tourist space, or any other for that matter, without an effort to accommodate both spaces in a harmonious way, as with the production of the host/guest environment, conflict tends to occur.

Previous studies in the New Zealand conservation estate show that crowding is frequently a source of conflict between visitors and is usually related to negative impressions about the experience. In the present research crowding was mentioned several times by participants who usually associated crowding with unpleasant situations. In fact, crowding was the single

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major source of conflict reported by both trampers and hunters in the survey conducted during the initial stages of my ‘PhD journey’. Informal conversations showed also that, even when complaints were directed at one specific group (i.e. trampers or hunters), the actual source of conflict was crowding and not group-related activity or behaviour. The following comment made by one respondent (tramper) from the survey illustrates the feeling: “hunters crowding huts.” Caroline, a tramper, described a situation that she experienced on the Southern Circuit to exemplify a conflict event that could have arisen with any other group:

you wouldn’t want to bump into another bigger group in there because the huts are just so tiny, they’re sort of... the bunks space and the actual moving around space is very limited by the time you have a bench and the little fires. (Caroline)

Another survey respondent (tramper) rated his experience as ‘satisfying’ rather than ‘very satisfying’ because there were: “too many people (hunters and trampers) [on tracks/in huts], did not feel remote.”


In Chapter 1, ‘Choosing the Topic: A Personal Journey’ I expand on the first efforts I made to understand the ‘conflict’ between trampers and hunters on Stewart Island, including the administration of a survey during my first few visits to the island.
Here it is interesting to note that Stewart Island is considered a remote destination, where one will experience wilderness and isolation. The *Lonely Planet* guidebook states that the atmosphere on the island is “remote, rugged, and friendly” while the Department of Conservation describes the island in an almost poetic way, emphasising the natural features and remoteness from other landmasses:\(^{28}\)

From the South Island, Stewart Island can be seen on most days as a mysterious jagged, dark blue lump on the horizon. When the weather drives in from the Southern Ocean the island disappears behind low cloud and grey sheets of cold rain. On clear summer days the island seems very close and shines an inviting blue-green, topped by rocky mountain peaks. To the north is often stormy Foveaux Strait and the South Island, to the east, west and south lies the endless tracts of unforgiving Southern Ocean. Sea-pounded cliffs and sandy beaches make up the western coast while on the eastern side of the island there are three sheltered inlets:\(^{29}\)

It is in this ‘mood’ that the ‘tramping product’ is sold, and if a specific aspect of the experience does not match the ‘advert’, then the overall experience is compromised. Again, engaging with that environment is satisfying only if ‘one gets what one paid for’, reiterating

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\(^{29}\) Department of Conservation, “Rakiura National Park,” 2009, n/p.
the commodification of Nature and of the experience. The construction of wilderness as devoid of humans, as discussed previously, means that the ‘true’ experience of wilderness can be attained only if humans are not in sight. Hence, meeting “too many people” jeopardizes the experience. Here I would like to draw the reader’s attention to the philosophical debates raised previously in Chapter 3. For trampers on Stewart Island, it is the concept of ‘wilderness’ that drives the tramping product that is being consumed. Nature, in this sense, is therefore ‘Other’ to trampers, being simply a means to ‘escape from civilisation’, for instance. Hence, the dualism discussed in Chapter 3 remains clearly present in trampers’ experiences on Stewart Island and is as irresolvable as ever.

Firearms and Killing Nonhuman Animals
The second key theme that emerged from this study revolves around contrasting views on the use of firearms and the killing of animals. Previous studies have highlighted the potential for conflict arising from polarised views on such matters. Although usually analysed as separate subjects of discussion (which I agree they are), I opted to examine both issues combined here because, despite the vast literature on the subjects (especially the killing of animals), I do not feel that these individual themes emerged strongly enough in this research to justify separate analysis. In fact, despite the great emphasis placed on these issues in philosophical debates about hunting, particularly discussions emanating from ecofeminists and animal rights’ scholars, on Stewart Island these issues were not prevalent in the narratives of trampers. However, due to their prevalence in the philosophical discussions surrounding modern hunting, I feel that it is imperative to highlight the (lack of) concern over firearms and killing of nonhuman animals.

