# Foucault, sustainable tourism, and relationships with the environment (human and nonhuman)

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Published online: 24 April 2014 © Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2014

Abstract Drawing on contemporary research into ethical consumption and sustainable tourism this article starts by outlining the ways in which sustainable tourism (and other forms of ethical consumption) has been understood as a means to perform class based distinctions. At this stage, it is suggested that whilst class may be one factor in understanding such a complex phenomena there might also be a need to examine the practices of sustainable tourist in a manner that takes seriously individual attempts to 'be ethical'. Foucault's understanding of ethics is then offered as a means through which this can be achieved. A brief account of the method used to read individuals accounts of sustainable tourism through an ethical Foucauldian lens is then presented. Following this the paper presents the analysis of interviews with sustainable tourists focusing on two key elements. Firstly, the analysis presents the emotional and reciprocal elements of interactions between sustainable tourists and the human 'other'. Secondly the analysis examines the relationship between the sustainable tourist and nonhuman environments to further develop the understanding of the emotional and reciprocal elements in light of a Foucauldian ethics. In conclusion it is suggested that rather than merely representing a mode of class distinction, sustainable tourism can be understood through an appreciation of the emotional and reciprocal relationship with the other, thus taking seriously individuals attempts to engage with ethical practices.

**Keywords** Ethics · Relationships to the environment · Foucault · Sustainable tourism

## Introduction

Consuming 'ethics': ethical consumption, sustainable tourism and class distinction

Social and environmental concerns underpin movements with an explicitly 'ethical' agenda; whether in terms of protecting the welfare of human beings (e.g. Oxfam) or the material environment (e.g. Greenpeace). In the production-consumption supply chain there has been a proliferation of products professing to be 'ethical'. To achieve such a status Tallontire et al. (2001) argue that such products should incorporate at least one of the key principles surrounding environmental, social concerns/human rights, animal welfare concerns and economic sustainability. Therefore, within the consumer market, products such as Fair Trade coffee arguably offer consumers the choice to express their social and/or environmental ('ethical') concern via their consumption behaviours (Barnett et al. 2005a, b). These social and environmental concerns are not limited to the purchasing of every-

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day products; rather they are expanding into all areas of product choice.

For example, during the twentieth century tourism was viewed as a 'clean' industry that could generate capital for countries whilst avoiding any ill effects (Honey 1999). The development of tourism infrastructure became a priority for many countries with the goal of enhancing economic growth (e.g. Spain). However, it became apparent that 'mass' tourism contributes to a raft of ecological concerns such as pollution; natural resource depletion; areas being 'developed' for hotel complexes; global warming through transport; litter polluting areas of natural beauty; marine life being destroyed; host workers and local cultures exploited as they become tourist attractions (Croall 1995; France 1997; Hunter 2002a, b, Mowforth and Munt 2003).

Thus, sustainable tourism arguably emerged, in part, as an ethical response "... to negate some of the impacts traditionally caused by unplanned mass tourism" (Dinan and Sargeant 2000, p. 2). Further, whilst clearly adopting a different set of 'social practices' (e.g. Shove 2012) to everyday consumption and everyday ethics, it has been argued that sustainable tourism can usefully be conceptualised as an emerging form of ethical consumption due to the shared history, principles, and 'ethics' of both (Hanna 2009). Such a position is adopted in this paper to explore sustainable tourism as an explicitly ethical practice; whilst also acknowledging its unique elements, such as: concerns surrounding the impact of air travel (Miller et al. 2010) and notions of 'having a break' from every day life and every day ethics (Barr et al. 2010).

Whilst ethical consumption and sustainable tourism function to address some of the inequalities and environmentally damaging consequences of mass consumption and mass tourism, they have been critiqued in a range of different ways. For example, in the ethical consumption literature it has also been noted that overstating the transformative potential of Fair Trade products can lead to a complacency surrounding broader ethical practices and therefore weaken the impact of a Fair Trade movement (Lyon 2006). In addition, there are debates surrounding the expense and time constraints of the labelling process (e.g. Nicholls and Opal 2005; Renard 2005), with others suggesting that ethical consumption simply provides a "green gloss" to the inequalities of production in the current capitalist system (Goodman and Goodman 2001). Finally, Wright (2004) argues that through attracting potential consumers, advertisements for ethical products draw on certain cultural representations that partially re-present colonial imagery, embedded within unequal power relations.

Sustainable tourism research has also been subject to critique with Bramwell and Lane (2014) suggesting that the area has recently been affected by the 'critical turn'. Such a 'critical turn' has seen the emergence of research addressing similar issues to those present in ethical consumption research. For example, Yearley (1991) and Kuhn (2007) challenging the 'objective' view sustainable tourism takes on the natural world suggesting it provides a backdrop through which western countries can exert power. Others have proposed that the idea of visiting untouched or primitive cultures under the guise of culturally educational and sustainable holidays appears to reinforce unequal power relations whilst sampling cultural traditions and ceremonies (Fennell 2006; Mowforth and Munt 2003). Furthermore, Jamal and Camargo (2014) draw on a case study of sustainable tourism in Mexico to explore how justice, ethics and equality are often lacking from the work engaging with disadvantaged populations at host locations.

