

Nature walks with education workers: an ecophenomenological study of aesthetic experiences*¹

Alberto Cabral Ferreira²

Orcid: 0000-0002-7137-0194

Valéria Ghislotti lared³

Orcid: 0000-0002-1082-9870

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the multisensory experiences of workers from the school community of Pinheiros (Espírito Santo) with~in⁴ nature. The research is based on ecophenomenological references, which consider the ecological and philosophical dimensions of the human being in the different interactions with the more-than-human. Data was produced from participant observation and walks with four participants from the school community. Records consisted of photos, videos, and descriptions, supported by the methodological movement known as sensory ethnography, of/in the multisensory dives into the aesthetic experiences of the research participants. The experiences of each participant gave rise to (eco)narratives, which were analyzed in accordance with the phenomenological references. The emerging aspects came from the (eco)narratives triangulation and answered our research question. Therefore, the emerging aspects are conceived as the multisensory experiences that emerged during the walks with the school community's workers: 1) Finitude of human existence in relation to the Atlantic Forest; 2) Protagonism of the more-than-human; 3) Fluidity of the microclimates of the Atlantic Forest; 4) Correspondence between bodies. Although this study did not aim to prescribe nature walks as a manual to be followed for less anthropocentric environmental education practices, we advocate that this form of occupation of nature can imply environmental education practices in which more-than-humans are in symmetrical conditions in the process and also awaken ethical feelings of respect for the otherness of other elements, beyond human beings.

Keywords

Education of attention – Sensory ethnography – More-than-human world – Walking Ethnography – Correspondence.

* English version by Sofia Bocca. The authors take full responsibility for the translation of the text, including titles of books/articles and the quotations originally published in Portuguese.

1- Data availability: the dataset supporting the results of this study is publicly available at: <https://acervodigital.ufpr.br/xmlui/handle/1884/88614>

2- Instituto Federal do Espírito Santo (IFES), Nova Venécia, ES, Brasil. Contato: albertocabral@hotmail.com

3- Universidade Federal do Paraná, Palotina, PR, Brasil. Contato: valiared@gmail.com

4- We adopted the use of (~) to conceive the elements, in an inseparable way, entangled and in continuity.



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Introduction

This article presents nature walks as a means of exploring bodily responses during multisensory experiences for a less anthropocentric environmental education⁵. These walks aimed to explore the multisensory experiences of a small group (three men and one woman) of education workers living in the city of Pinheiros, Espírito Santo (ES).

Payne and Wattchow (2009); Carvalho and Mhule (2016); Sato (2016); Iared and Oliveira (2017, 2018); Iared (2018); Duarte, Sato and Pazos (2018); Payne (2020); Carvalho, Steil and Gonzaga (2020), among others, lead us to realize that there are considerable gaps related to aesthetic experiences in nature, in the scope of research and practices in environmental education. The academic literature has also pointed out the silencing of ethical and aesthetic values and, specifically, the aesthetic experience in environmental education (Iared; Oliveira; Payne, 2016; Marin; Kasper, 2009). According to Iared, Oliveira, and Reid (2017), the lack of attention to the aesthetic experience in environmental education is related to the overvaluation of the cognitive sphere in the educational process. For Carvalho and Mhule (2016), this difficulty in implementing learning through experience is in the disciplinary movements instituted in the educational process. According to them, this “lesser importance of the validity of elements such as aesthetics, beliefs and local and traditional knowledge, feelings and emotions” (Carvalho; Mhule, 2016, p. 31, our translation) comes from a model of science generated within the project of Western modernity, where learning is based on the absorption of prefabricated knowledge, and knowledge is restricted to storage instead of recreating meanings of experience. These experiences, from birth, are provided by our “visceral connections with the world of life in our aspect as creatures in/with/as nature” (Iared; Oliveira, 2017, p. 98).

We understand the aesthetic experience, according to the perspective of Iared, Oliveira, and Reid (2017), as one in which the affective response to the world occurs through immersion in it, of the whole body, as an embodied mind. For the authors, aesthetics can be defined as experiencing and engaging with~in⁶ the world, having bodily practices as its source and origin (Iared; Oliveira; Reid, 2017). When researching aesthetic experiences in the Cerrado, they understood that the whole body is immersed in the world as an incarnated mind, whether through a critical sensibility of being, becoming and/or experiencing nature. They also say that aesthetics is defined as experiencing and engaging with~in the world, having bodily practices as its source and origin.

Marin and Oliveira (2005, p. 197, our translation) conceive the aesthetic experience as the way of relating to each other in the tangle of webs of the world, “in multiple ways, marked by affectivity, emotion, memory, that is, by all the capacities and dimensions that build it beyond rationality”. This conceptualization leads us to understand that the

5 - In times of exacerbated capitalism, some authors have been exploring concepts such as the Anthropocene, the Capitalocene, and even something new such as Chthulucene, a term discussed by Donna Haraway (2015). According to the author, we need to compost ourselves, make alliances and relate with other ways of being and existing. It is in this sense that we understand a less anthropocentric approach, something that invites us to be more attentive and attend to the presence of the world from a more-than-human perspective.