The use of rifles by hunters has, in the academic literature, been associated with the display of masculinity, and some groups, especially feminists, censure the activity based on critiques of patriarchal society. As one hunter quoted by Marx and Chavez expressed: “The non-hunter believes we make these decisions on a desire for a macho thrill. I cannot remember that feeling ever coming over me while hunting.” However, such critiques were not the case among trampers on Stewart Island. When the use of firearms was mentioned as a cause of

32 As quoted in Marx and Chavez, “Conflict and Coalitions,” 2002, 211.
concern or problem, it was invariably related to safety issues. One tramper, Jo, describing a conflict situation some friends had had with a group of hunters on the Hollyford Track, stated:

one of the trips had an unpleasant interaction [with hunters] in a sense that the hunters seemed to be shooting and not really being that careful and weren’t initially aware that there would be other people, despite being at the Hollyford Track, you know, and they [trampers] were just surprised that a) they were not sure if they [hunters] are allowed in there, and b) they just didn’t feel very safe. (Jo)

The same tramper mentioned a situation where she felt briefly disturbed because of the use of firearms:

the interactions I have had [with hunters] have all been pleasant... but I remember coming down the South Temple and coming around the corner and a guy was standing with a gun, like, we nearly fell over, we were so scared, but he apologised profusely because he hadn’t mean to scare us like that. (Jo)

A similar episode was described by Callum, a hunter who, like the hunter mentioned above, was extremely apologetic about the uncomfortable situation he had created:

It was just one you couldn’t avoid it. I was hunting along the track and I came through a little creek and came up and stood on a knob and he was making his way through a big mud bog and I saw him before he saw me and I thought, if I had said something, I would spook him because you know, so just for a split second I didn’t do anything and then he looked up and I forgot I had a camo net on and that’s quite a scary thing to see. It looks, you know, it’s like the bloody army. So I gave him a hell of a fright anyway and I felt bad about that for a while, you know, I wish that hadn’t happened but some things are inevitably aren’t they. Two people meet, one of us was going to get a fright. […]

[…] He didn’t say [anything], no. But I was mindful afterwards, I was thinking, “oh shit, I probably gave him a hell of a fright.” I tried to work out how, is there a better way to have done it. Maybe I should have coughed or [thinks] or tried to let him know, because he did get a hell of a fright. He, [makes a scared sound] but at the end of the day it’s not the end of the world is it. (Callum)

33 “The Hollyford Track is the only major track in Fiordland [National Park] at low altitude which can be walked in any season and also connects to the Fiordland coastline.” Department of Conservation, “Hollyford Track,” 2009, n/p.
Nevertheless, hunters on Stewart Island seemed to be very aware of feelings of discomfort that may emerge in the presence of firearms, and were considerate to other users, usually safely storing guns as well as keeping them out of sight so as not to upset or disturb trampers.

I always put my firearm away and I generally have it beside my bed, tucked up beside the bed so they are away, out of sight, out of mind, which I just think it’s a nice thing to do. (Tim)

International visitors were certainly more put off by the use of firearms. This can be explained by the fact that New Zealanders are more accustomed to hunting, and therefore to the use of firearms for that specific purpose, as this activity is considered a longstanding element of New Zealand outdoor culture and lifestyle.34

The killing of nonhuman animals is a major issue concerning hunting in modern society. As modern forms of production have changed, and rural villages have grown into large cities, many species of nonhuman animals have been distanced from individuals, and modern relations with nonhuman animals have altered substantially.35 In fact, today most city dwellers do not witness the killing of the nonhuman animal they consume and eat meat that comes already skinned and butchered. Reflecting this point, one Stewart Island tramper reported feeling squeamish and disgusted when seeing a deer carcass hanging outside a hut. This social change has triggered the emergence of social movements concerned with animal rights, animal ethics, animal welfare and animal consciousness. These movements have considerably impacted on hunting and the views held by members of society towards this activity.36 From one perspective, hunting is a cruel sport that involves the killing of sentient beings for no justifiable reason; from a hunters’ perspective, it is a natural activity and a fair form of killing for food.37 Hunters generally reject preconceived notions of hunting as animal cruelty, with some highlighting the hypocritical elements of hunter criticism:

It’s quite funny these people that judge other people in a way... like people that judge us to be hunting, and yet I guarantee that they all eat

chicken, and I guarantee that the chicken are being [raised]... probably in a battery. (Marty)

well, yeah, I mean, and that’s the thing with the whole hunting thing, I mean, the animals are in the wild, generally it doesn’t know that you are there, so generally doesn’t know that it has been shot, and generally the kill is really quick. (Tim)

As I say, it just sort of intrigues me why people... go on about hunting...you know, fine, don’t eat meat then! (Garth)