In addition to critiques that focus on broad structural questions of 'green glossing' and power inequalities, ethical consumption scholars have also addressed the consumption of such products at the individual level. For example, using the example of Fair Trade and drawing on theoretical insights from Bourdieu (1984), Cowe and Williams (2001) and Clarke et al. (2007) highlight that although fair trade products have expanded into mainstream supermarkets they tend to be expensive and therefore appeal only to more affluent members of society. Purchasing these products might therefore be conceptualised as a form of 'lifestyle politics' presenting an example of class based distinction as suggested by Bourdieu, rather than as a form of relational connection to those represented in the imagery that is used to promote the product. Lyon (2006) elaborates on this critique highlighting that as fair trade products offer the consumer a chance to 'vote' with money, certain sectors of society are excluded as resources are not equal. Therefore, affluent members of society are provided with the chance to differentiate themselves from those less fortunate and stake a 'moral' or 'ethical' position in the process (Howard and Willmott 2001). In order to examine these dynamics in relation to sustainable tourism, attention shall now turn to research examining the demographic composition of 'sustainable tourist's' to explore the potential of understanding sustainable tourism through Bourdieu's distinction thesis.

#### Sustainable tourism as a form of class distinction?

Throughout history, shifts in tourism trends have been said to represent broader societal structures and divisions. For instance, from its onset in the seventeenth century the Grand Tour was typically reserved for the most affluent members of society (Davies 1986), in particular for sons of aristocracy and gentry (Lofgren 1999). However, by the mid nineteenth century Thomas Cook pioneered 'A Great Circular Tour of the Continent' which resulted in a shift to middle class participation and the affluent classes seeking alternatives (Hibbert 1987). Such patterns were also reflected in the use of Spa's and the seaside in the UK throughout the same period. Originally reserved for the upper-class elites, by the eighteenth and nineteenth century, seaside and Spa resorts became more accessible to the middle classes. Such loss of exclusivity arguably resulted in another classbased shift in tourism practices (Walton 1983).

Such patterns can also be seen in more recent forms of tourism. For example, whilst originally an affluent tourism practice, during the mid 1970s it has been suggested that the working classes entered into the package holiday market (Bray and Raitz 2001). Such engagement from the working classes resulted in the upper and middle classes increasingly opting to consume products from the long haul market by the late 1970s (Middleton and Lickorish 2005). By the end of the twentieth century, advances in air transport and the internet created a situation in which many more people were able to access a greater range of holiday destinations and practices (Lewis et al. 1998). However, not only did the internet allow for cheaper air travel but it also provided the opportunity for smaller companies dealing in niche markets to promote their products (Baines 1998). Therefore, niche markets could be seen as new ways in which class based distinctions could still be exercised. It is this point that the following section will address in relation to an emerging form of tourism, sustainable tourism.

A number of studies into sustainable tourism have aimed to establish if a sustainable tourist could be categorised as a distinct 'type' of consumer (Singh et al. 2007). For example, early research into sustainable tourism suggests that sustainable tourists exhibit high levels of education (e.g. Ingram and Durst 1989). More recently, Carr (2004) found that 70 % of 'cultural tourists' were educated to graduate or postgraduate level and aged in their late 20 s to early 50 s. In addition, in a large-scale study Dolnicar (2010) found that income was the best predictor for engagement with sustainable forms of tourism. These research findings support numerous additional studies that find sustainable tourists are better educated and more affluent (see Dolnicar et al. 2008 for a review).

Thus in a similar light to contemporary research into ethical consumption, it could be suggested that participation in sustainable tourism is reliant on an individual's social position (in terms of income and education). Through Bourdieu's insights into a class based distinction it could be suggested that sustainable tourism represents a new form of class distinction in an globalised world in which previous strategies of travelling further are no longer possible as a means by which dominant members distinguish. Rather than offering anything 'ethical', sustainable tourism is simply a public expression of upper class 'taste' (Bourdieu 1984). Indeed Fletcher (2011) draws on a neo-liberal critique to suggest that sustainable tourism practices are accessible mainly for a 'transnational capitalist class' and serve to sustain capitalism more broadly.

If this is to be accepted, sustainable tourists could at best be considered passive dupes that are led to believe they are doing good through the misrecognitions embedded in the habitus (Bourdieu 1984) or, at worst, they could be interpreted as wholly 'unethical' tourists reconstructing class based inequalities under the guise of 'ethics'. Therefore, Cohen and Cohen's (2012) suggestion that class based dynamics are central to many aspects of tourism appears to warrant further investigation in the context of sustainable tourism with Bourdieu's distinction thesis potentially offering a fruitful resource in this endeavor. Indeed, the authors of this paper actively encourage the development of such a focus in tourism studies.

