Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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“Self-Transcendence and Self-Determination: Possibilities of Why and When Nature is Beneficial”

Department of Psychology

Thursday, August 2, 2018
1:00PM
Clearihue Building
Room B007

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Frederick Grouzet, Department of Psychology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Ulrich Mueller, Department of Psychology, UVic (Member)
Dr. Elizabeth Nisbet, Department of Psychology, Trent University (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Katherine Arbuthnott, Department of Psychology, University of Regina

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Gweneth Doane, School of Nursing, UVic

Dr. Stephen V. Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Nature’s salutary effects are well-established. A psychological connection to nature and exposure to nature are both associated with a variety of well-being indicators. Attempts to explain why these benefits occur are often from the perspective of why nature reduces ill-being. This leaves a lack of understanding of why nature increases well-being (e.g., hedonic and eudaimonic well-being). Self-transcendence is proposed as a mechanism that is activated by nature and explains why people feel greater well-being from engaging with it. In addition to understanding why nature is beneficial, we need to understand when—under what conditions—it is beneficial. The benefits of nature vary based upon conditions such as the amount of biodiversity in the area and personality of the person in nature. Motivation to engage with nature is implicated as an important factor for whether or not nature is beneficial. Two multi-study manuscripts address these questions: (1) does self-transcendence explain why nature is beneficial and (2) does nature engagement motivation affect whether nature is beneficial?

Keywords: nature, natural, well-being, happiness, self-transcendence, motivation, well-being