

PHD DISSERTATION  
Daniel F. S. Kardyb  
Danish School of Education

# Eccentric Enactments

Naturkraft as Non-Formal Sustainability  
Education in the Anthropocene



AARHUS UNIVERSITY

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*Daniel F. S. Kardyb*

Ry, February 2024

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# Fundamentals



Illustration 1: Construction site, Naturkraft, 2019.  
Photo by Bjørn Ellermand, Naturkraft



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# Introduction

‘This is where you use your ID-card, scan it on the machine here on the wall, and you’re inside the administration building. You’ll get your own locker in the wardrobe here on the right and over there are the toilet facilities’. The park manager points determinately to where the ID-card scanner, lockers and toilet doors will be, evoking their phantoms out of blue air as we move across the empty concrete deck. Rain is pouring and heavy wind slams the water onto my glasses, over-sized rubber boots, and under-sized safety helmet. On my left, the administrative offices-to-be. On my right, exhibition dome no. 1 with the 1:1-sized artificial tree-to-be. Lights come up and sounds of birds singing arise in a corner of my ear as the park manager captivately sketches out the exhibitions in the 2,000-m<sup>2</sup> hall. [...] In the sand dunes 200 meters further into the park, a wet gardener struggles to get potted Lyme Grass by the thousands planted into the soaked sand. ‘If we don’t get these plants in the ground within the next couple of months, they won’t get rooted and be lush by the opening. But it’s a bit of a challenge with all this rain’, the gardener yells through the wind.

(Fieldnotes, first visit, March 2019)

The writing of this dissertation started with a visit to a place in the making. It was in the beginning of 2019, and it was freezing cold. Dressed in knee-high rubber boots and a safety helmet, I walked through a wet and windy construction site on the outskirts of the Danish town Ringkøbing. Until recently, the site had been a conventionally grown rye-field; a practically unnoticed stretch of mono-cultural land in between two of the main roads leading in and out of Ringkøbing. Now, indomitable construction workers and sturdy gardeners occupied

the muddy field with their loud machinery and feeble plants. This former agricultural patch of the West Jutlandian landscape was in vigorous transformation.

I was in the company of the manager of this place-to-be. His evocative words and gestures made it clear how what was here now, and what had been here before, were remarkably different from what was soon-to-be. This was also clear from our conversation just prior to the visit to the construction site. We had met earlier that same day under more comfortable conditions in the Naturkraft offices a few hundred metres down the road. Posters on the wall, colourful catalogues, a small-scale Styrofoam architectural model: everything in these offices spoke the same evocative language as the park manager did. The place in the making that I came to visit, was as much ‘inside’ the well-wrought phrases and colourful illustrations on paper in here, as it was outside in the rain.

The name of this place is *Naturkraft*, which translates to *Force of Nature*. From previous conversations, I had learned that Naturkraft was to become a park of sorts, intended for recreational use by locals as well as tourists. In line with its name, the Naturkraft park was also envisioned as a setting for encounters with the ‘forces of nature’. I had learned that these encounters came with an explicit educational agenda in the project: through its activities, Naturkraft would ‘[...] create understanding and greater awareness of the human interplay with nature and how we, individually and collectively, can contribute to greater sustainability, locally and globally’ (Fonden Naturkraft, 2017).<sup>1</sup> A diverse group of stakeholders – some local, some national – had invested great ambitions, innumerable hours of work and large sums of money in this project since 2006.

What I did not know at this point, however, was how the evocative language and the muddy field would ever come together. What would the actual place be like once the vigorous transformation of the *physical* landscape ceased? How would the place give form to matters of sustainability? How would the place ‘work’, educationally speaking? Neither did I know how the Naturkraft ambitions would fit into what you might call, conversely, the West Jutlandian

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1 Here, I have translated the original Danish quote, aiming to convey as direct as possible the Danish choice of words and phrasing. The same goes for all other empirical quotes in the dissertation.

*social* landscape. This dissertation explores these questions with the intention of coming to term(s) with the way(s) in which the Naturkraft project enacts sustainability education.

## Interest in Enactments of Sustainability Education

What drove me to Ringkøbing on that rainy day in early 2019 was a genuine interest in questions of sustainability and education. Growing up in the 1990s and 2000s, I am a worried native to a world in visible and tangible environmental and climatic uproar. Moreover, in being an emerging scholar of education, my curiosity has long circled around questions about the potential role of education, broadly speaking, in societal processes of sustainable transitions. And long have I shared the disappointment of witnessing the inertia that this agenda has suffered in formal education – especially in Denmark (Læssøe, 2016).

In contrast, the Naturkraft project struck me as an otherwise curious and bold undertaking – big, expensive, and out of the ordinary – and it was unlike any sustainability education project, I knew. In fact, initially, I was not even sure how the project could qualify as education. It plays out in the *terrain vague* between formal institutions, and yet it subscribes to an explicitly educational agenda for change (Fonden Naturkraft, 2017). It places *sustainability* centrally within its organizational values. It mixes local natural riches with concepts and approaches from across different scientific as well as artistic disciplines. It evolves with the support of very different stakeholders: the local Municipality, the Region of Central Jutland, the Danish State, and some of the largest Danish philanthropic foundations along with local business entrepreneurs, civil volunteers, national cultural celebrities, and scientific experts, just to mention a few. Moreover, it bases its educational designs and activities on a conceptualization of the forces of nature contextualized to the Danish West Coast.

Already upon early encounters, the place and people of the Naturkraft project kindled my ‘sustainability educational’ curiosity. In tune with the programmatic direction provided by Australian environmental and sustainability education scholars, Malone and Truong (2017), I wanted to explore whether the

Naturkraft project offered openings to ‘[...] new ways of theorizing and educating about being with, and in relation to, the planet’ (p. 5). Without jumping to the conclusions of this project, I dare say that I think it does. The overarching interest, then, that guides this dissertation is how that is so.

In the following, to make this interest comprehensible and sharpen its contours, I offer an extended introduction that clears some conceptual ground and positions the dissertation in the literature. I elaborate on what it entails to approach the Naturkraft project as ‘enactments of sustainability education’ in the way I do. I elaborate on what I mean, when I consider these enactments in light of ‘challenges of the Anthropocene’, and what I mean when I reflect on the Naturkraft project as a form of ‘non-formal education’. These elaborations and definitions touch upon recent and evergreen discussions in the research field of *environmental and sustainability education* (which I abbreviate ESE throughout) with specific attention to literatures that thematize *non-formal* ESE and challenges of *the Anthropocene*.

### *Sustainability Education in the Anthropocene*

The word ‘sustainability’ was first used as a concept in the field of horticulture in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Læssøe, 2020b). It was used in forest management to consider balances between logging and regrowth. As such, the concept concerned schemes to ensure durable use of resources in specific, closed forest systems (Læssøe, 2020b). However, during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, scientists and social critics have raised the alarm continuously on the accelerating overexploitation, depletion and pollution not only of forests, but of most natural environments on earth (e.g. IPBES, 2019; IPCC, 2014; IPCC, 2022). Similarly, reports abound on accelerating developments in socio-economic measures such as global population numbers, GDP, mobility, global tourism etc. (e.g. Steffen, Broadgate, Deutsch, Gaffney, & Ludwig, 2015). In recognition of this ‘great acceleration’ (e.g. McNeill & Engelke, 2014), *sustainability* or *sustainable development* has become a regenerative ideal for future civilizational development

on earth (Læssøe, 2020b; WCED, 1987). Similarly, in tandem with the accelerating conception of these crises, the concept of ‘sustainability’ has expanded.

When I write about *sustainability*, my point of departure lies within the complex and dynamic planetary impasse caused by these accelerations. The impasse is no ‘ordinary’ or technical problem to be ‘fixed’ once and for all (Block & Paredis, 2019; Block, Poeck, & Ostman, 2019). Rather, when the problem is acceleration, and furthermore a multiplicity of accelerations across all aspects of life, solutions must be considered in similarly dynamic and experimental ways (Block & Paredis, 2019). Furthermore, despite a popular tendency to reduce sustainability to techno-scientific questions of climate change, pollution and resource scarcity, I subscribe to a holistic conceptualization that involves a socioecological scope on the human condition under these accelerating circumstances (Block & Paredis, 2019). As professors of sociology, Bernd Hamm and Pandurang Muttagi comment:

Sustainable development is essentially not about the environment, but rather about the capacity of human society to enact permanent reform in order to safeguard the delicate balance between humans and their natural life-support system.

(Hamm & Muttagi, 2001, p. 2. In: Scott & Vare, 2020, p. 111)

In Hamm and Muttagi’s perspective, sustainability is about the capacity of human societies to enact permanent reform. These enactments should involve changes to established societal orders and they should unfold iteratively and indefinitely. This, regardless of whether the intention is mitigation of or adaptation to the impending crises. Furthermore, in the words of Hamm and Muttagi (2001), these enactments aim for a balanced relationship between humans and the natural environment – they do not aim for technological ‘end-all’ solutions. Reforms should aim to change the *relationship* between humans and the environment, rather than act ‘upon’ the natural environment. This, too, is my take on the concept.

In using the concept *sustainable development*, Hamm and Muttagi (2001) subscribe to the dominant United Nations (UN) discourse on the topic. This



discourse is widely known in the form of considerations and definitions from the 1987-Brundtland report that define sustainable development as '[...] development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987). Yet, in line with some of the critique of the UN discourse on 'sustainable development', and in contrast to Hamm and Muttagi, I subscribe to a theoretical and analytical point of departure outside of this discourse (Jickling, 1992; Læssøe, 2020b). I hence use 'sustainability' over 'sustainable development' throughout this dissertation. My main reason for this, and my main objection towards the UN discourse, is to question the taken-for-granted link between socioecological thriving and economic *progress* that forms its historical basis (Mansfield, 2009).<sup>2</sup> Sustainability as a reformist striving towards a balanced relationship between human society and the ecological environment cannot depend by definition on economic progress as a narrative axiom.

This critical position parallels a newer line of sustainability educational scholarship (Jagodzinski, Paulsen, & Hawke, 2022; Malone, Truong, & Gray, 2017). This line of study pivots on the idea of *the Anthropocene*, originally proposed by atmospheric chemist, Paul Crutzen in 2000 (Crutzen, 2002). In essence, Crutzen's idea was that the human species is main responsible for the great accelerations of our time. This to such an extent that humans have currently become the dominating force driving planetary changes.<sup>3</sup> In following

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2 'Development' entered the UN discourse from considerations on economic inequalities between the global north and global south (Sauvé, Berryman, & Brunelle, 2007). This perspective, however, is not included in my analyses.

3 I opt for 'Anthropocene' while aware that the prefix anthros- fails to recognize the uneven responsibility for (and benefit from) the current conditions between different peoples on Earth. For these same reasons, other critics opt for the Capitalocene as a more just and appropriate designation to reflect the causes of the planetary imbalance (Malm & Hornborg, 2014; Moore, 2016). Correspondingly, philosopher of science, Donna Haraway, opts for the Chthulucene, in arguing the need to conceptually reflect how humans are not acting in isolation from everything else, but rather in assemblage (Haraway, 2015). None the less, when I choose to recirculate the concept of the Anthropocene, I do so following Anna Tsing, who argues for the useful-despite-problematic qualities of the concept for two reasons: 1) it allows

years, Crutzen's idea has proliferated well beyond the disciplinary boundaries of the natural sciences and has taken on a life of its own within the humanities and social sciences. Here, more than anything, it has turned into a vehicle for ecological curiosity and critique of 'modern' ways of life (Tsing, Swanson, Gain, & Bubandt, 2017). One such critique notes how *progress* has become the hallmark of modern, western ontologies, blinding us to ideas of other ways of being (Tsing, 2015, p. viii). As American anthropologist Anna Tsing remarks, the idea of progress has turned into a 'modern human conceit' (Tsing, 2015). It is following this theoretical trajectory that I opt for *sustainability* rather than *sustainable development* - in adjacency to the UN discourse, yet at a critical distance.

In continuation of this critique, my take on *sustainability* throughout this dissertation is thus intimately entwined with the idea of *the Anthropocene*. This means (at least) two things: firstly, that my analytical explorations are preoccupied with the environmental aspects of the permanent societal reforms that Hamm and Muttagi ask for above. In comparison, the UN discourse and subsequent elaborations propose a three-dimensional understanding of sustainable development involving *social* and *economic* concerns in addition to *environmental* concerns (Læssøe, 2020b; WCED, 1987). Later iterations further expand the concept with a fourth and sometimes a fifth dimension of concern for *cultural sustainability* and *good governance* respectively (Grindheim, Bakken, Hauge, & Heggen, 2019; Sachs et al., 2013; Soini & Birkeland, 2014). Taking the Anthropocene as a point of departure for discussions on sustainability do open considerations on sociality, economy, culture, and governance, but always from an environmentally oriented angle.

Secondly, considerations on the sustainability-Anthropocene entwinement imply a call for radical reframings of agendas and rationales for human action, such as in the sphere of education. As Anna Tsing notes:

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dialogue across disciplinary divides, and 2) it shines light on the problematic legacy from the Enlightenment enveloped in the term 'Man' (Haraway & Tsing, 2019). Writing of the Anthropocene hence offers a pragmatic yet critically charged middle ground for the educational discussions in this dissertation.

[The] Anthropocene is not the era of human mastery of nature. It is not the fulfillment of dreams of progress. On the contrary! The point of the term is to make us aware of how much we do not control, and of what a mess our species have made without really thinking about it. Far from mastery, even intentionality is not a useful guide once we take Anthropocene seriously.

(Tsing, 2021, p. 203)

When engaging with ideas of the Anthropocene, agendas of sustainability must necessarily involve considerations of the uncontrolled and the *unintentional* (Tsing, 2021). In the Anthropocene, sustainability cannot only be a matter of adapting our social organizations to accelerated changes. It cannot not only be about humans ‘safeguarding’ vital balances, as I quote Hamm and Muttagi (2001) above. Instead, in the Anthropocene one must consider sustainability processes in a *socioecological* perspective (Mannion, 2019; Paulsen, 2022). Again, sustainability is about human-environment relationships, but in an Anthropocene framing, human intentionality cannot be considered in isolation (Lysgaard & Bengtsson, 2022). By the same token, Tsing and her colleagues seek inspiration in multispecies collaborations for what life could mean in an Anthropocene future (Tsing, Swanson, et al., 2017). They explore and describe life from the perspective of for example mycelia, trees, and ants, to learn about what they term *collaborative survival* (Andrew, 2017; Deborah, 2017; Hathaway, 2022). Although my take on enactments of sustainability education is not immediately compatible with Tsing and colleagues’ multispecies explorations, their idea of the Anthropocene runs as an undercurrent to my analyses throughout the dissertation. Additionally, their implicit emphasis on de-centring the human perspective is an important motivation for my theoretical and methodological choices. More to this in chapters two and three.

### *Enactments of Sustainability Education*

The Danish word *opføre* (verb)/*opførsel* (noun), as a translation of enact/enactment, indexes the complexity of the actions I am interested in exploring in

Naturkraft. On the one side, to *opføre* is what actors do on stage. They perform a pre-defined script, adding vitality, materiality, and the contingencies of situated interaction to the words in print. Their actions, however, relate to the script like the audible symphony to the score. Their actions are a performance of a preexisting narrative, enabled as well as constrained by the plot and structures defined herein (Introna, 2013). On the other hand, and simultaneously, to *opføre* is what you do, e.g., by building a scaffolding prior to renovating a house façade. You erect or construct something that constrains as well as enables future actions. The scaffolding, for instance, enables renovating, but only of the areas of the façade that the scaffolding covers. Taken together, the idea of enactment, as invested with the denotations of the Danish *opførsel*, attempts a theoretical capture of reciprocal processes of *structured structuring*.

Theoretically, conceptualizations of enactment come in many colours and with different emphases (see e.g., Butler, 1996; Introna, 2013; Weick, 1988). This dissertation draws on a version of enactment that is infused with the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari – and thinkers that, in different ways, relate to their world of thought (Ellsworth, 2005; N. Gough, 2009; Tsing, 2015). This conceptualization inspires a curiosity in Naturkraft that is attentive to how ideas of education and sustainability take form in a coming-together with other ideas, bodies, and materials in a specific time and place on the Danish West Coast. In particular, this conceptualization encourages questions about what happens to sustainability education when it confronts ideas and matter that are not usually considered elements of education (Ellsworth, 2005). As such, it encourages unconventional and slightly strange perspectives on sustainability education, eager to affirm openings to different ways of thinking with and about the problems of sustainability and education. I unfold the theoretical implications in more detail in Chapter 2.

To return to matters of education: Hamm and Mutagi's (2001) definition above alludes to how sustainability as an ideal necessarily involves processes of learning. Some scholars of ESE go on to argue that sustainability is in essence a learning process (Foster, 2008; Scott & Gough, 2003). Enacting reform on a

permanent basis requires permanent capacity building in the face of an ever-changing socioecological landscape – both to (collaboratively) enact the changes and to live their outcomes. Two central voices in ESE-research, William Scott and Stephen Gough, argue that by...

[...] learning throughout our lives we equip ourselves to choose most advantageously as the future unfolds. This would not bring about sustainable development. Rather, it would be evidence that sustainable development was happening.

(Scott & Gough, 2003, p. 147)

Sustainability, in other words, is not something you bring about. It is no steady end-state; no ‘static paradise’ (Hamm & Muttagi, 2001). It is rather an ideal praxis or a way of moving; something you do, which is characterized by continuous change. Hence, when talking about sustainability, living might be better understood in terms of learning (e.g. Foster, 2008).

On this account, a prime concern in the ESE literature is what it implies to *enact* such processes of learning. A major part of the research thus concerns questions of curriculum and pedagogy (Læssøe, 2020c). Across the field, these questions have been approached from an array of different angles over the last 50 years (Lotz-Sisitka, Fien, & Ketlhoilwe, 2013; Reid & Dillon, 2017). Following an overview chapter by Lotz-Sisitka, Fine, and Ketlhoilwe (2013), three strands dominate the history of the ESE field in these respects: 1) positivist-informed, often quantitative inquiries into, for instance, how specific curriculum programs impact changes in predetermined measures of (environmental and/or sustainability) knowledge, behaviour, and/or attitudes;<sup>4</sup> 2) qualitative interpretivist and

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4 Lotz-Sisitka et al. reference Rideout (2005) as a typical example of this research tradition. In my own literature studies – see more below – I have come across a few examples of this sort, mainly from Anglo-Saxon research environments. See e.g. Groshong, Stanis, Morgan, and Li (2020) and Zelenika, Moreau, Lane, and Zhao (2018). However, the methodological operationalizations of, in particular, ‘behaviour’ and ‘behaviour change’ have developed recently towards systemic views (see e.g. Ardoin, Wheaton, Bowers, Hunt, & Durham, 2015), which in turn have inspired qualitative and mixed-method evaluative studies that trend towards Lotz-Sisitka et

constructivist explorations of particular environment- or sustainability-related learning experiences;<sup>5</sup> and 3) critical analyses of power relations and inequalities related to socio-environmental conditions as reflected in and countered through ESE curriculum and research (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2013).<sup>6</sup> Additionally, their chapter points out two further strands – post-structuralist and critical realist-informed lines of study that, in 2013, represented new emerging trends in ESE-research and which take it upon themselves to theoretically challenge implicit beliefs in established ESE research, policy, and pedagogical practice (see e.g., N. Gough & Gough, 2003; Lupele, 2008).

In trying to reflect Lotz-Sisitka et al.'s five-part categorizations, I would say that this dissertation pursues, firstly, an interpretivist interest in the experiences of learning offered in and by the Naturkraft project, as well as, secondly, a critically inclined interest in exploring the socio-political implications of the material-discursive *structured structuring* that the project involves (see more below). As such, my research project does not fall within one single research strand. This, however, is not to be lamented. As Lotz-Sisitka et al. emphasize, their categories should not be regarded as 'fixed paradigms' (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2013, p. 199). I take this to mean that methodological orthodoxy should not hinder theoretical development in a field that takes scope of socioecological issues across vast geographical, cultural, political, and historical divides. In other words, the

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al.'s second strand (see e.g. Bueddefeld & Van Winkle, 2017; Gould, Ardoin, Thomsen, & Wyman Roth, 2019).

- 5 Lotz-Sisitka et al. reference a free-choice learning-study by Ballantyne, Fien, and Packer (2001) as an example in this tradition. Through my readings, I have come across numerous other free-choice learning-studies (see e.g. Dierking, Falk, & Storcksdieck, 2013; Falk, Heimlich, & Foutz, 2009) as well as other qualitative explorations of environmental and sustainability related learning in out-of-school and out-of-doors settings (e.g. Chawla, 2006; Scoffham & Consorte-McCrea, 2018; Zimmerman & McClain, 2016)
- 6 Here, Lotz-Sisitka et al. reference Hart, Taylor, and Robottom (1994) as well as Malone (2006), both of which advocate rebel and activist research agendas in ESE. This is a pronounced tendency on the field. Other contributions following these lines of reasoning are, to mention a few, Mogensen and Schnack (2010), Reid (2019), and A. Gough and Whitehouse (2020).

'wicked problems' of unsustainability cannot be encapsulated within a single research paradigm (Pohl, Truffer, & Hirsch-Hadorn, 2017). For the same reason, there appears to be a pronounced tendency in the ESE field to work across both paradigmatic and disciplinary borders (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2013). Furthermore, Lotz-Sisitka et al. suggest that this research non-conformity also reflects the field's axiological relationship with the education system and society more broadly (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2013). Their chapter highlights that '[...] environmental [and sustainability] education research seems to primarily be seeking to fulfil a 'cultural innovation role' in the wider education research landscape, carving out niches and spaces that speak to educational innovation/transformation and change' (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2013, p. 196).

This dissertation joins in these culturally innovative discussions about curriculum and learning in ESE and does so from a perspective that treats education more broadly than what goes on in formal institutions like schools and universities. In this respect, I depart from a formal conception of education towards one that resonates with Dutch philosopher of education, Gert Biesta, when he writes: 'Education, in its widest sense, is about how we welcome 'newcomers' into our worlds' (Biesta, 2009b, p. 1). Framed like this, education research becomes more than a source of technical support and guidance of changing practices (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2013). Instead, educational research foregrounds philosophical and conceptual questions such as: what do we make of 'our worlds'? Of 'us'? Of 'newcomers'? Moreover, these questions necessarily exceed preoccupations with classrooms and nurture a broader concern for which kinds of acts it involve and could involve performing an educational welcome – institutionally as well as philosophically.

The abstracted yet comprehensive take on education that I draw from Biesta involves an emphasis on ontology. This focus reflects posthumanist and new materialist-inspired works of ESE research that are currently trending (Clarke & Mcphie, 2020). To qualify the position of this dissertation, this trend should be added to Lotz-Sisitka et al.'s mapping of the ESE literature. These newer strands of ESE research explicitly engage in questions of the Anthropocene, and although such questions have long held attention in ESE research

(Reid & Dillon, 2017, p. 1, vol. 1), I would contend that these newer theoretical ‘traditions’ frame these questions in productively novel ways. In particular, the posthumanist and new materialist agenda involves a concern for how challenges of the Anthropocene are not only affecting our conditions for living in a physical-biological sense, but also our conditions for knowing (Lysgaard & Jørgensen, 2020). Visibly accelerating states of planetary crisis necessitate a reconsideration of how we make sense of and relate to the world (Malone & Truong, 2017). Infused by philosophical reorientations in the form of, e.g., speculative realism and DeleuzoGuattarian ontologies of becoming, these voices advocate a philosophical ‘stepping back’ from immediate educational practices to perform theoretical experimentation, especially with an eye to the role of materiality and the more- and other-than-human (Jagodzinski et al., 2022; Lysgaard, Laugesen, & Bengtsson, 2019; McKenzie, Hart, Bai, & Jickling, 2009). In this perspective, the job of the researcher is to help reframe considerations of what it means to do sustainability education in the Anthropocene at all. It is my ambition with this dissertation to contribute to these discussions.<sup>7</sup>

## Non-Formal Sustainability Education

My research interest does not only lie in the particularities of the Naturkraft project. This dissertation is no evaluation of a specific educational development project. Rather, throughout I treat the Naturkraft project as a source of empirical material to fuel ‘culturally innovative’ discussions on how to approach the Anthropocene condition through education. Inspired by the specificities of my

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7 There are on-going discussions within ESE-related research on whether these theoretical strands present ‘new’ perspectives or merely extend existing research traditions (N. Gough & Adsit-Morris, 2020; Mannion, 2019). In line with Lotz-Sisitka et al. (2013), I don’t find it productive to insist on ‘fixed paradigms’. Regarding the current influx of new materialist and posthumanist inspiration into the ESE field, I thus like to think of these as complementary to, in particular, post-structuralist approaches (N. Gough, 2016b). Moreover, the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari and thinkers of their ilk, that I engage with throughout the dissertation, encourages such a non-orthodox and postparadigmatic stance (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994)



empirical case, this interest has an important adjectival condition: It is an interest in the conditions for enactments of sustainability education in the Anthropocene in non-formal educational circumstances.

The ‘non-formal education’-category is notorious for its many definitions and applications (e.g., Dohn, 2012). Some scholars focus on the organizational modes of education, stressing the implications of non-formal education’s independence from the formal educational system in their uses of the term (e.g. Coombs & Ahmed, 1974; Fordham, 1993). Others focus on the experiential modes of education and draw distinctions on the level of the learning situation from a psychological or phenomenological perspective (e.g. Eshach, 2007; Falk, 2005). My interest in non-formal sustainability education sits somewhere in between. In line with UNESCO’s use of the term (UNESCO, 2017), I consider Naturkraft a non-formal educational organization, operating in relative independence of governmental educational policies and programs. As such, I have an interest in exploring organizational aspects of sustainability education in an educational enterprise on the outskirts of the formal education system. At the same time, I explore the immediate enactments of education from a perspective that pays attention to the experience of learning in Naturkraft. My analytical exploration, in other words, combines the two perspectives – the organizational and the experiential – in an endeavour to perform a kind of thick description of the enactments of sustainability education in Naturkraft; attentive to sustainability education as enactments of material as well as immaterial/discursive relations on the level of the organization as well as on the level of individuals populating the place.

The ESE research literature offers different examples of how to address non-formal educational sites and situations. However, as mentioned above, my research interest does not correspond to any single pre-established research approach in the field. Instead, I consider my analyses and discussions of Naturkraft as contributions to conversations on the borders between different existing research strands. For the sake of the argument, I categorize the field of non-formal ESE research in three different yet overlapping foci: Out-of-*school* sustainability education, out-of-*doors* sustainability education, and

sustainability-oriented public pedagogy. Below, I propose a brief general characterization of each of the three areas, highlighting their main foci and dominant methodological approaches. The characterizations serve to situate and sharpen the contours of my research interest in relation to these different fields of study.

It is worth noting that in orientating myself in the literature, I initially attempted a formalized scoping-review approach (Booth, Sutton, & Papaioannou, 2016; Gutierrez-Bucheli, Reid, & Kidman, 2022). Yet, it dawned on me that the hybrid nature of the Naturkraft project, as well as my explorative research interests, were practically incompatible with the idea of research implicit in systematic methods of reviewing. Naturkraft falls ‘between chairs’ or ‘between the cracks’, so to speak, and trying to capture this ‘between-ness’ from the outset in a formalized review would require a very broad scope. For one thing, this would be an immense challenge given the limited timeframe of a Danish PhD-project and simultaneously, it would unavoidably miss the mark. Instead, what I present below is the literature landscape that has emerged as a background for my analyses through more than three years of reading and writing as well as discussions in seminars, PhD courses, and conferences.

### *Out-of-School Sustainability Education*

*Out-of-school sustainability education*, in my use of the term, is the area of ESE research, where broader, independent fields such as informal science education (e.g., P. Bell, Lewenstein, Shouse, & Feder, 2009), museum education (e.g., Hein, 1998), free-choice learning (e.g., Falk et al., 2009) and, to some extent, field-trip education (e.g., Behrendt & Franklin, 2014) overlap on questions about sustainability and the environment. Apart from this overlap, what these areas of study have in common is an interest in learning in out-of-school *settings*. ‘Settings’ here often implies an institutional context, such as a museum in general (L. Bell & Clover, 2017; Cameron, Hodge, & Salazar, 2013; Hamilton & Ronning, 2020) or more specific types of institutions, as for instance, zoos and aquaria (Esson & Moss, 2013; Kopczak, Kisiel, & Rowe, 2015; Swim & Fraser, 2014), botanical gardens (Morgan, Hamilton, Bentley, & Myrie, 2009; Sanders, Ryken, &

Stewart, 2018; Zelenika et al., 2018), science museums/science centres (Ardoin, Schuh, & Khalil, 2016), and art-museums and galleries (Hill, 2020).

A recurring focus in what I understand as out-of-school sustainability education studies are questions of how to utilize and optimize learning potentials in specific out-of-school settings for environmental and sustainability ends (Ballantyne & Packer, 2005; Evans & Achiam, 2021; Falk, 2005). Thus, two entangled threads in the literature focus on how to design *and* evaluate exhibitions and pedagogical interactions in the out-of-school institution spaces (Dierking et al., 2013; Johns & Pontes, 2019; Kopczak et al., 2015). In these regards, out-of-school sustainability education is generally dominated by a social constructivist perspective on learning, insisting that the learning outcomes of out-of-school visits emerge in collaborative processes involving multiple social and material factors (Falk & Dierking, 2018; Haywood, 2018). Learning, in other words, is no simple transmission process (Haywood, 2018). Rather, out-of-school institutions are sites of ‘knowledge producing processes’, as Lundgaard and Jensen (2013) phrase it.

Simultaneously, a substantial part of the out-of-school sustainability education studies frame ‘learning potentials’ in the context of science education, drawing in particular on STEM-related (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) academic disciplines in the formulation of learning contents and objectives (Evans & Achiam, 2021; Hamilton & Ronning, 2020; Haywood, 2018). As such, there is a tendency in out-of-school sustainability education to reflect on and research into non-formal education by applying formal educational aims, concepts, and concerns.<sup>8</sup>

Two peripheral themes in the out-of-school ESE literature resonate with my research interest in Naturkraft. One theme regards questions of organization in out-of-school sustainability education: Morse, Rex, and Richardson (2018), for instance, point to a general scarcity in research attention to organizational

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8 As a Danish example, see the Danish Ministry of Children and Education’s definitions and requirements for institutions applying for operating grants as *videnspædagogiske aktivitetscentre* (English: knowledge pedagogical activity centres) (Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet, 2023).

practices in museum studies of late. More specifically, Morse et al. (2018) phrase the understudied research interest as one bringing ‘[...] issues of representation and museum outcomes into dialogue with a concern with the processes and practices through which museums organize and are organized’ (p. 113). It is my impression, moreover, that this is a more generalized scarcity in the out-of-school sustainability education literature. Part of my interest in Naturkraft pivots on these concerns.

Another theme regards other than rational conceptions of knowledge: It is a general tendency in the out-of-school literature to advocate for the potential for tangible and experiential modes of communicating complex scientific information in out-of-school sites (Cameron et al., 2013; Evans & Achiam, 2021). Recently, this tendency is developing to also include art-based modes of teaching and learning (Johnston, Kervin, & Wyeth, 2022; Trott, Even, & Frame, 2020). In extending this interest, out-of-school studies trend towards what I term *out-of-doors sustainability education* and *sustainability-oriented public pedagogy* below. Here, there are established traditions for approaching non-formal educational situations in aesthetic and art-based registers (Hansson & Öhman, 2022; Hill, 2020; H. Illeris, 2022). I consider Naturkraft to be a case through which to contribute to these discussions, and I return to this below.

As such, I take three considerations from out-of-school sustainability education research in shaping a non-formal sustainability education optic on Naturkraft: Firstly, a terminology to discuss non-formal education initiatives from a formal education perspective; secondly, an attention to organizational processes and their implications for pedagogical designs and practices in non-formal education settings, and thirdly, an attention to implications of aesthetic, art-based and embodied modes of sustainability education.

### *Out-of-Doors Sustainability Education*

In general, out-of-*doors* sustainability education – as another strand of non-formal ESE research – arrives at questions of sustainability by a different trajectory than out-of-*school* sustainability education studies. While we can

understand out-of-*school* approaches by considering non-formal sustainability education from a science education perspective, what I term out-of-*doors* approaches largely consider non-formal sustainability education from philosophical and humanities-informed perspectives (N. Gough, 2016a; Jickling, 1992; McKeown & Hopkins, 2003). Broadly speaking, in out-of-*doors* ESE research, the pedagogical setting is the non-urban biophysical environment, and the research gaze is directed to the educational implications of encounters with the more-than-human world (Sandell & Öhman, 2010). In particular, this implies phenomenological, place-based, and posthuman approaches to the exploration of the non-formal sustainability education *situation* (Malone & Truong, 2017; Snaza, 2013); i.e., the research gaze is less focused on institutions or bounded sites than on pedagogical *events* (e.g., H. Illeris, 2022; Somerville, 2017).

The aesthetic and embodied modes of education that stand as peripheral trends in out-of-*school* studies in the previous section have an otherwise central and strong position in out-of-*doors* sustainability education. Educational investigations here are less concerned with scientific literacy than with questions of transformative and transgressive experiences of being in relation with the more-than-human world (Jagodzinski et al., 2022; Lynch & Mannion, 2021; McKenzie et al., 2009; Saari & Mullen, 2018). In the case of the evergreen Scandinavian *friluftsliv*-tradition (Gelter, 2000), what is at stake in out-of-doors sustainability education are open-ended experiences with existential and ethical implications beyond words; a kind of ‘curriculum free environmental education’ (Scott & Vare, 2021, p. 74).

Other branches of out-of-doors sustainability education relate more closely and explicitly to formal modes of education, either by developing and advocating augmented forms of outdoor education pedagogy and curriculum (Lynch & Mannion, 2021; Mannion, 2019; Mannion, Fenwick, & Lynch, 2013) or by taking the out-of-doors as a means to level critique against formal modes of education (Gruenewald, 2003; Louv, 2009). A pronounced example of the latter is the Crex Crex Collective’s *Wild Pedagogies*-project that seeks to ‘re-wild’ education in the face of the Anthropocene by ‘[...] learning from place and landscape. Listening to voices from the more-than-human world. Attending to the

untamed', as Jickling and colleagues put it (Jickling, Blenkinsop, Timmerman, & De Danann Sitka-Sage, 2018, p. x).

Of the three strands of non-formal sustainability education research presented here, my investigation of Naturkraft relates most closely to out-of-doors studies. In particular, I draw on the elaborate theoretical grasp of aesthetic and experiential processes of learning beyond scientific literacy that is found in this literature (H. Illeris, 2022; Saari & Mullen, 2018). Moreover, out-of-doors studies offer a critical vocabulary with which to think education differently from conventional, formal forms (Jickling et al., 2018; Snaza, 2013). Finally, this strand offers examples of how to take seriously the theoretical disruptions to educational thinking (as well as to philosophy in general) imposed through challenges of the Anthropocene, for instance by engaging with the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze (e.g. Clarke, 2019; N. Gough, 2016b; Mannion, 2019).

### *Sustainability-Oriented Public Pedagogy*

A third area of the non-formal sustainability education research landscape that forms the background for my study, is sustainability-oriented *public pedagogy* research (Sandlin, Schultz, & Burdick, 2010b; Van Poeck & Säfström, 2022). Examples of sustainability-oriented public pedagogy research are relatively few in number (Læssøe, 2020a; Van Poeck & Säfström, 2022), but the research interests closely resemble and overlap with research on *social learning* (Lotz-Sisitka, Wals, Kronlid, & McGarry, 2015; Wals, 2007), *citizenship education* (Biesta, De Bie, & Wildemeersch, 2014), as well Scandinavian forms of *folkeoplysning* (Lysgaard, 2020; Læssøe, 2020a), all of which are established strands on the broader field of ESE research.

In line with out-of-*doors* studies, public pedagogy arrives at general questions of education from a critical theoretical angle, challenging the '[...] commonsensical cultural constructs of what counts as teaching and learning in institutional settings' (Sandlin, Schultz, & Burdick, 2010a). Studies in public pedagogy are hence critically engaged in questions of 'schooling', keen to open up the educational gaze (Masschelein, 2010) to '[...] spaces, sites and languages of

education and learning that exists outside of the walls of the institutions of schools' (Sandlin et al., 2010a). Like out-of-*doors* sustainability education, this interest involves aesthetic and art-based takes on theorizing educational processes (Hansson & Öhman, 2022; Sandlin, O'Malley, & Burdick, 2011). However, whereas out-of-*doors* research departs in conceptualizations of and encounters with the more-than-human 'natural' environment, *public pedagogy* at large departs from cultural studies, taking popular culture phenomena as objects of investigation (Sandlin et al., 2010a). In combination, these two research trajectories open considerations of the intersection between cultural and natural forms and the educational implications hereof for matters of sustainability.

Additionally, public pedagogy shares traits with out-of-*school* ESE research in the sense that public pedagogy also investigates institutionalized spaces of learning (Sandlin et al., 2011). In contrast to out-of-*school* sustainability education, however, the counterhegemonic inclinations undergirding much public pedagogy research invites a different approach to such institutions (Sandlin et al., 2011). Rather than tracing potentials for science learning or motivation for STEM disciplines, public pedagogy investigates critical, disruptive, and transgressive potentials in non-school spaces as 'counterinstitutions' (Ellsworth, 2005; Sandlin et al., 2011). As such, public pedagogy is heavily invested in critical questions of democracy and (micro)politics in education (Giroux, 2000; Hansson & Öhman, 2022).

In my exploration of Naturkraft, public pedagogy perspectives add attention to the synthetic cultural quality of the Naturkraft project and park. Naturkraft is no pristine natural environment, and public pedagogy questions the political implications hereof. This also implies an attention to Naturkraft as a potential educational counterinstitution in the field of ESE. Naturkraft is a non-formal institution, but despite the seemingly explicit scientific focus in Naturkraft - Naturkraft meaning *force of nature* - a public pedagogy perspective affords a view of the potentially disruptive and critical potentials in the anomalous configuration of the park and project.

## Research Question

In sum, in the exploration of Naturkraft, this dissertation is situated amongst three separate, yet closely related, strands of non-formal sustainability education research: Out-of-school sustainability education, out-of-doors sustainability education, and sustainability-oriented public pedagogy. Roughly speaking, the out-of-*school* strand represents a formal educational gaze on institutions on the outskirts of the educational system. It is an important perspective to keep in mind when trying to understand Naturkraft as something potentially anomalous and different from formal education. Moreover, a few studies in the out-of-*school* strand raise attention to vacancies in the literature regarding organizational considerations in non-formal education. My study offers considerations on this aspect. The out-of-*doors* strand lends a perspective to explore the role of aesthetic and embodied experiences in non-formal sustainability educational processes. This undergirds my exploration of the distinctiveness of the learning experience on offer in Naturkraft. Finally, the critical approach to education from sustainability-oriented public pedagogy offers a nuanced perspective on and a vocabulary for considerations of the institutional role of Naturkraft in a broader educational institutional landscape.

With this background, the aim of my study is to characterize and discuss the Naturkraft project in a socioecological and critical perspective with attention to experiential and institutional aspects of the project. I ask how the enactments of non-formal sustainability education in the Naturkraft project can be understood as harbouring critical and nuancing perspectives on what it could imply to address challenges of the Anthropocene through non-formal sustainability education. Ultimately, the ambition is to propose a theoretical position that draws on empirical analyses of the Naturkraft project and builds on an ontology of becoming. To guide my explorations of the Naturkraft project, I translate this interest into the following problem statement:



*How does Naturkraft enact non-formal sustainability education and how can we understand this enactment in light of challenges of the Anthropocene?*

## Dissertation Outline

The dissertation falls in three parts: this introduction chapter is the first of three chapters in Part 1, *Fundamentals*. Here, I clear some conceptual ground and have introduced the research interests guiding this study, drawing on a discussion of existing scholarly insights concerning non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene. In Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, I present the theoretical and methodological considerations on which I base the subsequent empirical and theoretical analytical explorations of the Naturkraft project. I discuss what I mean by *enactment* when drawing on a DeleuzoGuattarian-infused ontology of becoming, and I discuss and describe how I go about exploring such educational enactments of the Naturkraft project with an ethnographic research framework. Chapter 2, moreover, elaborates on the analytical logic and layout of the combined six chapters that make up the two subsequent parts of the dissertation.

Part 2, *An Educational Landscape of Unintentional Design*, comprises the empirical exploration of the Naturkraft project. The four analytical chapters shed light on the Naturkraft project, each from their educationally informed perspective. Chapter 4, *Charting Intentions*, interrogates the historical development of the Naturkraft project by analysing a range of written project proposals from 2006 through 2017. The guiding question for this chapter is *why Naturkraft?* Chapter 5, *Concepts of the West Coast*, explores *what Naturkraft teaches* by identifying and unfolding some of the different ways in which a concept of the West Coast forms and gains significance in considerations of the potential educational impact of Naturkraft. Chapter 6, *Becoming-Nature, Becoming-Child*, is a theoretically informed analysis of the visitors' embodied experience of encountering the Naturkraft park. As such, this chapter concerns a question about *how Naturkraft works* – from a visitor's perspective. Finally,

Chapter 7, *A Host of Hosts*, also explores *how Naturkraft works*, yet from the opposite side of the pedagogical relation, so to speak. Here, I investigate different host-positions that co-exist in the Naturkraft park and discuss, how the existing differences, challenge the forging of an organizational and educational identity of the Naturkraft project at large. *Why, what, and how* thus make up the analytical supra-structure to guide the exploration of sustainability educational enactments of the Naturkraft project.

Part 3, *Eccentric Sustainability Education*, consists of two chapters. In Chapter 8, *Polite Visits and Eccentric Enactments*, I tie the knots from the analytical chapters and reflect on the analytical insights in current discussions of sustainability education in the Anthropocene. As a central component, I propose a theoretical figure – the eccentric – through which to consider the role and challenges of non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene; a figure that personifies the peculiar ways in which Naturkraft poses a potential for thinking non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene slightly differently. Chapter 9, *Critical Concluding Remarks*, rounds off with affirmative (self-)critical considerations and educational perspectives.

Here we go.



# Enacting Sustainability Education

The aim of this chapter is to outline the theoretical assumptions on which I base my empirical and analytical exploration of the Naturkraft project. As noted in the introduction, these explorations are guided by an interest in understanding Naturkraft as enactment of sustainability education and, relatedly, an interest in discussing, what alternative avenues for thought on non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene the project might open up. Moreover, this chapter must be read in close relation to the chapter that follows, which outlines and discusses my methodical choices and considerations in the project.

To these ends, in the following, I introduce a theoretical framework based on three interconnected ideas: Firstly, the idea of *affirmative critique* as an ethos for education research in the Anthropocene; secondly, the idea of *becoming* as ontological framing of sustainability educational thought and research, and thirdly, the idea of *performative enactments* as a methodological point of departure for researching non-formal sustainability education practices. Based on this background, I outline the analytic approach that guides the analyses and informs the concluding discussions of this dissertation. In essence, this analytic consists of a conceptual mapping of the *material*, *embodied*, and *imaginary* structures that enable and constrain specific lines of thought and action in the Naturkraft project with regards to education and sustainability. This mapping plays out in four interrelated educational perspectives, which pave the way for the affirmative inauguration of an alternative concept of non-formal sustainability education; the concept of *eccentric education*. I will return to this concept

in a hundred-and-some pages, when I have mapped the relevant parts of the empirical landscape of the Naturkraft project.

## An Affirmative Sustainability Education Experiment

My theoretical considerations involve an ambition characteristic of certain post-structuralist theories (Raffnsøe, Staunæs, & Bank, 2022): The ambition of performing *affirmative critique*. As the name goes, this ambition is critical at its core; critical in the sense that it is concerned with investigating and questioning structures(/strictures (N. Gough, 2016b)) that frame and condition social life (Foucault, 2013). Yet, it is not ‘critical’ in the spirit of e.g., the Frankfurt School’s *critical theory*, where critique is understood as a means for transgressing the *false consciousness* imposed on subjects through e.g., capitalism-infused products of culture (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1997; Giroux, 2000). Neither is it a critique that would, for instance, interrogate and evaluate the Naturkraft designs and activities against some more or less specified measures of (educational) quality. It is no critical evaluation (Wals, Mochizuki, & Leicht, 2017). In the case of Naturkraft, this role of the educational or cultural critic is already more than filled out by the countless journalists, consultants, and locals, who have eagerly voiced their opinions about Naturkraft in all sorts of public and social media throughout the time of my research (see e.g., Vesterby, Have, Rauff, & Laursen, 2020; Vibjerg & Sandøe, 2021).

By contrast, Italian philosopher Rosi Braidotti explains the *affirmative* approach in comparison to the *dialectics* of critical theory. She writes:

The point is [...] to extract the energy for collective action from social conditions that offer none. Dialectics is a manner of dealing with this problem, by fueling the energy for political resistance through opposition and the drive for recognition. Affirmative ethics takes a different and less violent path and borrows this energy from the future, so to speak, by counteractualizing alternatives that are both untimely and necessary. It mobilizes the

collective power (*potential*) to make a positive difference and puts it to the task of enacting alternatives.

(Braidotti, 2022, pp. 146-147)

This post-structuralist critical impulse is, to paraphrase Braidotti, one of ‘enacting alternatives’. It is a form of critique that works from within established (sociomaterial) structures, seeking out cracks and hardly noticeable developments herein which hold potentials for something else to emerge. It is a form of critique that does not seek to confront established social truths, habits, or institutions through direct opposition, but rather seeks to nourish sprouts of alternative ways of doing or being (Raffnsøe et al., 2022). In other words, what is affirmed are the expressions of *difference* that occur in even the most dogmatic and conventional forms of life (Braidotti, 2022). These alternatives are, as Braidotti writes, *untimely* in the sense that they counter what is taken for granted at any given point in time. And yet, they are *necessary* in the sense that without them social life would risk sustaining injustices and inertia of status-quo (Braidotti, 2022, p. 149). As Foucault writes, affirmative criticism does not ‘[...] try to judge, but bring an oeuvre, a book, a sentence, an idea to life; it would light fires, watch the grass grow [...]. It would multiply, not judgments, but signs of existence’ (Foucault, 2013, p. 326). As such, the affirmative critical ambition is one of affirming multiple forms of existence, thereby enacting a productive critique of established norms and structures.

When I approach the Naturkraft project with an affirmative critical stance, it is for two reasons: One is that, at the beginning of my research project, Naturkraft was nothing but a construction site and an evolving organization with grand ambitions. No educational practice was yet in place – at least not in the sense of organized learning situations involving guests and agreed-upon aims and content. Hence, had I set out to pass judgement on *how well* Naturkraft teaches questions of sustainability, I was at the wrong place and/or at the wrong time.

Instead, what Naturkraft did seem to offer was a large-scale educational experiment in the making; an alternative by many measures. As I will return to in the following chapters, the Naturkraft project played out in relations between

all sorts of established institutions and modes of thought. The peculiar combinations that were coming together in the Naturkraft project did not fit together seamlessly. As such, the project offered a potent site for nourishing sprouts of alternatives. In particular, there were fertile conditions for explorations of alternatives in the early days of the Naturkraft project, before employees settled in routine ways of operation and before the *people's court* (visitors and cultural critics alike) agreed on what judgement to pass. At this point, the project teemed with a restless and experimental energy that – in line with Braidotti above – I wished to explore for its potentials for collective action. Which leads me to the second reason for adopting the affirmative critical stance.

More than anything, the sustainability agenda is a call for societal change (UNESCO, 2017, 2020; Vare & Scott, 2007). Yet, as some educational critics point out, education and ambitions of societal change can make an odd couple (McKenzie et al., 2009; Stevenson, 1987/2017). Established institutions and established ways of doing education are likely to fail in the face of the *wicked problems* of sustainability (Block et al., 2019), as a major aspect of education is the reproduction of cultural and societal norms and structures (Biesta, 2016; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Stevenson, 2007). Simultaneously, and to the contrary, big hope is invested in the capacities of education to be a lever for societal transformation (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2020). I begin from a position that assumes education to be both, and the mix of the two to be muddy and entangled, i.e., education as simultaneously a reproductive and transformative societal capacity. Along these lines, approaching the analysis with an affirmative critical stance involves an ambition to distil expressions of transformative quality from the reproductive inertia of educational business-as-usual.

I approach Naturkraft affirmatively to pay attention to alternative ways of thinking and doing sustainability education that may be in the process of emerging from this experimental project. Whether these ways are *successful* or not, by whatever emic measures in place, is of less interest. In line with Deleuze and Guattari, whom I return to below, what counts are rather the enactments of (educational) differences (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004).

## An Ontology of Becoming

As noted in the introduction chapter, a range of recent critique on the field of sustainability education emphasizes how the idea of the Anthropocene not only signals a change in geological and ecological circumstances for life on earth (Crutzen, 2002), but also that planetary symptoms of the Anthropocene challenge how we as humans make sense of ourselves and our world (Clarke & Mcphie, 2020; Lysgaard & Jørgensen, 2020). Current planetary developments make painfully evident how we are intimately entangled in our environments. Experiences with, for instance, viral pandemics and anthropogenic natural disasters make it increasingly difficult to maintain certain dominant worldviews of the past, in which *nature* was something on the outside of *human culture* (Clarke & Mcphie, 2020).