However, whilst sustainable tourism is clearly located within, and bound by, class dynamics; this paper builds on insights from ethical consumption literature that suggests more attention needs to be paid to the complexities of such a dynamic phenomena (e.g. Adams and Raisborough 2008). It is from this position that attempts to develop a deeper understanding of the 'ethics' involved in consuming sustainable tourism is suggested in order to provide a more comprehensive and sympathetic account of the psychosocial factors involved in sustainable tourism. What follows in this paper will draw on a Foucauldian reading of interviews with sustainable tourists in an attempt to take seriously their attempts to engage in ethical practices. Highlighting the relationships individuals had with both the human and non-human environments whilst on holiday the paper offers a suggestion of how we could read these accounts differently in a way that provides a more 'ethical' account of the phenomena and takes seriously the reciprocal and emotional underpinnings. Before we can explore such issues attention now turns to the work of Michel Foucault to examine how his understanding of ethics and 'care of the self' might facilitate such a position.

## **Theoretical foundations**

Turning to Foucault to move beyond a critical account of contemporary ethics

[T]hree domains of genealogy are possible. First, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to truth through which we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge; second, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to a field of power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others; third, a historical ontology in relation to ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents (Foucault 1991, p. 262–263).

The works of Foucault have been far reaching as indeed was his analytic adventure. His theories are generally concerned with the concepts of power, knowledge and discourse from what many consider to be a 'post-structuralist' (Mills 2003) or 'postmodernist' (Danaher et al. 2000) perspective. His works span a range of subject areas, such as philosophy, psychology, history, critical theory, and a range of temporal epochs, from ancient Greece to the twentieth century. Interpretations of Foucault's works are diverse with his ideas having been applied to a variety of topics in an array of ways. For example, Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) interpret Foucault's works as providing a new historic-philosophical method for the critical analyses of social and cultural phenomenon that goes beyond structuralism and hermeneutics. Edward Said (1978) adopted some of Foucault's methods and terminology in his highly influential book Orientalism to present a post- colonial critique of how the west 'creates' the 'oriental' as an object.

It is the breadth and complexity of Foucault's work that has led to a vast range of researchers and academics to adopt some of his ideas for further analyses. It is the combination of the extent of his own theorising and dissemination along with the wealth of post-Foucauldian theory and research that many have acclaimed Foucault to be "... one of, if not the, most influential thinkers of our time" (Danaher et al. 2000, p. 1-2). However, one striking commonality of the application of Foucault's work is that there is a tendency to focus on his early theorising of power and knowledge. With regards to knowledge Foucault suggests that within the historical and social sphere there are dominant 'truths' which become accepted and embedded within the social practices of that society and provide the rules for understanding the world around us (Foucault 1991). In addition, unlike many of his contemporaries, Foucault argues that power should not be conceptualised in a deterministic sense whereby it is something that is 'owned' by some and exerted or imposed on others in a repressive manner. Indeed, for Foucault power does not flow in a unilateral sense but is circular and not the 'property' of any individual or group, rather power is constitutive, it creates subjects (Heyes 2007).

Therefore, it is through the relationship between power and knowledge that certain ways of being are made possible and normalised, particular 'truths' accepted, and subjectivities offered. Thus this ontological position is appealing to the critical academic precisely because, as Rose (1989) suggests, it is through the power/knowledge nexus that the modern self is constructed. However this understanding has not circulated as a 'dominant knowledge' unchallenged. For example, some have interrogated his position in terms of denying 'morality' or the prospect of a 'moral standpoint' through his rejection of universal values (e.g. Habermas 1990); others have challenged his deterministic understanding of power which leaves little hope for change (e.g. Taylor 1984); it has also been suggested that his understanding of power and knowledge does not sufficiently theorise subjectivity and fails to acknowledge the possibility of agency (e.g. Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine 2008).

Yet as the opening quote in this section suggests, it is through three domains of genealogy, or inquiry, that we can explore the ways in which individuals are constituted as human subjects. The third, that of 'ethics' is perhaps the aspect that has received the least attention within social research (Heyes 2007), and which goes some way in response to the critiques leveled at the understanding of power and knowledge. For example, Besley's (2005) educational research draws on Foucault's understanding of 'ethics' to examine ways in which education can help young people agentically constitute themselves as ethical subjects and form a 'relationship to the self' which challenges the subject positions formed through the power knowledge nexus. This offers a reading that rejects a unilateral focus on 'technologies of subjectivity' (Hook 2007) and enables an understanding that does address individual agency. Therefore, it is the purpose of this paper to explore the usefulness of understanding Foucault's 'ethics' in relation to 'sustainable tourism'. The following section begins to unpack this through an account of the way in which Foucault's ethics enables us to conceptualise relationships with the 'other'.