6 - We adopted the use of (~) to conceive the elements, in an inseparable way, entangled and in continuity.

aesthetic experience in nature is only possible by living in an environment permeated by emotions (Hermann, 2005). This perspective, then, requires a constructive movement of a new ontology.

Thus, the research was based on ecophenomenological references by Brown and Toadvine (2003). By coupling the term echo to the entry phenomenology, we understand that there is an emphasis on the incorporation of the more-than-human world in the experience of the sensible world. According to Iared (2019, p. 3, our translation), this collaborative logic “between phenomenology and the principles of deep ecology and environmentalism aims to eradicate anthropocentric assumptions and propose alternatives to expand the theoretical field of this framework”. This philosophical orientation, as well as the essence of our present proposal, seeks to understand the inherence of the indissolubility between human beings and nature, and the link between ecological thinking and phenomenology, provoking considerations regarding the parity of the bonds that exist in the more-than-human world. Given the above, the present study aimed to investigate the multisensory experiences of workers from the school community of Pinheiros (ES) with~in nature.

Theoretical-methodological framework

Problematizing aesthetic experiences in nature for a less anthropocentric environmental education means putting oneself into the search for understanding the place as a product of the imbrications of the more-than-human world. These meanings, in turn, express our actions in the world. After all, we understand our perception and performance in the world as coming from our sensory capacities (Johnson, 2007; Ingold, 2000, 2011; Sheets-Johnstone, 1999). Such movement is based on the assumptions of an ontological perspective in which our body (through sensoriality) and things are simultaneously placed in contact with the depth of the visible world (Merleau-Ponty, 1984). A perspective that takes seriously the idea of things as agents together *with* humans (Coole; Frost, 2010).

Ingold (2012) opposes the static view of bodies by teaching us that life occurs in terms of lines and flows, in which matter, indistinctly biological and cultural, pulsates without involucres, that is, it moves. For him, the constitution of organisms is given by the passage of materials, after all, organisms do not close themselves within bodily limits. In addition to this perception of affectation, Le Breton (2000) claims that to move is to place oneself in a possibility of movement. It implies that we subject ourselves to being taken out of the tranquility/comfort of daily life for a while or more, placing ourselves in fluctuations of the road, the weather, the encounters, that is, we are not limited to any kind of intentional urgency.

It is also necessary to emphasize that working with the sensitive/sensorial dimension made our methodological choice a challenge, even knowing that mobile studies are a category that is gaining prominence in the field of research in environmental education (Iared, 2019). The aforementioned author states that movement, coming from walking, has become a possibility of producing data to generate interpretations of the relations between



human being~nature and the interweaving of ethical~aesthetic~political dimensions (Payne, 2014; Rodrigues, 2015) between culture~nature. Movement, here, is seen as a constant flow of matter and body, as an intrinsic condition of all elements (human and more-than-human).

We assimilate from Ingold (2000) that the posture of our body is directly related to our sensory experience. In view of this, we consider that sensory ethnography responded to our expectations in the search to apprehend the knowledge that was produced through aesthetic experiences in nature with the research participants. Such a methodology – which tends to include participant observation, ethnographic interviews, and a series of other participatory research techniques – is often developed and adapted in the context and as appropriate to the needs and possibilities provided by the research project (Pink, 2009).

It came from the perception that embodied and multisensory activities involve multidimensions of corporeality and itinerations with the materialities of the more-than-human world (Iared, 2018). In this way, we see a logic of immersion in nature that opposes the objectifying perspectives of the components of the environment. We problematize the established notion of object, by being guided by the resumption of the notion of thing, porous and fluid, permeated by vital flows, integrated with the cycles and dynamics of life and the environment (Ingold, 2012). We also highlight that ethnography has become pertinent because multisensoriality is fundamental to the way we apprehend, understand, and access the place from a more-than-human perspective.

We assume that this methodology, by designing itself through the “sensory involvement caused by the body in movement” (Iared, 2018, p. 194, our translation), would evoke, in the subjects involved in the process, a visceral surrender. In the search for understanding this way of being in the environment, we believe it is also possible to problematize the way we produce meanings that are environmentally consistent with an ontological turn (Iared, 2018) and, therefore, we choose a less anthropocentric way of moving and positioning our body in the various landscapes (urban and/or rural) that the pathways have offered us. The body and the more-than-human world, in this perspective, present a relationship of correspondence based on the literalness of the experience of observing/observing oneself and perceiving/perceiving oneself in movement.