In particular, what many critics point out is how worldviews inherited from the Enlightenment have had major influence on dominant imaginaries of today (Lysgaard & Jørgensen, 2020). From this perspective, *nature* is a realm outside of and separated from *culture*, to which it serves as an untamed counterpoint and as a reservoir of resources. From their elevated position, outside of and above the natural and material world, (hu)man is capable of rationally categorizing, organizing and utilizing the environment to civilizational, progressive ends (Bai, 2009; Scott & Vare, 2021). Consequently, as noted by a range of environmentally concerned scholars, this worldview has had major influence on how (mainly Western) human civilizations have wreaked havoc on the environment over at least the past 200–300 years (Clarke & Mcphie, 2020; Lysgaard et al., 2019; Malone et al., 2017).<sup>9</sup>

As I will show in the analytical chapters, this anthropocentric and bifurcated worldview also permeates many aspects of the Naturkraft project. Not surprisingly. The project is commercially invested after all, fuelled by regional

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9 Some scholars argue that this bifurcated worldview dates back much longer than the Enlightenment, as tropes of human separation from and superiority over the natural world are central to, for instance, all monotheistic religions (Morton, 2013a; Scott & Vare, 2021).



development ambitions in a context of national politics and global capitalism. Culturally and socially oriented through and through. Yet, in order to establish an affirmative critical position for analysing and discussing the project in the context of the Anthropocene, I frame this study in a different ontology; an ontology, moreover, that also undergirds Braidotti et al.'s affirmative ambitions.<sup>10</sup> In line with, among others, Noel Gough (2009, 2016b; N. Gough & Adsit-Morris, 2020), Lucas Introna (2013), and Greg Mannion (2019), and behind them, in particular, French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, I think of this ontology as an *ontology of becoming*.<sup>11</sup>

One cornerstone aspect of thinking about the world as *becoming* is to accept that nothing simply *is* in itself. *Being*, in the sense of stable and fixed characteristics to any phenomenon, is too rigid an idea to capture how (geological, biological, social) life on earth unfolds (see e.g., Clarke, 2017). Rather than thinking of the world as made up of bounded entities interacting through exchange of non-essential, external qualities, in an ontology of becoming, there are no entities outside of the acts of relating (Introna, 2013). The world – or that which *is* – exists in an ever-changing, ever-entangling (or in Barad's words 'intra-acting' (Barad, 2007)) process of becoming. As Introna states: '[Q]ualities as such do not pre-exist but are the emergent accomplishments of becoming. We may impose ontological boundaries on becoming (to create beings) for analytical purposes, [...] but that is an arbitrary epistemological act' (Introna, 2013, p. 332). We may think of action in terms of bounded entities interacting, but this is only a temporary, analytical fixation of a world in constant flux for the sake of

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10 Braidotti is very explicit about the DeleuzoGuattarian lineage of her philosophy, continuously referencing and building upon their arguments and concepts (Braidotti, 2006, 2013, 2022).

11 From a sustainability education perspective, Lucas Introna is an 'odd scholar out' in this dissertation. A Professor of Technology, Organizations, and Ethics, his work is not concerned with education directly. However, his text, 'Performativity and the Becoming of Sociomaterial Assemblages' (Introna, 2013), presents and discusses with admirable clarity a line of general philosophical and methodological implications of adopting an ontology of becoming. I use Introna as part of my general presentation of the dissertation's philosophical grounding, while abstaining from going into detail on Introna's own research agendas – as does he in the 2013 text.

contemplation and orientation. Everything is always already on the verge of becoming different.

### *Enactments in and by Assemblages*

In my approach to working analytically within an ontology of becoming, I follow a widely adopted way of conceptualizing fluctuations of the world in terms of *assemblages* (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004; Introna, 2013; Mannion, 2019).<sup>12</sup> I will discuss my specific uses of this concept when relevant throughout the analyses, but some initial clarification here helps detail the ontological framing.

The word *assemblage* is an English translation of the French *agencement*, which has [...] both an active and a passive sense, ‘a way of assembling or arranging’ as well as the resulting ‘ordering or arrangement’ (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. xiii). In Deleuze & Guattari’s philosophical use, the active sense of the word dominates, although they also seem to play on the firmness or boundedness of the passive sense (Buchanan, 2017). In grammatical terms, an *assemblage* may be considered a *nominalization*, i.e., a verb remade as a noun. As Deleuze-scholar Wise puts it: ‘[...] an assemblage is a whole of some sort that expresses some identity and claims a territory. [It] is a becoming that brings elements together’ (Wise, 2011). What is brought together in the dynamics of assemblages, moreover, can be entities of every imaginable character: ‘corporeal, technological, mechanical, virtual, discursive and imaginary [matter] that carry affective charges’ (Renold & Ivinson, 2014). The assemblage, then, is a philosophical, analytical concept carved out for interrogating processes of sociomaterial organization or ‘world-building’ in a play between contingency and structure (Wise, 2011). This, moreover, without presuming agency as residing with any singular actor (N. Gough, 2016b; Tsing, 2015). Instead, agency emerges *in* assemblages;

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12 Other conceptualizations with (slightly) different theoretical implications also circulate, of which Barad’s concepts of the apparatus and material-discursive practices seem the most widely used (Barad, 2007). For a discussion of the conceptual differences between apparatus and assemblage see nicolic (2018).

capacity to affect the surroundings emerges in the acts of multiplicities coming together (Introna, 2013).

In my analyses of Naturkraft, I take these considerations as inspiration to explore how we can understand the mode of *non-formal sustainability education* of the Naturkraft project and -park as something *enacted* in and by assemblages. By this, I mean to explore what Naturkraft is in the act of becoming and what the sustainability educational implications of this becoming may be. I thus use the term *enactment* throughout to conceptualize *performative outcomes* in and by the Naturkraft project.

Again, in the way I use *enactment*, there is a nominalizing play between noun and verb going on. An enactment is something in the act of becoming, while simultaneously it also appears a stable entity capable of engaging in relations with the surroundings. As Introna puts it: ‘In the ontology of becoming, all acts/accomplishments are performative; all performative acts produce what such acts assume (as pre-existing)’ (Introna, 2013, p. 336). Moreover, enactments operate in-between ontological openness and constraint. As such, *enactments* indicate a non-causal yet conditional relationship between past accomplishments and accomplishments in the act of becoming (Barad, 2003; Butler, 2021).<sup>13</sup> Introna points out that despite enactments being ontologically open, ‘[e]very act is [also] already governed by prior performative outcomes within the flow of becoming’ (Introna, 2013, p. 337).

Enactments involve a play on norms. Feminist philosopher, Judith Butler, discusses the social implications hereof in terms of ‘enabling constraints’. She writes: ‘Agency begins where [assumed] sovereignty wanes. The one who acts [...] act precisely to the extent that he or she is [already] constituted as an actor and, hence, operating within a field of enabling constraints from the outset’

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13 Barad (2003) and Butler (1996, 2021), among others, write of these performative outcomes in terms of performances; something that is performed. I prefer and use enactment, as this term involves a (slightly) greater emphasis on relations between ideas and the embodied and materialized expressions of ideas. In my understanding, performance instantiates something that has effects from the point of performance onwards. Enactment does the same but, to a greater extent, also considers what went before; what went into the performance.

(Butler, 2021, p. 16). In other words, one does not make oneself socially intelligible without citing prior enactments. As such, norms enable social intelligibility while thereby also constraining social action. Yet, as Introna notes, echoing Butler, Deleuze, and Foucault, '[...] it is not essential. At any moment it could also be otherwise' (Introna, 2013). Put differently, enactments of all sorts also contain openings towards alternatives, however small and covert they may be. This theoretical circumstance is what fuels the ambitions of affirmative criticism, which I describe above.

As indicated, from a sustainability educational perspective it is also important to accentuate how an ontology of becoming necessarily exceeds the (inter-human) social. In this ontological framing, (human) sociality cannot be considered in isolation from material and ecological aspects (Mannion, 2019). This involves a de-centring of the human subject. Being human, in the perspective of an ontology of becoming, is not per definition to obtain a privileged position from which to reside over anything non-human (Malone & Truong, 2017). To the contrary, the human is a becoming, an emergence in and by the fluctuations of the world on par with any non-human existence, constantly made and re-made within an ecology of *inter alia* geological, biological, meteorological, and technological forces and entities (Malone & Truong, 2017; Mannion, 2019). Moreover, as ESE scholar Greg Mannion notes, adopting this perspective invites much needed discussion and revision in education of aspects such as ...

[...] 'stewardship' views of the environment (with its paternalistic associations of sympathy, mastery and control), a greater acceptance of environmental crisis of the Anthropocene (particularly climate change, but in connected ways food insecurity, migration, and so on), and a foregrounding of the importance of alternative ways of knowing (via, for example, indigenous knowledge and the embodied, affective and ethical dimensions of experience).

(Mannion, 2019, p. 2)

In sum, framing this project within an ontology of becoming has a range of implications on how to conceptualize the sustainability educational workings of

the Naturkraft project. For instance, the framing directs attention to how Naturkraft's enactment of non-formal sustainability education can be understood as the performative outcome of an assemblage consisting of multiple entities and forces, both human-cultural and ecological-material. The framing also implies attention to how these enactments are enabled as well as constrained by pre-existing (social) norms and structures, yet without the constraints being causal determinations. All assemblages contain openings, sprouts of the alternative, or *lines of flight* (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004) holding the potential of something different to emerge.

### Analytical Approach: Making Maps and Concepts

In some of my analytical explorations of the Naturkraft project, I transpose the ontological inspiration presented above to a research approach that pivots on Deleuze and Guattari's idea of *the concept* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994). Above, I write that this thesis explores how Naturkraft enacts a certain *non-formal sustainability educational mode*. A slightly different way to put this interest is to ask how Naturkraft works as a *sustainability educational concept*.<sup>14</sup> Below, I describe what I mean by this, taking inspiration from the way curriculum scholar Noel Gough works with the DeleuzoGuattarian philosophy in his 2009 essay 'Becoming Transnational' (N. Gough, 2009).

In the essay, Gough describes Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy as a *geophilosophy*; i.e., a philosophical project that maps the 'geography of reason' (N. Gough, 2009, p. 69). In this, Gough starts from the idea that philosophy as a discipline works by 'creating concepts' through which knowledge can be

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14 It is important here to distinguish the philosophical term *concept* from the use of the term in marketing, project development and similar contexts (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994). With Naturkraft, however, this distinction is not straight-forward. The term *concept* often occurs in my field notes as an emic term used in communication about the Naturkraft project, especially in the phase of project development prior to the opening. In order to avoid confusion, I use *project* when writing about the emic and empirical side of Naturkraft and reserve *concept* for analytical and interpretive purposes.

created (N. Gough, 2009, p. 71). By creating concepts, humans fix the fluctuations of the world, as described above, thereby enabling thought and orientation. By describing this operation in spatial terms, Deleuze and Guattari analyse thinking as ‘flows or movements across space’; i.e., as situated action (N. Gough, 2009, p. 70). *Concepts*, as the performative outcomes of philosophical thought, are enacted in a set of given circumstances and relations at a given time, in a given space; that is, in assemblages. ‘Every concept has a history and a becoming’, as Gough paraphrases Deleuze and Guattari (N. Gough, 2009, p. 73). As such, exploring *Naturkraft* as a concept involves exploring the history and becoming of the project. It is exploring the *situatedness* of the project in both time and space. This is the aim of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 below.

Yet, as Gough notes, there is also another side to the creation of concepts, namely what Deleuze and Guattari call *the plane of immanence*:

Every concept inaugurates the plane of immanence of the concept, which is ‘neither a concept nor the concept of all concepts’ [(Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 37)] but, rather, is a preconceptual field presupposed within the concept, ‘not in the way that one concept may refer to others but in the way that concepts themselves refer to nonconceptual understanding’ [(Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 40)].

(N. Gough, 2009, p. 73)

Concepts presuppose a preconceptual field; a dimension that is at the same time internal to and outside of the concept and which is ‘laid out’ in the act of creating concepts (N. Gough, 2009). The *plane of immanence* is the nonconceptual understanding that concepts refer to, or put differently, ‘the image thought gives itself of what it means to think, to make use of thought, to find one’s bearings in thought’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 37, as cited in Gough, 2009; italics omitted). As such, in Gough’s interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari, the *plane of immanence* is a preconceptual dimension to thought that is, none the less, situated. In Gough’s examples, planes vary across cultural and national contexts, which may, for instance, explain cultural differences in how a concept such as

*education for sustainable development* works and with what effects (N. Gough, 2009).

A brief additional remark on the theoretical vocabulary. In the edited volume from which Gough's essay is taken, the idea of the *plane of immanence* assumes a central role, yet mostly in the form of the term *imaginary* (McKenzie et al., 2009). Here, the editors reference Braidotti (2006), who describes the *imaginary* as '[...] ultimately an image of thought [...] a habit that captures and blocks the many potential alternative ways we may be able to think about our environment and ourselves' (McKenzie et al., 2009). *Plane of immanence, image of thought, imaginary*: different terms, similar idea. In the following chapters, for brevity and consistency, I opt for the term *imaginary*.

In my analyses, I take this idea of culturally varying *imaginaries* as a point of departure for exploring what differences go into the enactment of Naturkraft as a sustainability educational *concept*. Figuratively speaking, this implies *mapping* the Naturkraft history and becoming, with particular attention to the pre-conceptual field of combined and colliding imaginaries that undergirds the project. I expand on the analytical particularities of this approach at the beginning of Chapter 4. What is worth noting here is that the analysis serves to open considerations on the nature of the (social and cultural) differences that are entangled in the project. Naturkraft can be considered a concept inaugurated by many *imaginaries*. One analytical question then becomes, what this means for the intelligibility of the Naturkraft project as seen from both a visitors' as well as a hosts' perspective. How do people involved in the Naturkraft project – in one way or another – make sense of it?

### *Mappings and Conceptualizations in Posthuman, Embodied Registers*

When I write that I analyse Naturkraft as a *sustainability educational* concept, this involves attention to how enactments in and by the project relate both to questions of teaching and learning and to questions of nature-culture relationships from an Anthropocene perspective. In line with the ontology discussion above, this necessarily also involves attention to how the non-human, more-

than-human, and material play into the enactments of education in and by the Naturkraft project.

In Chapter 6, I approach these perspectives analytically by taking inspiration from cultural studies scholar Elizabeth Ellsworth. In her 2005 book, *Places of Learning: Media, Architecture, Pedagogy*, Ellsworth concerns herself with what she calls ‘[...] *anomalous places of learning*: peculiar, irregular, abnormal, or difficult to classify pedagogical phenomena’ (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 5, italics added). In her approach to handling these phenomena theoretically, Ellsworth works within an ontology of becoming and draws on a line of *new pragmatist* thinkers, of which the majority explicitly elaborate on the DeleuzoGuattarian philosophy.<sup>15</sup>

On this theoretical background, Ellsworth instantiates a posthuman analytic for exploring how sociomaterial assemblages enact educational experiences.<sup>16</sup> Central to these analyses are explorations of how learning plays out in *anomalous places* as something other than processes of exchange and acquisition of entities of knowledge (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 1). Rather, Ellsworth conceptualizes learning as the process of *understanding through sensational, bodily experience*, with knowledge being an embodied and relational phenomenon emergent to these experiences (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 17). Again, *understanding* is not the acquisition of entities of knowledge, with the body acting as an intermediate means. Instead, understanding is an *embodied* experience of becoming different *with* the sociomaterial environment; in Ellsworth’s words it is ‘[...] the

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15 The new pragmatists that Ellsworth references are Brian Massumi, Elizabeth Grosz, Barbara Kennedy, John Rajchman, Adam Phillips and Jessica Benjamin (Ellsworth, 2005, pp. 24-26). Of these, the four former thinkers explicitly base much of their work on, inter alia, Deleuze. The latter two, in contrast, draw mainly on Sigmund Freud and developmental psychologist Donald Winnicott (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 11).

16 Ellsworth’s project pivots on the concept of *pedagogy*, which she endeavours to re-frame from an embodied theoretical perspective. Throughout the dissertation, I use *education* and *pedagogy* interchangeably. If a small difference in emphasis comes through, it would be that I consider *pedagogy* to concern the micro relations of educational exchanges, such as teachers’ and pupils’ immediate interactions in teaching situations. However, I do not think it of great significance to my discussions where *pedagogy* stops and *education* takes over.



experience of the learning self in the times and places of knowledge in the making, which are also the times and places of the learning self in the making' (2005, p. 2). In other words, learning as embodied and materially entangled becoming *with* the world.

Aided by Ellsworth, I approach the educational enactments in and by Naturkraft from a posthuman perspective, asking what Naturkraft as a discursive-material assemblage makes of its visitor. Like that, I get to explore the role of bodies and materiality in the pedagogy that Naturkraft enacts. Moreover, Ellsworth lends a vocabulary for considering pedagogy as more than a rational endeavour. Pedagogy, too, becomes *anomalous* in her way of handling it. As such, Ellsworth not only inspires a mapping analysis of the constituents and inner workings of *anomalous places of learning*, she also enacts a new concept of pedagogy. As she writes:

The purpose of this book is to invite interested readers into an experiment in thinking about pedagogy in terms that are quite different from, say, an ethnography of various individuals' reported and observed learning experiences. It is an experiment that promises, as a consequence, quite different opportunities and challenges for students and teachers alike.

(Ellsworth, 2005, p. 5)

Accordingly, through analysing the pedagogical implications of *anomalous places*, Ellsworth opens up new considerations on pedagogy and education. In line with the DeleuzoGuattarian idea of conceptualization cited above, Ellsworth inaugurates a different take on educational experience, in effect laying out an alternative *plane of immanence*, an alternative *imaginary*, through which to approach pedagogical phenomena. Ellsworth's concept of pedagogy is forged as an alternative avenue for considering '[...] teaching about and across social and cultural difference in general' (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 100).

In a similar vein, the ultimate ambition of this dissertation is (to contribute to) the inauguration of a concept that opens thought on non-formal sustainability education as an enactment in-between multiple social imaginaries and with pronounced embodied, material, and ecological dimensions. It is the argument

of this dissertation that such a concept will provide an affirmative critical frame for understanding the Naturkraft project as non-formal sustainability education, precisely because of the alternative avenues for thought that it enacts. Moreover, in the broader perspective of *sustainability education research*, such a concept contributes to ongoing discussions about how to do non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene about and across social, cultural, and life-form differences (Clarke & Mcphie, 2020; Jagodzinski et al., 2022; Malone et al., 2017). In particular, this dissertation contributes – as discussed in the introduction chapter – an empirically situated perspective on how to manage the roles and potentials of non-formal sustainability education initiatives slightly differently from the ways that currently dominate. As such, the ambition of *affirmative critique* takes a distinct sustainability educational form in this dissertation. It is an ambition of noticing and kindling sparks of the alternative, while maintaining sustainability as a normative, educational aim. It is the ambition, after all, to contribute to the enabling of balanced relations between life-forms on earth through education. In other words, this dissertation aims to disturb, however slightly, what is taken for granted in established thinking about sustainability in non-formal education by illuminating alternatives.

## Analytical Directions

In sum, in this chapter, I have sketched some theoretical and methodological implications of analytically applying an ontology of becoming. I highlight how I follow, amongst others, Rosi Braidotti in the formulation of an affirmative critical research aim (Braidotti, 2022). As such, my explorations are concerned with how alternative expressions of sustainability education emerge in the Naturkraft project. These explorations, furthermore, draw on the theoretical idea of the assemblage; a coming-together of entities of multiple kinds (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004; Wise, 2011). I substantiate the theoretical gaze on this chaotic flux by circling in on the idea of different *imaginaries* (Braidotti, 2006; N. Gough, 2009) that collide in the project and by outlining Ellsworth's posthuman, material and embodied theoretical approach to analysing *anomalous places of*

*learning* (Ellsworth, 2005). Together, and with the addition of the voices of other scholars concerned with questions of ESE and/or the Anthropocene, Gough and Ellsworth inform a conceptual mapping of *material*, *embodied* and *imaginary* structures in the Naturkraft project. This analytical ambition is accompanied by the ambition of enacting an affirmative critique with sustainability bearings through the formulation of a novel theoretical position in non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene.

In rounding off this chapter, I want to provide the reader with an overview of how these theoretical considerations translate into an analytical approach of educational conceptual mapping. This approach unfolds over four chapters, followed by a fifth chapter of reading the resulting conceptual map, so to speak, in light of the Anthropocene challenges in education. The analysis is arranged around a popular curricular trinity: the educational *why*, *what*, and *how* (Juelskjær & Plauborg, 2013).

Chapter 4 explores the educational *why* of the Naturkraft project; its purposes and aims. In the chapter, I analyse different *expressions of intention* that occur in different project documents. In this analysis, I draw on the above-mentioned theoretical considerations about *imaginaries* (Braidotti, 2006) and the mapping of concept histories and becomings (N. Gough, 2009). More particularly, I focus on *sustainability educational intentions* by distinguishing different *educational philosophies* and different *sustainability approaches* at play in the Naturkraft project (Sandell, Öhman, & Östman, 2005; Öhman & Östman, 2019). This chapter, hence, provides an introduction to the Naturkraft project while at the same time discerning differences in ways of thinking that co-exist in the project.

Chapter 5 elaborates on the conceptual mapping by exploring the educational *what*; questions about content. In the chapter, I analyse the educational content of Naturkraft, asking *through what does Naturkraft try to fulfill its intentions*; or simply *what does Naturkraft teach*. The chapter focuses on one material-discursive phenomenon that takes centre stage in the many different emic descriptions of the Naturkraft project; namely the West Coast. The chapter analyzes the many different forms and roles the West Coast assumes in

Naturkraft's enactment of non-formal sustainability education. The chapter illuminates some of the ways in which the Naturkraft project is emplaced in local socioecological circumstances.

The following two chapters, Chapters 6 and 7, both explore the educational *how* of the Naturkraft project – its pedagogical methods – yet from two rather different angles. In Chapter 6, the inspiration from Ellsworth leads the way. This chapter is an analysis of *how* the Naturkraft *park* makes an address to its visitors. This involves attention to material, bodily, and aesthetic dimensions of the ways in which visitors engage with the park architecture and its different installations. Moreover, this chapter interprets the aesthetic workings of the Naturkraft park in relation to questions about normative distinctions between 'culture' and 'nature', and between 'children' and 'adults'. Hereby, the chapter makes the claim that a pivotal pedagogical aspect of the Naturkraft project are the disturbances of norms that it enacts.

Chapter 7 explores the educational *how* of the Naturkraft project by investigating the ways in which different actors, most of whom are human and engaged professionally with the project, enact the role of the *host*. That is, the analysis investigates different emic conceptions of what it means to be a facilitator of educational experiences in the park. Most of these host-identities, I discern and illustrate inductively, drawing on field note excerpts. The fifth host-identity, however, I abduct with theoretical support from philosophers Donna Haraway (2016) and Timothy Morton (2018). Like that, the chapter draws a map of different host-identities in becoming in the socioecological organizational life of the Naturkraft project.

Through this analysis, Chapter 7 opens considerations on what challenges may be involved in playing host to educational experiences in the Anthropocene in a non-formal educational institution on the Danish West Coast. The chapter paves the way for Chapter 8, in which I discuss the analytical findings with affirmative critical attention to how Naturkraft enacts non-formal sustainability education in novel ways. Moreover, I discuss perspectives from which the Naturkraft project can be understood as an educational response to the (challenging and changing) conditions for socioecological life in the

Anthropocene. Through these discussions, I propose the concept of *eccentric education* to grasp the educational particularities of the Naturkraft project and to open avenues for further investigations, questionings, and practices of non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene.

Yet, before I set out on the analytical journey through the educational landscape of the Naturkraft project, I will spend the following chapter detailing how I went about the empirical explorations of the project.

# Exploring Educational Enactments

As discussed in the previous chapter, the analytical parts of this dissertation take scope on *material*, *embodied*, and *imaginary* structuring structures of the Naturkraft project, ultimately to explore what openings the project holds to thinking and doing non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene in new ways. As such, I aim to theorise the Naturkraft project from a vantage point beyond its day-to-day organizational struggles, i.e., as if viewing a landscape from a (slightly) elevated position. However, these theoretical observations build on time spent *in the land*; amongst the things, ideas, and beings – human and not – that perform the structuring structures of the project. In this chapter, I discuss what this approach to Naturkraft – as a project as well as a park – has involved in terms of empirical exploration. Furthermore, I describe and discuss the methodological and methodical challenges I have had, and choices I have made, throughout my fieldwork. I consider how these choices influence the subsequent analysis – which analytical moves they enable and which they obstruct. Finally, I touch upon ethical implications of interrupting the life near Ringkøbing while doing fieldwork. To this end, I begin with a few more thoughts on landscapes.

## Exploring an Unintentional Design

The American anthropologist, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, and her research team have a specific interest in landscapes. Tsing writes:

The object of our research is *unintentional design* on anthropogenic landscapes, that is, landscapes that have been shaped by human activity. Unintentional design is not just about humans; many other species, as well as non-living stuff such as water and wind, shape the landscapes we study. Unintentional design is the emergent pattern of all these forms of activity, human and otherwise. This is our Anthropocene world.

(Tsing, 2021, p. 205, italics added)

Tsing and her collaborators explore physical landscape formations characteristic of the Anthropocene (Tsing, Swanson, et al., 2017). They do so with an eye to the unintentional outcomes of multi-species interactions: what emerges and ‘[...] what might yet emerge’ (Tsing, 2021). Humans as well as non-humans go about making their particular worlds, shaping the common landscape into something that none of the interacting agents alone intend (Hathaway, 2022). This is what Tsing and her collaborators term *unintentional design*: designs intentional in part, but in sum *unintentional*.

In exploring *Naturkraft*, I find this idea of unintentionally designed landscapes appealing as a heuristic device. With a term borrowed from Deleuze, Tsing describes such landscapes as ‘[...] landscapes in the process of becoming [...]’ (Tsing, 2021, p. 209). That is, as landscapes constantly on the verge of transformation. In extension of the previous chapter, I think of *enactments* of education as the continuous ‘coming-together’ of multiple intentional acts, unintentionally moulding a sociomaterial landscape with specific educational implications. The question thus becomes, what is it that comes together and what educational implications emerge in effect?

Tsing and her collaborators explore unintentional designs through an array of ethnographically informed approaches, including ‘[t]o listen to and tell a rush of stories [...]’ (Tsing, 2015, p. 37) – some of the stories voiced by humans, others emanating from other-than-human life-forms in other-than-linguistic registers. The multiple stories form a landscape, from which the curious ethnographer/researcher palpates unintentional outcomes of encounters. Tsing labels her methodical approach ‘the arts of noticing’ (Tsing, 2015), which her collaborator, Heather Anne Swanson, describes as ‘[...] the situated and sensuous acts of

observing, taking notes, drawing, and discussing as we repeatedly walk [a] site together' (Swanson, 2020, p. 17). It is a situated, sensuous, and patient approach that 'favor[s] the slow emergence of more focused questions from the observation of patterns' (Swanson, 2020, p. 17). Below, I will detail the methodical devices I applied in 'noticing', describing, and questioning the Naturkraft project.

Yet, whereas Tsing and colleagues depart from observations of physical landscape structures in their multi-species ethnography, my study also approaches the textual and discursive side of Naturkraft in a pursuit of the *immaterial* landscape structures of the project. As such, I strive to explore the Naturkraft landscapes in both material-physical and immaterial-discursive registers. This is not, however, to be understood as an ontologically bifurcated view. I consider the two landscapes intimately entwined. However, from an analytical perspective, it is occasionally helpful to consider the project in different registers.

That landscapes in fact intertwine, one very material interference made painfully clear in my study: the Coronavirus. The Covid-19 pandemic raged throughout most of my fieldwork period, obscuring every intention in the Naturkraft project as a consequence, as well as obscuring many of my attempts at following a pre-determined research plan. This has been a major cause of concern and frustration for the people involved in Naturkraft as well as for me. As such, my research design too evolved unintentionally. Yet, apart from causing frustrations, this circumstance also helped me take a stance on the research process that I probably would not have taken otherwise. Without the railings of specific schemas for the research process, what I sometimes had to rely on was simply *curiosity* as a 'willingness to explore', as Tsing openly defines it (Tsing, 2021). It was a willingness to '[a]nalyse and collect from the middle', as ESE scholar Greg Mannion puts it with reference to Deleuze (Mannion, 2019): from the middle of the Naturkraft landscape in the making and with an attention to problems I did not fully recognize prior to entering the field. Yet, *unintentional* does not mean *indifferent*. On the contrary. This too was a strenuous position to be in, as it required perpetual methodical reflexivity and inventiveness. Neither did it mean encountering the field empty-handed, as I relied on a range of



well-known methodical devices in my exploration. Below, I elaborate on what this inventiveness and choice of devices have involved.

## Inventive Methods

In their introduction to the edited volume *Inventive Methods: The happening of the social*, Celia Lury and Nina Wakeford describe their take on methodological *inventiveness* (Lury & Wakeford, 2012, p. 7). Their approach to inventiveness involves attention to the reciprocal relationship between method and problem in the exploration of social processes. They write:

Our hope is that the methods collected here will variously enable *the happening* of the social world – its ongoingness, relationality, contingency and sensuousness – to be investigated. Our belief is that, to address these dimensions of social life, the full actuality of the world, its indeterminateness, [...] it is not possible to apply a method as if it were indifferent or external to the problem it seeks to address, but that method must rather be made specific and relevant to the problem. In short, inventive methods are ways to introduce answerability into a problem.

(Lury & Wakeford, 2012, pp. 2-3)

A wedged-in word of caution here: In line with the theoretical positioning I described in the previous chapter, I expand Lury and Wakeford's view on processes to involve other-than-human entities. That way, I think about *happenings* of the world as *socioecological* processes rather than merely *social*. This does not, however, alter the argument I borrow from Lury and Wakeford to any noticeable degree. Their argument is that exploring the *happening* of the socioecological world, such as the unfolding of the unintentional design that is *Naturkraft*, requires a specific, reflexive take on methods. Method and problem are intimately entangled. Approaching the socioecological world through a particular method is at the same time introducing a particular answerability to its problems. Methods are not innocent or external tools. Rather, they are performative (e.g. Barad, 2007; Law & Urry, 2004). They participate in the

invention of the problem under consideration by setting the conditions for its answerability.

As such, my choice of methods participates in the production of the problem on which I focus. In the context of my investigation of Naturkraft, ‘problems’ – at least from the beginning of my fieldwork – should be understood as something tentative, with blurry boundaries. As indicated in the introductory chapter, my problem consisted in making sense of how Naturkraft enacts non-formal sustainability education. My methodical engagements with Naturkraft developed in tandem with the emergence of the problem. My choice of methods enacted a firmer set of boundaries, while simultaneously taking on specificity in the context of the emerging problem. As Lury and Wakeford write:

Inventive methods thus recognize specificity by addressing and including ‘heres’ and ‘nows’, but only as they are constituted in relation to ‘theres’ and ‘thens’ that are brought into being by the methods’ own constitutive, self-organizing effects in relation to the context of a problem.

(Lury & Wakeford, 2012, p. 12)

Methods enact the boundaries on given problems by adding ‘theres’ and ‘thens’ to the specific and empirically situated conditions of the field (Haraway, 1988). They participate in the assemblage that is empirical research, affecting and being affected by the relations to other participating elements (e.g., Fox & Alldred, 2015; Lury & Wakeford, 2012, p. 9). Lury and Wakeford’s ‘inventive methods’ is a concept coined to raise considerations on the entanglement of the researcher, the research devices, and the problem under investigation as well as the effects of these entanglements on the knowledge produced.

To add specificity to this discussion, Lury and Wakeford expand on their idea by fusing the concept of ‘inventive methods’ with the more popular concept, ‘device’:

[...] a word that has multiple everyday meaning, including an object, a method and a bomb. To adopt [a specific method] as a device is to make

explicit how a method and its object are linked to each other and with what potentially explosive – or inventive – effects.

(Lury & Wakeford, 2012, p. 8)

Devices are ‘terms for thinking about processes’ (Wardrip-Fruin, 2009, as cited in Lury & Wakeford, 2012, p. 9) and ‘something that happens that makes something happen’ (Fuller & Goriunova, 2012, as cited in Lury and Wakeford, 2012, p. 9). Devices operate in connection with a research object, thereby enabling particular explosive/inventive effects. As such, the idea of the device opens considerations on method as something material or ‘thingy’. It helps clarify the notion of methods as situated in larger schemes of things. The inventiveness of any method, in other words, hinges on the way it is put to work in relation: ‘[T]he notion of the device not only admits that object and methods are mutually constitutive, but also acknowledges that it is their relation that forces us to confront the new’ (Lury & Wakeford, 2012, p. 8). New insights, new concepts emerge in the productive relation between an object of research and methods.

From this methodological point of departure, I distinguish four methodical devices that I have engaged in my encounters with Naturkraft’s unintentional design. These devices are the *case-based study*, the *participatory inquiry*, the *interview inquiry*, and *published accounts*, all of which I engage through considerations on *ethnography*. In line with Lury and Wakeford’s basic ambition, I take up these devices to get a grip on the Naturkraft project as something in flux; as a socioecological happening. It is an ambivalent ambition of trying to harness the Naturkraft project for insights on matters of sustainability education, while remaining aware of the much more that goes on. In the following, I describe and discuss how I have put these devices to use and with what implications for the emergence of problems and analytical insights on sustainability education in Naturkraft.

## Engaging Through the Case-Based Study

The idea of the ethnographic case-based study has been central to how I think about the design of this study. This means that from my earliest project

descriptions on, the Naturkraft project has been the central empirical event under investigation. It also means I investigate the Naturkraft project as a case of non-formal sustainability education, and furthermore, it means that my methodical devices come from the ethnographer's toolbox (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). I return to the ethnographer's toolbox in the subsequent sections below. In this section, I discuss my take on the case-based study.

In their seminal book on ethnography, Hammersley and Atkinson define the 'case' as follows: 'A setting is a named context in which phenomena occur that might be studied from any number of angles; a case is those phenomena seen from one particular angle' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). In other words, phenomena occur in empirical settings. The theoretically informed conceptualization of these phenomena, to which the research project addresses questions, is 'the case'. In light of fierce discussions on the definition of 'the case' in case-based research (see e.g. B. Flyvbjerg, 2006; Ragin & Becker, 1992; Schwandt & Gates, 2018), I take Hammersley and Atkinson's definition as a pragmatic point of departure. In this perspective, the empirical setting of my study has been the Naturkraft project. And the theoretically conceptualized phenomena that I have been interested in have to do with enactments of sustainability education.

The Naturkraft project could serve as a well-chosen 'setting' for a range of other case-studies in other disciplines, and 'enactments of non-formal sustainability education' could be studied in several other settings as well. Choosing the Naturkraft project as my setting for research, however, was the only given condition at the outset of my PhD project. My PhD project grew out of conversations and negotiations with people in the Naturkraft project that started more than a year prior to the beginning of my formal PhD time. Furthermore, I ended up receiving a substantial part of my project funding from the foundation behind the Naturkraft project. Additionally, the local municipality – the Municipality of Ringkøbing-Skjern – granted an equally large amount of funding for my project. As I return to below, these grants came with near to no restrictions

regarding my research designs and analyses. The only requirement was that the project focused on the Naturkraft project.<sup>17</sup>

But how, then, do I delineate the ‘setting’ or ‘empirical context’ that is the Naturkraft project? Firstly, I do not consider ‘setting’ something fixed or ‘external’ to my case. The Naturkraft project as my ‘setting’ is a socioecological happening, a process, and as such contingent upon the way, my study treats it. That being said, I have had to draw lines to distinguish a manageable ‘slice’ of the world for my investigation. To that end, three characteristics have defined my ‘setting’:

1) The name ‘Naturkraft’. Over its years in existence, the Naturkraft project has developed in relation to innumerable people, ideas, places, policies, design-drawings, organizations, etc. Throughout, the name ‘Naturkraft’ has been the one common denominator for these sociomaterial relations and key to distinguishing processes of relevance to the project – at least in spoken or written terms. As I describe in Chapter 4 below, the name changed a few times over the years of development, and I include material related to the two former project-names when relevant.

2) A few geographical locations on the outskirts of Ringkøbing. The distributed life of the Naturkraft project has played out on several locations: in board-meetings in philanthropic foundations and in the Municipal council, in designers’ offices and at home with past and future visitors. The main part of my investigation, however, has played out in the Naturkraft park and offices. This is also where I make registrations of material and other-than-human aspects of the project, e.g., in the form of the park architecture, the planted environments, and the weather (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 7).

Finally, 3) the timeframe. As I detail in Chapter 4, the Naturkraft project (as defined by its name and Ringkøbing-location) officially dates to 2006.

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17 In terms of how it is funded, my PhD scholarship categorizes as a co-sponsored scholarship. Naturkraft sponsors 1/5 of my budget as one of two collaborating sponsors. The Municipality of Ringkøbing-Skjern sponsors 1/5 of my budget in the form of a research grant. Aarhus University sponsors 3/5 of my budget as the other of the two collaborating sponsors.

Therefore, in my investigation of documents from the history of the Naturkraft project, the year 2006 marks a starting point. It is not until 2019, though, that I first set foot on the Naturkraft-locations, and it is February 2020 before I officially initiate my fieldwork on the project. At the opposite end, I define the endpoint for my investigation two years later in February 2022. At that point, the management in Naturkraft changes. Most of the employees I came to know from the beginning of my project are laid off and the management of Naturkraft is handed over to the local museum. This marks a new era for the Naturkraft project, and an opportune time for me to terminate my collection of empirical material. Over these two years, I make 25 visits to the Naturkraft-locations, with the highest frequencies in the beginning of 2020 and again in the middle of 2021.

In my investigative engagements with this empirical setting, I have sought to notice, describe, and question what happens in the Naturkraft project to qualify an analysis of how Naturkraft enacts non-formal sustainability education. Borrowing a term from Ragin and Becker (1992), I have ‘cased’ the Naturkraft project in an sustainability education perspective, and I have been treating Naturkraft as a case of non-formal sustainability education right from the outset (Schwandt & Gates, 2018). By ‘casing’ I mean, proposing an answer to the question ‘what is this a case of’ (Ragin & Becker, 1992).

However, as Ragin and Becker (1992) detail, casing should be an iterative part of the research process:

Researchers probably will not know what their cases are until the research, including the task of writing up the results, is virtually completed. What *it* is a *case of* will coalesce gradually, sometimes catalytically, and the final realization of the case’s nature may be the most important part of the interaction between ideas and evidence.

(Ragin & Becker, 1992, p. 6)

In this sense, I consider Naturkraft a case of non-formal sustainability education for pragmatic reasons. My encounters with the Naturkraft project have had an educational angling from the start. And as I will show, the ‘casing’ of Naturkraft develops and qualifies through the course of my analyses. Furthermore, I do not

consider the casing-process a question of achieving a ‘perfect match’ between any pre-existent theoretical category and the happenings of the Naturkraft project. Not only would this be uninteresting, but it is also incompatible with my theoretical framework. Instead, I consider the relation between ‘setting’ and ‘case’ a dynamic and reciprocal one, which has the potential to foster theoretical, conceptual inventiveness.

In other words, using ‘the case-based study’ as a research device enables me to circle in on the particularities of one (widespread) event in a specific spatial and temporal setting. Furthermore, forcing myself to think about the Naturkraft project as a case of non-formal sustainability education has aided me in maintaining a focus on the educational aspects of this event. Without this disciplinary attachment, I would likely have gotten lost in some exotic miniscule nuance of the many-splendored project.

A note from the field of ESE: Case-studies are widely used in ESE (Corcoran, Walker, & Wals, 2004; Wals et al., 2017). Many of these are studies of an evaluative kind that assess specific cases of educational ‘innovation’ to determine ‘[...] what works and what does not’ (Corcoran et al., 2004, p. 10). They are studies aimed at improving the educational practices for sustainability within specific institutions while also generating examples for others to consider and compare. While my study delivers insights for Naturkraft as well as others to consider and compare, it is no evaluation. I do not assess what works in the Naturkraft project and what does not. As such, I do not approach Naturkraft as an example to be followed. Rather, I approach Naturkraft as a heuristic device for thinking differently about what it could mean to enact non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene (Malone et al., 2017). The ambition of my study is primarily to expand the theoretical landscape of ESE. Meanwhile, my analyses are deeply invested in the empirical particularities of Naturkraft; particularities I came to know through ethnography-inspired participant observations, interviews, and interrogation of documents related to the Naturkraft project.

## Engaging Through Ethnography

A substantial part of my empirical investigation of the Naturkraft project consisted of me being physically present in the Naturkraft offices and the Naturkraft park, hanging out, taking part in meetings or activities in the park, notebook in hand, chatting with the people I met, and being observant as I went. Additionally, I conducted a line of audio-recorded interviews, collected a range of written materials, and kept updated on stories about Naturkraft in news media and social media.<sup>18</sup> Everything I did was aimed to coming to terms with how Naturkraft ‘happened’ as an unintentional design of non-formal sustainability education. In line with Elliott and Culhane (2017), I think of this as acts of *ethnography*: ‘[I]nquiry into ‘collaborative’ or ‘co-creative’ knowledge making [...]’ that unfolds in the ‘[...]’ entangled relationships’ among humans, nonhumans, and natural, social, and virtual environments’ (Elliott & Culhane, 2017, p. 3). In this and the following sub-sections, I describe and discuss how I went about inquiring into the happening of the Naturkraft project. Each section focuses on one of three conventional methods for ethnographic inquiry, which also form the methodical basis for my study: participant observation, interviewing, and studying written accounts from the field.

### *Participatory Inquiry, Phase One: February to June 2020*

I engaged in participatory, embodied exploration of the educational processes of the Naturkraft project for two reasons: One was that I was particularly curious to explore the material and embodied aspects that were central to the ideas of education in the Naturkraft project. Another reason was that I was interested in exploring the socioecological embeddedness of this material park and the ideas, it involved. How for instance did the park, its designs, and employee practices relate to ideas of education? How did they relate to ideas of sustainability? I participated in the life that played out in the offices and in the Naturkraft park to get an impression of the ways that material, social, and ecological aspects

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18 See the appendix for lists of observations and interviews.



were coming together here. This part of my empirical inquiry fell in two temporal phases.

The first phase ran from the beginning of February 2020 until the grand opening of the Naturkraft park in the beginning of June 2020. Throughout this phase, I made six physical visits to the Naturkraft-offices and five visits to the Naturkraft park, which at this point was still in preparation. Furthermore, I participated in a handful of virtual meetings as Naturkraft was forced into its first Covid-19 related lockdown for eight weeks, beginning March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The overall purpose of this phase was to build relationships to people in the project (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 80 ff.) as well as to explore the broader strokes of the Naturkraft project, materially and in terms of ideas. I wanted to explore the organizational context and history of the Naturkraft project and develop these foci for my later in-park studies.

In many respects, building relationships and exploring the broader strokes of the project were compatible agendas. This first phase involved many informal conversations with whomever coincidentally crossed my path. The Naturkraft organization was vigorously expanding by this time. New employees arrived every week, and everybody was keen to chat and get to know each other. I blended right in. Having the official role of the 'researcher' furthermore gave me *carte blanche* to knock on all office doors, so I quickly got familiar with more than a handful of the employees. At this point, moreover, the organization had an air of start-up ingenuity and idealism to it, so most people were more than happy to share their enthusiastic experiences with and hopes for the Naturkraft project. This helped me tremendously in understanding the moving parts of the project.

In one respect, however, the two agendas collided. Whenever I visited Naturkraft at this point, I experienced an overwhelming amount and intensity of information. Everything was new, and I was deliberately 'casting my nets broadly', which quickly made remembering details difficult (Emerson et al., 2011, pp. 24-29). I relied heavily on writing field notes to register and preserve my experiences for later use. Most days, I jotted notes a few times during a day's visit, withdrawn with my notebook at a desk. In the evening and on the

following days, I developed these jottings into fuller field diary-entries (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 45 ff.). But when I participated in meetings in Naturkraft, I had to jot notes *in situ* so as not to forget most of what went on. The culture for meetings in Naturkraft was very informal, and on several occasions, I was the only one writing during an entire meeting. This, unfortunately, made some employees uncomfortable and nervous, which they told me. What did I write about them? What would I use it for? It was a reminder of the potential influence that I, as a researcher, exert by intruding into the life of others.

Throughout, I have considered it inevitable to influence the socioecological life that I participate in. I necessarily inscribe myself in the assemblages, I research, and hence become part of their affective exchanges (Fox & Alldred, 2015). I become another intention affecting the overall unintentional designs. I have tried to use this actively in the analyses, e.g., by including my own embodied and sensuous experiences as pieces of empirical material. More to this in a second. What I did however try to minimize were situations in which I made others feel uncomfortable. Influence is okay. Harm is not. I tried my best to communicate my research intentions initially, I collected written consent from all employees in Naturkraft at the beginning of my project, and I respected whenever anyone told me to keep information 'off the record'. Whenever I had the chance, I was overt and transparent in communicating my research intentions by explaining my use of information openly with worried employees in Naturkraft.

Overall, this phase was fruitful, as I did develop trusting relations with a handful of employees who shared their insight into and experiences of the Naturkraft project with me. They directed me towards relevant documents and invited me to join in activities – meetings and events – which proved relevant to me. Furthermore, I relied on these relationships for access and information for the rest of my field work. Yet, Covid-19 made physical access to the field extremely difficult for long periods of time and introduced an extreme degree of unpredictability, which lasted for most of my field work.

*Participatory Inquiry, Phase Two: May to August 2021*

Over the following year, I visited Naturkraft a couple of times, informally, to stay updated on the situation within the organization. During this period, Covid-19 caused another two lockdowns of the enterprise. For the same reason, it was very difficult to observe the park in operation for all the winter and most of the spring of 2021. As the situation eventually improved in late May 2021, I initiated the second phase of my participatory inquiry. This phase consisted in three plus four days in the park in operation. My overall ambition in this phase was to explore the sociomaterial enactments of sustainability education that played out in the park. I wanted to focus on how the park, its installations, flora, and fauna came into relation with visitors. I wanted to explore how visitors made sense of the experiences in the park, and how relations formed with broader discourses of education and sustainability in the process.

Concretely, I participated for three days in a festival on cross-disciplinary approaches to nature and sustainability that was set up in Naturkraft in May 2021. Here, I had informal conversations with employees, visitors, and presenters. I participated in communal singing and dancing sessions. I was amongst the audience to scheduled events, talks, and debates, and I observed life in the park in-between the scheduled events. I took comprehensive notes of my experiences throughout the days, paying particular attention to situations in which the park's materiality and concepts of sustainability and education featured explicitly.

Subsequently, I spend four days of the summer holiday in the park. Here, I was invited to join in the park guides' daily routines, fully dressed in a park uniform. I participated in the daily operation and had opportunities to interact with visiting families on par with the professional employees. My field notes from these visits contain equal measures of employees' descriptions of what is involved in assisting guests in the park and my own recollections of encounters and conversations with guests. Additionally, auto-ethnographic descriptions of my sensory experiences of being in the park are scattered throughout the notes (Elliott & Culhane, 2017, pp. 45-68; Pink, 2009).

These experiences offered good insight into the perspectives of the employees and the ways they participated in the enactments of non-formal sustainability education. I made rich field notes on the social aspects of how the organization worked to relate the park-materiality to conceptualization of nature, science, and sustainability. The informal conversations, moreover, added to my understanding of how people – employees as well as adult visitors – made sense of the Naturkraft park in words. Furthermore, I witnessed a range of illustrative situations of encounters between visitors and the park-materiality: Children running in and out of exhibitions inside the exhibition halls; families digging for ground water or flying kites; youngsters engaged in physical operation of artworks in the park; parents stumbling across climbing-webs or rolling downhill in a Zorbing Ball. These situations, however, always seemed to occur as I was passing by. They played out in the corner of my eye, and often I was not consciously aware of them until I was developing my jotted notes into diary entries by the end of a day's visit. Here, however, I began noticing how such situations had made lingering impressions on me, and I developed the observations into descriptions of scenes from my immediate recollection of the situations. These coincidental situations, moreover, came to play a substantial role in my analyses of the park.

On a critical note, I mostly approached situations in the park as I had approached situations in the offices in the first phase of my participatory inquiries: notebook in hand, eager to explore and trace the relational entanglements of the situations I witnessed. I was inspired by traditional ethnographic approaches to exploring the happenings of the world in ways that emphasize participation over observation and with my body being my main research tool (Elliott & Culhane, 2017, p. 11; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 19). However, only too late did I realize how difficult it was to participate in the intimate and ephemeral situations in which educational experiences unfold in smaller groups' visits to a nature park. I, in any case, only managed to get superficial access to the minutiae of these situations through informal chats and observations from afar. The analyses of learning situations in the Naturkraft park that I

present in Chapter 6 thus involve substantial use of theory to complement my observations.<sup>19</sup>

### *Interview Inquiries*

In addition to the participatory inquiries, I conducted 14 interviews with a total of 18 employees and stakeholders in Naturkraft. The specific interviews played different roles in my project and had very different formats. Yet, the common ambition of conducting interviews was to invite in a plethora of stories on the development of the Naturkraft project in general, as well stories on educational and sustainability-related aspects of the project. I needed a diverse range of perspectives to make sense of the project from within its socioecological happening.