#### Foucault, ethics and a relation to oneself

In his later works, *The Use of Pleasure* (Foucault 1992) and The Care of the Self (Foucault 1990) Foucault attends to what he calls 'technologies of the self'. Foucault provided a distinction between the terms 'moral' and 'ethical'. The former refers to the code or knowledge that an individual is obliged to follow. As Foucault (1992, p. 25) notes "[B]y 'morality', one means a set of values and rules of action that are recommended to individuals through the intermediary of various prescriptive agencies". The later, 'ethics', refers to the ideas surrounding the type of person one aspires to be (Rajchman 1986). Ethics is a relation to oneself, or rapport a soi, that enables the individual to engage in behaviours that they see as 'moral', or what Cowe and Williams (2001) refer to as "self-determined morality" (p. 11), in relation to the broader social constructions of 'morality' circulating at that time. Foucault suggests that in order to engage in this relationship with oneself the individual must turn to 'care of the self' as the precept on which to guide their actions and thus live an ethically engaged life, as opposed to one of solipsistic self-indulgence or unthinking authoritarian rule following (Heyes 2007).

For individuals to live an ethically engaged life then, they need to formulate concerns to their existence through reflection and actively respond through regulations of their practices and a 'care for the self'. It is this relationship that creates a 'heterogeneous ethics' in which "... particular moral codes may engender different such actions and relations to the self" (Quastel 2008, p. 30). Such an understanding has been utilized by Varul (2009) in his understanding of ethical consumption. In this work, Varul argues that individuals engage in the consumption of ethical products to not just *do* good (i.e. follow a moral code) but also to be good. That is, to constitute the self as an ethical subject by placing ethics at the level of the telos or goal in the relationship to oneself, a process Varul refers to as 'ethical selving'. However, such agentic practices are not free from the structural process facilitated through Foucault's understanding of power and knowledge as noted earlier. Rather as Varul comments "... ethical selving has to be seen as socially embedded in pre-existing discourses and practices in whose terms ethical selves can seek legitimacy" (Varul 2009, p. 183).

## An affective and reciprocal ethics

At this stage it could appear that Foucault's focus on a relationship with oneself promotes the type of individualism experienced in contemporary society that many have challenged. However, within the History of Sexuality Volume 3 (Foucault 1990) the thesis is structured around ones relation to 'the self and others', 'the wife' and 'boys'. Further, Infinito (2003) asserts that Foucault's understanding of the self critiques the dichotomy between care of the self and care of others. As Foucault (1990, p. 80) notes:

...man [sic] had to regulate his conduct, not simply by virtue of status, privileges, and domestic functions, but also by virtue of a 'relational role' with regard to his wife...they show not only that this role was a governmental function of training, education, and guidance, but that it was involved in a complex interplay of affective reciprocity and reciprocal dependence. Therefore, at the very heart of a care for the self is a reciprocal relationship to others that is both affective and interdependent. At this stage it may appear unclear how the individual might achieve this; therefore what follows shall unpack these ideas in more detail.

Foucault (1990) suggests that individuals engage with forms of elaboration, or practices, in order to cultivate themselves as ethical subjects. A number of these forms of elaboration could be viewed as individualistic in their focus and goal, such as journal writing or resisting excessive food consumption. However, Foucault suggests that these practices are not simply aimed at transforming the self into a 'better person' but rather are essential in forming a "...whole bundle of customary relations of kinship, friendship, and obligation" (Foucault 1990, p. 52). It is here that Foucault suggests that relationality is fundamental to the cultivation of the self as an ethical subject. Rights, responsibility and obligation find themselves at the forefront of Foucault's ethics; individuals have a responsibility to offer guidance and counselling to others, individuals are exercising a right when one is asked for guidance and individuals are performing a duty when they assist others and have an obligation to receive the help of others appreciatively.

Therefore, a system of 'reciprocal obligations' lies at the heart of a 'care of the self' that Foucault understands as a 'soul service' (Foucault, 1990, p. 54). In an interview with Ceccaty, Danet and Le Bitoux in 1981, Foucault elaborates on these issues and offers the example of soldiers in World War 1 to demonstrate his position. In this account Foucault highlights the compassion soldiers in the trenches felt towards one another despite often knowing little about each other. Foucault argues that through 'some emotional fabric' individuals experienced themselves and others in relation to a 'brotherhood of spirit' and exercise a care of the self through their responsibilities, compassion and obligation to these others (Foucault 1997b). It was here, in terrible conditions and facing an almost certain death, that these individuals cultivated themselves as ethical subjects directly through their actions, thoughts, and feelings to the other. Therefore, for Foucault a 'care of the self' is not simply looking after oneself, but rather Foucault's ethics is intersubjective, relational, and essentially emotional. One can engage with thoughts, feelings and actions in a way which does not prioritise oneself over others, but which takes on a concern for others and a responsibility to others that is fundamentally grounded through an emotional relationship to the other. Murtagh (2008) argues that:

[B]eing sensitive to different life circumstances and perspectives of individuals, families and communities is essential. The core elements of relational ethics are meaningful interaction, mutual respect, uncertainty and vulnerability and an interdependent environment.