These conflicts have found fertile ground in outdoor recreation landscapes and Stewart Island is one of the places where hunters may find confronters. A few hunters reported antagonistic feelings towards the “tree huggers” and vegetarians. In fact, one comment by a frequent visitor to the island was judgmental, classifying vegetarians as “complete idiots,” with “no common sense or any idea of what they are talking about [when opposing hunting].” Another hunter, when asked in a conversation if he had been asked by a tramper why he killed animals, said:

oh... yeah, you get a bit of that... every now and then, as I say, you know, it's the usual tree-hugger type, [...] I mean, you get, occasionally get someone who sort of goes on about it, but you know, I mean, that’s their view, that’s fine. Ah, doesn’t worry me. They’re entitled to their opinion, and so am I. So, you know... it’s my country, it’s... you know, we are lucky enough to be able to go and hunt, so that’s what I enjoy doing. I don’t give them a hard time for tramping around an island with no purpose, so... don’t understand it, you know..., but it’s fine, they wanna do it, so... (Callum)

But again, as with the usage of firearms, international visitors are more prone to oppose hunting in all its forms. According to Lovelock, New Zealand does not have as strong an animal rights movement as countries such as England and the United States, and this mitigates strong opposition feelings. Moreover, hunting is more socially accepted as a cultural manifestation in New Zealand and other outdoor enthusiasts are used to meeting hunters in huts and tracks.

An interesting situation happened at Mason Bay Hut. An English tramper was talking about her time on the island with hunters and described it as a very rewarding experience, the major reason being that she was able to learn about New Zealand culture and appreciate a

different perspective on hunting. This tramper strongly opposed hunting in England and supported the groups that finally had fox hunting banned in 2004. However, she stated that hunting in New Zealand was embedded in a different social and cultural history, and that it showed a nice synergy between hunters and the natural world, with strong respect for the land and the animal that it is being killed. In England, fox hunting is viewed as extremely connected with elitism, snobbishness and frivolity, and those were the sentiments that she was mostly opposed to.40

Understanding Tensions
Conclusions may be drawn from the material presented above that may contribute to the better understanding of what has been called recreation conflict in outdoor environments. Firstly, as demonstrated in Chapter 1, real and potential conflict situations arising within outdoor recreation environments have been widely discussed in the tourism, leisure and recreation literature based on an arguably simplistic, management-focused approach. In this literature, there is only sparse mention of the concepts of place and space as relevant constituents of the outdoor experience. Therefore, the possible tensions, or conflicts, that may arise from polarised values, attitudes, norms and behaviours in these environments have not been thoroughly discussed as possibly associated with issues related to the production of space and the process of place-making. My argument here is that such concepts are central to a more nuanced understanding of conflict in recreational spaces, particularly those in which concepts of Nature may be challenged by different norms of behaviour.

On Stewart Island, the production of the hunting space, although historically situated and passed on culturally from generation to generation, is central to the hunting experience and involves a place-making effort that reinforces the cultural history of hunting in this country, as well as wider social norms related to outdoor activities.41 Understanding space and place as inseparable, but at the same time distinct, both the production of the hunting space and hunters’ place-making effort – that creates ‘hut as home’ and facilitates the performance of hunters as hosts – are extremely powerful aspects of the hunting performance that cannot be overlooked, or simply merged. Following Wainwright and Barnes, I do not believe that either


41 Such norms may be associated to hut etiquette, to the sensual engagement with the sublime, to the constant search for this interaction, among others.
space or place should be favoured, one over the other, but that the constitution of each is central to the constitution of the other. In the case of hunting on Stewart Island, the production of the hunting space helps in the constitution of a significant place for hunters, which in turn reinforces the hunting space. One does not take precedence over the other, nor is it possible for them to be disconnected. Therefore, the hunting practice as a cultural performance cannot properly be understood if it is itself disconnected from these two metaphysical concepts of place and space. Finch highlights the importance of these concepts in the passage below:

separating practice and place [is inappropriate because] those who study hunting across societies and time recognize the relationships created between the landscape, the hunters, and the hunted as fundamental to the material and cultural significance of those constitutive elements. The encounters between the hunter and the hunted structure the social memories of those involved and are given meaning through references to the ‘places and spaces of encounter’ within which they were enacted or performed.

Recalling the importance of the sensual engagement with prey for the hunting experience, my argument is that the production of the hunting space is significant to not only the interaction with any other human being encountered in that environment, but also to the interaction with the nonhuman animal who is an integral part of the hunting experience and performance. As Finch argues, these “places and spaces of encounter” are essential to the whole experience.