Methodological procedures

The education workers who participated in our research were already walking, on Saturday mornings, long before our invitation. The group for the walks was formed in 2019. According to reports, the need to relax from school demands naturally arose during chats in the different spaces of EEEM N. S. de L. Since then, the group, according to them, has relaxed from the fatigue accumulated during the week by walking on Saturdays at dawn. We became aware of the recreational activity in October 2020. However, we only received the invitation to participate in the walks via insertion in the *WhatsApp* group in December 2020. Also, due to the pandemic, face-to-face meetings were only resumed in July 2021. We emphasize that we immersed ourselves in these walks seeking to “show

how knowledge emerges from the crossroads of lives lived together with others” (Ingold, 2016, p. 407, our translation).

All this dynamic led us to embrace the greatest possible versatility of technological apparatus, because of the organization and execution of the walk, always thinking about the best possible way to apprehend, in aesthetic experiences, subjective expressions that could subvert the anthropocentric logic that predominates in the forms of human occupation of space. This characteristic of the locus of study required us to establish coherence between the ontological, epistemological, and methodological fields of the present research.

We learn from Ingold (2016, p. 407, our translation) that the ontological commitment is crystallized in the research when the researcher, by resorting to participant observation, becomes aware that this “is not, at all, an undercover technique for collecting information from people, but rather contemplation, in act and word”. For the anthropologist, participant observation, as a methodological strategy to traditional ethnography, means “seeing what happens in the surroundings and, of course, also hearing and feeling” (Ingold, 2016, p. 407, our translation). As a participating researcher, we were aware that we were in a *synesthesia* movement, because our bodies plunged, in a sensitive way, into an environment loaded with stimuli (heat, cold, rain, sun, water, earth, air, day, night, dawn, dusk, campfire, fishing, winds, etc.).

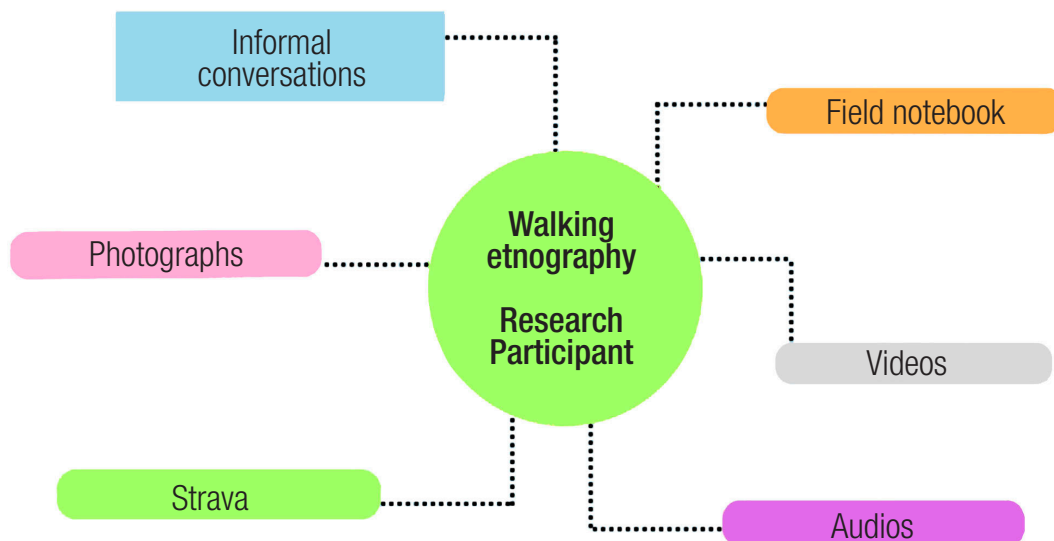
This choice was made due to the concern with the non-representational aspects of the aesthetic experience that would be under analysis, as well as its potential in the apprehension of the sensory and affective perceptions of the subjects involved in the same aesthetic experience. After all, we understand that the production of knowledge must be concerned not only with the mental representations of reality but also with the way these representations are produced, bodily practiced in the course of actions and interactions (Gomes; Silva; Iared, 2020). For Ingold (2016), participant observation is the main way of working ethnographically, and such a proposal carries within itself, as perceptive frameworks of the surroundings, the senses of taste, touch, smell, sight, and hearing of observer and observed when immersed in possibilities of experiencing the multisensorialities of the body in movement.

During the other technique used (*walking ethnography*), we focused on the movements, intending to produce and experience aesthetic experiences. According to Iared and Oliveira (2017), *walking ethnography* considers the researcher’s perspective of immersion within the study event. In this sense, more than observing/describing, the experience is lived and witnessed by all those involved (Iared; Oliveira, 2017). This technique was chosen because we consider it fundamental in the apprehension of the sensible, since, as already presented, we were also immersed in the experiences that the walks provided.

The long period of approximation (December 2020 to April 2022) made it possible for our theoretical and methodological framework to take shape, germinating ideas for the production of our data. When, finally, we appropriated the walks to produce data, each instrument of analysis required us to think about the possibilities of what would be used

to capture the lived experience. Figure 1 describes techniques used for the production and recording of the data produced.