Overall, my formal interview inquiries involved conversations of three different kinds:

One group of interviews focused on the history and larger conceptual lines of the Naturkraft project. These interviews supplemented my reading of

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19 For a post-doctoral further development of my studies, I might revise my methodical approach to the details of the sociomaterial exchanges in the park. To this end, I would consider applying video equipment as an aid to register and slow down the pace of the situations under investigation. Mulcahy (2016)'s Deleuze-inspired and affect-oriented explorations of 'sticky learning' in a Melbourne museum that I later became familiar with, stand as illustrative examples to take inspiration from. Had I followed Mulcahy and used both stationary and go-pro cameras to make observations of specific exhibitions or areas of the Naturkraft park, I could have made detailed analyses of 'what moved' visitors in the encounters with educational designs in the Naturkraft park. Mulcahy, in her studies, describes in impressive detail how the specific exhibitions provoke intense learning experiences and what makes this learning 'stick' across contexts (Mulcahy, 2016, 2017). Both, I would argue, are valuable educational insights. However, Mulcahy's approach involves circling in on micro relations of very specific segments of larger exhibitions. One could argue that this perspective of Naturkraft would miss the educative effects of e.g., architectural designs and park hosts' pedagogical work. In other words, the video-recording approach risks trading micro-relational analytical potential for more holistically oriented analytical perspectives.

documents from the years of development. The interviews nuanced some aspects of the overall design and purpose of the project and the park by adding stories of negotiations, disagreement, and compromise to the flattened and somewhat glossy narratives of the project documents. To these ends, I interviewed the park manager, who oversaw the project from 2010 through 2021.<sup>20</sup> I interviewed the chairperson of the board in Naturkraft, who was the former CEO of a large Danish philanthropic foundation that had played a substantial role in the development of the Naturkraft project. I interviewed the former mayor and the former municipal director of the Municipality of Ringkøbing-Skjern, who were both key-figures in the municipal process of developing the Naturkraft project. And finally, I interviewed the main architect behind the built environment of the park.

Another group of interviews concerned the contemporary workings of the Naturkraft project as experienced from within the organization. These interviews supplemented my participatory inquiries and expanded on questions of the relations and organizational tensions that emerged during field work. Furthermore, all these conversations had a reflexive atmosphere, in which my often quite open-ended questions clearly sparked new considerations for my interlocutors. New knowledge emerged in these conversations. They became instances of the happenings of the Naturkraft project, in which sustainability education was enacted. I interviewed three of the managers individually under these conditions: The commercial manager, the intermediation manager, and the development manager. Additionally, I interviewed four of the full-time employees, who were all involved in the explicitly educational side of the organization. I call these the sustainability developer, the network developer, the teaching designer, and the senior intermediary. I also interviewed an external

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20 I use professional titles when mentioning my interlocutors throughout the dissertation. This blurs their identity, which aids me in establishing analytical distance to the persons, I got to know. Yet, the titles do not conceal the employees' identity completely. Anyone with local knowledge about the Naturkraft project during my time of field work could easily connect the dots. This aligns with the informed consent I collected prior to the interviews.

behavioural designer, who was very involved in the development of a curricular design for sustainability prior to the grand opening, and finally, I interviewed a group of part-time park guides.

I approached both of these groups of interviews in a semi-structured way (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2016; Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2015). For the first group of interviews, I had prepared questions about the project history in terms of the process of development, the relations between people and organizations involved as well as considerations on the role and purpose of the Naturkraft project in broader societal contexts. Additionally, I asked all my interlocutors about how, in their experience, the Naturkraft project related to matters of education and sustainability. I deliberately did not offer definitions of these concepts. Instead, I was curious to experience how my interlocutors used and substantiated these concepts in the conversations. For the second group of interviews, I focused on how the employees made sense of how to do education in Naturkraft. How would they describe what it involved to do education in Naturkraft? How would they describe the organizational and material conditions for doing education here? Furthermore, if my interlocutors did not bring up matters of sustainability themselves, I did towards the end of the conversation. In both groups of interviews, the open-ended format allowed my interlocutors' agendas to influence the conversations. I posed a range of questions yet remained open to explore unforeseen digressions.

I audio-recorded the interviews and made full transcripts. In transcribing, I strove to come close to the meaning content in the conversation, yet without preparing the transcripts for linguistic conversational analyses (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2015). This means that I included repetitions and smaller words such as 'like', 'ehm' and 'you know'. I used grammatical punctuation and omitted indications of silences, except when pauses felt awkwardly long. I added smaller contextual descriptions in brackets, whenever my hand-written notes from the

interviews indicated specific gestures or interrupting incidents. Moreover, I added frequent timestamps and page-numbers.<sup>21</sup>

For the third group of interviews, this was different. As mentioned in my discussion of the first phase of participatory inquiry, I developed a few friendly relationships to employees in the Naturkraft organization during the first months of my project. Some of these employees confided frustrations and gossip to me in interviews, as the challenging start-up period began to wear on everyone. To other employees I came to occupy the role of an in-house expert; I became someone to ask for a critical perspective on the development of the Naturkraft project, which also involved pieces of confidential information. In such cases, my role simultaneously as an insider and an outsider offered exclusive insight into details of the social landscape in Naturkraft. Meanwhile, I was very aware that confidentiality came with an immense ethical responsibility. These situations, however, were difficult to predict. Sometimes, what started as a formal interview somehow took a turn. On other occasions, confidential conversations emerged spontaneously in the Naturkraft offices. This means that I sometimes made audio-recordings that I later felt obliged to delete, or that I had conversations ‘off-the-record’ that I felt obliged not to share or reference. A few times, I agreed to show parts of analyses to an interlocutor for his or her subsequent acceptance of my use of quotes. More often, however, I omitted direct quotation from or description of these situations from the written analyses all together. This, to avoid putting my interlocutors at risk in an environment where current or future careers might be at stake (Thorne, 1980).

### *Published Accounts*

The third and final dimension of my empirical inquiries consisted in the collection and on-going analysis of documents or *published accounts* relating to the Naturkraft project. This collection involves the official concept catalogues that describe the ambitions within the Naturkraft project in three iterations through

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21 Due to GDPR considerations, the interview transcripts are not made publicly available. If the dissertation committee wishes to receive a copy, please contact me.



the years of development. These documents are materialized outcomes of collaborations amongst multiple stakeholders, and the documents bear witness to how, why, and when these collaborations emerged and amongst whom. These documents offer insight into the perceived audiences at different stages in the project and offer tentative, emic definitions of concepts such as *sustainability* and *education* as well as enabling an analysis of the dynamic development within these conceptualizations. Moreover, the documents bear witness to theoretical design intentions and pre-conceptions, in terms of how the park should/could enact non-formal sustainability education.

Some documents from the development process describe ideas for educational and curatorial practices in the park. Others describe intentions of business collaborations. Some are part of an application for regional grants. Some are intended to woo philanthropic foundations. Others again address the Danish parliament in attempts to make Naturkraft eligible for yearly state operational aid. Additionally, an entire book was published as part of the opening celebrations in the summer of 2020 (Vesterby et al., 2020). Despite its celebratory and bite-size storytelling style, the book offers comprehensive insight into the relational landscape out of which Naturkraft emerged.

Furthermore, while doing fieldwork I collected documents used in meetings and in presentations within the organization. I made a collection of the texts that feature in exhibitions and teaching activities in the Naturkraft park, as well as documents used to inform and instruct part-time park guides in their work. Moreover, as indicated above, I kept updated on stories on Naturkraft in the news media and on social media, particularly the Naturkraft Facebook page.

In sum, the collection of written and published accounts of the Naturkraft project offered historical as well as contemporary insight into the negotiations and relations of the Naturkraft project. In addition, some documents revealed theoretical pre-conceptions, as well as hopes and ambitions, for the educational aspects of the park. As such, the documents proved a valuable supplement to my participatory and interview inquiries, to explore the enabling relations in Naturkraft in operation.

## Textual Intensifications

In sum, my inquiries resulted in 340 pages of interview transcripts, 130 pages of edited field diary entries and a large collection of physical as well as digital documents. My analytical preliminary editing of this textual corpus varied depending on the kind of material:

In handling my collection of *published accounts*, I read and sorted the texts into different folders as I collected them. I kept notes on the overall characteristics of the texts as well as notes on particularly interesting sections or aspects of the text. However, the level of rigor in notetaking differed depending on how relevant I thought the document was upon my first reading. In the case of many of the news media and social media articles, I made brief notes when relevant and kept only URLs for later retrieval.

For initial analysis of the interview transcripts and field diary entries, I made memos on preliminary analytical ideas upon the first editing of my field notes and while transcribing. These memos involved all sorts of analytical ideas, and I deliberately tried not to restrain my analytical gaze in any direction. Once I had completed the transcripts, I printed all materials and read them, scribbling notes with a pen in the margins. Upon reading the printed material, I again insisted on maintaining some degree of analytical openness. I did, however, pay attention to situations in which *education* or *sustainability*, as well as related concepts such as *learning*, or *environment*, featured explicitly in conversations or discussions. I paid attention to situations in which my interlocutors spoke about how the Naturkraft project made sense to them and where and how this sense-making collapsed. I paid attention to acts and descriptions of what it takes to enable sustainability education in Naturkraft – materially as well as socially. But most of all, I paid attention to situations that seemed to harbour a certain intensity; situations that surprised me, made me curious, or situations in which I detected tensions. These tensions sometimes occurred as unexpected clashes with my pre-conceptions. At other times, they occurred in the social relations between people in the Naturkraft project, or they occurred in situations I observed in the park in which flows of visitors, materials, and ideas intensified in situations with noticeably consistent patterns.

I consider these readings acts of *coding*. Yet in line with Maclure (2013), I did not approach the coding-process by following a highly restricted schematic to automatically transform a messy empirical material into well-ordered analytical insights (Maclure, 2013). Maclure writes:

[C]oding demands immersion in, and entanglement with, the minutiae of ‘the data’. Even though the ultimate aim conventionally is to move ‘away’ from the data through abstracting, reducing or generalizing, nevertheless, the entire architecture is built on a long, slow, familiarization with the details. This involves a kind of experimentation or crafting as one sorts, labels and disposes items that [...] never fully pre-exist their formation *as* ‘examples’ of categories that are themselves still being shaped.

(Maclure, 2013, p. 174)

Drawing inspiration from Maclure, I approached coding to *immerse* myself in the empirical material. I read my transcripts and field notes to become familiar with them; to allow myself to be *affected* by what I read and to allow associations with theoretical ideas to emerge. In line with my overall take on experimental casing of the Naturkraft project, I experimented with labelling of empirical situations and scenes, but not in order to ‘fence in’ these situations as e.g., particular educational or organizational categories. Rather, I coded the material to develop an embodied sense of it; a *feeling* for the material as a basis for the analytical process (Maclure, 2013, p. 174).

Maclure likens the ‘traditional’ approach to coding – the construction and application of labels to empirical texts in nested taxonomies of increasingly general conceptual nature – to the construction of tree-like structures (Maclure, 2013, p. 166). In opposition to this arborescent approach, and in line with her explicitly Deleuzian inspiration, Maclure advocates an approach to coding that departs instead in the rhizomatic logic of the assemblage (Maclure, 2013, p. 175). Figuratively, she substitutes the ‘traditional’ construction of a coding-tree with the curious construction of a *Wunderkammer*, or in English, a *cabinet of curiosities*. Historically, these cabinets, popular in the European Baroque-era, contained all sorts of objects – some of them collected for their scientific value,

others for their magical inexplicability (MacLure, 2006). In the Baroque, assembling these cabinets was hence an activity attentive ‘[...] *both* to classification and to wonder, system and secret’ (Maclure, 2013, p. 180). The cabinets preserved the unexplainable and strange alongside the scientifically categorized, remaining open to other kinds of *sense-making* than the scientifically categorical. As Maclure references the art historian Lugli, these cabinets offered a ‘[...] syntax of unexpected associations’ (Lugli, 2000, p. 30, cited in Maclure, 2013, p. 180).

The cabinets of curiosities I assembled through my initial reading of the empirical material materialized in notes and memos on quotes and excerpts containing remarkable intensity. Some memos on field note excerpts included preliminary and tentative classifications such as ‘bodily encounter, adult’ or ‘visitor-comparison with other sites’. Some interview excerpts were accompanied with classificatory labels such as ‘sustainability, explicit’, ‘learning initiative’ or ‘organizational tension re: schools’. Other excerpts again were annotated without classifications. These were situations I could not immediately make sense of, yet causing curiosity or fascination in me. The main outcome of the coding process, however, was that I familiarized myself with the material and identified excerpts of interests. From these, I initiated the subsequent process of making sense of the material in analytical writing – a process, moreover, which I think about in direct extension of Maclure’s *Wunderkammer*-coding:

[A]s just an experiment with order and disorder, in which provisional and partial taxonomies are formed, but are always subject to change and metamorphosis, as new connections spark among words, bodies, objects and ideas. Such a conceptualisation would recognise coding[/analysis], not as a static representation or translation of a world laid out before us on the operating table of analysis, but as an open-ended and ongoing practice of making sense.

(Maclure, 2013, p. 181)

## Words on Ethics

Throughout this chapter, I have pointed out situations and aspects of my study in which considerations on the ethical conduct of research has influenced my designs and immediate actions in the field. I mention how I collected informed consent from employees in the Naturkraft organization at the beginning of my fieldwork, and I mention how I deleted recordings of interviews that turned out to be of a more sensitive kind than first expected. Following Guillemin and Gillam (2004), I consider the former an example of *procedural ethics* and the latter an example of *micro ethical concerns of the research practice* (2004, pp. 262-265). Regarding the latter, these are concerns that arise unpredicted while in the field and they are concerns that demand spontaneous ethical conduct based on continuous researcher reflexivity (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, pp. 273-277). Here, however, I add a few more words on how I ensured ethically responsible conduct of research in my project in procedural terms, and I leave a comment on a third kind of ethical concern that I will return to at the end of the dissertation.

On a formal note, I have striven to comply with the *Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity* in all aspects of my study (Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2014). In principle, this involves an *honest, transparent, and accountable* conduct of research throughout all phases of my project. Of relevance are matters of *data management, authorship, and conflict of interests*, as these are not detailed elsewhere in the dissertation.

Since my project involves the collection of empirical material containing statements by and observations of the everyday life of other people, I collected informed consent from all employees in Naturkraft and ensured proper data-handling and storage in compliance with the guidelines of my university and the Danish Data Protection Agency (The Danish Data Protection Agency, 2023; Aarhus University, 2023). I did not get consent from the visitors to the Naturkraft park, whom I observed and had informal conversations with. I do not, however, consider this a case of research misconduct, as I did not register any personal information on the visitors and neither did I take pictures. In my field notes, the visitors only feature as physical bodies described without

identifiable traits and they feature as anonymous voices. These notes, though, were subjected to the same handling and storage-procedures as my other data.

Concerning authorship and conflict of interest, it is worth repeating that the funding I received from Naturkraft and the Municipality of Ringkøbing-Skjern came with very few demands. Every half year, the municipality requested a status report, and not once did I receive any comments or questions in return. Regarding the collaboration with Naturkraft, the communication with the management and the board has been very informal, characterized by curiosity rather than demands. Furthermore, for the latter half of the project period, communication practically stopped due to internal organizational challenges in Naturkraft, which did not involve me. Moreover, in line with the collaboration agreement signed by Naturkraft and Aarhus University, I am allowed to use illustrations and photos by the Naturkraft-photographer, Bjørn Ellermann. Additionally, I reproduce illustrations from different Naturkraft publications. In all cases, I credit the photographer and authors with name and/or publication references.

For a third and brief final note on ethics, I want to follow Haraway (2016) in remarking that research ethics also concerns the futures that we as researchers might partake in enabling through our research. As Haraway notes, a fundamental question of the entangled impasse, we as a species find ourselves in presently, is the question of ‘[...] what worlds world worlds. It matters what stories tell stories’ (Haraway, 2016, p. 35). The stories we tell and the worlds we participate in enacting in our research (as well as in any other aspect of our lives) configure and condition what future stories can be told; what future worlds can be *worlded*. Haraway writes of this as a question about the response-ability of our actions: what potential responses do our research enactments enable, and what are the ethical perspectives of these responses? I find this an extremely relevant point of attention in a study like mine, where possible futures play an immediate and ever-present role in considerations on *education* as well as on *sustainability*. How I go about telling the stories on these matters matter. I return to these considerations in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9.

## Bridging Remarks

In sum, the following four analytical chapters build on a research design set up to explore enactments of non-formal sustainability education in Naturkraft. Following Chapter 2 above, I approach these enactments as the performative outcomes of sociomaterial and -ecological assemblages. With Tsing, I picture such assemblages as landscapes – material as well as immaterial – configured from intersecting lines of action and storying; each line in itself intentionally driven, yet in sum the landscapes transform through unintentional intersections and encounters. To address these landscapes in a research perspective, I engage four interrelated methodical *devices*, all of which relate to the overall idea of *the ethnographic study*. These four are: the *case-based study*, the *participatory inquiry*, the *interview inquiry* and *inquiry into published accounts*. I describe and exemplify how I put each of these ideas to use in thinking about and actively performing research in the field. Furthermore, I characterize the textual result of my inquiries and I describe how I went about familiarizing myself with this material in an intensifying process of *Wunderkammer*-coding.

I guess coming to the end of a qualitative inquiry, and fieldwork in particular, always leaves you with a haunting sense of the so-much-more, you could have noticed, described, or questioned to improve the *thick descriptions* of the case under study (Geertz, 1973). My fieldwork experience is no exception. As already indicated a few times, the Covid-19 pandemic constituted a tremendous obstacle in this respect, hampering access as well as my possibilities for following through on initial research plans and ideas. Other considerations and potential improvements emerged through subsequent encounters with hitherto unknown literatures and through the process of writing my analyses. In hindsight, then, I could have chosen countless other avenues of inquiry. Yet, as Tsing notes, such well-meaning intentions never get their own ways anyhow (Tsing, 2021). You might as well go experiment. Which makes for a nice place to let the analyses take off.

# An Educational Landscape of Unintentional Design



Illustration 2: Park map, Naturkraft





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# Charting Intentions

New York has the Statue of Liberty, Paris has the Eiffel Tower, and Copenhagen has The Little Mermaid – but what does Ringkøbing have? The idea of creating an [...] exploratorium is to put Ringkøbing on the map as a power centre for meaning, depth and intimacy; i.e., a monument to promote and benefit humanity and the positive, healthy values that we are proud of as Northerners in an increasingly globalized village.

(Vesterby et al., 2020, p. 16)

The quote above is amongst the first sentences in print in the long line of sentences and actions that eventually catalyzed the materialization of the Naturkraft park in a field outside Ringkøbing. The quote featured in an email from a local optician to a member of the municipal council in 2006 (Vesterby et al., 2020). News was circulating that a local lighthouse was being taken out of operation. This spurred the optician. During his morning shower, he came up with an idea for a new ‘lighthouse’;<sup>22</sup> a tourist attraction focusing on nature. He ambitiously shared it in his local network. Quickly, the idea caught on in the municipal political apparatus, and 14 years later the Naturkraft park materialized (Vesterby et al., 2020).

In this chapter, I am interested in the stories of these 14 years. I chart part of the historical and conceptual development of the project, focusing on five official descriptions of it from different points in its developmental timeline. As such, the chapter reads as a broad-stroke introduction to Naturkraft. I approach this introduction as an exploration of statements of intention expressed in the

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22 In Danish, ‘lighthouse’ is sometimes used figuratively to mean a foresighted institution or initiative; a project worthy of imitation; something to illuminate the way forward.

official descriptions of the Naturkraft project – an exploration of the educational *why* of the project, in other words.

I do not, however, undertake this analytical description to seek out specific causes of which Naturkraft is the effect. Rather, in the words of Introna (2013), investigating the project's history is an analytical move to chart the accomplishments '[...] that are constitutive of [the current assemblage] as that which it is now becoming' (p. 340). In other words, I do not treat *intentions* as points of origin to any causal line of development. Rather, I investigate statements of intentions as cues to different *imaginaries* that came together in the Naturkraft project over the course of the years of development. As Braidotti writes, '[...] the imaginary is ultimately an image of thought [...] a habit that captures and blocks the many potential alternative ways we may be able to think about our environment and ourselves' (Braidotti, 2006). I thus work from the assumption that expressions of intention are potent places to explore the imaginaries that both enable and constrain how non-formal sustainability education can play out in Naturkraft. Charting imaginaries through statements of intention is charting the thinking in the Naturkraft project. I then consider this chapter a *geography of thought* (N. Gough, 2009) in the Naturkraft project, in which I chart the invisible mental landscape that is part of the Naturkraft project's educational enactments.

I am interested in exploring this landscape from a sustainability education-related perspective. For that reason, I take inspiration from Sandell et al. (2005) and the later iteration of similar claims in Öhman and Östman (2019). In these chapters, the authors explore the ESE literature-landscape to discern structural differences amongst prominent teaching traditions on the field. Their explorations pivot on an analytical distinction. On one hand, their readings focus on differences in *educational philosophy* (Sandell et al., 2005); i.e., they investigate differences in underlying conceptions of the role of education amongst different teaching traditions. This involves discerning how each tradition addresses the three main questions of education: *why*, *what* and *how* (Öhman & Östman, 2019). On the other hand, they discern the *sustainability approach* in each tradition, asking '[...] how the causes, character, extent and seriousness of

environmental and sustainability problems are perceived and what the main solutions to these problems are claimed to be [...]’ (Öhman & Östman, 2019, p. 71). I draw on Sandell, Öhman and Östman’s distinction to narrow in my scope on the imaginaries in the Naturkraft project to sustainability education matters.

Yet, it is worth noting that this is an analytical choice. As the above quote reveals, the people behind Naturkraft considered the project more and other than an educational project. In the following, I therefore read for the sustainability educational significance of statements that are, to a large extent, expressed outside formal educational contexts and discussions and to an other-than-educational audience.

As noted, I chart the sustainability educational imaginaries through five touchpoints on the project’s historical timeline. Departing from the municipal project proposal from 2007 that built on the optician’s ideas (Kjærgaard, Donslund, & Bøndergaard, 2007), I move through the first and second conceptual drafts, from 2009 and 2013 respectively (Komitéen for etableringen af KRAFT, 2013; Thimmer, Hebor, Hansen, & Madsen, 2009), to end at a fork in the road. One trace leads into the legal materializations of the project’s aims in the statutory framework (Fonden Naturkraft, 2017); another leads into didactical design materializations in the concept development publication (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017). Both of these latter materializations were published in 2017. My analytical descriptions primarily draw on official documents that play a role in the development process. Moreover, I briefly draw on my interview with the park manager in addition to accounts of the project’s development from the book *Blæst bagover* (Vesterby et al., 2020). This book was published as a celebration of the opening of Naturkraft in 2020. Moreover, although I primarily focus on written expressions, the documents that I investigate all have – to varying degrees – a graphic-visual dimension, which I also include when relevant. Imaginaries, after all, come in more than just linguistic forms (Ellsworth, 2005).

## Northerners' Values: The 2007 Project Proposal

As noted in the opening lines of this chapter, the idea for Naturkraft arose – almost mythological – during a local optician's morning shower. It did not take long for it to catch on in the municipality – in political circles as well as amongst entrepreneurs in local tourist businesses (Vesterby et al., 2020). Soon, a small group of local professionals formalized the idea into a seven-page project proposal entitled *The Star – An Experience-Experimentarium by Ringkøbing Fiord* (Kjærgaard et al., 2007). The group included the project proposal in an application for funding from a newly established regional development programme on future tourist attractions (Vesterby et al., 2020). This proposal presented the initial intentions of the project. In the following, I briefly characterize this publication with the aim to delineate the sustainability educational imaginaries implied in it.

The project proposal consists of a title page with pictures of trees that bend in the wind; windmills from the local company Vestas, a fingerprint-reader, a child with a surprised demeanour, and an architectural sketch of a star-shaped building. The following, densely-inscribed five pages present the project, starting with a statement on how a tourist attraction in Ringkøbing-Skjern Municipality can secure local development and progress (Kjærgaard et al., 2007). The proposal makes this claim by characterizing the existing tourist potentials in the area and by presenting the ambitions and ideas in the project. Next, the proposal describes a brief example of an exhibition, 'World of Wind', before rounding off with a section on project planning and the proposed business model. As an appendix, the proposal includes different stakeholders' expressions of interest in the project, including that of the local mayor, a professor of interactive digital media, and a Vestas vice president (Kjærgaard et al., 2007).

The project proposal presents the optician's idea as a grandiose building shaped like a seven-pointed star. In terms of content, each 'arm' of the star contains a themed exhibition, with proposed thematic ideas ranging from 'World of Wind and Energy' over 'World of Nature and Environment' to 'World of People and Mind' (Kjærgaard et al., 2007, p. 1). In terms of overall ambitions, the initial

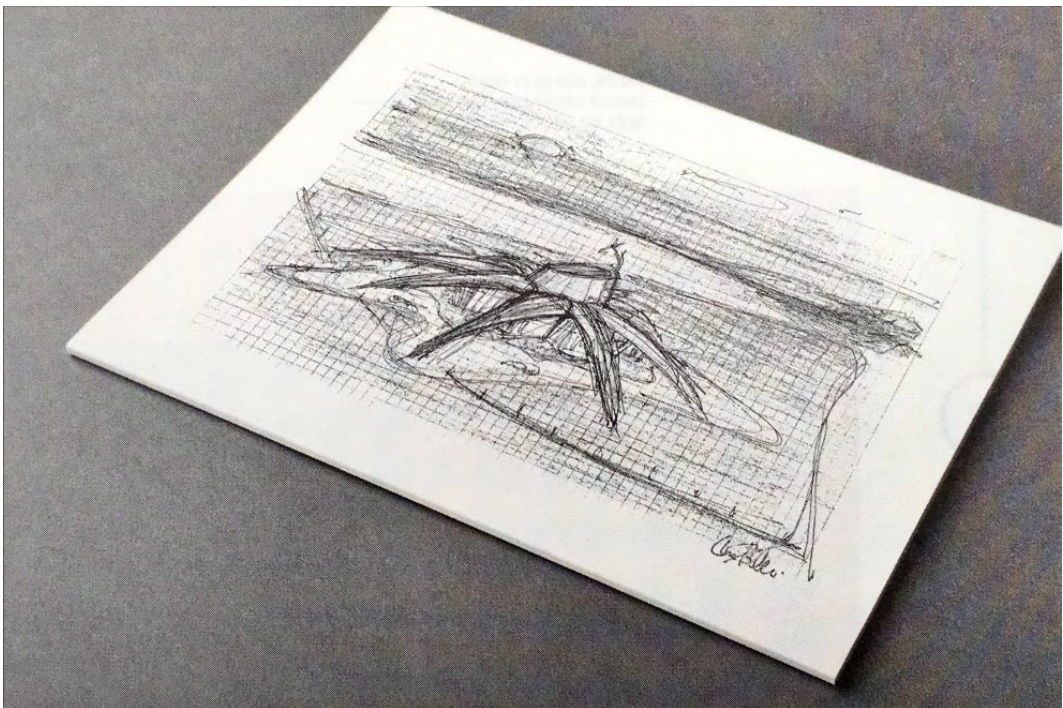


Illustration 3: An early sketch for the Star (Vesterby et al., 2020, p. 16)

project proposal from 2007 subsumes the project ideas under a two-sentence vision-statement:

The vision is to create a unique experience- and activity centre where technology, nature, development, and humans unite through play and learning. Local and international businesses, actors and knowledge institutions will showcase and test experience products and demonstration products in an experience space, in which tourists, corporations, students and scientists, as well as kids, youngsters, adults and elderly move about.

(Kjærgaard et al., 2007, p. 2)

In terms of *educational philosophy* (Sandell et al., 2005) and judging by the quote, the *why* of the project is an aim to ‘unite’ different domains and actors through play and learning. Separation and diffusion appear to be the implied problem that needs addressing. In this sense, the ambition is educational; the project aims to teach. Yet, the proposal is not explicit on concrete approaches to teaching. Only the ‘World of Wind’ example comes close to substantiating a *what* and a *how* by posing questions ‘[...] about the fierce powers of the wind [...]’ and by proposing wind machines, virtual kite-surfing and cargo-ship simulators to illustrate how modern technology ‘[...] has changed the fight against the wind to the fight with the wind’ (Kjærgaard et al., 2007, p. 4). Besides the ambition of teaching, the project couples its proposed activities to local businesses and institutions that may use the experience centre as a showroom and test site for their most recent inventions. There are, in other words, pronounced commercial and techno-scientific intentions rubbing against the aims of teaching in the project.

The project proposal has a marked local emphasis: it will take a form that can be ‘[...] supported by the local business assets, where wind energy and Vestas is one of the biggest companies’ (Kjærgaard et al., 2007, p. 1). The project shall incorporate the region’s unique ‘[...] nature values of national as well as international character’ (Kjærgaard et al., 2007, p. 1), and rely on the specific local mentality: ‘[W]est Jutland is known for its strong entrepreneurial spirit and its West Jutlandian go-getter-mentality. You might say that we are used to

‘working in headwinds’, a strength we must take advantage of when creating progress’ (Kjærgaard et al., 2007, p. 2). As such, and in line with the opticians early framing of the idea, ‘the local’ is the source of proposed themes for exhibitions as well as the axiological model for the educational impact that the project aims for. West Jutland appears as a place that abounds with innovative technology, natural beauty, and survivor’s mentality – all of which make the case for an educational tourist attraction fit for the future. I return to this multi-faceted idea of ‘the West Coast’ in the next chapter.

By the same token, environmental and sustainability-related topics are described in the proposal:

One of the area’s biggest industries is the windmill industry with Vestas in front, and wind and energy will have a big role to play in *the Star*. *The Star* will use renewable energy as much as possible, and modern technologies for energy saving and environmentally friendly solutions should be applied during the construction as well as operation [of the centre]. *The Star* should disseminate audience-friendly research on the technological development of the local area’s big agricultural production towards environmental sustainability in combination with improved animal welfare [...]. Likewise, the climate is an important part of the focus of *The Star*, which is why environmental considerations and research on climate change should be disseminated through experiences, activities, play and learning [...].

(Kjærgaard et al., 2007, p. 3)

The locally founded, international wind technology business, Vestas, clearly marks the proposal. The Naturkraft park, back then named *The Star*, is meant to showcase new technology, both in the physical construction of buildings in the park as well as in its daily operation. Furthermore, exhibitions reveal how other businesses and institutions in the area follow through on this agenda: agricultural innovations for environmental sustainability and research on climate change. A core idea of the project is to fuse the local emphasis on cutting-edge ‘green’ technology with tourism industry logics, creating ‘synergies’. As the



proposal states: ‘Synergy and holistic thinking concerning the themes of whole-year tourism, environment, and energy should be the scarlet thread through the entire centre’ (Kjærgaard et al., 2007, p. 3).

In sum, the sustainability approach in this early phase of the project emphasizes technological innovation with overt local anchoring. Whatever the condition and causes of sustainability problems are, the early Naturkraft-proposal offers technological innovation and local social values as a response. In terms of educational philosophy, the proposal shows ambitions of staging educational encounters across domains of technology, nature, and humanity. The commercially oriented imaginary undergirding these intentions, however, bend educational expressions to tourism marketing ends. Attracting tourists is key and education is a means to this end. Eventually, the synergetic reaction between tourism, environment and energy should result in ‘regional development’, primarily understood in economic term – as influx of tourist money and as export of technological ideas and products.

## Nature-as-Resource: The 2009 Concept Catalogue

Measured by the municipality’s ambitions, the 2007-project proposal was a success. The Regional Council granted funding for further development (Vesterby et al., 2020, pp. 23-24). By way of this funding, the municipality hired an external design bureau to develop the conceptual side of the project. The name of the project changed from *The Star* to *KRAFT* (‘force’ in direct English translation). A board of experts from different fields became involved and an external consultancy ran a *feasibility study* to determine the likelihood of the project succeeding (Thimmer et al., 2009).

As a result of this process, the design bureau produced a 104-page concept catalogue with the title *KRAFT – Powered by Nature* (Thimmer et al., 2009). In contrast to the 2007 project proposal, this catalogue abounds with pictures, colourful pages with quotes in large fonts and clearly separated sections with catchy headlines all ending with ‘-kraft’. In the 2009-concept catalogue, this



Illustration 4: Illustration excerpts from the 2009 concept catalogue

means that written descriptions of the project come wrapped in visual elements that appeal to the senses as well as to the municipal calculator.

In the 2009 concept catalogue, the following quote indicates the reformulated educational intentions in the project:

KRAFT is our realized ambition of creating a fun and attractive frame for understanding nature as a resource. But it is also a hub for the newest thoughts from the whole world about how to best utilize nature, about new energy solutions and green products of the future, but also about foresighted foods and modern art. Thoughts that are welcome to materialize and turn into new products, housing, enterprises and means of transportation [...].

(Thimmer et al., 2009, p. 5)

Bearing in mind the 2007 project proposal, two things stand out in this newer conceptualization of the project. For one, the aim of *uniting* technology, nature, development, and humans in the 2007 proposal now takes on a more distinct distribution of roles. *Unity* turns into *understanding*, and nature is cast in the role of the object that is to be understood. Moreover, the contours of the otherwise all-encompassing nature-concept sharpens, as the text above specifies: nature is a resource, something for humans to utilize. This educational ambition, furthermore, has a tangible intended outcome. It is a matter of 'green products for the future'. In other words, the intended educational experience in the project has a commercial aim and entails a mercantile conceptualization of what it means to 'understand nature'. Here, the role of education in Naturkraft is one that aims for production.

The second point of interest to take from this quote is how it alludes to an underlying conceptualization of crisis in these educational ambitions. There is a subtle sense of urgency to the proposed ideas. In statements that resound with the agricultural and technological focus of the 2007 proposal, there are words such as 'foresighted foods' and 'new means of transportation'. However, reading on in the 2009-publication, it becomes clear how this understanding of crisis

hinges on a specific nature-culture relationship. Under the headline ‘Nature is no victim’, the following quote appears:

Nature-as-resource is a mental counterweight to the doomsday atmosphere of the climate debate, in which nature appears a fragile victim of humankind’s abuse. The truth is that nature holds the answers to how we can live in climatic balance, and it is in nature that most solutions already exist in abundance. Renewable sources of energy such as sun, water, ocean and wind are not eco-glamorous pills for our bad conscience, but simply more long-sighted sources of energy than the burning of fossil fuels.

(Thimmer et al., 2009, p. 10)

That way, the 2009 concept catalogue argues the relevance of asking ‘what nature can do for us’ (Thimmer et al., 2009, p. 10), rather than treating nature as victim. By overtly alluding to the public discourse on climate and environmental crises anno 2009, the text states the project’s stance: renewable energy is no ‘eco-glamorous pill’ to treat a bad conscience but it is the rational choice. In other words, the project is concerned with the climate crisis and more specifically, the way current debates frame this crisis. In opposition to an alleged ‘doomsday atmosphere’, the Naturkraft project intends to buckle up and face the crisis head on, drawing its roadmap from nature’s answers. In this perspective and at this point in time, the Naturkraft project promotes a rational approach to the crisis at hand and promotes the development of technological solutions.

In these respects, the 2009 concept takes aim at another audience than the earlier project proposal. Compared to the 2007 focus on tourists, the 2009 concept amplifies green-tech aspirations: ‘KRAFT points ahead. To a world in long-term balance through insights in the newest, natural opportunities. That unites! That’s why KRAFT is already a phenomenon in the mental premier league of the green-tech world’ (Thimmer et al., 2009, p. 59). The self-perception in the project at this time appears to be one of a green-tech *first-mover*. The project presents itself as a green-tech showroom in which amateurs as well as professionals can get a hands-on update on the latest innovations across a wide range

of technologies, while enjoying themselves with rollercoaster thrills and awe-provoking immersions in a seamless intertwined indoor/outdoor environment (Thimmer et al., 2009, pp. 30-31). Ideas abound. As one section of the publication's introduction states: 'The breadth is the strength'. The elaboration of this statement goes:

KRAFT is a broad and inclusive concept. This does not mean it is unfocused. The concept has a very strict focus horizontally, and covers nature as a resource; roughly speaking, what nature can do for us, and this broad interface is the great strength of the project. The breadth creates almost infinite possibilities for renewal without thinning down the concept, whereas other attractions achieve 'the shark' (the ultimate attraction within a specific area of attraction) at some point – usually within the first 10 years – and then you struggle to surpass this 'ultimate attraction' in a continued vertical way of thinking, i.e. within a narrow field.

(Thimmer et al., 2009, p. 5)

In sum, and as the above quote illustrates, the 2009 concept is based on a question of 'what nature can do for us'. As such, the 2009 catalogue introduces a more specific conceptualization of the relation between humans and nature. *Unity* is replaced by an explicated set of roles, in which 'nature is no victim' and technology is humans' means for staying in the driver's seat of progress. In terms of a sustainability approach, the catalogue promotes ideas of green-tech utilization of natural resources, with humans as the rational agents – acting through understanding and technological innovation in a world of looming climate crises. These expressions of intention reveal a sustainability educational imaginary that emphasizes capabilities for technological innovation. In fact, the 2009 imaginary thinks of the Naturkraft project more in terms of green-tech innovation than in terms of tourism development. Furthermore, the 2009 concept catalogue insists on broad and open-ended statements of the educational *what* and *how*, in effect casting the project in the guise of an open-source software, radically flexible and adaptable.

## ‘Sustainability!’: The 2013 Concept Catalogue

Over the following three years, the organization changed again (Vesterby et al., 2020). The project received further funding from the Central Denmark Region, and in 2010 the park manager, who stayed with the project beyond the public opening in 2020, was hired (Vesterby et al., 2020). He led the development of the project for the next 11 years. When I interviewed him, he commented on his takeover of the project:

And then, as I said as a caricature, it was a blank piece of paper in the one hand and an empty field in the other. A lot of thinking had been going on, but it was all over the place. Of course, I had a look at it, but then I started all over because I still kind of missed the overall cohesion. You know, what is the ‘claim to fame’? What is it that makes this project relevant even in five and ten and twenty years? And then eventually, we had a workshop. [...] Here, I was asked, ‘What are you fighting for?’ And I still have the post-it note somewhere in the archive. It was ‘sustainability’ – exclamation mark.

(Interview with park manager, May 2020)

Judging by the park manager’s retrospective and self-confident statement, his arrival in the project meant a fresh start. As shown above, the project had already spurred quite elaborate ideas for why, what, and how to create a nature-focused tourist attraction outside Ringkøbing. Yet, the new manager thought the project a mess. It lacked ‘overall cohesion’ and the ‘claim to fame’. In order to set things straight, the manager introduced a specific discourse: talking about *sustainability* rather than ‘nature-as-resource’ and ‘local, Northeners’ values’ was a way to create a common ground for the multiple ideas already in the project (interview with park manager, May 2020). Judging by the quote, *sustainability* was meant to guide the development of a more concise park-design and at the same time, it holds the promise of the audience’s sustained future interest in the project. Finally, *sustainability* involves a personal dimension. It is something you ‘fight for’. It comes with an exclamation mark.

Through collaborations with, among others, a regional university, a regional school of design, the local utility company, a Danish think-tank, and a few smaller design consultancies, the park manager reworked the project (Komitéen for etableringen af KRAFT, 2013). Following his recollection of things in the interview quote above, one specific workshop was the defining event that sets the new direction of the project. With ‘sustainability – exclamation mark’ as the igniting spark, another concept catalogue was then published in 2013 (Komitéen for etableringen af KRAFT, 2013). One hundred and twelve evocative pages in a strictly defined colour-palette, with a distinct choice of letter fonts and headlines (see illustration below). The table of contents contains one-word headlines such as ‘the philosophy’, ‘sustainability’, and ‘the experience’. Similar to the 2009 concept, the 2013 catalogue contains conceptual back-story in addition to words of support from local as well as national notabilities and experts wrapped in evocative visualizations. In contrast to the earlier concept, however, the 2013 concept contains elaborate descriptions of the experiential content designs and boasts with visual renderings of the architecture. Through this publication, you get a glimpse of more than just preliminary ideas. You get the impression of a fully thought-through and fully designed building and park, ready for the engineers to take over.

Again, the project states its intentions in the following ‘vision statement’:

[...] KRAFT is created as an experience universe for families with kids, in which installations aim to disseminate knowledge about the forces of nature through fun, sensory, and formative experiences. First and foremost, a visit to KRAFT is supposed to be fun, but having fun and becoming more knowledgeable are not mutually exclusive. Our take on dissemination involves making knowledge a part of the experience. Yet, this take also opens up the possibility that you get to apply the new knowledge after a visit to KRAFT.

Of course, there is a higher purpose to making visitors to KRAFT more knowledgeable: KRAFT wishes to contribute to a societal agenda by making strategies for sustainability relevant to the individual. KRAFT makes the abstract concrete and, through its experience-based approach, shows

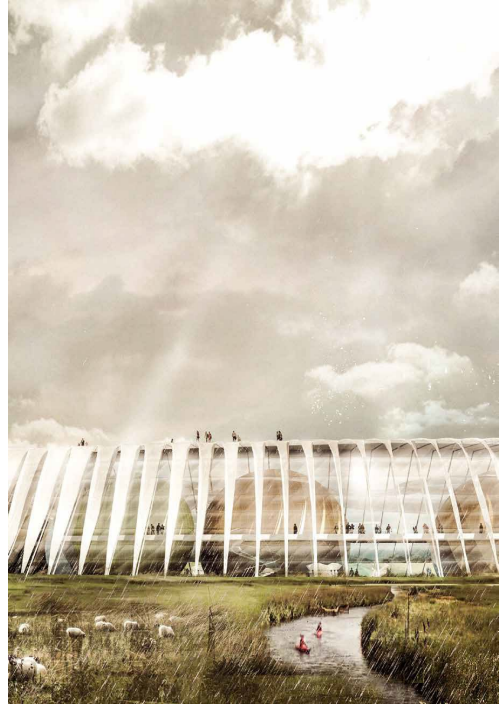


Illustration 5: Illustration excerpts from the 2013 concept catalogue



the potential in thinking and acting more sustainably through simple everyday behavioural changes. Like that, the experience universe is more than just for the fun of it.

(Komitéen for etableringen af KRAFT, 2013, p. 20)

When comparing this statement to the 2007 and 2009 statements respectively, there are several similarities: the ambition of creating ‘an experience with the forces of nature’ remains. The experience is still intended as something ‘fun’. Furthermore, the experience involves ‘becoming knowledgeable’ with intended applicability of knowledge beyond visits to the park itself. At first sight, this latter aspect resembles the emphasis on ‘uniting’ or ‘understanding’ nature and technology in the project’s former incarnations. Yet, on closer inspection, the project no longer primarily promotes regional values or cements ideas of nature-inspired green-tech innovations. Rather, the project intends to transform its visitors. Judging by the 2013-conceptual catalog, visitors should leave Naturkraft knowledgeable on how to ‘think and act more sustainably’ and not ideally capable of manufacturing the next green-tech venture. Educational ideas of *why* in the Naturkraft project now go beyond logics of acquisition of Danish West Coast values and utilization of nature. It concerns ‘the individual’. For the sake of society, the educational philosophy in the project emphasizes personal strategies for sustainability, though without being explicit on what sustainability entails.

Apart from this educational core, the project in many ways reiterates ambitions from the prior publications. For instance, the project still involves ideas of the park as a place for businesses, researchers and the public to meet and exchange ideas, and this ambition still pivots on an allegedly big potential for ‘green solutions’ in West Jutland. Yet there are some shifts in the details:

Danish society needs creative and innovative solutions, and we are strong on green technology, but there is a great un-tapped potential that KRAFT wants to help release by establishing a new approach to collaborations between developers, researchers, and users. Especially the involvement of users is alpha and omega behind the thought of utilizing the sustainable

potential. Like that, sustainable initiatives are made concrete and relevant to the individual, and businesses and researchers get response on the effect and usability of their products.

(Komitéen for etableringen af KRAFT, 2013, p. 20)

Whereas the 2009 concept presents the entire park as a piece of open-source software, radically adaptive to external input, the 2013 concept can be likened to the software-design consultant, offering her help in the difficult collaborative design processes. The project wants to ‘establish a new approach to collaborations’ and wants to make sustainable initiatives ‘relevant to the individual’. In that respect, the 2013 concept exposes the project as more than a showroom and test site for sustainable solutions. The 2013 concept casts Naturkraft – formally titled KRAFT – as an active agent in the societal sustainability transition, aiming to impact business and research practices as well as individuals’ grip on sustainability.

## Intermezzo – From 2013 through to the Opening

I have now described three different outlines of the Naturkraft project; from the earliest sketches of a West Coast tourist attraction focused on nature in 2007 through two iterations of concept catalogues, respectively from 2009 and 2013. In terms of *sustainability educational imaginaries*, the analytical descriptions of these three documents highlight how at first the project – then formally known as *The Star* – builds on ideas and intentions of regional tourism development, in which learning and play feature as means to attract tourists (Kjærgaard et al., 2007). The sustainability approach of the early iteration is focused on technological innovation and a locally anchored normativity that represents sustainability challenges as primarily a case for businesses. Subsequently, the 2009 concept catalogue adds more elaborate considerations to the role of education in the project: The Naturkraft project – at this point formally known as KRAFT – takes aim at knowledge of nature with the intention of spurring product-focused green-tech fascination and local business innovations. Thirdly, with the 2013 concept catalogue, a focus on individual societal

responsibility enters the project. Educationally, Naturkraft – still formally known as KRAFT – takes aim at making visitors knowledgeable about how to think and act sustainably. The approach to sustainability, moreover, extends beyond green-tech innovation. The 2013 iteration of the project flags awareness of social organizational aspects of sustainability challenges in addition to environmental and technological aspects.

Here, I want to point out two significant ways in which the ambitions in the project continued to both specify and multiply during the period from 2013 through to the grand opening in 2020. In the long fundraising process that ran from 2013, the 2013-concept catalogue in many ways came to define the project and serve as the main showcase (interview park manager, May 2020). However, along the way, the project called for descriptions in other formats, fit for other purposes. One example of this is the statutory framework that legally binds the activities in the project (Fonden Naturkraft, 2017). Another example is the re-statement of the project ideas as more elaborate content-designs (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017). Following the park manager's take on the project history, both examples represent materializations of the core ideas from the 2013 concept catalogue rather than fundamental reworkings (interview park manager, May 2020). Yet, as is always the case, something changed in translation.

In the following, I present these two examples and comment on the developments they represent in the project's educational thinking. Moreover, I take these two examples as illustrations of the ongoing process of turning educational *whys* into more concrete and tangible *whats* and *hows*, which is what I focus on in the following chapters. As such, by involving explicit and quite different statements on educational intentions as well as by materializing the project purpose, they make for an opportune passage to the analytical explorations in this dissertation.

## Legally Speaking: The 2017-Statutory Framework

Through ups and downs, the project had considerable success in fundraising between 2013 and 2017. In particular, the consent from one of Denmark's biggest philanthropic foundations, the A.P. Moller Foundation, lightened the prospects in 2016 (Vesterby et al., 2020). In this process, the project changed its name from KRAFT to Naturkraft and the organizational setup behind the project formalized into two independent foundations and a temporary, overarching steering committee that terminated once the park went into operation. One foundation oversaw the construction and ownership of the facilities in the park – the buildings, the installations etc. The other oversaw the organization and the operation of the park (fieldnotes, February 2020). In terms of cues to sustainability educational imaginaries, the latter foundation is the more interesting and, consequently, the only one I pay attention to in the following.

The foundation's statutory framework entails the following description of purpose that legally frames the foundation's activities:

On a nonprofit basis, the purpose of the foundation is:

With a visualization of the forces of nature as point of departure, to create understanding and greater awareness of the human interplay with nature and how we, individually and collectively, can contribute to greater sustainability, locally and globally.

To enhance knowledge and insight into and understanding of sustainability (environmentally, culturally and socially) with a particular focus on children and young people.

To support and conduct research, including on behavioural renewal, that aims at the development of a more sustainable society.

To develop innovative dissemination- and teaching concepts by way of all available means – pedagogically, physically and digitally – as catalyst for a sustainable development of society.

To create value for the public by disseminating the acquired knowledge about sustainability broadly in society in order to provide continuous support for necessary processes of change and actions.

Through:

Operating and developing a platform for dissemination, a knowledge-pedagogical activity centre – physically and virtually – that realizes the foundation’s above-mentioned purpose.

Engaging in partnerships with the state, the region, the municipality and organizations, institutions and corporations locally and internationally.

Offering consultancy and support on teaching and dissemination of relations between the forces of nature, human behaviour and sustainability.

(Fonden Naturkraft, 2017)

The framework describes the purposes of the project in five bullets, followed by three bullets on the means for achieving these purposes. The first bullet concerns the overall orientation of the project: the aim is to make people aware of, and understand, culture-nature interplays as well as how to contribute to worldwide sustainability. This bullet furthermore introduces an educational vehicle to drive the processes: ‘visualizations of the forces of nature’. As such, this bullet closely resembles vision statements from the 2013 concept catalogue (see page 93 above). Encounters with the forces of nature are thought to hold sustainability educational potentials as a point of departure for considerations on ‘how to’ contribute to societal sustainability.