Trampers have less control over the production of the tourism space in which they perform and that is clearly provided to them by controlling agencies that influence tourism practices in this country. Tramping, as an important part of New Zealanders’ recreation activities, is ‘pre-packaged’ for the tourists without contextualising the practice within New Zealand culture. As many readers familiar with the local tramping culture in New Zealand would agree from reading my accounts of tramping on Stewart Island, the New Zealand local tramping culture differs in significant ways from the practice that is sold to international visitors and consumed on Stewart Island. Much like hunting, for the domestic trumper the sublime is constantly engaged with in sensual relations, and fully experiencing the harsh weather and natural formations is as much part of tramping as is getting to the final destination. Such an experience does not characterise Stewart Island’s ‘touristic’ tramping

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performance. Therefore, without fully contextualising the practice, the tourism industry does not facilitate an engagement that goes beyond the product and that produces a critical response from visitors. In this way, tourists accept the space that is being provided for them, and without full agency in the production of the space in which they perform, place-making is compromised. As a consequence, hunters, who are constantly performing place through their host behaviour, have their hunting space dominating over trampers’, which may in turn cause discomfort for those who wish not to accept as legitimate hunters’ place-making efforts. Clearly, it is impossible to dissociate place-making and space production.

Another important aspect of this complex relationship between culturally inherited spaces, spaces provided by the outside, place-making efforts and performances, is that philosophical positions are constantly being played out in these environments. Philosophies of nature are, therefore, central aspects of these performances as they often dictate, or at least greatly contribute to, the acceptance of the norms that are intrinsically tied to the space produced. On Stewart Island, Romantic ideals of Nature, and the dichotomy between human and nature, predominate in both spaces. It is not surprising, though, that this is the case. Both spaces are produced through a New Zealand (Western dominant) construction of Nature, although in the case of trampers one that is purposively fabricated for the international tourist. It is possibly because of this that conflict did not seem to predominate in the social relations between trampers and hunters, but only tensions were apparent. My position is that the source of these tensions is the commodification of Nature in such a way that strongly disconnects the natural environment from the senses and, consequently, from oneself. Although hunters are trapped still in Romantic dualism, they regard Nature as an essential part of their embodied experience, where senses are evoked and discovered through the engagement with landscape and prey. Trampers, on the other hand, ‘use’ Nature as a disconnected setting, and although their experience could not take place elsewhere, the experience is not about an engagement with Nature, but, at the most, is about a personal journey of overcoming challenges, that is later retold to friends and peers through the use of photographic images.

The typical consumer of national parks and wildlife destinations is a tourist whose visit is typically fleeting, shallow and a one-off affair. They may be attracted to such areas in greater numbers than in the past but their relationship with each one is extremely loose and ephemeral and ‘until further notice’. There is nothing but their own pleasure and
interest binding them to the place and once that begins to wane, as it typically does after a relatively short period, the tourists take their leave.\(^{44}\)

My own experience of these activities has undoubtedly provided me with a different lens than other researchers who have engaged with the alleged conflict between hunters and trampers. As an acculturated immigrant to New Zealand, as far as tramping is concerned, my tramping practice on Stewart Island was very detached from the tourism space that is provided to the regular tourist. Helplessly aware of the commodified status of Nature in the tourism industry, while at the same time opposing such a position, my own tramping experience was a constant struggle to engage from within while hoping not to be trapped in the messages for consumption. Simultaneously, I was becoming more and more familiar with, and appreciative of, the cultural heritage that linked the hunting experience to the New Zealand tramping experience. Constantly trying to perform as a local, I had to negotiate the tramping and hunting spaces with both hunters and trampers, and found myself frequently fluctuating between the two spaces provided, in my case, from without. Significantly, as I discussed in the previous chapter, I was eventually trapped in the tourist space, and the recollection of this experience was essential for my understanding of the complexity of the production of spaces in outdoor recreation. It was through my unwitting engagement with both the hunting and the tourist space that I was able to conceptualise these experiences as experiences of space and place, and through this realisation build an argument for the importance of such concepts in the conversation around outdoor recreation conflict.