It is this understanding of relationality in Foucault's work on ethics that Evans and Thomas (2009) inject into a study of caring relationships within families affected by HIV and AIDS. They argue that rather than simply viewing caring relationships as a one-way process; reciprocity and interdependence are fundamental to caring relationships with both actors providing practical and emotional support for each other. It is here that an ethics is formulated by 'taking the concerns and needs of others as the basis for action' whilst also understanding the reciprocity in this action (Tronto, cited in Evans and Thomas 2009, p. 112). In addition, Burkitt (2008) argues that it is through such reciprocal and affective relationships that individuals can engage in alternative ways of being, enabling the self to reflect on the dominant forms of consumerist subjectivity. Therefore what follows in this article shall examine the ways in which the tourists engage with sustainable tourism not as a form of class distinction but rather as a 'care of the self'. For example, if "the self is from the outset relational" (Koppensteiner 2006, p. 58), how does the sustainable tourist practice a 'care of the self' through a relationship to, and a care of, the world (both human and non-human)? Firstly however, our attention turns to the ways in which the data for this article was collected and subsequently read through a Foucauldian lens.

# A method for reading accounts of sustainable tourism through Foucault's 'ethics'

The following section presents data drawn from semistructured interviews with 16 participants (13 female, 3 male) who self identified as either 'sustainable',

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Table

Anna—A 59 year old female who described her ethnicity as 'White English' and her occupation as a 'librarian'. She described her holiday as '3+ weeks in Quito helping out at an Ecuadorian tour operator designing their website and visiting the local area' Carly—A 26 year old female who described her ethnicity as 'White British' and her occupation as a 'children's centre evaluation officer for the city council'. She described her holiday as 'long distance walking/camping holidays where we take public transport to our starting point, walk for a week or so staying in campsites overnight, then travel back using public transport'

as Amanda—A 28 year old female who described her ethnicity as 'White British' and her occupation as a 'Part Time Administrator'. She described her holidays "WWOOFING" (Willing Workers On Organic Farms) in France to help build an Earthship (a type of 'sustainable' building)" ames—A 37 year old male who described his ethnicity as "White" and his occupation as a "Company Director and researcher". He described his holiday as a "green holiday last year in a specific design of caravan with two kids and two dogs for a month that provides green benefits.. 3illian—A 25 year old female who described her ethnicity as 'White European' and her occupation as a 'Marketing Assistant'. She described her holiday as visiting an 'eco resort on Andros Island in the Bahamas' Celia—A 23 year old female who described her ethnicity as "White' and her occupation as a 'Volunteer co-ordinator'. She described her holiday as 'a month at a yoga retreat in the South of France. It was very eco-friendly, with compost toilets, cold outdoor showers, accommodation in tents and a vegetarian diet. I also made the decision to travel there by coach and train as it was more eco-friendly than flying' Gemma—A 20 year old female who described her ethnicity as 'British' and her occupation as a 'Student'. She described her holiday as 'overland travel to places like Europe, Russia, China, Mongolia, India and some WWOOFING whilst away' Hannah—A 57 year old female who described her ethnicity as 'White British' and her occupation as a 'IT consultant'. She described her holiday as '2 week holiday to India last year with a company called Intrepid. The holiday was advertised via responsible travel' Katy—A 22 year old female who described her ethnicity as 'White British' and her occupation as 'working for the RSPB doing conservation awareness'. She described her holiday as going to 'Syria... travelling over land mostly on trains but undoubtedly a few buses too due to a desire to boycott air travel... to make sure the money we spend is going to benefit the local economy and small scale sustainable operations and not international/global chains' ayne—A 48 year old female who described her ethnicity as 'White' and her occupation as a 'Self Employed Homeopath'. She described her holiday as 'a holiday to Sri Lanka in the context of something that was eco'

Denise—A 60 year old female who described her ethnicity as 'English and White' and her occupation as a 'Retired teacher'. She described her holiday as 'a holiday to China last autumn with Intrepid Travel'

Darren—A 29 year old male who described his ethnicity as 'White British' and his occupation as 'None—on long term sick benefits'. He described his holiday 'as well as visiting two communes I visited Budapest by inter-rail... which saves resources'

fulie—A 27 year old female who described her ethnicity as 'British' and her occupation as a 'Academic administrator'. She described her holiday as 'a 9 week conservation project in Madagascar for my honeymoon'

Christina—A 37 year old female who described her ethnicity as 'White English/European' and her occupation as a 'Creative producer in broadcasting, performing arts & music'. She described her holiday as 'staying on the Unicorn camps in the UK' Ben—A 52 year old male who described his ethnicity as 'White European' and his occupation as a 'Teacher and Shiatsu practitioner'. He described his holiday as 'a peaceful holiday in Greece through responsible travel com providing environmental considerations for the place' Francesca—A 41 year old female who described her ethnicity as 'White British' and her occupation as a 'Regeneration consultant'. She described her holiday as 'a 2 week coast to coast long distance walking holiday'

'eco', 'ethical', or 'green' tourists (the participants and their holidays are documented in Table 1). A hybrid Foucauldian reading of the interviews, informed by aspects of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (Willig 2008) and an understanding of Foucault's later work on ethics as suggested above, allows an exploration of the ways in which individuals are both constrained by subject positions whilst also active in reflecting on and attempting to resist these positions (Yates and Hiles 2010). Building on Foucault (1990, 1992) this reading aimed to identify, 1. which aspects or 'truths' about themselves individuals problematised (ethical substance); 2. how individuals aligned themselves to forms of conduct or rules that carry certain obligations to think, feel and act in certain ways (mode of subjection); and 3. how individuals formed relationships to themselves and others through certain practices and attitudes and the ways in which this enables allowed them to work on the substance identified and resist/disrupt/unsettle broader constructions and subjectivities via experiments with alternative subjectivities (forms of elaboration). This structure allowed for the identification of a goal, or telos, which the previous three aspects are working towards.