Figure 1 – Data production techniques and corpus analysis



Source: Prepared by the authors, 2025.

The informal conversations were recorded, in written form, in a pocket field notebook. In it, we also made records from various sources that became the focus of our attention when we realized that yawns, arm relaxations and stretches, and loose oral expressions could be accessed during stops for coffee, rest, or random chat. We believe that, without such notes, the records of bodily responses, generated along the walks, would be kept in the intimacy of individual reflection. However, the field notebook for recording the sensations proved to be limited when we witnessed the correspondences between the encounters of the bodies. Therefore, the photographic record was fundamental when we witnessed the contemplative looks, bodies surrendered to the shadow, the rain, the breeze, or the beams of sunlight that crossed the senses.

The audios and videos became a *corpus* of analysis as the study was outlined. Even though we did not use technological apparatus to record dialogues, we had the opportunity, with cell phone cameras in hand, to make this tool essential in ensuring a dense *corpus* of analysis. Sometimes, the intensity of aesthetic experiences, the darkness of dawn, or the scorching sun contributed to making it difficult to capture bodily responses through notebook and photo. Thus, audios, even if few, served as a source of powerful reports in the construction of (eco)narratives. The moving images, present in the videos, were also considered powerful. Even if made at a distance, compromising the audio, they provided us with important bodily responses for the production of (eco)narratives. Through them, it became possible for us to perceive, during encounters and disencounters, the reduction

or acceleration of steps and other bodily responses. Finally, the *Strava app* allowed the registration of the route taken, portraying the duration, relief, speed, and options of each day of walking.

Data production

Our approach to the research participants, during those seventeen months (December 2020 to April 2022), aimed to strengthen ties. It is worth remembering that we learned about this group in an informal conversation with a colleague when answering a question about the doctorate and what we were planning to research. After some time, we realized that we had been added to the *WhatsApp* group of the people who walked, thus starting our *academic journey*. Many months passed, from the insertion in the group to the day we started the multisensory walks. The relaxation of the restrictive measures adopted during the pandemic allowed the group to resume walking on July 10, 2021. The *Whatsapp* group, called *Saturday Walk*, had approximately thirty education workers; however, the walk was carried out with all members only once. Generally, the walk had an average of eleven people on Saturdays.

The second moment of our itinerancy was in the recruitment plan, through an invitation to participate, on March 12 and 19, 2022, during the Saturday walks. Considering that the group and the walks already existed and that we were invited to join the team, we considered it an ethical commitment to extend the invitation to all the school community's workers who wished to participate in the research. Therefore, the invitation was made, first, openly and informally, and then in a direct and individualized way. Four people agreed to participate in the production of data and, subsequently, signed the Informed Consent Form⁷.

The third moment of our data production was more lasting and challenging. Throughout 12 (twelve) months (April 2022 to April 2023), we conducted ethnographic research. There were times when the participants questioned whether we were studying or *enjoying* the landscapes and the *good conversation*. Probably, this *concern* on the part of the walkers originated in the way their contributions were given, after all, the movement of the bodies, at that moment, was reduced to unpretentious walks of *manipulation/control* of the body. Although spontaneous, these moments consisted of recording, through various instruments (as already presented), the body responses.

The fourth stage was concomitant with the third. For each walk, a descriptive record of the bodily responses to the multisensorialities of the environment was produced, as well as an (eco)narrative, totaling, at the end of a year of data production, forty (eco)narratives. The idea is that the moment before writing would allow us to immerse ourselves in nature at the pre-reflective level and that, later, the description of the (eco)narrative experience would signal the possible potential of a non-anthropocentric perspective of environmental education. The (eco)narrative is defined here as a description of the experience lived by the body in a space-time in/of/with nature, which carries with it, or not, the potential

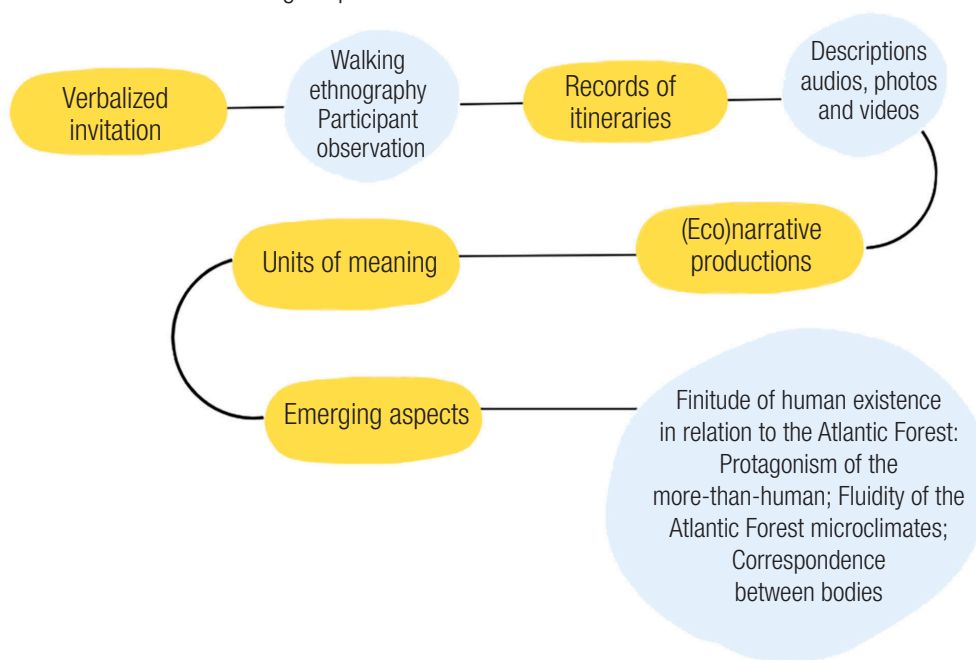
7- The research was approved by the ethics committee under protocol 5.259.254 of the Ethics Committee of the Universidade Federal do Paraná.