Revisiting, Restarting

In all fields of learning, the past fifteen years have forced us to recognise that no single, coherent set of theories, concepts and methods – regardless of their moral or political appeal – can hope to provide a certain and progressive path towards truth.\(^1\)

\[\text{it is not a matter of finding out things which are true but of finding a way of expressing this moment.}^{\text{2}}\]

At this moment, at the end of the journey, or at least of this particular story, it is important to reflect on the aims that underscored the discussions that built up this dissertation, and to reiterate my epistemological belief in a co-constructed narrative that is not intended to depict reality but to ‘express moments’ of significance, as Neville describes in the above quote. This research, and also personal, project aimed to unravel the narratives and performances of hunters on Stewart Island in regards to their discursive relationships with the natural environment and its inhabitants, both human and nonhuman. Admittedly ambitious, my aim was not, however, to ‘once and for all’ understand and explain the inherent contradictions of modern hunting practices. Rather, it was to attempt to provide a novel contribution of some critical aspects of hunting in present-day society to an ongoing conversation.

Food for Thought

The first aspect of the hunting experience that this study attempts to attend to is the conspicuous lack of a consideration of the sensual aspects of the hunting performance in current analyses of hunting practices.\(^3\) Indeed, the hunting performance \textit{per se} has been only marginally explored by contemporary scholars and such performance is an aspect of hunting practice that is crucial for its better understanding.\(^4\) As I have attempted to show throughout this dissertation, the analysis of the embodied performance of hunters adds layers of meanings to their spoken narratives of their experiences, and facilitates an understanding of

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\(^3\) Marvin’s contribution in “Sensing Nature,” 2005, is hallmark and confirms my claim of the limited literature available dealing with this theme.

\(^4\) Again Marvin provides a valuable contribution in “A Passionate Pursuit,” 2003, where he discusses the performative significance of foxhunting.
the complex relationships humans, as embodied beings, engage in with other elements of our environment. These engagements cannot be narrowed solely to visual experiences if we are to understand the complexities of our practices as indeed embodied. Other senses, such as olfaction, tactition, audition, and kinesis, all produce an experience of the world that is full of significance and that generates meaningful moments. Thus, it is important to recognise that hunting, from planning a trip, to staying in secluded camps, to finally perhaps finding and shooting the animal prey, is an experience profoundly evocative for those who participate in it. Hunters sit and wait for the nonhuman animal who is being pursued, fully immersed in the ‘extra-ordinary’ natural environment of Stewart Island; they listen, smell and look for signs. They watch other animals pass by and they recognise their traces. They walk carefully so as not to make a noise. They stay still, ‘blending’ with the environment. They enjoy the presence of a kiwi. They endure the rain, and the cold. They feel the elements in their bones and on their skin. They look into the eyes of the nonhuman animal whom they are trying to outsmart. They feel the blood of the dead animal on their hands. They carry the heavy load back to camp. They drink and relax in the shelter provided by huts and camps. They celebrate a kill with a big feast. They go fishing, diving, collecting paua. They are embodied beings experiencing the world with all of their senses. Any consideration of, or research into, their experiences needs to recognise this.

My contribution to this theme goes further. The characteristics of the environment in which hunters immerse themselves are unique and essential for the constitution of a meaningful experience. As much as this may be true for other forms of hunting and performances, the sublimity of Stewart Island provokes and facilitates an experience that goes beyond the experiences commonly associated with hunting practices. It is this more-than-ordinary, awe-inspiring environment that enables the production of a hunting space and that allows place-making to occur. Also, the sublime reinforces a social identity that not only strengthens a collective hunting identity but strengthens also a national identity that is shared by this group. It is, therefore, through the sensuality of the hunting experience in a sublime environment that hunters are able to produce a meaningful hunting space. As Cosgrove highlights, “sensuality and desire are powerful motivating aspects of imagination, mobilised in complex ways in relation to the vision which they often direct, and cannot be ignored in responses to landscapes.”5 It is my claim that any dismissal of the importance of the sublime, and the senses invoked by this environment, to the hunting experience on Stewart Island hinders

achieving a complex understanding of the practice, and therefore hinders also advances in the field.

It is important to note also the gendering of the natural environment by hunters on Stewart Island, and how this gendering contributes to the acceptance of, and desire for, a significant relationship with such an environment. Nature is *per se*, as is commonly so in modern and pre-modern constructions of nature, a feminine, giving entity that provides for hunters, particularly allowing the nonhuman animals to be taken. The sublime, on the other hand, although one expression of Nature, is constructed as masculine, powerful, dominating. These characteristics provide hunters with room for their own expressions of masculinity, through the endurance and challenge required to ‘survive’ such an environment.