For the purpose of this article, the focus of the findings will be on the forms of elaboration adopted by the participants in this study in relation to their affective relationship with host cultures and the environment. It offers an understanding of how practices and attitudes in relation to the human and non-human environments enable a relationship with the self and an ethical way of being (Foucault 1990). Thus, through relationships with others (human and non-human environments), individuals are able to recognise normalised ways of being with the power/ knowledge nexus and attempt to resist this and experiment with subjectivity. What follows in the findings highlights a reading of the data which focuses on power and knowledge. Each section then moves on to a reading which recognises practices as forms of elaboration in an Foucauldian ethics to unpack the resistance to normalised subjectivities and take seriously the sustainable tourists attempts at affective and reciprocal relationships to the human and non-human environment. Drawing on a large extract from one interview the first section shall explore these elements in relation the reflexive and reciprocal relationships with the human 'other' (host). Following this the analysis moves on to another interview extract to look at reciprocal and emotional relationships expressed in relation to the non- human environment.

#### Findings

Reflexive and reciprocal relationships with the human 'other' (host)

Throughout the interviews with sustainable tourists emphasis on 'meeting/interacting with local people' was explicit. For example, one participant (Anna) comments that she was "engaged with the country... engaged with the people and the way of life". Whilst this could be understood as a way in which individuals are positioned through the power knowledge nexus in relation to experiences with the 'other' (e.g. as is often the case in the promotion of sustainable tourism, see Hanna 2013). Such an account could also be examined through a more sympathetic lens that understands such an account as an engaging, interactional, and respectful form of elaboration. To examine such a reading in more detail attention now turns to an extract from an interview in which Julie, a sustainable tourist, was asked to reflect on the highlights of her holiday through which she elaborates on her relationship to the host:

the highlights I suppose were when we were interacting with the community out there umm and you know we did some really amazing things that I never thought that I would do. Like we did some umm trips out to villages and some people you know some people there had never even see a white person before and that was just kind of like wow but it was just I was really aware of how special that was and that we did need to control the interaction really carefully and we went and did solar stoves you know setting up solar stoves in this village and it's just some of the situations we found ourselves in was so remote from our lives here in London because we both live and work in London.

(9 lines omitted)...everybody there you know wanted to talk to us and to find out about our lives here and to talk about their lives and it was just um really cool.

Throughout Julie's extract the dominant construction of the interaction between the 'local' and 'sustainable tourist' (e.g. Caruana and Crane 2008), is employed. Interactions with the local community alongside everyday interactions with a local 'other' are presented as practices through which she can achieve "special" and "amazing" experiences. The 'local' is offered up as a source of meaning and enchantment and the subject positions of the 'tourist' and 'host' prominent throughout the promotional material are recreated. Drawing a discourse of the enchanting 'other' it appears Julie is positioned within the normative subjectivity of the sustainable tourist that consumes the local other and thus does not engage in an ethical way of being.

For example, presenting the 'local' as someone that had "never seen a white person before" she employs a discourse of exploration and discovery. Constructing the 'local' in this way functions to subjectify the 'other' as not only a collective homogenous group, but also as an object of consumption for the inquisitive western tourist. Analysing the construction of her interaction with the other in this way it can be suggested that Julie's account directly reflects the way in which broader discourses surrounding the sustainable tourist coercively position Julie and the 'host'. Therefore, at this stage it could be suggested that far from being agentic, Julie is a product of the broader knowledges surrounding the sustainable tourist. Positioned as a disenchanted consumer Julie is able to satisfy her desire for discovery via the host culture, which in turn exoticises the 'local' in a similar way to that noted by Said (1978). However, although Julie is to some extent subjectified via the power/knowledge nexus, an application of Foucault's model of 'ethics' provides a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between subjectification and agency.

Within Julie's interaction with the host a relational care of the self is also present. The practice of interacting with the local community is singled out as a way in which the participant was able to work on the self through an engagement with aspects that Julie "never thought I would do". Authenticity is constructed in this account through reference to intimate interactions in local "villages" which are far removed from the un-meaningful interactions she experiences in her day to day life in London. It is here that 'authenticity' should not be seen as an essentialist concept, rather a concept that is central to meaningmaking (Gunders 2008). Critical self-reflection is employed throughout these intimate interactions with

explicit references made to being "aware of how special" these encounters were and how there was a need "to control the interaction really carefully". In a similar light, another participant (Francesca) reflects on the need for control in relation to the power relations she sees as inherent in taking photos and giving gifts on holiday. As she comments, "like not taking photos if people who don't want their photos taken and not being too patronizing like giving gifts like taking pencils because you are going to a developing country". It is through this self-reflection and acknowledgement of their position within the relationship that Francesca and Julie (amongst others) are able to understand who they are as citizens of the 'city' (Foucault 1997c), or in this case, of the world.