for apprehending *ecobecoming* – being and perceiving oneself as nature (Payne, 2013) –, which can facilitate the identification and discussion of affective responses that are related to the fact that the body is immersed in the flow of movement with the world (Iared; Oliveira, 2017).

The fifth stage consisted of gathering the (eco)narratives and appreciating them individually. Subsequently, we gathered them into just one (eco)narrative for each participant. The (eco)narratives were returned to the participants to add, suppress, and alter excerpts from the descriptions witnessed during their aesthetic experiences. After the feedback, the (eco)narratives were again re-examined in detail for the selection of units of meaning (Bicudo, 1994). Such excerpts, which “represent the ideas that best represent the phenomenon” (Alves; Buffon; Neves, 2021, p. 208, our translation), contained in the subjectivity of (eco)narratives, have the purpose, here, of deepening the analysis and discussion of the data, in the sense of pointing out the existence of emerging aspects that stood out within the dimension of less anthropocentric environmental education proposals.

With this revised material in hand, finally, came the sixth stage. In this, we dedicated ourselves to analyzing the data, producing the emerging aspects to seek to access the ties that interconnect the senses and meanings of the experiences lived to the way of being in-with the more-than-human of each participant, to, finally, in the topic *Results and discussions*, unveil the potential of nature walks for a less anthropocentric environmental education. Each part of the methodological path is exemplified in our *illustrative methodological path*, represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Illustrative methodological path



Source: Prepared by the authors, 2025.

For the purpose of this article, we present and discuss, below, excerpts from some of the (eco)narratives in the light of ecophenomenology, with a view to *sewing*/dialoguing the ethical and political positions implied in the various subjects that emerged from different expressions, in order to raise the potentialities and weaknesses of multisensory dives during nature walks.

Results and discussion

Wishing to prevent the subjects from being associated with the (eco)narratives, they were named P1, P2, P3, and P4. The P stands for participant, while the numeral (1, 2, 3, and 4) represents the order of arrival in the walking group. Chart 1 summarizes some general characteristics of the research participants, aiming to familiarize the reader with the specificities and generalizations of our participants.

Chart 1 – Brief profile of the research participants

Participant	Age	Working time in education	Role in the school	General characteristics
P1	54	18 years	Warden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tall, brown, married, father of a child. – Born in Pinheiros-ES. – As a child, he explored, for leisure, the rural areas of Pinheiros.
P2	52	21 years	General Services Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Short, black, married, father of a son. – Not native to the region. – Knowledgeable about wildlife when he took the family sustenance from nature, in the company of his father.
P3	33	06 years	Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Black man, single and only child. – Born in Pinheiros-ES. – Instructor of young scouts, passionate about his father's adventure stories.
P4	46	19 years	Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – White, married, mother of three daughters and grandmother of two granddaughters. – Born in the rural region of Pinheiros. – Knowledgeable about medicinal herbs taught by her father in her childhood

Source: Prepared by the author, 2023.

The immersion in nature walks provided a deep understanding of the multisensory experiences lived by the education workers from the school community, highlighting the inseparability of the more-than-human world.

Emerging aspects

As pointed out, the results obtained highlighted four emerging aspects that were fundamental pillars to think about building less anthropocentric environmental education practices, namely: 1) Finitude of human existence in relation to the Atlantic Forest; 2) Protagonism of the more-than-human; 3) Fluidity of the microclimates of the

Atlantic Forest; and 4) Correspondence between bodies. The analysis of these emerging aspects, which make up the “sensory tapestry” that involved the walkers, from an ecophenomenological perspective, evidences the dynamic coexistence between humans and more-than-humans. These emerging aspects emerged from the triangulation of (eco) narratives, providing answers to our research question. Therefore, the emerging aspects are conceived as the multisensory experiences that came to light during the walks with the school community’s workers. At this point in the discussion of the data, we emphasize that the emerging aspects are adopted as expressions of the “wild territory” – a kind of material agency “that can surprise, bother, terrify or disconcert humans” (Alaimo, 2017, p. 920, our translation), as observed in the participants’ reports that we problematize here.