The next bullet entails words of specification: the intended audiences are children and youngsters, and the aim is to enhance their ‘knowledge, insight and understanding’ of ‘sustainability’. ‘Sustainability’ involves three dimensions: environment, culture, and society. I note how this three-dimensionality both resembles and differs from popular definitions of sustainable development such as the Brundtland definition from 1987 (WCED, 1987). Similar to the Naturkraft definition, the Brundtland-report defines ‘sustainable development’ as necessarily involving three dimensions (Læssøe, 2020b). Yet apart from Naturkraft,

the Brundtland-report describes ‘economy’ as the third dimension, rather than ‘culture’ (WCED, 1987). One possible interpretation is that despite wanting to signify broad conceptions of sustainability in Naturkraft, economic matters are ill fits with ambitions of staging entertaining experiences for youngsters. Without wanting to go into further speculations at this point, this interpretation does resound with what will appear a more general theme elsewhere in the analysis: the troublesome integration of sustainability, entertainment, education, and economy in the project. I will return to this in Chapter 7.

The following three bullets describe ambitions in three different arenas: research, educational innovation, and public dissemination. Through different means, each explicitly aims for the development of sustainability in society. Finally, the framework specifies the means for achieving this five-fold purpose in three general activities: operating the park – here described as a ‘knowledge-pedagogical activity centre’; engaging partnerships with all sorts of organizations and institutions, and finally, operating as an educational consultancy on how to teach about the interplay between ‘the forces of nature, human behaviour and sustainability’.

What stands out in the statutory framework in terms of cues to sustainability educational imaginaries then is how these legal statements formalize the project as directed towards sustainability in all its activities, while at the same time establishing a very broad conception of sustainability to guide the endeavours. ‘Sustainability’ concerns questions of environment, society, and culture and Naturkraft is to assist in the ‘sustainable development of society’ by ‘all available means’ (Fonden Naturkraft, 2017). So, what started out in 2007 as a specific, localized ambition for showcasing the innovative splendours of West Jutland eventually evolved into an all-encompassing ambition for changing society in the guise of a front-runner educational space and consultancy on sustainability teaching, cooperation, and research. The format was trimmed down and formalized considerably from the 104-page 2013 catalogue with its aesthetically aided rhetoric. Yet, the statutory framework makes explicit how the Naturkraft project is not guided by any concise or univocal intention. Naturkraft is not only about technological innovation, and neither is it only about the environment.

The project is about nature, but counter to the thinking in the 2009 concept catalogue, for instance, what is to be understood is not nature as such. Rather, ‘sustainability’ is the concept in focus and humans’ role in relation to nature is one of ‘interplay’ rather than ‘utilization’. Moreover, the framework emphasizes educational intentions as the main purpose of the project – reversing the priorities of the original 2007 project proposal. Now, formally, commercial considerations are the means to sustainability educational intentions and not *vice versa*.

### ‘And Become Inspired’: Curatorial Intentions

The fifth and final empirical touchpoint in this chapter is a 45-page content development publication from early 2017 (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017). The choice of fonts, colours, and illustrations in this document resemble that of the 2013-concept catalogue, and several ideas from that publication reoccur (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017). For instance, the content development publication opens with a literal repetition of the vision statement from the 2013-concept catalogue: ‘Through experiences, play, sensory impressions, and physical challenges, [Natur]KRAFT aims to create a deeper insight into the forces and potentials of nature, thereby inspiring and motivating a common, sustainable future with the local anchoring as driver and guiding example’ (Komitéen for etableringen af KRAFT, 2013, p. 16). However, in the following page of the content development publication, this statement is concisely reformulated. Now it reads: ‘Explore the forces of nature – on the West Coast – and become inspired’ (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017, p. 4).

Judging by a note that accompanies the sentence in the content development publication, the reformulation is meant as a simplification of the original vision statement. As the note states, this sentence is ‘[...] a concise description of *why*, *what* and *how* Naturkraft is’ (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017). So, whereas the 2013 concept describes the ambition in a 39-word vision statement and an additional full page of purpose-descriptions, the 2017 content

development document frames the educational ambitions in a manner that more closely resembles an eight-word piece of lyric. Moreover, statements of intention now boil down to just three words: ‘and become inspired’ (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017). As I discovered during fieldwork, this sentence became central in later developments of educational contents and activities in the park. Broadly, employees came to refer to it as *the core story* (field-notes, October 2020).

We can understand this simplified statement of intentions as a translation from one communicative mode to another: from a mode of marketing and rational arguments to a mode of literary imagination and poetic open-endedness. Furthermore, I take this translation in mode as an indication of the introduction of another way of thinking about sustainability education in Naturkraft. In all the previously mentioned publications, the educational *why* is elaborately presented, in all instances aiming to respectively unite, utilize, change! In the content development publication, to the contrary, the educational *why* appears a withdrawn coda to intended activities in the park. The encouragement to *explore* is what marks this publication, rather than any pre-determined endpoints in, for instance, specific West Jutlandian ways of life or green-tech innovations.

In presenting its take on *exploration*, the publication states: ‘In Naturkraft, the human is exploring the forces of nature, and [we] see the human as simultaneously analytical, embodied, and emotional – hence, we communicate to heart, hand, and head via story, play, and explanation’ (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017, p. 4). The human explorer in the 2017 version of Naturkraft is a multi-dimensional subject; a human being that should be addressed holistically. The park offers opportunities for rational-analytical, physical-embodied, and aesthetic-emotional encounters with the forces of nature, in which visitors’ explorative activity is what drives experiences in the park (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017).

In terms of educational philosophy, the 2017 iteration of the project bears distinct traces of Romanticist educational ideals (Scott & Vare, 2021, pp. 37-41). For instance, the *head, heart, and hand* distinction coined by Swiss pedagogue Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) is an obvious implicit reference



(Brühlmeier, 2010). Following Pestalozzi's ideals, learning happens best through self-activity in social environments that leave it to the learner to pursue their own interests and draw their own conclusions (Smith, 1996, 2008). Exploration in Naturkraft, in this perspective, becomes an open-ended engagement with phenomena of the world, not directed by any particular method nor directed towards any particular insight (Smith, 1996, 2008). Yet, the content design publication does state ambitions of certain educational outcomes: 'The great vision for Naturkraft: Action seen as personal behaviour change; the prerequisite for general societal behaviour change' (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017, p. 6). The aim, after all, is societal change through individual changes in behaviour.

As such, in terms of sustainability approach, the 2017 content design publication implicitly frames the main challenges of sustainability as questions about how to engage individuals in much needed societal transitions. In contrast to earlier iterations of the project, the 2017 publication does not spell out what these transitions could look like. Instead, the project focuses on spurring fascination with forces of nature: 'The vision for the park rests on a why – an ambition to seek to generate fascination in visitors through experience with and staging of the forces of nature' (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017, p. 6). Like this, the publication implicitly states that societal processes of sustainability transition are challenged by widespread social ignorance and indifference. As a response, the Naturkraft project seeks to remedy this by cultivating fascination and curiosity with *the forces of nature*, which, moreover, the publication defines as '[...] dynamics that originate outside of the human [...]' (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017, p. 8).<sup>23</sup> In order to anticipate a later discussion in this dissertation, you might say that the imaginary that dominates the 2017 iteration of Naturkraft emphasizes the value of encountering the *other-than-human* as well as the *more-than-human* in an endeavour to cultivate curiosity and a will to change (Tsing, Swanson, et al., 2017). Yet, there are no directives

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23 In full, the definition in the publication goes: 'Dynamics that originate outside of the human and from which you can find traces in the region' (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017, p. 8). I return to the full definition in the next chapter.

for how to change. The aim is to ‘inspire’, and the more concrete implications of this aim remain teasingly opaque.

## Multiple Imaginaries

In sum, the analytical description of the more than 10-years process of development in the Naturkraft project attests to an inherent negotiation on the educational philosophy and sustainability approach in the project. The different touchpoints in the above description reveal differences in thinking at different times in the project. Different imaginaries dominated different phases of the project, starting with an explicit intention of tourism development and local green-tech promotion in the earliest project drafts (Kjærgaard et al., 2007; Thimmer et al., 2009). Gradually, the project adopted a broader approach to sustainability, from an initial focus on green-tech innovations for optimized utilization of natural resources to eventually a conceptualization of sustainability as a society-wide challenge with implications for individuals and social organizations alike. Moreover, the 2017 content development document introduced an aesthetic and open-ended conceptualization of what sustainability entails. Here, sustainability is not something you normatively prescribe. Rather, sustainability is a process of exploration and more-than-human encounters that involve rational analytical as well as embodied and emotional dimensions (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017).

Educationally, as expressed in formal project statements, the project moved from an educational philosophy that mostly considered learning and play as entertaining means for commercial ends to the reverse situation in the statutory framework (Fonden Naturkraft, 2017); commercial initiatives and success were necessary means to educational ends. Moreover, in parallel with developments in the sustainability approach, the educational philosophy broadened in terms of what was considered educational and relevant. The initial iterations of the project considered learning in terms of becoming knowledgeable and up to date on green-tech innovations. Education, in the 2007 project proposal and the 2009 concept catalogue, served to ultimately supply the green-tech industry

with ideas and future engineer employees. Later iterations emphasized the role of education as a necessity for societal transformations in more than just the realm of technology. The sustainability education imaginaries that dominated the two 2017 iterations of the project, for instance, were attentive to vital interplays between human society and the environment as well as to the global interconnectivity of the sustainability challenges.

To reiterate the theoretical claim that opened this chapter: I do not consider the above description a causal story of progress. Whenever new imaginaries entered the project, previously dominating ideas did not necessarily adapt or die off correspondingly. Different iterations of the project existed in parallel, carried on by different actors involved with each their different trajectory in the project. As such, the Naturkraft project did not come together like a neat jigsaw puzzle over the course of the years of development. Rather, the thinking in the project evolved, unintentionally, into an ever more complex assemblage-like landscape of imaginaries. As the following chapter discerns, the complexity shows in the different conceptualizations that different actors made of the content of the project. These differences might co-exist effortlessly in print in a conceptual catalogue or in artful exhibitions in the park. However, as I will return to in chapter 7, differences also imply tension when imaginaries rub against each other in the messy flow of organizational life.

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# Concepts of the West Coast

In the previous chapter, I began my exploration of the Naturkraft project with a focus on its educational *why*. In that chapter, I investigated statements of intention from a genealogical-historical perspective, treating them as cues to the thinking immanent in the project. On these grounds, the chapter described how a multitude of *sustainability educational imaginaries* undergird the Naturkraft project over the course of the project's 14 years of development. Judging by the reading of five different publications from the project, different ideas dominated and defined the project outlines at different points in time. Thus, a landscape of diverging imaginaries became the virtual base on which Naturkraft materialized as a park between 2017 and 2020.

Below, I begin to shed light on these materialized contours of non-formal sustainability education in Naturkraft. I focus on a question about *what* Naturkraft teaches: what is the *educational content* in Naturkraft, when you consider the project an enactment of non-formal sustainability education? Whereas the previous chapter focused on educational enactments in the form of documents and written statements of intention, this chapter moves into the physical and lived enactments of sustainability education in and around the Naturkraft park. This does not mean, however, that I only focus on situations from inside the park. As will become clear, ideas of what Naturkraft teaches play out at different distances and in varying relation to the physical park and its configuration of installations and visitor activities. What Naturkraft teaches, depends on who you ask.

However, as the previous chapter alluded to, one aspect runs as a constant through every iteration of the project: The West Coast. From the 2007 'Star



Illustration 6: Aerial photo of the Naturkraft park.  
Photo by Bjørn Ellermand, Naturkraft

project’ to the 2017 ‘core story’; ‘Explore the forces of nature – on the West Coast – and become inspired’ (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017), the West Coast as a place and a concept is the pivotal dogma for design choices and content developments in Naturkraft. However, amongst the many different people involved in the project, several different conceptualizations exist. The West Coast as a place and a concept is pivotal to what it implies to enact education in Naturkraft, and with varying conceptualizations, enactments differ.

In the following, I discern a range of ways in which educational content is enacted in Naturkraft. The analysis seeks out different conceptualizations of the West Coast, as these feature in different actors’ expressions of *what Naturkraft is all about*. I locate these expressions in a diverse empirical material. Some of them I discern from the project design publications. Others I discern in interviews and field notes in addition to a few newspaper articles. The analysis moves from the curatorial layout of the inside of the park and out into wider societal relations of the Naturkraft project. All through, I ask what becomes central in Naturkraft’s enactment of non-formal sustainability education when judged from the different conceptualizations of the West Coast.

## The West Coast as Vista, Landscape, and History

In the content development publication (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017) – the concluding touchpoint of the previous chapter – the local anchoring of the *core story* is specified as follows: ‘The local anchoring means that the content in the [park] is grounded in the forces of nature, as these can be experienced in the region by the West Coast’ (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017, p. 4). As we learned in the previous chapter, the *forces of nature* are broadly conceptualized in Naturkraft as other-than-human dynamics (see page 104). Naturkraft designs should depict these forces in ‘local’ shapes and scales, thereby offering a particularly ‘local’ experience (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017). Furthermore, ‘the local’ and ‘the West Coast region’ figure as vehicles for, and prime examples of, the educational actions that Naturkraft aims to perform. In and through Naturkraft’s enactments, the

West Coast region should inspire sustainable changes in individuals' behaviours and thereby changes in society (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017).

In this section, I explore what this anchoring involves in terms of curatorial choices and design choices in the park. In other words, I investigate what becomes of the West Coast in the Naturkraft architecture and exhibitions.

In my reading, the curatorial principle of local anchoring concretely shows in three defining aspects of the park design: 1) regional vistas, 2) regional landscaping, and 3) regional history. To take first things first: architecturally, the main part of Naturkraft consists of a rampart that encircles a 5,000-m<sup>2</sup> park. A 620-metre track on the rampart lets visitors walk the park's entire circumference (see illustration 6). At its upper most point, this trail rises to 13 metres above sea level. Judged by international standards, this altitude hardly impresses, but in the middle of the immensely flat West Jutland, the modest rise opens far-reaching vistas of the region. On a clear day, you see the Lyngvig lighthouse and the system of locks in Hvide Sande from 13 kilometres across the Ringkøbing Fjord.

Judged by the content design publication, these vistas are considered a central aspect of the Naturkraft experience. This is where the region as a totality makes an aesthetic, sensuous impression on the visitors (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017, p. 14). This impression involves the rough beauties of the North Sea and the grandiosity of big open skies above the flat lands; the West Coast as a picturesque expression of other-than-human forces that have shaped land and sea for millennia. Yet, it is worth noting that seen from atop the actual, physical rampart, the West Coast also involves vast swathes of agricultural monocrops, large formations of windmills as well as the industrial hinterland of Ringkøbing. The romantic perception of the West Coast as a 'natural' place inevitably mixes with the clear traces of human culture.

Secondly, inside the encircled park, local natural life serves as the main curatorial principle for the landscaping process. The main landscaping architect from the Danish company SLA describes the use of the regional nature as follows:



Illustration 7: Regional vistas from atop the rampart in Naturkraft.  
Photo by Bjørn Ellermand, Naturkraft



In *Naturkraft*, we create a multiverse of new nature from a deep knowledge about nature's processes, cultural history, and the unique geodiversity, growth conditions and biological diversity in the region. From this knowledge, we have created a condensed and hyper-sensuous compilation of local nature typologies that all show nature as the basis for our life and society: as commodities and materials for production as well as a basis for meaning and quality of life in the Anthropocene epoch.

(Rehfeldt, 2020, p. 6)

The park is a 'compilation of local nature typologies' all of which have been studied in-depth biologically and geologically before applying them to the design (SLA, n.d.). The in-depth study of these nature-types further results in in-depth landscaping with attention to arranging specific, geological compositions of soil and sand in different areas of the park. Hence, in the final design, the park consists of eight locally inspired *biotopes* (see illustration 8 below).<sup>24</sup> By integrating eight such regionally specific ecologies, *Naturkraft* exhibits the regional nature's characteristics and diversities in one sharply encircled location.

However, not all of the biotopes are to be found 1:1 in the surrounding region. In line with the landscaping architect's descriptions above, the design also encapsulates the region's cultural history and human use of the land. As an example, the design includes a *carbon forest*. This biotope does not exist anywhere in West Jutland – but thousands of years ago, it might have. In the park, this particular biotope display features tarmacked trails to emphasize how we recognize and utilize the remnants of these ancient forests today: as oil-based products such as asphalt.

In those respects, the regional landscaping in *Naturkraft* depicts the West Coast as a biologically- and geologically specific entity, composed of different ecologically distinct places, or biotopes. However, the take on the West Coast nature is not one of pristine, romanticized ideals. Rather, the West Coast beco-

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24 By definition, the term biotope denotes a particular place or region characterized by uniform environmental conditions and a particular plant and animal population ("Biotope," n.d.).

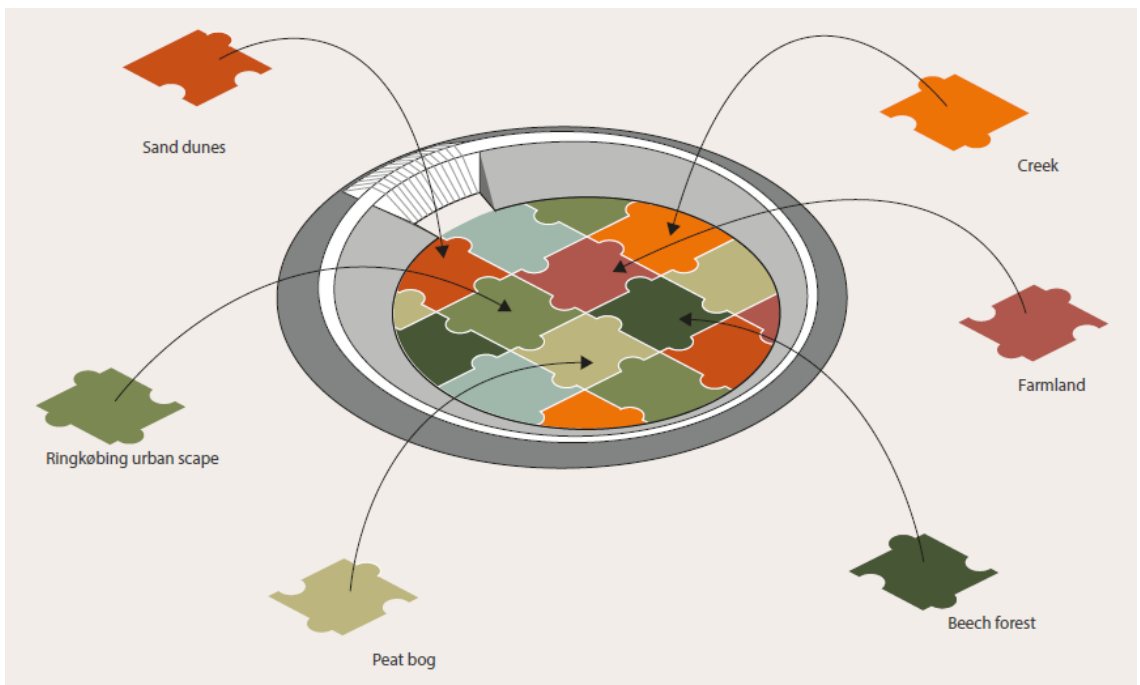


Illustration 8: Design sketch of the landscaping ideas (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017, p. 5)

mes a place in which human interference has marked the ways of life and shaped the surrounding landscapes for centuries. Similarly, the view of the regional vistas described above involves both endearing impressions of the park's natural surroundings and imposing reminders of contemporary human influences on the regional landscape.

Thirdly and finally, the curatorial ideas for Naturkraft involve different exhibitions of regional history. As a curatorial dogma, each exhibition should connect regional characteristics with Naturkraft's broad conception of 'the forces of nature' (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017). This results in a wide range of activities and storytelling performances. To illustrate the range, I emphasize two specific examples from the park in operation.

When visiting Naturkraft, you will see a large concrete construction wedged into the tallest part of the rampart. Although physically integrated into the dirt-hill, the building clearly stands out from the rampart's overgrown sides with its futuristic surface of concrete, aluminium, and plastic-foil (see illustration 6). This is the *main building*. The interior of the building consists of one big room, of which one half is divided into two floors. In the middle of the building are three domes, eight metres tall on average, each containing individual exhibitions. Behind these domes, on the second floor, along one of the plastic-foil walls, is a line of tableaux (see illustration 9 below). These create the exhibition named 'Evolution of the Landscape'.

The tableaux contain laser-cut wooden models on painted surfaces. The models depict animals, humans, geological formations, plants, houses, and different means of transportation, to mention some. From left to right, the models exhibit different eras from the latest Ice Age up until today. These eras are presented with attention to their regional specificities. The Ice Age display, for instance, tells of Doggerland – the now submerged stretch of land between Denmark and Great Britain. In this display, you see models of aurochs, mammoths, and moose alongside a video-screen showing aerial footages of the landscape and ocean as they look today. To the right is another tableau, this one showing models of boats, fish, and fishermen, with different types of fish painted on the display surface. Next to this one, yet another tableau depicts the story of Skjern

Å. This river – one of Denmark’s bigger rivers – was partly straightened out in the 1960s, only to be led back to its original flow in the 1990s to save its heavily and negatively impacted fauna.

In other words, this exhibition tells a collection of stories about local natural history. Some stories are historically specific. Some unfold across eras and geological epochs. You get the impression that there have been human settlements in the region for millennia, and that these settlements have always relied on nature for their survival. However, you also get the impression that human civilization of late has interfered and messed up natural ecologies – although attempts have been made to make up for these interferences. It is a story about the region and the local relationship between nature and human through thousands of years. Moreover, it is a story about human scientific ingenuity and technical progress, which have somehow set human civilization apart from the surrounding non-human lifeforms and affected the shapes of the landscape.

Another take on the telling of regional history played out during Halloween in the autumn of 2020. Here, in order to have a particular *Nordic* grip on the Americanized tradition, Naturkraft traced the Halloween tradition back to its Scandinavian historical parallels (Sørensen, 2020). Visitors carved out jack-o’-lanterns from sugar beets instead of from pumpkins. Local animal skeletons were laid out for the children to touch and, in the park, an employee devised a hunt for local spiders. Furthermore, a storytelling session played out that appears particularly emblematic for another depiction of the West Coast history in Naturkraft:

Inside one of the exhibition domes in the main building, lights are turned down low. In the middle of the room, encircled by LED candles, a young employee sits in a chair lined with lamb-skin. She wears a dark cape and holds a heavy, antique-looking book. As listeners settle in on the benches along the walls, she starts reading aloud the old Danish tale about *Åmanden* – a folklore character not unlike the English *Nix*. A traveller in the misty marshlands of this region gets lost one night. His mother is waiting for him



Illustration 9: The exhibit Evolution of the Landscape.  
Photo by Bjørn Ellermand, Naturkraft



Illustration 10: Story-telling session, October 2020. Photo by the author

to return, but as hours pass and night turns to day, she realizes the real scheme of things. Her son has fallen under a spell, thrown himself into the cold waters in the marsh and has drowned: Åmanden's annual victim. [...] After finishing the story, the storyteller briefly comments on the role these myths used to play in pre-modern conceptions of natural phenomena. When you lose a son to the marsh, Åmanden offers a possibility for sense-making and someone to blame, she notes.

(Fieldnotes, October 2020)

The West Coast harbours its own historical folk-mythology, preserved in narratives of fanciful creatures and mysterious incidents in the unreliable landscape. On this particular occasion, the local stories featured as part of the Halloween celebrations. Thereby, the stories added a layer of local, historical depth to the otherwise heavily commercialized and globalized contemporary Halloween event. Furthermore, the myths add a layer of ontological complexity to the enactments of the West Coast. Through the myths, Naturkraft enacts the West Coast as more and other than a compilation of tangible, biophysical elements. The West Coast too becomes a performative entity, the meaning of which depends on temporally- and spatially situated socioecological events. The West Coast is not just a place to go; it is also a historically situated way of doing and living. Moreover, this layer of depth does not just pose in the guise of historical curiosa. We are reminded how matters of the past effect and linger in our present; the immediate sense of being in a here and now atop the windy rampart is contrasted with stories from natural history of ongoing changes to the landscape; the endearing experience of walking amongst true-to-nature representations of the West Coast biotopes is disturbed when coming across the all too real remnants of a historically indeterminate *carbon forest*. As such, by exhibiting regional vistas, regional landscaping, and regional history, Naturkraft enacts the West Coast as a conceptual place somewhere between native nature and contemporary culture. Judging by this diverse exhibition of the West Coast, the educational content in Naturkraft then becomes the experience of the palimpsest-like quality of this specific place; a place of intersecting historical, biological, and perceptual layers.

## The West Coast as Educational Force Field

Following the curatorial *core story*, the conceptualization of the West Coast in Naturkraft is also intimately connected to conceptualization of the *forces of nature* (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017). In the previous chapter, I quoted part of the Naturkraft definition of the *forces of nature*, as it appears in the content development publication. In full, that definition reads: ‘The central object in Naturkraft is the forces of nature in Ringkøbing, defined as: dynamics that originate outside of the human, of which you can find traces in the region’ (Komitéen for etableringen af Naturkraft, 2017, p. 8). Thus, the West Coast is understood as the background for the dynamic acts of nature’s forces in Naturkraft; it is the material in which nature’s forces make palpable and lasting impressions. The Naturkraft activity trails, called *expeditions*, are illuminating examples of how these ideas become part of the Naturkraft educational enactments.

In the park, visitors encounter *expeditions* in the shape of a range of colourful cardboard discs. Each type of disc prompts a specific *expedition*. Each expedition guides visitors’ exploration of different aspects of the Naturkraft park in a specific, thematic perspective. Themes range from basic natural science subjects such as *temperature*, *magnetism*, and *biodiversity* over climate change-related themes such as *CO2 emissions* and *rising sea levels* to more openly defined themes such as *photo safari*, *signs*, and *garbage* (Naturkraft, 2021a). Each disc includes three activities for visiting families and groups to perform, and once the three activities are completed, participating children and youngsters can collect a theme-specific badge as a reward.

The expedition activities are different in form. Some mimic classical science experiments and methods for observation. Others encourage philosophical and ethical reflection through play-based or art-based activities. As part of the *Water* expedition, for instance, visitors are first invited to observe the life of insects and smaller fish in the park water stream through a pair of water binoculars. The expedition disc prompts the activity with the words: ‘*Water of the animals*: Thousands of animal species, from the tiniest to the largest on earth, live in water. Go to the ‘balance web’ and use a pair of water binoculars to find

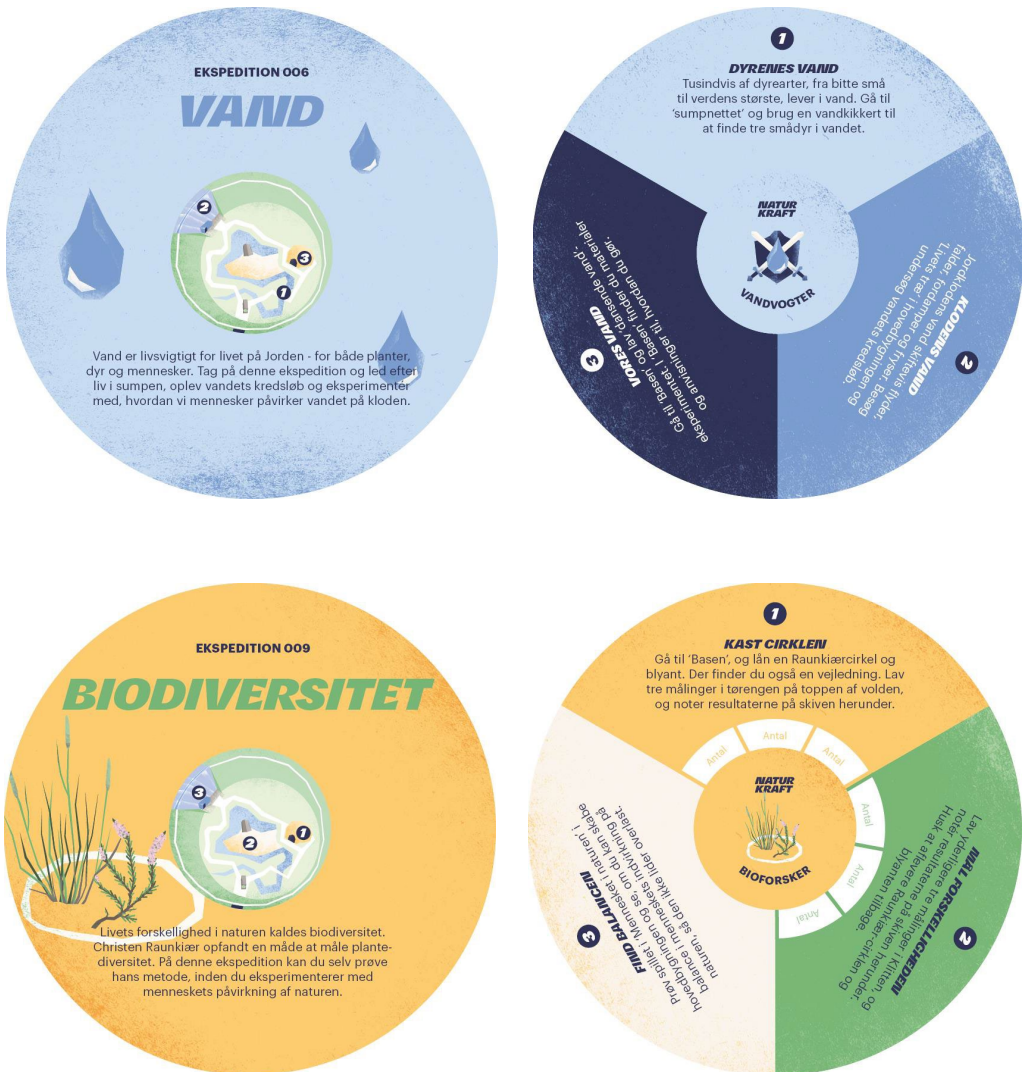


Illustration 11: Front and back of the water and biodiversity expedition discs (Naturkraft, 2021b)



three small animals in the stream' (Naturkraft, 2021a). Next, the expedition directs visitors to the exhibition 'the Tree of Life' inside the exhibition hall with the prompt: '*Water of the Earth*: Water on earth alternately runs, falls, evaporates, and freezes. Go visit 'The Tree of Life' in the exhibition hall and explore the water cycle of the earth' (Naturkraft, 2021a). The third activity, called *Our water*, involves the experiment *dancing water*. Following the printed experiment instruction, the experiment involves making a drawing with a whiteboard marker on a porcelain plate. Next, you carefully pour water on the plate and observe how the drawing lifts off the plate and floats on the water's surface. As an important note, the instruction sheet ends with a word of caution: 'Remember that the water is now polluted with microplastics from the whiteboard marker. Therefore, you must pour the water into our container for polluted water' (Naturkraft, 2021a, p. 22). Suddenly, the very local and innocent act of making colourful drawings on a plate proves to contain global environmental perspectives. The perspectives are not spelled out. Yet, words such as 'pollution' and 'microplastics' are presented as part of the activity; as an ethical reminder of the potentially destructive flip side of even the most innocently seeming human action.

Another expedition, *Biodiversity*, involves a classical tool of scientific observation and measurement: the Raunkiær's circle. This tool – a circle with a radius of 17.8 centimetres covering 1/10 of a square metre – was developed by Danish botanist Christen Raunkiær in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. You throw the circle at random in a natural environment and count the number of different botanical specimens inside it. Hereby, you get a measurement of local biodiversity to compare and relate with the biodiversity of other environments (Naturkraft, 2021a, p. 30). In Naturkraft, the *biodiversity expedition* prompts visitors to compare the biodiversity in two of the park's biotopes. As the third activity in the *biodiversity expedition*, visitors are encouraged to play with the human influence on local and global biodiversity. The activity description goes: '*Find the Balance*: Have a go with the 'Human in Nature' game inside the main building and try to balance the human influence on nature to avoid causing harm' (Naturkraft, 2021a, p. 31). Below, I briefly describe this game.

The *Human in Nature* game is located inside one of the exhibition domes. The game consists of a circular table placed in the middle of the circular room (see illustration 12 below). Video projectors in the ceiling project a colourful, interactive map onto the tabletop. There is a large iceberg floating on an ocean in the centre of the map. Towards the edges of the table are five islands, on which players can place wooden game pieces imprinted with different icons. As examples, these represent houses, forests, and factories. By placing the pieces on the table, players affect the development of the landscape. Fields grow around game pieces with grain icons, displacing native vegetation. Cities emerge and forests come and go. If, however, human industrial activity exceeds the limits of what the ecosystem of the virtual world sustains, the iceberg melts, the islands flood, and sounds of thunder roar from loudspeakers in the ceiling.

As such, both expeditions described above make use of scientific equipment and engage visitors in reflection on concepts and ideas from the natural sciences. They prompt scientific considerations with art-based and game-based activities and slightly disrupt the entertaining surface of the park, revealing ethical, political, and philosophical dilemmas of human-nature relationships. In terms of conceptualizations of the West Coast, the expeditions stage the West Coast as an interactive background for abstracted scientific concepts and considerations. The West Coast becomes a generic place to exemplify abstract and global scientific insights. Simultaneously, by making visitors engage with the materiality of the hyper-local environment in the park while reflecting on scientific phenomena, the global concepts and their discomfiting perspectives gain local immediacy.

## The West Coast as Mentality

Judging by the insights from the previous chapter, it is clear how other concepts of the West Coast also influence the Naturkraft project besides the scientific and eco-material concepts described above. In particular, one other dominant vantage point on the project is a local political one focused on doing business. This conceptualization builds on a story of the West Coast in which Naturkraft



Illustration 12: The Human in Nature-game.  
Photo by Naturkraft and Ringkøbing Fjord Museer

features as a business enterprise rather than an explicitly educational endeavour, an investment in tourism and local jobs. It is a conceptualization in which Naturkraft is part of a particular ‘West Coast’ brand (BARK rådgivning, 2018). Specifically, amongst municipal politicians and local entrepreneurs closely involved with the Naturkraft project, the project has been considered an obvious fit with the town of Ringkøbing and the larger Ringkøbing-Skjern Municipality. From their perspective, the project supports the regional branding-narrative by being a showcase of regional, natural splendours as well as of a particular *Ringkøbing*-ish mentality.

The concept catalogue from 2013 that was touched upon in the previous chapter (see page 93 ff. above), contains good examples of this. For instance, under the headline ‘The challenge and the solution’, the catalogue describes how the Naturkraft project at large relates to ambitions of regional development:

[Natur]KRAFT is a knowledge-based experience universe in Ringkøbing that takes the local, West Jutlandian forces of nature and natural phenomena as its point of departure. Through fun and fascinating experiences for kids as well as adults, [Natur]KRAFT raises awareness of not just the necessity of thinking and acting sustainably, but also of the potentials in sustainable strategies for enhancing life quality. We want to tell the positive story of sustainability.

The forces of nature are also keywords when [Natur]KRAFT seeks to contribute to the overall strategy in Ringkøbing-Skjern Municipality. The goal here is to ensure progression and not regression, as is the fate for many countryside municipalities in these years. The potential in climate solutions, green energy, and technology is big in West Jutland, and the municipality’s additional investment in sustainability positions Ringkøbing-Skjern at the forefront of positive development. [Natur]KRAFT could

contribute to making the region a point of reference<sup>25</sup> on sustainability locally, nationally, and internationally.

(Komitéen for etableringen af KRAFT, 2013, p. 17)

In two adjacent paragraphs, this quote presents the ambitions of sustainability educational experiences in Naturkraft on par with ambitions of regional development. The Naturkraft project is both intended as a place of beautiful, sensory, and thought-provoking experiences ‘with’ the West Coast, and as a showcase for a region of progressive green-tech entrepreneurialism. The latter is a kind of regional, entrepreneurial potential. In thinking about this potential, the West Coast in Naturkraft emerges as something that further involves two interrelated aspects: a certain mentality, and specific ideas of resources. In this section and the following, I elaborate on these two aspects, starting with some words on mentality.

Judging by the quote above, the West Coast mentality pivots on a particular self-perception: the West Coaster is someone who *succeeds in creating* means of survival under shifting circumstances. The West Coast and its inhabitants transform and adapt to survive. As part of my fieldwork, I conducted an interview with the former mayor and the former municipal director in the Ringkøbing-Skjern Municipality. When I asked the mayor, how the region had changed over the past generation, his reply clearly illustrated this local mentality:

No, I wouldn’t say that industry has disappeared. On the contrary, I would say that some of the corporations have been good at developing, also for other products and so on. Sure, if you look around here – some of the corporations that used to service the fishing fleet – it has diminished considerably, I have to say, but the corporations still exist. But they have been

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25 In direct translation from the Danish text, this sentence goes: ‘KRAFT could contribute in making the region a light house for sustainability both locally, nationally and internationally’. In Danish, light house is often used figuratively denoting a person or an institution that stands out and takes a lead in a particular area. The light house trope is a reoccurring one in the Naturkraft development story, which also might have regional connotations. Being on the ocean, this region is known for its many light houses.

good at adapting [...]. Take our shipyard for instance, they say that if they were to depend on the fishing industry alone, they might have 15-20 employees. Well, now they have 230, 'cause they build ferries and components for Vestas and Siemens and what not.

(Interview, September 2021)

As markets change, industry adapts. The former mayor points to his local community as an example. Here, the size of the shipyard staff far exceeds what the shrinking fishing industry alone demands. Fishing used to be one of the region's main sources of income but now, as that industry has completely changed, so has the region, thanks to its ability to adapt. The mayor's story of such adaptations also involves the local dairy industry. Decades ago, municipal politicians in the region provided the necessary conditions for this industry to expand, and today it thrives (interview, September 2021).

These achievements, however, have not come for free. Through the course of the interview, the mayor listed several municipal projects from his own time in the municipal council that took years of persistence: vacation homes by the locks in Hvide Sande, the co-workingspace Innovest in Skjern, the resort complex Lalandia in Søndervig, the still-in-process national park in Skjern Enge and, of course, Naturkraft in Ringkøbing. All these projects were years in the making and managed to overcome every obstacle in the tiresome processes; that is, except the national park project in Skjern. That was a 'strange story', as my two interlocutors put it. Yet, what characterized all the other stories of success was, amongst other things, a particular community spirit – both in the municipal council as well as in collaboration with the local community. The former municipal director exemplified this, referencing the process leading to Naturkraft:

It's the thing about standing together. Now we have come upon a good idea – it's even one of our own, [name], who conceived it - but we unite and say, 'we support this one'. And the municipal council proved - we are good at this.

[...]

And the last thing would be local support. Suddenly, we received 500,000 from a group of investors in Ringkøbing, Here, they show that ‘we are behind this’. It was at a point in time when the council was beginning to falter. [...] The project had been at a standstill for a while, you know. We didn’t receive any further funding from foundations. And in the municipal council, considerations about shutting down the project were coming up.

(Interview, September 2021)

In sum, what characterizes the mentality are stories of readiness for change, foresight, and communal persistence. The West Coasters have formed this mentality around stories of past achievements. Now these stories form a model for future developments. Through foresight and persistence, the region has weathered the storms of changing market conditions and kept on the track of progress – through entrepreneurial ingenuity and community spirit. In these respects, and following the former municipal leadership, the Naturkraft project embodies these virtues.

## The West Coast as Resource

As mentioned, there is another dimension to the idea of a West Coast potential besides the mentality. The potential also has to do with *resources*. In the stories I heard during fieldwork, the West Coast harbours great economic potentials just waiting to be tapped by its ingenious inhabitant. In my interview with the two former municipal leaders, the director alluded to this understanding of the place-specific potentials, coupling this understanding to the Naturkraft design directly:

MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR: In fact, I think, when you consider ‘what is it, actually, that we make a living from here?’ That’s nature. It’s the fishing industry, right. It’s tourism and hence the beach. It’s agriculture. And we’ve got Vestas, as a sustainability institution in general – that’s the wind and so on. And then we’ve got the dairies [...]. And we’ve got Skjern Enge. I mean the anglers. Salmon fishing. So, you know, when the place is called Naturkraft, and then you say, ‘what, in fact, is it that we, as a municipality,

make a living from in terms of business', then it fits perfectly. Because that's nature, practically. [...]

DANIEL: So, there is something about Naturkraft fitting into a certain story in the municipality?

MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR: Yes. That's it.

(Interview, September 2021)

In other words, the municipal director considers nature the backdrop for most professional activity in the municipality: The fishing industry, agriculture, wind power – and in recent years and to an increasing extent, nature as an attraction for tourists and as a basis for techno-scientific innovations. It is an understanding of nature as resource. Furthermore, today, it is no longer simply nature as raw material or commodity that sustains societies on the West Coast. In contemporary uses on the West Coast, nature becomes a potential for experience economic and knowledge economic expansion of the region.

Along similar lines of thought, the people involved in the Naturkraft project present the West Coast as a region of untapped potential for economic activity. Whereas people used to count this potential in tons, cubic metres and hectares, today, West Coast developers count in kWh and different tourist measures: 'numbers of vacation homes', 'nights spent annually' and 'daily spending mean' (BARK rådgivning, 2018, p. 5). This conception of the West Coast plays little or no direct role in the Naturkraft exhibitions, but it has been crucial to Naturkraft as a municipal development project. In this respect, Naturkraft was meant to showcase the West Coast, thereby attracting and tapping into the tourist resource potential in the region.

A similar understanding came to show at the park 'dress rehearsal' prior to the grand opening in June 2020. To test the park in operation, Naturkraft invited all employees of one of its most important local business partners, a local bank, to the park. Like every other dress rehearsal, the day was a mess, but a particular point of interest was when the bank CEO gave his welcoming speech:



As the park manager passes the microphone to the bank CEO, the CEO begins by returning the park manager's words of gratitude. Then he explains why the bank wanted to engage in collaborations with Naturkraft in the first place. He points out that Naturkraft is a local initiative, one that aims to generate local jobs and attract tourists to the region. 'That's all something for a bank to understand', he emphasizes before continuing, 'and that's something, we would like to be known for. That we, as a bank, would like to signal something new to the world. In a word that has come into fashion recently; we wish to show community spirit'.

(Fieldnotes, June 2020)

This quote sums up Naturkraft's position between two understandings of the West Coast. The bank CEO considers Naturkraft an organization that profits the region: it generates local jobs by expanding and exploiting the tourist potentials; by utilizing the West Coast resources, so to speak. At the same time, the bank CEO emphasizes that by engaging with Naturkraft, he and the bank embodies something new: community spirit. Yet, in light of my observations, rather than being new, this 'spirit' is in perfect line with the narratives about local mentality that seem to surround the Naturkraft project in general. In a double sense, Naturkraft, thus, becomes a place to *showcase the West Coast to the world*: a place to *showcase* a certain local business mentality of progress and community spirit, and a place to *showcase* the West Coast as a destination for tourists and business developers.

## The West Coast as an Educational Audience

A final prominent conceptualization of the West Coast that I have come across in my fieldwork concerns the West Coast as an educational audience. Hereby, I allude to conceptions of the West Coast inhabitants as a 'public'; not individual local subjects that visit the park on weekend family outings – I will return to them later - but the larger, social entity that inhabits this region. And, importantly, a local public or 'audience' as viewed from within or 'atop' the Naturkraft project. Whereas the West Coast as *resource* has to do with

economic and material conditions for life in the region, the West Coast as *educational audience* somehow has to do with social conditions for the local life. This, in some sense, concerns *mentality* too. Yet, I consider it as ‘local mentality squared’ – as the progressivist mentality turned inwards, on itself.

As an illuminating example of this West Coast conception, I have often heard the development manager in Naturkraft phrase a particular ambition for the project. An excerpt from my fieldnotes illustrates this ambition:

Towards the end of my first day of fieldwork in the Naturkraft offices, the development manager swings by my desk. She is just up for a chat. How am I settling in? Did I have any interesting conversations? I share my excitement about finally having started my PhD project. I find it immensely exciting to be able to do research on Naturkraft. ‘Yes’, she responds. ‘That’s just what’s so nice about this whole thing. That there’s more headroom. I can also tell that from the conversations I have around here. Our standards are just higher. And, I think that’s part of the thing, the park should contribute to the area. To show that it can actually work out to think bigger and to want something more’.

(Fieldnotes, February 2020)

According to the development manager, Naturkraft has a particular role to play in the local society. The Naturkraft project should prove the benefits of entertaining ambitious plans for the region. It should show alternative ways of progressing. This ambition permeated the project: from the unconventional offices amongst small local startups, that were home to Naturkraft from the beginning of my fieldwork, to the fact that I, as an educational researcher, became engaged in the project long before anything overtly ‘educational’ took place.

Moreover, what this all tells about the West Coast citizens as an educational audience is that some skepticism exists under the shiny, progressivist surface. Apparently, what I came to know as Naturkraft’s way of working, and what the former municipal director as well as the bank CEO above reflected as a certain local mentality, is not the whole story. Despite the entrepreneurial and adaptive

self-image, the West Coast is unaccustomed to ambitions the size of Naturkraft's and does not hold back from venting its disbelief.

Without a question, the main outlet for the common West Coast voice on the Naturkraft project has been the local newspaper, *Dagbladet Ringkøbing-Skjern*. Ever since the early days of the Naturkraft project, the local stance has been negotiated in the paper's debate sections as well as in editorials. Long before the park materialized, several editorials disqualified the Naturkraft project with headlines such as 'Hot air?', 'Exposed as a mirage' and 'I'll still eat both hat and words' (Vesterby et al., 2020, pp. 67-68). And despite a fierce determination in the Naturkraft organization to prove these predictions wrong, the public opinion did count. For instance, when I first entered the offices, a wall in one of the hallways was papered with newspaper clippings featuring Naturkraft (see illustration 13 below).

In our interview, the former municipal director elaborated on the occasionally difficult relationship with the public and the local newspaper:

In my opinion, the great test was in fact that the press, *Dagbladet*, were negative towards the project. And they start to write, that 'it' – I think, wasn't it the editor who said that 'he would eat his hat, if this thing actually happens'? And then he had to cook it and started eating it, I don't know. And that was also, how would you phrase it, 'how are we to tackle this?' Because the municipal council was, as I said, very positive and supportive, 100%. No one was against it. But if the public begins to oppose it. [...] Argh, it upset us. And we had a good chat with the press about it. 'It's unfortunate that when somebody dares to entertain big thoughts, that you then have to be scorned in the press for having a dream' – we agree with them that it was far from certain, at this point in time, that the project would succeed. But to blow it up in the press in capital letters, we were sorry for that.

(Interview, September 2021)

In the former municipal director's opinion, the press was the 'great test'. This was where the Naturkraft project would have to prove its worth. The press was the gatekeeper of the local public opinion. As the editor-in-chief swore to eat



Illustration 13: The clipping wall in the new Naturkraft offices, here on portable sheets. Photo by the author

his proverbial hat if the project ever succeeded, access was limited. Furthermore, this public opinion was in stark contrast to the municipal leadership, which was in unison on the decision to follow through on Naturkraft. The contrast disturbed the municipal director. His interpretation of the incident is a telling one. The problem was the size of the idea. Big dreams were at odds with the kind of mentality the press advocated. The municipal director was disappointed with the press for being non-inclusive, non-collaborative, and unambitious.

The former mayor, on the other hand, assumed a different standpoint. As we discussed another local development project, the vacation homes by the locks in Hvide Sande, the mayor told me about the local opposition. The citizens of Hvide Sande were upset. The project would destroy the nature around the locks. Eight hundred people officially objected to the zoning. From the mayor's point of view, this kind of critical opposition was to be expected. Yet, the people in charge have a certain responsibility in enduring the opposition, he thought. As he phrased it: 'You gotta say, the people in charge, politicians, have to be in front and adopt standpoints that are occasionally controversial, if we believe that this is what is required for progress' (interview, September, 2021). As I understood him, this stance also concerned the Naturkraft project. People in charge believed in the project and insisted despite public dispute.

In these respects, the West Coast public appear as an audience to the Naturkraft development itself. The development project becomes a collaborative performance and negotiation amongst different local bodies of influence. Following the municipal leadership as well as the management in Naturkraft, what is at stake is not simply the materialization of a park for tourists. What is at stake is the West Coast mentality. From this perspective, Naturkraft not only exhibits, explores and showcases the West Coast. It aims to affect the West Coast and shine a way for future regional developments – both economically and mentally. As a testimony to this agenda, the newspaper adopted the role of the convinced student when admitting its faulty predictions years later. Under the headline 'The happy refutation', a 2019 editorial ended on the following note:

With the topping out ceremony we have reached a point where the contours of Naturkraft clearly show. Exactly what the content will be is the next step of the way, and this is no less exciting. But perhaps best of all: Naturkraft has taught us that West Jutlanders are also allowed to think big!

(Osmundsen, 2019)

## An Anthropocene Concept of the West Coast

In this chapter, I have explored different ways in which the Naturkraft project enacts educational content; i.e., I have interrogated what different actors give as different answers in the Naturkraft project in response to the question, *what is Naturkraft all about?* The analytical focal point of the chapter has been an interest in different enactments of the concept of the *West Coast*. I have analyzed this concept from angles ranging from architectural and curatorial designs of the park, designs for educational activities, to social and political perspectives on the public impact of the project. This multi-faceted approach has drawn the outline of a project with multiple core contents. The West Coast in Naturkraft comes to stand as a phenomenon of multiple significance. As a material-discursive entity, the West Coast enables a range of very different expressions, all of which each encompass their different emphasis on what is educationally important in the Naturkraft project.