Through this process of self-reflection it can be suggested that rather than presenting the vulnerability, or the objectification, of the 'other' as a function of power/knowledge, the participant engages in what Murtagh (2008) refers to as a 'relational ethics'. This understanding enables us to conceptualise Julie's experiences as situated firmly within the power/ knowledge nexus, whilst also allowing for a relational aspect to her being. It is through this relationality to the 'other' that Julie is able to establish an ethical way of being. For example, Julie recognises her "interaction" with the host community suggesting a two-way process as opposed to the passive 'observer' that consumers the other. Through her references to the "control", "awareness" and being "careful" in relation to the host, Julie resists the asymmetric relationship she is invited to take up via broader constructions of sustainable tourism (e.g. Mowforth and Munt 2003). Julie engages in a process of self-reflection which enables her to employ a concern for the other in terms of her impact on them. Understanding her own responsibility within the process, and the intersubjective and relational aspects of these encounters, enables Julie to experience agency through ethical action, and practices, towards both the self and the 'other' (Quastel 2008). Thus in Julie's account, this acknowledgement and concern for the other is expressed in terms of her potential impact on the host culture from her visit.

Central to Foucault's ethics, education provides a form of elaboration for the individual to recognise an ability to guide or council the other (Foucault 1990). It is here that Julie recognises her obligation to the host culture and draws on her knowledge of "solar stoves" to educate the other. Rather than seeing this as a relationship in which knowledge is power, Foucault's understanding of ethics enables us to see this as part of an overall concern for the other. Through reflecting on the need of the other for this information the participant engages in a process whereby she is offering a type of 'soul service'. This knowledge transfer was essential for Foucault in understanding the reciprocal nature of an ethical way of life and provides Julie with a means through which to work on herself in relation to the other via the 'setting up of solar stoves in villages'.

In addition, giving this information and soliciting advice on new technologies is not only beneficial in terms of understanding oneself through another but it also "... constitutes a beneficial exercise for the giver, who is called the preceptor, because he [sic] thereby reactualizes it for himself" (Foucault 1990, p. 51). Thus, it can be argued that through educating the other about 'solar stoves', Julie is also regenerating her knowledge and reactualising herself. Drawing on tropes of invitation through reference to "they wanted to talk to us" and "find out about our lives here and to talk about theirs" Julie expands this understanding of education and reciprocity. No longer are the educational practices formal in the sense of knowledge transfer in terms of technologies. Rather a more general education of life or the 'soliciting of council' is presented here as a practice through which one can work on the self. In this scenario work on the self is not only practiced through the giving of advice, but also through the receiving of advice in terms of the 'other' talking about their life. In addition, in engaging in the reciprocal process of educating the other and being educated by the 'other', Julie is enabling and encouraging the 'other' to work on their self, which in turn, functions as a means through which she can engage in an ethical way of being (Foucault 1997a).

Therefore, through reciprocal relationships with the host Julie grapples with a resistance to asymmetric relationships with the other. Developing forms of relationality could be understood as an attempt to "... fulfil one's obligations to mankind" (Foucault 1990, p. 42) and generate forms of elaboration which facilitate the cultivation of the self as an ethical subject. The following section turns to another interview extract to explore the ways in which the tourists experience with the non-human environment can also be understood through a similar reading taking attempts at 'ethical' practices seriously.

The tourist, emotions and the non-human environment

In addition to a relationship with the host community, sustainable tourists in this research spoke about their affective relationships with the environment. The following quote from one participant explicitly documents the emotional relationship she had with the non-human environment. As Celia notes:

I suppose because of the nature of the holiday you'll see from the photos it was like very much outdoors we were outdoors like all the time umm (.) very kind of you know surrounded by nature natural (.) and one of the main things I got out of the holiday was like a really (.) like feeling of real kind of affinity with all things natural like a lot of the time we were sleeping in tents (.) and there was like this massive thunder storm I have never felt so much in the thunder storm (.) and like another thing that really stood out is butterflies millions of butterflies there and they just kind of land on you all the time like it was those kind of unique (.) natural experiences.

In order to engage in a relationship with the environment Celia draws on the rhetoric of 'the great outdoors'. Through her reference to being 'surrounded by nature' and 'natural experiences', Celia draws on the dominant construction of escaping to the wilderness that Banyai (1973) refers to. Falling under labels such as 'campers', 'climbers', 'amateur botanists', 'hikers', 'scouts', or 'nature-lovers' to name but a few, the author argues that the great outdoors provides individuals with a prime diversion from the stresses and strains of modern life. In his article Banyai speaks of individuals being driven to experience 'the great outdoors' through a subconscious desire to "... free oneself from the repetitious experiences of habitual existence" (p. 717). With this in mind, it appears that Celia is positioned within the power/knowledge nexus, understanding her experiences through the subjectivity offered up to the tourist. This understanding of Celia's relationship to the environment draws on the construction of the environment as a 'resource' and object of consumption. Within this reading of Celia's account, it could be suggested that far from representing an affective relationship with the nonhuman environment, the relationship she has with the environment is a prime example of the way in which the power/knowledge nexus subjectifies her. However, this understanding appears to ignore the complexities of Celia's relationship to the environment and her reflection on her position within the broader ecosystem.