Finitude of human existence in relation to the Atlantic Forest

To think about environmental education based on multisensory immersions in nature is to presuppose that the environment is endowed with affective potentials. Potentials that are only agentive if they encounter bodies that are also agentive. It also implies recognizing that aesthetic experiences broaden the understanding of our way of being in the world. In other words, following Merleau-Ponty’s (1999) premise, we understand that the experience of the world precedes the awareness of the world, as the latter refutes the ontological greatness of the experience.

With this in mind, we see that the results of the article point out that the *aesthetic greatness of the Atlantic Forest’s coast plain*, found latent in more-than-humans, has the potential to provoke reflections on the modes of human occupation (walkers) of space and the feelings that move their desires concerning consumerism. In this regard, it is worth noting that we understand consumption as necessary for our survival, while consumerism is a posture of excess, arising from the neoliberal context. We observed, in the selected excerpts, that the landscapes that are shown to the walkers have a value different from that negotiable by capital, however, they are of fundamental importance for well-being:

If I had money, I wouldn’t want anything else in this world, just to buy this area right here and build a house to be able to wake up to this landscape. No money pays for such a thing (excerpt from the 1st (eco)narrative - P2-16/04/2022, our translation).

We agree that it is necessary to stay more in spaces and places so that we can attribute and receive meaning from them, through active corporeality (Payne; Wattchow, 2009). The affective responses, which appear in the (eco)narratives of P3, show us the potential of aesthetic experiences in nature as a trigger for the valuation of life, through the contemplation of nature, experiencing a kind of brake on the agitation and haste of bodies, allowing us to rethink the troubled life in which our bodies are immersed, as we read in the following excerpts:

The dense dew was being cut by the force of the sun and stretched across the lowlands in front of us. It asks for a break (excerpt from the 40th (eco)narrative – P3-15/04/2023, our translation).
Everyone abruptly slowed down and took a deep breath. We were recharging our batteries (excerpt from the 40th (eco)narrative –P3- 15/04/2023, our translation).

Such statements instinctively lead us to agree that being there, for more than a fleeting moment, can result in “meaningful experiences” (Marin; Kasper; 2009), which, in turn, have the potential to invigorate bodies. It is under this aspect that Ingold’s (2010, p. 21, our translation) notion of education of attention allows us to infer that experiencing the *aesthetic greatness of the Atlantic Forest’s coast plain* can reveal that perception is not given by a mind within a body, but rather “as an activity of the whole organism in an environment”, after all, we witnessed a reduction in the intensity of breathing, vision was concerned with observing the scenario, and the flows of thoughts were reduced. There was no prior agreement to stop there. However, the agentive force of that place suggested such an action. Thus, the aesthetic experience awakened in the subjects happy memories of encounter with the beautiful and the vast.

These experiences were responsible for affecting their subjectivities, in such a way that they potentialized/germinated ideas for projecting their post-retirement futures. This detail leads us to share the following perception: “the way we perceive and act in the world emerges from our sensory capacities” (Iared, 2018, p. 185, our translation), as we can see below:

During the thirty days of vacation, he walked watching the sea, on a visit to his sister’s house. – When I retire, I’ll live on the coast (excerpt from the 1st (eco)narrative – P1, 2022, our translation).

By assimilating the aforementioned aesthetic experience, within the perspective of walking taken from the article by Machado and Muller (2011), we agree that walking is a way of thinking-in-movement. Therefore, it can be a concept-forming, experiential, intense, and collaborative practice. We accept this perception because we witnessed that a body in movement, in addition to pleasurable memories that emerged, also served as a trigger for memories of other immersions in nature. In other words, the aesthetic experience brought pleasure that, in turn, produced desires that, in the end, materialized into a life project to be carried out in future walks.

Protagonism of the more-than-human

Payne and Wattchow (2009, p. 19) state that seasonal variation of light, climate, and temperature can be known as a perceptual/sensory bodily response and “experiential comparison”. Our data converged with the notion of corporeality immersed in (micro) climates, as we can see in the following excerpt:



Look at that, Alberto, I think it's the end of times! One day a hellish heat, the next a shattering cold, the next a terrible wind, and today? We are in September. A climate like this is not normal (...) The man reaping what he sows (excerpt from the 22nd (eco)narrative – P2, 2022, our translation).

By supporting the (eco)narrative above on Ingold's (2000) notion of *enskilment*⁸, we propose a cut and overlap of motor skills learning created by the traditional worldview in which the division between mind and body and body and world prevails, by a learning that, for example, recognizes the predominance/influence of different climatic conditions in a short period of time, occurring inseparably from the action of doing and the place.