In terms of educational content, exhibitions and expeditions in the Naturkraft park stage visitors' encounters with non-human life in ways that draw on scientific vocabularies, tools, and methods in addition to phenomenologically toned activities. Moreover, the park architecture and curatorial layout add aesthetic sensuousness and historical depth to the notion of the West Coast. As such, the educational content in the park becomes at the same time sensations and experiences with the West Coast as well as encounters explicitly mediated through scientific vocabularies and historical representations. In that sense, Naturkraft enacts the West Coast as something simultaneously local and global, past and present, material and immaterial, cultural and natural. What

counts educationally seems to be the immediate encounters and experiences with this between-ness.

The chapter also explores perspectives on educational content that are not immediately visible inside the park. Local politicians, businesspeople, and newspaper editors all envelope the Naturkraft project in particular aspirations for their local community, their *West Coast*. Although these ambitions and objectives do not feature explicitly inside the park, they affect what the Naturkraft project is all about or, more specifically, in the local community perspective the Naturkraft project itself becomes an instructional example. From this perspective, the Naturkraft project embodies what long-lasting West Coast sturdiness, indomitability and ingenuity are capable of when fused with progressive daring. The educational content of the Naturkraft project becomes a transgression of the local present. In the local eye, what Naturkraft is all about is a potential for (sustainable) societal progress – a potential that is immanent to the West Coast. What counts educationally thus seems to be prospects and potentials.

As such, the chapter investigates the enactment of the West Coast in the Naturkraft project across fairly large differences in analytical perspective. This makes synthesizing comments difficult. Yet, my reasons for trying to include such heterogonous perspectives in one analysis perhaps offer synthesizing food for thought in themselves. The main reason is an analytical ambition of inclusivity; by including different perspectives, I want to explore the entanglement of broader social and material circumstances in the enactment of ‘educational content’ in the Naturkraft project that I experienced during my fieldwork. As such, the chapter makes the claim that curatorial- and design-related decisions do not happen in a vacuum, isolated from political and economic considerations. Neither do these political and economic considerations determine the shape of the Naturkraft project and park exclusively. In extension of the previous chapter, this chapter substantiates the view of the Naturkraft project as an unintentional design (Tsing, 2021). Different ambitions and imaginaries co-exist in the project. The project is about the West Coast, but the West Coast as a multiple phenomenon. As we will see in the following chapter, the park involves

aspects that are unconventional and slightly strange and do not at all conform to political narratives on entrepreneurial ingenuity and resource utilization.

However, one possible synthesizing consideration to encompass the differences in this chapter would be the idea of the Anthropocene. As described in the Introduction Chapter (see from page 14 above), the Anthropocene is a conceptualization of the current state of life on Earth (Tsing, Swanson, et al., 2017). This chapter can be said to present the West Coast as a place and socioecological happening in context of the Anthropocene. The West Coast in the Naturkraft project is simultaneously a palimpsest of geological and socio-ecological-historical layers, a collage of different biological conditions for life, and a contemporary socio-political landscape influenced by local, national, and global dynamics. That way, the Naturkraft project becomes a prism for observing and considering the messy interplays of the Anthropocene in non-formal education and at local scales. As such, in an overarching perspective, we can think of the educational content of the Naturkraft project as *the West Coast as Anthropocene place*.

One big question then arises on the back of this chapter and the previous one: *How* does Naturkraft work, educationally speaking? How does it teach in and about this Anthropocene place? These are the questions in focus in the following chapters. I pursue these questions by respectively analysing an educational experience on offer in the park from a guest perspective and by exploring the challenges of teaching in and about the park from a host perspective. In effect, I now turn my analytical gaze from questions of intention to questions of the processual enactments of pedagogy in Naturkraft.





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# Becoming-Nature, Becoming-Child

There are two months until the grand opening. All employees have gathered for an information meeting in the common room. Spirits are high despite the difficulties that the Covid-19 pandemic causes. The intermediation manager gives a status report on business partnerships. She finishes off by applauding the organization for ‘how we have broken the code on communicating complex stuff in super simple ways.’ This cues the park manager. He chips in with an anecdote to ‘show what it is that Naturkraft is apparently capable of’, as he says. Yesterday in the park, he sighted a man on the rampart from afar. The man was skipping and jumping cheerfully. Only as he came closer did the park manager realize that it was the otherwise calm and composed chef, now dancing in pure excitement. ‘Isn’t it fantastic how this place does that to you?! It makes me proud!’

(Fieldnotes, April 2020)

So far, the analyses of Naturkraft’s sustainability educational enactments have focused on intentions and content projections from designers’ and project developers’ perspectives. The analyses have provided insight into imaginaries undergirding the project and insights into diverging ideas of educational content that inform designs and activities inside and around the Naturkraft park. Now, I direct analytical attention to questions of the pedagogical *processes* taking place inside the park. That is, I ask how the park, its elements and designs, perform an educational work on guests.

To that end, I draw explicitly on Elizabeth Ellsworth’s cultural studies-infused pedagogical theory (Ellsworth, 2005). As presented in chapter 2, Ellsworth

proposes a Deleuze informed take on pedagogy, in which the pedagogical process is re-conceptualized to encompass other understandings of learning and knowing than what dominates formal educational discourses (Ellsworth, 2005, pp. 1; 5-7). In Ellsworth's considerations, the pedagogical process is not just a matter of conveying knowledge-ready-made. Rather, the pedagogical process is one of enabling *sense in the making* and consequently *the learning self in the making* (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 2).

Ellsworth is a trained media studies scholar, and she overtly deploys both the aesthetic attention of media studies and an interest in non-institutional forms of communication in her pedagogical propositions. Along these lines, she develops an alternative pedagogical theoretical approach through readings of *anomalous places of learning*: '[...] peculiar, irregular, abnormal, or difficult to classify pedagogical phenomena' (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 5). As she adds, this approach does not hinge on an ambition to critique or evaluate pedagogical cases:

My intent is not to appropriate concepts from architecture, media studies, or philosophy in order to apply them to the pedagogical innovations for the sole purpose of critique or evaluation. Rather, my hope is that any elucidation I offer here might be 'instrumental, performed as a way of getting somewhere else on the way to alternative understandings of pedagogy' (de Bolla, 2001, p. 100).

(Ellsworth, 2005, pp. 12-13)

Ellsworth explores pedagogical phenomena in places that are not usually considered educational. She does so for the sake of pushing understandings of pedagogy into anomalous terrain – out of the dominating centres of educational thought and action (Ellsworth, 2005, pp. 9-11).

My aim with the chapter is to explore the pedagogical processes in Naturkraft with inspiration from Ellsworth's philosophical and aesthetics-oriented perspective. I do this to understand what the Naturkraft park does that is more and other than conveying pieces of scientific knowledge. This interest lies in continuation of the analysis in the previous chapter, in which the educational *content* of the park showed to be both more complex and other than scientific

facts concerning the West Coast. Rather, the West Coast in Naturkraft emerged as an Anthropocene place, suspended between multiple perspectives. This chapter, then, explores part of the pedagogical process that the Naturkraft park engages its guests in. This exploration involves considering the ways in which Naturkraft addresses its visitors and invites them to experience and contemplate issues of nature, environment, and sustainability.

In line with Ellsworth's methodology, the argument of this chapter is primarily of a philosophical nature. The argument rests on empirical insights in the form of field notes from observations in the park in action as well as interviews with the main architect and a group of park guides. The chapter also includes a few quotes from the artists' description of the art work *Homo Economicus* that is found inside the park (S. Flyvbjerg & Assenholt, n.d.). As such, to paraphrase Ellsworth, the argument is '[...] quite different from, say, an ethnography of various individual's reported and observed learning experiences' (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 5). Rather, I read a few empirical scenes from the Naturkraft park firstly through Ellsworth's theoretical considerations and subsequently through Tsing (2015) and Skott-Myhre and Tarulli (2008) to make the claim that the pedagogical experiences enacted in the Naturkraft park are experiences of being in-between culture and nature, adult and child. The initial step below is to introduce Ellsworth's analytical concept of *the pedagogical address*.

## Pedagogical Address

The pedagogical analyses that Ellsworth performs aims to open alternatives; alternative understandings of pedagogy, but also, I would like to add, alternative understandings of the pedagogical cases that animate her book. Despite shying away from the role of the critic and the role of the evaluator, Ellsworth does include thorough descriptions of a range of anomalous pedagogical places and the practices they contain. As such, Ellsworth's arguments pivot on descriptions of actual places and analyses of their pedagogical workings.

One of such places is the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C., to which Ellsworth dedicates a full chapter of analysis and discussion.

Here, she performs a case-sensitive instantiation of her more general analytical approach:

[...] we will look for the various qualities and design elements that seem to constitute the pedagogical force of each place of learning. We will try to find, in other words, those elements that seem designed specifically to ‘assemble with’ their visitors’, users’, and viewers’ *learning selves*, and we will watch these qualities and elements interact with, elaborate upon, and challenge each other.

(Ellsworth, 2005, p. 6)

The analytical gaze traces elements of the anomalous places’ designs that assemble with the visitors’ ‘learning selves’. Although this intention may sound abstract, the specific analyses of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum provide useful exemplification.

In the analysis, Ellsworth investigates what makes the *pedagogical address* of the museum as powerful as its reputation has it. The American critic, Leon Wieseltier, for instance, called the museum a ‘pedagogical masterpiece’ in his review following its public opening in 1993 (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 99; Wieseltier, 1993). Ellsworth takes this museum as a case and a ‘[...] rich context for studying key challenges and opportunities involved in teaching the Holocaust in particular, and in teaching about and across social and cultural difference in general’ (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 100). She goes about studying these challenges and opportunities by considering the way the permanent exhibition in the museum addresses its visitors.

Ellsworth’s idea of the *pedagogical address* rests on the assumption that learning is relational and contingent upon the context, or stronger even, deeply enmeshed with the context (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 103). The particular space of learning invites specific modes of engagement, which involves particular social and political points of engagement (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 103). The learning space positions visitors in a certain way in relation to the specific content. From this theoretical perspective, what is important in a learning context such as an exhibition is not simply the textual messages but also ‘[...] how the structure of

address solicits a certain reading from [the visitor]' (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 103). From this particular and implicit reading position, the visitor is offered entry into a constellation of meaning. Accordingly, the guiding analytical question for understanding how the exhibit works becomes 'who does this exhibit think you are?' (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 103). Phrased otherwise, this question emphasizes that '[...] to learn about the Holocaust in the terms set forth by the exhibit is to assume a relation within a system of meanings', and furthermore that '[assuming] a relation within a system of meanings is what permits the 'learner' to relate symbolically to other humans' (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 103). Any learning situation is an event of subjective emergence in parallel with an emergence of understanding.

As mentioned above, in this chapter, I will take inspiration from Ellsworth in reading the experiences of encountering the Naturkraft park with attention to its *pedagogical address*. I will centre on a selection of scenes, i.e., social and/or materially manifest empirical situations that exemplify the ways in which Naturkraft offers entry into the meaning constellations surrounding matters of nature and sustainability. I do this by asking *who Naturkraft thinks its visitors are*, and I do this by considering the experience of Naturkraft between its singular designs and installations and the sum of its parts.

## A Natural-Cultural, Anomalous Place of Learning

When experienced from a distance, the Naturkraft park makes a remarkable impression on arriving visitors. Viewed from the main road, the park is set in the middle of a panorama of green fields, crisscrossed by the Von Creek with the Ringkøbing Fiord on the horizon and the town of Ringkøbing to the far left. The alien-looking main building reflects the daylight in its futuristic plastic-wrapped construction. Together with the grassy, circular rampart, it makes a sculptural scene of the entire landscape.

However, the bare name of the place – *Naturkraft*, or *Force of Nature* in translation – seems in contrast with its physical appearance. Nature, in the vernacular, romantic sense as something wild and untouched existing outside of



Illustration 14: Naturkraft in late summer. Photo by Bjørn Ellermand, Naturkraft

culture is everything that the Naturkraft park is not (Schnack, 2001). The park is thoroughly designed. A cultural product. As the main architect behind Naturkraft exclaimed in our interview:

The framework, as such, is rather generic. It's a circle. But again, I like the way it reflects – you know, it's about all of this 'human in nature' in a sense, and about the Anthropocene: that we influence, we design, we change Earth. The project in itself illustrates this, which is why I like this tight, geometrical shape. You know, it's the will of the human that prevails here.

(Interview with architect, September 2021)

As such, the overall architectural design of the circular park instantiates a break with wild nature. The pure geometrical shape underscores the artificiality of the park. Another example is the use of eight local eco-systemic types or *biotopes* as the basic curatorial concept for the area, encircled by the rampart. As mentioned in chapter 5 (see page 109 above), part of the park is a local bio-collage of meadow, dune, pine forest, oak thicket, moor, swamp, forest garden, and the anachronistic carbon forest. Yet, the way these biotopes are assembled here, right next to each other, still neatly separated in a place no bigger than 10 soccer fields, is highly artificial. As mentioned, establishing the biotopes in the park even involved *geo-designing* the underground (SLA, 2017). Heath, for instance, required a much sandier soil than oak thicket. In essence, biotopical conditions for particular kinds of life that develop in 'nature' over millennia were re-created by a few excavators in Naturkraft over a couple of months.

Still, neither is Naturkraft simply a *representation* of the West Jutlandian landscape. Naturkraft is part of that landscape. In fact, the view of the artificial Naturkraft blending awkwardly into the surrounding fields is more like most Danish nature-vistas than we care to think about. Denmark is among the most intensely cultivated countries on Earth (Møller, 2017). It is difficult to distinguish 'natural' from 'cultural' in the Danish natural environment in any case. From this perspective, Naturkraft is no innocent media simply illustrating the workings of a world more *real* or *pristine* outside of the circular rampart. Naturkraft is of the



world and as much a piece of contemporary, Danish nature as it is a piece of culture.

Yet, Naturkraft does stand out and, following the argument in chapter 4, intentionally so. The high-rising rampart appears alien. The park is a spectacle. From one perspective, this circumstance speaks of the commercial intentions with the park. Attention is key to attracting visitors. Yet, from a pedagogical angle, this circumstance contributes to the overall pedagogical address of the park. It is a park communicating about a particular place, the Danish West Coast, *from* that particular place, while at the same time at a conceptual distance. Coming to Naturkraft is different than exploring the nearby meadows of Skjern or the sand dunes of Hvide Sande in the company of a guide or ranger. Furthermore, Naturkraft is not simply a scaled-down version of a region's types of nature. I would contend that it does something other than what you encounter or experience elsewhere; that it is an anomalous place of learning, which embodies an invitation to thinking differently about nature and sustainability.

This thematic yet anomalous invitation imposes itself on the visitors to the Naturkraft park immediately upon their arrival. On the threshold of the main park, three particularly noteworthy artifacts set the scene: a park map, a bug hotel, and a bronze sculpture. At first sight, the bug hotel seems oddly out of place (see illustration below). Although the colours of the recycled, wooden pallets in its construction blend perfectly with the gravel tracks and other nearby woodworks, there is a disturbing randomness to the artifact. It is as if the bug hotel produces a rupture in the sculptural impression of the park as seen from afar. This is neither wild-growing nature nor a carefully manufactured, geometrical statement.

As such, the bug hotel contrasts with the highly stylized park map next to it. Whereas the park map depicts an idealized, abstracted illustration of what the park has to offer, the bug hotel ostensibly tells another story. In opposition to the evidently well-considered design of the park map, the bug hotel appears ramshackle and random, constructed from diverse materials at hand. This immediate opposition of a conceptual mode of expression, reminiscent of modern amusement parks and museums, to that of a loosely assembled artifact, mostly

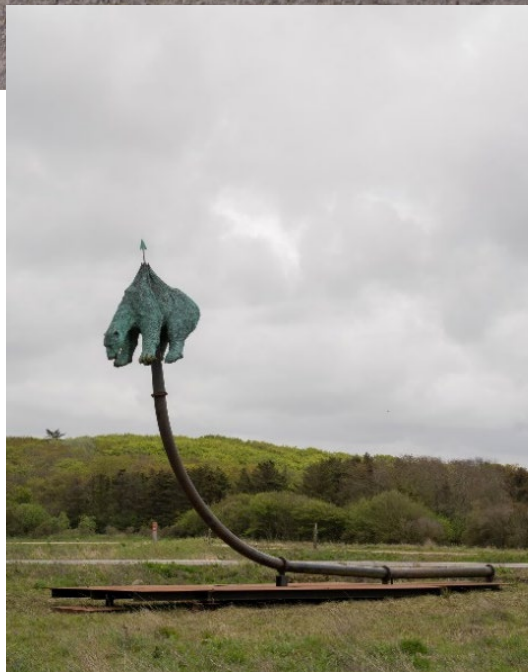


Illustration 15, above: Bug hotel and park map by the Naturkraft entrance. Photo by the author. Illustration 16, below: Unbearable by Jens Galschiøt located outside the Naturkraft entrance. Photo by Bjørn Ellermand, Naturkraft

resembling a day's work at a scouts' summer camp, raises a question. What do these two objects tell? It is a paradoxical question of how to balance structure with mess. The neatly designed, abstracted map in close relation to the apparently untidy and very concrete pallet-heap appears almost an oxymoron: a semiotic relation of a paradoxical kind that gains its force of address from the close proximity of its two contradictory expressions (Albeck, 2006/1939, p. 79). At the same time, the two objects imply two very different invitations. The map promises any human visitor a thought-out experience beyond the entrance. The bug hotel hardly addresses a human audience. A bug hotel is for bugs. The only invitation it offers humans seems of a moral kind: 'You could replicate this back home yourself and be a do-gooder for biodiversity'. This difference in invitation adds a practical dimension to the welcoming question: What can you expect from this place, and what is expected of you?

Another aspect adds to the opening question when you consider the sculpture *Unbearable* by Danish artist Jens Galschiøt (see illustration above). The sculpture consists of a 20-metre piece of oil-drilling pipe, cast in bronze, bent in the shape of an exponentially increasing graph. It rises to an impressive six metres. The arrow-shaped top of the graph impales a life-size polar bear. Next to the work itself is a poster display. The display exhibits posters and brochures from COP21 and COP23, at which Galschiøt exhibited the sculpture. In the context of the COPs,<sup>26</sup> *Unbearable* almost speaks for itself: anthropogenic pollution is spinning exponentially out of control with fatal consequences for even the remotest forms of life on Earth. It is impossible to miss the monumental moral outcry in Galschiøt's work. Furthermore, the presence of the sculpture and its historicity draw lines to macropolitical negotiations on climate change prevention, indicating the political complexity and – some would add – political inertia of the issue.

When considered in light of this arrival scene, what is at stake in Naturkraft is the staging of environmental issues of local as well as global scale. Global

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26 COP is an abbreviation for Conference of the Parties. COP is the "supreme decision-making body of the [United Nations Framework] Convention [on Climate Change]", held annually since 1995 (United Nations Climate Change, 2023).

political concerns for polar bears and CO2 emissions rub against small-scale do-it-yourself solutions to the ill conditions of local biodiversity. Together, the three objects – the park map, the bug hotel, and *Unbearable* – voice a complex question for arriving visitors: How do you engage in the entertaining experiences advertised in this colourful map while keeping in mind global as well as local implications of an accelerating biodiversity crisis? It is a question of worrisome, moral concern at the threshold of a recreational family outing.

## Making Sense of a Dead Shark

Naturkraft developed as a project in the Danish tourism industry. Many of the people involved came with experience from other Danish and international tourist attractions: museums, theme parks, zoos, and aquaria. From an attraction design perspective, a typical rule of thumb is to establish one particular content element that can act as the main attraction of the site. This is like the shark in an aquarium; the ‘installation to end all installations’, as the main architect joked in our interview (interview, September 2021). Yet, as the team of architects behind Naturkraft presented their final visualizations, one of the steering group members exclaimed: ‘You killed the shark!’

... and she meant it in a very positive way, ‘cause what she said was, well, with this kind of totality, then she no longer feels the need for some kind of super installation to be the reason-to-go. In fact, now the entire park has become a kind of reason-to-go.

(Interview with architect, September 2021)

The dead shark, hence, stands as a metaphor for a heterogeneous experience,<sup>27</sup> a totality consisting of smaller parts. In the above example, the shark featured

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27 The idea of the dead shark also features in the first concept catalogue from 2009, which the main architect did not participate in writing. In effect, I interpret the steering group member’s statement as a recognition of the way, these later architectural designs materialize one of the fundamental ideas in the original concept.

in marketing discussions on how to attract visitors, but the architect also insisted on heterogeneity as key to the overall pedagogical address of the place:

Typically, single installations are not how I think about it. [...] You know, it's the juxtaposition of things that somehow makes [Naturkraft] a bit more ... It's not that easy to grasp. And it could be an expression of it being schizophrenic and not really knowing what it is itself. But it could also simply be that it is a bit more strange and thus, you know, provokes curiosity.

(Interview with architect, September 2021)

When you read this excerpt side by side with Ellsworth and Deleuze, what the architect describes is the workings of an *assemblage* (e.g. Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, pp. 1-27; Ellsworth, 2005, pp. 1-13). I touched upon this Deleuzian key-concept in an earlier chapter, but for the sake of the aesthetics concerned argument in the current chapter, I find the descriptions by American anthropologist Anna Tsing an appropriate reiteration. Tsing, in essence, has a musical take on the concept. She writes:

The qualifier 'polyphonic' may help explain my variant [of the assemblage]. Polyphony is music in which autonomous melodies intertwine. In Western music, the madrigal and the fugue are examples of polyphony. These forms seem archaic and strange to many modern listeners because they were superseded by music in which a unified rhythm and melody holds the composition together [...]: we are used to hearing music with a single perspective. When I first learned polyphony, it was a revelation in listening; I was forced to pick out separate, simultaneous melodies *and* to listen for the moments of harmony and dissonance they created together. This kind of noticing is just what is needed to appreciate the multiple temporal rhythms and trajectories of the assemblage.

(Tsing, 2015, pp. 23-24)

The assemblage as *polyphony* involves attention to qualities that emerge from intersecting rhythms and lines of melodic movement within a totality. It involves attention to the quality of relations between singularities. Something

happens in-between the singular melodic lines of the fugue, or – in the case of Naturkraft – in-between the lines of address that emanate from singular designs or installations. As such, Naturkraft as a *dead shark* puts a specific demand on the visitor through its strange or polyphonic address. It invites a particular kind of noticing by which, for instance, the three artifacts at the entrance invite sensemaking in polyphony: that is, noticing with attention to ‘moments of harmony and dissonance’, as Tsing puts it. In the following, I expand on the description of this address and its pedagogical workings from inside the Naturkraft rampart.

## A Park of Strange Sensations

The main park in Naturkraft is a space furnished with playground objects, botanical specimens, explicatory texts, large mechanic installations, and works of art. Steel slides and aerial rope slides, a balance post track and a rope web across a small water stream are scattered about among trees and bushes, grasses and sand dunes, and other local landscape features. Around the park, texts in tall displays tell of the eight different local biotopes that have been recreated here. Smaller displays in the thickets name the many different local botanical specimens and on the elevated rampart, signs point beyond the park to other tourist sites in the surrounding landscape. In the middle of the circular park is a 3 x 3 x 7-metre metallic box: a wind machine. At uneven intervals, the box gives off bursts of high-pitched noise as curious visitors activate the canned storm. From another side of the park, screaming and yelling interfere with the raging winds, as other daring guests roll down the rampart in one of the big, transparent *Zorbing Balls*. Meanwhile, a toddler is treading barefoot on the cool, metallic walkway across the exhibit-building roof. A family flies kites.

Following the architect, the Naturkraft park gives a strange impression. By this, he seems to imply that the park does not lend itself to any straightforward interpretations. It is not easy to determine any central messages in polyphonies. Texts in the park do communicate names of local fauna and give short descriptions of how species have coevolved over time under the local geological and



Illustration 17, above left: Wind-machine in Naturkraft. Illustration 18, above right: Children playing on the balance posts track. Illustration 19, below: Zorbing Ball in action in Naturkraft. All photos by Bjørn Ellermand, Naturkraft

biological conditions. Other texts do name traces of culture in the surrounding landscape. However, judging by their immediate context, these messages are hardly the complete story. *Naturkraft* is not simply a matter of seeing the biology and geography of a specific Danish region. Rather, from the perspective of the park as a whole, the diverse totality acts to divert any singular understandings.

The installation *Homo Economicus* is emblematic of this kind of address. Located on one of the steep rampart sides, you see it as three wooden cylinders, uniform in appearance. Each cylinder is made from six sections that can be turned separately on a central axis (see illustration 20 below). Each section is covered in words printed on each of their wooden planks, placed next to each other all the way around the drum. Together, the six sections form sentences that can be manipulated word by word, by turning the individual sections. To accommodate different guests, one cylinder is in Danish, one in English, and the third in German. During fieldwork in the park, I repeatedly observed children playfully turning the sections, some gently, some violently, thereby spinning all sorts of statements: ‘Lilly says: | small plants | can | benefit from | humans | with confidence’ and ‘In the end| some people | can learn to | fight | nature | as a joke’, to name a few.

The cylinders, or *word machines* as the park map popularly labels them, invite passersby to participate in a textual play on meaning. Following the artists’ descriptions, it is a play on the power relations between humans and nature:

The sentences in the machine are devised to play on the roles of subjects and objects. Therefore, a single turn of the cylinders can upend the power relations between human and nature. [...] Through a play with words, the machine stages our view of nature, and with the hand on the drum, the human scope of action becomes literal: we can fundamentally change things by just the smallest effort.

(S. Flyvbjerg & Assenholt, n.d.)

By a turn of the drum, visitors can change the statements, thereby symbolically changing the understanding of any taken for granted relation between humans





Illustration 20: Homo Economicus by Flyvbjerg-Assenholt in Naturkraft.  
Photo by Bjørn Ellermand, Naturkraft

and nature. Furthermore, by its clever grammar, the machine also illustrates the delicate and sensitive relation between singularity and totality. One turn of a singular section shatters and redefines the whole.

At first glance, this work of art performs a specific moral address grounded in a specific intention by the artists and designers of Naturkraft. The artists phrase it as follows:

The title, *Homo Economicus*, signals an individualist view of the human, in which the claim is that the rational human is free to define its own interests and then calculate the most beneficial cause of actions. On the word machines, the human is positioned against plants, senses and concepts from nature. The question is what statement of nature the human decides on. It is in the hands of the audience.

(S. Flyvbjerg & Assenholt, n.d.)

Judging by the title, the work addresses the audience as rational, liberated actors, free to determine the common cause of action for the natural and human world. It positions the audience in the role of a human set against a natural world to which the audience is rationally superior. They are the masters of words. Yet, considering the mostly nonsense statements that come out of the playful manipulations, this address is thick with irony. You might produce ‘sincere’ sentences, but any next passerby would upend the meaning, thereby putting a stick in the wheel of your apparent freedom of action. As such, the address has less to do with understanding any predetermined views of the human and more to do with what the concept of ‘human’ entails and what role in nature this species plays in the first place ... or ‘other place’, more precisely, as somewhere outside of the spinning cylinders’ collapsing power of definition.

Furthermore, and in line with the fate of every other text in the park, the material context for the cylinders occasionally makes something completely different of the work. Often, when passing by the installation, I would see children, too young to read, fiercely spinning the drums. Side by side, two or three or four boys and girls beat the machine to make the wheels spin faster. Once in a while a sentence came to rest. I’d hear a child shout to their parents, ‘Wat does

it say?', giggle at their incomprehensible reply, and immediately spin the machine again. It was as if the sheer tactility of the wooden device and its strange, nonsense sentences produced a pleasurable sensation.

## Sensational Pedagogies

Ellsworth approaches the analyses of her *anomalous places of learning* with a specific theoretical curiosity. Drawing on a compilation of scholars, whom she labels 'new pragmatists', she investigates how particular places' qualities and elements constitute a ...

... pedagogical force [that] invites sensations of being somewhere in between thinking and feeling, of being in motion through the space and time between knowing and not knowing, in the space and time of learning as a lived experience with an open, unforeseeable future.

(Ellsworth, 2005, p. 17)

Speaking of pedagogy in terms of sensations is, following Ellsworth, speaking of pedagogy and learning in terms of material experience and, in particular, speaking of pedagogy as a bodily matter (Ellsworth, 2005, pp. 22-24). A 'body' here, however, is not something we *have*. Rather, a body is understood as a 'complex set of intersecting forces' (Kennedy, 2003, p. 29 as cited in Ellsworth, 2005, p. 25). Sensations, then, are neither experiences of perception nor cognition, but '[...] events of the body. They are something we do not merely observe; we live through them' (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 25). As such, these sensations are both *pre-linguistic* and *presubjective* (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 26). They pre-exist the linguistic sense we make from them, and constitute the forces out of which our subjectivities emerge. In other words, encountering or experiencing such sensations is encountering the conditions for thinking of all kinds (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 27). Pedagogy as sensation construction '[...] becomes a force for thinking *as experimentation*' (Ellsworth, 2005). Sensational pedagogies, then, position any involved human subject in a time and space between knowing and unknowing,

radically open to thinking differently, yet without any guarantees of the outcomes (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 27).

The descriptions of the experiences in the park that the main architect gave in our interview, take on a specific theoretical colour when read through Ellsworth's considerations:

'Cause there is a lot in this place that is about, some way or another, that you can have room for interpretation. This also has a little to do with play [...]. And then it's difficult for those who made the playground to control what people take with them when they leave. And there is a lot more that is open to interpretation. And hence, it's more difficult to determine the quality of the learning space and so on. However, there is such an almost artistic vision to it that you don't have to know or control everything about what people do, and neither do you understand or know everything they gain from doing it. [...] It doesn't matter that things are not univocal.

(Interview with architect, September 2021)

Viewed as a 'playground', Naturkraft addresses its visitors ambiguously and open-endedly. It positions visitors as people willing to playfully experiment with how to make sense of e.g., their relation to the natural world. At the same time, in this address, the park maintains the potential for multiple possible understandings. Despite the many intentions that everybody involved invested in the designs, no one controls the outcomes – neither in terms of experience nor in terms of understanding. Most importantly, when considered as a playground, installations such as rope slides and *Zorbing Balls* become other than fanciful devices to attract entertainment-desiring tourists. Elements such as these are key to the overall pedagogical address of the park. In these, visitors are addressed foremostly as bodies, capable of sensorily experiencing their surroundings and capable of making sense in other registers than the purely linguistic-conceptual.

When read through Ellsworth's perspective, what happens in the bodily play on slides and when rolling downhill inside a large, inflatable ball is an *up-ending of habits*. The sensational experience of giving yourself over to the force



Illustration 21: Rope web in Naturkraft. Photo by Bjørn Ellermand, Naturkraft

of gravity temporarily suspends habitual patterns of movement. Furthermore, the experience also suspends a cultural part of your being in world. Following Ellsworth's reference to Brian Massumi, habit ...

... resides not only in the conscious and unconscious sense of self. It also 'resides in the flesh. Some say in matter. As acquired, it can be said to be 'cultural'. As automatic and material, it can pass for 'natural' (Massumi, 2002, p. 11).

(Ellsworth, 2005, p. 32)<sup>28</sup>

Put differently, there is both a psychological and a bodily-material aspect to habits. Bodily play also involves socio-cultural dimensions. As an illustration from the Naturkraft park, a suspension of such embodied cultural habits occurs whenever an adult body finds its way onto the rope web (see illustration 21 above). Often, the adult follows on the heels of a child that moves effortlessly across the jumpy web. The children apparently 'know the ropes', so to speak. A quick look in the eyes of the shivering adults, on the other hand, reveals how unaccustomed most grown-up bodies are to a place like this. Legs quiver. Perplexed hands fly about, reaching for support of any kind. Underneath their feet runs the stream of water with the promise of wet shoes for those who do not get a grip. Some eyes fill with fright, some with a sudden strike of focus. Yet soon, everybody laughs.

Though innocent as it may seem, the rope web holds a potential for disruptive sensations. In a sense, any adult that wobbles across the web encounters the cultural limits of their own body. Being a grown-up body in a Western culture like Denmark's does not require the ability to balance on a rope web. This is foreign territory, sensorially speaking. Here, the adult body encounters a way of being in the world that it does not usually consider 'me'. As such, as the adult treads onto the rope web, they unknowingly enter what Ellsworth, with reference to Massumi, terms a *third zone*:

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28 You could make a similar conceptualization of habit via the Bourdieusian idea of *habitus*. See for instance Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992).

[...] that is the space of relationship between me and not me. This third zone is opened up when the body that I am is, in Massumi's words, 'in a dissolve: out of what it is just ceasing to be [and] into what it will already have become by the time it registers that something has happened' (Massumi, 2002, p. 200).

(Ellsworth, 2005, p. 32)

Moving onto the rope web is entering *transition*. On the web, the adult body occupies a space of being a self-out-of-self, so to speak. Here, through the bodily sensation of being outside habits, the self ...

... is in the immanent relation that is change itself. It is 'simultaneous and consubstantial' with the 'outside', with others, or with events. The self in transition is participating in the 'unfounded and unmediated in-between of becoming' (Massumi, 2002, p. 71).

(Ellsworth, 2005, p. 34)

In other words: putting an adult body on the rope web in *Naturkraft* is putting that body in a space of transition. Here, the adult, unaccustomed to the movements of the web, is hampered in their navigation of the world. As such, the embodied self experiences being in a foreign body in relation to a foreign self. This sensation is the experience of being outside of habits, outside of knowing oneself, and, thus, encountering *change*. It is a space of transitioning into something else, yet without knowing the direction. It is a self in becoming.

## Becoming-Child

In her general discussion of the anomalous places of learning, Ellsworth describes the common *pedagogical strategy* of the different cases in her book:

Their 'pedagogical strategy' is not to represent, construct, or incarnate a life world but rather to present us with 'strange constructs' that we can 'inhabit only through transmutation and or self-experimentation, or from

which we emerge refreshed as if endowed with a new optic or nervous system (Rajchman, 2000, p. 135).

(Ellsworth, 2005, pp. 34-35)

Mirroring the descriptions by the Naturkraft main architect above, Ellsworth considers the anomalous places as *strange constructs*. They neither represent nor incarnate versions of the world, but rather invite self-experimentation. In effect, anomalous places of learning are places with the capacity to produce in the visitor a new sense of being in the world or a new mode of experiencing.

In the case of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, what is produced through the museum's pedagogical address is a '[...] new type of hero' (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 114). It is a moral subject that takes on responsibility by insisting on not knowing the event of the Holocaust in its totality. It is a kind of hero that refuses to identify with the *heroic as mastery*, Ellsworth writes (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 114). Rather, this kind of hero remains radically open to '[...] the contingency of knowledge and belief even in the face of Auschwitz' (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 114). Visitors to the museum experience an address that does not cast them in the role of either victim or perpetrator. The museum refuses to teach any 'correct' responses to these horrific historical events. Rather, responsibility for the events remain an open question: 'Its structure of address implicates visitors in the inescapable task of producing an interminable response' (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 114). Answering to the Holocaust remains a never-ending obligation for everyone.

Reading Naturkraft alongside Ellsworth's analysis of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum poses the question of what position the Naturkraft address offers its visitors. Judging by the analyses in previous sections, the address in Naturkraft is also open-ended. It too addresses the visitors as persons neither-nor. What is at stake here are considerations of nature-human relations as well as body-mind relations. Nature is other than a realm outside of culture. Being human is simultaneously natural and cultural and, in extension, knowing nature implies knowing oneself. As such, Naturkraft addresses its visitors as someone in-between culture and nature. But moreover, Naturkraft also addresses its visitors as persons in a state of being in-between *child* and *adult*.



This address plays out when, for instance, visitors engage with the serious grammar of the word-machine. Here, any sincere attempts at a controlled meaning-production easily collapse, as the pleasurable bodily sensation of spinning the drum takes over. The address also plays out when adults lose control of their bodies on the rope web, while following their children's effortless movements. And it plays out when visitors of all ages stray off the designated tracks in the park, trample through sand dunes or oak thickets, and end up with dirty clothes. As one of the park guides that I interviewed enthusiastically explained:

I often try to dismantle this adult-stereotype that 'you are not allowed to have fun' ... to dismantle it and say, 'Listen, it's okay that you go race on the rope slide or the pull-ferries.' You know, [...] just to break down that thing, and also to have them relax. Then I actually think we have come quite far. Sure, we have to be there as the guides to make the good experience, but the guests have to be open-minded too – and maybe let go of some of the ties they are used to from the job. It's okay to get dirtied, and it's okay if the kids end up with filthy clothes. You know, the best thing is when you meet kids around the park that just run around in their raincoats and gumboots and just ... a diaper. That's the best thing. You can just tell they're excited. And their parents think, 'No worries, they will dry again.' That they are not back in their everyday lives. [...] And I also think that's an advantage of being in a tourist area. People come here when they're on vacation. Then they can let go, [...] and find their inner child.

(Interview with park guides, August 2021)

Following the park guide, answering to the Naturkraft address is to 'let go' of adult-stereotypes, everyday lives, tidiness, and narrow-mindedness. It is a question of finding one's 'inner child'. As such, and following the Canadian child and youth scholars, Hans Skott-Myhre and Donato Tarulli, the state of the Naturkraft address can be understood as a state of *becoming-child* (Skott-Myhre & Tarulli, 2008, p. 78). Their definition goes as follows:

In short, becoming-child has to do with the creation of new ways of being. It is for both adult and child a movement of transformation in which the molar identities of 'adult' and 'child' are abandoned in the interest of the infinite variation associated with the creative capacity to act.

(Skott-Myhre & Tarulli, 2008, p. 78)

*Becoming-child* is a matter of creating 'new ways of being' in-between adult and child identities. By this, Skott-Myhre and Tarulli do not imply the creation of other age-specific categories such as *adolescence* or *teenagers*. Rather, in line with Ellsworth and Deleuze, they conceptualize *becoming* as an aimless dynamism in-between identities:

[...] the power of becoming does not hinge on the actualization of an identity – on the passage into being in which one becomes *something* – but rather inheres in the force of change and movement itself, in the raw capacity to affect and be affected. Here, becoming has no object other than difference itself.

(Skott-Myhre & Tarulli, 2008, p. 77)

The power of the Deleuzian becoming is change and movement itself. As such, it is in line with my previous descriptions of the workings of the sensational pedagogies in *Naturkraft*. The specificity of the *becoming-child*, then, consists in '[...] a resistance to that which pretends to fix child and adult as molar entities' (Skott-Myhre & Tarulli, 2008, p. 78). What is at stake are the *molar* relations between children and adults.

By *molar identities*, Skott-Myhre and Tarulli draw on the Deleuzian distinction between *molar* and *molecular* relations (May, 2005; Skott-Myhre & Tarulli, 2008, p. 75). Molarity operates by fixating identities and creating boundaries through the production of *either/or*. A molar relation is the (temporarily) stable state of fluctuating matter and meaning in (temporarily) solidified *territories* (May, 2005, pp. 134-139). Man/woman, human/animal, adult/child; such binary pairs are the fundamental building blocks of common sense (Skott-Myhre & Tarulli, 2008, p. 81). They undergird the status quo and support the language and actions of dominant regimes of power (Skott-Myhre & Tarulli, 2008, p. 81).

*Molecularity*, on the other hand, operates by destabilizing molar binaries through forming relations beyond *either/or*. The molecular operates as a *deteritorializing* force that opens up actions and sensemaking to alternative directions and definitions (Skott-Myhre & Tarulli, 2008, p. 75; 78). Understood as an expression of the molecular force of becoming-child, Naturkraft thus contains works capable of upending stable ideas of binary adult/child identities ‘in the interest of the infinite variation associated with the creative capacity to act’ (see quote above).

An important by-note is that becoming-child is not a matter of adults acting *childishly* nor *child-like*, and neither is becoming-child an inherent capacity in all children. Quoting the Chinese-French sociologist, Liane Mozère, Skott-Myhre and Tarulli describe how children too ...

... have to invent and create the ways and means to hear, perceive and make use of the molecular forces that enable them to have access to ‘becoming-child’. All children are specially skilled to do this because they are not yet totally corseted in stereotyped thinking or acting. But being assigned to the closed worlds of family and school (or education more generally), children are prevented the opportunity to explore, eventually to get lost in other worlds, to live other experiences, although they usually manage to find breaches and hidden paths [(Mozère, 2002, p. 6)].

(Skott-Myhre & Tarulli, 2008)

Children and adults alike have to ‘learn’ to access the *zone of possibility* that is becoming-child (Bohlmann, 2019, p. 184). Children are disposed to do so, yet in constant risk of succumbing to ‘stereotyped thinking or acting’, as Mozère warns. Following this theoretical perspective, social institutions such as family and education impose rigid structures upon children that it takes a considerable force of creativity to breach and escape – for children and even more so for the adults, who have lived the molar *common sense* for much longer.

## Anomalous Pedagogic Sensations of Becoming Sustainable

I began this chapter with an excerpt from my fieldnotes that I didn't comment upon. It describes a meeting in Naturkraft in the spring of 2020, a few months prior to the grand opening. In the excerpt, the park manager reiterated a scene from the park, in which he saw the otherwise composed chef burst out in uncontrolled solitary dancing on the rampart. Read in its immediate context, the park manager obviously meant the anecdote as a motivational input to a challenged organization. Yet, as I have shown over the course of the chapter, bursts of the uncontrolled – in thought as well as behaviour – are key to the pedagogical working of Naturkraft.

Through its strange compilation of e.g., plants, playground equipment, artworks, and architectural geometry, Naturkraft makes a sensational impression on its guests. The park invites the guests to engage in a bodily-experimental sense-making of the human relation to the surrounding environment. This approach involves an upending of habits and a letting go of narrow-minded ways of thinking and behaving. In particular, this pedagogical address works by establishing a *third zone* between nature and culture as well as between child and adult identities. It is a zone in which visitors of all ages are offered '[...] the opportunity to explore, eventually to get lost in other worlds, to live other experiences', as Mozère vividly puts it in the quote above. Here, the park setup urges visitors to explore 'nature' from a position neither outside nor inside. Simultaneously, park guides and artistic installations urge a letting go of everyday identities and adult-stereotypes and to instead engage in the molecular force of becoming-child. This is unlike a conventional cast of molar family identities. It is unlike formal educational conceptions of getting to know nature through knowledge-ready-made. As such, Naturkraft appears an anomalous place of learning that addresses its visitors as someone in-between children and adults, in-between nature and culture, and open to negotiating such relations without demanding finite answers.

From a sustainability education perspective, this analysis depicts the Naturkraft park as a materialized example of how to pedagogically enact some

prevalent theoretical concerns put forth in the Anthropocene oriented ESE-literature. In particular, a range of scholars point out *anthropocentrism* as a core element in the challenges that we as a species are currently facing (Lysgaard & Bengtsson, 2022; Malone & Truong, 2017; Paulsen, 2022). We humans are too used to thinking of ourselves in the centre; too used to thinking ourselves the privileged species, set apart from our surrounding environment and with the right to exploit (Malone & Truong, 2017). What many of these scholars point to is that such long-held cultural understandings need *re-thinking* or *restorying* (Malone & Truong, 2017; McKenzie et al., 2009). Norms and dogmatic narratives need be upended and reconsidered in light of the current planetary state if we are to entertain any hopes for a sustainable future (Malone & Truong, 2017).

In Naturkraft, this process can be said to start in bodily sensations and aesthetic experiences of encountering the strange. Borrowing a term from semiotics, what Naturkraft does can be understood as enacting a pedagogy of *defamiliarization* – ‘to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar’, as Gough and Adsitt-Morris propose (N. Gough & Adsitt-Morris, 2020). Prompting guests’ becoming-nature and becoming-child is not a matter of having them actually become nature or child. Rather, the experiences hold the potentials for brief changes in perspective; small ruptures in guests’ everyday ways of being. The experiences hold the potentials of other ways of relating to, and understanding, the surrounding more-than-human world and one’s own body. Defamiliarization, as Gough and Adsitt-Morris write, provides ‘[...] an opportunity for improving our understanding of [something] through the removal of taken-for-granted assumptions’ (N. Gough & Adsitt-Morris, 2020, p. 1498). In its designs and activities, Naturkraft can be said to suspend taken-for-granted assumptions about what ‘nature’ is and what a human is, thereby opening spaces for alternative ways ahead.

If, as I quoted from Hamm & Muttagi in my introduction chapter, sustainability is about ‘[...] the capacity of human society to enact permanent reform in order to safeguard the delicate balance between humans and their natural life-support system’ (Hamm & Muttagi, 2001, p. 2), then Naturkraft can be said to

give form to experiential sides of sustainability. In the becomings that occur in guests' encountering the park, Naturkraft stages questions about what it means to do and be different; what it means to 'enact permanent reform' on a human experiential level. As such, the becomings in Naturkraft could be considered elements of what a *becoming-sustainable* is like: a permanent reform, not only of our societal structures but, as importantly, of our human ways of being in the world – in relation to other-than-human beings, more-than-natural places, and ourselves and bodies.

As such, the Naturkraft park can be considered a place with a sustainability-relevant pedagogical potential that emerges as an effect of the socio-ecological-material assemblage of *inter alia* the park, its installations, and its guests. This equation, however, omits an element that, during fieldwork, I saw also had great importance in the pedagogical workings of Naturkraft: the employees and others that play host to the Naturkraft park and project. So, where this chapter set out with an interest in the guests' perspective, the following chapter pans the view to the hosts.



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# A Host of Hosts

It is the end of October 2020. Naturkraft is in its first low season. Very low, in fact. Today only 21 visitors paid entry. Except for a few part-time employees, the entire organization has gathered in the largest area of the administrative quarters. Everybody, myself included, wears red shirts; the Naturkraft uniform. Chairs have been arranged in advance to uphold almost proper social distancing. Covid-19 looms. Most people take a seat. Some remain standing. Hesitantly. Up front, a screen shows the title page of a slide-deck. 'Strategic Development' it reads. Next to the screen, the park manager stands together with three men: the main architect, the content designer, and the communication designer. Together, these three have been key in designing Naturkraft. The park manager informs us that: 'Their ideas make up the foundation of Naturkraft'. The park manager has summoned them today to provide, as he says, 'a retrospect as well as a prospective view on the strategic development process that is currently going on'.

The park manager leaves the stage to the three designers. Each of them then briefly introduces himself. In a jovial address to the employees, the architect starts out by saying: 'It's really interesting being here again, now that we've handed over this gigantic machine to people like you'. On this note, the three present their individual take on the original ideas for Naturkraft, respectively in terms of the architectural designs, the conceptual core story, and the communicative brand.

(Fieldnotes, October 2020)



The field note excerpt above describes a situation in the early days of operation in the Naturkraft organization. The whole organization assembles to discuss *strategic development*. Three designers, each representing their different aspect of the conceptual ideas in the Naturkraft project, have been invited to give their input to this development process. They present the initial project intentions to inform the project's future enactment in the organization.

From the perspective of this dissertation, the situation marks a turning point for the analysis. Where the previous three analytical chapters have focused on intentions, materializations and aesthetical workings of the Naturkraft project and park, this chapter centres on those, who are handed the task of running the park on an everyday basis. This chapter explores the 'people like you', that the architect addresses. Not as individuals, though. Rather, the overarching analytical interest lies in the organizational processes of developing *identity* as hosts of Naturkraft.

One of the reasons for pursuing this analytical interest is empirical. During my field work in Naturkraft, a recurring question in the organization concerned the identity of the park and project. As the intermediation manager (henceforth referred to as IM) explained when I interviewed her in the spring of 2021, commenting on the general public reception of the Naturkraft project after a strenuous first year in operation: '[Something] people blame us for right now is ... people can't figure out what we are. You know, they simply don't understand the message' (IM, March 2021, p. 58). Similarly, half a year later, another person in the management team, the commercial manager (referred to as CM), also diagnosed problems of identity in the organization:

To be perfectly frank, we've never really landed. We haven't really found our feet yet. And it might seem a bit silly that we've been here for one and a half years and we're still this shaky. But when our surroundings are constantly changing ... and every time they change it is of consequence to us [...] then I can't help thinking, 'well how the heck are we to figure out where to find those feet when [new obstacles keep showing up]'. [...] So, I

still think, that's where we are at. You know, we are still kind of ... trying to figure out who we are.

(CM, September 2021, p. 237)

The recurring question hence concerns *who* and *what we, in Naturkraft, are*. Phrased differently, it is a question about 'who guests meet, when encountering Naturkraft'. As the latter quote reveals, the CM blamed the precarious social and political external environment for the identity hardship. Rules and regulations rained down upon cultural institutions like Naturkraft during the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving little time for anything but basic organizational survival. The IM, on the other hand, blamed the organization-internal process of transforming conceptual ideas into enacted practice:

IM: So, there is something about what – the story we're telling ... you know, reality is coming up against all those images [that circulated during the period of development and fundraising]. And that's where I think we're – we're like really in a phase of transformation right now.

DANIEL: Like, from developing to running [the institution] or what?

IM: Absolutely! [...] So, we have to take it all the way down here, so that we can sense it. And we really need there to be connections between our materiality and what we say and what you experience and, you know. So now, we really need that common thread.

(IM, March 2021, p. 56)

The aim with this chapter, however, is not to place guilt or to investigate, what has 'gone wrong' in the early period after the public opening of Naturkraft. Those questions are better left for marketing scholars or organizational consultants. Rather, I want to use the identity struggles to explore what it involves enacting *the role of the host* in an anomalous place of learning like Naturkraft. The struggles lay bare competing understandings and conditions for what it might involve hosting experiences in the park. In a processual perspective, what is revealed in the struggles are different *becomings-host*; different assemblages producing each their trajectory for developing an *ideal host* of Naturkraft. As

such, I consider this chapter an extension of the previous chapter. Whereas the previous chapter explored the potentials for defamiliarizing, sensuous, and aesthetic experiences with the West Coast *through* the park, this chapter explores what it implies to host such pedagogical processes *inside* the park.