A different aspect of the hunting experience is that of the interaction with other recreationists. It has been widely noted in the literature that hunting is indeed a highly controversial activity, and conflict has arisen as a response from different segments of society.6 Conflict with other recreationists, however, has received limited attention from tourism and leisure scholars, and studies in this theme have focused mainly on the differences between ‘consumptive’ and ‘non-consumptive’ forms of recreation. More importantly, research on recreation conflict in general, and between consumptive and non-consumptive outdoor recreation participants in particular, has been based largely on quantitative approaches, using broad theoretical frameworks based on the goal interference or the values model, and in a sense trying to ‘measure’ the intensity or amount of conflict taking place in a select area. The present study provides a significantly different approach to the understanding of conflict in outdoor environments. Through a deeper comprehension of the hunting performance on Stewart Island, it became obvious that conflict between hunters and other recreation participants referred to issues that went far beyond the models previously provided by the literature. Goal interference and difference in values are not sufficient to explain these conflict situations. As a consequence, the approach advocated by the present study suggests that an in-depth and contextual understanding of one particular activity is necessary in order to establish the tensions that may arise from its performance.

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other words, it would not be possible to understand fully the tensions between trampers and hunters on Stewart Island, if a more complex understanding of hunting had not taken place.

It was through this more nuanced understanding of hunting on Stewart Island that this study was able to establish the importance of place-making and the production of specific spaces in particular conflict situations. For hunters on Stewart Island, the engagement with the sublime environment is a powerful experience that involves their bodies, all their senses, and also a feeling of collective identity, as hunters and as New Zealanders. These elements combine to produce a hunting space that is intensively enjoyed and highly regarded by hunters, but also which is circumscribed, incorporating only the experienced New Zealand hunter. Therefore, the construction of place and the production of a hunting space are treasured and interferences may lead to tensions or conflicts. Trampers on Stewart Island, on the other hand, as fleeting guests in this ‘external’, but nonetheless sublime, environment may interfere with the establishment or stability of the hunting space, thus creating tensions. These tensions also may be reinforced by pre-conceived ideas of hunting as a ‘consumptive’ form of engagement with the natural environment, without the realisation that tramping, as it is being performed on Stewart Island, is itself a highly commodified, ‘consumptive’ form of tourism.

Another contribution this study makes is the acknowledgement of the philosophical positions that these subjects inhabit. As Macnaghten and Urry note, “the ‘reading’ and production of nature is something that is learnt; and the learning process varies greatly between different societies, different periods and different social groups within a society.” This ‘reading’ is not something uniform, constant or consistent in someone's performance, narrative and discourse through time. In fact, we commonly subscribe to different positions in different situations of our lives, and travel is certainly a moment where destabilisation occurs. The performance of tourists in a produced tourism space on Stewart Island reflects certain understandings of Nature and of our relationship with the natural environment that has implications to the exchanges that occur between tourists and hunters. The reverse is also true. Thus, my inclusion of philosophical conversations was indeed pertinent when discussing not only human/nature relationships but also human/human relationships in the natural environment, such as in the conflict situations described. It became clear that both trampers and hunters are trapped, as are most of us in the Western world, in a Romantic

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ideal of our relationship with the natural environment. However, how this Romantic notion
is expressed in each group is distinctively different due to the cultural significance of the
activity to the construction of one’s identity, and to the production of space from within
(hunters) or from without (trampers). Moreover, it became clear that the analysis of hunting
as an embodied and sensual experience challenges assumptions and approaches provided by
the contemporary philosophical positions of deep ecologists, social ecologists, eco-socialists
and ecofeminists. A more nuanced and equally complex perspective needs to be
incorporated in order to be able to deal with the contradictions and intricacies of hunting in
modern society.

Still regarding the hunting experience on Stewart Island, a smaller contribution derived from
the present work is the suggestion that hunters adopt a speciesist position, not only
differentiating humans from other animals but creating also a hierarchy of species that
defines the ones who are worth pursuing as targets and the ones who are to be the subjects
of admiration and respect. In New Zealand, the exotic status of terrestrial mammals plays an
important role in the hunting discourse, and the role of the exotic in the construction of the
nonhuman animal as object or subject is undeniable. Therefore the role of the exotic in the
hunting performance could profitably be further explored in future studies.

The Construction of Meaning
Creative approaches to research have slowly been coming out of the margins of academic
investigations and are gradually being taken seriously by scholars from different fields of
study. Interpretive analyses are now part of mainstream research endeavours and have gained
credibility as an alternative way of looking at social issues. The combination both of creativity
in expressing and searching for meaning, and of interpretive discussions of realities, is still a
challenge in academe. In particular, many tourism scholars have yet to embrace the use of
creative and alternative forms of approaching research in ways that the construction of
meaning is intersubjectively achieved and is relevant to all who participate in the knowledge
production process.