Celia's relationship to nature is mobilised through practices such as "sleeping in tents". It is through an understanding of simple experiences that she is able to reconnect with nature in a way that does more than simply protect an environment external to her. Rather she understands her position as an "affinity to nature" in which she is fully immersed via "sleeping" in and being "surrounded" by "all things natural". In a similar light, another participant (Amanda) comments that her holiday was "just about like being in being in the quiet and seeing the stars in a way you don't really see them in Brighton" and how she would "get up in the morning and just see trees around you". Through this understanding these participants are able to draw on the dominant discourse of escapism through being on holiday whilst also rejecting the subsequent subjectivity of the 'R and R' tourist. Their position is no longer as a tourist observing a natural environment, but rather being part of the natural environment.

This relationship with the environment is one that we could understand through what Latour (2004) calls an 'amodern' or 'post-natural' constitution. In referring to a 'post-natural' constitution Latour understands the relationship between humans and the environment as one in which the traditional dichotomy is broken down and replaced by a relationality in which both humans and nature are positioned within an agentic network, both acting on and reacting to each other. Such an understanding sheds new light on Celia's presentation of her engagement with the environment with reference to both her affinity to nature and her documenting the notion that nature has agency impacting on her, (e.g. thunderstorm and butterflies). It is through the practice of sleeping in a tent that she is able to immerse herself in this relationship and allow herself a closeness and connection to the environment that might not otherwise be realised to this extent. Further, it is through this practice and a physical engagement with herself and the environment, that she is able to resist dominant understandings of a human-nature binary and realise a reality of a mutually beneficial exchange between herself and nature (Nuppenau 2002).

These types of 'relationality' to nature can be understood through emotions with regards the way they made Celia feel (Ettlinger 2009). For example, Foucault argued that 'some emotional fabric' (Foucault 1997b, p. 139) formed the foundations of this relationship and it is through this account of emotions that our understanding of Celia's experience is further enhanced. Through the 'post- natural' discourse, references to feelings towards nature and the reciprocity of exchanges between herself and the natural world enable the participant to understand her place within the ecosystem through an emotional context. She talks of her feelings as being involved in a dynamic relationship between both herself and nature through reference to experiencing the storm and butterflies landing on her. Ben also documents his affective experience with nature noting how "it was just incredible and we climbed down... a rocky outcrop and into the water and we were actually both in the water as the sun went down that was just amazing". Francesca elaborates on her emotional relationship with nature through her suggestion of an "attachment... to UK birds" in which "British birds move me because they are like my family".

Thus, for Ben, Celia and Francesca (amongst others) both they and nature have agency to impact on one another. It is here that Anderson's (2009, p. 123) assertion that "[F]rom the onset, neither humans nor non-humans have prefigured dominance in terms of agency within a convergence; rather collective agency is constituted through mutual practical interaction" becomes salient. Anderson suggests that within the reciprocal 'post-natural' relationship between human and non-human affective emotions function as an essential component to our understanding of the network. For Anderson, emotions enable us to make sense of the world in which we are situated and it is this knowledge that enables us a deeper understanding of Celia and Ben's account of their experience with nature. For example, it is through Celia's interaction with the natural world in terms of practices (sleeping in the tent, holding butterflies, being outside in a storm), and feelings that a reciprocal and emotional relationship emerges. Therefore, these relationships with the environment exceed that offered in sustainable tourism discourse (e.g. Caruana and Crane 2008) and invite a more ethical way of being. These reciprocal relationships appear affective or emotional in their foundations as they are not simply the outcomes of a type of 'ethical identity work', rather they represent a place in which the individual can care for the self through a 'genuine' relationship with nature and understanding of their position within the broader eco-system (Quastel 2008).

#### Conclusion

This paper set out with the suggestions that whilst sustainable tourism (and other forms of ethical consumption) can usefully be understood as practices through which class distinctions can be performed; there might also be a need to examine the phenomena in a more sympathetic light. Foucault's understanding of ethics was then briefly presented as a means through which we could take seriously the practices of individuals as attempts to engage in more ethical ways of life. After a brief account of the method used to read our participant's accounts through an ethical Foucauldian lens the paper then presented the analysis of two key extracts. This analysis demonstrated how an appreciation for Foucault's ethics could help us understand the practices of individuals in a way that does not merely understand their accounts as a product of the subjectifying power knowledge nexus. Rather the analysis sections of this article demonstrated the ways in which an alternative reading can enhance our understanding of ethical practices through a focus on the emotional and relational elements within interactions with both the human and non- human environments. It is through this type of reading that we can explore the ways in which individuals grapple with the power knowledge nexus in their attempts to be good rather than just do good via the affective and reciprocal relationships with the other, albeit within the context of a class bound phenomena.

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