I have a few different reasons for choosing *host* as the central concept in this analysis. One is empirical, as ‘host’ is an emic term used by employees in Naturkraft when they discuss how to welcome and be around visitors. They also use other terms such as ‘guide’ and ‘mediator’, but as they consequently speak of visitors as ‘guests’, I find ‘host’ an appropriate collective term to correlate with *guests*. Another reason is educational. My conception of the *host* alludes to ideas of a *facilitator of pedagogical processes*. Yet, by insisting on using *hosts* instead of *facilitators*, I try to understand what it means to be a pedagogical agent in Naturkraft – i.e., outside of formal educational contexts. In educational discourse, the term ‘host’ is less value-laden than e.g., ‘facilitator’ or ‘teacher’ and, as such, more open to interpretation. Moreover, *host* connotes values and issues of *hospitality* which, to the best of my knowledge, are seldom highlighted in educational discussions. Thirdly, as I will elaborate in the final sections of the chapter, the term *host* also has biological and ecological connotations. Following Oxford Dictionary of English, the biological *host* is ‘[...] an animal or plant on or in which a parasite or commensal organism lives’ (oed.com ¶ host, n.2). Thinking about pedagogical processes in Naturkraft in terms of a *host* therefore conjures a range of connotations relevant to the specificity of the situation. Naturkraft may be a pedagogical situation, yet with non-formal education conditions and with specific attention to questions of sustainability and ecology.

Empirically, the chapter draws on three situations from my fieldwork along with six of the interviews that I conducted with people working in Naturkraft. I explore the processes of becoming-host in Naturkraft by suggesting that it makes sense to analytically distinguish between five different *host-assemblages*, respectively the *commercial*, *the schooling*, *the behaviourist*, *the anomalous*, and *the ecological host-assemblages*. This analysis of different becomings-host opens discussions of what it entails to make something pedagogical of a place like Naturkraft and ultimately, what it entails to play host to matters of

sustainability and to questions of the Anthropocene. Firstly, however, some words on the analytical setup.

## Analysing Becomings-Host

As in the previous chapters, the idea of *the assemblage* plays a central role in forming my analytical approach to questions of the Naturkraft-host. However, whereas the previous chapter, chapter 6, engaged the assemblage-concept in an analysis of aesthetical, pedagogical experiences with the Naturkraft park, in this chapter, I apply the concept with an eye to the organizational workings of Naturkraft (Mannion, 2019; Wise, 2011). I am not investigating enactments of particular experiences and experiential modes, but instead investigating the enactment of particular host-identity-directionalities, or *becomings*, in the Naturkraft socio-ecological practices.

In the DeleuzeGuattarian relational ontology there is practically no room for *identity* (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). *Multiplicities* rule and striving to pin down *identities* in any essentialist sense is considered a futile undertaking (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). Instead, questioning *identity* in line with the ontology would imply questioning a continuous becoming. In other words, when I investigate different *host-identities* in Naturkraft, I investigate the different conceptions of *a host* that are immanent to the processual enactments by the Naturkraft organization. I think of this as a question about, what kind of host it takes to make Naturkraft function in line with the intentions invested in this sociomaterial happening. *Host-identities*, then, becomes a configuration immanent to a given assemblage – here the Naturkraft organization, broadly conceived (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004).

Furthermore, I depart from the empirically informed assumption that the Naturkraft organization as a whole enacts *hosts* in a range of different ways. To substantiate that assumption and as mentioned above, I elaborate five different *sub-assemblages* within the larger Naturkraft practice, each of which enacts a particular kind of host-identity. This occurs while each sub-assemblage simultaneously and continuously engages in interactions and exchanges with

adjacent sub-assemblages. I therefore apply the term *host-assemblages* below as the general analytical framing through which I explore different *enactments* of *hosts* in Naturkraft.

Moreover, the analytical setup maintains a pedagogical focus by analysing the *host* in relation to the enactments of two other pedagogical archetypical categories – that of *content* and that of the *learner/pupil* or, to use the terminology of non-formal institutions like Naturkraft, the *guest*. This analytical division – *content, learner, facilitator* or in its non-formal form *content, guest, host* – is fundamental to much curricular and didactical theorizing (e.g. Damberg, Dolin, Ingerslev, & Kaspersen, 2014).<sup>29</sup> In this chapter, the categories serve as catalysts to analytically tease out the contours of the different *becomings-host* in the five different host-assemblages described below. The analytical structure of this chapter, then, can be schematized as follows:

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29 In discussions of the field of didactics, this three-partite theoretical division is, however, also criticized for being too simplistic and for omitting other relations of vital importance to understanding didactic exchanges (Bundsgaard, 2005; Hetmar, 2004). My analytical use of the three categories, however, is abstracted from their use in general didactical analyses and serves instead as a schematic to draw distinctions between different approaches to the pedagogical situations in Naturkraft. My focus, in other words, is to understand the differences between hosts, rather than to understand the didactic workings of a specific teaching approach.

HOST- ASSEMBLAGE	CONTENT	GUEST	HOST
COMMERCIAL	-	-	-
SCHOOLING	-	-	-
BEHAVIOURIST	-	-	-
ANOMALOUS	-	-	-
ECOLOGICAL	-	-	-

My take on analysing each of these assemblages, moreover, is highly situated. Some assemblage-descriptions, such as that of the *commercial host-assemblage*, build on a single interview. Others involve slightly more diverse empirical material while others practically stand as theoretical speculation. The point, however, is not to produce an all-encompassing, empirical map of the complete Naturkraft assemblage and its multiple enactment of a host-identity. Rather, the point is to systematically sketch the contours of the differences immanent to the process of enacting a host-identity in Naturkraft, thereby raising discussion of what challenges this undertaking entails.

## The Commercial Host-Assemblage

Coming from the field of educational research, with the school and the classroom as archetypical contexts, I was particularly curious about one specific object in the Naturkraft design: the cash register in the ticket-sales booth. The physical presence of a cash register in an educational space seemed to me foreign and exotic. So, throughout my fieldwork I kept coming back to questions about how the cash register and matters of commerce more broadly affected the pedagogical workings of the Naturkraft assemblage. Moreover, field work taught me I was not the only one to think cash registers and ‘bottom lines’

foreign, and I realized how questions of commerce also caused severe tension amongst employees.

The different approaches to matters of commerce seemed fundamental to understanding how different parts of the organization enacted the Naturkraft-host differently. In particular, two figurations of the host were in conflict in relation to commercial matters. In the following, I therefore take questions of commerce as an entry point to the analysis. Starting with the *commercial host-assembly*, I begin with the parts of the organization that overtly claim to be familiar with questions of ‘what you make from it’, and I ask how this business perspective plays out and how it plays into the enactment of a *commercial host* in three dimensions: *educational content*, *guest* and *host*. Subsequently, I present the views of some employees overtly *inexperienced* with commercial concerns and, as a contrast, their enactments of a *schooling host*. Finally, I will broaden the perspective through outlining three further host-assemblages, as indicated in the table above.

### *The Commercial Content*

An empirical opening that proved to be particularly rich in terms of describing the Naturkraft tensions surrounding commerce was my interview with the commercial manager (CM) in September 2021. The CM had played a defining role in shaping how the organization went about its operations. I was interested in grasping how she made sense of the Naturkraft project and park and its ways of operating.

CM was hired in Naturkraft three months prior to the public opening. Before, she had worked in what she called ‘the experience industry’; water parks and amusement parks of different sorts. CM got the job after insistently courting the park manager for a few years. She had experience with establishing tourist attractions from scratch, and as she told me, she liked the ‘craziness’ that such processes involved (CM, September 2021, p. 240). Moreover, she liked what she termed the ‘creative’ and ‘wild thinking’ side to the experience industry in general. In comparison, she once worked for a kitchen retailer, which she found

‘[...] very corporate. You know, structured. Shirts. Ties’ (CM, September 2021, p. 240). In other words, she distinguished Naturkraft from ‘corporate business’. Yet, she did not question the commercial aims of Naturkraft. This was particularly clear when she talked about the tensions in the organization:

If your motivation for being here is that you want to save the world and economy is not an issue, then it might be tough meeting someone who says, ‘well, but how much do you make from it?’ Because, we have to make from it, and if not, then we don’t do it. [...] Because we are a hardcore business. By the end of the day, there is a bottom-line, or else we’re not here.

(CM, September 2021, p. 244)

Following the CM, balancing commercial ambitions and ambitions of ‘saving the world’ causes tension amongst the employees. Yet, in her view, commercial concerns overrule any other concern. Naturkraft is ‘hardcore business’, and any activity and initiative must be weighed against the question of ‘how much to make from it’.

In contrast to those working in Naturkraft allegedly to ‘save the world’, the CM described her own motivations for the job as follows:

It’s funny, because I’ve just spoken to [a colleague] about this. You know, it’s because it is a new project – that is what’s pulling at me. And also because I’m with a great team. [...] In fact, the other day we agreed that it might as well have been about riding ponies. It wouldn’t have meant a thing. Because it’s about it being new and exciting and wild. That’s the *trigger*. There might have been some moral concerns, though, if we were working for the oil industry. But I’m not here to save the world. You know, that kind of sustainability-mindset that goes, ‘we gotta go out and make sure that ...’ and ‘I believe Naturkraft is gonna’ – basically, I don’t believe in that. But I like [sustainability as a] way of communicating things. And, I don’t think it’s irrelevant after all.

(CM, September 2021, p. 242)



Following the CM, the act of operating Naturkraft involves a certain intensity: It is ‘wild’ and ‘exciting’ and socially pleasing. In that sense, operating Naturkraft is like operating any kind of experience industry-institution. You might as well do pony riding. What matters is whether you can ‘make from it’, and how much fun you can have while at it. In effect, in terms of *educational content*, Naturkraft becomes practically an empty container to fill with whatever keeps the exciting and profitable movement going. Similarly, from the CM’s perspective, the sustainability-concept with its connotations of ‘world-saving’ becomes a fuel for this particular operation. Sustainability becomes a ‘not-irrelevant’ way of communicating that may support the hardcore Naturkraft business.

As such, from the CM’s perspective *the commercial host-assemblage* involves guests and employees’ desires of excitement and fun. These are principal points of aim for operation, including commercial concerns of ‘making from it’. And importantly, this kind of operation does not require any specific content in Naturkraft. Following the CM, hosting Naturkraft should remain open to handling whatever content serves the bottom-line. Accordingly, commercially speaking, content is *commodity*.<sup>30</sup> However, ambitions of ‘serving the bottom-

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30 Anna Tsing, in her ethnographic explorations of global Matsutake mushroom supply chains, describes ‘commodity’ and ‘commodification’ as characterized by processes of alienation. She writes: “In capitalist logics of commodification, things are torn from their lifeworlds to become objects of exchange” (Tsing, 2015). Alienating things – humans and nonhumans alike – by severing relational ties of origin enables potential buyers to invest relations and values of their own in the exchanged commodity – and traders to make profits in return. In the case of Naturkraft, enacting content as commodity might then involve treating the park as a generic frame to accommodate e.g. visiting families in their recreational relation building or visiting seniors in having a ‘cultural experience’. In effect, what becomes alienated might then be the relations of production that went into establishing the park or the severed ecological relations of every species planted in the park. Tsing builds her analysis on the theoretical contrast between commodity economies and gift economies (Tsing, 2013; 2015, pp. 121-128). Applying this conceptual contrast to non-formal sustainability educational initiatives such as Naturkraft would make for an interesting analysis to explore the ability of non-formal sustainability education – in commercial institutions – to build (educational) relations to the ecological world. See also Robert Sessions’ discussion of the gift-commodity-relation in education (Sessions, 1995).

line' does not mean 'everything goes'. Something, and *someone*, does influence the commercial ways of operating.

### *The Commercial Guest*

So, who defines what we do? Is it us who decides to tell this? Us, who addresses the world? Or do you go out and see what the people out there would like to hear? [...] So, if they want Halloween, we will sell them Halloween, 'cause then they come to us. And once they are in, we'll explain to them – once they bought the ticket and have come inside [the rampart] – then we'll explain to them why the forces of nature are cool, and why we have to take care of our nature, and why we must think sustainably. Because that way we can get them inside. And that's the idea really. [...] Rather than telling them that they should come inside to hear about sustainability, if they're not attracted to it. Then we'll never have success. And we won't get to talk to them either, [...] if we don't try to use, what triggers the market.

(CM, September 2021, p. 245)

According to the CM, operating 'commercially' is to operate in coordination with 'the market'. It is a matter of telling/selling people what they want to hear/buy in order to subsequently deliver any other messages. Halloween is an example. This generic event 'triggers' the market, as the CM explains. Other tourist attractions advertise Halloween happenings for the autumn school holidays, the CM later noted – so Naturkraft has to do the same (CM, September 2021, p. 245). In fact, the CM described it as a deliberate strategy to operate like these other tourist attractions – in particular the 'bigger' ones such as the nearby LEGO theme parks: '[T]hey have muscles, we don't have. So, by placing ourselves in their slipstream [we] can get the consumer to listen' (CM, September 2021, p. 246).

It is remarkable how the idea of the market puts certain demands on how *content* is presented in Naturkraft. Following the CM, the market does not rule out any contents *per se*. Instead, it puts demands on the 'wrappings' (CM,

September 2021, pp. 246). Halloween for instance, in the CM's description, is nothing but a necessary spooky occasion to present questions of nature and sustainability. Surfaces, she argued, are what draw people in and thus a fundamental requirement if you want to engage them in matters of nature and sustainability. Tellingly, the CM distinguished 'success' from 'getting to talk to them' - success consists in selling tickets. Afterwards, it is time for educational conversations about the forces of nature.

In other words, in the *commercial host-assembly*, the role of the *guest* to Naturkraft is played by 'the market'. It is worth noting that 'the market' covers many different potential visitors. I have observed discussions of how to make Naturkraft appeal to middle-aged German couples, Danish mothers on family vacations, subscribers to specific newspapers, kindergarten groups, visiting schools as well as busloads of pensioners, just to mention some. In my conversation with the CM, however, 'the market' primarily consists of families with children, and this carries implications of what it means to 'wrap' the content of the park:

If we are just the grey box in the corner, then no kid wants to go open it. Because they go for the glittery one. [...] You know, figuratively speaking, we have to wrap it in glitter, without selling something we're not. [...] Because we shouldn't – I mean, we are a park with what we are. You know, the forces of nature and sustainability and all that. We just have to make it cool.

(CM, September 2021, pp. 246-247)

The CM considered the archetypical guest of Naturkraft in the image of the stereotypical kid on Christmas Eve. Kids choose glittery presents over dull ones, the CM contended. Since organizational survival depends on being chosen by 'the market', the CM wanted Naturkraft to be in the glittery category.

This also permeated the CM's perspectives on how to enact traditionally 'educational' concepts such as *learning*. In direct continuation of the above quote, the CM noted:

CM: And the same goes for learning. That's another word with which we sometimes struggle. Because in certain situations that can be a bit boring. Especially for a nine-year old. They think they have enough of that in school.

DANIEL: So, what do you do about that? Same story, or?

CM: We wrap it in the experience of something cool. We sometimes speak of it in terms of 'smoke' and 'bang'.

DANIEL: [With a surprised giggle] Smoke and bang?

CM: Something that smokes, and something that goes 'bang'. Because that's something that triggers. Once it goes 'bang' or smokes, then you can learn. [...] That way, nature can be cool. [...] But mushroom hunting isn't cool. You know, you'll never get a kid to join, but once they're told there's one that kills you ...

(CM, September 2021, p. 247)

As such, from a commercial perspective, Naturkraft operates by offering *commodities to the market*. The centre of attention is families and children in particular, which implies a particular focus on how to frame or *wrap* experiences in the park. The wrapping must be glittery, smoky, and go 'bang'. This is also the case when the experiences on offer are thought to involve *learning*. Following the CM, learning in Naturkraft should be as exciting and fun as anything in the park ... but who, then, is to play host to these relations?

### *The Commercial Host*

The above characteristics form a background for understanding the particular kind of host-identity that the commercial operations in Naturkraft enact. In extension of the above line of analysis, the commercial host would then summarize as follows: they are capable of sustaining the high intensity-qualities of the experience of coming to Naturkraft – i.e., capable of framing the 'exciting' aspects of otherwise 'boring' or profane encounters with, or processes of learning,

‘nature’ or ‘sustainability’. The commercial performer is attentive to the guests’ desires and subject to the imagined arrangements of these desires for the sake of the bottom-line. In this understanding, the commercial performer configures a way of making sense of Naturkraft that pivots on the guest’s expectations. Naturkraft should be, what potential guests expect it to be.

Simultaneously, however, meeting the guests’ expectations involves surpassing these exact same expectations. As in the example of the mushroom hunt, the commercial mode of operating depends on something extraordinary to happen; ‘there’s one that kills you ...’. Naturkraft, following the CM, should stand apart from e.g., the operations of ‘school’. When thinking of this in terms of *host-identities*, the CM proposed a particular, yet fluffy, persona to facilitate such unconventional experiences:

When you go to Naturkraft, then because it is a different room you are in, or it’s a different frame, then it also has to be somebody different you meet. [...] You should meet the *nerd* when you come here. You shouldn’t meet yet another science teacher. Because you have one like that at home. So, if it is about doing, what you could have done back home in a classroom, then it’s not super interesting. But coming here and seeing things in a different framing and maybe meeting someone who is a bit nerdier than the one back home. [...] Someone who speaks at the next level. Then I really think we are moving something. Because then we stand out from – and, well, then there’s also an incentive to go, because you meet something, you couldn’t have done yourself. [...] We have to stand out and do something that’s not yet another biology classroom.

(CM, September 2021, p. 260)

This quote illustrates how the nerd becomes an ideal for how the commercial host in Naturkraft should operate – someone extraordinarily knowledgeable and capable of engaging differently with matters of nature than teachers in schools. Meeting the nerd in Naturkraft is meeting someone unfamiliar, since the nerd differs from science teachers and facilitators of ordinary class-room activities. This host makes Naturkraft ‘stand out’ and ‘move something’, and –

perhaps more importantly from a commercial perspective – they provide incentives for guests to come visit Naturkraft in the first place.

Moreover, on closer inspection, the nerd-host that the CM requested functions as another commercial *wrapping* of content. From the CM's perspective, the nerd is characterized less by their deep insight into natural relations than by their difference from 'conventional' facilitators of educational processes, i.e., teachers. The primary task for the nerd is to *trigger* the market and lure customers past the ticket sales booth. The nerd then is not essentially a scientist representing a specific scientifically disciplined gaze on the world. Rather, the nerd is a *commodifier*, operating by commodifying the experiential qualities of an otherwise easily accessible activity; that of spending time in nature. This assemblage, by which Naturkraft operates as something involving commodities, markets and commodifiers, is at odds with other ways of enacting host-identities in the organization, in particular school-like operations, to which I now turn.

## The Schooling Host-Assemblage

Throughout the time of my fieldwork, three people with a professional background as schoolteachers worked in the Naturkraft organization. They were all assigned the tasks of developing and administering different aspects of the school service programme in addition to developing and facilitating smaller activities for visiting tourists. I conducted interviews with two of them: The activity developer (AD), who was hired specifically to develop and facilitate activities and teaching programmes for visiting schools (AD, September 2021); and the network developer (ND), who was hired to organize and administer the performance obligations accompanying the four years' operating grant support that Naturkraft was granted in the 2021 Danish State Budget (Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet, 2021; Finansministeriet, 2021, p. 279). Importantly, however, by the time I ended fieldwork in late 2021, all three teachers had resigned. The AD reflected on this circumstance in our interview that took place after her resignation:

When I quit, the park manager said something interesting. He said that it's noteworthy how they have lost [three] teachers in a year. [...] And I think, basically it has to do with not taking learning seriously. It is like, they focus very much on what we call informal learning. You investigate, the kids have a good time, and thereby they get smarter. But a school service must also frame formal learning. So that you [have an] experience [of] bringing something [home] with you. Or that you had an eye-opening experience or that you became more knowledgeable on something. And I think they have to prioritize that – the school service is as important as marketing, which is as important as having someone standing in the shop. And that learning isn't just something you simply dash off.

(AD, September 2021, p. 281)

As the quote illustrates, the AD approached the task of hosting Naturkraft from a perspective that was explicitly different and at odds even with other parts of the organization. For instance, the AD prioritized and conceptualized *learning* differently from what is the case in the description of the *commercial host-assemblage* above. From the AD's perspective, considerations of what she calls *formal learning* were necessary aspects of playing the role of the Naturkraft-host. Yet, from her perspective, such considerations were undervalued in the general organization's approach to operating Naturkraft. In the following, I explore the perspective of the AD and ND for how they configured a host-identity in Naturkraft. I term their configuration the *schooling host-assemblage*, as they both drew on terminology one would mainly encounter in relation to schools. Both explicitly related their experiences in Naturkraft to their prior work experiences in schools, and both focused primarily on organizing visits from schools in their jobs in Naturkraft. As in the above analysis of the *commercial host-assemblage*, I structure the following by exploring first the enactment of *content* in the *schooling host-assemblage* and next, in a combined section, I analyse the enactment of *schooling guests* and *hosts*.

### *The Schooling Content*

Whereas the commercial host-assemblage enacts content in Naturkraft as a commercial striving to meet family market demands, the schooling host-assemblage in Naturkraft enacts content primarily in relation to state authorized structures:

DANIEL: What about the question of what to learn here. How did you decide on that?

AD: Well, I don't know how they decided on the topics – you know that wind, water, plastic. Someone decided on that before I got here. But everything [in the school service programme] is designed to match the learning objectives, or the National Curriculum (*Fælles Mål*). Because it was important for me that if you want an economically lesser privileged school to come, then they must be able to tick off something once they are here. It cannot be a day wasted coming here. It shouldn't just be a social thing coming here. If you've bought a course, you have to be able to return home and say, 'Tick, tick, tick – we don't need to work more on those things.'

(AD, September 2021, p. 270)

As is apparent from the interview, a highly influential element in the schooling host-assemblage in the Naturkraft organization is the Danish National Curriculum. This piece of policy describes the learning objectives for each subject in Danish primary and lower secondary education and in Naturkraft. It serves as a template to 'match' with the designs of the school service programme. This match does not, however, have to do with the choice of particular topics – e.g., wind, water, or plastic. Rather, it prescribes how pupils should engage with topics and what they should 'bring home' with them in terms of specific competencies (K. Illeris, 2012).

As such, this relates to the AD's comment on the conception of learning in Naturkraft in the previous quote. In her opinion, Naturkraft – or the Naturkraft management in particular – fails to take 'learning seriously'. According to the



AD, Naturkraft fails to provide the conditions for visitors to have school-like experiences that meet specific formal education demands.

Furthermore, these demands have as their model the objectives in the National Curriculum in addition to teachers' conceptions of what it means to 'formally' learn:

The problem is, or, what I've been trying to, is to make sure we didn't end up in situations where a teacher could stand next to [our guides] and correct them. I simply wouldn't risk sending out guides and then receive an email afterwards from a science teacher complaining that what we said was incorrect. And I believe that's where we have to be most careful. To make sure that it isn't all about marketing, but that you hold on to the core of things – that what you sell must be worked through.

(AD, September 2021, p. 280)

In essence, the schooling assemblage in Naturkraft operates by enacting the Naturkraft park as something the world of formal education understands and recognizes. This, for instance, implies designing each school service programme to match specific categories and codes of the National Curriculum – one illustrative example is how all school service course descriptions on the Naturkraft website feature indications of which National Curriculum objectives are met by the course (Naturkraft, 2022). Additionally, this enactment implies providing what visiting teachers consider 'correct' information on science. Moreover, what the above quote also indicates is how this enactment is a 'bottom-line' manoeuvre too. Operating like the National Curriculum and in line with teachers' ideas of correct and incorrect is a way of meeting the demands of another kind of market; that of schools and teachers and behind them, the state. In sum, the content enacted by the schooling host-assemblage takes the form of what could be termed *state codes*.

### *The Schooling Guest and Host*

Following the argument above, the schooling host-assemblage in Naturkraft has obvious similarities with the commercial host-assemblage. In terms of how the

two assemblages operate, both involve a striving to plug into external demands and logics for economic reasons. In the case of the commercial host-assemblage, it plays out as enactments of the Naturkraft content following operational patterns of other enterprises in the experience industry. In the case of the schooling host-assemblage, the enactments of content in Naturkraft follow state authorized operational patterns. In both cases, the process involves ensuring economic viability for the Naturkraft organization. What differs are the conceptions of the guests and the ideas of what counts as valuable in the eyes of these different guests.

As shown above, a central guest-figure in the schooling host-assemblage is the visiting teacher, who judges the Naturkraft offers by state standards; overtly the National Curriculum categories and, less specifically, through empirical categories of ‘formal learning’, ‘something correct’, ‘something worked through’ and ‘something to bring home with you’. This put other strains on the Naturkraft-host than what we saw in the commercial assemblage:

But literally, [the Naturkraft management] has to understand that learning is not something you just dash off. It does not happen all by itself. At least not when you want to charge money for it. If you don’t want to charge money, then you can play around all you want. But here, you have to deliver a piece of work. *And teachers show up with different expectations than tourists.* They expect someone to actually be on top of the situation.

(AD, September 2021, p. 282)

Following the AD, the energetic host that families and kids expect – and that was conjured up in the previous section in the image of the nerdy host producing bang and smoke – is different from the host that teachers expect. Teachers want the host to be ‘on top of the situation’. They expect the host to be in control of the learning situation by exhibiting ‘correct’ knowledge and by having ‘wrapped’ the content of the Naturkraft experience, not in glitter, but in state-recognized categories of the curriculum. They expect an experience that follows school standards.

Moreover, designing pedagogical content by school standards is not usually something Danish teachers do for the sake of profit. Rather, in my interviews with the AD and later in the interview with the ND, both argue ethical reasons for this way of operating. The AD, for instance, described how, from her perspective, handling questions of sustainability and caring for nature in *Naturkraft* and education in general should follow a progression not unlike the progression of the curriculum:

Then there is the aspect of *Bildung* in the school service courses – we don't use *sustainability* directly but talk about wind energy and water energy and 'how do we care for nature'. And try to incorporate some aspects of taking action, at least in the primary school-level. At the high school level, it plays out inside our 'Human in Nature' game, where we discuss sustainability and climate change and you are assigned different roles [in the game]. [...] So, in that sense, [matters of sustainability and caring for nature] progressively plays a larger role. You know, when we have a kindergarten visiting, we teach them about the movements of the wind and how that is energy and that windmills exist. We give them small windmills to carry around and see what wind is capable of in terms of force. And then in lower primary, we take a look at the windmill and talk about it, and we examine how we measure wind and how we can create wind. And then in upper primary, we gradually put more on top. But we don't tell them that anything is better or worse than anything else. [...] Because we can't – well, we could. We can have all sorts of opinions [...] But if we should take a stance, qualified, on these issues, then we have to equip the kids first.

(AD, September 2021, p. 275)

Following the AD, taking a stance on matters of sustainability requires the right 'equipment', the right amount and quality of knowledge. Here, the schooling host-assemblage involves what seems like developmental psychological considerations of what content is appropriate for children of different ages. Adapting the design of the school service programmes to formal education age-segmentations – kindergarten, lower and upper primary – hence serves the purpose of ensuring psychologically justifiable processes of learning with ethically

justifiable end-results: pupils, able to partake in debates on a cultivated basis once they grow up. Following the AD, operating a non-formal education institution like a school involves more and other than economic concerns. Although there are operational similarities between the two host-assemblages, operating like a school is about ensuring visiting pupils' optimal learning.

In fact, the kind of operation that the commercial host-assemblage enacts for the sake of economy and for the sake of attracting visitors/customers is questioned by the teacher employees. The network developer explained:

[W]hen you work with kids and youngsters in a municipal context, you always ask yourself, 'is it good for the kid? What does the kid gain from the intervention?' That's whether you do a communication campaign or something else. 'What does the kid gain from it, eventually?' Whereas in Naturkraft – again it's a question of the purpose of the place. It has a wonderful vision about communicating the forces of nature and 'we will teach them to care about nature [...]' and all. But as an employee – besides asking yourself 'do we fulfill the purpose', there is this small obstacle course that goes 'do we have any customers?' [...] It doesn't motivate me to have that focus: 'does anybody show up'.

(ND, October 2021, pp. 292-293)

The ND described the difference between Naturkraft and her former jobs in terms of an 'obstacles course': in order to get to where she can concentrate on questions about 'what the visitors gain' from a visit to Naturkraft, she has to consider how to make visitors show up in the first place. As experienced teachers, the ND as well as the AD are skilled in creating exciting programmes for learning, yet they are both unaccustomed to creating such programmes to attract participants. Following the ND, tackling the many difficulties it involves to successfully teach anyone anything is no obstacle. It is the commercial concerns of commodifying these processes that hampers school-like operation.

In sum, through my interviews with the ND and the AD, I came to know another way to enact the role of the host in Naturkraft. When schools and teachers are the guests, enacting the role of the host is not a matter of high

intensity and glittery surfaces that allude to something surprising and unconventional. Rather, enacting the role of the schooling-host becomes a matter of ‘wrapping’ Naturkraft in categories of the National Curriculum and staying within the boundaries of what is scientifically ‘correct’. Furthermore, it is a matter of addressing visiting pupils in age-appropriate manners, following carefully elaborated course structures, and staying ‘on top of the situation’. All of this must be done with an eye to the benefits to the child as well as to ensuring that visiting pupils become more knowledgeable and ‘bring something home with them’, as the ND states above. As such, the host-identity enacted by the schooling host-assembly becomes that of a *curricular operator* – one who designs and supports curriculum-structured encounters between guests – teachers in particular – and the park.

## In-Between Molar Operations of Commerce and Schooling

The two different host-assemblages described above have considerable influence on the general processes of becoming-host in Naturkraft, and tension ensues. Commercial operations, for instance, are necessary for the economic survival of the organization, the CM states. Accordingly, attracting visitors comes first. Concerns of the *commodifier* should take precedence over concerns of the *curricular operator*. Schooling operations, on the other hand, are economically important too, the AD and the ND argues. Without well-designed courses that align with stately codes – the National Curriculum and visiting teachers’ conception of quality – school service income falls away. More importantly, without emphasis on schooling contents, Naturkraft repels teachers altogether, both in the roles of visitors and employees. Without a sturdy framework for how to teach in line with ‘formal’ standards in Naturkraft, Naturkraft risks severing connections to adjacent assemblages of formal education all together.

I consider this struggle one between two *molar* configurations. To quote Alicia Youngblood Jackson in reiterating my definition of the molar-concept in the previous chapter (see p. 158 above): ‘Molar is something that is well-defined,

massive and governing – such as large structures, or identity categories’ (Jackson, 2013, p. 117). So, molar configurations are politically powerful and broadly acknowledged, involving strict categorical criteria for in- and exclusion. In this sense, the commercial host, with its market implications and logics of commerce, extends the molar structures of capitalist logics into the Naturkraft assemblage. Similarly, the schooling host, with its implications of state authorized codes, visibly extends Danish welfare state structures of governance into the Naturkraft assemblage.

Furthermore, following Brian Massumi, molar configurations operate by making-the-same (Massumi, 1992, pp. 101, 106). Molar movements follow well-defined and politically powerful models in an attempt to make more of the same. They are not static structures, but ongoing dynamics working to *de-* and *reterritorialize* established patterns in ways that conform to a particular governing order (Jackson, 2013, p. 119). The molarity of the commercial host-assemblage works by involving everything in its way in an enactment of capitalist commodities: the natural environment of West Jutland, the artful installations in the Naturkraft park, the specialized knowledge of educated scientists in the organization. The molarity of the schooling host-assemblage, on the other hand, works by relating places, materials, and specialized knowledge in an educational enactment to national curricular and scientific educationally coded ends.

Judging by the examples above, collaborating across these two molar operations involves tremendous tension. From the perspective of the commercial host-assemblage, operating too much like the *curricular operator* risks making the experience in Naturkraft dull, mundane, and ultimately unattractive to the family seeking leisure entertainment. From the perspective of the schooling host-assemblage, operating too much like the *commodifier* involves failing to meet national curriculum criteria, thereby violating the performance contract with the state, failing to meet visiting teachers’ expectations and furthermore failing to equip visiting pupils with sufficient knowledge for engaging with sustainability-related problems. Judging by my empirical material, these two operations appear practically incompatible. They even seem to repulse each other to the extent that all teachers in the Naturkraft organization eventually resigned.

Yet, in addition to these two forms of operation in Naturkraft there are a range of other host-assemblages that enact the host-identity differently. Each in their own way, they perform *molecular* operations in response to the commercial as well as the schooling host-assemblage (Jackson, 2013, p. 120). To follow these other kinds of operation is to insist that Naturkraft is a place of learning – not an empty commodity – yet at the same time that Naturkraft is something other than a school. The following sections explore the operation of three of these host-assemblages, through which the organization can be seen to try harnessing or encompassing the ‘anormality’ (Ellsworth, 2005) or ‘molecularity’ of the Naturkraft assemblage. In the following, I outline the different configurations of the host that each of these three assemblages involves.

## The Behaviourist Host-Assemblage

The configuration of one of these additional host-assemblages found its most explicit expression in a pair of development workshops in the spring of 2020. They were labelled ‘sustainability workshops’ in the calendar invite that went out to a large group of employees, me included. The first of the two workshops involved a series of brain-storming exercises on the concepts of ‘sustainability’ and ‘inspiration’ followed by a range of questions on how to concretely perform ‘inspiring sustainability intermediation’ in the Naturkraft park (Fieldnote, April 2020, p. 42). The newly employed in-house graphic designer facilitated the workshop along with a man from an external communication bureau who presented himself as a behavioural designer (henceforth referred to as BD).

At the very last minute of the workshop, one of the managers in Naturkraft concluded the session by saying: ‘The idea with today’s work has been to provide [the graphic designer] and [the BD] with material so that they can present a behavioural design to us next week’ (fieldnotes, April 2020). At the follow-up session a week later, the external BD presented a slideshow. The first half of it contained quotes and models with references to theoretical literature. The second half contained guidelines and recommendations for the implementation of the theoretical design in different phases of the ‘user-journey’ in Naturkraft.

Halfway through his presentation, the BD explained the links between his proposed behavioural design and questions of sustainability:

The BD talks us through the theoretical background he has applied in the design process. He explains how his focus has been on sketching interventions in the park – activities or material installations - that would cause changes to visitors’ ‘climate-behaviours’. In this respect, his slides reference the website *behavioralscientist.org* as well as lists a line of concepts from a psychological theory of motivation.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, he sums up this theoretical background in three bullets: ‘Avoid negative messaging; avoid self-taught helplessness; avoid redundant communication’. In elaboration of the third bullet, he reads aloud from the slide: ‘Instead, provide guests the information they need, and facilitate dialogue between parents and children’. He continues: ‘You know, it’s not a learning centre or a school [we are creating]. We want to create an experience – a story to play out in the families afterwards’.

(Fieldnote, April 2020, p. 44)

These descriptions show an attempt to configure a way of hosting Naturkraft that goes between the two molar movements discussed earlier. For one thing, the fieldnote excerpt clearly shows the ambition of avoiding the operations of the schooling host-assemblage. Following the BD, Naturkraft is no school. Rather, the host should support visiting families in experiencing a specific ‘story’. If told the right way, this story catches on in conversations within visiting families and spurs motivation for ‘climate behaviour changes’. No teachers or pupils or curriculum objectives here. Yet, despite the clear rejection of schooling forms, what the BD suggested is no less structured. Where the activity developer in the analysis of the schooling host-assemblage above opted for prioritizing clearly framed learning experiences over ‘just playing around’, the BD instead suggested a strict communicational framework for controlling the behavioural outcomes of the experiences in the park: aim for positivity, self-efficacy,

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31 The theory he references is Self-Determination Theory proposed by American psychologists Edward L. Deci and Richard Ryan (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2017).



and avoid redundant messaging. This kind of operation does not convey scientific facts for the sake of answering to formal curriculum objectives. Rather, it operates to tap into guests' existing needs and desires to lure them into the park and then re-channel these desires towards specific behavioural ends. As such, this host-assemblage can be said to involve a conception of the guest as a behavioural system, conditioned by prior experiences and susceptible to the right kind of behavioural re-conditioning.

In my subsequent interview with the BD, he referred to one of his one slides when he explained:

The idea with 'redundant communication' in this example, that is communication, we think they need, which they don't. Or communication we provide because we think it's cool, but they don't. So, it's about meeting their needs depending on where they are. So, if we simply want them to get interested in [Naturkraft prior to visiting], they don't need to know how to plan the visit. They are not ready for that. It isn't relevant information. Similarly, it's not relevant for them to know, uh, when they flush the toilet ... 'in fact, you use five thousand litres of water each year to flush out your feces'. Uh, that's not relevant information. It doesn't give them anything.

(BD, April 2020, p. 10)

If we analyse the BD's statements as a certain perspective on the host role, it appears the host of the behaviourist assemblage economizes with what and how much to communicate. As such, these economizing operations also have similarities with the operation of the *commodifier* of the commercial host-assemblage. Ideally, enacting the role of the host is adapting to what the visitor wants to hear. Yet, in contrast to the *commodifier*, the host of the behaviourist assemblage evaluates the relevance of the communication against a psychology-informed theoretical framework. The aim is behavioural changes rather than economic bottom lines. To this end, moreover, the behaviourist host is aware of addressing the question of climate change and sustainability through other modes of engagement than the facts-based approach that characterizes the science-oriented *curricular operator* of the schooling host-assemblage:

Because if we could say that you left [Naturkraft] with an emotion rather than a plan for action for instance, then we might raise the probability of actions being more subconsciously [motivated]. You know, when you are in a shop and have to choose between a [...] sustainable and a non-sustainable product, then – because we’ve changed your values but not your actions, then you are more *inclined* to choose the sustainable product. It’s like more subconscious.

(BD, April 2020, p. 11)

As such, the host of the behaviourist host-assemblage seeks to address and affect visitors’ emotions through concise and strictly aligned communication and storytelling, i.e., a well-designed ‘user experience’ or UX, as designer-lingo has it.<sup>32</sup> This operation involves ideas of causal relationships between storytelling, family conversations, emotions, values, and choices between products in categories of sustainable and non-sustainable. Hereby, the operations of the behaviourist host-assemblage involve conceptions of knowledge and relations that are understated in the schooling host-assemblage. On the other hand, the behaviourist operation appears as rigid and programmed as the schooling operations. The rigidity of the behaviourist arrangement practically takes on the form of a digital algorithm. Each phase of the guests’ encounter with Naturkraft serves a specific function in ensuring a carefully controlled user experience, resulting in a change in personal values and subsequently, a change of behaviours. Everything and everybody are cast for specific roles and functions in the communicative circuits of the Naturkraft user-journey. Along these lines, the host of this behaviourist assemblage can be understood as a *behavioural programmer*

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32 By ‘user experience’ or UX, I imply the conceptualization widely recognized in design scholarship such as Norman (2021), Krug (2006) and Eyal (2014). Particularly interesting is Eyal’s ideas of designing for habit-formation, which resounds in the behavioural designer’s statements in my analysis (Eyal, 2014). Central to the idea of habit-formation and UX in general is the design of products (or in the case of Naturkraft, experiences) that engage the user without ‘making the user think’, to paraphrase the title of Krug’s seminal book (Krug, 2006). As such, it is an approach to behavioural change that strives to bypass processes of rational reflection – and democratic deliberation, some critics would add (Mogensen & Schnack, 2010).

of visitors' desires through arrangements of information in the *UX design* that is Naturkraft.

The BD's concluding remark in our interview attests to this reading:

I mean, I kind of see everything like a prototype. There will always be a next version. So, I hope can go out [in the park] and see the reactions and hear about the experiences and 'did it work as intended'. Often, things aren't used according to intention but in some other way, which can be both good and bad.

(BD, April 2020, p. 15)

The behavioural design may not work as intended, and something else may come out of it. The job of the behaviourist host, then, is to adjust the algorithm for a better model fit in the next version.

## The Anomalous Host-Assemblage

So far, I have described three different host-assemblages that operate within the overall Naturkraft assemblage: the commercial-, the schooling-, and the behaviourist host-assemblages. I have discussed, how each of them enacts a specific host-identity in relation to specific conceptualizations of contents and guests. Whereas the two former host-assemblages operate in ways that extend the molar arrangements of, respectively, the market and the state, the operation of the third assemblage plays out as somewhat a mix. It is invested with ambitions of producing effects that extend beyond bottom-lines and leisure excitement, yet at the same time, it explicitly strives to deviate from school-like operations. The ends are confidently defined by the behaviourist host in terms of changes in 'climate-behaviours', whereas the behaviourist guests are configured as preferably unaware of changes being imposed on them.

Now, I turn to a fourth host-assemblage that involves a less distinct conception of ends. Here, performing the role of the host in Naturkraft is not about luring guests into cleverly devised *user experiences* with carefully programmed behavioural outcomes. Rather, enacting the role of this fourth host is about

facilitating anomalous experiences and understandings. It is about asking questions, without presuming to know the answers. It is about distracting guests from how they habitually go about living their lives, yet without prescribing any specific other behaviours in return. And as such, it's also the host-configuration that most directly responds to the experiences of becoming-child and becoming-nature, which I analysed in the previous chapter (see page 137 ff. above).

In contrast to the three host-assemblages discussed above, the description of the *anomalous host-assemblage* does not hinge on any one employee or any one specific situation. Rather, its contours show as traces throughout several parts of my empirical material, and its operations involve many of the people working in the organization – particularly those who were part of the organization from its earliest stages.

One trace of this assemblage, for instance, shows in the way that some employees speak of 'activating' the material side of the park. Take my conversation with the sustainability developer (henceforth referred to as SD) in the excerpt below as an example. We were in the third month of the 2021 Covid-19 lockdown, discussing the forthcoming re-opening:

Now, as the SD explains, 'it's a matter of opening at 100 or 110 % rather than 90'. I cautiously challenge her idea by suggesting that in principle the park could open any day and provide the same experiences as it did last year. 'No', the SD insists, 'things need adjustment. It's a matter of getting more people to understand the park. Those coming here just for entertainment, they don't get it'. As a concrete example, she explains about the oak-thicket-biotope: 'We would like to activate that more'. Visitors are supposed to walk all over the place in the park, but last year most were reluctant to stray off the trails. Therefore, the SD and her colleagues designed an insect treasure hunt to tease people into the greenery. Apparently, it worked.

(Fieldnotes, March 2021)

Following the SD, it is a misunderstanding to take the park for entertainment only. There is something more to the experience; a 'something more', which

happens off the gravel trails in the park; a something more that you could ‘activate’ using an ‘insect treasure hunt’. Following the SD, this ‘something more’ is an essential part of understanding the park. In my interview with another employee, the senior intermediary (henceforth referred to as SI), she elaborated on the idea behind the above-mentioned insect treasure hunt in terms of ‘hidden intermediation’:

The ‘hidden intermediation’ in it was, that here you force the guests out into our [different] nature types, so that they in fact get to explore those nature types. And because the animal they find belongs in that particular type of nature, then without actually knowing it, it gets encoded that ‘in a place like this I can look for an animal like that’

(SI, July 2021, p. 134)

The ambition is to tease guests off the designated trails in the park. By straying off the tracks, guests are given the opportunity to ‘explore’ nature. The ambition is to provoke a change of perspective in the visitors. The greenery that lines the trails in the park is not just for contemplation and distanced enjoyment. It is no inanimate background. Rather, the greenery teems with activity. It is the habitat for other kinds of life. The SD, as well as the SI, wants to lure guests into encounters with these other ways of life.

Similarly, other empirical excerpts illustrate how the ambitions of perspective change play out in relation to the generic playground installations in the park. We were in the park at the introduction event for the part-time employees in late spring 2020:

During the tour, the SD keeps returning to an imagined scenario from the functioning park in the near future. ‘So, when people are waiting in line here by the rope slide, it’s your job to encourage them to develop hypotheses. Like, do you think you can go faster than your dad can? Or, who do you think can come the longest way back again, after you’ve been to the

furthest end of the track?’ By the pull-ferries a few minutes later, the SI echoes the message: ‘Again, developing hypotheses, that’s your job. It’s all about pushing them a little, play along, but don’t take over!’

(Fieldnotes, May 2020, p. 71)

The recurring advice for the group of new part-time employees was to encourage guests to develop hypotheses. Taking a ride on a rope slide in Naturkraft is not just for entertainment. Again, it is an activity that could invite other perspectives such as *inter alia* scientific perspectives. For instance, it is a fundamental analytical approach in physics to pose hypotheses about relations between different objects’ movement in terms of speeds and distances. The questions that the sustainability developer and the senior intermediary suggest, are supposed to tease guests into thinking differently about what are conventionally non-scientific objects.

Moreover, the ambition of changes in perspective is also about teasing guests into thinking differently about natural science. In my interview with the intermediation manager (IM), she elaborated:

We are about to hire – I chose to call it an *activity developer*, right – anyhow, one to develop these courses that we’ll run for schools and kindergartens and high schools and so on. But [some of the others] would like, ‘well, then we would want a science teacher or a physics teacher or something like that’. And, I guess I’m more like, ‘no, I actually don’t think so, because we are not supposed to do science teaching. They get that back home. [...] We are supposed to do something completely different. Because then we can offer something you get to try body first’, right. And that’s what we’re supposed to do. That’s where we should hold on to what we are. [...] What is interesting, in fact, is this whole group – if we are to talk about *natural science Bildung* – that doesn’t like this kind of teaching. So maybe we want someone who is good at design and craftsmanship, who could then add another layer to some of these things. Because they would

catch the attention of a whole different target group, that never liked physics and chemistry and stuff like that. But it's just difficult to change that mindset.

(Intermediation manager, March 2021, p. 76)

According to the IM, employees in Naturkraft are 'not supposed to do science teaching'. Rather, Naturkraft is supposed to do 'something completely different', although some contents of the pedagogical encounters are scientific. The IM labels these ambitions 'natural science Bildung',<sup>33</sup> thereby invoking an in-fashion concept in current Danish debates on natural science pedagogy (e.g. Danish Government, 2018). Following the IM, 'natural science Bildung' is the ambition of catching the attention of children, who would otherwise be indifferent to formal educational perspectives on science. As such, the IM proposed a schooling ambition in disguise. Naturkraft could have an educational role to play if children as well as other visitors left the park with a greater inclination towards scientific perspectives. That is, if they showed signs of natural science Bildung. Yet, at the same time, the IM advocated design and craftsmanship approaches that relegate science to one perspective on nature among many. Or more specifically, she described the operation in Naturkraft as dynamics between a science-oriented and an aesthetically oriented approach to nature. Guests should experience nature 'body first', that is as something tactile, sensory, and non-linguistic. As such, the IM advocated an idea of nature that is not reserved for natural scientists. It is something to be engaged holistically.

On a similar note, Naturkraft arranged a large-scale event to celebrate the reopening of the park after four months of Covid-19 lockdown in May 2021. The event was advertised as a festival under the headline 'Cross connections in Naturkraft', 'Krydsfelt i Naturkraft' in Danish (Naturkraft, 2021c). The festival programme included talks and debates with prominent Danish researchers from the natural sciences, the humanities, and social sciences along with politicians, NGO representatives, local farmers, and a range of artists (Naturkraft, 2021c).

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33 The original, Danish term, which the IM used in the interview, is 'naturvidenskabelig dannelse'.

At the event, all the three previously described host-assemblages were in operation. Commercially, the event, for instance, advertised celebrities and exciting entertainment activities for children. In terms of schooling, the event featured a prominent line-up of scientific experts and, for the children, multiple-choice exercises with concepts from the natural sciences. Judging by the press release, moreover, the overarching ambition with the event was explicitly behavioural: ‘All visitors must take at least one thing home with them, which they can do to contribute to the green transition’ (Naturkraft, 2021c).

Emblematically, however, the framing story for the event as a whole was a historical anecdote about the friendship between the Danish author, H.C. Andersen and the Danish physicist, H.C. Ørsted (tvmidtvest.dk, 2021b). Allegedly, these two canonized Danish characters had considerable influence on each other’s intellectual and artistic production, each coming from their discipline and school of thought. This idea of disciplinary cross-connections was then enacted in multiple different forms throughout the festival days.

As a contemporary example, the event featured a range of panel discussions, one of them on cross-connections between ‘art, nature and knowledge’ (tvmidtvest.dk, 2021a). Towards the end of the panel session, one of the panelists, a Danish professor of geology, cautiously summed up his conception of the similarities between research and art, much to the excitement of the interviewer:

GEOLOGIST: I think it always starts in (a sense of) wonderment, like – in addition to this thing about imagination. And I guess that you see something you don’t understand – and I believe that’s where it is [...] most rewarding to do research, that is when you are convinced about how something functions, and then you invest all your energy – you sit and think and do this and that for years and then you find out how wrong you were. That is how the world expands. You know, if we only prove our own preconception all the time, then we won’t go anywhere. But that’s where, sometimes you are rewarded with a completely different understanding of the world from the one you had initially. And I believe that is what art is all about too. [...] And blessed be Einstein, whom we always invoke when it’s



about research, he used to say that science does not develop by the accumulation of more data, but rather by the formulation of new questions. That's what it's about.

INTERVIEWER: So, what we are told here in fact ... curiosity, the question mark, ehm, what I hear you say [Mr. Geologist] – which is also the spirit of art – to fail. To explore and also accept the failures.