This dissertation attempts to make a small contribution in this direction, through the
embodied and embedded engagement of the researcher with all elements involved in the
study, human and nonhuman. Also, the undisguised use of my own reflections about my
experiences and the experiences of others have contributed significantly to my academic and
personal understanding of the questions I encountered throughout the process and which I
wished to address rigorously. More importantly, these reflections made possible my narrative and my (theoretically and empirically founded) academic contribution to knowledge to occur.

The constant reflexivity entrenched in this research inevitably led to an emotional engagement which I chose to make explicit through the use of pictures. Here, pictures were used as another form of narrative and represent my attempt to add ‘flesh and blood’ to this piece. Or using Brearley’s words, the pictures here represent a “new kind of text that do[es] not simply describe but make[s] a difference.” It is hoped that this methodological approach encourages other researchers to explore their creative voices when disseminating the knowledge produced through their studies. More importantly, it is hoped that it made a difference to the reader as much as it did to me.

The Road(s) Not Taken
As with any attempt to investigate one segment, or element, of our social lives, the present study was not able to explore fully other aspects of the hunting practice that could provide profitable themes for discussion. Due to different sorts of constraints encountered in the process, but most particularly of time and space, several interesting facets of hunting in New Zealand could not be explored. This limitation, however, provides new paths for future journeys and should be seen more as opportunities for novel developments.

Māori hunting practices were deliberately excluded from this study. However, hunting still is an important cultural tradition for Māori, and its meanings are certainly different from the ones explored here. Investigation into these experiences, and how they reflect (or not) a cultural heritage would undoubtedly provide new understandings of Māori culture and hunting practices in New Zealand. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 4, deer hunting is not so popular amongst Māori, as much as are pig and waterfowl hunting. The former is extensively practiced particularly in the North Island of the country and would offer interesting possibilities for better understanding hunting and human relationships with Nature through the lenses of different cultures.

Another avenue of research into Māori ‘harvesting’ practices that could valuably be explored is related to customary hunting practices. In particular, the Titi Islands, off the coast of

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Stewart Island, is considered a place of cultural significance to Māori principally due to the muttonbird/titi hunt that occurs every year. This tradition is only enjoyed by a few who have the inherent right to harvest muttonbird on the islands, and this harvest would certainly be a rich cultural practice to be explored.

Regardless of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, research into different types of hunting in New Zealand is necessary also if we are to reach a broader understanding of hunting practices and experiences. There is currently a dearth of studies, particularly qualitative ones, that address hunting practices as embodied, meaningful experiences that take place in locations that may be adding further meanings to the practice. More importantly, the active inclusion of the nonhuman elements of the hunting experience, including the prey, is essential to a wider comprehension of human relationships with other constituents of the Earth. In fact, this dissertation calls for more attention to be given to the close and significant exchanges that take place between hunter and the nonhuman animals that are part of the hunting experience. Here I follow Cloke and Perkins assertion that

> [y]et questions remain about exactly how the ‘agency’ of animals contributes to the constitution of place, how in Mol’s terms the definition, measurement, observation, and enactment of animals can be recognised as crucial (rather than colonised) moments in the messiness and mobilities of relational assemblage, and how both the particular capabilities of animals, and their capacity to fold the ordering of spaces around themselves, can be discerned in the context of a lingering human-nonhuman divide.9

It is urgent that other studies are undertaken taking nonhuman animals’ agency seriously and including them as subjects. Particularly, research about hunting needs to further explore the co-construction of place, meaning and performance made possible by the human and nonhuman animal interaction and presence.

Lastly, I recommend that future studies investigate the tramping experiences of New Zealanders and how their embodied engagement with New Zealand’s sublime landscape helps shape their experiences. As noted before, during the course of this research tramping became an ancillary element of my investigation into the hunting experience, and therefore was not analysed in the vein I suggest now. The predominance of international tourists on Stewart Island did not allow for a full exploration of the performance of New Zealanders, who undoubtedly engage in different ways with ‘their’ natural environment.