Walks emerged as a space for embodied learning, transcending the traditional view of physical activity to become a journey rich in meaning and learning, as well as powerful to unveil the understanding of the complexity of relationships, that is, strong to build a sense of “relationship with the natural world” (Iared *et al.*, 2021, p. 2, our translation), from the transposition of the school walls, as we see in the excerpts below:

Boy!! Those boys from school (students) should come and have classes here. To see it as it is!! (excerpt from the 21st (eco)narrative – P2, 2022, our translation).

I had never noticed before how the world can feel so alive and vibrant after rainy days! Look how wonderful! (excerpt from 29th (eco)narrative – P3, 2022, our translation).

Smelling the smell of wet dirt floor (excerpt from the 37th (eco)narrative – P3, 2023, our translation).

The potential of the multisensory immersions pointed out in the reports, in this subtopic, is important since we advocate for breaking paradigms, both in the dimension of knowledge production that occurs within and between the academic environment, and in formal institutions of basic education, which is where the proposed environmental education practices are applied.

Fluidity of the microclimates of the Atlantic Forest

The emerging aspect of this subtopic refers to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, when he makes us think about the emergence of signification in the encounters with the lived world (human and more-than-human), based on the aesthetic experience. For the philosopher, “Truth does not ‘inhabit’ only the ‘inner man’, or, rather, there is no inner man, man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself” (Merleau-Ponty, 1999, p. 6, our translation).

⁸- In-depth, tacit, and practical knowledge – a type of local know-how or skill that emerges, progressively, as an individual becomes intimately familiar with a task and its surroundings (Ingold, 2000).

The constant and dynamic interaction evidenced the coexistence between different elements, whether faunal, floristic, microclimates, or landscape cutouts. This coexistence was not limited to mere observation; On the contrary, the participants actively interacted, responding to the sensory stimuli provided by the environment, as we can see in the following excerpts:

His gaze over the reflecting pool makes him slow down. His hand goes to his waist, as if the landscape presented itself to him like a child doing some prank (excerpt from the 8th (eco) narrative – P2, 2022, our translation).

P2 is enchanted even by its appearance. He touches the leaves of the banana trees carefully and proudly taps the trunk. He even comments on the dark red of the bunch's "heart" (excerpt from the 36th (eco)narrative – P2, 2023, our translation).

That said, we perceived, in the reports below, participants' sensory perceptions regarding the correspondence relations of the more-than-human. After all, bodily responses denote the understanding that it is necessary to pay attention to the different and unique ways of communication of the more-than-human:

Not content with picking up the stick, he brings it close to his face, groping it. Then he exclaims: "Hail Mary, how resistant they are. The cobwebs that were in the backyard of my house aren't even close to this one" (excerpt from the 11th (eco)narrative – P3, 2022, our translation).

She comes back, gently picks up the flowers and smells them. Her hands touch the petals like those of a couple in love saying goodbye (excerpt from the 4th (eco)narrative – P4, 2022, our translation).

Aesthetic experiences potentiated the transformations of the subjects by subordinating themselves to the forces of agencies of nature, without awakening the desire for domination/manipulation or exploitation of *natural resources*, governed by the logic of capital consumption. The literature on environmental education highlights the importance of practices that transcend anthropocentrism and advocate for a *comprehensive epistemology* (Carvalho; Grün; Avanzi, 2009), whose ecological orientation is indicative of the recognition of symmetrical relationships between humans and more-than-humans. We defend the perception that more-than-humans have agencies when the subject is constructed in the interaction (Alaimo, 2017). For Barad (2003), these agencies are not aligned with human intentionality or subjectivity. Nor do they only entail a resignification or other specific types of movements within a social geometry of anti-humanism. Agency is a matter of intra-action; it is a representation, not something that someone or something has. Agency is not an attribute at all - it is a "doing"/"being" in its intra-activity (Barad, 2003).

Correspondence between bodies

The analysis of the (eco)narratives allowed us to situate the composition of the paths as a “patchwork quilt”. The excerpts below allow us to perceive the conformation of the environment, from the active presence of the human being, in such a way that it expels the state of dormancy and awakens curiosity and a feeling of pleasure in the walkers. Or else, they provoke perceptions of beauty in the new landscapes that emerge during the movements. However, the *landscape cuts* also give rise to feelings of repulsion, disappointment about environmental irresponsibilities.

You can notice the change in his body posture when something on the route catches his attention... (excerpt from the 7th (eco)narrative- P1, 2022, our translation).

And there he is (...) perceiving and contemplating imposing landscapes (excerpt from the 8th (eco)narrative - P1, 2022, our translation).

Boy, why not waiting for the day the truck passes. I keep garbage inside the house, but I only take it outside on Wednesday, which is the day the truck collects it. (excerpt from the 6th (eco) narrative - P1, 2022, our translation).