GEOLOGIST: Yes, exactly. Only the failures teach you anything. You always say, 'a successful experiment builds on experience; experience builds on failed experiments'.

(tvmidtvst.dk, 2021a)

The geologist's words concluded the debate. His comparisons did not cause objections from the panel. Read alongside the four other excerpts in this analytical section, the geologist can be said to also indicate a defining characteristic of this fourth host-assemblage: you do not know what you are about to know, but expanding the world requires a risky leap into the unknown and a willingness to fail and try again. The leap, however, is not simply one of progress into the uncharted territory of a given discipline. Rather, the leap also consists in disrupting as well as bridging understanding across worldviews.

Read like this, the anomalous host-assemblage configures content, guests, and hosts in Naturkraft in ways that can be summed up as follows: despite explicit use of natural science concepts and, to some extent, natural science equipment, this assemblage does not configure content as something exclusively scientific. Rather, the central content of the Naturkraft operations becomes something beyond science as well as beyond art. In the anomalous host-assemblage, content is the *anomalous experiences* outside of specific, disciplinary gazes. It is off the beaten track. And – as the multidisciplinary festival in general as well as the multifaceted design of the park attests to (see also the previous chapter, p. 137 ff.) – it is not only something between or beyond science and art. The anomalous is inside these disciplines too, as well as in the relation to mundane activities such as riding a rope slide and treading into an oak-thicket.

Furthermore, apart from the other host-assemblages, this assemblage does not primarily configure the guest as someone to satisfy or imperceptibly behaviourally modify. Rather, in the anomalous host-assemblage, the guest becomes someone to distract and someone to engage in explorations ‘out of bounds’, so to speak. As such, the anomalous host-assemblage configures the guest as what I would term an *everyday specialist* – an ‘average Joe’ that behaves in accordance with dominant cultural norms, walks inside the lines and thinks within dominant disciplinary segmentations. In response, the anomalous host operates as a distracting catalyst to experiences of the anomalous – not a programmer of behavioural algorithms with predefined directionality, but a *catalyst of leaps* into the unknown.

### Mapping and Transgressing the ‘People Like You’

With the anomalous host-assemblage included, this chapter has now shed light on four different assemblages in operation in enacting a host-identity in Naturkraft. In some respect, the presentation has made the different assemblages pose as conflicting positions in a struggle over which (educational) worldview should dominate the overall identity of the Naturkraft project. In other words, the different hosts may appear abstract combatants in a fight over operational hegemony in the social field of Naturkraft. This presentation, moreover, is not completely incompatible with the tension and the conflict-laden atmosphere that has marked the organization at certain times of my fieldwork. From this perspective, enacting a host-identity in the project – settling the questions of who and what Naturkraft is – poses as a matter of choosing a specific position, more or less exclusively.

However, from the onto-epistemological point of departure that has marked this dissertation so far, I rather consider the sum of different host-assemblages at work in Naturkraft a complex, yet meaningful, response to an even more complex set of sociopolitical conditions. One thing is to uphold an economic basis for an organization that must balance state requirements with how to appeal to a tourism market. Another thing is to combine this balancing act

with the enactment of sustainability-oriented education. On the field of environmental and sustainability education it is a well-established idea that it takes both scientific literacy and behaviour modifications, as well as open-ended explorations to rise to the sustainability challenges through education (UNESCO, 2017; Vare & Scott, 2007). As such, the multiple enactment of a host-identity in the Naturkraft assemblage at large could be interpreted as an expression of what it entails to rise to the sustainability educational challenges in free-market capitalist conditions rather than as a sign of organizational dysfunction. Playing host to a non-formal sustainability educational situation like Naturkraft is then not a matter of either/or but rather both/and.

To return to the question that opened this chapter: Who, then, are the ‘people like you’ – the *becomings-host* – that the architect and the designers handed the Naturkraft project to? The table below sums up the different pedagogical constituents that the four host-assemblages described above enact, including the four different host-identities: *the commodifier*, *the curricular operator*, *the behavioural programmer*, and *the catalyst of leaps*. As such, the table outlines an answer to this initiating question.

HOST-ASSEMBLAGE	CONTENT	GUEST	HOST
COMMERCIAL	Commodity	Market	Commodifier
SCHOOLING	Stately codes	Teachers	Curricular operator
BEHAVIOURIST	User experience (UX)	Conditioned systems	Behavioural programmer
ANOMALOUS	Anomalous experiences	Everyday specialist	Catalyst of leaps
ECOLOGICAL	-	-	-

In line with other research in the (non-formal) sustainability education research area, this table can serve as an empirically-established ideal typology for theoretical considerations of how to balance different concerns in the practical operation of a non-formal sustainability educational initiative without losing sight of educational aims (Van Poeck, Læssøe, & Block, 2017; Vare & Scott, 2007). In elaboration of the analysis, this balancing act also involves considering the dilemmas and tensions that inevitably arise. How, for instance, do you pursue schooling ambitions of scientific rigour and ‘factuality’ while simultaneously striving to accommodate the entertainment desires of vacationers and energetic youngsters (Packer & Ballantyne, 2004)? And how do you appropriately dispense more-or-less overt advice on sustainability behaviours with exploratory open-endedness in the face of the impending, yet constantly merging, wicked problems of *inter alia* climate change, biodiversity loss, and global social inequalities (Block et al., 2019; Kopnina, 2014)?

Yet, for the remainder of this chapter, I pursue another heated, and somewhat radical, discussion in sustainability education of late by adding a fifth (and, for this chapter, final) host-assemblage to the analysis. Hereby, I attempt an ontological shift in perspective. Through this shift, I aim to give voice to aspects in my empirical material that are visibly in operation in and around the park, yet without someone amongst the employees being an obvious key-exponent of these operations. The shift is an attempt to transgress, or at least point towards the possibility of transgressing, the human-centred perspective that prevails in all of the four host-identities above. Hence, I label the fifth host-assemblage the *ecological host-assemblage*.

## The Ecological Host-Assemblage

The *ecological host-assemblage* concerns the Naturkraft operations in light of relations that extend from a realm outside exclusively human agency. This configuration, in other words, has to do with operations enacted also by more-than-human and other-than-human constituents. As in the description of the

anomalous host-assembly, the description in this section rests on more subtle empirical traces that appear only in glimpses in my field notes.

As such, the operations of the ecological host-assembly are unintentional (Tsing, 2021) in contrast to, for instance, the leaps in perspective that the anomalous host intends to catalyze. Whereas the operations of the anomalous host-assembly are understood as departing *inter alia* in the designers' intentions of defamiliarizing experiences (see also the previous chapter, p. 163), the operations of the ecological host-assembly are about the excess of non-human activity that unfolds adjacent to, and in interaction with, the above described host-assemblies.

One example that shows traces of the ecological host came out of my interview with a group of part-time employees. In the interview, one of the part-time employees recounted a particularly memorable incident that happened to her while guiding a group of visitors to the top of the rampart:

I take them to the top of the rampart because I have this thing, if I get that route for a guided tour, I like to stand on the rampart where you get to see most of the park as well as the recreational area [outside]. And then I spend some time explaining what was here before and what it has become. [...] And then all of a sudden, I am interrupted by a woman yelling: 'Look, it's the kingfisher!' or something like that. So, a kingfisher simply flew by, which is a pretty rare bird to watch. And apparently, it passed right by us. [...] So [that experience] is just pretty clear in my memory. [...] Also, because I've used it afterwards for

other tours or in conversations that we've created – or Naturkraft has been part of creating – an area, where something like a kingfisher moves in.

(Part-time employees, August 2021)

The group encounters a kingfisher, a small, shy, bright blue bird, native to the West Jutland region, although currently the population is small and widely scattered (Dansk Ornitologisk Forening, n.d.). The encounter excited the part-time employee along with the rest of her group, making the experience one to remember and one to recount on future guided tours. As such, the kingfisher

altered the situation on the rampart dramatically. One can imagine how without it, the situation would have featured factual stories about the West Jutland landscape and stories of the Naturkraft architecture and designs. Yet, as the kingfisher interfered, shooting across the rampart-trail, something different from human intention and capability determined the situation. Judging by the quote, the immediate encounter was highly intense. For a moment, all attention was on the mere presence of a small blue bird, which the part-time employee did not even see for herself.

In terms of a host-assemblage, what I take from this quote is firstly how the encounter with the kingfisher flattened the relations between the humans and non-humans involved in the situation. In the moment the kingfisher flashed by, the distribution of social roles between guests and hosts dissolved. The part-time employee did not strive to meet any expectations. Guests were not judged or analysed for their ways of behaving. In fact, it was not even given who was the host and guest. In that small instant, everybody rather partook on the same footing. You may say that guests and hosts transformed into critters – inhabitants on planet Earth (Haraway, 2016) – encountering a seldom seen co-inhabitant, the kingfisher. As such, what the critters in Naturkraft encounter in terms of content is what you may call the experience of co-existence – or as Donna Haraway would phrase it, symbiosis (Haraway, 2016). I will return to this concept in more detail below.

Another excerpt from the part-time park guides interview shows illustrative traces of similar other-than-human interferences:

DANIEL: (Reading aloud from a piece of paper on the table) ‘When, in your opinion, does Naturkraft work well for the guest?’ How, I mean, how do you experience that from your position? And what does it require of Naturkraft or of you?

PART-TIME PARK GUIDE: Well, firstly, much depends on the weather out here. So, the weather has to be good. You know, I don’t like it too hot – it’s nice with sunny days, because it’s great to have everybody outside. Because, when it rains, they go inside and then everything just stops. And

we cannot give them the same good experience when there are so many (of them inside). Then it's better to have them in a nice and easy flow 'round the park. So, that's the first thing really.

(Part-time employees, August 2021)

The weather has tremendous influence on the Naturkraft that guests encounter. The weather affects how guests move around in the park: rain sends everybody inside the main building whereas sun and heat keep them outside. It affects the guests' well-being in the park: I, for instance, personally left the park with a heavy headache once after spending a full sunny day there without sunglasses. And the weather affects economy: for instance, visitor numbers peaked on a cloudy summer day in 2020, when, allegedly, the local tourists were less tempted by the nearby beaches and instead visited Naturkraft (Part-time employees, August 2021).

Moreover, in line with the kingfisher example, the distribution of roles between hosts and guests (of the human sort) loses importance when considered from a weather-perspective. Heat and cold, rain and shine effect every human in Naturkraft and alter the experience of Naturkraft accordingly. The weather is way outside the control of Naturkraft employees, and yet it is the first thing on the list for how to set up a good day for visitors. Again, everybody emerges as critters on planet Earth, whose behaviours and wellbeing are highly contingent upon the weather.<sup>34</sup> We inhabit our world on weathered conditions, you may say, living in a symbiotic relationship with something as ephemeral as the

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34 British Anthropologist Tim Ingold writes of our world as a weather-world, emphasizing how '[...] the weather continues to comprise the ever-present undercurrent for our actions as we go along in the world' (Ingold, 2015, p. 72). The weather is omni-present and even, Ingold states, one with the human mood – we are always, imperceptibly, tempered by the weather. And yet, the weather does not convert into an object '[...] that the child or anyone else can have a relationship with' (Ingold, 2015, p. 70). The weather is rather a condition of interaction and relationship. Yet, does that mean the weather is better kept outside of pedagogical concerns or rather, that inviting the weather in is a way of '[...] changing the whole way we think about this world, and about relations with it', as Ingold writes (Ingold, 2015, p. 70)?

weather – which, of course, is also at the core of the all-too-current climate change crisis (IPCC, 2022).<sup>35</sup>

Above, I introduce the ecological perspective by calling it ‘radical’, and some readers may, understandably, question the radicality of a shy blue bird and the whims of the weather to a discussion of sustainability education. So why is this a radical perspective? Well, because it contains openings to challenge some long-held convictions in Western traditions of thought (Lysgaard & Jørgensen, 2020; Scott & Vare, 2021). In particular, the ecological perspective contrasts the fundamental idea of the (Western) human as occupying a privileged position in the cosmos – apart from the surrounding environment, elevated above ‘nature’ and thereby entitled to utilize, conserve, or preserve natural entities as one sees fit (Scott & Vare, 2021).<sup>36</sup> Being a critter amongst critters – if only for as long as it takes to notice a kingfisher passing by – is to momentarily experience a different position, I would argue. In line with how the *anomalous host* operates, it contains an invitation to a leap. Yet, in contrast to the *anomalous host*, the invitation to a leap that the *ecological host* enacts is not primarily a leap out of habituated behaviours and disciplined ways of thought. It is rather a leap in ways of being.

Eco-philosopher Timothy Morton can be called upon to elaborate on this idea. In the 2018 book *Being Ecological*, he focuses on what *being ecological* involves (Morton, 2018). At the core, Morton’s argument is that the problem of *ecological being* – so often treated in academic and political discussions as an ethical question of *how to act on our knowledge of environmental decay* – may be better construed in line with Haraway above. Ecological being, in Morton’s version, becomes a matter of opening up our attention to what is always-already

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35 In a Danish context, the weather seldom has material effects on educational situations beyond tanned noses and wet socks. The ESE literature from other parts of the world, however, addresses the potentially catastrophic impact of the weather in a world of changing climates and considers the role of schools in aiding local communities to mitigate and adapt to possible weather-related disasters (e.g. Feinstein & Mach, 2020).

36 In the previous chapter, I discuss this idea in terms of anthropocentrism (see p. 118 above).



fundamental to human experience – namely, *symbiosis* (p. 183). In a direct response to his implied reader (someone who desperately demands answers to ‘how to be or do something totally different’ (p. 214)), Morton writes:

But you are already a symbiotic being entangled with other symbiotic beings. The problem with ecological awareness and action isn’t that it’s horribly difficult. It’s that it’s too easy. You are breathing air, your bacterial microbiome is humming away, evolution is silently unfolding in the background. Somewhere, a bird is singing and clouds pass overhead. [...] You don’t have to *be* ecological. Because you *are* ecological.

(Morton, 2018, p. 215)

If you dig a few inches deeper into this seemingly careless encouragement, Morton’s argument can be said to revolve around two ideas: the idea of *beauty* and the idea of *hospitality*. Firstly, the beauty-experience, Morton writes, holds a key to understanding what it means to ‘appreciate’ something, not for its utility value or for any other reason in particular, but for its mere presence. That is how beauty works. As Morton writes:

[...] when I try to find out exactly where this feeling is and what it is about the thing, or about me, that is the reason why I’m having this feeling, I can’t isolate it without ruining what precisely is beautiful about it.

(Morton, 2018, p. 178)

At the basis of being ecological is a particular kind of appreciation. It is about appreciating the strange and ambiguous; that which cannot be pinned down easily as either something inside or outside of well-established categories, such as *nature* or *culture*, *child* or *adult*, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Microbiomes in our digestive system is another example: neither ‘us’ nor ‘not-us’. Appreciating such ambiguities is to insert oneself into symbiotic relationships with other lifeforms (Morton, 2018, p. 180), and this is where the *host* comes in.

Acting on the appreciation of *strangeness* is what *hospitality* is all about, Morton asserts (Morton, 2018, p. 183). Hospitality is, in essence, the act of welcoming strangers and ultimately, the logical coherence of this idea depends on

the paradoxical situation of ‘being hospitable to some being you couldn’t possibly be hospitable to’ (Morton, 2018, p. 183). Yet, despite the logical paradox, playing host to friend as well as foe is as everyday an act as any. In experience, this is a constant in life, Morton contends:

We find ourselves in the position of host, permanently. And hosting depends on an uneasy sense of welcome – who’s going to show up through the door? The word *host* stems from a Latin word that can mean both *friend* and *enemy*. We literally host all kinds of beings that can flip from friend to enemy in a moment – that’s what having an allergic reaction is all about. Symbiosis, which is how lifeforms interconnect, is made up of all kinds of uneasy relationships, where beings aren’t in total lockstep with one another.

(Morton, 2018, p. 183)

Following Morton, being ecological hinges on the appreciative act of hosting strangers; giving oneself fully to welcoming the uneasy and unintentional contingencies of symbiotic life. It is something that happens all the time, though spontaneously and in glimpses. Morton points to the experience of art as an example; my fieldwork points to the encounter with a kingfisher and, to some extent, the experience of the weather. Moreover, reading the two empirical excerpts above alongside Morton’s philosophy emphasizes how we, as critters in the symbiotic web of life on planet Earth, are in a constant, reciprocal relationship of hosting and being hosted by multiple more- and other-than-human entities. The *ecological host-assembly* that plays out in *Naturkraft* casts everybody and everything in the roles of *hosts* and *guests* interchangeably, in effect flattening the relationship between constituents. This host-assembly thus involves a different conception of what it means to be a host in the first place. A host is not someone who resides over a certain space or situation. It is not an exclusively human position. It is not someone who encounters guests on the back of strategic analysis or with pedagogical ambitions. The ecological host, rather, operates in the fundamental experience of living always-already in

entanglement with other life-forms, always exposed to the potentially hostile, potentially vital whims of symbiotic co-existence.

## A Host of Hosts

This brings us to the end of this extensive chapter and leaves us with a perspective on the host in *Naturkraft*, in which *Naturkraft* becomes just another instantiation of life on Earth. Encounters between species such as human beings and kingfishers happens all the time; experiences of being in the weather, even more often. From this perspective, the analytical categorizations of the four other host-assemblages are somewhat obliterated. Accordingly, who cares if you welcome guests to *Naturkraft* to sell them a commodity or to enhance their scientific literacy? Who cares if you design a park to lure guests to unconsciously change their behaviours or deliberately leap into unknown conceptual terrain? From the perspective of the ecological host, everyone and everything turns into co-existing critters and symbiotic flows. This includes the differences, tensions, and relations within and between the other host-assemblages described. As such, the table I presented above to summarize the chapter's other findings practically loses its meaning when transported to the ecological perspective.

The thing is, nonetheless, that from the point of view of education, attention to the different ways in which *Naturkraft*, as well as any other social configuration, enacts a relation and/or distinction between nature and culture, should be of vital importance. No matter how temptingly easy Morton makes it sound to *be ecological*, our inter-human affairs and our conceptual severing of ecological ties have already driven the planet to the brink of collapse – and this despite everyday encounters with art, kingfishers, and the whims of the weather. Furthermore, there is not much on the horizon to suggest, this is soon to change (IPCC, 2022). So, dare I write that Morton's implied reader – the one who demands directions for what to *do* differently – is right in his question? In other words, despite the transgressive and radical perspectives of the ecological host, simply *being ecological* also does not make for an approach to set things straight. It seems we humans are way too deep into our long-established social

arrangements to just up and surrender to the ecological drift and 'uneasy sense of welcome' that Morton asks for. As such, the enactment of a host in the Naturkraft project necessarily and unavoidably multiplies; it calls for specific educational arrangements to perceive and contemplate what *being ecological* entails. An ecological host cannot do on their own. It takes a host of hosts.

Now, speaking on the back of this and the three previous analytical chapters, the question becomes, what a multiple host to a multiple place of anomalous sensations framed by multiple imaginaries can teach in terms of sustainably navigating challenges of the Anthropocene in education. That is the question I pursue in the final part of this dissertation.



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# Eccentric Sustainability Education

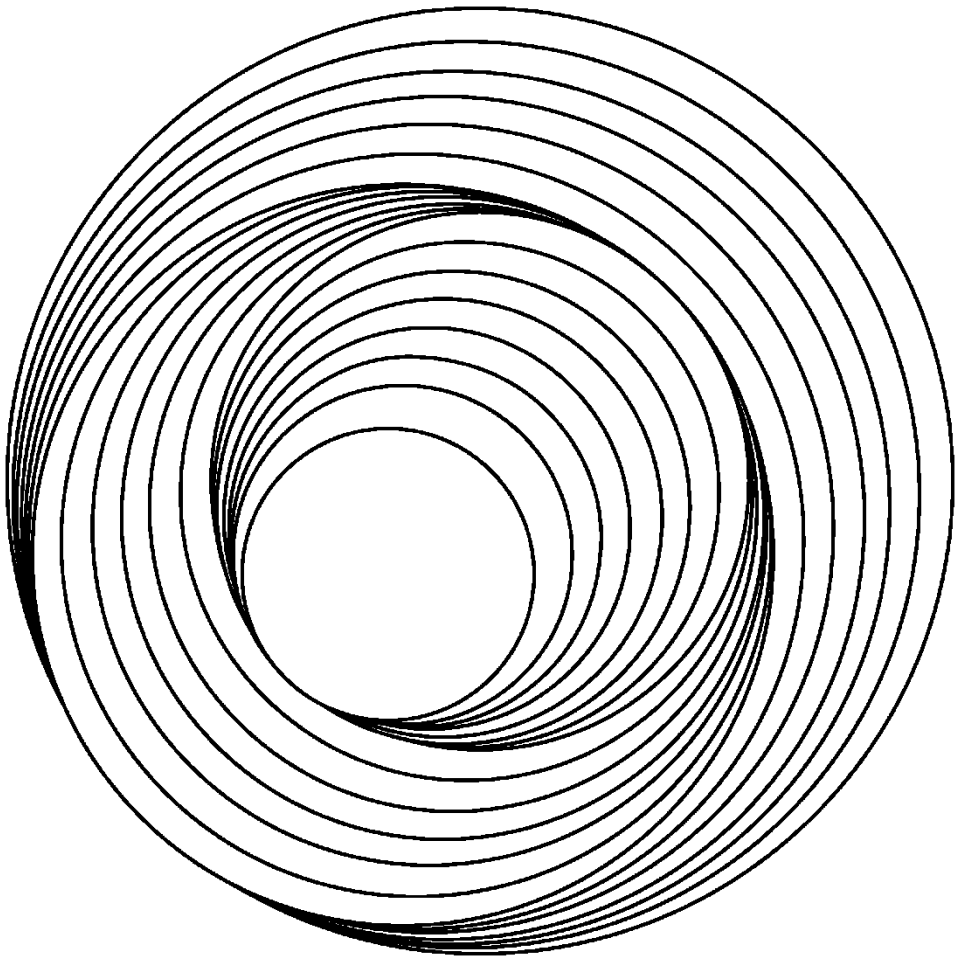


Illustration 22: Eccentric. Illustration by the author



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# Polite Visits and Eccentric Enactments

At the beginning of this dissertation, I set out to explore how the Naturkraft project enacts non-formal sustainability education, and how we are to understand these enactments in light of challenges of the Anthropocene. In the following, I revisit this question considering the preceding four analytical chapters with the aim of ‘coming to term’ with the Naturkraft project; i.e., to dare subsume the multidimensional characterization of the project under one concept. This is not to fence in and fixate a single understanding of the Naturkraft project. Rather, it is to take the preceding analyses as catalysts to the development of a new theoretical position through which to elaborate and progress ideas of Anthropocene-concerned non-formal sustainability education.

In my efforts to understand the Naturkraft project as an enactment of non-formal sustainability education, I have established four distinct analytical perspectives through the dissertation. The chapters each focus on one curricular dimension of the project: purpose, content, and – from two complementary angles – method. In this, I have analysed my empirical material based on questions regarding *why* Naturkraft engages in sustainability education (see Chapter 4), *what* the pedagogical work of Naturkraft takes as its content (see Chapter 5), and finally, *how* Naturkraft conducts its educational activities. The two different approaches to the latter question comprise dealing with the bodily and material aspects of Naturkraft’s curatorial and curricular design (see Chapter 6) and addressing the various host roles and their pedagogical implications in Naturkraft (see Chapter 7). With this foundation, I have presented and discussed the Naturkraft project as a composite educational entity that reflects a diverse and not necessarily compatible set of sustainability-oriented hopes and intentions



through an equally multifaceted and multi-modal educational enactment of the Danish West Coast. Moreover, the analyses shine light on how this educational configuration affords visitors experiences of confronting and momentarily disturbing culturally instated subjectivities, while the analyses also point towards the tensions entailed in hosting such defamiliarizing encounters.

This chapter, in turn, discusses a series of questions related to the sustainability education enactment of the Naturkraft project across the independent analytical points of the four preceding chapters. One pertinent question arises concerning *the mode* in which Naturkraft pedagogically addresses and handles sustainability issues. Another question pertains to how Naturkraft's sustainability education enactment relates to questions about the Anthropocene. Finally, I find it relevant to discuss how we can understand the peculiar and slightly deviant social position of a non-formal educational project like Naturkraft and the conditions this position implies for educational work for sustainability. The discussion of these three questions unfolds as a comprehensive essayistic reflection, and along the way, I introduce the concept of *the eccentric* to connect the three questions. The point, in other words, becomes that Naturkraft can be understood as a case of *eccentric education* and that this mode of education, unconventional and slightly strange as it is, offers a path worth exploring if we want to nurture hopes of change.

## The Nature We Create Ourselves

In a Danish newspaper article from October 2020, the Danish Professor of Anthropology, Nils Bubandt, gives his comment on the Naturkraft project. In an aphoristic quote, the article headline sums up Bubandt's considerations: 'We have to get used to the fact that we only have the nature we create ourselves' (Petersen, 2020). Naturkraft, in Bubandt's opinion, can spur visitors' reflections on the dilemmas immanent to this statement as well as incite Danish urban dwellers to re-engage with the out-of-doors (Petersen, 2020). As such, Bubandt offers an affirmative opening to a discussion of the educational potentials in Naturkraft. I get to ask what the implications are of having only 'the nature we

create ourselves' and subsequently, how Naturkraft aids in a 'getting used to' this condition.

However, for those familiar with Bubandt's scholarly work, the newspaper quote must be taken as a somewhat toned-down version of a series of considerably more dramatic insights. In close collaboration with Tsing and scholars such as Heather Swanson, Elaine Gain, Donna Haraway, and Karen Barad, Bubandt has made remarkable contributions to contemporary, multidisciplinary discussions on the implications of the Anthropocene (e.g., Tsing, Mathews, & Bubandt, 2019; Tsing, Swanson, et al., 2017). These contributions involve vivid ethnographic descriptions of our planet in contemporary decay; a *damaged planet*, as the title of one of the collaboration's influential volumes has it (Tsing, Swanson, et al., 2017). In light of the dispatches from ruined and industrially exhausted places of earth that the collaboration has produced, our contemporary world seems on the verge of collapse (Tsing, 2015). In that sense, we are in a situation where 'getting used to' man-made-nature becomes rather a question of how to cultivate 'arts of living on a damaged planet'. As such, 'getting used to' becomes, eventually, a matter of survival (Tsing, Bubandt, Gan, & Swanson, 2017).

Following Tsing, Mathews, and Bubandt, our damaged planet is the result of a dual process. As they write: 'Anthropocene landscapes emerge in the relation of ecological simplification and feral proliferation' (Tsing et al., 2019). Since the advent of modern capitalism, *homo sapiens* has imposed simplified ecological structures upon the landscape. The monocrops and even rows of plantations, for instance, has made it easier to utilize natural resources for profitable and progressive ends (Haraway & Tsing, 2019). These ecological simplifications, moreover, have been fuelled by what Tsing terms 'the modern human conceit': the blind belief in progress and techniques of alienation intimately entwined with colonialism and capitalist modes of production (Tsing, 2015, p. 19). However, although capitalist planning takes part in the emergence of the Anthropocene landscape, it does '[...] not fully determine the results' (Tsing et al., 2019, p. S190). The process of ecological simplifications spurs unintended side-effects. As Tsing cautions: '[A]lthough some interpreters see the [Anthropocene] as

implying the triumph of humans, the opposite seems more accurate: without planning or intention, humans have made a mess of our planet' (Tsing, 2015, p. 19). The mess emerges in the form of *feral proliferation*: global warming, plastic and chemical pollutants, unknown viruses spreading wide and wildly from the simplification processes (Tsing et al., 2019). As such, in the description by Tsing and colleagues, the Anthropocene becomes an era of man-made-nature (a particular, privileged part of 'mankind', mind you), with increasingly severe and uncontrollable side-effects.

Meanwhile, it is worth emphasizing that 'the Anthropocene' is a concept. This barely comes as a surprise. Yet, as Mary Louise Pratt notes in her short concluding essay to *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet* (Tsing, Swanson, et al., 2017), concepts '[...] are never true; they only enable' (Pratt, 2017, p. G170). That is, the value of the concept of 'the Anthropocene' lies in what it enables. Pratt elaborates by quoting Elizabeth Grosz: 'Concepts are ways of adding ideality to the world [...] transforming the givenness of chaos, the pressing problem, into various forms of order, into possibilities for [...] being otherwise' (Grosz, 2011, as cited in Pratt, 2017). Concepts enable us to think and be otherwise by enacting the world in specific forms. From this theoretical point of departure, Pratt states:

The point of 'Anthropocene' is to enable reflection in Western academic circuits on what this volume calls 'arts for living on a damaged planet'. The concept starts a conversation on 'what we humans are going to do now, in the midst of an increasingly given fate of ruination and extinction'

(Pratt, 2017, p. G170)

Conceptualizing 'the Anthropocene' is an invitation to a conversation on how to move on – how to 'get used to' our present life-conditions to follow Bubandt. As part of this conversation, Tsing, Swanson, et al. (2017) propose *monsters* and *ghosts* as figures for thinking about *arts of living on a damaged planet*. The etymological and cultural historical meanings of these strange beings each open their dimension of the Anthropocene: Monstrosity is life in entanglement. It involves attention to the ways in which all things living are vitally dependent on

collaboration with other forms of life. That way, monstrosity reflects both the ‘[...] wonders of symbiosis *and* the threats of ecological disruption’ (Tsing, Swanson, et al., 2017, p. M2). Paying attention to monsters is hence paying attention to both life-giving relations across species and life-forms, as well as paying attention to the terrors of such relations gone awry. Ghosts, on their side, urge an attention to ‘[...] the vestiges and signs of past ways of life still charged in the present’ (Tsing, Swanson, et al., 2017, p. G1). Ghosts are the haunting shapes of past ways of life inscribed in the landscape. The ability to notice ghosts is a difficult, yet particularly urgent capacity: ‘Our era of human destruction has trained our eyes only on the immediate promises of power and profits. This refusal of the past, and even the present, will condemn us to continue fouling our own nests’ (Tsing, Swanson, et al., 2017, p. G2). As such, paying attention to ghosts is paying attention to past alternatives and present examples of ‘[...] what has been ignored because it never fit the time line of progress’, as Tsing writes elsewhere (2015, p. 21).

Getting used to the ‘nature we create ourselves’ might thus imply that we metaphorically consider monsters and ghosts – creatures long exiled to shadowy territories on the margins of our progressive and enlightened world – to re-imagine less destructive ways of being (Tsing, Swanson, et al., 2017, pp. M2, G12). Monsters and ghosts are notoriously abject creatures, yet they follow on the heels of simplifying and progressive humans. Here, they threaten to distort and disturb our glitzy stories of progress-without-end. It could be a worthwhile educational point of attention to seek out eerie encounters with the strange and ‘out-of-the-mainstream’ (Malone & Truong, 2017) in pursuing redefined and more sustainable ways of living.

### *Encountering Monsters and Ghosts in Naturkraft*

In extension of my arguments in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, I would contend that Naturkraft could fruitfully be understood through the monstrous as well as ghostly figures of thought. Starting with monstrosity in the above sense of the term (Tsing, Bubandt, et al., 2017), it is clear from the analytical descriptions in

Chapter 5 that monstrous entanglement of life plays an explicit part in the exhibitions and expeditions in the park: the eight local biotopes, for instance – each reconstructed in Naturkraft from their geological composition up – direct attention to the diversity of the West Coast landscape as it has evolved over millennia. By exhibiting the interrelation between geological conditions, flora, and fauna in specific places, each biotope offers grounds for reflection on the importance of symbiotic making; the entangled coming-into-being of life. The same goes for the expeditions that lead visitors out into explorations of interrelated dynamics of the world – physically, biologically, geographically, and culturally. Through these curatorial features, the Naturkraft park becomes a small-scale, multi-disciplinary force field, mimicking the symbiotic wonders of West Coast life.

Simultaneously, the monstrous terrors of the Anthropocene are implicit lures in the Naturkraft setup: exhibitions and expeditions allude to stories of consequences of CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions, ocean plastic pollution, and human-induced biodiversity havoc. The human utilization of the forces of nature has and has had ecological consequences, also in the stories in Naturkraft. Yet, in terms of curatorial design, Naturkraft does not overtly advertise such stories. Apart from a few very explicit statements – an impaled polar bear being one of them (see from p. 141 above) – the monstrous terrors remain allusions. Naturkraft is no *information dump*, as eco-philosopher Timothy Morton describes an all-too-typical mode of communicating matters of ecology (Morton, 2018, p. 9). Naturkraft is not predominantly a place in which to acquire the latest facts on global warming or biodiversity decline and then feel guilty. Rather, encountering monsters in Naturkraft is predominantly an encounter with the ‘wonders of symbiosis’, yet invoking a strange and ambivalent sense of unease.

A similar ambivalence emerges when considering Naturkraft in terms of ghostly aspects of the Anthropocene (Gan, Tsing, Swanson, & Bubandt, 2017). For instance, as pointed out in Chapter 5 (see from p. 109 above), the West Coast natural history exhibits in Naturkraft expose both entangled evolution and recent anthropogenic disruptions of the landscape. The exhibits tell of past human inhabitants of the West Coast living off the land and sea in increasingly

industrialized forms: a story of how the West Coast human has adapted, leaving increasingly simplified forms of land in its wake. Ghosts feature in the guise of small-scale models of extinct animals and illustrations of past human ways of life (Gan et al., 2017). Yet again, the depiction is subtle. The historical display does not point fingers. Here, landscape transformations appear rather as the result of human endeavours to survive with and despite the fierce play of the forces of nature.

Meanwhile, the most recent example on this landscape transformation timeline, which is not included in the exhibit, is the Naturkraft park itself. In more than one sense, the park as such implicitly evokes Anthropocene ghosts: For one, the collection of local biotopes in the park's outdoor design can be considered a display of landscape structures of the past. Although most biotopes are presently found on the West Coast, the proximity in which they are assembled in Naturkraft is anachronistic. The collection of biotopes evokes ghosts by omitting the vast in-between stretches of industrial land that mark the contemporary West Coast. There are no monocrop biotopes in Naturkraft. As such, a ghostly character emerges as an effect of the way in which a biologically heterogeneous place like Naturkraft is obviously artificial; obviously man-made. The biodiverse abundance in the park strongly alludes to the absence of biodiversity outside of the park.

Secondly, Naturkraft is – in part at least – fuelled by modern human conceit (Tsing, 2015). As I detailed in Chapters 4 and 5, aspirations of regional progress permeate the project history as do stories of nature as a resource; a resource for fishing and family-outings as well as for green-tech harnessing (see e.g., p. 88 and p. 126 above). Nothing would have become of the Naturkraft-project, were it not for these stories. Moreover, as the main architect claimed in the interview quote I discussed in Chapter 6: 'The project in itself illustrates [the Anthropocene], which is why I like this tight, geometrical shape. You know, it's the will of the human that prevails here' (Interview with architect, September 2021). In the form of Naturkraft, the will of the human is wedged into the West Coast landscape, physically as well as mentally. And again, this all too

obvious presence amplifies an Anthropocene absence: the absence of man's ability to think outside of progress (Tsing, 2015).

As such, *Naturkraft* addresses matters of the Anthropocene in an Anthropocene way. Monstrous entanglements of life and ghostly vestiges of past ways of life are present in exhibitions and designs along with the modern human's explicit aspirations for progress. Simultaneously, these presences foster strange and ambivalent senses of absence: the ghostly absence of biodiversity in an agricultural, monocrop landscape; the restless absence of the ability to think ecological action without progress and, as discussed in terms of becoming-child in Chapter 6, the absence-presence of alternative subjectivities (see p. 158 above). These presences and absences rub against each other, producing a strange experience of being simultaneously inside and outside of nature, culture, and modern progressive subjectivity.

### *Educative Encounters: Juxtaposition and Attunement*

ESE-scholars Saari and Mullen (2018) lend a perspective to elaborate on some of the ambivalence exposed above. Drawing on Morton they propose *juxtaposition* as a powerful strategy to promote educational experiences in the Anthropocene. Their argument pivots on the uncanny experience of *global warming*, which, too, conjures up ghosts: '[...] we can experience its effects and compute its existence, yet we are unable to point to it in any meaningful sense as if it exists hauntologically' (Saari & Mullen, 2018, p. 1). Global warming, in line with the above characteristics of the Anthropocene, *haunts*; simultaneously absent and present it produces '[...] an uncanny aspect to our experience of place' (p. 1). Juxtaposition, then, becomes a strategy for making tangible the uncanny ghosts of global warming by '[...] bringing into uncanny proximity, play or comparison objects and events that are conventionally seen as distant, incompatible or all together abject [...]' (p. 7).

Saari and Mullen discuss the art-installation *Ice Watch* by Danish architect-artist Olafur Eliasson and Danish geologist Minik Rosing as an example: Twelve blocks of ice from the ice sheet of Greenland placed in clock-shape formation

on a Parisian square on the occasion of the COP21 (Morton, 2018, pp. 119-120). This work of art juxtaposes a politically charged moment with ‘authentically’ melting ice, Parisian urban life, and random bodies passing by, just to mention a few components. As such, as Eliasson notes, ‘it is a mistake to think that the work of art is the circle of ice – it is *the space it invents*’ (Zarin, 2015, as cited in Saari & Mullen, 2018. Italics added). The artwork is not the particular objects, it is what happens when these objects gather in this specific location at this specific time. The space invented sets in motion considerations on global warming and the wider Anthropocene condition by bringing Greenlandic ice into close proximity with the urban Parisian environment and climate as well as with the symbolic connotations of the clock.

Similarly, we can think of Naturkraft as an *invented space of juxtapositions*, which ‘[...] have the potential to draw to the surface aspects of our haunting ecological unconsciousness, or those aspects we intentionally suppress and would rather not dwell on’, as Saari and Mullen phrase it (2018, p. 8). Ideally, Naturkraft stirs reflection and awareness by its strange appearance in an otherwise flat West Coast landscape, dominated by patches of agricultural monocrops. It invents a unique space as an effect of the entities and qualities assembled here; a space or a happening with the educative capacities of making (uncannily) tangible the Anthropocene condition on the Danish West Coast.

Moreover, it can be argued that by inviting visitors into bodily encounters with these strange conditions, Naturkraft does more than raise awareness. In continuation of the concluding discussion of Chapter 7, I would argue that the aesthetic experiences in Naturkraft harbour educational potentials for *attunement* with the more-than-human world (e.g. H. Illeris, 2022; Lynch & Mannion, 2021; Lysgaard & Bengtsson, 2020). In artist-educator Helene Illeris’ iteration (2022), *attunement* is when ‘[...] two objects unintentionally reach out towards each other, causing a third object, ‘the relationship’, to come into being’ (Morton, 2013b, p. 23, as cited in Illeris, 2022). In Illeris’ presentation, this unintentional relating is independent of conscious attention, yet highly dependent on bodily, sensuous encounters. Again, it is a passive experience of ‘being



ecological' without trying too hard, as Morton teasingly describes it (Morton, 2018). And attunement, Illeris argues, is crucial in the face of the Anthropocene:

In the Anthropocene era, human bodies are an inseparable part of geological and biological changes that now are happening [...]. To grasp the significance of the Anthropocene it is thus crucial that we as humans get in touch with the planet that we are part of, not only as a resource for human expansion, but as a world of objects, each with their own mysterious form of existence.

(H. Illeris, 2022, pp. 184-185)

We, as humans, must connect with the world through sensuous encounters to recognize the inherently mysterious and strange forms of existence that we live amongst. I would argue that it is what can happen in the bodily play on installations and amongst biotopes in the Naturkraft park. Here, you get to sense your body as part of a changing world, cast amongst other living entities. Yet, as can be argued in the continuation of my analyses in Chapter 6, these experiences do not result in a becoming-familiar (see p. 163 above). The world does not appear less messy or less complex as an effect of the encounters. Rather, the encounters reveal the immanent strangeness of the world. In my analysis of the grown-up body on the balance web, for instance, the body even becomes foreign to itself. Strangeness does not only emerge in the encounter with an external 'nature'. Strangeness is immanent to any encounter (Lysgaard et al., 2019).

As such, as Saari and Mullen note, these ways of thinking about relating to the Anthropocene produce an educational ethics different from holistically-oriented environmental education (Saari & Mullen, 2018). Relating through juxtaposition, as well as through attunement, is not about 'overcoming alienation from nature'. It is not, I may add, about curing 'nature deficit disorder' (Louv, 2009). Maybe it is about realizing – not how to come closer to 'nature' – but how all our human attempts at coming closer to nature are in fact attempts to dominate or control a flow that, for one, we are always already a part of, and secondly, that always spawns *feral proliferations* once we try to control and fence it in (Tsing et al., 2019). As such, the task may be, rather, as American

feminist philosopher of science Donna Haraway phrases it, about *staying with the trouble* (Haraway, 2016).

### *Cultivating Response-Able Visitors*

The educational approaches that Saari and Mullen, as well as Illeris, propose, and which I presence through the above analytical reading of *Naturkraft*, might sound passive, bordering on ignorant, in the face of the looming (and ongoing) catastrophes of the Anthropocene. In the plain language that surrounds *Naturkraft*, you might ask, how it could count as any kind of sustainability education to become confused from nature-culture clashes and subtle artful absences. What is educative about sensing the wind on your skin and the ground beneath your feet?

I like the way Haraway aids in answering these questions. Through her speculative ecological philosophy, educating for sustainability can be about cultivating the ability to respond to the anthropogenic mess that is the Anthropocene. In the opening lines to her book *Staying with the Trouble* (2016), she writes:

*Trouble* is an interesting word. It derives from a thirteenth-century French verb meaning ‘to stir up,’ ‘to make cloudy,’ ‘to disturb.’ We – all of us on Terra – live in disturbing times, mixed-up times, troubling and turbid times. The task is to become capable, with each other in all of our bumpy kinds, of response.

(Haraway, 2016, p. 1)

To stay with the trouble is to insist on the messiness of our time. To be capable of responding to the mess is to insist on *sympoiesis* – making in collaboration – as the prerequisite for all being (and all surviving). And furthermore, staying with the trouble is neither to despair at nor to ignore the ‘[...] extent and seriousness of the trouble [...]’ (p. 4); something that too easily follows from responding with either technofix-beliefs or nihilist game-over attitudes (p. 3). Although

technology can make helpful contributions, it will not come to our rescue, and yet everything is not lost.

In an illuminating chapter, Haraway draws on Belgian philosopher Vinciane Despret to argue the virtue of *polite visits* as a response. Haraway writes:

Visiting is not an easy practice; it demands the ability to find others actively interesting, even or specially others most people already claim to know all too completely, to ask questions that one's interlocutors truly find interesting, to cultivate the wild virtue of curiosity, to retune one's ability to sense and respond – and to do all this politely!

(Haraway, 2016, p. 127)

Translated into the contours of a response-able subject, Haraway can be said to advocate the cultivation of a *polite visitor*. This visitor is capable of making interesting what, at first sight, appears all too familiar; like Despret, '[...] allergic to denunciation and hungry for discovery [...]' (p. 127). The polite visitor is a curious subject capable of thinking in '[...] attunement with those she thinks with [...]' (p. 126); of sensuously as well as cognitively adapting to '[...] letting those one visits intra-actively shape what occurs' (p. 127). This, too, is the virtue of politeness that '[...] does the energetic work of holding open the possibility that surprises are in store, that something *interesting* is about to happen [...]' (p. 127). The polite visitor is *tuned* to the movements of the world and able to engage the interesting in the mundane lives of humans as well as non-humans. She is *polite* in the sense that she does not dismiss opportunities for experiencing differently, sensing differently, knowing differently.

Read through Haraway, the *polite visitor* might be the ideal subject to emerge in the Naturkraft enactments of education. It is a subject not overburdened by doomsday perspectives, while simultaneously not ignoring them. It is a subject not overinvested in technological hopes, yet not ignorant of technologies' potentially interesting contributions to the Anthropocene conversation. But most of all, it is a curious subject, constantly scouting out for the interesting in the mundane; the different and strange in the well-known; a subject '[...] alert to off-the-beaten-path practices' (p. 127). Being response-able, in Haraway's

sense of the term, is a philosophical and epistemological obligation to meet the world as a lively mess in order to strike out immanent possibilities for being different. The monsters and ghosts of the Anthropocene are hence not beasts to be slain, but strangers to pay a visit.

So, via Tsing, Bubandt, and colleagues, we get to think about the Naturkraft enactments of sustainability education as staged encounters with the monstrous and ghostly character of the Anthropocene (Tsing, Swanson, et al., 2017). Saari and Mullen, as well as Illeris, lend perspectives to consider these encounters as educative, in the sense that they raise awareness on uncanny aspects of our anthropogenic surroundings as well as engage visitors in a bodily relating to the world; a kind of relating that draws its potency from being mindless and inherently strange. Finally, when thought with Haraway, such staged encounters with the mess of the Anthropocene present an avenue for cultivating response-able subjectivities. Naturkraft can, ideally, cultivate a practice of curiosity in which humans engage the challenges of the Anthropocene as curious and *polite visitors*.

## Personal Steps Towards Eccentric Education

In the remainder of this chapter, I will attempt to combine these insights with an eye to how Naturkraft can be understood as an educational endeavour to cultivate response-ability to challenges of the Anthropocene. Above, I introduced *ghosts* and *monsters* as conceptual figures to help us contemplate the human-nature relations in and of the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene is a conceptual figure, coined to enable thought to grapple with the massive scale and implications of human activity of late on planet Earth. Below, I seek out a conceptual figure to capture the qualities of the educational efforts of the Naturkraft project. As such, I do not pursue an exhaustive descriptive label to summarize the analytical insights of this dissertation. Rather, I aim for a concept that directs attention to and aids discussion of some general educational potentials, which I believe I have identified in the Naturkraft project.

I think about this pursuit in continuation of the analytical logics of Chapter 7 above. Here, I inquired into the ways in which the Naturkraft project enacts the role of a *host* to the West Coast in different ways. The host, as I describe it in the chapter, is a *persona*: an ideal and theoretical type of character, who takes on themselves the pedagogical responsibility of engaging visitors in the workings of the Naturkraft park. Following my argument above, I contend that these workings concern *monsters* and *ghosts* of the Anthropocene. In content as well as form, Naturkraft is a place to encounter these abstract creatures. My question to pursue below then is, who the ideal persona is to host such creatures. In the following, I consider and discuss four different characters as part of my argument.

The first persona to consider could be the *Ghostbuster*. Popularized in a 1984 blockbuster (and its three sequels) by (almost) the same name, the Ghostbuster is characterized by their technological superiority over all sorts of paranormal beings ("Ghostbusters," n.d.). Dressed in stained boilersuits and armed with all sorts of dubious looking technological equipment, the Ghostbuster is called upon whenever a monster or ghost disturbs busy metropolitan life. The Ghostbuster has acquired their (equally dubious) ghostbusting skills in (peripheral) science departments of prestigious universities, and although the Ghostbuster is fascinated with paranormal life, their aim is to outsmart and slay the disturbers of societal peace and normality – and to get paid in return ("Ghostbusters," n.d.).

In educational vernacular, the Ghostbuster is a caricature techno-optimist proponent of science-based solutions to our present planetary impasse. Challenges of the Anthropocene should be managed primarily through high-tech engineering which aids human civilisation in subduing the monstrous nuisances of human-nature relationships gone awry. Moreover, although well-concealed underneath a nerdy outward appearance, these initiatives should preferably also benefit the economic bottom line as what some commentators have described as *ecological modernization* (Dryzek, 2005; Læssøe, 2010). On the field of non-formal sustainability education, Ghostbuster mode reflects affinities for STEM-subjects and preoccupations with scientifically established methods to

guide educational efforts (Dotson et al., 2020; Evans & Achiam, 2021). Although the Naturkraft project in certain respects shows inclinations towards this mode – especially in the early iterations of the project (see from page 88 above) and in formal schooling-oriented activities (see from page 183 above) – STEM-related subjects generally feature in Naturkraft as possible entry points for multi-disciplinary contemplations on Anthropocene entanglements rather than as technical objectives to achieve. The Ghostbuster, in other words, misses the mark.

Another persona to consider could then be the *Clairvoyant*. This persona would have an otherwise sensitive relationship with the creatures of the Anthropocene compared to the Ghostbuster. The Clairvoyant represents a sub-culture of spiritually gifted (semi-)professionals, who operate from private enclaves, often home offices, from which they offer sessions and lessons to the specially interested. In contrast to the Ghostbuster, the Clairvoyant relies on the imaginative collaboration of their clients rather than on technological equipment and stealth. That way, the Clairvoyant carefully assists private clients in co-authored reconnection and reconciliation with the spirits of those who have passed.

From a non-formal sustainability educational perspective, the Clairvoyant persona resembles educational approaches to the Anthropocene that argue the importance of relational ethics in a world of fragile multispecies and more-than-human entanglements (Duhn, 2017; Somerville, 2017; Swanson, 2020; Taylor, 2017). Many proponents of this approach champion the subtle ambition of noticing and listening to ‘stories’ in other-than-rational registers to learn about multi-species living and, ultimately, to re-story and re-imagine ways of survival in precarious times (Adsit-Morris, 2017; Malone et al., 2017). As discussed above, the Naturkraft project comes close, at times, to establishing a space for contemplative and caring encounters with other-than-human beings of past and present, i.e., monstrous and ghostly encounters (Tsing, Bubandt, et al., 2017). Yet, in contrast to the intimate and guided Clairvoyant sessions, Naturkraft is a loud and gesticulating invitation to eerie experiences.