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The Thesis
As claimed in the beginning of this dissertation, my thesis is about human and nonhuman elements of the natural world, and how they relate to each other in complex and ever-changing ways. What I have found in the process of immersing myself into this study and engaging with all its participants is that our senses are an essential part of our experiences of the world, and without recognising the power of sensuality, particularly in activities that take place in the outdoors, we are never to comprehend these practices fully. The senses, which in the case of this study involve the experience of sublime nature and of the nonhuman elements that inhabit this sublime environment, are central to the construction of meaningful places and of evocative spaces, which in turn help in shaping relationships that occurs within them. These places and spaces are constructed/produced also through one’s understandings of Nature and its role in our experiences. For hunters on Stewart Island, it is through their embodied, multi-sensory engagement with the environment that experiences are formed. Such an engagement is shaped by an underlying construction of Nature that represents a search for a deep connection with place. Trampers, visitors ‘entering’ the sublime landscape that is ‘bought’ in advance of the experience, perform in an externally produced tourist space that conflicts with the hunting space. Hunting and tramping on Stewart Island are therefore conflicting only when the subjects, particularly trampers as fleeting guests, interfere with the space of the other, particularly the well established and appreciated space of hunters.
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Appendix 1 – Away from the Office

This appendix provides detailed information about the number of trips I made to Stewart Island during the course of this research, their duration and time of year, and a rough idea of places visited while on the island. It also provides further information about formal interviews conducted with hunters and trampers I met on the island. This information is considered an addition to that provided in Chapter 2 and subsequent analysis chapters.

Stewart Island Trips

− Trip 1 (01/03/2007 to 05/03/2007): Contact with DOC office staff, days walks in Oban, basic information about the island’s tourism operations.

− Trip 2 (15/03/2007 to 19/03/2007): Visit by boat (DOC and water taxi) to hunting blocks around Paterson Inlet area, day walks in Oban.

− Trip 3 (22/03/2007 to 26/03/2007): Visit by boat (DOC and water taxi) to hunting blocks around Paterson Inlet area, day walks in Oban and tramping the Rakiura Track with overnight stays in huts.

− Trip 4 (31/03/2007 to 23/04/2007): Tramping the Rakiura, Northwest and Southern Circuit in different directions, staying in huts every night.

− Trip 5 (03/05/2007 to 08/05/2007): Visit by boat (DOC and water taxi) to hunting blocks around Paterson Inlet area, day walks in Oban and tramping different tracks inside the National Park with overnight-stays in huts.

− Trip 6 (11/05/2007 to 18/05/2007): Visit by boat (DOC and water taxi) to hunting blocks around Paterson Inlet area, day walks in Oban and tramping different tracks inside the National Park with overnight-stays in huts.

− Trip 7 (03/02/2008 to 17/02/2008): Tramping the Rakiura, Northwest and Southern Circuit in different directions, staying in huts every night.

− Trip 8 (13/02/2009 to 19/02/2009): Tramping the Tin Range.
Digitally-recorded Conversations

- Hunters: Nine hunters were formally interviewed. Interviews were semi-structured, that is, themes and potential questions were previously defined. However, as explained in Chapter 2, the interviews were seen as ‘conversations with a purpose’, where the purpose was to gain an understanding of a person’s experience of hunting on Stewart Island. To achieve this ‘informality’, meetings were arranged mostly to take place at the hunter’s own house or in a café. The main guiding themes were: a) Personal background; b) Hunting background; c) The Stewart Island experience; d) Ethical issues; e) Environmental/Conservation issues; f) Conflict. In one interview I had three hunters participating. All other interviews were conducted with one hunter only. All participants were New Zealanders. Four hunters were based in Christchurch and five in Dunedin. All male, with ages ranging approximately between 25 and 70 years old (I did not ask their age). Interviews lasted between one to two hours.

- Trampers: Seven trampers were formally interviewed. Similarly to hunters’ interviews, trampers’ interviews were semi-structured, with themes and potential questions previously defined. Again, interviews were seen as ‘conversations with a purpose’, where the purpose was to gain an understanding of a person’s experience of tramping on Stewart Island. To achieve this ‘informality’, meetings were arranged to take place mostly in cafés. The main guiding themes were: a) Personal background; b) Tramping background; c) The Stewart Island experience; d) Ethical issues; e) Environmental/Conservation issues; f) Conflict. All interviews had one participant only. Two interviews were conducted in Christchurch and four in Dunedin. All participants were foreigners to New Zealand. Two were male and five female, and ages varied between 20 and 60 (I did not ask their age). Interviews lasted between 55 minutes and two hours.

- General: Over the course of this project in excess of 200 hunters, trampers and DOC staff were engaged in conversation, the most salient points of which informed my construction of the emergent categories and themes. These categories and themes were merged with others that emerged from formal interviews, hut book entries, and diary entries.