She's talking a little and quietly. As we cross the city through the paved streets, the group is taken even more by a creepy silence. [...] the research participants are staring at the ground. Their shoulders and heads down (excerpt from the 36th (eco)narrative - P4, 2022, our translation).

The aesthetic experiences in nature awakened childhood memories immersed in multisensoriality, leading us to believe that they were fundamental in the construction of an environmental identity. We also consider them as stimulators of ideas to think about the health of the environment where people circulate. These observations converge with Payne's results (2000, p. 70, our translation) that “the (embodied) being itself in aesthetic experiences is a point in the right direction to understand one's own identification with the environment, nature, or its crisis”. As we can see in the reports below, aesthetic experiences in childhood were indispensable to consolidating ways of adult life that denote respect for more-than-human beings:

- He has been related to trees since childhood. We can see him caressing a tree in silence. Because if it weren't for the human hand to end its life, it wouldn't be at risk of being murdered (excerpt from the 35th (eco)narrative - P2, 2023, our translation).

- I have the feeling that he is at the same time apologizing for the harm he once caused to other vegetables, in addition to knowing another way of interaction besides death (excerpt from the 33rd (eco)narrative - P2, 2023, our translation).

In addition to the pleasant memories, the scenario unveiled, from the excerpts that we inserted, also highlights the force that the movement (of bodies in nature) has to stimulate

sensitivity. The units of meaning germinate feelings of regret, misunderstandings, and pride in relational forms once lived. Thus, movement can be recognized as having the potential to put the body in response to the agentive forces of the environment. Thus, it is assumed that the movement has the potential to be a “generator of affectivities” (Iared, 2018).

Final considerations

A phenomenological research is unique to the eyes of each researcher, so there are varied perceptions of the phenomenon studied. Thus, this researcher has reached the *end* of a journey marked by *movements*, graceful encounters and disencounters, experiences, engagements, and, especially, itinerancies (comings, goings, and rests) in this existence that is our place of production of life. In this investigation, a pre-approximation through the *WhatsApp* application facilitated our first face-to-face meeting; however, building affection and respect from them towards us, and wearing a protective mask, was not an easy task. Thus, this study indicates that the time to carry out this type of research can be a limitation for the robust production of data.

As for the specific objectives of this study, we identified that walkers have walking in nature as a way to experience processes of intellectual, sensorial, and emotional/affective involvement. They also act as a driving force for the emergence of marks of trajectories in nature during the walkers' childhood. They lived aesthetic experiences in nature, and this pointed out the more-than-humans as responsible for the affection that the group showed towards nature. However, we identified, in the literature review that supports this article, a worrying inanity when it comes to environmental education practices guided by parameters structured in sensory intelligence and not only in intellectual apprehension.

Given this, future studies are fruitful to better understand this cultural gap that culminates in the devaluation of sensitive environmental education.

From a more-than-human perspective, the landscape has history, inhabiting the landscape makes up our human relationships, our identity, and our environmental trajectory. They, the subjects of our research, co-produced knowledge about the particular and the global, problematizing the different themes about environmental, economic, social, and political issues. However, although our methodology demonstrated vigor with four participants, since we took into account that a large number of people could leave us dispersed in the midst of so many body responses, the study highlights an element to be explored about a possible methodological limitation regarding a large number of people to be followed. We understand that, if we expanded the number of research participants, the understanding of the phenomena, from an epistemological perspective, would become difficult, as we could run the risk of being among so many reports and life stories that, naturally, we would dilute the aesthetic experiences produced.

Although this study did not aim to prescribe nature walks as a manual to be followed for less anthropocentric environmental education practices, we advocate that this form of occupation of nature can imply environmental education practices in which the more-than-humans are in symmetrical conditions in the process and also awaken ethical feelings of respect for the otherness of other beings – those who have life and those



who have existence – in addition to human beings. However, due to the limitations of this research, it was not possible to explore these agentive forces that enhance the ethical dimension of the research participants, so we suggest new studies to focus on this theme.

Unfortunately, the study showed that the individual histories of the researcher and the research participants linked to experiences with~in the environment that crossed the (eco)narratives, when discussed from the dialogues and analyses supported by theory, were a cause for concern, as the researcher was taken by the fear of making such experiences and livings fragile, when converted into an academic text, even if bathed in a poetic look and impressions that a new world is just around the corner. This documented experience opens gaps/spaces for other research to better understand the possibilities of the more-than-human in the formative processes of more sensitive citizens and environmental educators, as we understand that more efforts are needed to ensure the expansion of new ontologies.

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Alberto Cabral Ferreira has a degree in biological sciences from the Faculty of Technology and Sciences of Salvador (FTC); a Master's degree in Education from the Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo; PhD in Education from the Universidade Federal do Paraná.

Valéria Ghislotti Iared has a degree and a bachelor's degree in biological sciences at the Universidade Federal de São Carlos; a Master's degree in ecology from the Universidade Federal de São Carlos; PhD in Sciences from the Universidade Federal de São Carlos.