A third persona to consider could then be the *Shaman*. Known to scholars of Northern Asian tribal cultures since the birth of Anthropology, these socially high-ranking characters play the role of the medium-counsellor, who connects and balance societal life with the transcendent or spirit world (Diószegi & Eliade, 2023). The mystic method of the Shaman involves rituals with intoxicating drugs, trance-provoking song and dance and correspondences in unfathomable tongues. Additionally, the Shaman holds much authority in animistic tribal societies on account of their access to transcendent worlds. Whereas the Clairvoyant exerts their paranormal abilities from a marginal social position, the Shaman uses their abilities to impose power of definition. Furthermore, as their actions may bring benefits as well as harm to the tribe, the Shaman's authority builds on respect as well as fear (Diószegi & Eliade, 2023).

In the context of non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene, the Shaman persona shares traits with pedagogical approaches that boast of critical confidence in the face of established educational forms. The Shaman-approach convincingly insists on the possibility of alternative, non-rationally grounded cosmologies. Unlike the Clairvoyant, the Shaman is not afraid to strike out alternative paths through the Anthropocene mess; paths with a clear activist slant and norm-overturning perspectives. Specifically, I would argue that one can find the Shaman's traits in, for example, The Crex Crex Collective's recent proposal for a *Wild Pedagogy* (Blenkinsop, Morse, & Jickling, 2022; Jickling et al., 2018). The Naturkraft project in part reflects both the valuation of *wilderness* that characterizes the Crex Crex Collective's proposal and the questioning of norms (Blenkinsop et al., 2022). Yet, whereas the Shamanistic tendencies make the Crex Crex Collective display overtly rebel ambitions, the transgressive ambitions of the Naturkraft project are less explicit.

However, none of the above do justice to the Naturkraft mode. Despite his nerdy demeanour and good-humoured nature, the Ghostbuster is too technologically focused and aggressive, blasting his way to normalcy with his masculine dominator mentality on display (literally in the form of the iconic ghost-prohibited sign worn on his boilersuit). Conversely, the Clairvoyant is too private to fully reflect the Naturkraft project. While the Clairvoyant assists the

spiritual seeker in the art of (re)connecting with ghosts, the Naturkraft project reaches a broader public through otherwise excessive and noisy means. The educational intentions may be similar, but the methods and the social positions are quite different. Finally, although both the Shaman and the Naturkraft project involve ambitions of transgressing norms – disciplinary, social, bodily – the Naturkraft project does not boast about these ambitions as overtly as does the Shaman.

### *The Unconventional and Slightly Strange*

Enter the eccentric. Following Oxford's Pocket Dictionary, the eccentric is 'a person of unconventional and slightly strange views or behaviour' ("eccentric," 2013). In this very general understanding, all the three personas above could qualify as eccentric under the right circumstances. Moreover, the term *eccentric* is age-old, stemming from the Greek *ekkentros* literally meaning 'out of the centre' ("eccentric," 2013). Across historical periods, societal discourses and disciplinary boundaries, the term has had a range of variegated connotations ("eccentric," 2013). Yet, when I write about *the eccentric*, I use the word in a restricted sense. In particular, I build my idea of the eccentric from anthropologist George E. Marcus' essay 'On eccentricity' (Marcus, 1995).

Marcus explores the social mode of eccentricity – and the social role of the eccentric – from a vantage point of what he calls 'mature American dynastic families and fortunes' (Marcus, 1995). These families are the nobilities of modern industrialized USA; families of fame and fortune that have occupied the top societal tiers for generations. As such, Marcus makes a point of narrowing the scope of his discussions down to eccentricity in the context of 'heirs to great wealth' (Marcus, 1995, p. 48). However, he makes more general claims and characterizations too, which I find apply to the Naturkraft project and open productive avenues for sustainability educational thought.

Building from Marcus's essay, four aspects characterize what I propose as *the eccentric persona* or *mode*: One, the eccentric must be considered neither an imposter nor a mentally ill person. Marcus notes how, from an



anthropological perspective, clinical descriptions impede understandings of eccentricity as '[...] a fully viable form of life in society' (Marcus, 1995, p. 48). Similarly, I will add that understanding the eccentric as someone intentionally 'putting on a show' equally obstructs understanding the eccentric as a form of life. Two, following Marcus, *eccentric* '[...] is rarely if ever a term of self-reference but is a label of social judgement of a particular person's behavior' (Marcus, 1995). To be eccentric requires a judgemental external gaze. It is a question about whether someone falls outside of social conventions. Three, social acceptance, respect even, is a prerequisite for someone to be considered eccentric. As such, the eccentric is endowed with substantial symbolic power.<sup>37</sup> If not respected, though, the eccentric is too easily dismissed and put out of influence. Four, eccentricity is the outward expression of a distributed identity authored by multiple agents. Eccentricity, in other words, emerges in internally incompatible, multifarious configurations.

In relation to the first characteristic of the eccentric, several traces can be found in the Naturkraft project. An example is the deliberate way in which the project takes on existence in the space between genuine and artificial nature. Indeed, in a concrete way, the nature in Naturkraft is artificial and contrived, yet at the same time, it is as vibrant as any other biotope. In a sense, Naturkraft is an imperfect representation of the surrounding biological diversity of the West Coast, and at the same time, it is a part of this West Coast in its own right. Moreover, it is noteworthy how the Naturkraft project, as it unfolds in my analyses, genuinely plays out a multitude of human intentions and understandings that cannot be controlled under one heading or in one form. The eccentricity of Naturkraft, in this sense, appears as a balancing act between feigned consensus and organizational disintegration – although the latter is dangerously close at times.

That being said, the fact that the project cannot be captured in one tasteful headline is not intended by those involved. I have several times overheard

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37 By 'symbolic power' I mean the power to impose ones definitions and value judgements of the social world and, in effect, exert social dominance over the less powerful (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

discussions about what to call Naturkraft. An amusement park? An experience park? A science centre? Time and again, it turns out that no designations are entirely fitting or entirely satisfying. There have also been repeated discussions about whether 'sustainability' should play a role in the project's self-description. Describing the place as eccentric education leads us to appreciate that the Naturkraft project falls outside (more or less) well-established categories while remaining explorative in relation to what is essentially conveyed. As I quoted the main architect in the above Chapter 6 (see p. 147 above):

You know, it's the juxtaposition of things that somehow makes [Naturkraft] a bit more ... It's not that easy to grasp. And it could be an expression of it being schizophrenic and not really knowing what it is itself. But it could also simply be that it is a bit more strange and thus, you know, provokes curiosity.

(Interview with architect, September 2021)

Unlike the Ghostbuster, the Clairvoyant, and Shaman, Naturkraft does not boast about its identity or its relationship to questions of the Anthropocene. Here, there are no unequivocal technological quick-fixes, intimate sessions of correspondence with monsters and ghosts, nor fully developed alternative cosmologies to obey. And at the same time, elements of all three emerge in ways that challenge the visitor's accustomed perceptions of categories such as 'human,' 'nature,' and 'education.'

However, thirdly, it must be noted that the eccentric's ability to exert influence is contingent on whether the eccentric enjoys social respect or not. The eccentric mode is precarious. In the case of the Naturkraft project, this is expressed by the fact that the project's eccentric mode pedagogically reveals itself as subtly sensory estrangements of the visitor's body and as cracks in the communicative surface. It would be easy to understand the Naturkraft park as merely the setting for a pleasant day with the family, where everyone goes home with a bit more knowledge about the forces of nature, the natural history of the West Coast, and local biodiversity. However, this analytical understanding would overlook the many complex layers of Anthropocene issues that,

following my argument above, also unfold in and with the Naturkraft project. It requires respect for the strange and immediately intangible in the Naturkraft project to engage with these layers. It requires the *politeness* of Despret and Haraway's ideal subject discussed above (Haraway, 2016). In other words, it requires respect for the fact that the strange and intangible itself can constitute a pedagogical core – and indeed a core of central relevance for the time we live in.

Finally, it is pertinent to note that the pedagogical core of eccentric education emerges as an effect of the eccentric's particular configuration – and not the other way around, as if it were a form of essentialism. The pedagogical core of the eccentric is a result of the way in which the eccentric entity is constituted in multiplicity. I have hinted at this circumstance throughout the preceding text, but as I consider this aspect particularly significant for the pedagogical potentials of the Naturkraft project, allow me to conclude by elaborating on this point.

### *The Eccentric Educational (Id)entity*

As noted, this entire dissertation has been an exploration of multitudes. I have inquired into the multiple intentions about non-formal sustainability education that assemble under the project headline 'Naturkraft' (see Chapter 4 above). I have explored the multiple ideas of pedagogical content and aims that are contained in its diverse concept of the Danish West Coast (see Chapter 5). I have analysed the sensational pedagogical implications of the multiple material entities and non-human beings that are encircled and emplaced by the grassy rampart and colourful Naturkraft park map (see Chapter 6). I have explored the multiple approaches to pedagogically hosting and operating this many-splendored place (see Chapter 7). So, through the dissertation I have striven to shine light on the ways in which this multiple constitution of the Naturkraft project is *unintentional* (Tsing, 2021) (see Chapter 3). That is, not *unintended*, but rather the result of multiple agents operating intentionally, however in each their mode and with each their aim. Tsing and colleagues apply this concept in explorations of material landscapes of the Anthropocene, impoverished and

excavated by short-sighted but well-meaning modern humans. My take has been to explore the *unintentional design* of the material *as well as* the socio-discursive aspects of the Naturkraft project in a non-formal educational perspective.

The idea of unintentional design resonates in many ways with Marcus' discussion on eccentricity. His pivotal argument is that the mannerism of the eccentric person is an effect of the way this person tries to hold together a distributed identity. Put differently, the eccentric is simultaneously out-of-tune with themselves and with the surrounding (social) world. As an example, Marcus elaborates on the case of Howard Hughes. Hughes was a successful entrepreneur, film-producer, and aviator, infamous for ending his career (and life) in a solitary, filthy bungalow in Las Vegas, from which he controlled one of America's then greatest business enterprises for years (Marcus, 1995).<sup>38</sup> In line with other eccentrics in Marcus' essay, Hughes was heir to a business dynasty and had lived all his life under the influence of multiple fiduciaries: senior relatives, lawyers, journalists, etc. (Marcus, 1995). As a result, Marcus states, Hughes had his identity authored from without. Marcus' point becomes that Hughes' eccentricity was an effect of him trying to forge and reflect a consistent identity from a life that was essentially without centre (Marcus, 1995). As Marcus writes:

[...] Hughes controlled vast resources and businesses from hermitlike, ascetic, even mortifying isolation, protected and exquisitely served by Mormon attendants in what amounted to the systematic annihilation of an integral, centered self in the effort to observe, manipulate, and control the representations of his self that were created in the disembodied management of the various projects of his immense inherited fortune.

(Marcus, 1995, p. 56)

In other words, an unconventional and slightly strange outwards appearance reflecting an out-of-centre, highly distributed identity.

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38 The story of Howard Hughes has been a case of continued curiosity and scrutiny, in academic discourse (Arp, 2020; Barlett & Steele, 1979) as well as in public media (Scorsese, 2004).

If one reads Naturkraft alongside Marcus' analysis, the composite and widely distributed configuration of the project becomes the hallmark of the project's identity. As I demonstrate in Chapter 4, the Naturkraft project is defined by and through a multitude of actors who bring a plethora of intentions into the project. Philanthropic foundations, regional public investment schemes, local entrepreneurs: Naturkraft's educational enactments emerge amidst the diffuse reflections of these. The many intentions find expression through an equally complex concept of the West Coast. In the Naturkraft project, the West Coast appears in the form of locally specific biological diversity and the interplay of scientific forces, as well as in the form of a mentality of ingenuity and (un)willingness to change (see Chapter 5). Like Hughes, who expressed his inherited opportunities and obligations in an unconventional, peculiar, and sometimes disconcerting manner, the Naturkraft project expresses its complex conditions of existence in social as well as ecological registers. This, moreover, leaves a strangely unconventional and sometimes disconcerting impression. Not overtly, though, but between the lines, in the cracks, out of centre.

In a similar vein, the way in which visitors and hosts partake in the educational enactments of the Naturkraft project have pronounced eccentric qualities. As I show in Chapter 6, the Naturkraft park affords human visitors defamiliarizing experiences of educational significance. Here, it is difficult to maintain ideas of essentially human identities contained in essentially human bodies. Our human relationship to/with nature decentres. Not through a forceful blow, though, but through subtle and strange sensations of engaging the world differently. Moreover, as Chapter 7 testifies, this sensation does not come about through the influence of a convinced and dogmatic host. Naturkraft is no Shaman, plotting the path to deliverance. Rather, Naturkraft is eccentrically and curiously at odds with itself, speaking to us beyond its own intentions.

## Naturkraft as Eccentric Education

Accordingly, we arrive at this chapter's pointed conclusion: Naturkraft's way of enacting non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene can

advantageously be understood as *eccentric*. This involves an appreciation for both the way the Naturkraft project enacts an educational address and an understanding of how this address may be perceived in the project's local as well as broader social context. In one respect, the address is excessive and bombastic: The Naturkraft park carves itself into its flat surroundings with grandiose concrete structures and shiny plastic surfaces. In this, the excessive address applies materially, but also socially, where the project challenges the prevailing West Jutland mentality in various ways. In other respects, the address is subtle and covert, emerging as a faintly discernible through-line in the multifarious Naturkraft assemblage. As such, upon closer inspection, Naturkraft exhibits the strange in the well-known through defamiliarizing juxtapositions and disconcerting sensations. From this contrast, a captivating and insistent address emerges that cannot be easily dismissed. Naturkraft is an eccentric product of its place and time and simultaneously its uncanny reflection.

Stepping into the park, one is confronted with this eccentricity on a sensory scale. The place is a hodgepodge of diverse installations, invoking either respectful engagement or indifferent rejection. Surrendering to the park's invitations offers guests the opportunity to explore the limits of one's embodied and social preconceptions. Like Howard Hughes, who challenged the limits of what aviation, filmmaking, and successful businessmen could be, the visitor to the Naturkraft park is invited—albeit on a significantly smaller scale—to a meeting with limits.

Throughout this chapter, I have worked around these liminal spaces using a range of theoretical figures: monsters, ghosts, ghostbusters, clairvoyants, shamans, and the eccentric. The intention has been to interpret Naturkraft in relation to questions about the challenged conditions for life on Earth in the Anthropocene. The various figures have all reflected a particular quest for boundaries. Inherent to the quest are questions of ontology. How is our world configured and how are well-established and widespread Western understandings hereof currently being challenged, including in education? When I describe Naturkraft as eccentric education, it is with this question in mind. The eccentric, I believe, best captures the fundamentally deviating and opening manner, in

which the Naturkraft project enacts sustainability education. This manner also offers a meaningful response to the challenges we face as humans in working towards sustainable reform of our societal structures, socioecological relationships, and ways of thinking. The eccentric is a person to be inspired by, as the eccentric embodies what it means to live a deviant life. The eccentric is an interesting figure to encounter and learn from, to be reminded of our inherent possibilities to do and be otherwise. This, however, is not to say that the eccentric can or should be considered a role-model. The eccentric is, by definition, on the edge, and it is a very risky place to live one's entire life.

The idea of eccentric education, moreover, provides a pathway into both educational analysis and pedagogical practice. As an analytical concept, the eccentric opens considerations about how an educational enactment is configured across analytical levels. As my analyses should reflect, Naturkraft's eccentric enactment emerges in immediately strange sensory experiences in and with the park, combined with the perception of how these experiences are intended and presented in a larger socioecological context. The analysis branches out: Sensory encounter in relation to other immediate sensory encounters in relation to multiple hosts' frameworks in relation to a multifariously configured institutional setting in relation to an extensive place and time. Understanding this event and approach emerges in a reading of the intersections between various branches. Moreover, considering educational entities from an eccentric angle affords an epistemologically recalibrated approach to processes of learning. In eccentric education, potentials for learning arise in the hard-to-control spaces of juxtaposition and embodied sensation; i.e., in eccentric relations rather than in attempts to establish, uphold, and transmit hegemonic beliefs.

In extension, thinking through the eccentric from a pedagogical practice perspective opens considerations on ways to frame human-nature relationships that make us question currently dominating understandings. Within the eccentric educational entity, a multitude of diverse actors, both human and more-than-human, assemble and enact an educational expression primarily known for its openness and its polyphonic deviation from hegemonic forms. As I have pointed out, this educational mode might be an apt approach in the

Anthropocene, as it reflects the challenges we are facing. Human acts of self-assured superiority to and separation from all else is what brought the complicated ecological crises about in the first place (Morton, 2016; Tsing, 2021). Now, the situation has changed. We are no longer able to rationally choose our way ahead between a few well-defined alternatives. Rather, we are in suspense between a range of wildly circulating forces and intimately interconnected circumstances; a rapidly changing global climate, all too local political concerns and demands, techno-optimist entrepreneurial propositions, unravelling ecological symbiotic webs, pedagogical ideals – state authorized and not. Thus, enacting sustainability education in the Anthropocene eccentrically involves insisting on a strange and intangible pedagogical core that invites curiously polite acts of engaging both the strange and the all-too familiar differently.





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# Critical Concluding Remarks

This dissertation has been an empirical and theoretical exploration of what the Naturkraft project offers in terms of new ways of doing and thinking non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene. It started with a rainy visit to a construction site in an open stretch of land on the Danish West Coast. From this point of departure, I have explored the Naturkraft project from a non-formal sustainability educational perspective. As presented in Chapter 4, I have charted the project's history of ideas and pointed out how, over the years and through changing forms of organization, Naturkraft grew into a complex non-formal sustainability educational enactment with commercial, political, techno-scientific, architectural, and aesthetic philosophical bearings and ambitions. As illustrated in Chapter 5, I have explored how the project is emplaced and expressed in relation to different conceptualizations of the Danish West Coast – geographically, narratively, scientifically, and politically. By paying attention to interstitial spaces in and between different concepts of the West Coast in the project, I have made the claim that Naturkraft, beyond its own intent, enacts a concept of the West Coast that is charged with questions of the Anthropocene. Furthermore, in Chapter 6, I have explored the pedagogical force of the project's immediate materializations by analysing the Naturkraft park and its installations from a guest's perspective. This has fostered insight into how Naturkraft makes a defamiliarizing address on visitors, offering them experiences of becoming-nature and becoming-child. Such situations, I claim, harbour sustainability educational potentials by disturbing anthropocentric points of reference and by making felt what is involved in enacting permanent reform of contemporary (Western) ways of being human. In Chapter 7, I have then explored what

different hosts to the Naturkraft project make of its pedagogical address. This analysis involves the description of five co-existing host-identities at play in Naturkraft: the commercial, the schooling, the behaviourist, the anomalous, and the ecological host. These have led me to consider how it requires a non-univocal and distributed host to frame questions of sustainability and of the Anthropocene, especially when such questions are tackled in commercial and non-formal education conditions.

On the back of this multifaceted analytical exploration, I end in a discussion of how the Naturkraft project relates to questions of the Anthropocene and a discussion of what constitutes the project's overarching non-formal sustainability educational mode. In this discussion, I metaphorically reflect Anthropocene challenges through two conceptual figures: monsters and ghosts. Together, these figures invite considerations on the fragile and wondrous symbiosis of socioecological life on Earth that is presently at risk. In the discussion, I connect the dissertation's analytical findings in an overall reading of how the Naturkraft project, through its inherent contradictions and sensory invitations, frames transgressive encounters with challenges of the Anthropocene. I point out how Naturkraft fosters transgressions as polite and curious engagements with the strangeness beyond rational conceptions of the world. Seen from an educational business-as-usual perspective and compared to other Anthropocene-concerned non-formal sustainability educational forms, I claim that Naturkraft hereby constitutes a hitherto undescribed mode of non-formal sustainability education. Moreover, I present a four-fold characterization of this mode: the pedagogical force of this mode emerges in the balancing act between the pretentious and the dysfunctional; the mode involves violations of established social conventions; the pedagogical force of the mode hinges on it being engaged respectfully by interlocutors, and finally, the mode is marked by a composite and widely distributed configuration of elements, which enact an out-of-centre identity. With reference to George E. Marcus, I conceptualize this mode as *eccentric education*.

As such, this PhD project has been guided by a dual interest: on the one hand, I have been concerned with how to make sense of the Naturkraft project as a particular enactment of non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene. On the other hand, through this exploration I have sought to distil educational and pedagogical insights of broader relevance to those who grapple with the problematic task of enacting non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene in other contexts than the Danish West Coast. That this exploration has landed me in the concept of *eccentric education* is thus partly due to the experiences and conversations I had during field work. Yet, obviously, this designation is also heavily infused with the specific theoretical framing of my analyses and discussions. For this reason, I think it appropriate to round off the dissertation by discussing some strengths and weaknesses of the methodological and theoretical foundation, here reflected through the DeleuzoGuattarian philosophy. This, before adding a few concluding remarks on perspectives emerging from this study.

### *Becoming-Ontological Challenges of Theory and Methodology*

The DeleuzoGuattarian philosophical gaze that runs as an undercurrent to the analytical reasoning of this dissertation has – as the preceding pages should support – proven a productive approach to kindle sparks of alternative educational insights from the Naturkraft project. Yet, this radical philosophical gaze also calls for some critical remarks, both regarding its methodological and educational-pedagogical theoretical applications within this dissertation and concerning the potential academic afterlife of the dissertation's conceptual contributions.

Deleuze and Guattari are thinkers of multiplicity par excellence. As they argue the defining contours of their fundamental concept of the *rhizome* in *A Thousand Plateaus* (2004):

Multiplicities are rhizomatic [...] There is no unity to serve as a pivot in the object, or to divide in the subject. There is not even the unity to abort in

the object or ‘return’ in the subject. A multiplicity has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature [...]

(Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 7)

As such, in the DeleuzoGuattarian view, every phenomenon *in* the world is a phenomenon *of* the world. All occurrences take place as intensities immanent to a dynamic, fluctuating mesh. Like convective flows in an all-encompassing primordial soup, the manifestations of the world emerge and dissolve in a constant, restless intra-action.

My use of the DeleuzoGuattarian inspiration far from brings their posed ontological challenge and wild conceptual vocabulary to its outer-most consequences. Other scholars take these philosophical speculations way further, also within the field of ESE (Clarke, 2019; N. Gough, 2006; Mcphie, 2019). In comparison, my take on the philosophy has been rather pragmatic. I have used what I have found helpful and illuminating for my analytical and theoretical explorations of the Naturkraft project. This may violate what some Deleuze-scholars consider a ‘correct’ understanding or application of the philosophy (Buchanan, 2017). For instance, my use of the term *assemblage* does not necessarily correspond to the DeleuzoGuattarian ‘original’, since I elaborate on and makes use of this term by drawing on a fairly diverse range of scholars (Buchanan, 2017; Mannion, 2019; Tsing, 2015). Yet, I would argue that my pragmatic use has served as a scaffolding structure for the empirical analyses rather than the opposite way around. My analyses are not intended as legitimation or illumination of a particular ontological idea. To the contrary, this take on ontology serves the analyses as an alternative horizon for understanding – a way to support curiosity rather than a protocol to complete.

Similarly, I could be accused of not following through on the DeleuzoGuattarian considerations methodologically. ‘Why’, some may ask, ‘don’t I engage full on with, for instance, post-qualitative methods that overtly build on the posthumanist- and becoming-oriented ontologies?’ (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013). Again, part of my proposed answer is pragmatic, bordering on the practical: What ended up as a substantial part of the field work for this dissertation played

out at the very beginning of the project. Back then, in early 2020, my theoretical readings and considerations had not had sufficient time to mature and ‘spill over’ into a methodological approach. Moreover, and unfortunately, as emphasized in my methodological discussions (see Chapter 3 from p. 53 above), the Covid-19 pandemic proved a recurring obstacle to my empirical inquiries, in effect hampering ideas I had for experimentations in the field. In other words, I might have approached the empirical work differently, and more in line with the ontology, should I do it over again.

However, there is a tendency in the method literature inspired by Deleuze and his ilk that would make me hesitate, were I to start over again. The imperative encouragement to experimentation as well as the overwhelming number of neologisms (Coleman & Ringrose, 2013) risks making these methodologies into noisy travel companions in field work. My main ambition has not been methodological. I did not set out to re-imagine qualitative educational research. Rather, I set out with an interest in the sustainability educational and pedagogical insights to be gained by engaging in the Naturkraft project. From that perspective, I would contend that my more modest – some would say traditional – ethnographic design, with an added tint of Deleuze, has supported this ambition well, although I am truly regretful of the limitations to the project caused by feral proliferations (Tsing et al., 2019) in the form of a Corona virus.

### *The DeleuzoGuattarian Gaze as Poor Pedagogy*

In addition to methodological and analytical-conceptual critiques, the theoretical foundation of the dissertation also invokes a more specifically educational criticism. Here, I am particularly thinking about how incorporating philosophical inspiration from Deleuze and Guattari can be understood as an educationally directed action in its own right. In other words, one must ask how the theoretical basis of the dissertation has performative effects in an educational context. The dissertation could undergo the same scrutiny as the Naturkraft project undergoes throughout the dissertation. One way to do this could be to ask, with Haraway (2016), how the Deleuze-inspired way of telling stories can propagate

in the social fabric (through education) and with what effects? What stories do these stories tell?

On one hand, a critical reservation arises: is education challenged or even undermined by the becoming-ontology's inherent possibility of valuing all forms of existence equally? Flies, pebbles, humans, passing thoughts: when everything influences everything in a relational, non-intentional mishmash, it becomes difficult to argue for the legitimacy (let alone the possibility) of education, just as it becomes difficult to argue for ethical aims.

As Biesta writes, educational acts are characterized by their normative dimension (Biesta, 2009a). There will always be value judgments at play; priorities about what is more important than something else. Biesta uses this observation to criticize current, neoliberal-formulated testing regimes in education. According to Biesta, these regimes overlook the normative dimension of education by assuming that we can plan and optimize ourselves for 'effective education.' Turning to becoming-ontologically inspired educational research, the critique looks a bit different. Here, it is not managerial dreams of the perfectly optimized educational machine that overshadow normativity. If the Deleuze and Guattari-inspired narrative is understood literally in education, it risks, in other words, propagating a confused nihilistic relativism – a poor kind of pedagogy that does not intend anything for anyone. As such, the philosophical basis of this dissertation might also undermine whatever idea of *sustainability* one entertains. Sustainability, in much the same way as pedagogy, is a normative ideal.

Yet, on the other hand, if the Deleuze and Guattari-inspired story is taken up less literally, with caution, the educational perspectives may be different. In the words of Belgian scholar of education, Jan Masschelein, a worthwhile education might not have to involve *intention* as much as it should involve *attention* (Masschelein, 2010). In this sense, education ideally works by opening up *atopical* spaces of possible self-transformation and self-displacement (Masschelein, 2010, p. 44) – not unlike the space of becoming-child and -nature, I identified in *Naturkraft* with Ellsworth's assistance (see p. 163 above). Although unintentional, there is normativity at play in Masschelein's proposition; a normativity that urges one to *attend* to limits. As Masschelein writes: 'To be attentive is a

limit-attitude, which is not directed at limiting the present (by judging), but at exposing one's limits and at exposing one at the limits' (Masschelein, 2010, p. 47). Exposure of and at the limits is not the same as succumbing in relativist nihilism. At the same time, neither is it a matter of adopting a self-assured position from which to pass critical judgement. It is somewhere in-between; exposing oneself at the limit allows for attention to what is present as well as to what may potentially be. Masschelein polemically calls this idea *poor pedagogy* (Masschelein, 2010).

His encouragement to curious attention at the limits echoes the way in which Deleuze and Guattari also urge engaged readers to approach their philosophy with caution. In their characteristically complicated manner, they write:

If you free [the Body Without Organs] with too violent an action, if you blow apart the strata without taking precautions, then instead of drawing the plane you will be killed, plunged into a black hole, or even dragged toward catastrophe. Staying stratified – organized, signified, subjected – is not the worst that can happen; the worst that can happen is if you throw the strata into demented or suicidal collapse [...]

(Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 187)

In extension of Haraway's question posed above, we can then say that the kind of stories the DeleuzoGuattarian stories tell depend on how literal your reading is in the first place. With the eccentric, I propose a fundamentally non-literal reading – of the philosophical fundamentals as well as of any socio-discursive attempt to fence in phenomena such as sustainability or the Anthropocene. The eccentric teacher does not serve as a role model. There is no literal core to follow. At the same time, the eccentric is more than meaningless indifference. The eccentric is a strange disturbance; an opening to different ways of thinking about life in the Anthropocene. This, in essence, does not mean that sustainability in *the Anthropocene* is fundamentally unknowable. Rather, it might mean that knowing (and enacting) sustainability in the Anthropocene is a continuous process of deviation.



## Exceeding Conclusions

The ambition of the dissertation has been a critical exploration of the Naturkraft project. However, the criticism, as mentioned repeatedly, should be understood affirmatively and as that which prompts critical reflection. In this, I have not, as also mentioned several times, endeavoured to pass judgement on the quality of the Naturkraft pedagogy. Neither have I striven to unmask the Naturkraft project as an experience-economic form of greenwashing or to critically scrutinize whether the project fulfils its business ambitions. Instead, the critical ambition has been pedagogically motivated and for constructive purposes.

In this light, critical reflection primarily comes into play in the educational experiences in the Naturkraft park as something that emerges through juxtapositions and contradictions. This is a fundamental characteristic of the eccentric. Moreover, my portrayal of the Naturkraft project may also contain a critical dimension. I juxtapose a series of rationales that have surrounded the construction of the Naturkraft project, which fundamentally appear contradictory. One thing is how the Naturkraft project, especially the park, engages the visitor and invites reflection on an aesthetic, sensory, and bodily basis. Another thing is how my depiction of the project emphasizes the contradictions embedded in the conceptual foundation on which the project is built. The Naturkraft project can be said to have educational effects, but in some respects, despite or beyond the intentions that have shaped it.

These considerations are critical if they lead the reader to think differently about the Naturkraft project and the eco-social world of which the project is a part. They are critical if they lead the engaged educator to think differently about what non-formal sustainability education can be in the Anthropocene. If the dissertation has succeeded in igniting some of the sparks of alternative thinking found around the Naturkraft project, then the ambition has been achieved.

Some might argue that this ambition and the way it plays out through the dissertation and in Naturkraft is too subtle; too *polite* (Haraway, 2016). Don't we all agree that the present planetary impasse is caused by destructive patterns of human exploitation, production, and consumption sustained by omnipresent

capitalist logics (Hickel, 2020; Moore, 2016)? And wouldn't angry rebellious activism in the form of e.g. Extinction Rebellion (Extinction Rebellion, 2024) be a more appropriate response than setting up a recreational invitation like Naturkraft to strange encounters with alternative ways of being in the world? Is Naturkraft, after all, simply reiterating the destructive logics that brought about the problems of unsustainability and does that work counter to sustainability education in the Anthropocene? There is much more to be discussed on this topic. Yet let me repeat that my take on the Naturkraft project has been to affirm the expressions of educational alternatives that dwell in the cracks and crannies of a project initially intended for tourism business-as-usual. As such, I have striven to affirm critical and subversive expressions – however small – immanent to the otherwise capitalist ordered assemblage that is Naturkraft. Maybe polite, artful, and curious encounters are our best hope for alternating the destructive logics from within.

With the concept of eccentric education, I have attempted to capture such alternating sparks so that they can be carried into other educational contexts – or even back into the 'actual' Naturkraft enterprise – and kindle fires there. However, the eccentric is an unreliable and leaking container. The concept is ambiguous, making it difficult to ensure that my understanding of the Naturkraft project is communicated credibly and concisely to the reader and, furthermore, that the reader can apply these thoughts elsewhere. Yet this, if anything, is intentional. Unlike a prevailing trend on the field of sustainability education in general, it is not my intention to provide guidelines for a particular potent sustainability educational practice. It is not my intention to prescribe the eccentric as a teaching role that one can assume, and thereby create 'effective' teaching (Biesta, 2009a). It is not my intention to articulate the eccentric so clearly that the concept can be recognised as *knowledge* that can be explained and applied (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 151 ff.). Instead, my intention is to treat the eccentric eccentrically – to let writing and thought flutter around this elusive centre. The eccentric person is recognized by their strange unrecognizability. The eccentric configuration allows only glimpses of 'core concerns' out of the corner of the eye.

In that sense, the eccentric is a *weak* concept (Biesta, 2016). It leaves a lot of room for interpretation and carries significant risks of unintended use. According to Biesta, concepts like this are characteristic of education – even if such concepts are under pressure from current neo-liberal educational efforts of *best* and *effective* education practices (Biesta, 2009a). To meet the sustainability educational task – i.e., to strengthen the relationship between humans and the planet (Malone & Truong, 2017) – with the eccentric in mind, therefore, provides no secure bearings but invites curious transcendence and encounters with the strange, the alien, the absent – both in our surroundings and within ourselves.

In much the same vein, this concluding chapter can hardly be described as a conclusion. I have pointed out how my analyses and discussions lead me to answer the question of how *Naturkraft* enacts sustainability pedagogy in the Anthropocene. Whether my answers are conclusive, I am more hesitant about. They are more of an invitation to further thinking and further action; a thinking and action that deviates and is not afraid to be unconventional and slightly strange.

# Summary

This dissertation, *Eccentric Enactments. Naturkraft as Non-Formal Sustainability Education in the Anthropocene*, is an exploration of the Danish non-formal sustainability education project Naturkraft. The Naturkraft project started in 2006 and unfolds in and around the Ringkøbing-Skjern Municipality on the Danish west coast. The project develops and – since 2020 – operates a nature science centre by the name Naturkraft. This dissertation is based on an ethnographic field study conducted in and around the Naturkraft project between February 2020 and September 2021. The focus of the exploration is on understanding the Naturkraft project as a way of 'enacting' non-formal sustainability education in the Anthropocene. Accordingly, the dissertation seeks to open new perspectives on sustainability educational thought, research, and practice in relation to Anthropocene challenges.

The dissertation situates itself within the research field of environmental and sustainability education (ESE), with a particular focus on non-formal education forms and the thematization of Anthropocene issues in pedagogy and education. This implies, on the one hand, a broad understanding of 'education' that extends beyond formal education institutions and rationales. On the other hand, it implies understanding sustainability perspectives in Naturkraft from a socioecological perspective, with theoretical attention to material, embodied, and imaginary aspects of the educational situations the project frames.

The dissertation's use of 'enactment' is based on philosophical considerations by, amongst others, the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari. In particular, the dissertation draws on the concept of the assemblage as a starting point for analysing the Naturkraft project. In this analytical operationalization, the dissertation also incorporates some of Anna Tsing and colleagues' anthropological insights, Timothy Morton's ecological philosophy, and Elizabeth Ellsworth's theoretical take on non-formal educational spaces and

situations as embodied and material. Additionally, the dissertation includes a range of studies from the environmental and sustainability education research field, most of which have clear ontological and epistemological references to Deleuze & Guattari's world of thought.

Analytically, the dissertation explores the Naturkraft project by questioning its educational purposes, contents, and methods – the why, what, and how of the project.

The question of the project's purposes is pursued through an examination of five official project descriptions from different periods in Naturkraft's development history. Here, the dissertation explores how the project expresses an educational philosophy and understands sustainability at different times. This analysis reveals how Naturkraft carries significant internal diversity regarding ideas of education and sustainability purposes.

The dissertation then explores a question of content by asking how the concept of the West Coast plays a role in the Naturkraft project. This part of the analysis draws on ethnographic material in highlighting various ways in which the West Coast comes to matter in the Naturkraft project – in curatorial designs as well as in expressions of relationship to the surrounding local community and landscape. On this background, the chapter makes the claim that Naturkraft conveys insight into issues of the Anthropocene beyond its own intent. By paying attention to interstitial spaces in and between expressions of the West Coast, questions of human-nature relationship take nuanced and complex form, while being anchored in a very local sense of place.

The question of the Naturkraft project's educational methods is illuminated from two different perspectives – those of the guest and of the host. The guest's perspective is explored through an analysis of the pedagogical address of the Naturkraft park. The analysis interrogates the park's material designs, emphasizing that the park, through its layout, invites guests to sensory and aesthetic experiences of becoming-different. With the guest, the park enacts a space between and beyond hegemonic sociodiscursive categories of nature and culture, child and adult. In consequence, Naturkraft holds the potential for defamiliarizing experiences that problematize prevailing subject categories and offer

openings to alternative socioecologically informed modes of being and understanding.

In extension, the dissertation explores how various human and non-human actors enact an identity as host to Naturkraft. Digging into interviews from the field work, the chapter outlines five different positions, each with its practiced understanding of how to assume the role of an educational host for sustainability in and through the Naturkraft project. The five different host identities are described as the commercial, the schooling, the behaviourist, the anomalous, and the ecological host. The chapter thus claims that the sustainability-oriented educational expression of the Naturkraft project emerges in and through the presence of a non-univocal and distributed hosting role.

Based on this multifaceted analytical exploration, the dissertation concludes with a discussion of how the Naturkraft project relates to questions of the Anthropocene and a discussion of what constitutes the project's non-formal sustainability educational mode. In the discussion, Anthropocene challenges are metaphorically reflected through two conceptual figures: monsters and ghosts. The discussion connects the analytical findings in an overall reading of how the Naturkraft project, through its inherent contradictions and sensory invitations, opens transgressive encounters with challenges of the Anthropocene. As such, transgression is in-potential in the Naturkraft project's framing of a polite and curious engagement with the strangeness beyond rational conceptions of the world. Seen from an educational business-as-usual perspective and compared to other Anthropocene-concerned sustainability educational forms, the discussion claims that this constitutes a hitherto undescribed mode of sustainability education. The dissertation presents a four-fold characterization of this mode: the pedagogical force of this mode emerges in the balancing act between the pretentious and the dysfunctional; the mode involves violations of established social conventions; the pedagogical force of the mode hinges on respectful engagements in the educational situation, and finally, the mode is marked by a composite and widely distributed configuration of elements, which enact an out-of-centre identity. With reference to anthropologist George E. Marcus, the dissertation conceptualizes this mode as *eccentric education*.



# Resumé

Denne afhandling, *Excentriske Enactments. Naturkraft som non-formel Bæredygtighedsuddannelse i det Antropocæne*, er en udforskning af det danske naturformidlingsprojekt Naturkraft. Naturkraft-projektet har udspillet sig i og omkring Ringkøbing-Skjern Kommune på den jyske vestkyst siden 2006. Projektet drejer sig om udviklingen og siden hen driften af oplevelsescentret Naturkraft. Denne afhandling er baseret på et etnografisk feltstudie, der blev gennemført i og omkring Naturkraft-projektet mellem februar 2020 og september 2021. Den udforskning, som afhandlingen udfolder, bygger på et etnografisk feltstudie foretaget i og omkring Naturkraft mellem februar 2020 og september 2021. Fokus for afhandlingen er at forstå Naturkraft-projektet som en måde at 'enacte' non-formel bæredygtighedsuddannelse i det Antropocæne. Derigennem søger afhandlingen at åbne nye perspektiver på bæredygtighedspædagogisk tænkning, forskning og praksis i relation til udfordringer i det Antropocæne.

Afhandlingens indskriver sig på forskningsfeltet for miljø- og bæredygtighedsuddannelse (ESE), med særligt fokus på non-formelle uddannelsesformer samt på tematiseringer af antropocæne forhold i pædagogik og uddannelse. Det betyder på den ene side, at 'uddannelse' forstås bredt og som noget, der kan betragtes i sammenhænge ud over det formelle uddannelsessystems institutionelle former og rationaler. På den anden side betyder det, at bæredygtigheds-perspektiver i Naturkraft projektet tilgås fra en socioøkologisk orienteret vinkel og med teoretisk opmærksomhed på materielle, legemlige og imaginære aspekter af de uddannelsesmæssige situationer, projektet indrammer.

Med dette for øje bygger afhandlingens brug af 'enactment' på et viden-skabsteoretisk fundament, der finder udtryk hos bl.a. de franske filosoffer Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari. I særdeleshed trækker afhandlingen på begrebet assemblage som udgangspunkt for at analysere Naturkraft-projektet. I den analytiske operationalisering trækkes der endvidere på Anna Tsing og kollegaers



antropologiske udforskninger af antropocæne livsformer, på Timothy Mortons økologiske filosofi samt på Elizabeth Ellsworths kropslige og materielt fokuserede analyser af non-formelle uddannelsesrum og -situationer. I tillæg inkluderer afhandlingen en række studier fra forskningsfeltet for miljø- og bæredygtighedsuddannelse, hvoraf de fleste har klare ontologiske og epistemologiske referencer til Deleuze & Guattaris tanke- og begrebsverden.

Analytisk belyser afhandlingen Naturkraft projektet ved at spørge til dets uddannelsesmæssige *formål*, *indhold* og *metoder* – hvorfor, hvad og hvordan:

Spørgsmålet om projektets *formål* forfølges gennem en læsning af fem officielle projektbeskrivelser fra forskellige tidspunkter i Naturkrafts tilblivelses-historie. Kapitlet spørger til, hvordan projektets *uddannelsesmæssige filosofi* og dets *forståelse af bæredygtighed* tager sig ud til forskellige tider. Herved tegner der sig et billede af et projekt, der bærer rundt på stor intern diversitet, hvad angår forståelse af såvel uddannelsesmæssige som bæredygtighedsmæssige formål.

Spørgsmålet om projektets *indhold* udforskes gennem et fokus på, hvordan et begreb om *Vestkysten* udfyldes og spiller ind i udviklingen af Naturkraft projektet. Analysen trækker her på indsigter fra det etnografiske feltarbejde, og gennem kapitlet peges der på en række væsensforskellige måder, Vestkysten får betydning i Naturkraft projektet – i såvel kuratorisk udformning som i måden projektet forstår sin relation til det omgivende lokalsamfund og landskab. På denne baggrund hævder kapitlet, at Naturkraft formidler indsigt i spørgsmål om det Antropocæne ud over sin egen hensigt. Ved at være opmærksom på mellemrum i og imellem de forskellige udtryk for Vestkysten tager spørgsmål om menneske-naturforhold nuanceret og kompleks form, samtidig med at de forankres i en meget lokal opfattelse af sted.

Spørgsmålet om Naturkraft projektets uddannelsesmæssige *metoder* belyses fra to forskellige perspektiver – gæstens og værtens. Gæstens perspektiv udforskes gennem en læsning af den *pædagogiske henvendelse*, som Naturkraft parken retter mod gæsterne. Analysen forholder sig til parkens materielle udformning og også her bliver det en pointe, at parken, gennem sin indretning, inviterer gæsten til sanselige og æstetiske oplevelser af værensmæssige

mellemrum; her forstået som uafgjort tilblivelse i et rum mellem og over etablerede kategorier som *natur* og *kultur*, *barn* og *voksen*. Naturkraft har dermed potentiale til at rammesætte *afselvfølgeiggørende* erfaringer, der problematiserer fremherskende subjekt-kategorier og derved tilbyder åbninger til alternative, socioøkologisk informerede værens- og forståelsesmodi.

I forlængelse heraf udforsker afhandlingen, hvordan forskellige menneskelige og ikke-menneskelige aktører 'enact' en identitet som vært i Naturkraft. Ved at dykke ned i interviews fra feltarbejdet skitserer kapitlet fem forskellige positioner, hver med sin praktiserede forståelse af, hvordan man påtager sig rollen som uddannelsesvært for bæredygtighed i og gennem Naturkraft-projektet. De fem forskellige værtidentiteter beskrives som den *kommercielle*, den *skolende*, den *behavioristiske*, den *anormale* og den *økologiske* vært. Kapitlet hævder således, at Naturkraft-projektets bæredygtighedsorienterede uddannelsesudtryk opstår i og gennem tilstedeværelsen af en ikke-entydig og distribueret værtsrolle.

På baggrund af denne firstrengede analytiske udforskning afsluttes afhandlingen med en diskussion af, hvordan Naturkraft projektet forholder sig til udfordringer i det Antropocæne og med en drøftelse af, hvad der udgør projektets non-formelle bæredygtighedsuddannelsesmodus. I diskussionen reflekteres antropocæne spørgsmål metaforisk gennem inddragelse af to konceptuelle figurer: Monstre og spøgelser. Diskussionen kobler analysens fund i en samlet læsning af, hvordan Naturkraft projektet, gennem sine iboende modsætninger og sanselige invitationer, åbner for overskridende møder med udfordringer i det Antropocæne. Overskridelsen eksisterer som mulighed i Naturkraft-projektets rammesætning af en ydmyg og nysgerrig omgang med underlige og ikke-rationelle forestillinger om verden. Set fra et uddannelsesmæssigt *business-as-usual* perspektiv og i sammenligning med andre antropocæn-orienterede bæredygtighedsuddannelsesformer hævder diskussionen, at dette udgør en hidtil ikke beskrevet modus af bæredygtighedsuddannelse. Afhandlingen præsenterer en fir dobbelt karakteristisk af denne modus: Den pædagogiske kraft heri opstår i balanceakten mellem det prætentiose og det dysfunktionelle; moduset involverer overtrædelser af etablerede sociale konventioner; den pædagogiske kraft i

modusset afhænger af, at den pædagogiske situation mødes med respekt, og endelig er modusset præget af en sammensat og bredt distribueret konfiguration af elementer, der skaber indtryk af en afvigende og underlig identitet. Med henvisning til antropologen George E. Marcus konceptualiserer afhandlingen denne modus som *excentrisk uddannelse*.

# Appendix

## List of observations

Date	Time	Note
Prior to formally initiating the PhD project		
04/05/2019	10:00-14:00	First visit to the Naturkraft offices and park
Spring 2020, formally the PhD project begins		
06/02/2020	10:00-15:00	First formal visit, Naturkraft offices in Rinddum Gaard
19/02/2020	10:00-15:30	Observations in relocated Naturkraft offices
26/02/2020	09:00-16:00	Observations in Naturkraft offices, Sustainability meeting
04/03/2020	09:00-16:00	Observations in Naturkraft offices, meeting in dissemination team on dissemination strategy
11/03/2020	11:00-14:30	Meeting with park manager, development manager, my PhD supervisor and me. Visit to the park construction site. <i>NB: Denmark enters first Covid-19-related general lockdown</i>
15/04/2020	11:00-14:00	Virtual observation, sustainability workshop
22/04/2020	11:00-13:00	Virtual observation, sustainability workshop follow-up
24/04/2020	13:00-15:00	Virtual observation, status meeting, <i>NB: Most employees have returned to the offices</i>
28/04/2020	09:30-15:00	Observations in Naturkraft offices, meeting in dissemination team
30/05/2020	10:00-14:30	Observations in the park, introduction day for part-time employees

07/06/2020 10:00-16:00 Observations in the park, 'dress rehearsal' with invited guests from a local bank

12/06/2020 10:00-16:00 Observations and celebrations in the park, official opening of the Naturkraft park

#### Autumn 2020

20/10/2020 11:00-15:00 Observations in Naturkraft offices, strategy day facilitated by external consultant

26/10/2020 12:00-15:00 Observations in Naturkraft offices, strategic development-presentations by the architect and main designers

12/11/2020 16:00-16:30 Status report by the park manager on the phone  
*NB: Complete lockdown of the park and organization from early December to the beginning of March*

#### Spring 2021

08/02/2021 12:00-12:30 Status report by the intermediation manager on the phone

22/03/2021 11:00-15:00 Observations in Naturkraft offices, development meeting in dissemination team

27/05/2021 18:00-21:00 Observations in the park, Krydsfelt festival [Cross connections festival], day 1

28/05/2021 10:00-18:00 Observations in the park, Krydsfelt festival [Cross connections festival], day 2

29/05/2021 10:00-15:00 Observations in the park, Krydsfelt festival [Cross connections festival], day 3

05/07/2021 09:00-15:00 Observations in the park, summer holiday season, participation in park guide routines

06/07/2021 09:00-15:00 Observations in the park, summer holiday season, participation in park guide routines

#### Autumn 2021

03/08/2021 09:00-15:00 Observations in the park, summer holiday season, participation in park-guide routines and group interview with park guides

04/08/2021	10:00-15:00	Observations in the park, summer holiday season, participation in park-guide routines
Spring 2022		
08/02/2022	10:00-11:00	Virtual observations, information meeting, new management. Apart from me, everybody participates physically

## List of interviews

Date	Time	Interlocutor
23/04/2020	11:00-11:40	Behavioural designer, external consultant, via Zoom
11/05/2020	12:30-13:50	Sustainability developer, via Zoom
12/02/2021	10:00-11:20	Communications officer, via Zoom
22/03/2021	13:00-14:40	Intermediation manager
05/05/2021	12:00-13:30	Park manager
09/07/2021	15:00-16:50	Senior intermediary
03/08/2021	09:00-10:15	Group interview with part-time park guides
03/09/2021	10:00-12:30	Main architect
09/09/2021	10:00-11:30	Group interview with former mayor and former municipal director of the Municipality of Ringkøbing-Skjern
09/09/2021	14:00-15:00	Commercial manager
21/09/2021	08:30-09:30	Activity developer, via Zoom
10/10/2021	14:00-15:30	Network developer
07/12/2021	16:00-17:00	Chairperson of the Naturkraft board
03/02/2022	10:30-12:00	Informal group interview with the commercial manager and the development manager

(14 interviews in all)

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